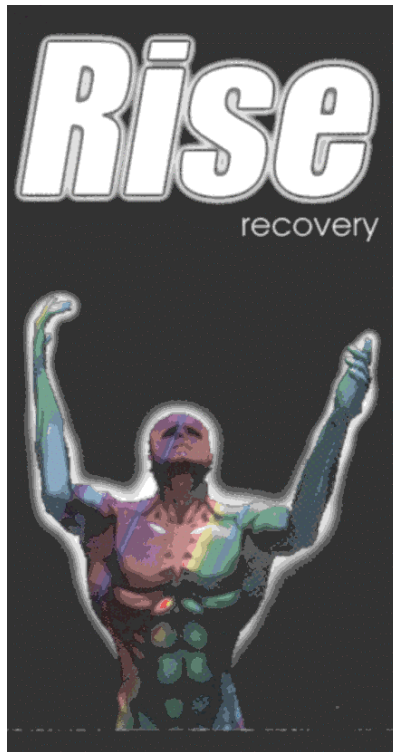


Goin' off



**Subcultural power
and the
chemical generation**

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Finally, I wish to thank Melbourne's DJs for taking us higher, my friends Nic and slinky/strobe for their comments and the original Dome crowd for being there and partying so hard for so long. And many thanks to my beloved Simon, without whom I'd still be stuck on page one!

Abstract

The subcultural world of electronic music subcultures is intriguing. Unlike other historical subcultures, the many genres encompassed herein under the title 'electronic music subculture' are increasingly spilling over into the mainstream, influencing popular media, fashion and even politics. Focusing on Melbourne, Australia, this study takes an historical cultural studies approach to the spread of electronic music subcultures.

This study utilises the subjective experience of the author, who has been an active participant in the subculture for over seven years. There is little recent research published about the electronic music subcultures across the Western world, and no published research into Australian dance subculture. As such, it was important for the author to draw upon her lived experience, referring to past published subcultural analyses in order to position this study in a theoretical framework.

The position of women within the electronic music subcultures has been examined with reference to power relations within the subculture. This dissertation also explores the commodification of the electronic music subcultures. Finally, the dissertation suggests further areas for study in a very diverse and interesting topic.

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chapter 1: introduction

god made me phunky (m.d. express)

an outline of the tenets of this work

The production and enjoyment of music has been a vital part of human communities since time immemorial. Archaeologists have discovered musical instruments while excavating sites linked to the earliest times of humankind. Music is an important part of our lives. Not only is it one of the widest known forms of entertainment and self expression, but studies have also shown that different genres of music elicit different responses from foetuses within the womb. But what is the social function of music? It has been used as a means of communication and as a method of creating and maintaining cultural and social cohesion (Jones:1992). Music has also been used as a tool for propaganda and more recently has become the focal point for popular culture.

Music is a vital element of youth culture. Without punk music, punk would have been merely an aesthetic visual art form. Young people define themselves by and through the genres of music to which they listen. In fact, youth subcultures are frequently associated with, or defined in reference to, a particular genre of music and associated identifiers. These include other forms of expression such as apparel, language, accessories, leisure time activities and extent of compliance with customary social norms.



James (1996:240) states that:

Since World War II, youth cultures in the anglophone West have created a series of subformations of popular music...up to contemporary rap, rave, grunge, industrial, techno, trance, and so on. Conversely, music and its attendant practices have been the largest single constituent in the production of post-war subcultures, the most powerful vocabulary for generational and other identities. Mostly these have been pioneered in the States and then exported, but other parts of the world have appropriated them in locally specific ways...Though generally continuous in their production of post-war cultural politics, the internal constitution of these youth cultures and their positions within the social formation as a whole have not been identical. The capitalist mode of musical production has been dominant all through...and to some extent, musical subcultures have differently mobilized class, ethnic, gender, and age identities.

The following dissertation provides an Australian account of an Australian subcultural phenomenon, unlike any other historic subculture experienced in the Australian context and directly linked to a wider Western subcultural trend. In examining this phenomenon, I have taken a cultural studies approach in an attempt to provide a clear and easily understood discursive account of a genre of subcultures embraced by people ranging in age from 14 to 55. I refer to the subcultures associated with the ascension of electronic music, from the late 1970s to the present day.

I focus particularly on the electronic music subcultures, as found in Melbourne, Australia, with reference to their manifestation elsewhere in Australia, Europe and the United States. Club, dance scene and rave subcultures are closely connected, being based around particular forms of electronic music, a lifestyle specific to the subculture and the cult of the DJ (a form of DJ worship).

There are many different genres of electronic music, the spread of which originated with the birth of house music at Frankie Knuckles' warehouse parties for Black homosexuals in Chicago in the early 1980s. From there the music was most probably disseminated to western Europe and bohemian India, particularly Ibiza in Spain and Goa in India, by travellers and holiday makers, who then took it with them to their home countries. The various genres of electronic music will be referred to herein as electronica or dance music and their origins will be considered divers.

what you need (soft house company)

a brief glossary

For the purposes of this dissertation, I employ the following definitions which are essential for understanding the basic tenets of the work. (These and further definitions may be found in the Glossary):

Acid-House	a term used by the dominant culture to describe one of the genres of house music. Collins Dictionary defines it as “a dance music dominated by beat and bass line, created with synthesisers and digital sampling; popular in the late 1980s”
<i>bricoleur</i>	one who reinterprets everyday items in such a way that they assume a completely unrelated meaning
club	leisure space in an established dance venue, usually open at night, where patrons must fulfil certain criteria for entry
club subculture	the principally (and sometimes aggressively) heterosexual mainstream nightclub patrons and lifestyle. Age range tends to be between 16-24 years.
clubber	one who frequents a club
codification	rendering particular aspects of the subculture nonthreatening, so they lose their subcultural value and may be more readily adopted by the dominant culture
dance music	any of the many styles and genres of electronic music, usually played in a club or at a rave
dance scene	the gay friendly clubbing fraternity, principally aged between 24-40 years
DJ	a disc jockey; one who plays electronic music, either on compact disc, vinyl record or digital audio tape. DJs act as <i>bricoleurs</i> , mixing music from existing recordings to create a new interpretation of the music
electronic music culture	the industry, media, patrons and participants in the electronic-music oriented subcultures
electronica	any genre of electronic music
electropop	late 1980s usage of electronic instruments to create popular music
mainstream	the dominant culture. Mainstreaming is defined as the way in which subcultural practices and fashions are stereotyped and particular influences adopted for sale to the non-subcultural members of the market
rave	leisure space in a unconventional dance venue or space. Usually a one-off event which features certain genres of dance music
raver	one who leads a rave lifestyle, usually aged between 14-24.

subculture defined in the Collins Dictionary of Sociology (1995) as any system of beliefs, values and norms which is shared in and actively participated in by an appreciable minority of people within a particular culture. The relationship of the subculture to the so-called dominant culture has been identified as one of subordination and relative powerlessness. Power relations are therefore an important dimension of any sociological consideration of subcultures.

the way it is (chameleon)

subcultural theory and the Australian experience

The following dissertation explores the reasons for the rapid dissemination and popularity of electronic music and the associated subcultures, its marginalisation by government and media, the social impact of electronic music and the electronic music industry's subsequent achievement of political and popular power in the wider community. A range of subcultural theories are discussed, together with their relevance for the genre of electronic music subcultures, and their strengths and weaknesses identified.

Through undertaking the initial research for the project, it became evident that there are very few studies of Australian subcultures, and no studies of the relatively recent subcultures associated with electronic music. The few studies of subculture in the Australian context focus on particular cultural practices within particular social or institutional settings and tend to be male oriented. Examples of these may be found in *Youth Subcultures* (1993), a collection of Australian accounts edited by R.White. Referring to youth studies in Australia, White (1993:vii) states that:

...for all the talk about youth culture or youth subcultural theory, there has actually been relatively little published material 'on the ground' which describes the experiences and everyday life of different groups of young people in subcultural terms.

disco's revenge (gusto)

a chapter outline

chapter 2: around the world examines the spread of electronic music and the apparent differences between rave, dance scene and club subcultures, music genres and lifestyles. I have noted factors common to each and indicated the nature of any differences and the perceived

reasons for these differences. I explore the associated rise of recreational drug use and spirituality and I briefly examine the rationale for the wide involvement of people from disparate age ranges and socio-economic backgrounds.

In *chapter 3: greetings from exile* I have examined other historic subcultures and identified their similarities to, and differences from, the club, rave and dance scene subcultures. Through studying past and current theories of popular culture and subculture I have identified theories consistent and inconsistent with practices within the Australian rave, club and dance scene subcultures and examined the relevance for analysis. Other issues which are briefly discussed in *chapter 3* include illegal drug taking and misuse of prescription drugs.

Any study of subcultural phenomena would be incomplete without at least some analysis of the internal power and gender relationships. In *chapter 4: positive education* I examine gender analyses of subcultures undertaken by leading sociologists McRobbie and Garber and explore their relevance to the electronic music scene in Melbourne.

chapter 5: access discusses the 'mainstreaming', commodification and codification of the subcultures, by which I mean the way in which subcultural practices and fashions have been stereotyped and particular influences adopted for sale to the non-subcultural members of the market. I briefly explain the Australian criminal connection and the interest of big business in subcultural activities. Directly related to this is my consideration of the extent to which popular music has embraced the electronic format.

The reactions of the rave, dance scene and club subcultural communities involved to the mainstreaming and popularisation of the genre/s is an essential facet of this study. I very briefly examine the integration of gay and lesbian dance community trends into the dance subcultures and the subsequent mainstreaming of gay and lesbian subcultural elements.

Later in *chapter 5: access* I examine the ways in which club, dance scene and rave subcultures have interacted with each other and with other subcultures to achieve a coherent political voice and a highly developed industry, with recognised status and influence in the wider community. The role of the Criminal Justice Act in Britain and the Australian government's reactions to British anti-rave laws are briefly examined. The transition from subculture to mainstream is discussed and a gap in the theorisation of subculture has been identified, as there appears to be little theory to support the change from subculture to mainstream.

In the conclusion I determine the most appropriate subcultural theories for supporting an analysis of the electronic music subcultures and identify gaps in the theorisation of subculture. There is enormous scope for further research activity and I have suggested several areas in which this activity could take place.

In order to provide a representative and sound ethnographic account of the Australian electronic music subcultures, I have drawn upon a range of subjective sources, including my own personal experience and the equally subjective lived experience of members of the rave, dance and club subcultures. Research materials included radio, newspaper and magazine journalism, which enabled the subcultures to be placed in a wider Australian cultural context. This information has been used to show the relevance of the theories examined to the subcultures explored herein.

chapter 2: around the world (tall pall remix)

rok da house (wicked wipe)

a chapter outline

Supcic (1987:348) laments that “Some avant-garde music today does not fulfil a definite social function, as art music did in the past. Sociologically, one hardly knows why and for what such music is written.”.

In this chapter I present a brief history of electronic music and its marginalisation from the realm of ‘real’ music. The conditions under which it gained subcultural credibility and its subsequent global dissemination are discussed and three principal electronic-music oriented subcultural groupings are identified. The associated growth of recreational drug use and spirituality are noted and I briefly examine the rationale for the wide involvement of people from disparate age ranges and socio-economic backgrounds.

Reynolds (1990:9) suggests that “the most exhilarating moment is that gap when an old musical order is dis-established but nothing stable has yet taken its place”. From 1979 through until the second ‘Summer of Love’ in 1987, music underwent an identity crisis. Early electronica was experimental and progressive for musicians such as Kraftwerk and also played a minor role in contemporary pop and other musical subcultures. Popular music songs employed electronica primarily as a synthesiser adjunct to the standard drums, guitars and keyboard and it was not until 1987 that subcultural youth embraced electronic-based music in its own right, on a (Western) world wide scale.

In the early 1980s rock music was undergoing a major rejuvenation process, sparked by the sense that all new rock songs lacked originality and that the genre needed to move in a new direction, or die completely. “All the wealth of a past that was fully available to rock as never

before, became fuel for a single, giant flare-up of possibility” states Reynolds (1990:11). As a result of the availability of electricity-dependent musical instruments and the introduction of new methods of sound production, rock music diversified again and again, giving rise to the new romantic sounds of Spandau Ballet, the aggressive rock of Billy Idol, the rebellious grunge of Nirvana and an extensive range of musical styles and genres.

One of the new styles was found in the electronic sound of songs by bands such as Depeche Mode and Soft Cell. Other, classically trained, musicians also embraced the new sounds available through electronic media, with Philip Glass and Brian Eno breaking away to experiment with the range of new equipment available, giving creation to a variety of entirely new sounds. Rock music was soon to be challenged for its place as the premier popular music form in the Western world.

i got the vibration (blackbox)

difficulties with discourse

Many music critics, both professional and amateur, described the new electronic music as simply being meaningless noise, lacking in soul and alienating the listening audience. The fact that the new compositions were often released without lyrics led to confusion and disenfranchisement amongst those who were used to listening to songs and identifying and singing along with the words. In their attempts to locate the new music forms in the traditional rock discourses, critics were frustrated, as the new musical genres held very little in common with traditional Western rock music.

Reynolds (1990:11) describes the rock discourse as an entity, “a stifling fixation on the text, an overbearing neurosis for meaning and relevance, an urge to totalize, and a gamut of taboos and inhibitions about what was sonically permissible”. In crossing musical boundaries, the electronic musician challenged the established ‘laws’ of Western popular music. Consequently, the adherents of rock discourse refused electronic music a place in their repertoires, forcing purely

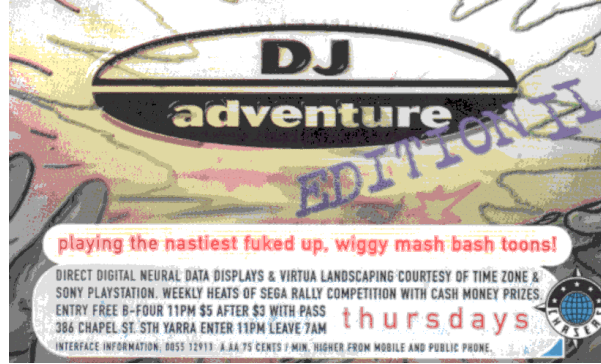
electronic music underground and cannibalising 'acceptable' amounts of electronica for back-up sounds in their rock songs.

By the mid 1980s, electronic music was being made by musicians using computers, synthesisers, traditional instruments and samples from records, videos and television and, in the 1990s, the Internet and compact discs. An artificial division in electronica took place, with progressive electronic music being regarded as avant-garde and high-brow, to be explored by musicians and amateur computer buffs with a keen interest in the possibilities of the new technologies, and of mutation and interpretation of sound. The electronic sound was also adapted for use by producers such as Stock, Aitken and Waterman for use in their low-brow teeny-bopper pop songs, known as electropop.

blow your mind (pablo gargano)

a disruptive influence

With new releases from electronic music artists able to be recorded direct to high fidelity media like Digital Audio Tape (DAT), musicians and DJs were freed from regular methods of production and distribution of music. Instead of requiring days in an expensive recording studio, new tracks could be produced in the home, bedroom or garage. However, without the backing of mainstream music labels' distribution networks and promotional know-how, new dance artists had to rely heavily upon DJs to find an audience for their music.



DJs often played this
parties, where, more
not, the listeners would

music at private
frequently than
be in a blissful

chemically-altered state. Whilst many in the wider Western population would have regarded this music as noise, not music at all, the participants I have spoken with report the music as having interacted with the listeners' mind states to give rise to a sensation of bliss. Interestingly, Reynolds argues that 'bliss' and 'noise' are the same thing - "a rupture/disruption in the signifying system that holds (a) culture together." (1990:11) In rupturing the dominant signifying system, albeit in a positive manner, the music threatened the status quo. It came to be known as 'cutting edge', 'underground' and '*avant garde*' and the critics initially relegated it to a place on the margins and tangents of music history, setting it up to be adopted as the theme for a subculture.

With the advent of the codification, normalisation and commercialisation of electronic music in the mid 1990s, its ability and potential to disrupt was lessened and, in achieving recognition as music rather than as noise, some forms of electronic music were embraced as non-threatening, mainstream, normalised and safe. The implications of this commercialisation are discussed in *chapter 4: access*.

ebenezer goode (shamen)

musical mystique

As the wider Western population began to absorb elements of electronica in popular rock songs, 'gender-bending' singers like Boy George and gay bands such as Pet Shop Boys were using electronica as a focal point for their songs. At the same time, in America, these songs were being mixed together by gay DJs at warehouse parties, predominantly run by, and for, the Black gay community. Known as 'house parties', the music quickly gained the tag of 'house music'. Characteristically upbeat, with a heavy bass line, unusual effects and soaring female vocals, the

music created the ideal sonic environment for drugs such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and 3,4-methylene-dioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), also known as Ecstasy or simply 'E'¹.

McRobbie (1993:421) examines the 'cultural plundering' which makes rave (and other dance subcultures) so expansive and notes that rave takes on two aspects from black culture in the United States and the United Kingdom, being the dance party and the pre-eminence of the DJ in the creation of musical performances. She states that, when coupled with new technology and new music, these serve to create an incredible range of possibilities. Top DJs are acclaimed as they create a soundscape by mixing one track into the next, thus taking the raver/clubber/listener on an auditory journey. This journey is then combined with a light show, other people, imaginative decor and certain drugs, commanding attention from all the senses, leading McRobbie to wryly note that the DJ assumes the role of magician.

A dance party or a rave is considered one of the penultimate experiences within the subculture. In Melbourne there are four gay and lesbian dance parties and at least twelve major raves each year, and these large parties are supported by smaller parties every week. In addition to providing a spectacular opportunity for participants to feel a sense of community with others within the subculture, raves and dance parties also provide the attraction of international and interstate DJs, many of whom are producers in their own right and who hold residencies at legendary nightclubs overseas.

Often these DJs will have released CDs or records which they have mixed or created themselves and these provide a form of iconography for the party goer. The DJ has the pivotal role at the party, creating a sensory journey for their dancing public, and may command rewards commensurate with their skill. UK DJs Sasha and Digweed commanded twenty thousand pounds

¹ Originally used in psychotherapy, Ecstasy was adopted by the dance community as it gave the user a sense of euphoria and love for those around them, plus amazing energy. Ecstasy consequently gained popularity very quickly and spread through the Western world in conjunction with the electronic music with which it had come to be associated (Collin 1997:4). Ecstasy was made illegal in America several years after it first started being used as a recreational drug at house parties. The UK and Australia quickly followed suit.

sterling for their New Year's Eve gig in 1997. The success of the DJ's role as guide, and indeed as magician, is determined by their ability to weave an auditory experience which will interact with lighting, drugs such as Ecstasy and other stimuli to enable the listener/dancer to blissfully transcend their reality. This is the aim of top quality DJs.

Other drugs which came to be associated with the rise of dance music include amphetamines (speed) and cocaine (coke), together with offshoots of the MDMA family of chemicals. The focus was on feeling good, together. With an emphasis on community and strong bonding facilitated by the use of the Ecstasy, participants felt that they had a new family, one comprised of their peers. As such, it was important to maximise the time spent with those with whom you had bonded, and staying awake as long as possible was one way to achieve this.

Experimentation with different types of drugs became a game, of sorts, in which one returned to an emotionally naive childlike state and danced and played games with one's friends. Clubbers, those in the dance scene and ravers alike adopted this role with clubbers embracing comfortable, body conscious clothing and ravers, indicating their return to naiveté, filled their fluffy backpacks with lollipops and babies' dummies.² It was not unusual for the experimentation to spread to other drugs, such as barbiturates, to enable the user to sleep once the party was over.

Many clubbers and ravers originally heard the music whilst on holiday and associated it with freedom, fun, beachfront dressing and an absence of everyday responsibilities. The UK summer of 1987 was designated the second Summer of Love, and it had many similarities to the first Summer of Love in the late 1960s. Expanding their horizons through friends, music and drugs, the early proponents of electronic music explored their spirituality in an awakening comparable to that of their parents twenty years before.

²perfect for 'E-jaw', where the drug Ecstasy leaves the ingester unconsciously grinding her or his teeth.

In conjunction with this expansion of horizons went New Age philosophies. As revisiting Asian philosophies and being open to alternative lifestyles once again became fashionable amongst the young and not-so-young (Collin 1997:82), so did the new intellectualism. It was no longer acceptable to simply have attended the same venue as others, with little exchange of ideas or self. With the new music and the new drugs, it was important to share on as many levels as possible, ranging from intellectual to emotional to material to physical. The focus shifted away from the selfish to an awareness of others and of others' needs. With such utopian views associated with the electronic music subcultures, in an era of high mobility and frequent international travel, it is scarcely surprising that dance music spread internationally in the way that it did. In sharing on many levels, participants also shared their enjoyment of the electronic music which had brought them there in the first place.

accelerate (zzino)

subcultural expansion

There seems little doubt that electronic music spread extremely quickly through the Western world, but in the first seven years this was strictly as an underground phenomenon, spread within the disparate subcultures which comprised the electronic music subcultures. In this, it is extremely unusual. The majority of forms of trans-continental (sub)culture are spread overtly, often springing up in other countries in response to articles or presentations in the mass media³. In remaining underground until the early 1990s, electronic music and its associated leisure activities and lifestyles, remained the property of those 'in the know' and were protected as such by the musicians, DJs and participants.

