

Perspectives in Popular Musicology: Music, Lennox, and Meaning in 1990s Pop

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Perspectives in popular musicology: music, Lennox, and meaning in 1990s pop¹

STAN HAWKINS

I

Scholars of popular music in the 1990s are increasingly aware that traditional musicology has failed to recognise commercial pop music as a legitimate academic area of study. Intransigence on the part of many Western music institutions towards recognising the field of popular music study is attributable to issues that have been heatedly debated and discussed in most disciplines of popular music study. Even withstanding the expansion of critical approaches in the 1970s, which paved the way forward to the emergence of new musicological discourses by the late 1980s, musicologists engaged in popular music research have continued to feel some sense of isolation from the mainstream for obvious reasons. The implications of consumerism, commercialism, trend and hype, with the vigorous endorsement of modernist ideologies, have repeatedly curtailed any serious opportunity for studying popular music in Western music institutions. To start accommodating this area of music within any musicological discourse, scholars active within the field of popular music have had to branch out into new interdisciplinary directions to locate and interpret the ideological strands of meaning that bind pop music to its political, cultural and social context. Musical codes and idiolects are in the first instance culturally derived, with communication processes constructing the cultural norms that determine our cognition and emotional responses to musical sound (Ruud 1986). Any proposal of popular music analysis therefore needs to seek the junctures at which a range of texts interlock with musicology. Similarly, the point at which consumer demand and musical authenticity fuse requires careful consideration; it is the commodification of pop music that continues to problematise the process of its aesthetic evaluation within our Western culture.

Taking as a starting point the exploration of music itself, analysts of pop music have had to confront the experiences, ideologies and theories unique to the specific musical style under study. Through the combined effects and increased ramifications of its mediation through the infrastructures of communication technology, pop music functions primarily as an *internalised* condition of experience within its own unique social environment. By promoting widespread consumption and recognition of styles, fashions and trends, pop art forces and perpetuates mythologies (or realities) that justify its economical, political or social means. A

fundamental overlay here is ideology, which, as Judith Williamson points out, signifies a sense of 'meaning made necessary by the conditions of society while helping to perpetuate those conditions' (Williamson 1993, p. 190).³ On this basis, analysts of pop music should not only seek to determine how music is structured, but also discover the extent to which the music disseminates its own conditions of aesthetic and cultural experience. To this end, whilst engaging in a range of analytical and traditional theoretical practices (often involving notation and aspects of music theory), musicologists need to situate their work within an active interdisciplinary field for the purpose of achieving a more holistic critical enquiry into the music. Tagg has advocated such an approach by stressing the importance of recognising and appreciating the 'conception, transmission and reception of the object of study' (Tagg 1982, p. 44). In addition, I would suggest that popular musicology demands a constantly flexible and adjustable critique to serve the diverse range of dialects and mutually critical set of references analogous to the specific styles under scrutiny. To unravel the stylistic codes of pop, we need to explore, identify and challenge the actual implications of the musical structures that articulate musical meaning for us within our environmental landscape. Traditionally, music has been analysed as an abstract form with limited reference to its social and cultural function. But, however, as Nicholas Cook emphasises, commercial and pop music delineate meanings that stretch far beyond the capabilities of words or visual representation:

Music transfers its own attributes to the story line and to the product, it creates coherence, making connections that are not there in words or pictures; it even engenders meanings of its own. But it does all this, so to speak, silently. (Cook 1994, p. 38)

So far the 1990s have witnessed a greater fragmentation through blurred representations of gender and sexuality in popular culture than ever before; this is evident within the complex and diverse identities and subjectivities that consume, package and purchase music. Recent work in feminist critical theory in music has confronted such issues by not only generating debates around the politics of gender in the Western canon, but by also offering up fresh critiques for enabling musicologists to understand how music functions within complex and highly sensitive social systems. Feminist discourses have mobilised a number of male musicologists, such as myself, into addressing and challenging notions of sexuality, gender and power within the music of a still mainly patriarchal culture. I owe many of my thoughts to the work instigated by feminist critics in musicology, 4 who have tackled issues of gender and sexuality within the Western musical canon. In Feminine Endings, Susan McClary debates how a 'musical semiotics of gender' (McClary 1991, p. 8) might not only inform us on the actual music itself, but also provide us with a vital critique on the intricate systems of gender control operating within socio-historic climates. She discusses issues of musical signification through locating generic norms and processes of deviation within a social and cultural context. By confronting the dominant paradigms that prop up the traditional musicological canon through a range of social and cultural theoretical infrastructures, McClary's critique provokes questions that lie at the heart of conventional ideologies and practices. Above all, in formulating her critique, she reveals through personal readings a critical perspective on the traditional and often subversive nature of the Western musical canon.

As a model for addressing a range of theoretical paradigms and analytical methodologies necessary for developing a popular musicology I have selected the



Annie Lennie Lennox. Photo by Michel Linssen. © REDFERNS

song 'Money Can't Buy It' by Annie Lennox. My prime task here is to attempt a reading of a single closed musical text by affording consideration to the semiotics of gender, style and performance iconography as disseminated through the channels of recorded sound and video representation. The signification of gestures in sound constitutes a central axis around which various codes of musical expression are explored. Broadly speaking, our cognition of music involves intimate responses to desire, arousal or excitement resulting from aural imagery, connotations and aesthetic experience. But any perception of musical sound as pleasurable, arousing or erotic varies considerably from one person to the other.5 Whilst we identify more erotically with one particular image than another, even seemingly objective responses to explicit musical or visual codes are grounded entirely on personal experiential and imaginary readings. McClary argues that through 'obvious' readings of sexuality in music, completely diverse interpretations of what 'qualifies as the "erotic" ' (McClary 1991, pp. 8-9) inevitably surface. From a Freudian perspective, sexuality and power imply a specific control over aspects of human creativity, whilst also signifying a defiance of that control through processes of rationalisation and personal choice. With this in mind, how might musicologists proceed in extrapolating the musical features that engender notions of gender and musical expression within a musical text?

