A MUSICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF *NATURE'S BEST*

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Abstract

Academic research on New Zealand popular music has primarily been conducted from historical and cultural perspectives. While asking important questions, these sources have rarely engaged with the musical details of New Zealand popular music. This thesis is a musicological analysis of the 100 songs from the three *Nature's Best* albums. The musical perspective complements the socio-cultural research on New Zealand popular music.

The *Nature's Best* project was instigated by Mike Chunn in 2001 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA). All songwriting members of APRA and 100 celebrities and critics were invited to vote for their ten favourite New Zealand popular songs. Fourmyula's 1969 hit 'Nature' gained the most votes. The three *Nature's Best* CDs ranked the top 100 songs. The albums were a commercial success upon release in 2002 and 2003.

This thesis analyses the 100 songs with regards to eight musical parameters: harmony, melodic construction, form, beat, length, tempo, introductory hooks and instrumental solos. The analytical methods were drawn from classical and popular musicology. Interviews with twelve songwriters were also conducted to gain alternative viewpoints on the analysis. The 100 songs provide a sample of New Zealand popular music from 1970 until 2000; thus, the analysis is useful for addressing questions of New Zealand musical style and traits.

The results suggest New Zealand songwriters follow fundamental principles of Anglo-American songwriting, such as arched and balanced melodies, and forms based on repeated and contrasting sections. The harmonic language is similar to international artists of the same period; however, it appears 1970s and 1980s songwriters were more adventurous in this area compared with their 1990s counterparts. The instrumental solos were notable for an anti-virtuosic trait. It is argued this feature mirrors aspects of New Zealand identity.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

1. Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) was founded in 1926. To celebrate the organisation's 75th anniversary in 2001, a 100-strong Australian panel voted for the top 30 Australian popular songs of the period 1926-2001. They deemed The Easybeats' 'Friday On My Mind' the best. Mike Chunn, the head of APRA New Zealand, attended the conference at which the Australian songs were named; he returned to New Zealand and began arrangements for a similar project.

APRA invited its 4000 New Zealand-based members to vote for their ten favourite New Zealand songs, in no order of preference. The organisation also sent forms to 100 critics, celebrities and others, whose names had been drawn at random. There was no shortlist, but only original compositions by New Zealand artists were eligible. 911 songs received votes. APRA did not keep the voting records; however, the total votes cast likely ranged from 6000 to 8000.[1]

Fourmyula's 1969 hit 'Nature' received the most votes, followed by Crowded House's 'Don't Dream It's Over' and Dave Dobbyn's 'Loyal.' APRA successfully negotiated a record deal with Sony Music (the Australians could not agree on terms) and on 14 January 2002, *Nature's Best* was released. The two-disc CD contained 30 tracks, which, according to the cover, were "New Zealand's Top 30 Songs of All Time." *Nature's Best 2* and *Nature's Best 3*, which ranked the songs placed 31 to 100, followed in October 2002 and May 2003.

This thesis is primarily a musicological analysis of the 100 songs on *Nature's Best*.[2] The research, broadly speaking, falls under the banner of empirical

[1] These figures are based on "Nature's Best DVD," *Amplifier New Zealand Music*, from http://www.amplifier.co.nz/release/13693/natures-best-dvd.html (accessed 17 April 2011), and an interview with Mike Chunn. Full details of the interviews are provided in the reference section below.
[2] Unless otherwise specified, *Nature's Best* hereafter refers to the three albums as a collection.

musicology, insofar as it "embodies a principled awareness of both the potential to engage with large bodies of relevant data, and the appropriate methods for achieving this."[3] Here, "musicological analysis" is defined as studying musical elements in musical terms. Songs are examined in terms of harmonies, melodic contours, form, tempo, length, beat, hooks and instrumental sections. This analysis creates data from which it is possible to draw conclusions about the songs, as related to musical or socio-cultural issues. In this regard, the analytical process is similar to a scientific experiment: establish a data set, run a test, and infer theoretical ideas from the results. However, given the partly subjective nature of analysis, it is necessary to proceed cautiously so that any deductions are accurate and valid.

Due to space constraints, little attention is paid to the specific historical, cultural and social settings in which the songs were originally written and released. The primary concern is musical; social and cultural ideas will be used to embellish the analytical work, rather than provide a starting point. This is not to deny the importance of such factors; the research complements other perspectives on New Zealand popular music, some of which are considered in Chapter 2.

The first task is to justify *Nature's Best* as material worthy of investigation. Upon release, the first album went many times platinum.[4] Simon Frith points out that commercial success does not necessarily preclude critical acclaim. He cites Bruce Springsteen's 1986 album *Live/1975-85*, a live compilation released at Christmas. It was critically praised, unusual for such ventures, and became the biggest "pop commodity of the moment."[5] However, in another context, Frith warns, "the equation of popular culture with market choice is problematic." Sales figures do not indicate cultural importance or value because it is rarely

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[3] Nicholas Cook and Eric Clarke, "Introduction: What is Empirical Musicology?" in *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects*, eds. Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.
[4] A "platinum" album in New Zealand sells 15,000 copies. One report suggests the three *Nature's Best* CDs had collectively sold 150,000 copies by 2004. See "Nature's Best DVD," (accessed 17 April 2011).
[5] Simon Frith, "The Real Thing — Bruce Springsteen," reprinted in Simon Frith, *Music For Pleasure* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 94-101.

known why people purchase music.[6] Thus, it is risky to assert *Nature's Best*'s worth simply because of its commercial achievements.

Furthermore, an academic, in the early stages of the research, argued that *Nature's Best* was a "fairly mainstream representation of New Zealand music," suggesting both blandness and cultural exclusion.[7] The academic suggested studying alternative musical voices that attempt to express stronger forms of local identity in New Zealand.

There are two points to make in reply. Without engaging debates over definitions, the songs on *Nature's Best* were not necessarily "mainstream" when originally released, but rather, became so when re-contextualized as part of a compilation album. Music by Sneaky Feelings, The Chills, Darcy Clay or The Front Lawn, for example, was produced in the alternative corners of New Zealand music. Therefore, there has been no change in the songs' musical value simply because they appear on a different album. Commercial successes have indicated the albums' popular and, by extension, "mainstream" status; however, this success was subsequent to the voting process and likely depended, in part, on clever marketing.

Second, songwriters, not the general public or a record company, primarily determined *Nature's Best*. As Mike Chunn pointed out, "an APRA member is a songwriter…it didn't matter to them if it was a big hit…to a songwriter, a song is a work of art."[8] This can be compared to musical talent shows, such as *American Idol*, where voters seem to favour contestants as much for their image as for their musicianship. One cannot rule out this scenario in the case of *Nature's Best*, and one must be wary of taking comments such as Chunn's at face value, but as a musician, it is plausible that a songwriter would take greater interest in the musical craft of a song over extra-musical features.

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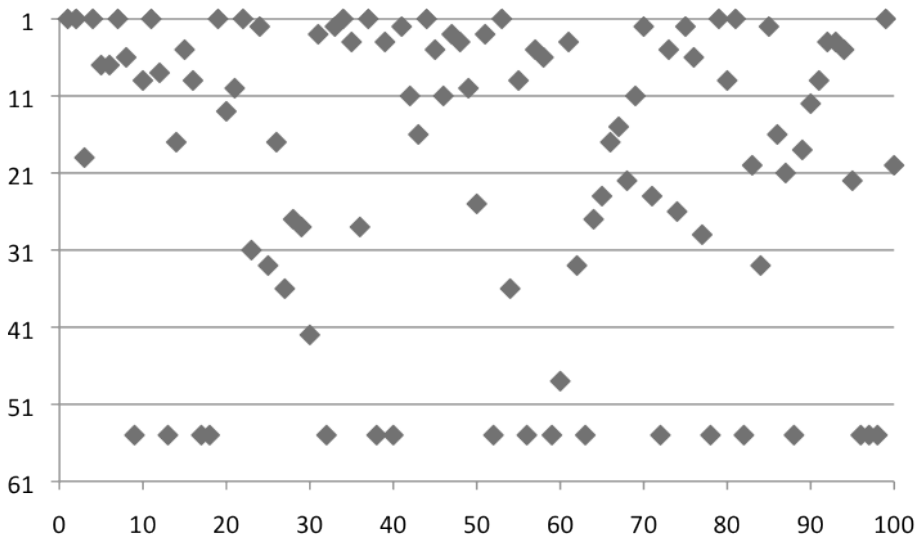
[6] Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 15.
[7] Email, May 2011. The name is withheld for privacy reasons.
[8] Interview.



Graph 1.1 *Nature's Best* Ranking (x) Against Peak Chart Position (y)[9]

Graph 1.1 supports this point. There is no discernible relationship between the *Nature's Best* positions and the songs' peak chart positions, when released as singles. 38 of the songs charted below number twenty, which in the small music industry of New Zealand suggests a lack of commercial success and exposure. Of those 38 songs, eighteen failed to chart at all. This does not take into account, for example, album tracks from popular albums[10], but it appears voters were not necessarily swayed by the popularity of individual songs.

Music videos, live performances and general media exposure, may have influenced voters. Dave Dobbyn's 'Loyal,' for example, is particularly memorable because of the video in which Dobbyn wears a decoratively patterned woolen jersey and sports a healthy mullet. Nonetheless, there is reason to believe the music would have shaped the voting process in some way, as suggested by Chunn's comments, personal experience, and the lacking relationship between *Nature's Best* and chart performance. These factors justify a musical study of the 100 songs.

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[9] The y-axis values have been inverted for ease of presentation; i.e. number one is the highest value. Songs positioned at "55" represent those that did not chart. "55" was chosen arbitrarily but allows for clear presentation of the data (compared to assigning non-charting songs "0") and does not interfere with the presentation of the remaining data (compared to assigning non-charting songs "100").

[10] For example, Crowded House's 'Private Universe' from *Together Alone*.

The thesis is structured as follows: in the remainder of Chapter 1, the research aims are presented. Chapter 2 covers the relevant literature that informs this study, moving from general debates to more specific analytical issues. The state of New Zealand popular music studies is also considered in order to situate this thesis in the field. In Chapter 3, the analytical methods are listed. Chapter 4 is the heart of the thesis; the analytical results are outlined with discussion of numerous examples. Chapter 5 then considers the implications of these results. Finally in Chapter 6, the key ideas are summarized and ideas for future research offered.

1.2 AIMS AND QUESTIONS

A number of factors have informed this research. The thesis originated from a personal concern, to borrow John Covach's phrase, "with how the music sounds."[11] As will be explored below, popular music is comprised of text, performance and context, all intertwined in a complex fashion; but often, it is the notes, chords, rhythms, and so forth, of a song to or for which one listens.[12] At a general level, the study provides an opportunity to identify some individual elements of popular music and to examine their place within songs.

The ideal research would determine why *Nature's Best* is made up as it is. Such a question is impossible to answer without profiles of every voter; however, it is possible to ascertain overall trends and features of the songs. From there, points of comparison can be made between specific songs, or groups of songs and the average findings.

The *Nature's Best* list reveals some historical trends. Songs written during the 75 years of APRA's existence, 1926-2001, were eligible for *Nature's Best*, yet only one was written pre-1950 and 95 between 1975 and 2000. The 1980s and

[11] John Covach, "Popular Music, Unpopular Musicology," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 466.
[12] Covach believes his argument is representative of musicians and I would agree, not in the least because of the practical implications of such a position. Ibid., 466.