In part this may have been due to the use of Ecstasy. Its illegality in some countries and the use of non-standard venues for parties meant that the participants attempted to maintain the secrecy surrounding their lifestyles. Additionally, the way in which Ecstasy enables the ingester to open up to others emotionally means that a considerable amount of trust is generated and strong

emotional bonds are formed. If the music and the associated lifestyle were to be embraced by the general population, then it would be possible for the sense of bonding to be degraded and the 'magic' to be erased⁴.

kinetic (golden girls: cubic 22 remix)

defining subcultural genres

Initially there was a single, principally male and gay, subculture associated with a single type of dance music (house music). As the dance music genre grew and more and more diverse styles of electronica were produced, so too grew the numbers of subcultures directly associated with the electronic music. It is not my intention to enumerate the styles of electronic music, nor the subcultures associated with them, however, for the purposes of this dissertation, I have designated three main groupings of subcultures, each of which is comprised of a number of other subcultures. These groupings are club, dance scene and rave and I have had considerable exposure to each of these subcultural groups.

Broadly speaking, club subculture refers to the most mainstream of the subcultures. Melbourne clubbers tend to be middle class, of Anglo-Saxon or Mediterranean background, employed, heterosexual and single. The age range is usually between 16 and 24 years of age and musical taste tends to be radio-friendly electronica. The drug of choice is usually alcohol and clubber-oriented nights tend to finish around 4am.

Dance scene subculture refers to a slightly different sector of society. Those in Melbourne's dance scene tend to be middle class, of a variety of racial backgrounds and sexual orientations, employed, unmarried, but frequently in a partnership and principally range in age between 24 and

³ e.g. the spread of the homeboys subculture may be associated with the accessibility of rap videos

⁴ I recall attending an underground dance party in Melbourne in 1988, at which I had my first exposure to the dance/Ecstasy subculture, proving that it was already present in Melbourne at this stage, albeit only for a select few hundred participants. Use of the drug and playing of the music in established nightclubs and at raves did not really occur in Melbourne until five years later, in 1993, and has since become extremely widespread, especially amongst the club, rave and dance scene subcultures and the gay and lesbian nightclubbing community.

40 years of age. The musical tastes of this grouping tend to be more bass-oriented and non-mainstream, although six months after a track has been played in the dance scene, it may make it into the Top 40 in the singles charts. The drugs of choice for this group are alcohol, Ecstasy and speed, with the wealthier venturing into cocaine.

Melbourne's rave subculture is the most alternative of the three groupings, having lifestyles which are rarely commensurate with their peers. Ravers are of any age, but are most frequently between 14 and 24 years of age. Single, heterosexual and middle class, of Anglo-Saxon or Mediterranean background, ravers are often students and alternative lifestylers, who choose not to work. Ravers have the widest range of musical tastes, tending towards minimalism and syncopated beats, with a great love of heavy bass. Occasionally popular rave music is played in the dance scene and may make it thence to the clubs and the mainstream. Such enduring tracks are deemed 'anthems' or 'classics'. Drugs of choice for ravers tend to be Ecstasy and LSD, with LSD being used more frequently, possibly because it is cheaper and offers greater value for money. My contact with some ravers within the Melbourne rave scene during 1995-1997 exposed concern within the rave community that some young ravers were also taking heroin and speed intravenously⁵.

In the above groupings we can see that electronic music appeals to a wide age range, attracting students, the idealistic, the experimental, the non-conventional and those with money to spend. In short, electronic music appears to appeal to those who are most likely to travel internationally. As such, it is scarcely surprising that it spread so quickly throughout the English-speaking world, nor that it now has adherents in major cities throughout the planet. Electronic music has gone mainstream in the UK, in Europe and in Australia and other countries look likely to follow suit⁶.

⁵ This was around the same time as the film *Trainspotting* was released, a film about young people's heroin addiction in Scotland. At the same time, the popular media were running stories about 'heroin chic' (featuring the 'waif look' supermodels) arguing that heroin was becoming a trendy drug. It is difficult not to draw a connection between the perceived 'trendiness' of heroin and its usage by these young ravers.

⁶ This success is exemplified by the popular success of The Prodigy, Chemical Brothers, The Orb, Bjork and many others.

supernova (slp)

a subcultural rationale

The Collins Dictionary gives the following as one definition of 'underground': *any avant-garde, experimental, or subversive movement in popular art, films, music, etc.* It is clear that the early highly experimental nature of electronic music rendered it appropriate to this definition. Rejected by the mainstream in the 1980s and embraced by those who adopted a lifestyle, rather than simply a form of music, electronic music continued to gain popularity, frequently amongst younger members of the dominant culture who felt alienated by mainstream thought and musical trends.

My own experience as a teenager in the 1980s, which is scarcely likely to be unusual for teens of that time, was one of stock market crises, a lack of jobs and an increasingly consumerist culture giving little hope or security to a generation which grew up in the shadow of the Cold War and the prospect of a nuclear World War Three. Lack of community support, unresolvable tensions within friendship groups and increasingly fractured family lives gave rise to isolation and emotional withdrawal amongst the young.

Enter electronic music and happiness in a pill. The ability, through dance, to physically express and expel one's frustrations with the dominant culture, in a non-violent manner. An opening-up of self, a sense of being valued by one's peers. A world-wide subcultural phenomenon, spreading (by word of mouth) amongst the youth - no strangers to American cultural colonisation. Enormous backlashes by media and government once the secret was leaked⁷. As Longhurst (1995:213) suggests, "Subcultures express a response to a set of conditions and the different aspects of the subculture are tied together into structured relatively coherent wholes." It is scarcely surprising that the electronica-oriented subculture grew so fast, so fast that it spawned splinter subcultures. Given its rate of growth, especially since 1993/94, it is unsurprising that a number of new subcultures arose from the initial gay dance club/warehouse subcultural scene. What is

surprising, however, is that these subcultures remained underground for so long, successfully hidden from the popular press and from governmental intervention.

feel your body (frank o'moiraghi)

the strength of the subculture

Willis (1978) researched the subcultural activities of hippies and the motor-bike boys in the late 1960s and made a link between their lifestyles and the music to which they listened, and through which they, at least in part, defined themselves. He argues that their musical preferences were integrally linked to the nature of their lives. His findings have significant implications for explaining the spread of dance music.

Like rock'n'roll, electronica fosters a return to focus on the body, however, unlike rock'n'roll it also encourages exploration of intellectual boundaries. Referring to rock'n'roll and the motor-bike boy subculture, Willis suggests that (1978:77):

...this music allows the return of the body in music, and encourages the development of a culture based on movement and confidence in movement. The classical European tradition has steadily forced the body and dancing out of music, and made it progressively harder to dance to.

Willis (1978:77-78) also asserts that:

...[the music's] ability to stop, start and be faded, matches the motor-bike boys' restless concrete life style. As we have seen, it is no accident that the boys preferred singles, nor is it an accident that the rock'n'roll form is the most suited to singles and its modern technology (fading etc.) Both the music and its 'singles' form are supremely relevant to the style of the bike culture.

Interestingly, electronica is typically sold in 'singles' format, on vinyl, as this format is easier for the DJ to mix one track into another. ⁸Electronica is continually pushing the frontiers of

⁷ The extreme reaction of the British government, which introduced the Criminal Justice Act in an attempt to outlaw electronic music and its associated subcultures, is explored in Matthew Collin's *Altered State*, published 1997 by Serpent's Tail Press.

⁸ Only recently have CD mixers emerged, which have the same beat-matching capabilities as turntables. The majority of DJs still use turntables as few venues are fitted with the appropriate CD players and a CD mixer.

technology and experienced a major growth spurt at the end of the restless and anxious 1980s, at a time when the world faced an economic recession which government leaders were reluctant to call a depression.

Whilst conforming to the norms and expectations of the dominant society, supporters of electronic music enjoyed the position of being at the 'cutting edge' of a new and idealistic cultural form. These people were often electronic music's staunchest protectors and allies and were those who eventually enabled electronic music to achieve a voice in mainstream society, a decade later. One of the key peculiarities of the electronic music subcultures is that they are embraced by people from a very wide range of ages and backgrounds. It is this, perhaps, which provides them with much of their strength.

Through gaining a strong and more mature underground following, electronic music had 'friends in high places' when it eventually reached a wider audience. An interest in electronic music, coupled with a sense of mismatch within their dominant culture, meant that by the time wider support for electronic music was available within the wider community, the original adherents of the music knew the musicians, the producers and the other supporters very well. As long term supporters of the *avant garde* genres, who had achieved certain levels of authority and influence within their professions, these individuals were frequently placed in a position whereby they could also stand to profit from the expansion of electronic music. Examples of these roles are: the DJ, the accountant, the manager, the lawyer, the promoter, the publicity agent, the musician and the recording studio.



As those with a vested interest, these individuals often found themselves in professional positions which would enable them to promote the interests of the formerly *avant garde* electronic music, whilst creating their own niche in the burgeoning electronic music industry, as the music became more than a hobby; it became a lifestyle.

chapter 3: greetings from exile

my definition (d.j. hell: resistance d remix)

defining cultural studies

Cultural studies is a difficult concept to define. As a term, it embraces a wide variety of discourses, not all of which appear to sit comfortably together. Cagle (1995:21) states that:

(British) cultural studies...stresses a understanding of the 'raw materials' of contemporary (and often popular) culture while examining these materials (in varying ways and to varying degrees) through a critical engagement with semiotics, economic and political theories, structuralism and poststructuralism, continental philosophy, deconstruction, phenomenology, feminism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, post-Marxist analyses, 'queer' theory, and postmodernism. At the same time, cultural studies does *not* require that one have the exceptional ability to denote each and every point within the field where these (as well as numerous other) theoretical terrains have cross-pollinated. The particularity of the question being asked is what matters most; all questions must be guided first by context, second by theory.

The contextualism of cultural studies is paramount. It is, therefore, essential to place subcultural theory in context before using it to explore the various subcultures which have sprung up around and within the electronic music phenomenon.

the tribe (hoschi)

chapter outline

For the purposes of this dissertation, I take the Collins Dictionary of Sociology (2nd ed:1995) definition of subculture as any system of beliefs, values and norms which are shared by and actively participated in by an appreciable minority of people within a particular culture. The relationship of the subculture to the so-called dominant culture has been traditionally been identified as one of subordination and relative powerlessness⁹. Power relations are therefore an important dimension of any sociological consideration of subcultures. I define members of a

⁹ Refer Hebdige, D. (1979) Subculture: the meaning of style

subculture to be those who choose to participate in the subculture, sharing similar belief systems and holding similar values, attitudes and principles.

Before we can develop an adequate theoretical base to address issues of cultural processes and collective identity within subcultures, we need to be sure we can clearly identify a subculture in practice. Clarke et al (1976:14) state:

subcultures...have reasonably tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces. When these tightly defined groups are also distinguished by age and generation, we call them 'youth subcultures'.

Fortunately, the boundaries of Australian electronic music subcultures are well defined; participants are typically aged in their late teens and twenties (although these age boundaries are extremely flexible), hold valuable similar aspects of their leisure activities and have very similar beliefs and values regarding appropriate behaviour, standards of dress, levels of communication and respect for others. A common motto is PLUR, which stands for Peace, Love, Understanding/Unity and Respect.

In the following chapter I explore various theories of subculture, relating them to the electronic music subcultures under discussion and examining how they can help us to appreciate the subcultural knowledge and practices involved. I discuss the concept of neo-Gramscian hegemony theory, the influence of The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham and subsequent criticisms and theories posited by later social theorists.

Subcultural theory focuses on the rise, maintenance and destruction of subcultures, particularly with reference to youth subcultures. Subcultural theorists claim that "...through rituals involving fashion, music, language, and territory, youth subcultures attempt to win cultural space as a way of resisting the dominant order". (Cagle 1995:22). Cultural spaces may take the form of physical spaces such as a physical designated location, temporal spaces for leisure and recreational activities or societal space, such as recognition of their subcultural existence. Consequently

theorists such as Clarke, Hebdige and White claim that subcultures comprise a form of resistance against the dominant culture. The nature of this resistance, and its success or failure, is strongly dependent upon the extent to which the subculture is tolerated by the dominant cultural order and upon the extent to which the resistance is exerted by the subculture itself.



In Western society in the late 1990s there is a very wide range of subcultures, some of which are more evidently resistance-oriented than others. Not all subcultures are youth subcultures and not all subcultures are overtly resistance-oriented, however in Western society, any subculture which crosses established social boundaries and norms is expressing a form of resistance to the dominant cultural (WASP and class-based patriarchal) ethos¹⁰.

Subcultures, particularly youth subcultures, may usually be identified through any combination of music, clothing, lifestyle, hobbies and beliefs, although it is typical for music to play a defining role in the formation of a subculture. Some members may be consciously aware that they are part of a subculture, whilst others may not. Some subcultures may gain the approval of the dominant culture, whilst others may garner scorn and distrust.

¹⁰ By 'crossing social boundaries', I refer to a (sub)cultural ethos which disregards some (if not all) traditional discriminators such as age, class, gender, colour, ethnicity and sexual preference.

The prominence and rise of subcultures may be associated with the breakdown of the traditional or nuclear family. My own experience has been that subcultures may assist in providing members with a sense of social cohesion and belonging which is increasingly eroded in contemporary Australia¹¹. Featherstone and Burrows (1995:12) recognise that "Close face-to-face social relationships...are becoming increasingly difficult to form. As patterns of both social and geographical mobility increase the fluidity of social life they undermine the formation of strong social bonds." Subcultures assert these bonds, however the emphasis is not on family but on friendship groups, or substitute families, and as such falls outside the norm.

Extreme subcultures, such as the punks and Mods examined by Hebdige and Cohen in the 1960s and 1970s, are fascinating, in part because they provide a glimpse of otherness, which reassures members of the dominant or parent culture that they are 'normal'. Through being situated as abnormal, extreme subcultures become the mirror of opposites through which the dominant culture can comfortably evaluate itself. In a society in which to be different is almost always to be mistrusted, subcultures enable self-approbation for members of the dominant culture.

However, as a subgrouping of the dominant culture, subcultures also carry a wide range of traits inherent in the parent culture. Aspects of the parent culture (which the parent culture may consider non-defining and irrelevant) may be emphasised or parodied, whilst other aspects, regarded as highly important in the parent culture, may be disparaged.

not forgotten (leftfield: rhythm king remix)

early subcultural theory

Frith (1984:28) informs us that before the term 'subculture' was coined, American sociologists were examining 'delinquent' youth culture in the 1920s. Explaining that delinquency arose

¹¹ I have a number of friends who refer to each other as blood relatives, including two friends who introduce me as their big sister and a third who calls me Mum. Such references are made in a joking fashion, but are

through an absence of normal socialisation, the Chicago School proposed to examine the way in which delinquent behaviours had been learnt. The Chicago School of sociologists was based at the University of Chicago and focused its research on the ways in which groups of 'delinquent youths' behaved, whether as gangs or as ethnic communities. The Chicago School asserted that association with delinquent groups taught a potentially delinquent youth to become delinquent. Their argument sparked a flurry of new sociological approaches concerning behaviours which were posited as 'normal', to which 'delinquent' behaviour was placed in opposition. In response to the Chicago School, a wide range of theories concerning youth behaviour was developed during the 1920s and 1930s and these theories were refined, both in America and in Britain, following the Great Depression and World War II.

McGuigan (1992:92) gives us a brief historical view of subcultural theory *per se*, suggesting that early (British) subcultural theory concentrated on post-war wealth and the associated emancipation of the working class. It was a generally held view that, following the Second World War, the concept of 'class' had all but disappeared and that the Western world had moved into an era of classlessness. Due to an influential sector of the population having being born after the Great Depression, a blurring of the assets-based demarcation between the classes and a youth-oriented consumer culture, it was thought that the notion of class had died a natural death, giving rise to significant generational differences instead. The term "generation gap" was coined and held responsible for the majority of difference and conflict within the society.

McGuigan *ibid* advises us that the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, proposed the concept of *hegemony* in the 1920s, arguing that the mores and methods of the bourgeoisie dictate the dominant ideologies in effect in Western society. Any challenge presenting an alternative to the dominant ideology must be regarded as a threat, whether realistic or otherwise. Following World War II, the apparent death of class would have been viewed as a threat to the dominant ideologies of the time, and this, together with associated social changes such as the arrival of the

indicative of the fragility of genuine blood ties.

'generation gap' and spectacular male-dominated youth subcultures could be viewed as startlingly anti-hegemonic.

McGuigan goes on to suggest that cultural theorists of the 1970s did not regard neo-Gramscian hegemony theory, as expressed in the concepts of classlessness and generational difference, as sufficient for an analysis of the cultural events and practices of the era and were keen to return to a class based analysis of culture. Holding that generational conflict could be resolved within the theories of Marx, they posited that differences within generations were directly related to class issues within the generations under study. Such an approach drew upon the work undertaken in neo-Gramscian hegemony theory, but expanded it to take into account variances in 'parent culture' and subcultural groups.

the book (salt city orchestra: hardback dub)

the Birmingham School

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham (hereafter referred to as 'The Birmingham School') was the locus for a number of studies into popular, youth and subcultural studies in the 1970s. Whilst not all Birmingham School researchers were in agreement regarding their findings, and their later work embraced a wide range of approaches and strategies, the Birmingham School was groundbreaking in that it was highly innovative and synthesised a number of disparate theoretical positions. McGuigan (1992:90) explores the background to the Birmingham School, with reference to its relevance for an analysis of popular cultural movements and subcultural movements of the time .

The Birmingham School initially drew upon a neo-Marxist framework to develop theories of subculture, working from analyses of principally male working-class subcultures of resistance. The Birmingham School posited that, in any capitalist society, there are dominant and subordinate classes. Consequently, one cannot refer to a single culture when describing a

society, as the cultural basis for the society is extremely varied. It was suggested that, recognising their subordinate position, members of the subordinate class engage in problem solving behaviour to rectify the situation and, in seeking to escape the oppression inherent in such a relationship, establish a space within which they may operate as empowered entities. The Birmingham School identified this as a class struggle and suggested that members of the subordinate class are those who form subcultures in an attempt to (to use the cliché) subvert the dominant paradigm. Such attempts to resolve collectively experienced conflict were interpreted as possessing an underlying motivation to present new, oppositional frameworks to apparent contradictions in the established social structure. Consequently, theoretical links were established between work and leisure, production and youth culture, in an attempt to locate reasons for the arise of subcultures within the wider societal framework.



In addition to the use of class as a consciousness-awakening catalyst, the Birmingham School employed age and the 'generation gap' as equally important defining characteristics of the

dominant/subordinate relationship. This theory suggested that one's perception of the self as being essentially different to one's parents is fundamental to class consciousness¹².

The Birmingham School suggested that working class youth, in particular, bond together to create subcultures which provide a platform through which they may experience success and reward. Given the multifaceted nature of their powerlessness, both present and future, the Birmingham School submitted that subcultures provide these young people with solutions to the ideological contradictions thrust upon them by parents, media and the wider society in which they live. Frith (1984:44) built upon the work of the Birmingham School to identify the ideological struggles as being rooted in the changing cultural ideologies of youth, leisure and style.

In order to locate themselves within a society whose conceptualisation of youth seems fluid and self contradictory, but almost always negative, Frith suggests that subcultures develop a "form of group leisure that negotiated a path between such competing values by presenting individual prestige in terms of collective consumption." (1984:44).

Focusing on working-class cultures, the Birmingham School examined the production and consumption ethics, most commonly expressed by those whose principal role was in production i.e. men. Males were considered trapped between a new culture of massive media endorsed consumption and a traditional culture of production, within which they achieved their self-identity. Young males in particular were regarded as victims of the new ideological framework, and the subcultures in which they participated were viewed (by the Birmingham School) as important mechanisms for resolving the conflicting ethics within which they found themselves¹³. Additionally, the notion of 'problem-solving' subcultures was queried on the grounds that such a

¹² Marxist concepts of alienation are fundamental here, as it is through defining themselves as different to their parents that young people identify with one another, becoming aware of generational and class differences and bonding with others with similar levels of awareness, in some instances giving rise to subcultures, which may feel disenfranchised from the parent society.

simple rationale did not adequately address the complexity and variety of subcultures (or ideological dilemmas).

For members of the electronic music subcultures in Melbourne, the Birmingham School's explanation of subcultures as a working class phenomenon does not suffice. Melbourne's electronic music subcultures include participants from all social, racial and economic backgrounds, providing a melting pot wherein one's place of birth and social standing are irrelevant. The theory of the Birmingham School is supported, however, by the notion of problem solving as a means of resolving the tension within a dominant and subordinate relationship. The electronic music subcultures certainly behave in a manner which could be interpreted as problem solving, as they seek to establish a space within which individuals may operate as empowered entities.

In Melbourne, there is the subcultural belief that one's subcultural activities represent the 'real' individual, whilst the behaviour of the individual in spaces governed by the parent culture is regarded as artificial. There is the assumption that one's behaviour in the dominant cultural space is not an expression of the true self, but rather an ill-fitting role which one must play in order to negotiate one's place in the parent culture and create unobtrusive space for one's subcultural self. Hence, it is not unusual for subcultural participants to be forging their career in white-collar and gentrified blue-collar professions, whilst furthering their subcultural interests in their own time.¹⁴ The assertion of one's true self through subcultural participation enables the individual to negotiate the conflicting ideologies which they may encounter in the dominant cultural space¹⁵.

¹³ Some of these ideological struggles may be identified as the reconciliation of adult responsibilities with a wish to enjoy one's youth; the conflict between (media-conveyed) desirable affluence and one's actual financial position; the conflict between (media-endorsed) physical attractiveness and one's self-perception; and the conflict between one's wish to be authoritative in the workplace, where one fulfils an adult role, whilst being deemed too young to be taken seriously by one's colleagues.