II

To initiate this analysis of 'Money Can't Buy It', I intend to examine a range of musical features and parameters inherent in the fixed form of the sound recording. One research method for exploring processes in performance would be to employ

a model which positions musical performance within its specific social context. At this point I wish to draw on Ellen Koskoff's work which investigates how musical performance provides a relevant context for observing and understanding notions of gender structures within a society. She defines four distinct categories applicable to inter-gender relations in performance as:

- 1 performance that confirms and maintains the established social/sexual arrangement;
- 2 performance that *appears to maintain* established norms in order to protect other, more relevant values;
- 3 performance that protests, yet maintains, the order (often through symbolic behaviour);
- 4 performance that challenges and threatens established order (Koskoff 1987, p. 10).

Koskoff describes how, in embracing strategies of protest, gender transformations result in intricate processes of social deception that are identified by a series of contradictions stemming from so-called 'ideal behaviour', 'apparent behaviour', and 'real behaviour' (1987, p. 12). Questions relating to how and why such deceptions surface within a performance tradition become critical to any evaluation of gender and sexuality within our own and other cultures. Interestingly, Koskoff maintains that in the case of female musicians, the determination of deceptive actions ultimately depends on females 'perceptions of themselves in relation to men and to each other' (1987, p. 14). Through varied responses to pop music, notions of power, sexuality and musical style inevitably become transposed into the audience/consumer perceptions of gender. Any musicological enquiry therefore becomes a highly personal one, grounded on the tenet that cultural signifiers and social symbols frequently represent shifting and conflicting signifieds operating at disparate levels within the same socio-cultural group.

During the 1980s and into the 1990s pop music has continued to represent vividly powerful images (aural and sonic) through the rapid advances in technology and shifting patterns of mass consumption. E. Ann Kaplan, in her research on music video, claims that institutions such as MTV have constructed 'several different kinds of gender address and modes of representing sexuality' (Kaplan 1987, p. 89). Notions of gender and sexuality are therefore encoded within the musical sound, presenting powerful representations and transmutations of cultural and social identity. Since the 1970s, aspects of gender blurring and androgyny, have featured to varying degrees in pop stars and groups, such as Lennox, Boy George, Madonna, Bowie, k.d. Lang, Prince, Pet Shop Boys, Eurasure, Michael Jackson, who through their individual modes of expression have demonstrated how gender bending challenges and alters traditional notions of gender and sexuality. The breaking with and reconstruction of traditional gender roles is therefore a focal point for decoding meaning in pop music of the 1990s. In what he refers to as the emancipated post-orgy state of affairs, Baudrillard has described how in a postmodern society individuals construct a fractal multiplication of body images through which original distinctions and divisions result either in a sense of elimination or transformation (see Best and Kellner 1991). He cites as an example Michael Jackson's scrambling of his own personal image in terms of racial, gender and sexual reconstructions. Moreover, Baudrillard views the 1980s as 'the time for transvestism', which, he claims, is located at the core of our institutions.⁷ Pop music in the 1990s might be perceived as the ultimate postmodern text in that it symbolises the complex fragmentation of stylistic identities and codes, by its continuous appropriation, innovation and manipulation of traditional representations. By advocating a popular musicology it is worth identifying and relocating traditional codes of musical representations within a pluralist social framework.

Ш

With reference to 'Money Can't Buy It' by Annie Lennox, I wish to explore how various musical structures convey, organise and construct meaning in a typical late twentieth-century pop song. To arrive at some general theory for a popular musicology it is necessary to recognise the interrelationships that exist between musical structures, lyrical connotations and the visual and performance narratives within a given cultural context. Any grasp of musical understanding needs to take place through identifying the specific localities within which music is realised and contextualised. Meaning within Annie Lennox's music might be viewed as an integral component of the songs themselves through the listener empathising and identifying in various ways with the artist. Readings of any piece of music are therefore predicated upon an awareness of gender, sexuality and social identity. In most contemporary pop music, concepts of social meaning are often constructed within the communicative framework of the technology that realises and produces the musical product. Lennox's 'Money Can't Buy It' encapsulates ideologies of late capitalist consumerism both through its blend of narrative connotations and slick production techniques. High quality digital recording, sampling techniques and the choice of instrumentation (mainly digital keyboards) within the production of the Diva album reveals its period of conception as that of the early 1990s. Features inherent in the sound production and recording capture a distinct aesthetic associated with the employment of state-of-the-art, fashionable timbres. 8 The importance of the analysis and evaluation of recording technology and its ramifications from a musicological perspective cannot be overemphasised. Middleton argues that the techniques employed in pop recordings have 'increased the variety of possible configurations, and the sense of specific physical space that can be created has enormous potential effects on the power and types of gestural resonance which listeners feel' (1993, p. 179). Meaning in pop music is thus located at the junctions where musical gesture and sound, experience of and identification with sound and all its ideologies intertwine.

Prime analytical focus in this article is directed towards inspecting the organisation and manipulation of specific musical, narrative and visual constructs, which embrace a set of codes responsible for conveying meaning within the song under examination. A number of questions arise here. How might we identify signifiers of performance and gender through the construction of a musical discourse? By confining our analysis to a single closed text, what features should be extracted and musicologically examined? And what methodologies might we employ to analyse the musical structures and processes in order to provide a more holistic reading of our case-study? As starting point, I have selected two musical parameters for scrutiny: harmonic organisation and vocal timbre, both of which, while defining and determining the musical structure, function to regulate the levels of tension and aesthetics throughout the song.