1990s both contributed 38. There are several possible reasons for these observations.

In the early era of New Zealand rock and roll, approximately 1950-1970, artists primarily recorded cover songs. Well-known acts of this time, such as Johnny Devlin, Ray Columbus, Dinah Lee or The La De Das, are consequently denied a place on the list. As John Dix points out, covering songs was strongly encouraged by the record industry, a practice that stunted the development of original New Zealand rock and roll. He further notes the importance of Fourmyula in the late 1960s, who had the most hit singles of any New Zealand act during the decade, but more significantly, penned original songs.[13]

With regards the proliferation of 1990s songs, the Broadcasting Act (1989) and New Zealand On Air funding scheme, begun in 1989, have been important. New Zealand On Air was established to protect, promote and develop New Zealand popular music[14] and has arguably helped to expand the New Zealand music scene.[15] These industry changes may therefore explain some aspects of *Nature's Best*.

The second obvious feature of *Nature's Best* is the songwriters with multiple songs: Dave Dobbyn has ten songwriting credits, Neil Finn and Tim Finn have seventeen combined under a variety of guises, Don McGlashan has five credits, while Bic Runga and Sharon O'Neill have four apiece.[16] Runga's songs were, notably, all from her 1997 debut album *Drive*.

It is tempting to view these features in terms of an imagined demographic of voters — an 'old-boys club' on the one hand, which explains the 1970s and

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[13] John Dix, *Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock and Roll, 1955 to the Modern Era, rev. ed.* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 90-91.
[14] See Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music, 2nd ed.* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 40-53.
[15] See Roy Shuker and Michael Pickering, "Kiwi Rock: Popular Music and Cultural Identity in New Zealand," *Popular Music* 13, no. 3, Australia/New Zealand Issue (1994), 261.
[16] These figures do not necessarily reflect the actual number of songs. For example, Tim Finn and Neil Finn are both credited for 'Four Seasons in One Day' and 'Weather With You' recorded with Crowded House. Likewise, Dave Dobbyn and Ian Morris are both recognized for Th'Dudes' 'Be Mine Tonight' and 'Bliss.'

1980s rock songs, and the younger generation who all voted for the songs *du jour*, such as those by Runga, The Feelers, Zed and Fur Patrol. This view probably contains some truth, however, it is too simplistic to fully account for *Nature's Best*. The analysis may, therefore, reveal musical reasons behind the list.

The primary benefit of *Nature's Best* is that it offers a sample of New Zealand popular music from around 1970 until 2000. Further, the 100 songs can be divided into smaller samples according to male/female songwriters, individual songwriters, specific eras, and so forth. At only 100 songs, it is debatable if this sample is representative of the timeframe; nonetheless, a sample it is and the albums offer an excellent opportunity to engage wider debates.

One of the central issues concerning New Zealand music is the adjectival "New Zealand." The Broadcasting Act (1989) aims to support and advocate New Zealand culture and "content."[17] Yet New Zealand "content" is an undefined attribute. In critical circles, the phrases "New Zealand music" or "New Zealand sound" are frequently employed, but with little qualification.[18] It is unclear if the phrases are related to geography, the musicians or musical style. Rather, whatever the term "New Zealand" denotes is taken as self-evident.

To further complicate the situation, Geoff Lealand boldly asserted in 1988, "all New Zealand music…is derivative."[19] To date, no author has successfully defended or overturned this statement on musical grounds. By isolating a sample of New Zealand music and analysing its fundamental components, it is possible to view these songs in relation to Lealand's claim. If there is a New Zealand style, for example, then one must be able to find its musical components in

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[17] Shuker and Pickering, "Kiwi Rock," 271.
[18] See, for example, Simon Sweetman, "The Good, The Bad and The Clean," *Blog on the Tracks*, 28 February 2011, from http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/blogs/blog-on-the-tracks/4711064/The-good-the-bad-and-The-Clean (accessed 13 June 2011); or "New Zealand Culture," from http://www.eske-style.co.nz/nzculture.asp#music (accessed 21 January 2012); or Alex Ross, "Nothing's Going to Happen: The Story of New Zealand Rock Music," *Alex Ross: The Rest is Noise*, 15 April 2008, from http://www.therestisnoise.com/2008/04/nothings-going-to-happen-the-story-of-new-zealand-rock.html (accessed 29 May 2011).
[19] Geoff Lealand, *A Foreign Egg In Our Nest?: American Popular Culture in New Zealand* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1988), 75.

texts. At the heart of this study, therefore, is the question of what *Nature's Best* reveals about popular music from New Zealand.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

Throughout this thesis, distinctions will be made between classical and popular music mainly in a harmonic context and in a generalizing manner (e.g. "Compared to classical music, popular music…"). Therefore, a brief note on definitions is required. Tagg's "axiomatic triangle" of folk, art (i.e. classical), and popular music neatly encapsulates the present position.[20] Popular music is, thus, taken to be music that is "stored and distributed in recorded form."[21] Classical music is defined more narrowly as the score-based, Western concert music using the principles of functional tonal harmony, thus ranging approximately from Bach to Brahms.

Stylistic distinctions are occasionally invoked under the umbrella of "popular music." It is assumed that the reader will be familiar with the basic principles of popular music styles that qualification of these claims is unnecessary. With regards to all definitions and distinctions, the examples discussed below are typical enough that there should be few qualms.

[20] Philip Tagg, "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice," *Popular Music* 2, Theory and Method (1982), pp. 42-43.
[21] Ibid., 42.

2. Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review begins with the changes that occurred in musicology during the 1980s. These changes arguably encouraged the development of popular musicology.[1] This leads to an overview of the new discipline and its central debate: text versus context, also manifested as music versus culture, analysis versus criticism, or notes versus timbres. It is proposed that scholars must be sympathetic to both standpoints. To justify this approach, the faults will be highlighted of literature at both ends of the text-context spectrum.

The focus then shifts to analysing popular music texts. Debates arise in this area because of the uneasy relationship between traditional analysis, developed alongside classical music, and popular music. It is necessary to consider whether, or to what extent, established analytical tools are relevant or applicable in a different context. Negotiating the divide provides a foundation for the analytical methods used in this study, outlined in Chapter 3. Finally, popular musicology in New Zealand is considered. This body of literature is in its infancy; the research will be summarized in order to situate the current study within that context.

2.2 MUSICOLOGY AND POPULAR MUSICOLOGY

Musicology originated during the second half of the nineteenth century, philosophically underpinned by positivism. *Musikwissenschaft* considered itself parallel with the natural sciences insofar as investigations were deemed 'objective.' Prominent musicological activities included historical musicology — preparing editions — and musical analysis — verifying and developing theories with regards to the 'factual' evidence of the score.

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[1] I am not distinguishing between "popular musicology" and "popular music studies"; both are taken to mean a scholar studying popular music. Semantic differences may be more marked in an American context than in Britain, because of the pronounced academic division of labour. The journal *Popular Music* can be taken as representative of the discipline in question.

During the 1980s, Joseph Kerman altered the discipline's course. In his seminal *Contemplating Music*, Kerman challenged the positivistic tendencies of musicology in favour of approaches that focused on "music as aesthetic experience."[2] *Contemplating Music* furthered ideas put forth in his 1980 article, "How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out," which critiqued both the ideological bias of the analytical tradition and the limitations of rigid analytical methods.[3]

In "How We Got Into Analysis," Kerman discusses Schumann's 'Aus meinen Thränen spriessen' from the song cycle *Dichterliebe* and critiques Schenker's analysis of the song, as illustrated in the following passage:

> As is not infrequently the case with Schenkerian analysis, the fragile artistic content is skimped in the analytical treatment. The song's most striking feature — practically its raison d'être, one would think — is the series of paired cadences in the voice and then the piano at the conclusion of lines 2, 4, and 8 of the poem…Ambiguities such as those set up by Schumann's cadences are likely to strike a critic as a good place to focus his investigation, to begin seeing what is special and fine about the song. The analyst's instinct is to reduce these ambiguities out of existence.[4]

Kerman seeks to explain how the music may be perceived and experienced by the listener. He opposes the formalist argument, which explains music as an "autonomous organism" — that is, its meanings and value are located solely in the music itself. [5]

Furthermore, there was a growing concern that analysis was conducted with little consideration of the social conditions that influenced the music's composition and reception.[6] Consequently, one could read classical music

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[2] Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 12.
[3] Joseph Kerman, "How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 2 (1980), pp. 311-331.
[4] Ibid., 325.
[5] Kerman, *Contemplating Music*, pp. 72-73.
[6] See Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 91-93.

history as the teleological development of tonality, from Bach to Wagner, leading into the tone rows of Schoenberg; paradoxically, a history of ahistorical works. Hand in hand with the idea of "music as aesthetic experience" was the need to relate music to its social and cultural surroundings. Although this is a greatly simplified account, these philosophical changes are important because around the same time as Kerman's publications, the first formal seeds of popular musicology were sewn.

In 1981, the first International Conference on Popular Music Research was held and met with incredulity and ridicule, suggesting

> Either popular music is so worthless it should not be taken seriously…or academics are so hopeless — absent-mindedly mumbling long Latin words under their mortarboards in ivory towers — that the prospect of them trying to deal with anything as important as popular music is just absurd.[7]

Humour aside, Stan Hawkins noted, in 1996, "implications of consumerism, commercialism, trend and hype…have repeatedly curtailed any serious opportunity for studying popular music."[8] Robert Fink echoed this view, arguing "it has been axiomatic that [the] discipline…is not going to travel well — especially 'down scale,' to the type of music that musicologists have spent their professional lives pointedly ignoring."[9]

This situation is somewhat contradictory given musicology's desire to expand beyond the Western classical canon — as Kerman asked, "Cannot a criticism be developed that will explain, validate, or just plain illuminate…other musical traditions?"[10] Perhaps in recent years, attitudes have improved; but traditionally, popular music scholars have faced stiff opposition from traditional musicologists due to lingering distrust of their subject matter. This situation has

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[7] Philip Tagg, "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice," *Popular Music* 2, Theory and Method (1982), 38.
[8] Stan Hawkins, "Perspectives in Popular Musicology: Music, Lennox, and Meaning in 1990s Pop," *Popular Music* 15, no. 1 (1996), 17.
[9] Robert Fink, "Elvis Everywhere: Musicology and Popular Music Studies at the Twilight of the Canon," *American Music* 16, no. 2 (1998), 137.
[10] Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," 320. His historical overview of music analysis also broaches the circularity of criticism that arose from such practices — i.e. German music is 'great' because it can be analysed, analysis demonstrates the 'greatness' of German music.

been driven by the perceived dichotomy between "music that functions as art, as opposed to entertainment or some other ancillary or background function."[11]

The practitioners have not always helped the quandary. Whereas music analysts emphasised the text over context, popular music scholars have predominantly examined sociological and cultural factors — popular music's place and role within a given culture, the ideologies it supports or contradicts, and so forth — without considering the musical texts.[12] As John Covach pointed out, classical musicologists ignored popular musicology because of their fundamentally different approach; at the same time, popular musicologists preferred to be ignored because they considered the classical tools of research inadequate for their purposes.[13]

Covach was writing over a decade ago; since then, he, along with Walter Everett and Allan F. Moore have developed an analytical tradition being enriched by a new generation of scholars. Yet as bibliographies in journals such as *Popular Music* indicate, there remains a split within popular music studies — musicologists on the one hand, cultural, social and media theorists on the other. The popular music scholar requires, to a certain extent, "unique disciplinary training,"[14] but it is more difficult to agree that "the musicologist interested in popular music has to invent critical techniques, codes, and paradigms from scratch," or fight off the "ideological claptrap of their musicological training."[15] Examining literature from both sides will help to achieve, for the time being, a "disciplinary *détente*."[16]

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[11] Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.
[12] John Covach, "Popular Music, Unpopular Musicology," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 452.
[13] Ibid., 455.
[14] Fink, "Elvis Everywhere," 136.
[15] Susan McClary and Robert Walser, "Start Making Sense! Musicology Wrestles with Rock," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, eds. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 280-281.
[16] Covach, "Popular Music, Unpopular Musicology," 455.