¹⁴ There are many examples of this, such as the Melbourne DJ who works in a management role at the Bureau of Statistics, the Melbourne promoter who runs a computer company and a number of promoters and DJs who work in the legal, accounting and computing professions.

¹⁵ One of the key conflicting ideologies is the tension between being (and staying) young in an ageing society, where the nuclear family is idealised, but a third of first marriages end in divorce. This conflict is further complicated for girls who embark on non-traditional career paths and do not follow traditional lifestyle or sexual patterns.

Hebdige (1979) understood subcultures to be a force for utilising, altering and challenging forms of culture which are frequently integral to the dominant cultural ethos. The reinterpreted use of traditional style items to identify themselves, simultaneously drawing attention to their unconventionality, enables subcultural members to highlight the contradictions in the dominant ideology, as it relates to themselves. Hebdige gave this process the name of *bricolage*, with the subcultural agents being referred to as *bricoleurs*. Hebdige (1979:91-92) notes that:

subcultures express forbidden contents (consciousness of class, consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial and behavioural codes, law breaking, etc.). They are profane articulations and they are often significantly defined as 'unnatural'.

Hebdige would be delighted with the level of *bricolage* to be discovered in Melbourne's electronic music subcultures. Underwear worn as outerwear and high heeled running shoes are two of the ways Melbourne's *bricoleurs* have reinterpreted everyday items. Additionally, the use of emergency sirens, jackhammers, ringing telephones and newsreports in a popular track would send Hebdige into paroxysms of delight. Yet others within the parent culture would not be so impressed with these profane articulations¹⁶.

freedom (u-people: french vibes mix)

a Marxist approach to subcultural theory

An analysis of society leads the Marxist to conclude that inequality is class based and that inequality stems from class divisions. In capitalist society, class is regarded as the principal structuring division. Class analysis is therefore a basis from which divisions, contradictions and conflict in society can be understood. Marxism states that, at varying stages in history, people formed particular social relations in the process of production. These social relations in production form the economic base of society, thereby shaping all other aspects of social organisation (the

¹⁶ Another example of this is the importance placed upon a DJs' ability to mix well, in the electronic music subcultures. Whilst placing records on a turntable music may be considered a non-essential aspect of the parent culture, for the electronic music subcultures it is a defining characteristic of a good DJ.

social superstructure). Whilst the Marxist analysis fails to fully explain why subcultures arise, further theorisation demonstrates that class division leads to alienation and dominant/subordinate relationships, which may then prove appropriate conditions for the contradictory stresses from which subcultures may form.

Typically, those who experience the least amount of control over their lives and over the process of production are those are most likely to form or join a subculture and who rebel against the 'traditional' social order. This rebellion is fairly consistent in the way in which it is expressed, with elements common to subcultures throughout the past century. Such elements may include unusual dress styles, listening to music which does not fall within traditional norms, keeping irregular hours and upsetting the *status quo*, all of which traits were evidenced by the larrikins in the late 1800s, the Mods and Hippies in the 1960s, the Punks of the 1970s and today's ravers. In respect of the dominant paradigm's attitude, McGuigan (1992:90-91) informs us that from the 1890s onwards, features common to subcultures included "...media sensationalising of popular pastimes like street celebrations turning into violent clashes with the police, outrageous styles of dress and deportment, sense of an alien presence..., public debate over punishment and rehabilitation."¹⁷

Moysey (1993:16) points out that rarely is this rebellion a considered approach to asserting non-conformity to societal practices. Citing late twentieth-century issues such as the decreasing number of jobs available for young people, the presentation of wars and famines as unsolvable events and the linking of profitability to the continuing destruction of our environment as being key alienating and anxiety-creating issues for young people, Moysey suggests that subcultural rebellion is an instinctive method for young people to assert control over aspects of their lives,

¹⁷A 1996 example of media sensationalism in Australia was the headline 'Sex, Drugs As 1500 Go Wild At Rave Party' in the Adelaide Advertiser. The article went on to imply that intravenous drugs had been encouraged and that an orgy room was established on site. A friend who organised the party informed me that a needle disposal bin in a disused toilet was the rationale for the claim that intravenous drugs had been encouraged and that the orgy room was, in fact, the designated chill out room, where bean bags and sofas had been placed to encourage people to take a break.

recognising that they have been educated in ways to address the issues but have no voice in the decision-making processes of big businesses and government (1993:13).

Melbourne's electronic music subcultures certainly demonstrate non-conformity to common pressures from the parent culture. The subcultures tend to be nocturnal, rather than diurnal, extreme fashions are *de rigueur* and illicit drugs are not unusual. Participants focus on escaping from the dullness of everyday existence in their parent culture and, within their subcultural circle, establish the world as they would prefer it to be. Many discover the subcultural world through friends and adopt its norms easily. This supports Moysey's theory that subcultural rebellion is rarely a considered response, but rather an instinctive means for assertion of control over one's life.

wake up (laurent garnier)

criticisms of 1970s subcultural theory

The subcultural theory of the Birmingham School has come under attack from a number of sources. McGuigan (1992:91) suggests that there was a tendency to romanticise the activities of the disadvantaged or oppressed groups, claiming that this was a potentially irresponsible approach which might give a free licence to unacceptable behaviour, exemplified by activities such as media-celebrated beach resort 'riots' between the Mods and the Rockers in the late 1960s. Additionally, McGuigan suggests that focus on such groups suggests an unrealistic assessment of their cultural power, particularly their consumer power.

This view is supported by McRobbie (1980) who criticises the Birmingham School for using a two-factor rationale for the development of consciousness leading to subculture formation, suggesting that limiting the rationale to generational consciousness and subordinate (class and youth) status is short-sighted. McRobbie suggests that other factors such as race/ethnicity and gender are also essential considerations for analysis of subcultures, as they can be key areas for discrimination in

the wider community. Obviously the researcher's own background will radically affect the range of factors considered and the focus of the study.

Clarke (1982, cited in Longhurst 1995:219) criticises the Birmingham School for its glamorisation of subcultures and the implied assumption that spectacular subcultural activities are far more interesting than the mainstream activities of their peers, who are more likely to follow culturally approved and acceptable 'normal' behaviour patterns¹⁸. Spectacular (highly visible and unusual) youth subcultures are a fascinating but marginal phenomenon in youth theory, involving a minority of young people and excluding the majority. Further criticisms of the Birmingham School are listed in Longhurst (1995:221)¹⁹.

Focusing on spectacular youth subcultures leads to the disregarding and exclusion of other, far less spectacular but equally important, youth subcultures, which may involve far more significant numbers of young people. Examples of these include the grunge subculture, the teeny-bopper subculture, the pub subculture, the indie scene subculture, the Country Road clothing subculture and a wide variety of sports and leisure oriented subcultures existing in Melbourne today. Additionally, subcultural theory appears to ignore the fact that subcultural participants may take part in more than one subculture at the same time and thus complicate analysis²⁰.

¹⁸ A question begs to be raised here, as it is becoming increasingly obvious that in fact all youth is in some way subcultural and it is extremely difficult to identify a particular individual as being mainstream, or the norm.

¹⁹ These are (i) that the writing does not give an indication of the 'structural location' of subcultures and the nature of the problem solving, hence the subculture is not assessed in its full context, nor is the rationale for its expression fully addressed; (ii) that there is relatively little explanation of the complex social conditions that are also relevant to the emergence of particular subcultural styles or of their importance for participants in the subculture as talismans of problem solving; (iii) there is little attention paid to variations in style and commitment within different subcultures, meaning that different styles may indicate a hierarchy within the subculture and that not all members may be full-time subcultural members. Additionally there is little methodology given accounting for the uses of leisure *within* and between various subcultures; (iv) there is a lack of attention to the way individuals move in and out of subcultures and for the reasons in joining/leaving the subculture; (v) there is a tendency for subcultural analyses to start from subcultures and work backwards to class situations and contradictions, leading to a 'freezing' of distinct subcultures and ignoring other influences upon the subculture and subsequent changes within the subculture; and (vi) there is a dichotomy between subcultures and the rest of young people, where great emphasis is placed upon spectacular subcultures in particular, with non-spectacular youth being relegated to the sidelines as being too uninteresting for consideration.

It is apparent that non-spectacular subcultures, a significant number of which may comprise 'mainstream' youth, are ignored by researchers in favour of the more easily recognisable and attractive spectacular subcultures. Mainstream youth are viewed as the boring norm, that which has the potential to bring disruptive spectacular subcultures into line and which represents a younger but otherwise identical version of the theoretical construct of the average, blindly accepting, consumer. The extent to which this is a true picture of non-spectacular subcultural (mainstream?) youth would provide an excellent basis for further research, but cannot be discussed here.



Foucault's challenge to notions of power and the ways in which it operates and is wielded represents another challenge to the Birmingham School. The power relationship is fundamental to neo-Marxist concepts of dominance/subordination and is essential to the corresponding theories regarding economic operations of capital and labour. Foucault's (1979:82) *The history of sexuality* suggests that power is not an absolute indiscriminate generality, but rather that power is constituted by different knowledges, practices and technologies and must be understood in relation to specific locations. Everybody is caught up in ever-changing power interactions, from the micro level through to the macro level. Further, power is productive, not repressive, in that it creates a vocabulary of new capabilities and aptitudes.

Foucault's notion of power relationships suggests that it is inappropriate to consider subcultures as purely the product of the dominant/subordinate relationship in culture, as Foucaultian power is

²⁰ A clubber may also wear Country Road clothing, or spend two or more nights a week at their favourite

far more complex and mutable than the simplistic two way power of a neo-Marxist relationship. The neo-Marxist relationship at its primary level is a dominant/subordinate relationship, allowing little space for complexities. However, as Hebdige (1979:91) explores in his notion of *bricoleurs*, the subcultural use of traditional items in non-traditional ways to highlight and subvert the dominant/subordinate relationship, thereby introducing complexities, paves the way for the integration of neo-Marxism within Foucaultian power relationships.

indoctrinate (castle trancelot)

power and subcultural theory

Accepting Foucault's interpretation of power renders the subcultural theory of the Birmingham School insufficient in itself for analysis of subcultures. If there is no class struggle, because there is no absolute generalised power, then whither subcultural theory? Given that Foucault posits a variety of theories, the product of various bodies of knowledge, Foucault's theories may be preferable to neo-Marxist ideology as a forum for the interpretation of subcultural relationships.

If we consider the Foucaultian notion that power is expressed in knowledge, practices and technologies, then it becomes evident that subcultures are a result of the ways in which these knowledges, practices and technologies work upon and within cultural operations, giving rise to social and cultural tensions, which may reinforce or challenge the status quo. Thus, by drawing upon evidence of this within the society, such as the power exerted by a subculture to disturb commonly accepted notions, the concept of hegemony may be redefined and relocated, from an ideology locus to a framework of relationships and practices. Hegemony is thus integrated into Foucaultian notions of power to give rise to an easily grasped concept of relationships and power interplays.

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) asserts that classification of individuals and practices makes it possible to create a domain of government, determining averages and norms and constructing categories. This forms a crucial part of the mechanisms which facilitate the effective circulation of power. Those who do not conform to social norms become the subject of the greatest attention. It is through the construction and demarcation of pathologies that those norms can be reinforced. However, through the exercising of power upon a group/individual (e.g. discipline), the individual receives resources (self discipline/training) which enable her/him to become an agent for the exercise of power.

The production of cultural categories is normative, adding to the list of descriptions of the abnormal, through which the desirability of the norm is augmented. Thus 'subcultures' may be viewed as constructed artefacts at the intersection of a wide range of government strategies (Tait 1993:6).

The implications of this for neo-Marxist theory are that power may be exercised by one group/government (the dominant group) upon a group or individual whose behaviour falls outside the spectrum of norms (the subordinate), thus establishing a relationship of dominance and submission. This relationship is further modified through the next premise of Foucaultian thought, which is that the exercise of power gives the subordinate resources for exercising power, complicating the relationship to become one through which the dominant party gives the subordinate party resources which may then empower the subordinate party, so the subordinate party in turn may become dominant. A by-product of this relationship may be that the trait which rendered the subordinate party outside the norms in the first place is then appropriated back into the range of acceptable norms. This notion of subsumption of difference or 'mainstreaming' is further examined in *chapter 5: access*.

Foucault's depiction of power interactions as continually changing relative fields gives us a good model from which to examine the complexity of human relations within the Australian electronic

music subculture. According to Sercombe (1993:9) this charting of power relationships may be too complex to use as a basis for constructing subcultural theory. Sercombe affirms that power is an unequal relation and that structures operate which are designed to concentrate power. Members of subcultures frequently possess less of this power than those in authority roles. Sercombe is principally concerned with Foucault's assertion that no one is powerless - every single person is an agent of power and concurs with the Foucaultian notion that some individuals are ascribed more power at a particular date/time/location than others, which may lead to imbalances adversely affecting those with less power at that temporal locus. The complexity of power relationships implied within this appears to be too flexible and unmanageable for subcultural theorists seeking to identify trends common to a variety of subcultures.

tribal steps - step one (kaltenbrunner)

subcultural politics

Past examples of subcultures which gained cultural power to radically affect the dominant society have been covered in Hebdige's *Subculture: the meaning of style*. One subculture which had great influence in the late 1960s was described as the Situationists. The practices of the Situationists had many similarities to the Australian rave subculture, which was to emerge in the late 1980s. In the following section I explore ways in which rave took up the role of the Situationists, challenging and creating a new lifestyle which was later embraced by the mainstream.

Situationism is defined as "the revolution of everyday life" (Reynolds 1990:109). For Situationists in the late 1960s, popular consumerist leisure culture and formalised popular lifestyles were viewed as the enemy. Subversion of these new norms could be effected through creativity. In the 1970s, Malcolm McLaren embodied the spirit of the original Situationists, pushing the limits of his society's ability to assimilate that which was challenging and different. Acting as a *bricoleur*,

McLaren shocked and challenged the accepted lifestyles providing an example and an avenue for others to follow.

Similarly, rave culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s subverted popular culture by opening an arena within which people of all ages could express themselves and assert their individuality. Reynolds (1990:111) states that “Everyone is supposed to be endowed with a limitless capacity to be creative, to realize their true selves and desires.” Global rave culture gave all participants the opportunity to actively participate in their entertainment and explore their options. The DJs were themselves ravers, lovers of the music who had an urge to learn more about its production and share their interpretation with others. The lighting was, initially, very amateur. A strobe light, ultra violet fluorescent tubes, a flashing warning signal stolen from the local roadworks - these were the tools from which I have seen ravers construct their lighting rigs.

equilibrium (tranquilizer)

the cultural politics of rave

Some ravers volunteered themselves to paint images for decorating the walls of the rave venue, others created sculptures or collected leaves and branches for use in a forest theme, indoor party. Student ravers conversant with the new technology used their university computers to create graphics for use on flyers, to explore sound bites and download samples from the internet, for use within a new track. Those with a good home computing set-up, and the funding, turned their bedrooms into studios, linking keyboards, computers, mixers, turntables, CD and DAT players, speakers and Roland TB303s, 606s and 909s to create their own tracks and music to which others could dance. DIY rave continued²¹. The early trend was towards non-profit parties,

²¹ A group of friends would throw parties in warehouses, with a couple of ravers taking the door charge, others selling water and energy drinks at a make-shift bar and a law-student raver or two volunteering to meet with the police if necessary. In the month or so preceding the party, other members of the group would have been out distributing home-printed flyers to record and clothing shops, at recovery parties and universities and under the windscreen wipers of cars parked at appropriate nightclubs and other venues.

however if a profit were made it would be diverted into funding the next party. Later the increasing commodification of the electronic music experience caused this ethos to change.

McRobbie (1993:421) suggests that “the other attraction of rave is that...it goes on, it doesn’t stop” centralising the concept of rave as lifestyle. McRobbie notes that it “produces a new social state, a new relationship between the body, the pleasures of music and dance, and the new technologies of the mass media.” (1993:421). In rave, the participant combines established cultural influences with new technologies to create a discourse specific to the subculture and its associated enterprises.

The resultant cultural politics must be seen as an active process with the participants actively negotiating and producing their culture, providing themselves with a cultural identity which is creative, non-conservative and which is independent from, but not entirely separate from, the parent culture. Through providing a cultural space which encompasses the experiences of a variety of different cultures, utilises and incorporates aspects of past subcultures and challenges those within the electronic music subcultures to be their best, to think widely and to support difference, the electronic music subculture and its associated subcultural genres provide a framework within which members can perceive themselves as successful, gain approval and a sense of community and construct their own identities. This idealistic discourse encounters difficulties when overlaid with the practical experiences of women within the subculture, to be explored in *chapter 4: positive education*.

McRobbie suggests that there is a ‘text of excitement’, coupled with a ‘text of avoidance’ within the electronic music subcultures. The gratification inherent in electronic music subcultural practices mediates a recoil from major social issues of responsibility and uncertainty (1993:422). These subcultures may be viewed as tools for some young people to use to shape the contradictory ideologies which work upon them in such a way that they have room to act and to live, without being suffocated by conflicting demands.

chapter 4: positive education

groovebird (natural born grooves)

women and subcultural theory

The electronic music subculture is one within which women have many opportunities to participate on an equal basis to men. In the following chapter I explore the opportunities available to women within the electronic music subculture and the correlatory growth of girl power and self-esteem amongst female participants.

It is important to focus on women's roles in the electronic music subculture, as traditionally subcultures appear to have been rooted in a working-class patriarchal ethos and have not allowed for significant levels of female participation. The electronic music subcultures are the first to begin to break out of the theoretically accepted subcultural mould.

It has been well established that traditional subculture theory does not account for feminist influences on subcultures. The dance music subculture(s) offer the feminist subcultural theorist a wealth of the subculture's often-contradictory beliefs and practices.

A key objection to subcultural theory, as propounded by the Birmingham School, is that it is based on analyses of male subcultures and is therefore not necessarily easily generalised to other subcultures which may not have the same male-dominated bases. Working from within the Birmingham School, Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber noted that there was a distinct male bias to the subcultural theory work undertaken by their (male) colleagues, exploring (male dominated/oriented) subcultures (1976:209). They suggested that this may have been due to a number of factors, positing that the attitudes towards girls of the (male) research source may have been unconsciously adopted by the researcher, resulting in the researcher perhaps

assuming that the research source's negative perception of the girls was a valid one which held true for all such research sources.

Alternatively, it was possible that the (male) researcher had been hampered by gender relations when attempting to study the girls, as a male researcher may have found that the girls flirted with him, or assumed a subordinate role when talking with him. In their article *Girls and subcultures* McRobbie and Garber also suggest that the responses of the girls may be "characteristic of the ways girls customarily negotiate the spaces provided for them in a male dominated and defined culture" (1976:210)²².

Whilst acknowledging the importance of the research into subcultures based around the male experience, McRobbie and Garber argued that it was equally important to examine the subcultural experiences of girls and women. Consequently their approach to redressing this imbalance was to critically evaluate subcultural theory, as propounded by the Birmingham School, and relate the theory to the experience of girls and women, thence expanding to include the exploration of subcultural issues of masculinity and femininity (McGuigan 1992:105). To "the centrality of class; the importance of the spheres of school, work, leisure and the family; the general social context within which the sub-cultures emerge; the structural changes in post-war British society which partially define the different sub-cultures", McRobbie and Garber added the dimension of sex and gender structuring and examined the effect of this added dimension on the analysis as a whole (1976:210).

conception vessel (steve mason)

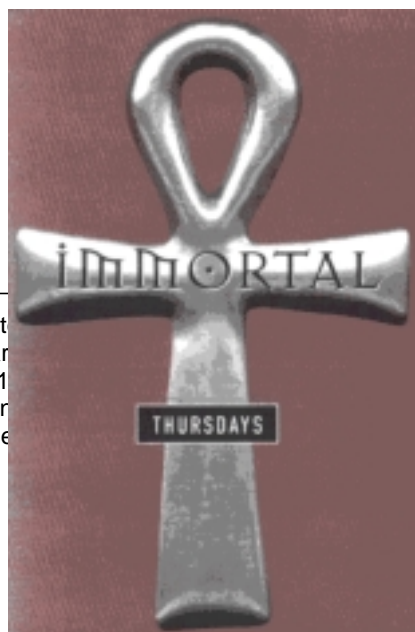
the inclusion of gender in subcultural theory

McRobbie and Garber sought to address the rendering of females into the background, as non-influential characters, through examining typically working-class 'girls cultures'. They examined

the status of females within significant 1960s working class subcultures (such as the Mods, the Skinheads and the Motorbike subcultures), discovering that girls tended to hold subordinate and marginal positions, even when in visible roles. This marginality was not simply due to the dominance of males, but because of the girls' centrality in a number of different, necessarily subordinate activities.

McRobbie and Garber suggested that, for girls, active subcultural participation was limited to complementary, but more passive roles, focusing around the only space of their own - the bedroom. This was as a direct effect of the greater limitations on social freedom, a lesser amount of financial freedom and a wider range of domestic duties in the home. It was claimed that working-class girls between 10 and 15 years of age had to negotiate their subcultural space within the boundaries imposed upon them, and this space necessarily was within the home, expressed as participation in the 'teeny bopper' subculture.²³

McRobbie and Garber point to influences such as the 'softening' of working-class subcultures, the growth of middle-class subcultures, such as the hippies, the development of 'unisex' clothing, and the blurring of sexual boundaries as effected by gender-boundary crossing (principally male) popular music artists as being important for the increased visibility of girls within subcultures (1976:215). They warn, however, that such increased visibility does not necessarily reflect any real change in the subordinate status of girls and that the "feminising of the male image may in no way signal the complementary liberation of the female from the constraints of the feminine image."