Set within a simple song formal structure, ¹⁰ 'Money Can't Buy It' consists of a multitude of musical gestures that construct and articulate a central ideology which embraces themes of pleasure, greed, love, narcissism, passion and vulnerability. Control of harmony, whilst simple is deceptively subtle and ambiguous

Table 1. Modal organisation: 'Money Can't Buy It' (Lennox).

PITCH CENTRE:	С	E⁵-F	F
MODAL CENTRE:	C Dorian	C Aeolian/C Dorian/E ^b Lydian	F Mixolydian
CHORD TYPES:	Cm7(9) F7(9)	E ^b Fm F	F
SONG STRUCTURE:	intro A B A1 B1	C A2 B2	Coda
EFFECTS:	tension searching	release finding	tension questioning/responding

throughout. This is borne out first and foremost by the avoidance of any conventional diatonic closure. Harmonic organisation in 'Money Can't Buy It', on a macrolevel, 11 involves a gradual progression from the minor flavoured C Dorian mode in the chorus (constructed around Cm7) to the brighter E^b Lydian, which is followed by a shift to the subdominant chord of F major (Table 1). Qualities inherent in this harmonic movement correspond in a number of interesting ways to the song's narrative. Following a six-bar instrumental introduction, during which a pensive, dreamy mood is established, the vocals enter with the hook, Money can't buy it, baby. Lennox insists that neither money, sex or drugs can buy it. These lyrics, in representing the central ideological sentiments of the song, are cushioned by the melancholic C Dorian mode, consisting of chord shifts in each bar, from Cm9 (i) to F (IV). At this point the harmony is static, with the rhythmic riff emerging more prominent within the mix. These chords are grounded throughout by a C bass pedal. Leading into the verse with the same modal centre, Lennox claims I believe that love alone might do these things for you . . . and tells us how this might be achieved, take the power to set you free, kick down the door and throw away the key . . . Here the harmony resists change, while the rhythmic pulse becomes more strident through the setting up of a regular groove. In the second verse, a release in the harmonic tension occurs through a resolution to E^b major chord (III of C Aeolian/Dorian). Brightness in this shift to E^b major from the doleful C Dorian mode illuminates and strengthens the affirmative quality of the lyrics, I believe that love alone might do these things for you . . . I believe in the power of creation, I believe in the good vibration . . . Throughout this nine-bar passage a temporary state of elation prevails before Eb major resolves to Fm (iv), which, through the minor third, signifies a modal excursion from C Dorian to C Aeolian. A sense of modal-minor duality (established by the regular oscillation between chords Fm9 and Fm6) has the effect of heightening and almost exaggerating the motif of searching in the lyrics, Won't somebody tell me what we're coming to? . . . You can have it all but you still won't be satisfied. Final reference to the E^b major chord occurs in the coda, before this chord progresses to an F chord (in F Lydian mode), evading diatonic closure as a result of its modality. Ambiguity within the harmonic gestures of this song is further exemplified by a shift from C Dorian to F Mixolydian in the coda, with the modal centre, F, now assuming prominence. Through the regulation in levels of tension and release within the specific harmonic organisation of events (Table 1), the various conflicts and nuances posed by the narrative are effectively communicated. 12 The overall effect of moving from C Dorian through C Aeolian/ E^b Lydian, and then resolving to F Mixolydian, musically reinforces the motifs of



Example 1. Bass riff, 'Money Can't Buy It'.

searching, finding and yearning inherent in the song. Hence, it is through the modal organisation that the blend of moods and emotions are largely shaped and controlled (Table 1).

The harmonic structures should also be examined in conjunction with the bass line, which is driven by a dotted figure against a regular, straight figure in the kit line. This part is developed from a simple idea consisting of single pitches forming a double-unisoned melodic riff as accompaniment to the vocal melody (Example 1). Reinforced and transformed timbrally by the additional layering over of piano and guitar parts this riff serves as both a melodic and rhythmic line. As the song draws towards its conclusion, the bass part undergoes further alteration by shifting to an E^b pitch centre, as it acquires a higher profile within the mix. The rhythmic motion of the bass line focuses on an active figure on the first two beats of the bar, with a release and break in movement on the third and fourth beats (Example 1). Within the wider context of the musical style, this heightens the sense of a strong downbeat with tension followed by resolution on the upbeat of each bar. Furthermore, the bass line functions to underpin the rich and sensual quality of Lennox's voice, its quality of timbre, which is the next parameter I wish to consider.

How might the analysis of timbre further assist the musicological investigation of this song? And what methodologies could be employed to explore the timbral details of the music? One of the first observations to surface when listening to this song is the inherent wealth of contrasting shades, textures and tonal colours to be found in the vocal part. It soon becomes clear that continual variations in the vocal nuances and gestures hold a critical clue to delineating codes of meaning within the song. Commencing with the first line of the lyrics, the hook, Money can't buy it, baby, Lennox's vocal tone suggests a warmth, a sense of dreaminess and melancholy. This establishes the mood for the first two sections of the song. A more rhythmically accented passage (lines 8-15, Table 3) then follows, which reinforces the narrative, take the power to set you free, kick down the door and throw away the key. Through the location of the vocals to the foreground of the mix, with a marked intensification of dynamics, this section denotes a definite shift in the mood of the song. Also evident here is the increase in levels of ornamentation (inflections and embellishments) within the vocal part, which is anchored by a heavily emphasised, quantised rhythmic groove in the bass and kit parts. The piano line is doubled with the bass to reinforce and raise the contour of this counter-melodic line (Example 1). From lines 16 to 22, the vocal part becomes more rhythmically profiled and intense within the mix as Lennox stresses the verse's hook, I believe that love alone might do these things for you . . . whilst still maintaining a richness and warmth in