2.3 POPULAR MUSIC TEXT AND CONTEXT

2.3.1 "Anti-Musicology" of the Popular Song

Antoine Hennion's "Anti-Musicology" of a pop song demonstrates the sizeable task facing popular musicologists.[17] Hennion states,

> The final product, consisting of highly disparate elements which can be considered individually and as a mixture, is the fruit of a continuous exchange of views between the various members of the team; and the result is the fusion between musical objects and the needs of the public.[18]

Hennion is primarily concerned with the "disparate elements" of popular music. At a macro level, Hennion divides the song into its "raw materials" and the "techniques of the song." Under the first heading fall the music, the lyrics, the character and their synthesis. These elements are subdivided further as "techniques of the song." Thus, one can consider musical form (which can be broken into introductions, verses, choruses, etc.); the melody, rhythm, and orchestral backing; the 'story' of the lyrics, the vocabulary and the versification; and the artist's persona, voice, image and history.

The public is situated opposite the artist. Audiences consume the song and create "its meaning and its substance."[19] In the middle sits the producer, who monitors the audience's pulse; the producer must determine public tastes and translate these demands into a musical entity. The pop music "team" must also consider distribution and dissemination methods, whether through radio, television, a live performance, as part of a film soundtrack and so forth. Hennion's research, from the late 1970s, may appear dated, however, the importance of distribution was enhanced in subsequent years with the advent of music videos and MTV.

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[17] Unless otherwise cited, this discussion is based on Antoine Hennion, "The Production of Success: An Anti-Musicology of the Pop Song," *Popular Music* 3, Producers and Markets (1983), pp. 159-193.
[18] Ibid., pp. 160-161.
[19] Ibid., 191.

A few minor aspects of Hennion's argument can be developed or adapted when transferred from a French, commercial hits context. In brief, he pays little attention to harmony; the idea of "orchestral backing" is better served by "instrumentation and arrangement" in British or American popular music; and many producers would consider their role artistic as well as functional.[20] Furthermore, Hennion concludes that popular music "always [leads] back to real audiences, in the form of consumers,"[21] suggesting successful artists and producers spoon-feed the public whatever it desires. For some pop singers, this is a perceptive appraisal; other artists, however, might wish to challenge their audiences with different musical experiences.[22]

The deconstructive approach reveals several key points. First, popular music is multi-faceted regardless if one is referring to the latest number one single or to an alternative-folk band playing to twenty patrons at its local pub. Almost every song contains lyrics, melodies, harmonies, and rhythmic gestures arranged into a formal structure, which is then played on certain instruments, creating a particular 'sound.' This 'sound' can be further manipulated beyond the capabilities of raw instruments using technology, both in the studio and in live performance.

Second, popular music is created by musicians and/or producers for an audience, thus establishing a dialogue that shapes an artist's direction and career trajectory. Third, audiences actively[23] consume the music because they identify in some way with the artist —the values they embody, their social position or their musical characteristics, for example. Fourth, and most importantly, the

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[20] For example, see Virgil Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2005).
[21] Hennion, "The Production of Success," 161.
[22] In this context, one could refer to Bruce Springsteen, for example, whose stripped-back albums *The Ghost of Tom Joad* (1995) or *Devils and Dust* (2005) deprived listeners of the E Street Band. Similarly, one could point to the changing style of The Beatles from *Revolver* (1966), *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) to *The Beatles* (1968) as evidence of a band seeking to develop musically with fewer external pressures from audiences.
[23] As distinguished from people hearing music in a shopping mall or at a sporting fixture, for example.

popular song lies at the complex intersection of the elements identified by Hennion; the style and context determine which features are accentuated.[24]

Without going into further detail, it is evident why so many parties have become involved in popular music studies. Sociology, cultural studies, media studies, anthropology, psychology, history, geography, computer studies and musicology — from technological, critical and analytical standpoints — have all offered insights, indicating that interdisciplinary approaches are required to articulate and interpret the different aspects of popular music.

2.3.2 Textual and Contextual Approaches to Popular Music

Shepherd and Wicke sum up the academic dilemma.

> Musicology has…tended to conceive music's meanings as phenomena extrinsic to social and cultural forces…Sociology, communication and cultural studies…have tended to conceive music's sounds as phenomena extrinsic to social and cultural forces and the affects and meanings they generate…Neither approach seems capable of discussing a *relationship*, a set of *processes* between music's sounds and music's meanings wherein sounds are significant, but meanings are the consequence of the socially and culturally mediated character of this relationship.[25]

It is debatable whether Shepherd and Wicke achieve their prescriptive task of connecting music's sounds with its social reception — Philip Tagg[26] and Robert Witkin[27] certainly think not. However, amid the jargonistic and convoluted writing, their fundamental idea is important: one needs to establish a relationship, of some sort, between music and its contexts.

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[24] For example, conveying an image of 'collectivity' is a defining feature of reggae music; a progressive rock epic may emphasise the inner harmonic structure.
[25] John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Music and Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 13-14. Italics are original.
[26] Philip Tagg, "Essay Review," review of *Music and Cultural Theory*, by John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Popular Music* 17, no. 3 (1998), pp. 331-348.
[27] Robert W. Witkin, "Book Reviews," review of *Music and Cultural Theory*, by John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *The American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 3 (1998), pp. 970-972.

Various approaches to this issue include using cultural theory or semiotics, establishing a homological relationship, or discussing each angle and allowing links to form naturally. Given the musical focus here, this issue will not be addressed in great detail. However, in this thesis, a range of writers, who adopt the various methods, will be considered.

Although contextual information is important, scholars have often pursued this path at the expense of textual engagement. Therefore, it is necessary to begin with literature that ignores or subjugates the music in order to understand why such a standpoint should be avoided. It is not desirable to construct a straw man just to knock it down, but Richard Dyer's essay on disco typifies the problematic approach. His article has been published in an oft-cited collection of essays on popular music, suggesting it is regarded within the discipline as either significant, representative or both.[28]

Dyer addresses the musical texts but in a vague and reductive manner. He defines disco, in opposition to rock music, by its eroticism, romanticism, and materialism, three abstract and non-musical concepts.[29] Dyer moves closer to the texts when discussing rhythm, but does not refer to specific musical details. Thus, it is taken as given that "rock's eroticism is thrusting, grinding"; "rock's repeated phrases trap you in their relentless push, rather than releasing you in an open-ended succession of repetitions as disco does"; and disco displays a "willingness to play with rhythm."[30]

There are several problems with Dyer's description embodied in the above examples. Even allowing for metaphorical freedom, the third quotation is so vague that it reveals little about either disco or rock music. Similarly, the other two statements are misleading. By considering several of Dyer's examples, it is easy to see that his argument is weak and inconsistent.

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[28] Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (eds.), *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[29] Richard Dyer, "In Defense of Disco," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, eds. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 413-418.
[30] Ibid., pp. 414-415.

Dyer refers to The Temptation's 'Papa Was A Rollin' Stone' as having an "open-ended succession of repetitions." This feature is noticeable compared to The Undisputed Truth's original version which is slightly slower, much shorter and orchestrated in conventional Motown style. In contrast, The Temptations' remake is underpinned by a funky bass line and hi-hat beats above which instrumental and vocal layers float in and out. The textural fluidity and rhythmic freedom in the 'lead' parts create the impression of improvisation, enhancing the idea of open-endedness.

From a structural perspective, however, 'Papa Was A Rollin' Stone' is comparable to a riff-based rock song, like Queen's 'We Will Rock You,' or one with a cyclical and, thus, open-ended chord pattern, such as Bob Dylan's 'All Along the Watchtower,' which repeats the Aeolian i-VII-VI-VII progression. Furthermore, the song is built from four-bar phrases, with the lyrics alternating between solo sections and the refrain sung by the group, akin to verse-chorus form. In its basic design, there are inherent similarities with much rock music.

The idea of "grinding" eroticism is located within a broader discussion comparing rock's phallo-centricity to disco's whole-body eroticism. Dyer's point is weak because he provides no supporting examples of rock music. That said, there are obvious rhythmic differences between, for example, Deep Purple's 'Perfect Strangers' with its hard kick-snare beat, and the gentle, Latin-infused pulse of Herbie Hancock's 'Tell Me A Bedtime Story.'

Dyer's argument is stretched, though, when one considers the 'four-to-the-floor' beat prevalent in much disco. Notably, the beat is used in Gloria Gaynor's 'I Got You Under My Skin' and Grace Jones' 'I Need A Man,' both cited by Dyer in a subsequent section. These, and other disco songs, feature a syncopated bass line and draw attention to the offbeats with open hi-hat quavers. But what is not clear, from Dyer's discussion, is how a rock beat can be "grinding" and "thrusting" compared to a disco pattern, given that both stress the crotchet beats in a bar of 4/4.

It is, therefore, difficult to believe that disco's rhythms are wholly different to rock's. When combined with Gaynor's and Jones' 'come-hither' vocal inflections and the lyrics of their respective songs, it is difficult to reject completely a phallic-oriented interpretation. In turn, it is difficult to accept Dyer's final conclusion: that "gay culture should promote a form of music that denies the centrality of the phallus" but does not deny a sense of physicality.[31]

The problem is that Dyer cites The Temptations and Herbie Hancock when he wants disco to oppose rock and resist notions of heterosexual masculinity; when he is concerned with other ideas, he turns to Grace Jones, Gloria Gaynor and the Village People, not realizing the inherent musical contradiction. There are clear differences between rock and disco, musically, culturally and sexually. However, Dyer blurs the boundaries between music as text and music as social practice. Therefore, when he attempts to bridge the gap, by relating music to sexuality, his argument lacks the requisite detail.

This is not to argue that 'We Will Rock You' and 'Papa Was A Rollin' Stone', or 'Perfect Strangers' and 'I Need A Man,' for example, are essentially the same; however, Dyer fails to acknowledge that musically, disco songs share traits with rock songs. That disco and rock sit in distinctive cultural spaces is not debatable, but this division is not predicated upon vague musical binaries, such as open and closed forms. Musical analysis, even in brief, would help Dyer to tease out the similarities and differences between the two styles. This would substantiate his comparison and, consequently, strengthen his overall argument regarding disco's social and cultural features.