²² An example of this may be an interview space, where a young, male researcher

²³ McRobbie and Garber (1976:221) state that is available...to create a person that these strategies also symbolise

mediating the interview room

and highly manufactured space offered only on the understanding as well as a present one.

Girls' increased visibility was facilitated by their expanded participation in the workforce, however the nature of their jobs (unskilled with few career prospects) meant that in reality they were tied to their working class roots, even if the short term affluence afforded by these jobs did allow them to imagine themselves free. McRobbie and Garber suggest that the apparent freedom imparted by their work, independent earnings and their subcultural participation did not in fact enable girls to break free of the family oriented expectations placed upon them by their backgrounds (1976:218).

For middle class girls there seems little doubt that the Hippy subcultures provided an important route for girls' increased visibility. For girls who were students, participation in the Hippy subcultures was facilitated through their status as students, through which they were able to negotiate a space which could neither be forbidden, nor accessed by their parents. Whilst still participating in roles which were typically female, girls were able to create a space in which they had influence²⁴.

McRobbie and Garber concluded that "when the dimension of sexuality is included in the study of youth subcultures, girls can be seen to be negotiating a different space, offering a different type of resistance to...their sexual subordination" (1976:221). The girls were able to take on significant roles, but only within the gender role limitations prescribed by the subculture. Hence an Earth mother type in the Hippy subculture could advise people on what to do in certain situations, but for important issues would defer to the male leader of the group.

McRobbie in her 1993 article *Shut up and dance* notes that Hebdige's attempt to include race as a key characteristic in the analysis of youth subcultures was extraordinary insofar as it made evident his theoretical omission of gender. McRobbie draws her readers' attention to the fact that, in developing their particular subcultural traits, subcultures draw upon the patriarchal and class characteristics of the dominant or parent culture. As McRobbie's work was primarily focused on white working-class girls and undertaken over twenty years ago, it is necessary to examine how relevant her observations are today and whether they bear any relevance to subcultural female youth (of any racial or class background) in the Australian electronic music subcultures today.

closer to all our dreams (rhythm quest)

changes in subcultural femininity

In *Shut up and dance*, her 1993 work on rave culture, McRobbie queries the validity of her early work, stating that, as the mother of a teenaged girl in the 1990s²⁵, she feels as if she drastically oversimplified subcultural youth in her 1970s writings. McRobbie argues that rave culture may be connected to drastic changes in femininity over the years, suggesting that "girls both black and white have been 'unhinged' from their traditional gender position while the gender and class destiny of their male counterparts has remained more stable" (1993:408).

McRobbie suggests that recent youth culture is more than simply a response to the oppression suffered by young Britons in the Thatcher years, but is rather the site for the active production of new social meanings, investing in their society and achieving an unusual level of politicisation. Reviewing the changes since her 1970s writings, McRobbie asserts that issues around sexual inequality became part of the political agenda in both the private and public sphere and that

²⁴ whether in one of the roles typically ascribed to female participants by the media (Earth mother/pre-Raphaelite fragile lady) or in a more academic or creative role (rebel/writer/singer).

²⁵ Whilst raves are open to people of any age (excluding those raves operating within liquor licensing restrictions), it appears that McRobbie herself had not experienced raves first hand. This is most likely due to her daughter's concerns about occupying a recreational space in which she might encounter her mother. The other alternative is simply that McRobbie does not view herself as a rave participant, perhaps having other interests and priorities which exclude raving as an option. I suggest that staying up all night and into the next day becomes a less viable option as one grows older, as concerns such as work pressures, housekeeping, meeting family and friendship obligations and so forth increasingly place restrictions on the amount of leisure time available.

women's economic power was recognised, resulting in an inability to fully define what it is to be female. Associated with this shift has come a traditional-boundary-crossing rejection of the feminism/femininity divide, as women assert their femininity on the one hand and their rights to equality on the other.

Examining the market research which led to decisions such as that of *Just Seventeen* to delete the romantic fiction from its pages, McRobbie concludes that girls have changed since the 1970s. "They do not want to be represented in a humiliating way. They are not dependent on boys for their own sense of identity and well-being...They will buy a magazine as long as it presents an image of themselves which is compatible with those selves which exist outside the text." (McRobbie 1993:415). She notes that "images of bold, assertive and ambitious girls leap out in their Doc Marten boots from the pages of the magazine" and that the "enslavement of romance is escaped...through the freedom of the commodity" (McRobbie 1993:416). The resultant format of a 'typical' girls' magazine presents a new, more equal climate of relationships and self-actualisation (through purchasing power) which encourages girls to take on a more proactive and independent role.

In discussing rave, McRobbie suggests that this subculture may not, in fact, adequately reflect the changing social conditions experienced by girls in the wider sphere of relationships and socio-economic political influence. McRobbie states that "girls appear... to be less involved in the cultural production of rave, from the flyers, to the events, to the DJ'ing than their male counterparts" (1993:418). This is at odds with her claim that in the wider social sphere girls are taking on a more equal role involving self-actualisation and proactive behaviour, through the commodification of the ideal. The Australian experience fails to fully bear out McRobbie's assertions, as women have the opportunities to play significant roles in the cultural production of the electronic music scene. This is discussed later in this chapter.

ignition (madame dubois)

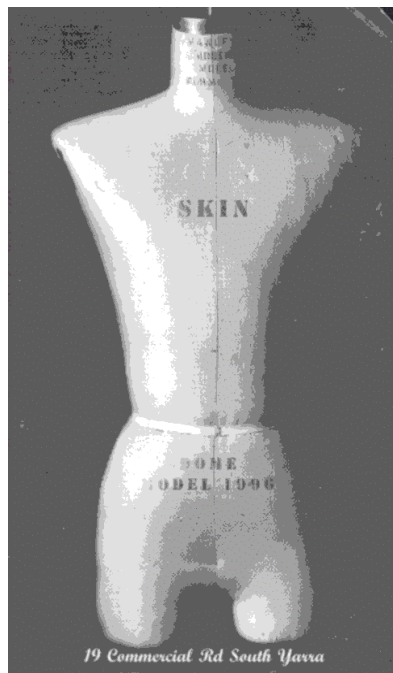
the contextuality of women in the dance subcultures

Before I discuss the role of women in the electronic music subculture in Australia, I must take issue with McRobbie's explanation of the process by which rave arose in the UK and its subsequent spread throughout the Western world, integrating with the American gay 'house' dance subculture, the Balearic sound experienced by Ibiza vacationers and with the experimental acid-oriented techniques of Goa. McRobbie suggests that rave came to popularity as a result of the 1980s nightclub door policies, which required patrons to be dressed in a particular way, to know the 'right' people and, of course, to attend the 'right' clubs. Those who did not subscribe to this attitude, claims McRobbie, simply stayed away and participated in established, usually non-spectacular subcultures which revolved around sexual preference, musical tastes and racial background. She claims that this led to a lack of visible subcultures available for participation by those in their teens.

My own experience has been that rave and the other subcultures associated with electronic music gained their popularity because of three main things - the atmosphere of freedom and acceptance, the multilayered, futuristic and inspiring music and the drugs, especially Ecstasy. Raves started off as private parties which grew larger and became saleable - rave was never initially a nightclub-based phenomenon. There were nightclubs, such as Shoom in the UK in the late 1980s, however these catered for a different market of electronic music lovers and were far more visible than rave²⁶.

²⁶ In the late 1980s the rave ethic was that of PLUR - Peace, Love, Unity, Respect - and the saleability of raves was initially an attempt to recover the costs of the DJ and equipment, thus encouraging Respect.

McRobbie claims that rave promoted an egalitarian code of access and soon grew too large for nightclubs, resulting in larger or outdoor venues with older male promoters achieving wealth and status through their marketing of raves and female participation being restricted to girlfriend status, working on the tills, behind the bars and in PR. McRobbie suggests that the place of women in the electronic music industry is, and always has been, marginal. In Australia in the 1990s, promoters tend to be older and male, however it must be noted that a significant number of these highly successful promoters are those who were just kids DJing when rave first took off and who have been involved at a grass roots level ever since. That initial cohort of DJs were male, almost by default, coming out of the patriarchal entertainment culture of the mid 1980s in Britain, Australia and the United States. Currently across the world there is still a significant division in the principal roles within the dance subculture, with fewer female DJs and promoters than male ones, however the gap is growing smaller every month.



A principal difficulty promoters is the tendency overlook them in favour of present Melbourne has regular gigs - the most of

experienced by female DJs and of male DJs and promoters to their male counterparts. At approximately 20 female DJs with any city in the country. In

Adelaide there are approximately 3 female DJs, Canberra has one female DJ with a regular gig

and Sydney has 10 successful female DJs. I do not have numbers for promoters, nor for other cities in Australia.

As a promoter myself, I have a male business partner with whom I share the requirements and duties of such a role. I am better than he at organising and have access to computing facilities, which enable us to produce flyer artwork and access others involved in rave and club promotion. He has far more spare time than I and has some terrific contacts. I have experience and he has creativity and enthusiasm. Between us we work well as a team. He enjoys DJing, a skill which I have neither the time, the patience nor the inclination to develop, and I prefer talking to people and finding out what we are doing right and what they would like to see.

Given the changing social conditions experienced by girls in the sphere of relationships and socio-economic political influence, McRobbie's assertion that "girls appear... to be less involved in the cultural production of rave, from the flyers, to the events, to the DJ'ing than their male counterparts" (McRobbie 1993:418) is superficial and disregards the true extent of female participation. The desexualised nature of rave and the emphasis on mixed-gender friendship groups empowers girls as it enables them to be proactive and independent and offers a supportive sphere in which they may be creative and expressive. Participants, regardless of gender, have opportunities to develop their interests as far as they wish and are only limited by themselves and by the conditioning inherent in the ideologies of the dominant culture, which both sexes have integrated into their own attitudes and behaviours.

Whilst the subcultural girls studied by McRobbie and Garber in the 1970s held a marginal position in the subculture, girls in Melbourne's electronic music subcultures are far more visible. Some girls play an active role in the production of the music around which the subcultures are focused. Others take on the role of organiser or promoter. Whilst the subculture has not achieved perfect gender balance and representation, it is apparent that there is significantly more female participation in this genre of subcultures than in their historical counterparts.

This finding supports McRobbie's assertion that subcultures draw upon the patriarchal and class characteristics of the dominant or parent culture, as there have been significant changes in the social ethic over the past three decades. Subcultural girls and women today are career minded, independent and earn their own money. They do not usually live with their parents, but instead share accommodation with a partner or flatmate. Reflecting a dominant cultural ethos which continues to see men in high-earning management positions, the electronic music subcultures rarely manifest women in the high status positions. It is not unusual, however, to find girls and women operating in a significant number of 'middle-management' level positions within the subculture. As such, in Melbourne the subculture operates in a similar manner to the dominant culture, with girls and women taking on significant roles, but with boys and men in the high status positions.

McRobbie argues (1993:420) that "the rave culture industry thereby reproduces the same sexual division of labour which exists not just in the pop music industry but in most other types of work and employment." To some extent the Australian electronic music subcultures contradict this view. There is not necessarily a sexual division of labour, but rather a sexual division of power, reinforced by a perceived division of interests and priorities which tend to be based in the wider Western cultural approval sphere of activities suitable for males and females. This is evidenced by females often feeling too intimidated to take on the 'male' roles such as sound engineering and aggressive promoting.

whodunnit? (mrs wood)

dancing women

Whilst older male promoters and DJs tend to be the most visible proponents of the rave/dance subculture and its associated subcultures, there is a significant number of male DJs teaching their

skills to aspiring female DJs and there are many female DJs²⁷ extending their talents to production and recording roles. Additionally, the number of women participating in the creative roles afforded by dance culture (set design, graphics, conceptualisation of themes, expression, multimedia production and fashion design and innovation), together with the number of women involved in promotion and team leadership roles continues to increase²⁸.

McRobbie also misreads the nature of female participation in the electronic music industry, particularly as applied to rave. Given that dancing is the principal objective of attendance at raves, it could indeed be argued that the entire rave experience is female-centred. Whilst it is not my intention to argue this, it is interesting to note the assertion of Willis (1978:77) who states "The classical European tradition has steadily forced the body and dancing out of music, and made it progressively harder to dance to." With dance being, in Western society, a non-traditional, non-culturally approved method of enjoying music, it was relegated to the subordinate status associated with the feminine.

This view coupled with the patriarchal nature of the classical European musical tradition has significant implications for McRobbie's earlier research which suggested that dance traditionally attracted subcultural female participants, giving them their only proactive role in the subculture. In the rave/dance subculture, dance is the motivating force for the entire subculture, leading to girls occupying a prominent position. "The tension in rave for girls comes, it seems, from remaining in control, and at the same time losing themselves in dance and music" (McRobbie 1993:419).

Rave has dance as its primary focus, giving girls a far more proactive and influential role within this contemporary subculture. In her 1980:47 study, McRobbie refers to girls being reluctant to drink alcohol, "...because of the sexual dangers of drunkenness." The rave subculture does not

²⁷ Examples of female DJs/producers currently operating in Melbourne are B(if)tek, Artificial, Lush, Liz Millar and Lani

²⁸ In Melbourne a female promotion team called 'Decibelles' provides an independent support and training network for women involved in the industry and there is a female owned/operated school for aspirant female DJs.

encourage the drinking of alcohol, as, as a depressant, alcohol is in opposition to the 'happy vibe' promoted by Ecstasy. Whilst Ecstasy heightens one's sensuality, there is a full consciousness of one's actions and any sexual activity is usually fully consensual, takes place within an established couple or between close friends, takes place in private, can involve experimentation with alternative sexualities and does not entail shame or ridicule, but typically reinforces a strong friendship. For girls there is no longer a fear of the sexual dangers of losing control, thus they are empowered.

Positing that in this AIDS aware sexual climate the ravers engage in a subculture which focuses on friendship groups, rather than couples, on dancing rather than sex, on a return to childhood, rather than the responsibilities of adulthood, McRobbie suggests that rave provides a medium through which the male may be 'softened' and the female may be 'released' in a crowd in which one may be free and which negates the pressures of sexuality (McRobbie 1993:418).

in my brain (mark nrg)

other research

There has been little recent research undertaken into the role of women in subcultures and the most extensive studies are over fifteen years old. Briefly, the most important studies are touched on in this section. Longhurst (1995:219) compares a 1981 study by Cowie and Lees with the 1976 findings of McRobbie and Garber, stating that Cowie and Lees find the earlier work too limited in scope. Through examining a discrete female subculture, Cowie and Lees believe McRobbie and Garber prematurely discount the intergender relations operational throughout Western society. Cowie and Lees make the point that there can be no 'different space' that is not always and already the product of gender relations, hence to suggest, as McRobbie does, that girls may create their own private space within the sphere of their relationships with other girls, and indeed a fantasy space within that private space, is erroneous.

Cowie and Lees' examination of this theory leads them to conclude that it is inappropriate to attempt to situate feminist theory within the subcultural theory of the Birmingham School along the lines proposed by McRobbie, and that it is necessary to develop an alternative framework of subcultural theory which may address the issue of feminist thought within subculture, whilst addressing other relevant issues such as ethnicity, class and environment.

Erica Carter (1984) built on and expanded McRobbie's work, challenging the Birmingham School and claiming that subcultural theory was:

...founded on a set of 'unspoken oppositions': conformity/resistance,
harmony/rupture, passivity/activity, consumption/appropriation,
femininity/masculinity. (McGuigan 1992:112).

Carter believes that a more realistic means for evaluating youth culture is to use the model of market research categories, which has more meaning in a capitalist/consumerist society. This option may well be more appropriate, given the recent commodification and mainstreaming of the electronic music subcultures. This is discussed further in *chapter 5:access*.

chapter 5 : access

hybrid oral (random generator) intentions

In the following chapter I examine the 'mainstreaming' and codification of the electronic music subcultures and the extent to which popular music has embraced the electronic format and used the technology to produce 'synthesised soap opera pop', as Sydney DJ Michael MD has deemed it. I also explore the reactions of subcultural participants to the mainstreaming and popularisation of the genre.

In any culture, there is a tendency to regard cultural elements which are different to the mainstream 'serious' culture as being potentially subversive and a threat to the *status quo*. Consequent to this is the clustering of individuals who are 'other' and who share an affinity for a non-traditional form of self-expression, lifestyle, art form or leisure activity. These groups are regarded by the mainstream, as filtered through the popular media, as being on the fringes of society. For some groups, such marginalisation is empowering, fostering creativity, intellectual debate and self esteem. For others, marginalisation may have negative consequences, such as accentuating a sense of isolation and depression. Subcultures arise in response to marginalisation, where a group finds that sharing an experience benefits its members in some way.

Marginalisation of the electronic music art form has resulted in its adherents forming subcultures. As popular electronic music is a relatively recent phenomenon²⁹, based in the extension of analogue to digital and in the range of synthesisers and computer applications available, it has been regarded with suspicion and some hostility by those adherents of more accepted music

²⁹Experimental electronic music was first encountered via the *avant garde* of the 1950s and 1960s, created by musicians/artists such as Bob Moog, Dick Hyman and Karl Stockhausen.

forms. This is scarcely an unusual situation. Historically, new genres of music have been regarded with distaste by those fond of the more established genres. Yet, for many years, one of the foci of electronic music's adherents has been to keep it in society's margins.

Ensuring that the music remains subcultural, rather than mainstream, is one of the key concerns of subcultural participants. Once the music is available in the public domain, it is deemed commercial, or to have sold out, and receives a level of contempt reserved solely for music and musicians who have transgressed the boundaries of their tribe. It is usually at this point that it becomes available to clubbers. Those in the dance scene, however, are located in what may be viewed as a half way position, often hearing the new music and providing an appreciative audience which then leads to the music achieving commercial viability.

mystery (code 16)

subcultural appropriation

While the music remained in the private sphere, subject to rumour and conjecture, it possessed the ability to intimidate and concern those outside the electronic music subcultures. Rumours of its association with illegal drugs, together with a general public inability to understand why young people choose to listen to deafeningly loud driving music at all night dance parties in non-standard venues combined to keep the music and its associated lifestyles underground. Media recognition of the electronic music phenomenon and its financial viability legitimised dance music and pasteurised it so it became fit for public consumption, to the horror of those in the 'scene'. Suddenly the boundaries had shifted and elements of the subculture were being sanitised and adopted by the mainstream. Examples of this mainstreaming may be heard in the many 1990s media commercials which sport an electronic music backing track.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s in Melbourne, new community, underground and student radio stations broadcast electronic music and for the first time in Melbourne the music became

available to the wider community. The many local underground electronic music producers were suddenly supported by a popular youth interest in electronic music, heightened by the availability of successful international electronica in specialist record shops. Perhaps the most significant indicator of the shift from subcultural to mainstream came in 1995, when Robert Miles' *Children*, a gentle rave/trance track written to be performed at the end of a rave and thus reduce the number of high speed car accidents on Italy's roads after raves, was picked up by the ABC's nationwide youth radio station, Triple J, followed by Melbourne's popular commercial stations, Fox fm and Triple M. Shortly after, two commercial television stations used the track as background music for their *Ivan Milat Backpacker Murders* docudramas. Evidence that the track had gone 'mainstream' could also be found in the Top 40 singles chart.



Horrified at the commercialisation of 'their' music, local electronic musicians began to further explore the boundaries of their art form. Bearing in mind that commercial music rarely involves industrial and experimental sounds, Melbourne musicians such as Black Lung and UPC continued their experiments with the ever-expanding technology available in an attempt to limit the mainstream access to the music and to keep it underground.

From 1993 onwards Melbourne's weekly street press issued electronic music oriented liftouts such as the Zebra liftout in *InPress* and the Play liftout in *Beat*. With articles written by DJs and promoters, the street press did more to raise the level of community awareness of the dance music industry than any other popular medium. To the community radio stations like 3PBS and

3RRR, were added Kiss 90fM Melbourne, which began its first 30 day test transmission in 1994, playing music popular with the dance scene, and Hitz fM which focused on dance music for the teenage market. Melbourne's airwaves were broadcasting purely electronic music for the first time.

flagship (blu peter)

mainstreaming

White (1993:ix) suggests that:

It is the location of young people within the social structure which largely determines whether particular group activities will be socially acceptable or not, the subject of close social regulation or not, or the object of sensationalist media attention or not...The stigmatising language of the media, and the expressed concerns of the powerful with maintaining public order, should make us especially aware of the pitfalls, dilemmas and responsibilities associated with isolating this or that 'subculture' for particular research attention.

Electronic music's perceived subcultural rejection of Western society's expectations resulted in intensified policing and social control, as evidenced by the British government's adoption of the Criminal Justice Act. The CJA was the first law ever to identify and prohibit a specific form of popular music: that which is "wholly or partly characterised by a succession of repetitive beats". Before the CJA was passed, three huge Advance Party demonstrations were held against it, one ending in a bloody riot, and for the first time the associated subcultures developed a political conscience.

In Australia, governmental reaction to electronica and its associated subcultures was far more moderate and any changes tended to be in response to media pressure³⁰. In Queensland and northern New South Wales it is not unusual for police to close down outdoor parties on suspicion of the presence of drugs. I have been to a number of parties in these states which have been

³⁰ A copy of the NSW Dance party code of practice may be found in appendix 3. This was originally developed by police and promoters in South Australia and has been adopted for voluntary use in all Australian states.

closed down around 12:30am³¹. Victorian and South Australian police have a far more relaxed approach to outdoor parties and have been known to open up alternative routes to the parties when floods have closed the principal access road³². The experience of British subcultural youth in relation to the CJA has been a lesson for their Australian counterparts, who are suspicious of any governmental attempts to establish laws surrounding parties where electronic music is played.