Table 2. Timbral spectrum: 'Money Can't Buy It' (Lennox).

stronger innocent strong – rap elated innocent strident richer tone little girl positive decisive contemplative more conviction voice' excitable emotional cool emphasis more forceful nostalgic aggressive with feeling detached	f sub.pp cresc f-ft f	8-15 16-22 23-30 31-43 44 k	B1 C A2 B2 coda
ger ted passior ent richer t convict nasis more f	f	16-22	B1
ous choly ng	mf	8–15	A1
warm rich 1 sonord melan	2 mp	3 1-7	4 AB

1 = timbre description 2 = dynamics 3 = lyric lines 4 = formal sections

colour. During this section the vocal timbre undergoes further change, now assuming a more passionate, determined edge. In the next passage (section C), Won't somebody tell me what we're coming to?, the voice transforms into a pleading, innocent, vulnerable 'little girl' voice, with the thin, flanged vocal timbres capturing the fragility and searching quality of the lyrics. All effects are removed from the vocals in the mix, evoking a greater intimacy through the delicate timbre. At this point the rhythmic groove fades into the background of the mix, while the harmonic rhythm decreases, becoming grounded on chords Fm9 and Fm6 (Table 2). Through lines 31 to 34 of the chorus hook, the mood changes yet again, regulated by a more forceful, fuller and passionate vocal timbre. The voice becomes richer and sensual, once again foregrounded in the mix and strongly reinforced by the backing parts. Further changes in tone colour occur within the following passage, lines 35 to 43, where the style alters from a ballad to rap, with Lennox's voice assuming an aggressive, excitable and emphatic quality. A vivid interplay of vocal colours and change in style express the hard, cool message, now hear this, pay attention to me, 'cause I'm a rich white girl, and it's plain to see I got ev'ry kind of thing that money can buy. At this climactic moment in the song, it becomes evident that Lennox draws on stylistic change to proclaim notions of gender and power inferred by the lyrics. From line 44 onwards, the vocal timbre returns to its original colour from the opening bars of the song. In drawing to a close, one final timbral change occurs on the hook in the coda section of 'Money Can't Buy It', with the voice flanged and manipulated in the mix through use of a delay unit and pitch harmoniser providing a mechanical, desensitised and impassioned cadence of resolution to the song.

Through her unique, personalised style and particular mode of performance, Lennox articulates an array of contrasting shades and rich textures. Breadth in vocal register, the control and manipulation of timbre, all contribute to the construction of a rich tapestry of moods (Table 2), which serve to articulate the sentiments of the song. Predominantly, it is the voice that transmits the performer's personal qualities by communicating a variety of codes pertaining to notions of style and context. However, in analysing vocal timbre in 'Money Can't Buy It', other questions and observations start to surface. Consideration of timbre might also incorporate any 'mediations brought on by gender' (Shepherd 1987, p. 164). John Shepherd has identified how male and female timbres, hard and soft, evoke specific readings and responses of gender in pop music.¹³ In the case of Annie Lennox, her personalised style adumbrates a rich sense of ambiguity, a type of musical androgeneity, that is continuously harnessed by the measured extremities of her vocal timbres, gestures and textures. For instance, the vulnerable girlish voice (section C) is vividly contrasted against the fuller sound of the mature, sensual, confident vocal delivery (section B2), which mobilises a whole set of interchanging connotations. Lennox's wide range of vocal nuances are therefore responsible for generating constantly shifting layers of Klangfarben that relay specific sets of musical codes to the listener. Our responses to the musical sound are clearly influenced by a range of factors relating to personal associations with gender, sexuality, culture, musical experience and ideological predispositions (see Middleton 1993). The tonal shading of the voice, its technical articulation and juxtaposition with other instruments within the context of the mix is crucial to any critical evaluation of pop songs.

Table 3. Visual, lyrical and musical structures: 'Money Can't Buy It' (Lennox).

FORM lyrics	lyrics	musical effect/aesthetics	video shots/visual narrative
INTRO		Smooth, swirling synth lines over long, sustained chords creating a mood of tranquility and relaxation. Subdued rhythmic motion, with percussion sounds prominent in mix. Repetition of chords, richness of timbres are homologous with the mirror effect in the video.	Long shot: opulent surroundings, Lennox framed seated in front of a huge, ornate mirror – dressed in full-length blood-red evening dress, white towel draped around head, clasping a large bunch of yellow mimosa flowers. Mid shot: Lennox stands up, moving languidly and sensually in time to the music, her reflection is juxtaposed by mirror images.
			Ten shorter duration fast mid-shots follow, framing her in a variety of different poses in front of the mirror.
A	 Money can't buy it, baby Sex can't buy it, baby Drugs can't buy it, baby You can't buy it, baby 	Voice becomes foregrounded in mix, striking up a balance with Lennox's facial image which is foregrounded in the clip.	Close shot: Lennox's face, with its reflection in mirror, becomes the centre focus. First full-eye contact with the camera/viewer, with gaze shifting filtratiously from her own image in the mirror to the camera/viewer.
		Minor quality of D Dorian and the blues melodic line highlights the pensive, resigned quality of the lyrics.	Image depicted is luring, seductive, confident and narcissistic.
INSTR. BRIDGE	m	Repetition of musical ideas/ timbres from intro passage, capturing luring and contemplative mood.	Close shot continues throughout this instrumental bridge, with Lennox shutting her eyes for the first half of passage, thereafter opening them slowly.