Discourse on the Sex Pistols raises similar issues. Roy Shuker argues that the band embodied and conveyed "images of apocalypse, the second coming, and social chaos."[32] He further states, "the ingredients of 'Anarchy in the UK' typify

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[31] Ibid., 415.
[32] Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture, 3rd ed.* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2008), pp. 104-107.

punk rock."[33] These rather typical comments resonate with regards to the Sex Pistols' hairstyles, names, behaviour, dress and Jonny Rotten's subversive delivery of "anti-*cahrrista*." They do not resonate, however, with the music.

'Anarchy in the UK' begins with a G chord before descending the major scale in power chords to the tonic, C. The power chords in the verse — I-IV-iii — and chorus — the initial scale descent — both reinforce the key, C major. Additionally, 'Anarchy in the UK' is underpinned by a strong and constant beat in 4/4 time. Despite the extra-musical details mentioned above, the song's musical organisation is so conventional and structured that "its connotations could not be further from 'anarchy'."[34]

These criticisms are not intended to denigrate punk or disco; nor do they seek to devalue social and cultural factors that shape the styles in question. Rather, it is necessary to discuss the musical texts in order to avoid misrepresentations of popular music. A balanced account of 'Anarchy In The UK' should, therefore, identify those features that enhanced the notion of "social chaos" while also acknowledging the inherent contradictions of punk due to its traditional and institutionalized musical language.

John Covach emphasises the need for balance in his essay on 1970s rock bands.[35] Covach introduces the new wave style through Elvis Costello and the Attractions' appearance on *Saturday Night Live* in 1977, a performance teeming with irony. Costello wore horn-rimmed glasses *à la* Buddy Holly; the band wore straight-leg pants and narrow ties; and Costello and Steve Nieve played a Fender Jazzcaster and Vox combo organ, respectively. The visual and instrumental references deliberately opposed the long hair, jeans, Stratocasters and Hammond B3 organs of 1970s rock.

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[33] Ibid., 105. The sharp observer may note that the title of Shuker's book does not appear to claim that it is concerned with the music itself. However, the same material appears in an earlier edition with a different title — Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music, 2nd ed.* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 160-162. — hence, my criticism here seems justified.
[34] Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text, 2nd ed.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 194.
[35] Unless otherwise stated, the following discussion draws upon John Covach, "Pangs of History in Late 1970s New-Wave Rock," in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan F. Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 173-195.

Covach argues that post-*Sgt. Pepper*, rock music had continued to develop technologically — evident in 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and the use of synthesizers — and musically, with progressive rock albums by Yes, ELP and Genesis incorporating classical music techniques. The result was music and bands that had allegedly become too indulgent, bloated with a sense of self-importance and divorced from a sense of social responsibility. New wave artists (related to, but a more pop-oriented version of punk) sought to reverse the trend with a "radical stripping down to the basics."[36]

Within this historical framework, Covach compares Foreigner — the soulless, faceless, corporate hit machine — and new wavers The Cars. He considers Foreigner's 'Feels Like The First Time' as typical of 1970s rock because of its form, derived from compound AABA[37], and the prominent synthesizers; he also situates 'Cold As Ice' in this style with its similar formal design, as well as classically-influenced harmonies and guitar melodies. By comparison, Covach points out that The Cars' 'My Best Friend's Girl' features a portable 1960s organ, clean guitar sounds and only three chords — I, IV and V. The handclaps in the introduction also stylistically reference The Angels' 1963 hit 'My Boyfriend's Back.' That said, Covach notes the verse-chorus structure and The Cars' sonic quality as comparable to much 1970s rock.

Covach draws further parallels between The Cars' 'Just What I Needed' and 1970s rock. His harmonic analysis reveals a degree of tonal ambiguity that, if not as complex as Yes, is not "basic." Furthermore, the song has a verse-chorus structure and Elliot Easton's distorted guitar sound is closer to Foreigner than early 1960s rock. One could also argue that the opening phrase of 'Just What I Needed' is almost identical to Led Zeppelin's 'Good Times, Bad Times' — both are in E, begin with power chords on the downbeat allowing the major third overtone to resonate, and have a constant rhythmic pattern in 4/4 time played the guitar (The Cars) and the hi-hat (Led Zeppelin).

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[36] Ibid., 177.
[37] In compound AABA form, each "A" contains a verse and a chorus, thus it could also be regarded as a Verse-Chorus-Bridge form.

Covach does not argue that new wave is "basically 1970s rock with a veneer of retro references" but rather, it sends "mixed stylistic signals."[38] He acknowledges that 1970s audiences would have likely appreciated the 1960s references and considered the similarities between The Cars and Foreigner less obvious. Overall however, his chapter stresses the need to study popular music texts as complementary counterparts to various contexts. As Moore points out, "Our concern has to begin from the sounds, because *until we cognize the sounds…we have no musical entity to care about*."[39] In other words, the social contexts of The Cars, Foreigner or Herbie Hancock are only important because there is music of some description in the first place.

By considering songs under different banners, it is clear some musical attributes cross stylistic boundaries. Without denying the importance of extra-musical features, it is misleading to argue that disco and rock are fundamental opposites, or that new wave and punk moved in a completely different direction to 1970s rock music. When the musical text is glossed over, authors tend towards these inaccurate conclusions. Close analysis, as demonstrated by Covach, allows the author to highlight any "mixed signals" in the music, while also identifying the details idiosyncratic to a particular song, artist or style.

2.4 ANALYSING THE POPULAR MUSIC TEXT

2.4.1 The Listener and Analytical Methods

If it is now evident that one should examine the musical elements of popular music, then another issue arises: what, specifically, should one study? Recalling Hennion's article, one can look at form, harmony, melody, rhythm, instrumentation, timbre, as well as the lyrics, production features and their inter-relationships.

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[38] Covach, "Pangs of History in Late 1970s New-Wave Rock," 194.
[39] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, 17. Italics are original.

This matter will be temporarily placed aside for the answer is conditional on another question: who is listening? As Chris Kennett points out, "listening to the same music in different situations, with different purposes and with different intensity, will affect the analytical meanings which may arise from the experience."[40] Kennett broaches this problem by constructing a hypothetical experiment in which a drum 'n' bass song, 'Shadowboxing,' played in a wine-shop, is 'analysed' by different customers.[41]

For the store manager, the song expands her musical tastes and she is grateful for the mediocre sound-system which enables some balance between the treble and bass frequencies. By comparison, the young bank-clerk, knowledgeable of the song, is disappointed by the poor sound quality and lack of bass. Finally, the retired Major, partially deaf from fighting in WWII, can only hear the bass and gets frustrated listening to the "repetitive pop music."[42]

Kennett's experiment is entertaining and probably accurate; but is the "cultural-acoustic model" useful for analysts?[43] Kennett admits the scenarios are facetious, but one can ask, what would happen if the Major were not deaf? What if the bank clerk was white not black? In short, "[creating] texts from listenings"[44] is unhelpful because the results are infinite. One may gain a well-rounded picture by considering all responses to a particular song, but this is clearly impossible. Kennett's model is beneficial, however, if it encourages analytical self-awareness. That is, by defining the listener, one implicitly acknowledges the potential for different hearings of the same music.

Sociologists studying reception have, in general, not followed this approach, often relying on "monolithic listening publics."[45] In the case of hysterical Beatles' fans, this assumption may be justified, but it hinders nuanced or detailed interpretations. Sociologists respond with surveys or focus groups,

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[40] Chris Kennett, "Is Anybody Listening?" in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan F. Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197.
[41] Ibid., pp. 209-217
[42] Ibid., 213.
[43] Ibid., 217.
[44] Ibid., 216.
[45] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, 6.

which produces quantitative and qualitative data from listeners. However, these techniques are restrictive and limiting. "Circle a number" or "very much-not very much" continua reveal little about listeners' opinions; likewise, focus groups force participants to respond within a specific and non-familiar setting. These are not profound objections, but they suggest another listener must be found.

Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* is predicated upon the "*musical intuitions of a listener who is experienced in a musical idiom*."[46] The authors admit this person is idealized; however, they argue that a listener well-versed in a particular style could "identify a previously unknown piece as an example of the idiom." Furthermore, they suggest that amongst "experienced listeners," there will be considerable agreement on how to hear a piece.[47]

These criteria are appropriate and the writers are aware that individual hearings may diverge.[48] In terms of setting limits, their "experienced listener" seems justified, but in practice, the actual "listener" may be hard to define. For example, what is the borderline between "experienced" and "inexperienced"? What if a listener can identify Beethoven's first symphony but not his ninth? Again, one reaches an impasse.

Moore establishes the strongest argument. Similar to Kennett, he contends, "it is the mode adopted by the listener that determines what the music will yield."[49] Therefore, given that he addresses rock as a "primary text" as "constituted by the sounds themselves,"[50] the reader can expect Moore to hear the harmonies, the melodies, the rhythms, and so forth, without necessarily interpreting particular cultural or social meanings embedded in the sounds.

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[46] Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1996), 1. Italics are original.
[47] Ibid., 3.
[48] See, for example, their reference to "conservative" and "radical" hearings of metrical structure, ibid., pp. 22-25.
[49] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, 25.
[50] Ibid., 1.

The *Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*[51] highlights the multiple analytical approaches that can arise from such a standpoint. The topics covered in the edition include KT Tunstall's live performance on *Jools Holland* using loop technology[52]; gender construction in rock backing vocals[53]; and personal interpretations of various songs using Pierce's semiotic theory.[54] The three essays all begin from "popular music qua music" but demonstrate the degree to which various musical elements can be accorded significance within this framework.[55]

Richardson mentions the harmonic progression used by Tunstall in 'Black Horse and the Cherry Tree' (a repetitive, minor blues sequence, i-VII-V7) but focuses more on the instrumental layers created by the singer and her loop pedal. He then considers how her performance and use of technology communicate ideas of authenticity and locate Tunstall within a folk-indie-rock aesthetic.[56]

By comparison, Fast examines the female backing vocalists in songs by the Black Crowes, Rolling Stones and Pink Floyd, asking how they convey notions of gender. Like Richardson, Fast refers to the songs' formal elements but engages primarily in critical interpretations of the vocalists. Thus,

> This excerpt [from 'Great Gig'] sounds like a tortured scream arising out of pain, not like singing at all. The scream ends the overture and ushers in the band; Torry, standing in for woman, gives birth to the album and the narrative.[57]

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[51] Derek B. Scott (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).
[52] John Richardson, "Televised Live Performance, Looping Technology and the 'Nu Folk': KT Tunstall on *Later…with Jools Holland*," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 85-101.
[53] Susan Fast, "Genre, Subjectivity and Back-up Singing in Rock Music," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 171-187.
[54] Allan F. Moore, "Interpretation: So What?" in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 411-425.
[55] Derek B. Scott, "Introduction," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 21.
[56] Richardson, "Televised Live Performance, Looping Technology and the 'Nu Folk," pp. 90-95.
[57] Fast, "Genre, Subjectivity and Back-up Singing in Rock Music," 184.

Fast's vivid and poetic description serves to "[alter] our perception of the thing we hear" by using metaphorical language[58]; in other words, she encourages the reader to hear 'Great Gig' as a woman giving birth.