³¹This was during 1996, when there was a government enquiry into police corruption in NSW. One of the investigations had focused on Gosford, where seized illegal drugs had allegedly vanished from the safe at the police station and been replaced with a powder substitute. Gosford was not far from the party locations and the feeling amongst the participants was that the local police were making a point of how uncorrupted they were.

³²It may be that there is a link between the supportive approach of police in Victoria and the court case following the drug raid on Melbourne's Tasty nightclub in 1994, but one cannot be sure. It is also possible that the relaxed approach may be due to pressure from a number of Victorian politicians whose children are heavily involved in the electronic music subcultures. Again, this is speculation.

McGuigan (1992:101) states:

Few original and different subcultures emerged...until the acid house phenomenon of the late 1980s. It is an irony of youth culture that acid house, premised on 'fun', signified by primary colours and ecstatic dancing, should have become a major focus of 'trouble'...It had striking similarities to pre-1980s subcultures, at first mysterious and strange, an object of myth and speculation, to some extent deliberately cultivated. Combining lightly hedonist and mildly puritanical elements, acid house seemed to issue little threat, except for the illegality of warehouse parties and noise in the shires, yet it was met with a social control response comparable to the fate of spectacular subcultures back in the 1960s. In the autumn of 1988, the tabloid press whipped up a panic concerning the use of psychedelic drugs and, in the summers of 1989 and 1990, police took action against parties on the outskirts of London and elsewhere...The acid house phenomenon and Hebdige's own work indicate why the class struggle model of *Resistance through Rituals* was too cumbersome and unworkable for analysing the complexities of youth cultural meanings.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the electronic music subcultures appeared threatening to authorities as they enabled participants to realise their own potential in a sphere outside the culturally approved realms of school, work and leisure arenas such as pubs, sportsfields and concerts. Participants were exposed to illicit recreational drugs and the abuse of some prescription drugs, the use of which was automatically a cause for concern. Additionally there was doubtless a sub-text in the media outrage, resting in the fact that electronic music events frequently operate outside the law, outside taxation guidelines and outside state controls.

In exploring a possible reason for the extreme UK backlash, McRobbie (1993:424) suggests that:

It is the extent to which [subcultural]...forms and practices exist and take shape outside the controlling and defining gaze of otherwise more powerful... which also accounts for the feelings of anxiety, fear and powerlessness experienced by conventional 'moral guardians'... Sociologists have described and explained the power of youth subcultures as resistance, and the social reaction to these phenomena as 'moral panics'.

Given the appropriate conditions, a subculture may either remain a subculture, static, with no real influence over society as a whole, or may gain a degree of political influence, providing a means for the subcultural members to assert their views and engender a dynamic which may directly or indirectly affect their social condition. The potential political power inherent in a subculture should not be underestimated, as it is through recognition of common goals that influence may be

wielded to realise those goals³³. Participants in the electronic music industry have obtained political influence through consultation with politicians, police, youth workers, health workers and community groups and popular influence through the alternative media, active participation in youth-related activities and ensuring the demands of its target audience are influenced, anticipated and met.



In the Melbourne local street press, the 200th issue (7 August 1997) of Zebra included an article by writer/DJ Andrez, who wrote about the path of electronic music in Melbourne over the years from 1993 to 1997. In reviewing the key factors which led to the increasing popularity of electronic music, Andrez points to the strong live independent band subculture which had existed in Melbourne since the 1970s. Whilst the independent bands rarely, if ever, delved into the potentials offered by electronic music, their healthy presence meant that there was an ideal infrastructure for allowing the electronic music/artist to be heard. With excellent PA systems available, sound friendly venues and lighting companies with a wide experience of live act support, the framework was there for the taking.

Melbourne's electronic music artists took full advantage of the scope on offer and, with the extension of their activities into the public arena, electronic music somehow achieved a degree of popularity undreamed of. The experimental fringe of the early 1990s has given rise to a large

³³ An example of this is the establishment of Melbourne's first "100% Dance" radio station, Kiss 90fM, which, at time of writing, is in its thirteenth test transmission and seeking government approval of a full-time broadcasting licence. Kiss fM has developed from a 1992 idea conceived by a couple of members of Melbourne's dance music subculture into a growing media influence, reaching out into the wider community and extending the interests of its supporting subculture.

number of local live electronic acts, spawning independent (electronic) record labels, a large number of producers and DJs and a strong electronic music scene³⁴. Yet, whilst the live acts remain underground, supported by a loyal base, there is growing demand for compilation CDs of 'Club Anthems'. Given that the target market for popular compilation CDs is those under twenty years of age, it is immediately apparent that the dance music phenomenon has hit the big time, with massive commercial appeal³⁵.

So, what are the implications of this for the dance music industry, the participants, the wider dominant culture and for the artists themselves? As Andrez states himself, "There's a musical renaissance happening out there - but perhaps not as most people would know it at this stage, let alone recognise. Things change." Perhaps it's time for the purists to let go and accept that strong subcultures, at some stage, will breach the divide between subculture and mainstream. Unfortunately, this transition from subculture to mainstream does not appear to have been adequately theorised in subculture theory and it may be necessary to source theories of commodification in order to sufficiently account for the change.

From my personal experience I have found that, for the dance music and associated electronic music industry, the implications are good, from a financial viewpoint. The popularity of dance music is on the rise, which means increased sales and expansion of the listening (dancing) public's tastes. This in turn has positive implications for DJs and musicians, as there is money available to support them.³⁶ Sought after 'white labels' (pre-release records) are sent from the record companies to DJs, to be played in clubs. In return for the 'free' music, DJs return their impression of the track to the company, together with an indication of how it was received on the dance floor. This information enables the record companies to decide how many pressings to run

³⁴ The majority of Melbourne musicians I know are keen to have their music released and to reap the financial rewards.

³⁵ This rise in popularity is correlated with dance music videos being featured on MTV, Miss Shirley Bassey joining with electronic musicians The Propellerheads on their latest album and the use of electronica in the majority of Top 40 singles.

³⁶ Record companies will typically specialise in a particular genre of music, leading to the association of subcultural taste markets with particular record labels.

of the record, where to release it and so forth. The musician is happy because their music is being released and they may have a contract to produce more music, the company is happy because they save money on market appraisal and the DJs are happy because they get a free record (minimum retail value \$15.00) to add to their collections, and perhaps the chance to be the first in Melbourne to play a particular track. The downside is that some artists do not receive credit for their work and are ripped off by the bigger companies.

The explosion of support for electronic music has meant a correlatory explosion of retail outlets selling the vinyl and CDs, resulting in job creation. For many of Melbourne's DJs, working late into the night during the week, record shops are an easy gig. They can work part-time hours, obtain discount on the music and equipment they buy and advise other music aficionados as to what record label or music type might suit them. Of course there are other related positions DJs may hold as their 'day jobs', whether it be A & R at one of the record companies, promoter and tour organiser for international acts, journalist for the street press or station manager at Kiss 90fM.

got to have (party pumpers)

subcultural response

For those who are the consumers, and have been since the late 1980s, the rising popularity of dance culture and its music represents a double edged sword. On the one hand participants view it as terrific that others can participate in the joy and the sharing of electronic music and its associated subcultures, but on the other hand it has meant a huge shift in the economic, emotional, mental and physical representation of the dance scene. As more people came to know about the dance culture, significant changes became evident. In 1988 the scene in Melbourne was tiny, with fewer than 1000 people taking part. Consequently the parties were small, private, free or cheap and extremely open, with much sharing and hugging, highly pure drugs and an emphasis on alternative spiritualities. Ten years later, the difference is startling.

Electronic dance music is popular music, played in nightclubs across the country and around the world. Big parties with international guests are typically held at Shed 16 at Melbourne's Victoria Dock, attracting upwards of 10,000 people³⁷. The parties can be huge, very public and subject to government controls. People are far more guarded with others, preferring to remain with their friends and perhaps meet one or two new people over the course of the night. Tickets can cost up to \$90 each, with ecstasy tablets of very dubious purity costing up to \$80 each for those who try to buy them from someone at the party³⁸. The emphasis on alternative spiritualities has mutated into an emphasis on hedonism and selfishness, with the future left to look after itself, although amongst those who have seen the changes from 1990 onwards there is still that emphasis on self-awareness and seeking after truth.

Many friends, long-term participants in the dance scene, have remarked that they enjoy the private parties which are now re-emerging. With the original participants now in their late twenties and early thirties, they are financially able to hire a warehouse for a night and hold a private party, where the original direction of the dance scene may be revived. Of the 300 or so who attend, all enjoy an atmosphere where they know everyone else, at least by face, and where they are unlikely to be challenged on the basis of gender, sexuality, appearance or age.

The rising popularity of dance music has implications for the wider dominant culture too, which may not be evident to the casual observer just yet but will be in ten years' time. A large proportion of television and radio advertising uses electronic music as its backing music. Computers give people access to technology, the same technology which is fundamental to the production of electronic music. Australians take more prescription drugs now than ever before and are taking more non-prescription drugs as well. It would be difficult to locate an individual over 20 years of age, but under 50, who had never been exposed to one of the illegal drugs. Alcohol consumption in nightclubs is dropping, and has been since dance music gained popularity, according to

³⁷ There could be four or five other parties on the same night, playing at Melbourne University, Festival Hall, Mt. Disappointment in the bush, the Melbourne Showgrounds and the Palace Entertainment Complex, which would attract another 10,000 people easily. Such a night was New Year's Eve 1997/98.

nightclub owners I know. Sales of bottled water are up and most clubs charge between \$2.50-\$3.00 for bottled water. They have to, in order to try and make a profit over the bar³⁹. The impact of the electronic music subcultures on people's leisuretime activities is likely to offer radically different alternatives to traditionally sanctioned forms of relaxation.

everyone's future (pablo gargano)

the absence of mainstreaming theories

Theorising mainstreaming, Hebdige's work (1979:94) suggests that essential to the signification of subcultures is their portrayal by the media, through which the subculture may be denounced, dismissed, valorised or made familiar. Through celebration of difference or via identification of the subculture as a social problem, the media encode the subculture, exposing it to the general public and defusing its potential for difference. The effect of this is incorporation of the subculture into the dominant social sphere. Under the guise of warning the mainstream of the potential disruptiveness of the subculture, the media frequently highlight the similarities between subcultural individuals and their peers in the mainstream, normalising the subculture and homogenising it for safe mass consumption. The lived reality of the subculture, however, may have little or no relationship to way in which it is portrayed and made safe by the media. Through defining the subculture in approved, familiar terms, the subculture is enfranchised and returned to the dominant social order.

Another means of repossessing the errant subculture is through commodification and exploitation of those signs which identify the subculture as being 'other'. Hebdige (1979:94) notes that codification of subcultural style frequently takes place via the fashion industry. Through their production on a large scale and their ease of access to the mainstream, the subcultural

³⁸ Standard price tends to be between \$40-50 for regular customers.

³⁹ Most clubbers know that alcohol and ecstasy don't mix, nor do alcohol and LSD. You can drink all the alcohol you want if you're on speed, but not feel an effect, and what's the point of spending a lot of money on alcohol if you don't feel tipsy?

signification of certain styles of clothing is lost and the subculture itself is subject to assimilation within the dominant social order. Moysey (1992:17) asserts that:

Subcultures have become a source of new markets for business. Subculture's fashion and style are turned into commodities by business and sold to people who identify with the look. Cultural rebellion is eventually co-opted by the very system it is rebelling against and sold back...the rebellion becomes purely a look or a sound: it's OK to have a rebellious haircut but it's not OK to have rebellious ideas.

Through the attempts of 'outsiders' and social commentators to locate the forms of expression associated with the music subculture within a societal framework, the underground has become institutionalised. Operating outside the dominant social structure lent the dance music underground a mystique, which (media) commentators set out to expose. Exposure led to popular curiosity, especially amongst those of an age with the young co-ordinators of underground events, resulting in increased attendance at underground parties and with subcultural style being adopted by those who were not subcultural participants⁴⁰.

DJs within the underground scene reacted in different ways⁴¹. Some DJs taught themselves more about the modes of production and entered the semi-commercial music production arena, often establishing their own record labels, whilst others embarked upon the sphere of promotion, arranging raves and dance parties and co-ordinating tour details for leading international DJs. Still others set up their own record shops and studios, employing DJ friends as their staff. There were also those who became protective of their initially small scene, refusing to become part of the money making machine and preferring to host private parties and write *avant garde* material in their bedrooms.

Similarly, the response of the gay and lesbian clubbing community was varied. After all, electronic dance music had originally been played in gay nightclubs and by gay or transgendered

⁴⁰ Cagle (1995:42) suggests that young people may adopt incorporated versions of subcultural attitude and style, yet not become victims of commercialism. These young people may take on a sense of otherness and engage in 'style wars' which represent resistance movements. In this way the participants actively create *bricolage* from their own lifestyle choices, as if to mock the dominant paradigm. These are the true descendants of the Situationists.

musicians. With its subcultural spread, there was an associated exchange of subcultural ideals and knowledge amongst the adherents of electronica. Elements of gay and lesbian subculture were incorporated into the other subcultures and were later commodified, whilst elements from the other subcultures were adopted by the gay and lesbian subculture⁴². The response of the gay and lesbian community appears to be divided three ways⁴³. Each of these levels of interaction between gays and lesbians and the straight community facilitates a similar level of cross-



subcultural exchange.

jus' a lil' dope (masters at work)

appropriating subcultural style

⁴¹ An example of a DJ who took advantage of the popular spread of electronica is Japanese techno DJ, Ken Ishii, who scored the music for the 1998 Winter Olympic Games, held in Nagano.

⁴² An example of this cross-subcultural exchange is the adoption of techno/rave music by the gay and lesbian clubbing community, and the adoption of 1970s remixes by the straight clubbing community.

⁴³ The first is rejection of the straight community, including those who are gay-friendly, on the grounds that they are trying to take over the gay community. Thus there are those who see this cross-subcultural exchange as threatening to the identity of the gay community. The second response is that of acceptance of the situation, but with little interaction with straight people. The third response is one of welcome, where members of the gay and lesbian community enjoy close friendships with straight people and sexuality is no longer a divisor.

One of the key indicators that a subculture is losing its subcultural nature is the adoption of subcultural styles by those in the parent culture. As aspects of punk style and Mod style were adopted by those who were not Mods or punks, so too have elements of electronic music subcultural style been adopted by those outside the subcultures. James (1996:241-242) suggests:

Disco, punk, and country and western subcultures in the 1970s each made music differently, as do rappers, techno new-agers and Riot Grrrls today, and some of their subcultural practices travel or are recreated in new forms. But corporate exploitations of all of them are constructed upon commodity recordings. Producing these as mass culture, they enforce the regime of commodity culture, and repress - though never completely - the various popular practices that create them.

This commodification of subcultures, James claims, acts to repress the subcultures from which the signs originated. An alternative explanation I would propose, is that the commodification of subcultures involves altering the subcultural experience to fit in with the experiences of the parent culture, thus irreparably changing the nature of the subculture. This transformation alienates the original adherents of the subculture and they abandon its tenets and traditions⁴⁴.

Cagle draws our attention to Clarke (1995:38), who recognises that Hebdige's focus solely on the innovation of original subcultures "...dismisses youth who may adopt subcultural trends by way of stylistic co-optation." Clarke argues that "those who embrace subcultural trends *after* the moment of incorporation should not be neglected (in subcultural analyses) because very few people have the privilege of joining an authentic subculture" and that the researcher should target the instant when a style appears either as an idea for imitating or as a commodity⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ The rave subculture in Melbourne was one of the first to be adopted by the parent culture, with its yellow acid smiley face iconography available on boxer shorts, ties and a variety of merchandise. Some of the original Melbourne ravers I know are now very anti-rave, accusing rave of selling out.

⁴⁵ Cagle states (1995:40-41) that:

Hebdige's theorization of the cycle leading from opposition to defusion is totalizing; the subculture is always rendered powerless as a result of the omnipotent process of conversion. In taking a more optimistic stance, I believe that in some instances subcultures fight real battles; they secure real spaces; they issue real threats - ones that actually make a difference. In the search for such instances, we need to examine more closely the perceived intentions of the subculture, thereby asking, What is going on beneath the surface? Thus we need to come to a clearer understanding about how the subculture makes sense to its own members. Most importantly, we need to determine the kinds of results that occur as the subculture's style splinters out into mainstream culture.

In order to determine the effects of stylistic appropriation on the subculture, it is necessary to focus on those elements which construct the subculture, the manner in which they are incorporated into the dominant culture and the effects of this on both the subculture and the parent culture. Unfortunately there appears to be little subcultural theory to account for this process and it may be necessary to employ theories of marketing and commodification to adequately explain the ramifications involved.

Cagle suggests (1995:41-42):

...aside from subcultural theory, no theoretical tradition in cultural studies provides an adequate account of non-mainstream youth...At the same time, subculture theory inadvertently maintains that mainstream youth is duped by media/commercial incorporation. Mainstream youth are thus conceptualized as being inauthentic because they are the ones most likely to provide the economic fuel that helps to ignite the defusion of original subcultures.



Conclusion

It appears that whilst all the subcultural theories discussed herein have advantages for exploring the electronic music subcultures in Melbourne, all also have disadvantages. The Birmingham School's model presupposes that spectacular subcultural participants are principally male, from a working class background and have a generation/class ideological conflict. Thus the Birmingham School posits that subcultures arise as a means of mediating this conflict. The Birmingham School fails to take into account issues of race and gender, nor does it account for less spectacular subcultures.

The work of the Birmingham School was rooted in Marxist analyses of class inequality. Marxist class analysis is not sufficient to explain how subcultures arise, but provides an explanation of the conditions which lead to class divisions. Further theorisation by neo Marxists such as Clarke and Moysey led to theories of rebellion and alienation, resulting in the arise of subcultures as a means for asserting control over one's environment.

Dick Hebdige's work with punks and Mods suggested that spectacular 'otherness' reassures the parent culture of its normality. Subcultures carry enough of the traits of the parent culture that these may be identified in an attempt to normalise the subculture. Hebdige focused on subcultural participants as *bricoleurs* , claiming that they reinterpreted everyday items and endowed them with new meaning, thus highlighting contradictions in the dominant ideology.

Loghurst's criticisms suggest that methodology is thin and that discussion of spectacular subcultures is superficial, hence the subculture is not assessed in its full context, nor is the rationale for its expression fully addressed. McGuigan supports this, warning that focusing on spectacular youth subcultures could lead to ignoring of equally important, but far less spectacular youth subcultures, resulting in a biased analysis of society.

Foucault's notion of power relationships provides us with an additional means of analysing subculture, as it provides a background of a power weave, within which power fluctuates. This provides us with the best model from which to examine the complexity of human relationships within the electronic music subcultures. It is precisely because it is highly complex that it is the best tool for subcultural analysis.

McRobbie reviews the subcultures existent in her locale at the time of writing and suggests that a key failure of the earlier work of subcultural theorists was the omission of questions such as:

...who was doing what? Where did the style come from? Where was it purchased, who was selling it to whom?...What were the social relations which informed the production of the subculture? What pre-existing skills were called upon to produce the graphics and the posters and even the music itself? (McRobbie 1993:411).

These are all questions about the production of practices and technologies.

Implications for future subcultures - cyberbodies/cyberpunk/cyberculture.

Areas for further study

- gender roles
- politicisation
- chemical generation
- technology explorations
- age limits

For further exploration: What is the theory behind the crossing over from subculture to mainstream? What are the signifiers that a subculture has been adopted by the dominant culture? What are the implications of this? For whom? What is a typical reaction to this? Why? Can a lifestyle remain subcultural once it has been embraced by the mainstream, or does it simply morph into another subculture altogether, retaining aspects of the original subculture but incorporating changes in order to achieve its own identity? (No - new 'bricoleurs' spring up elsewhere. Original participants drop out as it gets commodified and loses that which attracted them in the first place.) How may this be correlated with the rise of the original

subculture, having its own identity but sharing characteristics with the parent culture? Can a loose grouping of subcultures maintain its identity in the face of such changes? How may the dominant culture have to re-evaluate itself following the adoption of subcultural norms? Does ideological/commercial incorporation always operate in such a manner as to usurp the power of subcultural style? Explicitly identify the bricolage/detournment recontextualising agents as the developers/instigators of new styles (is this true?).

Archaeologists have discovered musical instruments while excavating sites linked to the earliest times of humankind. Music is an important part of our lives. Not only is it one of the widest known forms of entertainment and self expression, but studies have also shown that different genres of music elicit different responses from foetuses within the womb. It has been used as a means of communication and as a method of creating and maintaining cultural and social cohesion. (Jones:1992). Music has also been used as a tool for propaganda and more recently has become the focal point for popular culture.

Music is a vital element of youth culture. Without punk music, punk would be merely an aesthetic visual art form. Young people define themselves by and through the genres of music to which they listen. Youth subcultures are usually associated with a particular genre of music and associated identifiers may include apparel, language, accessories, leisure time activities and extent of compliance with customary social norms.