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Emphasis is predominantly on changes to facial expression.	Close shot: Lennox's face and reflection in the mirror continues, with the gaze shifting continuously from camera to herself.	Close shot: facial expressions continue to dominate, now enhanced by slow, gestural hands movements which enter the frame, emulating the pleasure in the music.	Close facial shot of Lennox continues, hands now moving out of the frame as verse starts. Lennox's gaze is directed towards herself in the mirror. Facial expressions become more varied and animated throughout this sequence.	Continual close up shots of Lennox's face, with her singing/mouthing the lyrics throughout.
Open voicings on chords Cm9 and F9 serve to heighten the level of tension and expectation within this passage.	Vocal lines more rhythmically emphasised, highlighting the positive nature of the lyrics in this section.	Build up in musical intensity, with introduction of piano/bass riff, accenting 1st and 3rd beats.	Dynamics in vocal parts increase, with voice more foregrounded within the mix. Vocal line more embellished to accent words. Build up in instrumental layers, with guitar fills inserted at the end of line 11.	Verse is further developed by doubling in length. Dynamics increase, emphasising vocal line and lyrics. Piano/guitar fills included to intensify overall
	 I believe that love alone Might do these things for you I believe in love alone yeah, yeah. 	В	8. Take the power 9. To set you free 10. Kick down the door and 11. Throw away the key. 12. Give up your needs, 13. Your poisoned seeds, 14. Find yourself elected 15. To a different kind of creed.	16. I believe that love alone17. Might do these things for you,18. I believe that love alone19. Might do these things for you,
	В	INSTR. BRIDGE	-K	B.

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20. I believe in the power of musical interest. Noticeable creation, 21. I believe in the good words, 'yeah, yeah,' which vibration, 22. I believe in love alone cadence.	23. Won't somebody tell me rocals create blurred, dreamy take forever till mood, which captures come true, 27. All the money in the percussion pace of the percussion pace of the percussion part. Mirror mists up from the distance. A certain fragility in the satisfied. 29. You can have it all most of this section until the satisfied. 20. Won't buy you peace of mood, which captures in the expression, e.g. eyes cast down, in the expression, e.g. eyes cast down, in the expression, e.g. eyes cast down, with a hint of tears. Mirror mists up from the closeness of her throughout, with changes to breath in front of her mouth, as she looks into the distance. Hands reappear within the frame, gently and sensually caressing her face. Towards and when a drum roll of her lips evident on the glass of the crescendo leads into the mirror. Entire effect is erotic.	31–34. Money can't buy it, Chorus returns with loud baby
20. I belie creation, 21. I belie vibration, 22. I belie yeah, yea	23. Won's 24. What 25. It mig 26. We w come true 27. All th world 28. Won's mind. 29. You c 30. But y satisfied.	A ² 31–34. M baby · · · · 35. Now attention 36. cause girl, 37. And i 38. I got the result of the r

Rap section: close-up shots of face throughout, with variety of expressions – selfish, greedy, mean, conceited, confident, etc. Exaggerated use of facial expression, especially with reference to eyes, which flash wickedly and knowingly as the lyrics are emphasised. Overtones of camp style.		Close shot of face with back to the mirror, eyes face upwards for first time in the video clip. Towards end of section eyes fix firmly on camera/viewer, before looking away.	Mid shot: Lennox clutching flowers – image linked up with the first frame of the clip. Close shot: Lennox faces herself in mirror, then looks into the camera, mirror mists up in front of her mouth, upon which she traces \$ dollar signs repeatedly as the clip reaches its conclusion.
Vocals multi-tracked to create large chorus-type effect within this seciton.	Musically, this denotes as an arrival point in the song. Harmony resolves to E ^b major centre, vocals are milti-tracked to create snatial	feel and the mix is rounded and filled.	Recap of intro material. Hook line repeated ad lib, with effects, voice and fades into background of mix.
	44. I believe that love alone	(instrumental)	
	\mathbf{B}_{2}		CODA

I now wish to turn to the video clip of 'Money Can't Buy It' off the music video *Totally Diva*. Within the framework of an evolving popular musicology, I am interested in examining the processes through which visual imagery emulates musical impact. What specific techniques might be employed to identify the set of interrelationships between the musical and visual text? How do video clips construct and convey meaning within songs? And how does the structural organisation of the music relate to the visual narrative of the song, in particular to compositional processes such as repetition, rhythmic structure and tempo? To start addressing such questions I have devised a table (Table 3) which provides a structural analysis of the video clip, relating it to the musical effects and lyrical content of the song.

With reference to Table 3, numerous interesting parallels may be drawn between the musical processes and visual imagery. As with music compositional processes, the use of repetition in the structural organisation of visual events functions as a common device employed in video narrative. The central visual hook, which is represented by facial images, continuously undergoes changes in expression according to the qualities and details inherent in the musical text. This hook tends to reflect a variety of themes that correlate directly to the repetition of musical ideas and structures. Clearly functioning as the predominant mode of visual emphasis within this video clip, performer iconography (Lennox's image, her expressions and gestures) holds a vital clue to our interpretation of the music. Sensual, feminine and erotic dimensions of the visual performance have parallels in the musical qualities, for instance in the soft synth lines, the long sustained lush chords, the gentle, undulating rhythm tracks, the cascading glissandi at the end of keyboard phrases, the general arrangement and production of the mix.

