

MUSIC, MARKETS AND CONSUMPTION



# Part I

## Introduction

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# 1 Marketing and Music

## Introduction

The purpose of this book is to contribute to discussions about the music business from a marketing point of view. Arts marketers have long argued that marketing thinking needs to be substantially adapted to deal with the complexities and particularities of the creative and cultural industries. There are a number of books which take a practical approach to the marketing of music (e.g. Baker's (2012) *Guerilla Music Marketing Online*), or provide an overview of the music industry (e.g. Kusek and Leonhard's (2005) *The Future of Music: A Manifesto for the Digital Music Revolution* and Wikstrom's (2009) *The Music Industry: Music in the Cloud*), or comment on economic aspects of the business from the point of view of popular music studies. This book, in contrast, deals with the application of marketing and consumer studies theory to the business. As far as the authors can establish, this has not been attempted before.

This project presents three challenges:

- 1 deciding what kind of marketing theory we are talking about (for there are different strands);
- 2 engaging with an appropriate selection of the relevant conceptual and empirical journal literature; and
- 3 applying it to the music business in a way which respects, and seeks to accommodate, the valuable insights generated by researchers in other areas, such as popular music, cultural, media and sociological studies.

The remainder of this introduction considers classical marketing and branding theory, and examines some of the difficulties in their application which, in our view, create the need for this book.

# What's so special about music?

Music has been a notable part of human activity since prehistoric times. The precise origins of music have been discussed in such fields as evolutionary musicology (e.g. Wallin *et al.*, 2000), however the human significance of music has been recognized and debated since the earliest days of Western civilization, when philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato ruminated on the nature and value of music (Bowman, 1998). Music has always been fundamentally social. People share music with other members of their society – a practice which gives meaning not only to the music itself, but also to social interaction. Sounds are transformed into music through the meanings people imbue in them within a given social and cultural context (Hargreaves and North, 1997).

The sharing of music precedes any formal economic exchange, however the political economy has greatly influenced, and is influenced by, this fundamental, social human activity of music-making. Music as we know it now – as an 'autonomous production' – is an invention of only the past century or so, emerging out of Western capitalism. This represents a particular form of making and engaging in music, which, like any form, reflects the dominant structure of political power and social control (Attali, 1977/1985). Put simply, the market is a formalized way of regulating and capitalizing music-making, -sharing and engagement.

Marketing theory and practice provide a way of understanding and facilitating exchanges within the market (e.g. Bagozzi, 1975). Marketing as a discipline emerged in response to the physical separation between producers and consumers, which was a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. Driven by the tangible, physical nature of the manufactured goods of the times, marketers focused on the distributive function and sought to bring both products and consumers to the market in order to facilitate exchange. This emphasis remained and, despite the broadening of the scope of marketing into such functions as communications and branding, the formalization of the principles of marketing (Wilke and Moore, 2003) reflected an interest in physical products, such as consumer durables and FMCG (fast moving consumer goods). Therefore, marketers' initial interest in music was concentrated on how it could be used *in* the marketing of other products. The capability of music to