James (1996:240) states that "Since World War II, youth cultures in the anglophone West have created a series of subformations of popular music...up to contemporary rap, rave, grunge, industrial, techno, trance, and so on. Conversely, music and its attendant practices have been the largest single constituent in the production of post-war subcultures, the most powerful vocabulary for generational and other identities. Mostly these have been pioneered in the States and then exported, but other parts of the world have appropriated them in locally specific ways...Though generally continuous in their production of post-war cultural politics, the internal constitution of these youth cultures and their positions within the social formation as a whole have not been identical. The capitalist mode of musical production has been dominant all through, but it has not fully contained all other functions, and to some extent, musical subcultures have differently mobilized class, ethnic, gender, and age identities."

The following dissertation provides an Australian account of an Australian subcultural phenomenon, unlike any other experienced in the Australian context and directly linked to a wider Western subcultural trend. In examining this phenomenon, I have attempted to present it in its historical and sociological context, focussing on mediation of terminology to provide a clear and easily understood account of a genre of subcultures embraced by people ranging in age from 14 to 55.

This study examines the ways in which club, dance scene and rave subcultures have interacted with each other and with other subcultures to achieve a coherent political voice and a highly developed industry, with recognised status in the wider community. I focus particularly on these subcultures, as found in Melbourne, Australia, with reference to their manifestation elsewhere in Australia, Europe and the United States. Club, dance scene and rave subcultures are closely connected, being based around particular forms of electronic music, a lifestyle specific to the subculture and the cult of the DJ.

Definitions

For the purposes of this dissertation, I employ the following definitions (further definitions may be found in the Glossary):

Acid-House	a term used by the dominant culture to describe one of the genres of house music. Collins Dictionary defines it as “a dance music dominated by beat and bass line, created with synthesisers and digital sampling; popular in the late 1980s”
club	leisure space in an established dance venue, usually open at night, where patrons must fulfil certain criteria for entry
clubber	one who frequents a club
codification	rendering particular aspects of the subculture nonthreatening, so they lose their subcultural value and may be more readily adopted by the dominant culture
cult of the DJ	where clubbers or ravers attend an event with the aim of hearing a particular DJ

DJ	a disc jockey; one who plays electronic music, either on compact disc, vinyl record or digital audio tape
mainstream	the dominant culture. 'Mainstreaming' is defined as the adaptation of a particular aspect of a subculture for use by the dominant culture.
mixing	(referring to music) the attempt to make one piece of music blend seamlessly into another, through using two or more turntables, CD or DAT players
rave	leisure space in a unconventional dance venue or space. Usually a one-off event which features certain genres of dance music
raver	one who attends a rave
subculture	a distinct sub-group within a dominant culture, members of which have particular belief systems and similar values and principles
track	a piece of music

The following dissertation explores the reasons for the rapid dissemination and popularity of dance music and the associated subcultures, its marginalisation by government and media and the industry's subsequent achievement of political and popular power in the wider community. The dance music industry has obtained political influence through consultation with politicians, youth workers and community groups and popular influence through the alternative media, active participation in youth-related activities and ensuring the demands of its target audience are met and anticipated.

Through undertaking the initial research for the project, it became evident that there are very few studies of Australian subcultures, and almost no studies of the relatively recently appearing subcultures associated with electronic music. The few studies of subculture in the Australian context focus on particular cultural practices within particular social or institutional settings and tend to be male oriented. Referring to youth studies in Australia, White (1993:vii) states that "...for all the talk about youth culture or youth subcultural theory, there has actually been relatively little published material 'on the ground' which describes the experiences and everyday life of different groups of young people in subcultural terms."

In pursuing an understanding of the differences between rave, dance scene and club cultures and the reasons for the perceived division between the music genres and lifestyles. I have noted factors common to each and indicated the nature of any differences and the perceived reasons for these differences. I have also examined other historic subcultures and identified their similarities to, and differences from, the club, rave and dance scene subcultures.

Through studying past and current theories of popular culture and subculture, I have identified theories consistent and inconsistent with practices within the Australian rave, club and dance scene subculture(s). These theories support my analysis of the history of the electronic music scene in Australia and its current trajectory.

There are many different genres of electronic music, which originated, some argue, with the birth of house music in San Francisco in the early 1980s. Others believe that electronic music was pioneered in Goa, India, and was disseminated thence throughout the English speaking world. Goa was viewed as a latter-day Prague; a place to which the disillusioned could escape and live a Bohemian lifestyle and, as such, a wide variety of artists and alternative-thinkers made their way to Goa in the 1980s. For the purposes of this dissertation, the various genres of electronic music will be referred to as dance music and their origins will be considered divers.

This study discusses the 'mainstreaming' and codification of the subcultures, by which I mean the way in which subcultural practices and fashions have been stereotyped and particular influences adopted for sale to the non-subcultural members of the market. Directly related to this is my study of the extent to which popular music has embraced the electronic format and used the technology to produce 'electropop'. I have also explored the reactions of the subcultural communities involved to the mainstreaming and popularisation of the genre/s.

One of the most unusual features of the electronic music oriented subcultures is the age phenomenon. Whilst principally adopted by people aged from their late teens to their early thirties, it is becoming increasingly common for people from a wide age range to be actively involved in electronic music events. This is not a recent occurrence, but dates back to the origins of electronic music oriented activities.

In writing the following dissertation it was necessary to combine personal experience with the equally subjective lived experience of members of the rave, dance and club subcultures. Research materials included radio, newspaper and magazine journalism, which enabled the subcultures to be placed in a wider Australian cultural context. There is enormous scope for further research activity and I have suggested several areas in which this activity could take place.

Other issues which are briefly discussed in the course of this dissertation include the relationship of the Australian government's reactions to laws passed by the British government, illegal drug taking and misuse of prescription drugs, the Australian Mafia connection, specific clothing

fashions, the integration of gay and lesbian community trends into other subcultures and the interest of big business in subcultural activities.

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glossary

Acid-House	a term used by the dominant culture to describe one of the genres of house music. Collins Dictionary defines it as "a dance music dominated by beat and bass line, created with synthesisers and digital sampling; popular in the late 1980s"
club	leisure space in an established dance venue, usually open at night, where patrons must fulfil certain criteria for entry
club subculture	the principally (and sometimes aggressively) heterosexual mainstream nightclub patrons and lifestyle. Age range tends to be between 16-24 years.
clubber	one who frequents a nightclub
codification	rendering particular aspects of the subculture nonthreatening, so they lose their subcultural value and may be more readily adopted by the dominant culture
cult of the DJ	where clubbers or ravers regularly and passionately attend events with the aim of hearing a particular DJ play her/his music. A form of DJ worship.
dance music	any of the many styles and genres of electronic music, usually played in a club or at a rave
dance scene	the gay friendly clubbing fraternity, principally aged between 24-40 years
DAT	Digital Audio Tape
decks	record turntables
DJ	a disc jockey; one who plays electronic music, either on compact disc, vinyl record or digital audio tape
electronic music culture	the industry, media, patrons and participants in the electronic-music oriented subcultures
electronica	any genre of electronic music
electropop	late 1980s usage of electronic instruments to create popular music
ferals	a subculture of the dance scene
folk devils	any stereotypical, 'socially constructed' cultural types identified as socially threatening by other members of society
mainstream	the dominant culture. Mainstreaming is defined as the way in which subcultural practices and fashions are stereotyped and particular influences adopted for sale to the non-subcultural members of the market
mixing	(referring to music) the attempt to make one piece of music blend seamlessly into another, through using two or more turntables, CD or DAT players

modernity	the ideas and styles associated with the modern age
popular culture	the practices, likes and wants of the people
postmodernism	theories pertaining to the change from modernity to the cultural and ideological configuration taken to have replaced or be replacing modernity
rave	leisure space in a unconventional dance venue or space. Usually a one-off event which features certain genres of dance music
raver	one who leads a rave lifestyle, usually aged between 14-24.
society	a self-perpetuating human grouping occupying a relatively bounded territory, possessing its own more or less distinctive culture and institutions. This dissertation focuses on Western society, being the cultural norms common to Europe, the United States and Australasia
subculture	defined in the Collins Dictionary of Sociology (1995) as any system of beliefs, values and norms which is shared in and actively participated in by an appreciable minority of people within a particular culture. The relationship of the subculture to the so-called dominant culture has been identified as one of subordination and relative powerlessness. Power relations are therefore an important dimension of any sociological consideration of subcultures.
track	a piece of music
youth culture	the subcultural features surrounding youth as a social category, including distinctive fashions and tastes, social relationships centred on peers and friendship groups rather than family, relative centrality of leisure rather than work, challenge to adult values and a degree of classlessness in leisure tastes and behaviour

* most definitions are obtained from the Collins Dictionary of Sociology 2nd ed 1995.

Appendix 2

sounds of a subculture

To hear the sounds of a subculture, appendix 2, please listen to the audio tape. This tape has been mixed by Melbourne DJ Peter Pardy and contains house, hard house and techno tracks from 1996 and 1997.

Appendix 3

New South Wales Dance Parties Code of Practice

Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to assist promoters to hold professionally organised, legal and hassle free Dance parties in suitable locations, conducted in a responsible manner, which are safe for patrons, and do not disturb neighbouring properties.

The Code of Practice aims to set standards which Dance parties must meet. The Code also aims to help promoters to work with the Police Service and local Councils to identify good venues for Dance parties, and then get the approvals and consents needed under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act) and the Local Government Act (LG Act) to hold the Dance party.

The Code uses the term 'dance' party to include a wide variety of parties, including 'rave' parties. Dance parties are legitimate forms of entertainment, but must be run professionally and safely.

Dance parties usually involve:

- an indoor venue with a large open space suitable for dancing, but may be held outdoors;
- 50 to several thousand people;
- late start and late finish, possibly into the following day;
- dance (usually techno) music with disc jockeys, although there can be live music;
- a laser light show;
- young people as patrons;
- being called Dance or Rave parties;
- a commercial venture;
- a charge for admission.

In this Code the term 'promoter' is used to generally refer to all people who plan, set up and run Dance parties, such as promoters, organisers and managers.

Promoters have a moral and legal obligation to act reasonably, including planning, to avoid risks they could reasonably expect to occur, to ensure the health and safety of patrons at their events.

This paper is issued for public comment. Public responses are welcome on the content, wording or layout of the document, and should be forwarded to the NSW Ministry for Police.

1. Planning For A Dance Party

Local Council

Promoters planning a Dance party should begin by talking to the local Council responsible for the area they want to hold the party in. Promoters need to discuss with the local Council the planning controls which apply to the location where they wish to hold the party. The discussion should focus on whether the planning controls permit Dance parties, with or without Council consent, or prohibit them. Council can provide advice on the process of gaining the consents and approvals which may be required, particularly if the Dance party is held indoors. This is an important step in identifying the right venue for the party. More details on this process are provided in Section 5 and Section 6.

Police

The Police should be consulted soon after promoters first identify a venue for the Dance party which Council will accept. Early discussion on details of the Dance party must take place with the local Patrol Commander of the Police Station closest to the planned venue. In any case, the Police Service must be contacted at least 40 days before the Dance party is expected to start.

The Police should also be notified when Council has given consent to hold the Dance party. A photocopy of the Council approval must be posted or sent by facsimile to the local Police Station.

Early discussions with the Police Service about the intended party helps the Police Service plan to assist promoters, for example:

- to enable the Police to make a proper and speedy response if unforeseen problems or emergencies
- develop at the Dance party, to secure the safety of the promoters and patrons;
- to help minimise community disruption, such as organising traffic to help patrons get to and from the Dance party;
- advising the Police of Council consent to hold the party will stop Police arriving at the Dance party to close it down, in the belief that the party is occurring illegally without Council consent;
- to provide advice on security arrangements (including on-site inspection);
- to provide a back up to the Dance party's security arrangements.

Keep a copy of the local Police Station telephone number handy for emergencies.

Fire Brigades

The NSW Fire Brigades or the Rural Fire Service, where appropriate, must be informed at least 14 days before the event. This contact is very important for the safety of patrons if the Dance party is to be held in premises such as a warehouse, factory or temporary structure.

In case of fire emergencies ring telephone number 000, not the local Fire Station.

Ambulance Services

Promoters must notify the Ambulance Service's District Office 21 to 14 days before the Dance party. This may be done by facsimile or mail. A local District Inspector will then meet with promoters to make arrangements for clear passage for ambulance vehicles to gain access into the venue, including access by ambulance officers to the first aid post; the Security Controller to make sure that any ambulance called is met on arrival and clear instructions are given about access and casualties. In the case of multiple casualties, security staff must cordon off the affected area to allow ambulance personnel free access to treat and remove casualties.

Any Dance party attended by 10,000 patrons or more must have an ambulance in full time attendance, with an additional ambulance for every extra 10,000 patrons. The promoter must pay for the cost of this service, and must pay before the event.

The NSW Health Department, Health Services Functional Area Coordinator, must also be informed 21-14 days before the event, so that they can also plan ahead to arrange help if a health emergency occurs at the Dance party.

In case of a health emergency telephone 000.

Communication with Promoter

The promoter or his/her agent must be contactable at all times by the local Council and Police before and during the event. A mobile telephone is useful for this role. This contact person must be responsible for the event and have authority to order the venue to be evacuated in an emergency.

Parking

There should be adequate parking so that neighbouring properties are not disturbed by vehicles visiting the venue.

Local Councils are responsible for parking and with early notice, extra facilities may be organised, for example, car parking stations remaining open for extended periods. Access to venues should not be by roads which pass through quiet suburban streets.

Transport

If public transport is available, the event should coincide with public transport times.

The promoter should make sure that transport is available to get patrons to and from the venue. The promoter should talk to the local public transport providers to advise on expected numbers of patrons and on arrival/departure times, so that more buses, trains etc., can be arranged to meet the extra number of passengers, especially at the end of the party. All private bus routes in the Sydney - Central Coast - Newcastle - Wollongong area are on the internet on www.businfo.com.au. A person may locate, by suburb, all bus routes and bus companies who operate through that suburb. The State Transit Authority and private bus companies can provide quotes to deliver charter services. The cost of a charter service can be included in the ticket price, so that cash fare transactions are eliminated and the cost is spread over all of the patrons. Bus charter enquiries should be directed to the local bus company or to:

State Transit Authority of NSW - level 29, 100 Miller Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060. Telephone (02) 92455 777

The Bus and Coach Association of NSW - 27 Villiers Street, North Parramatta, NSW 2151. Telephone (02) 9630 8655

For rural areas it may also be a good idea for patrons to camp overnight. If this option is chosen, extra conditions may be set by the local Council.

Tickets

Ticketing arrangements

Money for advance ticket sales received by venue operators or independent booking outlets should be held by them in trust to cover refunds if the performance is cancelled.

Patrons should be entitled to a full refund or ticket exchange option if the:

- main attraction/event is cancelled or re-scheduled;
- main attraction/star performer(s) is cancelled and substitute arranged.

Conditions of Entry

The promoter could set up signs at the Dance party entry points, or print on the tickets, that patrons will be refused entry, or will be made to leave the Dance party, if they are intoxicated by alcohol or another drug, or attempt to sell, deal or distribute an illicit drug (or if they are under 18 at Dance parties aimed at adults).

Entrance by ticket only

Most venues are only allowed to hold a certain number of people, and overcrowding can be dangerous. A good way to avoid overcrowding is to allow entry only to people with a pre-paid ticket.

Thought could be given to issuing tickets in a form that makes losing them more difficult, such as in the form of arm bands.

Water

An adequate and safe water supply must always be available for fire fighting, hygiene and for dousing heated patrons during summer events. Dousing should be in a specific area and only on request.

Dehydration is a major source of health problems at Dance parties. Water must always be provided at Dance parties. Tap drinking water must always be provided free of charge, and must be available for indoor Dance parties. For areas where tap water is not available for patrons to drink, such as at some outdoor Dance parties, bottled water must be made available. Where bottled water is provided, the cost of providing the bottled water is to be included into the ticket price to help eliminate cash transactions and to encourage its consumption.

Dance parties will not be approved, or will be cancelled if in progress, if the tap water is turned off before or during the event, or if water is not provided.

Food and drinks must only be available in unbreakable containers (no glass or crockery).

Insurance

Promoters must make sure that patrons are covered by a comprehensive public liability insurance policy, and that the building is adequately insured. Policy holders must be sure that their policy conditions cover this type of event.

Noise

Noise pollution has been a major problem with previous Dance parties. Some Dance parties have resulted in noise complaints from residents 10 kilometres away from the party. This kind of extreme noise has often meant that the Police have had to close Dance parties down. It is difficult to stipulate a maximum allowable noise output as this will vary with the venue conditions and the distance to neighbouring residents. The way the speakers are placed has a critical effect on the noise output. Speakers should be positioned to ensure minimum disruption to residential areas.

Generally, noise levels of 35dB(A) at any neighbouring residential area including camping areas (unless the camping area has been created for event patrons) are not a nuisance. Noise levels on

the floor need to be limited to about 95dB(A). Each venue will have its own individual requirements. Noise restrictions also become more strict after midnight.

Promoters must talk with the local Council to find out what noise restrictions will apply to particular events and venues. If the Dance party is to be held on a licensed premise, promoters must also talk to the Department of Gaming and Racing.

Smoke Machines

Smoke making machines must not be used in any way that results in limited visibility, particularly to the extent that it would make evacuation difficult.

Fireworks

Fireworks can be used at Dance parties if permits are obtained from Workcover NSW before purchase and use, and fireworks guidelines are followed. It is strongly recommended that a General Permit Holder be hired to organise the fireworks for Dance parties. A General Permit Holder is authorised to purchase and set off fireworks and can make all the arrangements needed with Workcover NSW, local Council etc. When hiring a General Permit Holder, be prepared with details such as the number of patrons attending, whether the venue is indoor or outdoor and the size of the venue.

For details contact WorkCover NSW, Dangerous Goods, 400 Kent Street, Sydney, telephone (02) 9370 5000.

Toilet Cleaning

Toilets must be kept clean and serviceable during the event. For events longer than four hours, arrangements need to be made to ensure that toilets are kept clean and resupplied with toilet paper. Where portable chemical toilets are used, pumpouts need to be arranged as part of the hiring contract.

Dance and Rave

Promoters are encouraged to use the name 'Dance party' rather than 'Rave party'. The term 'rave' has a negative and pro-drug reputation, and the image it reflects will not help in getting the needed approvals and consents.

Clean Up

It is the promoter's responsibility to liaise with the local Council and building owner to make sure that the venue and surrounding areas are left clean and tidy. Clean-ups should be completed within 24 hours of the event's conclusion.

Needle and Syringe disposal

Needle and syringe disposal is becoming a problem at entertainment venues. It is recommended that cleaning staff be trained in the dangers of used syringes and that needle disposal containers be used for collecting used needles and syringes. Cleaning staff should be educated on the advantages of being immunised against Hepatitis B.

Needle disposal containers (or sharps containers) come in different sizes and are available in the metropolitan area from most medical supply wholesalers, local Councils or Health Department Needle and Syringe Exchange outlets. Some container suppliers also offer a disposal service. In country areas, containers may be available from hospitals.

When collecting and disposing of needles and syringes, the following procedures are recommended:

- when collecting needles and syringes, it is best to wear heavy duty gloves or to use a brush and pan or tongs;
- avoid touching the needle with your fingers or hands;
- pick up the used needle and syringe by the blunt end, away from the point;
- never try to replace the protective cover of the needle, if the needle is exposed;
- bring the needle disposal container to the needle and syringe, never carry the needle to the container;
- place the needle disposal container on a firm surface;
- put the needle and syringe in an approved needle disposal container with a well-secured lid. (If you do not have an approved container, rigid plastic containers with lids are the next best option eg., a plastic bottle with a screw top lid. Do not use glass which may break or aluminium cans which may be squashed);
- make sure the container is tightly sealed and put the sealed container in a rubbish bin;
- if you have a needle disposal bin to collect needle disposal containers, seal and dispose of the bin following the arrangements or recommendations of the supplier.

Needlestick Injuries

Cleaning staff must be educated on the steps to follow should they be pricked or scratched with a discarded needle.

The main concern with needlestick injuries is the possibility of Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C infection.

A person who is pricked or scratched with a discarded needle has only a very small risk of being infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) from blood in the needle.

Tetanus spores which live in the soil may also cause infections if they get into the body through broken skin caused by a discarded needle.

What do you do if you have a needlestick injury?

- Wash the area gently with soap and running water as soon as possible. Stronger detergents are not recommended as they may damage or remove skin from around the wound.
- Apply an antiseptic and sterile dressing, if needed.
- Report the injury to your supervisor who must keep a record of the incident.
- Contact your local doctor or hospital emergency department as soon as possible.
- Contact the New South Wales 24 hour needlestick injury hotline on 1 800 804 823.
- Medical tests may be done to see if you are already protected from Hepatitis B. If not, a course of vaccinations may be given. This will be most effective if begun within 24 hours following the injury.
- (Baseline blood tests may be recommended to establish whether you have these viruses or not. This is for compensation purposes. If offered, it is your choice whether to have these tests or not.)
- If you are not vaccinated against tetanus, this should be done immediately.

- Any medical treatment will be based on the nature of the injury.
- Antibiotics may be given as a protection against other infections.
- Do not save the needle and syringe. The needle and syringe should be disposed of safely, as explained in
- the section headed 'Needle and Syringe Disposal' above.

2. Security

Dance Party Security

Security to control crowds is required at all large public gatherings. Experience shows that Dance party crowds are not usually aggressive. Also, hysteria and crushing do not usually occur. The most common problem is dehydration. Distressed patrons must be escorted to the first aid station for medical attention as soon as possible.

Security staff should be hired at the ratio of one per 150 patrons for these events. An attempt should be made to hire male and female security staff if possible.

If holding an under 18s Dance party, check whether the security staff being hired have experience in supervising a younger crowd.