Having examined vocal timbres in the song (Table 2), links might be drawn up between these and the visual qualities of timbre, such as nuances of colour and shade employed in the clip. The vivid tonal contrasts between Lennox's clothes - the red dress, white towel and the bright yellow mimosas - are emulated through the richness of instrumental colours and lush Dorian harmony in the introductory bars to the song. Here, the serene, swirling effect of the synth sounds accompany the visual framing of Lennox in regal splendour before a massive mirror amidst opulent surroundings. The 'acoustical' setting of this opening shot is enhanced by a range of effects, such as reverb, within the mix. Close up details in the facial features (smooth, flawless complexion, dark red lipstick, large made-up eyes), with constantly changing shades of expression, provide a link between the lyrical and musical structures of organisation. The technique of employing mirrors in the video clip, which repeats Lennox's image, has parallels in the specific regulation of musical ideas. This is demonstrated by the repetition of timbres, techniques of multi-tracking, doublings of melodic and riff lines and constant use of effects. In section C, programmatic motifs of vulnerability, searching and fragility are captured in the pose. Here, the vulnerable, almost tearful, downcast look of Lennox is mirrored in sound by the flanged vocals, the noticeable drop in dynamics, and the subdued rhythmic motion. Correlations between visual and musical processes of motion therefore form a critical point for analytical consideration. Motion, rhythmic tempo, musical ambience are depicted within the visual representations of the clip in a variety of ways:

1 Manipulation of sound imagery within the context of the recording often correlates directly to the positioning of the visual image within the frame of the video

- clip. Stereo imaging, the foregrounding, mid and backgrounding of sound correspond to similar processes in the visual text. In the final chorus (A²), Lennox's voice is multi-tracked with pitch shifts to enhance a wider, chorus effect. Here the clip includes a variety of rapid, interchanging mid and close up shots of the performer, which directly interact with the general increase in density of the musical text.
- 2 Musical tempo in 'Money Can't Buy It' corresponds in a number of ways to the visual sequence of events. Visual tempo is regulated by camera movement and editing, which involves alternating speeds of splicing. For example, in the introduction the rate of visual cuts is relatively high in contrast to the steady groove denoting the musical tempo, which heightens the overall level of anticipation. Once the vocals enter with the lyrics, editing is reduced, so as not to detract from the image of the performance and the musical tempo. Rate of change in musical gestures and the formal sections of the song (Table 3) appear to be co-ordinated directly with the singer's mode of expression and apparent control of the image.
- 3 Rhythmic pulse, groove or 'feel' are expressed in a variety of visual processes throughout the clip. Percussion and kit tracks set up the main groove that activate the performer into motion in the first few frames. But the visual images frequently assume an independent rhythmic flow of their own, at times out of sync with the musical rhythm. Lennox sways in time to the rhythm of the music during the beginning of the clip, but thereafter for most of the song performs without much physical response to the beat. This might be explained through the nature of the slow, undulating ballad style. Jody Berland throws further light on this issue by discussing the significance of rhythmic movement in the context of music video:

The images caress the beat; yet they determine the rhythm of the experience just as the musical rhythm determines their effectiveness. The rhythm conquers all; first the real subject (me watching), and then, after some struggle, of course, the fictional object . . . (Berland 1993, p. 40)

4 Perhaps the most powerful expression of rhythm is captured through the compelling image of Lennox herself, which includes variants of physical movement intensified and amplified by the clever and deceptive use of mirrors. This functions to emphasise the obvious narcissistic and hedonistic representation of Lennox as diva. Her flirtatious yet detached performance is mirrored by the links between the range of visual and sonic images (see Table 3).

Movement within and between the musical-visual structures of 'Money Can't Buy It' frames a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of rich timbres; this is at the core of deciphering experience and enjoyment within the song. Scrutiny of the sonic and visual images provides us with an essential clue towards understanding the political constructs of the performance; it is the 'grain' of the voice with all its signifiers that negotiates strategies of sexuality, style and gender within pop songs. With further reference to Table 3, I now wish to turn to the processes, gestures and techniques associated with the realisation of performance within the video clip. How far do the visual codes follow any logic in the musical text? And how might the visualisation of the performance heighten any understanding and awareness of the song? Clearly the lyrical connotations and musical qualities constitute an integral part of the visual narrative. Lennox emphasises and articulates the lyrics in a way that further enhances the narrative. Performance iconography

in pop videos tends to construct its own narrative, which often leads to different readings of the song (cf. Goodwin 1993). In 'Money Can't Buy It', for example, an intimate and new mode of address is articulated through the close-up shots of Lennox's face. With the face operating as a prime visual hook, the viewer/fan/ spectator is compelled to concentrate on her expression as a means for gaining an understanding of the narrative. Merging of musical sound with performance iconography, together with all the layers of aural and visual imagery, therefore serve to construct the syntax of the song: the rhythm, harmony, melodies, formal structures, textures, instrumental and vocal timbres are a few of the parameters juxtaposed in countless permutations with the visual components of colour, form and expression, as represented by Lennox's face, the red dress, white towel, yellow flowers, the mirrors in the background of the performance set. Ultimately, we might consider the gestural and somatic properties of the performance as responsible for regulating continuity in the narrative and establishing the emotive and aesthetic qualities of the song.