By comparison again, Moore explains personal interpretations of songs using Pierce's classes of signs. Because of his musical training, he responds frequently to details of pitch and harmony. Of The Kinks' 'See My Friends,' he writes, "Compare three (E) sequences: ii-V-IV-I; ii-V-IV-Ic; ii-Vb-IVc-I. They seem to me to become progressively less assertive, more accommodating; less forceful, more delicate."[59] When discussing The Vapor's 'News at Ten,' Moore similarly emphasises the internal pitch relations — "the [bass] line is beautifully balanced between its outer points (G and E), swinging constantly via the F♯."[60]

Robert Walser works from a similar position in *Running With The Devil*. A significant element of the book is analysis of the modes and harmonies used in heavy metal music. Walser justifies this focus through ethnographic research — "mode is…widely acknowledged by heavy metal musicians as a crucial part of the musical production of meaning."[61] That said, Walser relies almost exclusively on the recordings, not audience reactions, for his analysis. His work is thus similarly founded on his response to the music.

To summarise, an idealized listener is desirable, but removed from the sphere of musical experience. An entire culture or social group of listeners is unrealistic because it negates individual experiences. The best listener for any analysis is, therefore, the analyst. This, however, raises hermeneutic issues regarding the interpreter's influence on the textual interpretation. For it seems, in the above examples, that the analysts each hear what they want to hear, in order to satisfy their research aims. The question is whether the analytical process is ultimately subjective, reliant on the whims of a particular individual.

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[58] Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 373.
[59] Moore, "Interpretation: So What?" 418.
[60] Ibid., 423.
[61] Robert Walser, *Running With The Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hannover: University Press of New England, 1992), 46.

The answer to this question is partly yes and partly no. Analysis can be considered objective insofar as there are developed and established methods for describing the components of European music composed since, approximately, the seventeenth century. That is, if a string is plucked and vibrates at 440 Hz, most analysts will regard this as an A above middle C. If, simultaneously from other strings, frequencies 5/4 and 3/2 times above the A are produced, most analysts will hear an A major triad. And if, in a piece of music, this combination is heard on the stressed beat of the first bar and was preceded by the frequencies of an E major triad, then most analysts will hear A major as the tonic.

Everett states, regarding a I-V^7-I progression, "if we do not agree that it shares the same meaning in 'Twist and Shout' that it has in Chopin, then we cannot agree that it has the same meaning in Mozart's 40th Symphony as it has in his 41st."[62] There will be some leeway in interpretation when analysts move to more complex musical details — inversions or chromatic chords, for example — but the basic point stands: analysts and listeners can agree on the fundamental ingredients of tonal Western music, a category to which Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and almost all popular music belong. This is, perhaps, what Wilfrid Mellers had in mind when he spoke of "musical facts."[63] Although not objective in the Aristotelian sense of the word, to posit analysis as entirely subjective is to deny and dismantle the entire musicological tradition. Even with the recent disciplinary debates, few would be willing to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

Ian Bent argues that the analyst's role is to identify the "constituent elements [of the work] and explain how they operate."[64] It is in this latter task that analysis becomes more subjective. There would be considerable agreement that an A on the downbeat of the first bar, with requisite harmonies, is "operating" as the tonic, but as the essays from the *Ashgate Companion to Popular Musicology*

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[62] Walter Everett, "Pitch Down The Middle," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 170-171, n. 24.
[63] Wilfrid Mellers, *Twilight of the Gods: The Beatles in Retrospect* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 16.
[64] Ian Bent with William Drabkin, *Analysis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987), 2.

demonstrate, the manner in which more detailed musical elements "operate" can vary depending on who is listening.

It follows that if one demonstrates how "constituent elements…operate," then these elements must be important, to some extent, within the context of that music. As Roger Scruton states, it is a "matter of *critical* argument, whether this or that feature should be given the prominence which a particular analysis confers on it."[65] Therefore, given this study proposes a musical analysis of the *Nature's Best* songs, it is necessary to prove that the actual music, as constituted by its sounds, has some inherent value beyond one's subjective opinion. This is a much-debated position within popular musicology and it is this issue to which the following section turns.

2.4.2 Analysing "The Notes"

Nadine Hubbs proposes an analytical framework in which musical parameters are equally valid as areas of enquiry. She notes that much debate within popular musicology concerns "social effects versus musical effects" which, with regards to the music, corresponds to "timbral qualities versus pitch-rhythm structure (better known as "the notes")."[66] Audiences do not listen once for the "notes," once for the timbre, once for the social effects and so on; thus, Hubbs asks, "why…should its [musicological] criticism proceed along such compartmentalizing lines?"[67] Similar to the text-context debate, she argues there is no need to promote particular musical features over others.

This idea works well across the entire discipline. The essays by Richardson, Fast and Moore demonstrate how one can bring different musical elements in and out of the analytical foreground, depending on the context. None of the writers better explains the music than the others; rather, they all address their issue at hand. However, at a micro level, it is necessary to "compartmentalize" the

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[65] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 396. Italics are original.
[66] Nadine Hubbs, "The Imagination of Pop-Rock Criticism," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), 231.
[67] Ibid., 232.

popular song because one cannot consider every detail at every step. At this point, some justification is required.

Traditional analytical methods were developed in conjunction with classical music and its practices; hence, analysts emphasised notated features such as harmonic progressions, structural divisions, melodic construction and development, and rhythm. This practice reflected the discipline's positivistic foundations. Notated pitches and rhythms, for example, could be counted and measured discretely. Perhaps also, score-based analysis mirrored the idealized concert culture in which attendees sat and listened attentively in silence. In an environment that neutralized performing elements, it is understandable that analysts focused on the "notes."

Without simplifying history further, two things have become clear in time. First, the analytical approach was ideologically driven. Enough academics have launched scathing Marxist critiques so no more is required on that matter. Second, and more relevant, traditional analytical methods have an uneasy relationship with popular music. As Phillip Tagg points out, there is an historical "nonchalance towards other parameters not easily expressed in traditional notation."[68] This attitude sits poorly in popular musicology because sound effects, timbre and performance gestures are significant in the popular music text. The question is: are "the notes" still important in popular music?

The answer is yes, but not unconditionally. It is pertinent to examine first the problems that arise when the "notes" are over-emphasised at the expense of other details. Wilfrid Mellers' *Twilight of the Gods*, a traditional musicological analysis of The Beatles' catalogue, is famous, or infamous, for this reason. Mellers relies on formalistic methods, warranting some criticism, but he insightfully connects aspects of The Beatles' music and their careers, suggesting equally he should not be dismissed as a caricature of popular music analysts.[69]

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[68] Tagg, "Analysing Popular Music," 42.
[69] See Simon Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music," reprinted in Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 260, 269.

His approach, however, is particularly problematic when analysing 'The End' from *Abbey Road*. Describing the final guitar solo, Mellers notes

> the dominant sevenths in rumba rhythm…rocking a tone lower than the starting point, getting nowhere. Suddenly the hubbub stops; there's a tinkling of A major triads on a tinny piano; and Paul's voice returns to sing 'in the end the love you take is equal to the love you make.'[70]

The first problem is Mellers' assumption that the A major triads are the important feature, as if the "hubbub" finally 'gets somewhere' when the piano enters. According to Shepherd, this conforms to a view of music in which dominant sevenths must resolve and harmonies drive towards a climactic focal point, analogous to the recapitulation in sonata form.[71]

Second, Mellers correctly identifies the subsequent transition from A major to C major that concludes *Abbey Road*, but he seems unable to explain it theoretically. From a teleological perspective, C major is the important musical destination, yet Mellers offers no interpretation, possibly because such a modulation, from A to C, as effected by the Beatles, does not fall squarely within musicological rules.

Most importantly, Mellers ignores the guitar solo prior to the A major triads. This section features McCartney, Lennon and Harrison 'jamming' in two-bar fragments on clean, slide and distorted guitars, respectively. As Vulliamy suggests, it is these details that the "rock music lover…finds the most musically satisfying."[72] Therefore, Mellers omits a crucial part of 'The End' for a lacking harmonic interpretation.

Mellers' account is an excellent example of the hermeneutic problem. His analysis is technically correct and one cannot say that what he hears is wrong, per se. But the manner in which he has interpreted 'The End' is influenced by the formalist standpoint of musicology, which places high currency on

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[70] Mellers, *Twilight of the Gods*, pp. 122-123.
[71] John Shepherd, "A Theoretical Model for the Sociomusicological Analysis of Popular Musics," *Popular Music* 2, Theory and Method (1982), 147.
[72] Quoted in ibid., 147.

"harmonic-syntactic structures," to use Dahlhaus' term.[73] The consequent analysis is misleading and misrepresentative, and does little justice to 'The End' from either a musicological or aesthetic perspective. In short, Mellers' "critical argument" is not sound.

Although this case serves as a warning, it does not render the "notes" meaningless or irrelevant. 'Rip This Joint,' the rollicking second track from the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*, attests to this point. The song contains only two chords, D and A, a limited melodic range, and maintains a fast rock-shuffle beat throughout. Robert Christgau concisely appraises the Rolling Stones thus,

> If the guitars and the drums and Jagger's voice come together audibly in those elementary patterns that no one else has ever managed to simulate, the most undeniable rock and roll excitement is a virtually automatic result.[74]

These words can be applied to 'Rip This Joint.' The fundamental feature of the song, it seems, is the idiosyncratic combination of musicians — Watts' precise drumming foils Jagger's furious vocal delivery and the lackadaisical fills from Richards. In this case, formal analysis should apparently give way to critical interpretations of timbre and the group's performance, details that enhance the song's narrative of a freewheeling ride across America.

The formal details, however, foster this criticism. That is, Jagger sings in his upper chest voice, hence the strained vocal timbre. Likewise the tight rhythm section provides a strong foundation upon which Jagger and Richards can perform without restraint. Furthermore, Everett argues that songs with a limited harmonic palette, specifically just I and V, are "effective and direct in getting

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[73] Carl Dahlhaus, "Wagner's Musical Influence," trans. Alfred Clayton, in *The Wagner Handbook*, eds. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 553.

[74] Robert Christgau, "It Isn't Only Rock and Roll: The Rolling Stones," *Village Voice*, 30 June 1975, from http://robertchristgau.com/xg/rock/stones-75.php (accessed 5 May 2011). The context of this quote is a concert review and not specific to 'Rip This Joint'; however, I think, in general terms, the idea is applicable to a lot of the Stones' music.

[their] message across without distraction."[75] Thus, one could interpret the simple harmonies as allowing the spotlight to fall on Jagger and Richards who invoke the sense of freedom and wild abandon. 'Rip This Joint' thus suggests it is necessary to analyse or at least consider the pitch details, even if it is a precursor to critical evaluation or interpretation.

Everett supports this argument. In an imaginary situation, he refuses to play at a party unless someone finds him an "Epiphone Texan guitar tuned a whole step low" and a string quartet because "you'd never recognize 'Yesterday' on the piano."[76] Further, Everett states, "timbre must take a back seat to pitch in terms of core structure in all or nearly all of the music of the pop-rock literature."[77] This is a bold claim and Brackett counters by citing the Epiphone guitar, the string quartet and Paul McCartney's voice as exactly those features that distinguish The Beatles' version from the thousands of imitations.[78] There is, therefore, a complementary relationship between pitch and timbre, the combination of which helps to define the popular music text.