Security for Dance parties is primarily the control of crowds to:

- remove or refuse entry, to any person intoxicated by alcohol or other drug use, showing aggressive or anti-social behaviour, or persons trying to bring drugs into, or sell or distribute drugs at, the Dance party;
- avoid personal injury due to crushing, overcrowding and unruly or violent behaviour;
- enable injured or distressed patrons to be identified and moved to safety or a first aid post;
- preventing overloading of structures whether or not for spectator use, including seating stands, advertising
- hoarding, stages, lighting and sound mixing towers;
- keep all exits, gangways to exits, and vehicle entrances, clear at all times;
- assist in evacuating the venue in emergencies.

Security Staff

Security staff are licensed to protect persons or property, including the patrolling protecting and guarding of property. For Dance parties, this primarily requires directing and/or controlling people.

There are two basic types of crowd control:

Passive

Where staff do not normally come into direct contact with patrons, such as ticket collectors, ushers, parking attendants.

Active

Where staff are in direct physical contact to control crowds and unruly behaviour, such as bouncers, door attendants, security guards, etc.

Active security staff for crowd control must:

- be properly licensed under the Security (Protection) Industry Act;
- be fit and physically active;
- be over 18 years of age;
- have good communication skills (the cornerstone of good crowd management)
- have basic training in fire fighting;
- have basic training in evacuation procedures;
- have a basic knowledge in first aid and have the ability to recognise distress;
- have some knowledge of self-defence and how to control violent or unruly behaviour and intoxicated persons;
- know their limitations on removing patrons and refusing entry to patrons;
- know lawful search techniques.

Equipment Required

Security staff members must:

- be able to be easily identified. Unique identification must be formally issued at each event so that
- security staff can be easily identified from the patrons;
- be individually identified by a number on their uniform;
- have a torch if the event is held at night;
- have communication equipment that is effective under noisy concert conditions;
- have noise protection.

Records and Plans

The promoter should maintain a register of the names and identifying number of all security staff. This list will enable the promoter and the Police to identify unauthorised or unlicensed security persons, and to identify security staff involved in a complaint. One person should be chosen as the Security Controller to be in charge of all the security staff.

Each security staff member should be given a written summary of all they are expected to know and do, including an evacuation plan. This includes the duties of the particular post to which he or she is allocated. Security staff should operate to a set pre-arranged plan known to all staff. It should be made clear to them that they are deployed to assist in the safe operation of the venue, not to view the event.

Promoters must include, as part of the security plan, the requirements that security staff must secure a clear passage for ambulance vehicles to gain access into the venue, including access by ambulance officers to the first aid post. The Security Controller is to also make sure that any ambulance called is met on arrival and clear instructions are given about access and casualties. In the case of a major incident with multiple casualties, security staff must immediately cordon off the affected area to allow first aid and ambulance personnel free access to treat and remove casualties.

To help protect the promoters of Dance parties, a record of incidents involving disorder, violence, drug dealing, other crime, ill health and all other relevant incidents must be kept. Immediately report any incidents which require Police attention to the local Police station.

The promoter must provide the Police Service with advance warning of the Dance party, so that Police Service back up can be included as part of the security arrangements.

What Security Staff should do

Below is a list which gives examples of typical tasks that security staff are expected to carry out, and for which they should be prepared. Security staff should:

- turn away from the party any people who seek entrance who are already intoxicated from alcohol or other drugs, who attempt to bring drugs into the Dance party, or who are exhibiting aggressive or anti-social behaviour; and remove those who have already gained entry;
- patrol toilet areas (male and female) preferably every thirty minutes;
- assist in identifying patrons who are banned from the venue, such as people who are intoxicated by alcohol or other drugs, who attempt to sell or distribute drugs, who are being aggressive/anti social, who
- are underage at an adult Dance party, who do not possess tickets, or who are in possession of forged tickets;
- monitor the crowd for signs of distress or overcrowding, and take action as set out in the standing instructions;
- persons known to the promoters and security staff to be drug dealers should be refused entry or removed from the Dance party, and the Police notified immediately;
- prevent overcrowding by making sure the number of patrons does not exceed the venue's legal crowd limits in the various parts of the venue;
- prevent patrons, as far as possible, from climbing fences and other structures such as light towers,
- advertising hoardings, speaker columns and mixing towers. If the size of the problem means the security
- staff cannot prevent it from happening, they should immediately report the matter to the Security Controller;
- make sure all parking area entrances and emergency exits are kept clear and that vehicles are correctly parked;
- make sure that gangways and exits are kept clear;
- control all exits including openings in a boundary fence;
- assist in the diversion of patrons to other parts of the venue, including the closing of turnstiles, when the capacity for any area is about to be reached;
- identify and investigate any incident (eg., violence) amongst the patrons, and report the findings to the Security Controller;
- know the location of, and be able to operate, the fire-fighting equipment at the venue;
- know the location of first aid posts;
- direct distressed or unwell patrons to first aid posts;
- fully understand any methods or signals used to alert staff that an emergency has occurred;
- be capable of recognising potential fire hazards and suspect packages, reporting such findings
- immediately to the Security Controller;
- immediately follow any instruction given in an emergency by a Police Officer or the Security Controller, or in the case of fire, instructions from the Station Commander or Incident Commander of the Fire Brigades;
- remain at their allocated posts as instructed unless authorised or ordered to do otherwise by the Security Controller;

- report to the Security Controller any damage or defect which is likely to be a threat to patron safety;
- assist as required in the evacuation of the venue, in accordance with the evacuation plan;
- assist in the prevention of breaches of venue regulations;
- check identity documents to keep out minors from adult dance parties and to help stop underage drinking.
- Identity documents include driver's licences, passports and, for licensed premises, proof of age cards issued by the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Security Options

Other security measures that should be considered, according to circumstances, location and environment, include:

- door searches;
- use of metal detectors at point of entry to detect weapons and nitrous oxide bulbs;
- patrolling of car parks, thoroughfares and the immediate area of the venue;
- clearly set finishing times and controlled 'pass out' conditions. If 'passouts' are issued, note that some patrons use passouts to leave the Dance party to obtain drugs and then try to return to the party. Passouts are not recommended for under 18s dance parties;
- total banning of glass drinking vessels, bottles etc (glass free environment);

3. First Aid

Whenever large numbers of people get together, qualified first aid personnel should be in attendance. Traditionally, this is done by St John Ambulance Australia, but other agencies such as the Red Cross are also available. St John Ambulance officers are volunteers but they rely on donations to buy training equipment and medical supplies.

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First Aid Posts

These should be easy to see and identified by an illuminated sign at night. An ideal location is near the main entrance.

First aid kits must be maintained in accordance with the Australian Standard for the size of the crowd expected.

Casualties

Experience from previous Dance parties has shown that most casualties are from:

- heatstroke, dehydration, respiratory distress;
- cuts from broken glass;
- fainting and exhaustion from a mixture of hysteria, heat, and alcohol;
- trampling or crushing from crowd pressure at the stage barrier;
- illicit drug and alcohol abuse, or misuse of legal drugs;
- patrons not knowing how to handle the effects of drug use;
- epilepsy attacks brought on by strobe lighting.

Harm Minimisation

A 'chill out' area should be set up either in, or near the venue. Low profile, non-threatening supervision of the chill out area must be provided, so that patrons are not scared away, and so that patrons with health problems can be spotted and treated.

A 'check your mates' campaign or similar, should be promoted by the promoters. Posters explaining how to handle the effects of drugs like ecstasy could be set up in the toilets.

On site security will also help in spotting potential problems and escorting unwell patrons to the first aid station.

Any patron concerned about symptoms from any drug use should be referred to the first aid post.

Adequate water must be available at all times, especially in the toilets.

Entertainment other than dancing should be considered eg virtual reality machines, Internet, arcade games and socialising areas.

Sound, strobe, laser and smoke machines should be operated within statutory levels.

Needle disposal containers could be considered for attaching to the back of toilet doors. Needle disposal containers are available from most medical supply wholesalers, local Council or Health Department Needle and Syringe Exchange outlets, and rural hospitals.

Details on needlestick injuries and needle and syringe disposal are found in Section One.

4. Liquor And Dance Parties On Licensed Premises

Liquor Licence

Liquor can only be served at Dance parties in certain circumstances. You can:

hold the Dance party on premises that are already licensed (for example, in a nightclub, hotel or registered club); apply to the Licensing Court of NSW for an On-licence (function) licence, but only if you are a non-proprietary association and the Dance party is a fund raiser; or make arrangements for the liquor to be supplied by a local hotelier near the proposed Dance party venue. The hotelier must first get approval from the Licensing Court.

For further information about On-licence (function) licence, or about hoteliers supplying liquor away from their licensed premises, contact the Licensing Court of NSW - Court Registry, telephone (02) 9289 8894, facsimile (02) 9289 8819.

Inquiries should be made as early as possible, at least 31 days before the event.

An approval from the local council must be held for registered clubs, hotels and licensed premises where entertainment is provided. See Section 5 for details.

Liquor and Harm Minimisation

The Liquor and Registered Clubs Acts require licensed premises to minimise the harm connected with the misuse or abuse of liquor, such as violent and anti-social behaviour. Licensees must ensure that practices are put in place so that liquor is sold, supplied and served responsibly. Also, that all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent intoxication on the premises.

This means a licensee should not use promotions or conduct activities which encourage binge or excessive drinking, or under age drinking. Also, the licensees and staff are to be trained in responsible serving practices. This includes refusing to serve liquor to an intoxicated person, asking them to leave, and seeking Police help if the person refuses to leave.

Liquor licensees and registered club managers are encouraged to check licensing issues with the Department of Gaming and Racing before staging a Dance party on their premises. Contact the Complaints Section, Special Investigations Branch, on telephone (02) 9289 8402 for more information.

Under 18s (alcohol free) Dance Parties on Licensed Premises

To hold an under 18s Dance party in a hotel or registered club, the licensee or club manager must apply for a "minors function authority" (for hotels) or a "functions authority" (for clubs, which includes functions for non-members). The application should be made to the NSW Licensing Court at least 21 days before the event.

The local Police Patrol Commander must be notified in writing 7 days before each event.

These authorities are subject to a number of conditions, including those listed below.

Supervision/security

The Dance party must be supervised by adults over 21 years of age, with one supervisor/security staff for every 100 patrons. Supervision/security must include checking tickets and bags on entry, patrolling toilets, supervising the function and access areas and patrolling the area around the licensed premises, checking that other patrons of the licensed premise do not enter the party, and under 18s do not move to other areas of the premises.

Advertising

Advertising for the Dance party must state that the party is alcohol free, with adult supervision, with entry by pre-sold tickets only, and that any minor suspected of having consumed alcohol will be refused entry. If the Dance party is to be held in a hotel, advertising must also say that any person suspected of being under 15 years will not be admitted.

Function area

Under 18 patrons must not move into other areas of the licensed premises, and other hotel/club patrons must not bring liquor into, or enter, the function area (where the Dance party is being held). Signs denying access into, or out of, the function area must be set up.

Passouts

Passouts reduce the ability to control the event and increase security problems, and are not recommended for under 18s dance parties. It should be made clear that patrons leaving the under 18s Dance party function area will not be re-admitted.

Noise and Safety

Promoters will need to make sure the Dance party does not create noise which causes problems for neighbours, and ensure the safe conduct of patrons around the licensed premise. Security patrols outside the premises will be needed, especially 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the Dance party. Also note the comments on transport in Section One.

Liquor At an under 18s Dance party on a licensed premise, no alcohol is to be sold, supplied, consumed or disposed of in the function area, or brought into the area by the licensee, the promoters, other patrons of the hotel/club, or Dance party patrons. Intoxicated persons are to be refused entry. Tobacco vending machines and gaming machines are also not allowed in the Dance party area.

Closing

The party must end at 12 midnight, or earlier if stated in the authorisation. All patrons must have left the function area 15 minutes after the party ends.

For further information on staging under 18s Dance parties in hotels or registered clubs, contact the Department of Gaming and Racing, Industry Development Branch, telephone (02) 9289 8647 or (02) 9289 8648, and facsimile (02) 9289 8669.

5. Consents And Approvals To Stage A Dance Party

Where Dance parties are held

Dance parties have been held everywhere, from inner city to country locations, and in different venues, from clubs and halls, to sports stadia, disused factories and warehouses. One result of using unusual venues is that they will probably not have the consents or approvals required by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act), or the Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act).

Dance parties may be held as a part of open air music festivals or concerts. Open air functions only need approval under the LG Act for any building work such as the erection of stages, temporary buildings etc. An open air venue does not need a "place of public entertainment" approval, as detailed in this Code. However, consent may still be needed under the EP & A Act.

Where open air concerts use amplification equipment, and have a crowd capacity of over 10,000 people, the Dance party will require a Pollution Control Approval and Licence from the Environment Protection Authority. Open air Dance parties should be held well away from homes

or residential areas. As most Dance parties are held indoors, this Code of Practice focuses on Dance parties held within buildings.

Dance parties are also held in hotels and registered clubs, many of which already have the right approvals and consents. Hotels and registered clubs usually serve alcohol, so in addition to the EP&A Act and the LG Act, the Liquor Act and the Registered Clubs Act also apply (see Section 4 of this Code). The timing and nature of events in these venues can be held in accordance with the terms of the existing consents and approvals.

Promoters aiming at people under 18 must make sure that alcohol is not brought into the party. Since October 1996, licensed premises are now allowed to stage alcohol free entertainment in authorised sections of the premises. Equally, all promoters of Dance parties must make sure that illegal drugs and alcohol are not brought into the party, or sold or distributed at the party.

Approvals Required Under The Environmental Planning And Assessment Act

Planning for public events is regulated by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act).

Dance parties may need a Development Application (DA) depending on their size, location and duration. In some circumstances, a Dance party may be a 'use' of the land, and therefore a 'development' under the EP&A Act. This matter needs to be made clear in each individual case. Promoters should seek advice from the local Council or their own expert planning adviser.

The ideal location for a Dance party is where:

- zoning allows a Dance party to be held in the area;
- the venue does not negatively affect residential areas;
- the premises provide safe accommodation for patrons during the event;
- public transport is available; and
- parking and noise will have limited impact on surrounding uses and the general public.

The Planning Situation

Planning 'instruments' such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) determine whether development consent is or is not needed, or if the use is a prohibited activity in that area. Each local Council area has its own planning instruments. The planning instrument of the local Council area you want to stage the Dance party in needs to be examined. Dance parties may be held in venues defined in the instrument by terms such as 'places of assembly', 'recreation facility', 'entertainment facility'. LEPs and the type of zones where this activity is permitted vary between Councils.

Where you can hold a Dance party without development consent

Other forms of approval will still be needed under the LG Act. Part 5 of the EP&A Act may apply. The determining (deciding) authority (usually Council) in issuing any other approval that is required (eg as a place of public entertainment) must decide if the Dance party may have any major environmental impact (s111 of the EP&A Act).

Where you can hold a Dance party with development consent

other forms of approval will still be needed under the LG Act.

- a Development Application (DA) is lodged (by the Promoter) with Council.
- Council has 40 days to decide on the application, otherwise it is considered to be refused. (Nevertheless, Councils can continue to deal with applications but a right of appeal to the

Land and Environment Court is available after 40 days. As Councils can take more than 40 days to decide, the earlier the application is made to Council the better).

- Council will consider the proposal according to section 90 of the EP&A Act. In particular, DAs should refer to the position of the stage and speakers, existing and proposed sound proofing, use of automatic cut out systems set for particular noise levels; which doors/windows will be used for access, and the closeness of neighbours (for noise).
- Council can impose conditions of consent. These may specify hours of operation, parking arrangements, and address any matters of environmental concern, in particular noise levels and noise control.

Where you cannot hold a Dance party

Where the zoning prohibits activities such as Dance parties in the area which includes the proposed venue, then the party cannot take place in that venue.

Approvals Required Under The Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act)

The most important approvals under Section 68 of the LG Act are:

- use of a building or temporary structure as a place of public entertainment or permit its use as a place of public entertainment - Approval A8
- install a temporary structure on land - Approval A4
- change of use of the building - Approval A7

Dance parties are considered to be "public entertainment" and the use of the building or a temporary structure for public entertainment requires an A8 approval. "Public entertainment" is where people pay money, or other consideration, to gain admission to the event (even if only some people are charged). A consideration includes a charge for a meal or other refreshment. However, in the case of premises licensed under the Liquor Act or Registered Clubs Act, even "free" entertainment requires an approval. If a "temporary structure", such as a circus tent or marquee is used, then an Approval A4 install a temporary structure on land is also required.

The promoter of a Dance party at a particular venue may also need an approval under the LG Act to change the use of a building (Approval A7) from the use currently approved, in order to check fire safety standards. This would be the case with a warehouse or factory building, which is a class 8 building under the Building Code of Australia (BCA) whereas a "place of public entertainment" is a class 9 building. An A7 approval may be applied for at the same time as an A8 approval.

It is useful to note that clause 70(g) of the Local Government (Approvals) Regulation allows an exemption from 7A approvals for existing buildings used as places of public entertainment for 'short durations' (such a for example, 72 hours, or 7 days, if the Council decides the change of use is unnecessary. Also, for A8 Approvals using existing buildings as a place of public entertainment, clauses 18, 23 and 25 of the same Regulation allows Councils the option to decide to lower or vary the standards from those expected of new buildings.

Premises with an approval

Buildings already approved for public entertainment have been assessed by Council (to see if it complies with the Building Code of Australia) to be safe for a large number of people, and to allow quick exit from the building if there is a fire.

An existing approval will:

- show the permitted adult capacity for entertainment;

- include any operational conditions which must be observed;
- be displayed in the premises.

Enquire at the local Council if there is any doubt about the approval, its conditions or if a copy is not available.

Premises where an approval must be obtained

Promoters should consider the suitability of the building for the Dance party. They should talk to the local Council to assess what may be needed to obtain the necessary approvals.

The technical issues involved in assessing suitability usually means getting advice from a building professional such as an architect, consultant building surveyor or similar expert. They would need to inspect the premises, examine building plans and note the services available in the building.

Details of the number of people expected at the Dance party, and the range of entertainment being planned, would need to be considered.

Consultants with the relevant information (often available from the building owner) can conduct an initial assessment of the suitability of the building as a place of public entertainment.

The application for Council's approval

This will be needed if:

an existing place of public entertainment approval exists, but some variation is needed to stage a Dance party;

no approval exists, but with initial assessment, a Dance party could be held in the building.

The promoter can lodge an application for an approval, accompanied by the written consent of the building owner.

The application must be made on a form available from each Council. It must be accompanied by a fee which is set by the Council. (Any A7 approval needed should also be lodged at the same time).

Deciding on (Determining) the application

In determining an application for a LG Act approval, a Council must consider whether any consent required under the EP&A Act has been given, or whether the use is prohibited (from receiving consent) by a planning instrument such as a local environment plan of the Council.

It is a statutory requirement for any approval, in addition to any conditions attached by the Council, that standard management and use conditions for places of public entertainment, set out in Schedule 2 of the Local Government (Approvals) Regulation 1993 must be complied with. The management and use conditions details requirements for fire safety officers; trained people for stage performances etc.

These requirements also generally apply to temporary structures used as places of public entertainment. For temporary structures an application for an A4 approval should accompany the A8 approval application.

References:

LG Act s68 (Approvals A4, A7 and A8); Division 3 of Chapter 7 Ss 75-113. LG (Approvals) Regulation; Clauses 16, 18 and 38 Schedule 2.

6. How To Make An Application To Council

The ideal location

The ideal location is one removed from residential areas, preferably with public transport access, with a venue that is safe for patrons, but where parking and noise will have limited effect on surrounding uses, particularly residential areas.

Consider the location and consult Council early

Appropriate locations for Dance parties may be within such zonings as industrial, light industrial, commercial and recreational. As the land uses within zones may vary, this should be discussed with the Council at a very early stage. You need to consider neighbours and surrounding land uses. This is particularly important if the venue is not usually used for public entertainment.

A venue that is currently used for public entertainment may already have a development consent and an A8 approval for the type of party being proposed. Check, and if that is the case make sure that the party will conform with the conditions of consent and approval.

A place of public entertainment approval indicates that public entertainment can be held in that building, as long as you comply with any conditions of that approval. If no approval exists, the promoter will need to get early expert advice, arrange discussions with the Council concerned, and consider whether any necessary alterations can be made to the building.

Start early

Allow time for research and discussion with all the relevant agencies. Note that a development application and applications for local Council approvals can take up to forty days before a decision is given.

It is also necessary for promoters to consult with the local Patrol Commander of the NSW Police Service about the Dance party soon after they start talking to the local Council.

An application for a liquor license should be lodged 21 days before the date of the proposed Dance party. For further information, contact the Licensing Court - Court Registry on telephone (02) 9289 8894, and facsimile (02) 9289 8819.

Discuss all aspects with the Council

Council will be able to advise you on the type of consents (under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act) and approvals (under the Local Government Act) required, how to make applications, the process, and how long this will take. Council may identify premises already with A8 approvals which are suitable for your function (particularly premises under Council control and/or publicly available).

It is important that promoters have the following information available at discussions with Councils:

- desired location and type of venue;
- the type of event i.e. dancing to amplified music, live music;
- starting and finishing times of the event;
- anticipated number of patrons, including maximum;
- transport/parking arrangements;
- possible impacts of the party, such as noise, on nearby areas;

- any measures to limit possible impacts;
- any information or plans from an expert consultant or the building owner/agent, etc.