 \mathbf{v}

As we have so far seen, the analysis of star iconography in video clips forms an essential pathway towards understanding and evaluating meaning in pop music. The visualisation of performance, an integral part of pop, functions to heighten responses of pleasure through the visual imagery of the star, thus providing the viewer/listener with an intimate point of reference. Experiences of listening to music involve the formulation of abstract and imaginary mental visualisations. I have attempted to demonstrate how codes associated with the unfolding of the video clip of 'Money Can't Buy It' afford different readings of the musical text. In this song musical structures become transposed into facial expressions, which include the mouthing of words, eye movement and contact, head rotation, smiles and pouting. Through the imposition of these codes of representation within the clip, the viewer's sense of imagination soon exceeds the boundaries of the visual image. In other words, the sense of perception becomes altered through visual images in a manner that shapes, enhances and even detracts from our experience of the music on its own. Interestingly, the Totally Diva video positions Lennox in the role of successful diva within a highly introspective, narcissistic and self-critical context. 14 In 'Money Can't Buy It' she is dressed in a way which suggests that she is preparing to go out; the entire video clip revolves around the pop star. Seated in front of a massive ornate, baroque mirror, the opening shot positions Lennox as central focal point. With clever use of mirror effects to create various juxtapositions of Lennox's face, the entire video is shot in the same room. As I have already discussed, facial images of expressions emerge as a central code for transporting and reinforcing the musical sound. Throughout the video, Lennox is depicted as a 'rich, white girl', possessing 'every kind of thing that money can buy', which prompts two distinct readings. First, the portrayal of some fictional, stereotypical character, very feminine, beautiful and greedy, aspiring to everything money can buy. There is a sense of irony employed in this reading, a point I will return to later. Second, foregrounding Lennox as she wishes to portray herself, an authentic representation of the character as she really is is depicted by the images in the clip. Dominance of the star image within the narrative of the song attaches a particular meaning to the song. Significantly, however, throughout all nine songs of the video Totally Diva, Lennox undergoes character transformations, which construct a range of intentionally conflicting points of interpretation. We therefore need to engage ourselves with questions of how Lennox intends to reconstruct or perpetuate her identity as star performer. To what extent does she attempt to conceal her 'real' self? And how might the construction of a particular identity relate to the promotion of the star within the record industry? Goodwin has attempted to address the functional role of stardom in music videos:

. . . the creation of character identities for pop stars provides a point of identification for the listener-spectator – a necessary one, given the lack of characterization or narrative depth in song lyrics . . . (T)he construction of star identities is central to the economics of the music industry . . . Thus, stardom, while it may have varied meanings for the consumer, is always functional from the perspective of the music industry. (Goodwin 1993, p. 103)

Such an observation suggests that the focus often rests more on the star (Lennox), in terms of the video text, than on the narrative itself. In analysing star imagery in pop music, Goodwin alerts us to how the precise packaging and designing of album covers, in addition to video and other promotional material, serves to reveal specific codes of meaning by playing a crucial part in creating the actual genre (see Goodwin 1993). The representation of Lennox's face on the album *Diva* and the video *Totally Diva* openly spotlights the central theme of this her first solo production. With an elaborate, ornate headpiece, and 'look' of seduction, conceit and self-assurance, Lennox's head shot epitomises her role as diva.¹⁵

There is more than a touch of parody in the theatrical pose of the album cover image, which foregrounds Lennox as masquerader of the carnivalesque body. Such a strategy, it might be argued, tends to keep femininity at a distance, which, as Sue-Ellen Case describes, 'offers the female viewer a way to be the spectator of female roles while not remaining close to them . . . attaining the distance from them required to enter the psychoanalytic viewing space' (Case 1993, p. 301). Similarly, Judith Butler suggests gender might be perceived as performance in the case of drag if it constructs the 'ideal it attempts to approximate', thus producing 'the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core' (1993, p. 317). Lennox's performance in the video clip not only offers up a multiplicity of musical styles and narratives that signify the potency of her agency, but through the various character portrayals in each of the songs in the music video she succeeds in expressing a set of psychic identifications (see Butler 1993, p. 316), which set out to parody any fixed notions of gender and sexuality. And so representations of performance in the video together with the image on the album covers become directly aligned to the musical sounds themselves, which all blend to offer the listener-spectator intensified readings of the song. Performance iconography therefore provides us with an insight into how the performer structures and interprets her own persona; herein lie the qualities attached to gesture and pose, which in turn become central to the search for meaning.

Lennox's representation of herself as a 'rich, white girl' posits a strategy of wry irony. During the 1980s she insisted that she did not want to appear as a 'girlie' singer wearing pretty dresses. Gillian Gaar has described how since the late 1970s Lennox consciously shaped her image in a way to confront stereotypical notions of femininity. Ever since the Eurhythmics, Lennox has always voiced her concern that videos should be used for more than just promotional purposes, viewing music videos as a channel for 'artistic expression' (Gaar 1993, p. 329).

Commenting on her sexuality and androgynous look, she explained in *Sweet Dreams*:

I don't want to change sexual labels – I want to sidestep them, and to confound people a little bit with something fresher and less clichéd. (ibid.)

However, any straightforward notions of gender bending disappear in 'Money Can't Buy It' as Lennox masquerades as precisely the character she originally intended to avoid. Such characterisations, as depicted in a number of the songs in Totally Diva, might be viewed as a reaction to the more androgynous image associated with her in the 1980s. A sense of parody prevails throughout the Diva album, with Lennox employing tactics which might be considered as a provocative strategy of protest. Referring back to Koskoff's third and fourth categories of performance, the employment of a 'pretty girl' image in the video, 'Money Can't Buy It' and the drag-like representation on the Diva album cover express intentional statements of social deception and sexual mobility. There are obvious codes of sexuality and power integrated within images associated with Lennox cast in the role of performer both in the music and within the flexibility of her 'look'. Lennox exhibits a range of counternarratives that constitute her personalised politics of expression. This is evident, for example, through the construction of the 'pretty girl' image in the video clip and the 'little girl' vocal timbres in Section C of the song (Table 2), which evoke impersonations of femininity, thus negotiating a strategy that flirts with conformity. All this is evident, to varying degrees, in the visual imagery of the video clip, where powerful references of narcissism, voyeurism and eroticism construct a personal 'rhetoric of seduction' (see McClary 1991, p. 39). From the position of male spectatorship, the uncertainty and ambiguity in such codes inevitably prompts countless readings. Lennox's fetishised image often appears confusing, yet at the same time exhilarating, challenging and threatening. The politics of power and pleasure, sexual fantasy, notions of empowerment, desire, gender blurring are all constituents of her idiom. Through her womanliness and parody of femininity, one might argue that Lennox achieves success in destabilising the male heterosexual gaze.¹⁶