In saying this, pitch relations play an ontological role in popular music. That is, much of the essence of 'Yesterday' lies in the opening lyric that descends from the supertonic to the tonic, the initial chord progression I-vii^7-III-vi, the concluding plagal cadence in each verse, and so forth. These details help listeners identify 'Yesterday' as 'Yesterday' regardless if performed by Bob Dylan, Ray Charles or Boyz II Men, confirming that the "notes" are an important aspect of popular music.

Thus far, the analytical standpoint has been justified by considering various debates within popular musicology. The discussion has been unified by a common theme: the need to approach popular music from a wide-range of perspectives. Although theoretically sound, in practice one cannot study

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[75] Walter Everett, *The Foundations of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 216.
[76] Walter Everett, "Pitch Down The Middle," 170, n. 20.
[77] Ibid., 111. To his credit, Everett later demonstrates, in a section titled "Vocal and Instrumental Colour" (pp. 117-126), how the two strands inform each other.
[78] David Brackett, "Essay Review," review of *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, eds. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone; and *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett, *Popular Music* 20, no. 2 (2001), 281.

everything. This is not problematic as long as the scholar is conscious of his or her limited position. Therefore, by focusing predominantly on the "notes" of the songs, not the performances, not the music videos, and not the social contexts, this research covers a fundamental, but single element of *Nature's Best*.

2.5 ANALYSING "THE NOTES": ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

2.5.1 Analytical Frameworks

The broad problem is the application of classical tools to popular music and more specifically, whether the patterns or details uncovered by such tools are meaningful in popular songs. If coming from traditional musicology, popular musicologists will be armed with an arsenal of terminology and methods, which may not be appropriate in the new context. Middleton, for example, argues that commonplace terms, such as "dissonance," "melody," "accidental," "dominant seventh" or "syncopation," are ideologically loaded and will produce distorted results when applied outside of classical music.[79]

This issue is familiar to ethnomusicologists. As Stokes notes,

> They [ethnomusicologists] have…often failed to understand and sufficiently distance themselves from the baggage of an Enlightenment rationalism in which European and non-European 'others' are simply there as examples or 'cases' for classification according to metropolitan criteria.[80]

Mervyn McLean exemplifies this tendency. He states that traditional Maori music used scales such as Ionian, Aeolian and both in combination with the Phrygian mode.[81] McLean is correct that Maori music contains an "oro," a central note, analogous to the tonic, towards which other pitches gravitate.

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[79] Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990), 104.
[80] Carole Pegg, *et al.*, "Ethnomusicology," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, from http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/52178#S52178 (accessed 11 May 2011). This quote is from section IV, "Contemporary Theoretical Issues," which is written by Martin Stokes.
[81] Mervyn McLean, *Maori Music* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996), pp. 235-239. I am grateful to Martin Lodge for bringing this point to my attention.

Furthermore, the music, from which McLean derived the pitch structures, contains frequencies that could be approximated to the aforementioned scales. However, while a Maori *waiata* may sound similar to an Ionian/Phrygian combination, it does not actually use an Ionian/Phrygian combination as a conceptual method of organizing pitches. The modal combination is a European idea and there is no evidence that Maori knew of Ionian and Phrygian modes, pre-European colonisation. McLean's terminology, therefore, does not reflect Maori musical practices.

In a similar case, Scruton cites Hans Keller's serial analysis of Mozart's String Quartet in E♭ major, K. 428, in which Keller suggests the opening passage can be derived from a three-tone set.[82] Scruton points out that one does not hear, nor understand, the chromatic notes as part of a series but as leading-notes to "subsidiary dominants." That Mozart uses all twelve chromatic notes is not evidence of serialism, rather "a by-product of his energetic tonal thinking."[83] In these examples, McLean and Keller have analysed the music within frameworks that are foreign to their subjects, a practice which undermines their results.

These two examples are relatively straightforward. The distinction between popular and classical music practices is less obvious. As Middleton notes, the "totalizing" view of popular music as the "antithesis" to classical music is misleading and inadequate.[84] But equally, the structures and techniques are not identical between the idioms. To negotiate the divide, it is necessary to consider how and when analytical methods may be applied from classical to popular music.

2.5.2 Classical Analysis of Popular Music

The problem appears to stem, in part, from the perceived practices of each school of musicians — 'learned' and theoretical on the classical side, improvisatory on the popular side. Lucy Green supports this point, although

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[82] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 300.
[83] Ibid., 300.
[84] Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 117.

probably not in such simplistic terms, by arguing that popular musicians predominantly learn by listening to and copying recordings.[85] She states that even when popular musicians acquire theoretical knowledge, they tend not to apply it, "instead carrying on by feel, ear and trial and error."[86] As one of Green's interviewees pointed out, his mode of learning involved determining "What sounds right. Just get the bass note, the first note they're playing [on the record], then work a scale round that."[87] New Zealand songwriter Don McGlashan agrees; although classically trained and a composition student at university, he very rarely "engages [his] brain theoretically" while writing songs.[88]

In practice, this distinction between classical and popular music is not tenable; as Nicholas Cook points out, the long-running joke with Liszt was that his "finest performances were when he was sight-reading, because that was the only time he ever played the music as written."[89] Furthermore, it is foolish to think classical composers never compose by "feel, ear and trial and error" or that popular musicians only create music through improvisation.

Placing this debate aside, the issue seems not so much whether analytical frameworks fit popular music, but whether one should try. McClary and Walser sum up this dilemma; it is worth quoting their passage in full.

> The sociologist who has jumped up with excitement…turns to the adjacent musicologist and asks: "How did that happen?" The musicologist calmly replies: "You were expecting an E-flat, and he sang an E natural." And the sociologist explodes because she knows perfectly well that she was not expecting an E-flat, that in fact she would not know an E-flat from a hole in the wall, and that the musicologist is once again taking a perfectly transparent phenomenon and obfuscating.[90]

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[85] See Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 60-76.
[86] Ibid., 93.
[87] Ibid., 94.
[88] Interview.
[89] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 89.
[90] McClary and Walser, "Start Making Sense!" 279.

Tom Constanten, keyboardist for the Grateful Dead, concurs with this view. In response to Graeme Boone's essay on the band, Constanten wrote,

> The paper sounds like a weather report in French, delivered perfectly by someone who doesn't speak a word of the language. While the points made are all true, the spirit of the paper has nothing to do with the spirit in which the music was made.[91]

These anecdotes suggest an underlying suspicion of formal analysis: why should one discuss popular music in technical terms if this practice is divorced from the experiences of audiences and musicians?

In reply, a beginner guitarist does not need to understand descending Aeolian progressions or chromatic passing notes to produce the correct sounds of 'Stairway To Heaven.' The theory illustrates, for the guitarist, why the notes work, per se. Whether analysing or playing, the same musical concepts are at work; the difference is articulating these concepts theoretically or practically. Furthermore, popular musicologists should not abandon analysis just to capture the "spirit" of the music. This sort of thinking promotes a vague type of 'criticism' that explains little of anything. The challenge is to reconcile the technical details with the "spirit" of the music.

The more pressing issue is whether the classical analytical framework fits popular music. Middleton is correct to warn analysts about the connotations of terminology; certainly, the notions of "syncopation" and "dissonance" differ from classical to popular music. Although Middleton's argument is a little over-zealous — is anything lost by referring to the "melody" of Schubert, Gershwin or Joni Mitchell? — analysts must broach these terms and concepts cautiously. The overarching concern, however, is harmony. If popular musicology is to utilise the same tools of harmonic analysis as classical music, then the two idioms must share the same harmonic principles.

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[91] Quoted in Graeme M. Boone, "Tonal and Expressive Ambiguity in 'Dark Star,'" in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, eds. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 205.

This is, by and large, the case. Most popular music is tonal or modal insofar as the melodies and harmonies revolve around a central pitch. Even with modulations, either up a semitone (Bon Jovi's 'Living On A Prayer') or to a variety of keys (Queen's 'All God's People'), a localized tonic is usually evident.[92] Furthermore, the relationships between the tonic and other chords are fundamentally similar in classical and popular music. As Everett plainly states, "the tonal norms basic to the pop music from which rock emerged are the same norms common to the system of common-practice tonality."[93]

It is not difficult to identify these "norms." Diatonic chords prevail in standard popular music progressions, such as I-vi-IV-V or I-V-vi-IV, as is parodied by Australian band Axis of Awesome in their song '4 Chords.'[94] Basic harmonic principles are also evident in Bruce Springsteen's 'Jungleland.' The introduction, in skeletonised form, progresses: I–iii–IV–vi–ii–V // vi–iii–ii–vi–ii–V, before leading into a drawn-out IV–I cadence. This example highlights fundamental similarities between popular and classical harmony: overall movement between the tonic and dominant, progression through the circle-of-fifths, and basic chord substitutions.

These observations have led, particularly American, theorists to adopt classical music's analytical tools and apply them to popular music. Thus, Nicole Biamonte discusses chords in terms of Riemannian functions[95]; Guy Capuzzo employs neo-Riemannian operations to analyse harmonies in terms of voice transformations[96]; and Everett has used Schenkerian techniques from the earliest

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[92] The cyclical chord patterns and particular phrase structure might make 'Sweet Home Alabama' a partial exception to this statement. The verse's D-C-G progression can be heard as either I-$^{\flat}$VII-IV in D or V-IV-I in G.
[93] Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (2004), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.w_everett.html (accessed 11 May 2011).
[94] See "The Axis of Awesome: 4 Chords (2011) Official Music Video," *YouTube*, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOlDewpCfZQ&feature=related (accessed 9 November 2011).
[95] See Nicole Biamonte, "Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 32, no. 2 (2010), pp. 96-97.
[96] Guy Capuzzo, "Neo-Riemmanian Theory and the Analysis of Pop-Rock Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 2 (2004), pp. 177-199.

days of popular music analysis.[97] At the heart of these methods lies the normative assumption that the fundamental principle of classical music is present in popular music; as stated by Shepherd, "The sense of direction and resolution produced in functional tonal music is symbolized by one chord — the dominant seventh."[98]

Everett and other American theorists acknowledge that this chord is not always present in popular music. However, Everett, for example, states that the absence of a I-V-I progression does not "suggest a different underlying system."[99] He further argues that an absent dominant may be implied or latent in the music through other voice-leading or contrapuntal events.[100] Elsewhere, Biamonte's Riemannian approach treats chords such as ♭VII as dominant functioning.[101] Biamonte does not argue that ♭VII is the same as V, but in treating ♭VII and other harmonies as variations on V, they are implicitly seen as less normal. The issue is not necessarily the analytical techniques but the normative theory underpinning those techniques.

Moore argues,

> It is *intrinsic* to what rock music has been, that the use of the 'flattened' diatonic seventh scale degree (and sixth, third, second and occasionally fifth, and also 'sharpened' fourth), far from being aberrant, should not even be viewed as *departures*.[102]

Furthermore, it is easy to agree with Moore whose "ears refuse to hear VII [i.e. ♭VII] as merely a substitute V."[103] The prevalence of flattened harmonies stem from popular music's origins in the blues. It is the crucial difference between

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[97] See Walter Everett, "Text Painting in the Foreground and Middleground of Paul McCartney's Song, 'She's Leaving Home': A Musical Study of Psychological Conflict," *In Theory Only* 9 (1985), pp. 5-21; or Walter Everett, "Swallowed by a Song: Paul Simon's Crisis of Chromaticism," in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, eds. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 113-153.
[98] John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 124.
[99] Everett, "Pitch Down The Middle," 139.
[100] Ibid., 139. I am grateful to Walter Everett for also discussing this point by email in July 2011.
[101] Biamonte, "Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music," pp. 96-97.
[102] Allan Moore, "The So-Called 'Flattened Seventh' in Rock," *Popular Music* 14, no. 2 (1995), 186. Italics are original.
[103] Ibid., 187.

classical and popular music. Several examples highlight how this difference is musically articulated.