You may also need (for the particular building concerned) to discuss with council additional requirements concerning:

- provision of toilet facilities;
- building regulations relevant to the venue;
- electrical matters;
- drinking water/refreshments;
- security;
- first aid;
- insurance;
- clean up.

When the venue is under the management of Council

Many halls and community centres are publicly owned and managed by Councils or management committees. These premises may be good for public entertainment and should be considered for a Dance party.

Councils may control public land suitable to accommodate temporary structures (eg large tents or marquees) for a Dance party. Negotiations with Councils will be on a commercial basis. Tent hire companies may provide help.

7. Legal Issues With Dance Parties

While Dance parties are legitimate forms of public entertainment, poorly planned Dance parties can create legal problems for promoters, patrons, local Councils, the Police and neighbouring residents, when Dance parties:

- occur without Council approval;
- occur on premises without the owner's consent;
- take place in unsafe buildings (e.g. fire hazard);
- result in injury to patrons at the Dance party
- involve the unlicensed sale of liquor;
- involve underage drinking or illegal drug taking;
- involve drug dealing;
- involve very loud noise;
- result in anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood as patrons arrive and/or leave the party;
- cause traffic disruption and danger as patrons move onto roads as they leave the party;
- result in drunk/drug driving or drunk/drug walking accidents after the event.

Laws exist to make sure that Dance parties take place in locations that are suitable, with limited impact on residential areas, in buildings that are sound, with adequate exits and with public safety measures in place.

This Section gives advice on some of the reasons that can cause legal problems for Dance parties, so that promoters can avoid them through good planning. This Section also explains some of the major powers and responsibilities of government agencies and promoters when legal issues arise. By forward planning and discussion with the relevant authorities, as detailed in this Code, most of the problems set out below can be avoided, resulting in a legally hassle free and successful Dance party.

Legal Issues Before A Dance Party Starts

The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

There is likely to be a breach of planning laws where the party would:

be outside of the existing conditions of consent; or
require consent, but it has not been obtained, or
not be allowed given the area's zone.

In these cases, any person, including the local Council, can take legal action under section 123 of the EP&A Act in the Land and Environment Court, to restrain (stop) the holding of the event, through applying for an injunction.

The Local Government Act

If a planned party constitutes or is likely to constitute a life threatening hazard, or a threat to public health or public safety, and it is not regulated or controlled under any other Act by a public authority, a Council could use Order No. 15 of section 124 of the LG Act to require the promoter not to conduct, or to stop conducting, the Dance party. Order No. 15 may be served directly on the promoter without any warning.

A Council may abate (stop) a public nuisance, or order a person responsible for a public nuisance to stop (Section 125, LG Act). An example would be where very loud noise will affect the neighbourhood. This would apply particularly where the law prohibits the carrying out of the activity, or requires that a permitted activity must be conducted in a particular way, and these requirements are not being met.

Liquor Laws

If the Dance party is to be held on licensed premises, under the Liquor Act or Registered Clubs Act, the premises may be closed down for 72 hours or up to six months. This action may be taken where there is:

- a threat to public health or safety;
- a risk of substantial damage to property;
- a significant threat to the environment; or
- a risk of serious offences being committed on the premises.

If promoters seek a licence to sell liquor at a proposed Dance party, and strong evidence exists that illegal drugs are to be sold or supplied to patrons at the Dance party, or evidence exists that promoters had failed at previous Dance parties to prevent drug abuse by patrons, this could lead the Director of Liquor and Gaming to object to the granting of a licence.

Legal Issues When A Dance Party Is In Progress

The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

There is no power under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to close down an event in progress.

The Local Government Act

Council Orders

Councils can issue orders that prohibit the doing of things to or on premises (section 124 of the LG Act). The most relevant orders are:

for life threatening hazards, a threat to public health or public safety which is not regulated under any other Act, may be issued immediately - Order No. 15;

related to fire safety or fire awareness, may be served on the building owner - Order No. 4.; and requiring the stopping of the use of, or the evacuation of, premises may also be issued immediately in an emergency. (Otherwise a "show cause" procedure applies in advance of the serving of these two orders) -Order No. 16.

Fire Brigades officers may also issue Order No.4 in relation to exits or essential services provisions in buildings.

If a person fails to comply with an order, this is an offence under section 628 of the LG Act with penalties of between \$2,000 to \$5,000 (or double in the case of a corporation).

Court Orders

Councils may also bring Court proceedings for an order to remedy or restrain a breach of the LG Act (section 673). In addition, the abatement of public nuisances (section 125) may also be used.

Failure to comply with an Order

Where a person fails to comply with the terms of an order, the Council may do all things that are necessary to give effect to the terms of the order (section 678), including the carrying out of any work required by the order. While patrons cannot be removed from the premises, this provision can authorise a council employee to turn off music, stop light shows etc. Circumstances may enable a Council to apply to the Court to stop a public nuisance or order a person responsible for making a public nuisance to stop.

Noise Control Act

Some Dance parties have led to noise complaints from residents living between two and ten kilometres away from the venue.

Noise Abatement Directions can be issued by local Council employees, or the Police. Failure to comply with the Direction can result in a fine and in extreme situations, may result in arrest. The Environmental Protection Authority may issue noise control notices. The Police have powers under Common Law to arrest and detain a person committing or about to commit a breach of the peace, such as in some cases, making an offensive noise. Residents can make a written complaint to the Liquor Administration Board if Dance parties on licensed premises cause disturbance to the neighbourhood.

Some other Police powers

Police Officers of the rank of Sergeant and above, have a power of entry into an indoor Dance party for inspecting the premises and, if necessary to test equipment, under the Theatres and Public Halls Act. Section 6 of the Police Service Act, requires Police officers to prevent and detect crime, to protect people from injury or death, and to protect property from damage. Police officers can use this power to take action to secure the safety of patrons and property, including closing down the Dance party, if necessary.

Illegal drugs at Dance parties will attract an increased police presence. A Police officer has the power under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act to stop, search and detain any person or vehicle which the officer reasonably suspects is in possession of, or contains, an illegal drug.

Liquor Laws

The Liquor Act (section 104) and Registered Clubs Act (section 17AA) enable the making of complaints by neighbours and others such as the Police or local Council, if a registered club or licensed premise creates problems, such as noise or the violent or anti-social behaviour of patrons in and around the premises. The penalties include reducing the premises' trading hours, prohibiting the admission of patrons after a certain time, and restricting or prohibiting certain types of entertainment, such as those which involve loud music (such as Dance parties).

Under the Liquor and Registered Clubs Acts:

selling/supplying liquor to a minor (maximum penalty \$5,000; or a maximum penalty of \$10,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment);
selling liquor without a licence (maximum penalty \$1,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment);
intoxication on licensed premises (maximum fine for the licensee \$5,000);
serving alcohol to an intoxicated person on licensed premises (maximum penalty \$5,000);
licensees or staff who permit the possession, sale or use of a prohibited substance on licensed premises (maximum penalty \$5,000);

Legal Issues After A Dance Party Has Ended

The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

Action may be taken where a Dance party has been held which breached the planning laws. This is where the party:

- failed to stay within the existing conditions of consent;
- consent was required but not obtained;
- the party was prohibited in the zone in which it was held.

Under section 123, any person can take legal action in the Land and Environment Court for a breach of the EP&A Act to make orders, for example, to fix any environmental damage caused by an unauthorised Dance party.

If an offence has been committed such as not complying with the consent conditions, section 125 allows a Council or a person specified in the Act or Regulations, to prosecute the offender in the Land and Environment Court or the Local Court. Fines of up to \$100,000 can be awarded by the Land and Environment Court, and fines of up to \$10,000 can be awarded by the Local Court.

The Local Government Act

Failure to get an approval needed under section 68 (which sets out what activities require an approval) is an offence under the LG Act. Section 626 (Failure to obtain approval) carries a penalty of \$5,000 (\$10,000 in the case of a corporation). Similarly, section 627 (Failure to comply with approval) carries penalties of up to \$20,000 (\$40,000 for a corporation). Section 628 (Failure to comply with an order) carries penalties of up to \$5,000 (\$10,000 for a corporation).

8. Building Requirements

Promoters of Dance Parties often seek out unusual buildings such as warehouses and other disused industrial buildings. Regardless of whether the proposed venue is a licensed premise or a disused warehouse, it must comply with essential minimum requirements of the Local Government (Approvals) Regulations 1993 and the Building Code of Australia 1990 (BCA) concerning building structure, fire safety and sanitary provisions. (However, Councils have some

discretion when dealing with existing buildings that do not strictly meet minimum requirements that are mandatory for new buildings.)

The references to the Building Code of Australia, 1990, in this Section provide a guide to KEY elements of building design and fire safety issues. The BCA should be consulted directly for technical building standards and requirements. Part A1 and the NSW Appendix A1 of the BCA contain a complete list of important definitions.

Enquiries relating to the Building Code of Australia should be directed to local councils.

Building Integrity

The integrity of the building structure and its surrounds must be sound and not be a danger to its occupants. Below are some issues to be considered when deciding on a suitable venue.

Floors

All floor surfaces must be level, structurally sound and free of hazards such as pot holes, protrusions, loose boards, worn floor coverings and debris.

Walls

Walls must be free of hazards such as loose and broken cladding, broken windows, protrusions and sharp edges.

Roof

The roof must be sound and free of hazards such as loose roofing material, insulation, light fittings and broken skylights.

Electrical

Wiring must be sound and free of hazards such as exposed cables, terminals, loose plugs and switches. Wiring must not be loose or taped to the ground or floor in public areas.

A qualified electrical contractor should be consulted in each case to ensure that the electrical facilities are adequate for the proposed function.

Curtains and Drapes

All curtains and drapes must be made of flame and smoke retardant material or be treated with a flame and smoke retardant chemical.

Plastic drapes and hangings must not be used under any circumstances.

Building Capacity

Part D1.13 of the BCA provides for the number of persons according to use.

Area per person according to use

Auditorium (for public entertainment) - 1 square metre of floor area per person

Dance Floor - 0.5 square metres per person

Other areas - 1.2 square metres per person

All calculations are in square metres and are dependent upon the variables of exit provisions, sanitary provisions and car parking requirements being adequate for the proposed capacity.

Exits

An 'exit' is any internal or external stairway, ramp, fire-isolated passageway, or doorway, if they provide exit to an open space. All exit doors must be easily opened into an open space which is free from obstruction. All passages leading to an exit, must be well maintained and free from obstruction.

Exit provisions are determined by Section D of the BCA which includes detailed specifications for the provision of escape and construction of exits.

Numbers of Exits Required

For all buildings there must be a minimum number of two exits from each floor, including the basement.

Exit Travel Distances

There can be up to a maximum of 80 metres from any point on the floor to an exit.

Distance Between Alternative Exits

There should be a minimum of 9 metres between alternative exits and a maximum of 60 metres between alternative exits. Alternative exits are to be located so that alternative paths of travel to those exits do not converge to the extent that they becomes less than 6 metres apart inside the building. The openings where the alternative exit paths leave the building must be as far apart as possible.

Dimensions of Exits

An exit which is a doorway must have a minimum height of 1980mm. All other exits must have a minimum height of 2 metres.

An exit must have a minimum width of 1 metre and a maximum width of 3 metres. The aggregate (or total) required width of exits must be provided on the basis of one metre per 100 persons, or part thereof, present on the premises.

Exit Signs, Emergency Lighting And Warning Systems

Exit signs, emergency lighting and warning systems must comply with BCA, Part E4.

Exit signs

All entertainment venues must be fitted with exit signs that are clearly visible to persons approaching the exit and must be installed on, above or next to each required exit.

All exit signs must be installed so that if the normal power supply fails, emergency illumination is provided to the sign. Exit signs must comply with Australian Standard 2293.1.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting must be provided in entertainment venues where the floor area of that storey is more than 300 square metres, or any point on the floor of that storey is more than 20 metres from the nearest doorway opening directly to a stairway, ramp, passageway, road or open space.

Emergency lighting must also be provided if exiting from that storey involves a vertical rise within the building of more than 1.5 metres, or any vertical rise if the storey does not admit sufficient light.

Every emergency lighting system must operate automatically and give sufficient illumination without undue delay for the safe evacuation of all areas of the building.

Emergency lighting must comply with Australian Standard 2293.1. Enquiries about Australian Standard 2293.1 and emergency lighting should be made to a qualified electrical contractor for electrical installations, and to local Council for the BCA.

Balustrades

Unlicensed premises such as warehouses and disused factories often have flooring which includes ramps, loading bays and balconies which are not fitted with suitable barriers. It is strongly recommended that balustrades be provided where the threat of injury exists, taking into account low light levels and the possible intoxication of patrons.

Balustrades must be put in if the level is more than 1 metre above the floor. Handrails must be 865 mm high. On required exit paths, balustrades must be 1 metre high if inside the building, and 1.2 metres high if outside the building.

Doorways And Doors

Required exits must be fitted with swing doors which open outwards from the building. However, automatic sliding doors are allowed on the main entrance. Revolving doors, collapsible gates, accordion doors, turnstiles or rigid barriers are not acceptable.

Many unlicensed venues are fitted with large sliding doors and roller doors which do not meet the requirements for places of public entertainment. However, local Councils may accept sliding and roller doors as exits in a venue if:

the doors meet the minimum requirements of distance of travel to exits, and aggregate width;
the doors are key-locked in the open position while the premises are occupied, and the key is held by the promoters.

Artificial lighting

Artificial lighting must be provided in entertainment venues to provide a safe and comfortable environment in accordance with Australian Standard 1680 to all rooms that will be occupied by the public/patrons, and all corridors, lobbies, internal stairways and other circulation spaces and paths of exit.

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire Hydrants

A fire hydrant system must be provided to service a building with a floor area greater than 500 square metres, and where an operational fire service is available to attend a building fire. Fire hydrants must comply with Australian Standards 2419.

Hose Reels

A hose reel system must be provided to serve the whole building where one or more internal hydrants are installed.

Where internal hydrants are not installed, a suitable hose reel system must be provided to serve any fire compartment with a floor area greater than 500 square metres. Hose reels must comply with Australian Standard 2441.

Portable fire extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers containing an extinguishing agent suitable for the fire risk being protected against, must be provided in every building.

Water type extinguishers need not be installed in a building or part of a building served by a fire hose reel.

Portable fire extinguishers must be provided and installed in accordance with Australian Standard 2444. Enquiries about Australian Standard 2441 and 2444, fire extinguishers and more specialised requirements for sprinklers and alarms should be made to the local Council.

Sanitation

The Building Code of Australia, 1990 provides for sanitary provisions for buildings such as public halls and function rooms as follows:

Sanitary Facilities:

patrons closet fixture(s)

1 2 each extra Urinal(s)

1 2 each extra Washbasin(S)

1 2 each extra

9. To Organise A Dance Party

A flow chart of the major things a promoter should do to organise a Dance Party.

As soon as possible

Decide on the area you want to hold the Dance party in.
Check Council local planning instruments to find out where a Dance party can be held, and what approvals and consents are needed.

Identify a venue for the Dance party.
Check with local Council for suitability of the venue and what is needed to apply to Council to hold the party there.
Discuss travel, safety, security arrangements for the party with local Police.

60 days

Lodge the necessary applications with the Council to hold the Dance party at the venue.

40 days

Arrange public liability insurance cover.

31 days

If needed, contact the Court Registry of the Licensing Court of NSW for a liquor licence, or to hold an under 18s dance party on licensed premises.
Talk to local bus companies/SRA about transport arrangements for the event as needed.
Hire licensed security staff, appoint Security Controller, make security plans.
Notify local Police of Council approval.
Hire adequate first aid staff.

21-14 days

Advise the Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Health Dept of the event.

During the event

Make sure refreshments, especially water, are available during the event.
Keep a written record of any violence, ill health etc.

Within 24 hours of the event finishing

Organise and carry out a clean up of the venue.

appendix 4

electronic music in the UK

1988 - Acid house music is enthusiastically received in London and the Summer of Love takes hold. Ecstasy and LSD are the most popular drugs for use while nightclubbing, with alcohol remaining behind the bar. Acid fashion goes mainstream, with high street shops selling LSD inspired clothing. The media use Ecstasy as a vehicle for bemoaning the fall of the young generation, with *The Sun* newspaper releasing t-shirts emblazoned with the 'yellow smiley face' logo, which are then recalled and replaced by t-shirts with the 'Say no to drugs' slogan. An Ecstasy related death leads to police crackdowns on warehouse parties.

1989 - The rave scene takes off in the UK. Illegal outdoor parties are held in fields and woodlands, with high quality sound systems, laser light shows and fairground equipment. Dressed in sportswear, aficionados coin the term 'ravers' to describe themselves. Advertising is word of mouth and mobile phones become an essential item of party equipment, as attendees phone for instructions on how to get there. The first 24 hour, 7 days a week pirate radio station is launched, with police subsequently arresting the DJs and closing it down. In Berlin the first Love Parade is held, with 150 people dancing through the streets. Love Parade becomes an annual event, with 750,000 clubbers and ravers from across the world attending nine years later, in 1997.

1990 - The Peace, Love, Unity, Respect movement of electronica continues to gather momentum, as Tory MP Graham Bright proposes the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act. Passed by Parliament, the Act results in one of the biggest mass arrests in Britain's history, as 836 ravers are detained at Yorkshire's 'Love Decade' party. Manchester is nicknamed 'Madchester' as thousands of party-goers and clubbers focus on Northern England and its popular club 'Hacienda'. Gangsters attempt to muscle in on the drug trafficking scene, resulting in much unwanted police attention and a damaging court appearance for the Hacienda. Pirate radio station Kiss FM achieves legal status to become the first legal dance music station in the UK, spawning the rise of sister Kiss FM stations worldwide. The Glastonbury Festival gives rise to the adoption of dance music by the many travellers in the UK, resulting in the first free outdoor parties.

1991 - The focus is on fun and revisiting one's childhood, as a new batch of Ecstasy hits the clubs. Known as White Doves, the new Es are immortalised in numerous dance track titles, such as "Morning Dove White" and in the names of electronic artists collectives, such as "One Dove".

Whistles and other noisemakers are key items of dance floor paraphernalia, as a number of artists release childhood nostalgia tracks such as Smart-E's "Sesame's Treet". Vicks VapoRub is another clubbing essential, as it 'brings the E back on'. Clothing is oversized and comfortable for the boys, while the girls wear sports crop tops, gym shorts and runners. The variety of genres within electronic music continues to grow and Pete Tong joins BBC Radio One, to bring dance music to the nation on Friday nights.

1992 - The smash hit "Ebenezer Goode" is released by The Shamen, with the chorus "Es are good, Es are good" bringing young Britain together in an in-joke. Breakbeat spawns the first jungle track and the genres keep on diversifying. A week-long illegal techno jamboree is attended by 25,000 ravers and travellers, with members of Spiral Tribe being later arrested for "conspiracy to cause a public nuisance" for "organising" the free festival. It is not unusual for members of the subcultures to band together and give themselves a name and the term 'posse' is bandied about continually. There is a sense of community, unattainable in the mainstream.

1993 - Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* is released, gathering momentum to become the book (and later the movie) that speaks for a generation. 50 years after the discovery of LSD, 1993 becomes the 'year of the trip' as the ambient and trance genres achieve popularity and the music gets harder, darker, stranger and more complex. Trip Hop takes off, another progeny of the breakbeat and hip hop of a few years before. Touring artists prove to the mainstream that electronica can be live. Spiral Tribe leave the UK and launch the first Teknival rave in France.

1994 - Spiral Tribe stand trial for the free festival organisation of 1992. After a trial costing over 4 million pounds, they are acquitted. The British government responds with the passing of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (known as the CJA). The CJA is the first law ever to identify and prohibit a specific form of popular music: that which is "wholly or partly characterised by a succession of repetitive beats". However, before the CJA is passed, there are three huge Advance Party demonstrations against it, one ending in a bloody riot, and for the first time the subculture(s) develop a political conscience. Nostalgia hits hard, with older clubbers reminiscing about the good old days of the late Eighties. In California, Dr Charles Grob begins testing MDMA on humans legally for the first time since 1985.

1995 - The year dance culture went truly mainstream. DJ tours, club tours, remixed tracks from the 70s and 80s, DJ mixed tapes, glamour clubbing and computerised mixing took the dance culture from the underground into the mainstream. Exodus continue their community work in deprived areas of London, proving there's still the PLUR in dance culture. Hard house music hits the clubs, with clubbers seeking plenty of bass and a few vocal samples. Goa trance throws in

challenges to the mainstream and the rediscovery of the Roland 303 synthesiser launches an acid sounds revival. The Ecstasy related death of Leah Betts, the daughter of a police officer, sparks off the biggest worldwide moral panic about drugs this century.

1996 - Diversity becomes the focus as older clubbers and ravers seek to re-establish the joys and 'undergroundness' of yesteryear. Ninety per cent of the top 100 selling tracks in Britain are electronic-based. Electronic music is de rigeur for backing in radio and television advertisements, and for a large number of television programmes. Acid guru Timothy Leary dies of cancer, aged 75. Tory MP Barry Legg reacts to the hysteria surrounding the death of Leah Betts to introduce the Public Entertainments (Drug Misuse) Bill to close clubs where drugs are available - the third piece of legislation in a decade aimed at suppressing the scene. Tribal Gathering is banned, only to go ahead at an alternative site. Drum and Bass is launched in the chill out rooms of a number of clubs across the UK.

1997 - Drum and Bass achieves popularity as the first pubs with dance music are launched in the UK. The genres continue to diversify, with creativity being invested by a number of unlikely sources. Indie (independent) music artists, thrash metal musicians and more all lend their influence to electronic music.