To return to several of my introductory points, popular musicologists, while taking on board the task of exploring the musical structures implicit in a text, also need to address the social, cultural and political components of the music itself. In order to unravel these codes, we require methods and approaches appropriate for dealing with musical representations in the technologically produced forms of recordings and music videos. During this article I have attempted to demonstrate how the aesthetic experience and nuances of jouissance afforded by a song written in the 1990s are grounded in musical gestures and star iconography. Issues of gender and power therefore become integral to negotiating meaning within a musicological framework, with the practice of deciphering sound relying ultimately on the analyst's readings of the musical text from a variety of perspectives. A range of ambiguities are encoded in the song 'Money Can't Buy It', which beg questions concerning the actual definition of texts, how they are constructed, and what type of response they elicit. By problematising the interpretation of musical styles, we need to bear in mind that all pop music products are scopogenic in the sense that they expose a variety of readings when displayed and presented to us; herein, I would argue, lies their meaningfulness. No meaning alone exists within the musical terms, chord structures, diatonic or modal systems, kit tracks or percussion riffs until someone actually identifies these parameters as harmony and rhythm. Moreover, pop styles never crystallise; they are constantly transient. With the rapid and ever increasing emergence of new identities within a 1990s postmodern context, firmly embedded in vacillating patterns of marketing and consumption, popular musicologists now have to transcend the old habits of conventional practice to assimilate the collective social, political, economic and cultural effects of musical signification. We need to continually ask ourselves: if musical meaning is a direct result of understanding predicated on our experiences, how might such an understanding be linked to any previous unheld meaning? I would argue that it is only through the interpretation of pop in its discursive location that popular musicology starts gaining any sense of purpose.

Endnotes

- The content of this article is drawn from a paper with a similar title presented at the Seventh International Conference on Popular Music (IASPM) held at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, July 1993. Thanks to Derek Scott and Lucy Green for comments and assistance in editing.
- One case in point is the work done by Philip Brett, who points out that through the 'immediacy of musical and bodily experience' implicit within popular music, musicologists involved in studying this in the postwar era, the 'dissidents' of musicology, were 'banished from the academic study of music' (1994, p. 371).
- 3. Williamson also argues that through processes of mass mediation, pop music imposes on society internal imaginary relationships between its individuals and subcultures in an attempt to construct notions of a 'common culture' (1993, p. 190).
- See Wolff (1990); McClary (1991); Citron (1993).
- Malcolm Miller views eroticism as 'concomitant with a life force which, while resisting control, is nevertheless expressed' (see 'A balance against the death wish', THE, 28 August 1992).
- 6. In spite of the massive developments in technology during recent years, it might be argued that the images of gender and sexuality, whilst appearing to transform, mutate and challenge traditions, continually appropriate conventional perceptions and expectations. However, this obviously varies greatly from one genre to the next, as well as from one artist to the next.
- Best and Kellner suggest that Baudrillard's work in the 1980s could be perceived as 'transpolitical' by assuming a stance outside any

- fixed political position. In 1989 Baudrillard stated that everyone had become transsexual, as well as transpolitical, taking on a type of political androgyny akin to 'political drag queens' (1991, pp. 137, 142).
- 8. Use of Roland T808/909 percussion samples evident within the crisp and cleanly quantised rhythm track together with the quality of the mix reveals the approximate period of the song, i.e. 1992.
- 9. My choice of methodologies for this analysis is based on an implicit understanding that the analyst functions both as informant and critical observer (cf. Middleton 1993, p. 180), with a sense of social and cultural awareness of the musical example under scrutiny. I agree with Middleton's view that the 'scholar-fan' position is essential to any such musical analysis.
- 10. Intro-Chorus-Bridge-Verse-Chorus-Verse-Bridge-Chorus-Verse-Coda.
- My earlier work on microlevel and macrolevel systems of modal harmonic systems in the music of Prince attempts to reveal how modality functions differently from diatonic harmony (Hawkins 1992, pp. 325ff).
- 12. In her chapter 'Living to Tell', from Feminine Endings, McClary has pointed out how Madonna, like Lennox, refutes musical and cultural conventional resolution, which serve to create alternative musical processes (1991, p. 161).
- 13. Shepherd has investigated how vocal timbres reflect personalised notions of gender. For example, on female timbres, he states '(t)he timbres of woman-as-sex-object . . . speak to a male image of femininity . . . The vocal sheen and vocal hardness that characterise the woman-as-sex-object and the woman moving towards a male location in the social structure can become exaggerated to stridency

- when the woman singer as rock artist attempts to carve out a niche for herself' (1987, pp. 169–70).
- We might consider this entire video as a personal, introspective and evaluative account of herself.
- 15. A diva is a great, famous, successful, and highly distinguished female singer, from Latin: a goddess, from divas DIVINE. This
- term is employed commonly to 1990s female pop stars and groups, such as Dina Carroll, Loni Clark, Bjork, En Vogue, Gabrielle, Lisa Stansfield, Kym Sims, Sister Sledge, Sarah Washington and Monie Love.
- However, as identity is never fixed I feel reluctant to posit any single reading of Lennox's image.

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