Flattened-seventh chords appear frequently in blues-derived rock music, such as Bachman-Turner Overdrive's 'Taking Care of Business' with its repeated I^7-$\flat VII^7$-IV^7-I^7 pattern. The added sevenths cannot be viewed in terms of dominant-tonic resolution because the requisite voice-leading, from scale-degrees 4-3 and 7-8, does not occur. Furthermore, in this progression, the double-plagal cadence, the bass descends in fourths to the tonic, avoiding the dominant. Other songs with this progression include Free's 'It's Alright Now,' REO Speedwagon's 'Roll With The Changes,' 'Take Me To The River,' Guns 'N Roses' 'Paradise City' and the coda from 'Hey Jude.' In each case, the tonic is the harmonic focal point, yet harmonic stability and closure is achieved without the dominant.

One can also note songs featuring both $\flat$VII and V harmonies, such as Fleetwood Mac's 'Don't Stop' or Little Feat's 'Let It Roll,' thereby juxtaposing $\flat 7$ and $\natural 7$ scale degrees. 'Let It Roll' deserves special mention because this contrast occurs at important structural points. Each chorus repeats V-I-IV-$\flat$VII before concluding with a two-bar dominant chord. The subsequent instrumental refrain, however, is built predominantly on the minor pentatonic scale and thus the flattened leading-note 'resolves' to the tonic. While the harmonic language may be similar, Moore correctly argues that some of popular music's harmonic practices are "distinct" from the leading-note/tonic relationship that axiomatically defines classical music.[104]

The issue at stake is a theory of rock harmony. This brief introduction to the debates will be supplemented in Chapters 4 and 5 with the analytical findings. Despite subtle differences in opinions, there is a consensus amongst popular music analysts, best summed up by Shepherd — "it is apparent that there is a harmonic-rhythmic framework *more or less* common to functional tonal music

[104] Ibid., pp. 186-188.

and Afro-American musics."[105] Therefore, classical analytical tools are appropriate for popular music. At the same time, the two idioms diverge in places. One cannot, therefore, assume *a priori* that the attendant concepts of harmonic stability, closure and resolution are directly applicable from classical to popular music. Songs must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The problematic analyses are those that fail to heed this caveat.

This point is exemplified in Everett's fleeting account of the Smashing Pumpkin's 'Soma.' The initial progression, B-Em-G, repeats for three minutes and Everett sees this as "suggesting B as tonic" given the phrase structure.[106] The vocal melody uses an Ionian and Aeolian modal combination but frequently begins phrases on the mediant, D♯, and ends phrases on the tonic. When an F♯^{sus4} chord enters, he argues the subsequent I-IV-V^{sus4} progression provides relief to the listener because it confirms the tonic key.[107]

This interpretation is debatable for two reasons. First, the suspended fourth undermines the dominant-tonic relationship by obscuring the leading-note; this is, however, only a minor issue. The main problem is hearing the harmonies within the song's context. The progression appears once in full, before the music launches towards A and then back to the initial chord pattern, now with the guitar heavily distorted.

There is an audible difference between the two chord progressions, I-iv-♭VI and I-IV-V^{sus4}, and undoubtedly this affects the shape, direction and flow of the song. But it is arguable whether the latter progression provides the harmonic resolution supposedly found wanting in the former. Even with its modal implications, the hypermetrical emphasis of the B major harmony and melodic construction are strong indicators that B is the tonic. Furthermore, V^{sus4}-I is heard only once, which means any relief is short-lived. These factors seem to

[105] Shepherd, *Music as Social Text*, 133. Italics are original.
[106] Everett, "Pitch Down The Middle," 171, n. 32.
[107] Ibid., 171, n. 32.

undermine Everett's interpretation. To paraphrase Moore, relief is there only if one looks for it.[108]

The problem is that Everett's analysis is based on a rigid theory; namely, tonic and dominant harmonies equate to tonal stability, security and resolution. This theory is often, but not always applicable to popular music and Everett's analysis lacks the required flexibility. When popular music is made to fit classical theory in a wholesale manner, there is the potential for skewed results that are not sympathetic to the "distinct" features of popular music.

2.6 CORPUS ANALYSIS

2.6.1 Disciplinary Overview and Trends

Up to this point, the literature review has justified analysing the "notes" as one element of single popular songs. This path has been necessary because any research, regardless of its scope, must begin with individual examples. It is now pertinent to consider large-scale analyses, a rather neglected area in popular musicology. As Rob Bowman pointed out in 1995, few academics have "attempted to ferret out the component parts of a given genre through an analysis of a sizable body of repertoire."[109] In the interim, little has changed.

David Temperley notes that scholars have generally focused on analysis — "an intensive study of a particular song" — rather than theory — "a more general study of the features…of a musical style."[110] Theorizing, in this regard, is an important area of musicological enquiry; as much as anything, popular music discourse, in formal and casual settings, relies on distinctions between styles at a broad level, such as soul, punk and dance, and in much finer detail, such as

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[108] Allan F. Moore, "Review," review of *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett, *Music & Letters* 82, no. 1 (2001), 149. Although in a different context, Moore is criticizing Everett's analytical interpretations; therefore, my point stands.
[109] Rob Bowman, "The Stax Sound: A Musicological Analysis," *Popular Music* 14, no. 3 (1995), 285.
[110] David Temperley, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock," *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007), 323.

classic rock, progressive rock, indie rock, blues rock, and so on. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the similarities and differences between titles.

Some authors have asked wider questions of a particular artist, band or style. Peter Winkler's study of Randy Newman is outstanding in this regard.[111] Winkler locates the American musical influences — parlor, gospel-blues, barbershop and film scoring — within Newman's songs, and asks, "what does musical style have to do with musical meaning?"[112] In a similar manner, Kevin Holm-Hudson uncovers various signposts in Styx's 'Come Sail Away,' such as the 'classical' piano accompaniment, the Townshend-esque "Windmill" figure, and the space-travel narrative. He argues that Styx's appropriation of musical traits helped to define "prog lite," the AM-friendly, but critically derided 1970s rock style.[113]

In analytical contexts, Everett investigates Steely Dan's harmonic characteristics in relation to modern jazz musicians such as Oscar Peterson, Thelonious Monk and Dizzy Gillespie.[114] Chris McDonald explores the different harmonic relationships in alternative rock music, focusing predominantly on the modal ambiguities in songs by Nirvana and My Bloody Valentine.[115] One can also add the aforementioned *Rock: The Primary Text* and *Running With The Devil*, by Moore and Walser, respectively, both of which document rock styles and sub-styles in greater detail.

These authors consider individual songs as part of wider contexts, such as an artist's oeuvre or a broader style. But in each case, they begin with a particular issue, which dictates the choice of songs. For example, when Walser examines metal and classical music, he refers to Eddie van Halen; for metal and androgyny, Poison; for censorship, Judas Priest, and so forth. Consequently, one

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[111] Peter Winkler, "Randy Newman's Americana," *Popular Music* 7, no. 1 (1988), pp. 1-26.
[112] Ibid., 1.
[113] Kevin Holm-Hudson, "'Come Sail Away' and the Commodification of 'Prog Lite,'" *American Music* 23, no. 3 (2005), pp. 377-394.
[114] Walter Everett, "A Royal Scam: The Abstruse and Ironic Bop-Rock Harmony of Steely Dan," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 2 (2004), pp. 201-236.
[115] Chris McDonald, "Exploring Modal Subversions in Alternative Music," *Popular Music* 19, no. 3 (2000), pp. 355-363.

understands heavy metal not as a coherent genre or style, but as a range of artists each related to a particular sub-issue.

One could likewise ask, what of 1990s alternative rock music that does not use the "particular set of harmonic practices" identified by McDonald?[116] Or where do the songs *not* marked by specific American influences sit in Randy Newman's oeuvre? These are pedantic, but necessary questions because the authors here are united by a common theme: they always find what they are looking for.

John Covach describes the situation through Pete Townshend: "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss."[117] He argues that traditional forms of analysis did not, in themselves, validate the greatness of selected works, but their development alongside the German repertoire enhanced notions of a canon. In other words, musicologists would study Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms because established frameworks, such as Schenkerian analysis, were ready for use.

Covach's argument is directed towards sociological accounts of popular music.[118] Just as Schenkerian or other formal analytical tools enhanced the classical canon, a number of scholars treat popular music as a political and social vehicle, an ideal that similarly determines their repertoire. The "new boss" of popular music studies is the same as the "old boss" of classical analysis.

Covach intimates that analysis can solve this problem. That is, not every song can be considered in terms of its political content (i.e. if it is not overtly political), but any song can be analysed with regards its musical details; thus, he

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[116] Ibid., 355.
[117] The following paragraphs are from John Covach, "We Won't Get Fooled Again: Rock Music and Musical Analysis," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, eds. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (United States of America: University of Virginia Press, 1997), pp. 75-89.
[118] Susan McClary is the object of Covach's criticism here. See Susan McClary, "Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition," *Cultural Critique* 12, Discursive Strategies and the Economy of Prestige (Spring, 1989), pp. 57-81.

views rock music as providing fertile ground for developing and refining analytical theories.

Unfortunately, Covach's argument is more idealistic than realistic. As Kaminsky points out, much analytical work has focused on 1960s and 1970s rock, such as The Beatles, Genesis, Frank Zappa and Yes. This is music with a "degree of structural integrity that can withstand…analytical scrutiny."[119] He jests that Everett has written *The Beatles as Musicians* but there is yet to appear a scholarly book titled *The Backstreet Boys as Musicians*.

Even Covach is guilty in this regard; three of his contributions to the literature, two in well-known academic books, have concerned progressive rock.[120] Although none are methodologically oriented, he focuses on music suited to Schenkerian analysis, a framework promoted in the aforementioned essay, "We Won't Get Fooled Again." When combined with a chapter on 1960s pop[121], the comparison of Foreigner and The Cars discussed above, and a delightful essay on Spinal Tap[122], it is clear that Covach is interested in analysing music that analyses well. Thus, for all the authors listed above, the "old boss-new boss" dilemma remains, insofar as their repertoire is determined by their methods or questions.

There is a need for research in which the music dictates the results rather than selecting structurally sound works for analysis, or considering songs that

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[119] Peter Kaminsky, "Revenge of the Boomers: Notes on the Analysis of Rock Music," *Music Theory Online* 6, no. 3 (2000), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.00.6.3/mto.00.6.3.kaminsky_frames.html (accessed 1 June 2011).

[120] See John Covach, "Jazz-Rock? Rock-Jazz? Stylistic Crossover in Late-1970s American Progressive Rock," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 93-110; John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge,' and the Boundaries of Style," in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, eds. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 3-31; and John Covach, "Echolyn and American Progressive Rock," *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 4 (2000), pp. 13-61.

[121] John Covach, "Leiber and Stoller, the Coasters, and the 'Dramatic AABA' Form," in *Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music*, eds. Mark Spicer and John Covach (Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 1-17.

[122] John Covach, "Stylistic Competencies, Musical Humour and 'This Is Spinal Tap'," in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz Since 1945: Essays and Analytic Studies*, eds. Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 1995), pp. 399-421.

conform to a particular issue.[123] In doing so, one is better placed to develop a theory, in Temperley's sense of the word, of a particular style, artist or body of songs. Such an approach also refines analytical methods because one can see when, and why, a particular tool may not be appropriate — for example, is Schenkerian analysis applicable or necessary for Britney Spears as well as The Beatles?

2.6.2 Corpus Analyses

This section will summarize and discuss four relevant studies, each based on a sizeable and externally determined corpus. Rob Bowman and Jon Fitzgerald have investigated the musical characteristics of Stax and Motown recordings, respectively; Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley have conducted a harmonic analysis of 100 songs from *Rolling Stone*'s "500 Greatest Songs" list; and Walter Everett's *The Foundations of Rock* is based on approximately 6500 pop and rock songs.

Bowman analyses 95 songs released by Stax Records, primarily during the 1960s when the company was based in Memphis and used Booker T. and the MGs as the 'house' band.[124] Bowman takes a range of songs — hits from Memphis-based artists, hits by non-Memphis-based artists, and non-hits — which allows him to determine if commonalities within a subset were consistent across all songs.

He then analyses the songs under nine headings: instrumentation, repertoire (authorship and broad style, i.e. ballad, up-tempo dance), harmonic construction, rhythmic elements (including tempo, pulse, and the arrangement of various parts), melodic construction, ornamentation, and timbral and production features. As Bowman points out, the divisions are "artificial" and thus overlap somewhat, but his analysis enables him to pinpoint the musical characteristics of the "Stax sound."[125]

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[123] It is, of course, impossible to entirely avoid the "old boss-new boss" problems in practice.
[124] Bowman, "The Stax Sound," pp. 285-288.
[125] Ibid., 289.

Stax recordings generally followed traditional structures (i.e. AABA, verse/chorus, chorus/verse or blues); a third of the songs used only chords I, IV and V, while almost half involved harmonic movement in thirds; and nearly all the songs fit within two bands of tempi, either a slow ballad or between 102 and 132 bpm. Because Bowman's sample spans a decade and features multiple songs by single artists, he uncovers historical trends, such as changes in chord voicings, and common aspects of an artist's style.

Significantly, Bowman had earlier conducted interviews with the musicians, who gave insight into why the "Stax sound" came about. For example, one may relate the infrequency of minor chords to some cultural aesthetic; perhaps, the band wished to present an image of 'happiness' as they attempted to woo the white audience. Rather, Jim Stewart, studio producer and owner, just "didn't like minor chords," according to keyboardist Isaac Hayes.[126] Similarly, guitarist Steve Cropper believed that the crash and ride cymbals were avoided because "high end" percussion "offended the female buyer."[127]

In this sense, Bowman links his analysis with musical experiences. His work is important in two complementary respects: first, he identifies the core musical features that distinguish the "Stax" style; and second, his ethnographic investigation explains part of the studio's aesthetic and provides greater depth to the analysis.

Jon Fitzgerald's study is structurally similar. He examines the most successful black "crossover" songwriters from 1963-1966, those who had eight or more hits on the U.S. Top 40 chart, leading to 91 songs by five songwriters/songwriting teams.[128] Fitzgerald analyses the songs in terms of six

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[126] Quoted in ibid., 298.
[127] Quoted in ibid., 308.
[128] The songwriters are Sam Cooke, Curtis Mayfield, Smokey Robinson, William Stevenson and the Holland-Dozier-Holland team. See Jon Fitzgerald, "Black Pop Songwriting 1963-1966: An Analysis of U.S. Top Forty Hits by Cooke, Mayfield, Stevenson, Robinson, and Holland-Dozier-Holland," *Black Music Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2007), pp. 97-140. This article derives from Fitzgerald's doctoral dissertation that involved analysis of close to 400 hit songs from the same time period to ascertain songwriting trends in a wider context. I am grateful to

categories: lyrical content, melody, rhythm, harmony, form/structure and production. He seeks the common musical details of these songs, which were historically important because they represented 'black' music shifting into the mainstream. Fitzgerald also finds similarities within the sample's subsets, such as a songwriter's fingerprint or traits associated with the Motown studio.

His analysis reveals that much of the crossover pop utilized elements from traditional black music, an expected, yet valid conclusion. Fitzgerald links gospel and the new mainstream style; that is, a preference for verse/chorus structures, the use of short, repeated harmonic progressions and call-and-response phrasing. But it is also notable that some musical features shifted away from their historical roots, namely melodic structures, which, while still based on pentatonic scales, lacked the arch contour of gospel music.

Fitzgerald's article can also be read in conjunction with his study of Motown music, in which he returns to the artists and songwriters for insight into the creative process.[129] In doing so, one can locate the musical features within a particular context and establish a relationship between the music, the musicians and their aesthetic beliefs. One could further complete the picture by placing this context within a wider context (i.e. 1960s America, cultural change, 'British invasion'[130] etc.), but Fitzgerald's work assists understanding of a significant period in popular music history.

Bowman's and Fitzgerald's studies are relevant in two ways. First, their methods provide a model for studying the *Nature's Best* songs. Their analytical tools, both at individual and corpus levels, are useful; likewise, both authors vindicate the need to conduct analysis with the musicians' creativity in mind.

Jon Fitzgerald who, following email contact in early 2011, sent me his dissertation in unpublished form.

[129] Jon Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover Hits 1963-66 and the Creative Process," *Popular Music* 14, no. 1 (1995), pp. 1-11. As the title suggests, Fitzgerald uses the same data as his doctoral dissertation and the previously cited article on black pop music of the same period.

[130] Fitzgerald does make a brief comparison between Motown, "teen" hits and British pop songs with regards to the their form. There is a stark contrast between the Motown verse/chorus structure and the British tendency towards AABA forms, from which one could possibly draw further conclusions. Ibid., 4.

Second, the authors' modes of presentation are exemplary. They aim to find trends and commonalities in quantitative terms — for example, 27% of the Stax songs followed a verse/chorus/bridge structure.[131] Such an approach runs the risk of turning music into statistics, which is far-removed from creating, performing and listening to music. The authors circumvent this problem by constantly referring to the songs in question, demonstrating how the various musical parameters actually play out.

For example, when outlining the structures of The Astors' 'Candy' and Eddie Floyd's 'Knock on Wood,' Bowman highlights the common feature — the verse/chorus/bridge form — but also the subtle differences — phrase lengths and use of instrumentation in the bridge section.[132] This is a basic point to make, but it is still important. From these studies, one understands how certain songs are musically connected, without losing sight of individual attributes, the idiosyncratic features differentiating one song from the next.

One could compare these studies to Tsai *et al.*, who use computer and statistical techniques to blindly cluster singers. They envisage a scenario in which someone has multiple unknown records and wants to group them according to the singer, thus separating original and cover versions.[133] This is an interesting and valid research proposition.

Part of the problem is the authors' statistical jargon, which will deter most musicians, but is appropriate for their discipline. That said, they do not refer to actual examples and consequently, one struggles to understand this work outside its academic context. Whereas one can engage with Fitzgerald's analysis and hear it in the 1960s pop songs, it is not clear that one could read about blind clustering of singers and then use that information practically. The authors note their work is only introductory and call for further research[134]; however, the

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[131] Bowman, "The Stax Sound," 294.
[132] Ibid., 294.
[133] Wei-Ho Tsai, Dwight Rodgers and Hsin-Min Wang, "Blind Clustering of Popular Music Recordings Based on Singer Voice Characteristics," *Computer Music Journal* 28, no. 3 (2004), pp. 68-78.
[134] Ibid., 76.

necessary path for an empirical or quantitative study is one grounded in the "aesthetic experience" of music as demonstrated by Bowman and Fitzgerald.

Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley have recently analysed songs from the *Rolling Stone* "500 Greatest Songs" list."[135] The authors select the top twenty songs from each decade, 1950-2000, and subject them to a Roman numeral harmonic analysis.[136] Although, the study is narrowly focused, compared to Bowman's or Fitzgerald's, it is relevant in this context because it engages similar methodological issues to the present study.

Their corpus is comparable to *Nature's Best* because both lists arose when a group of people, at a certain historical juncture, voted for these songs. As de Clercq and Temperley point out, "there is disagreement as to what rock is and what it is not." Therefore, there is no guarantee that the "500 Greatest Songs" are "rock & roll" (whatever that may be) or that they are the "greatest" (however that may be judged)[137], a situation analogous to *Nature's Best*. That said, neutrality may be sought but will never be achieved. Thus, for corpus analysis, the *Rolling Stone* list, like *Nature's Best*, is a good starting point.

Furthermore, de Clercq and Temperley create a set of data against which the current results can be compared. The study reveals the frequency of particular chords (in terms of Roman numerals), the distribution of two-chord progressions and common three-chord progressions. The authors also present the distribution of harmonies according to each decade. Although acknowledging the limitations of a small sample, they contend that rock's harmonic language "matured" in the 1960s and then changed very little in the following decades. Given *Nature's Best* covers similar years, this makes for a potential point of comparison. The authors suggest, at the end of their article, that new corpuses could substantiate

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[135] Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," *Popular Music* 30, no. 1 (2011), pp. 47-70.
[136] Since their initial research, de Clercq and Temperley have expanded the list to include the next 100 highest placed songs not already analysed. The songs used in this study can be found at http://www.theory.esm.rochester.edu/rock_corpus/ (accessed 17 May 2011).
[137] De Clercq and Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," pp. 50-51.

their findings or offer different perspectives on popular music harmony.[138] This research will, therefore, complement their forays in this area.

Finally, Walter Everett's mammoth study, published as *The Foundations of Rock*, references approximately 6500 songs, including the 2459 that appeared in the top twenty of the *Billboard* "Hot 100" singles chart between 1955 and 1969. As Everett states, this era represents the "cauldron out of which rock was born."[139] The book "explores every domain of rock and pop recordings in greater depth than experienced anywhere else."[140] Everett presents chapters on structural, production and melodic materials as well as discussing the range of instruments appearing in popular music of this period. His main focus, however, is harmony with four chapters moving from basic chord construction through diatonic harmonies to more complex chromatic progressions.

Unlike the aforementioned studies, Everett presents his analytical results in quasi-list form, similar to Moore's "Appendix" of harmonic progressions in rock music.[141] Thus, in the chapter on "Chromatic Harmony," he compiles a table in which are outlined twelve voice-leading patterns; under each heading, he lists the songs featuring these patterns and the particular harmonic progression used.[142] Everett aims not to discover the most common occurrences of particular musical features[143], but to provide requisite information so that "a listener should be able to identify the sources of any and all sounds in a recording."[144]

The results in this thesis will not be directly comparable to Everett's. But, his research is useful as it provides a resource of harmonic progressions, melodic lines, rhythmic characteristics and so forth. In the case of unconventional musical details appearing in *Nature's Best* songs, they may be derived from an earlier era. If Everett is correct about the "embryonic nature" of 1960s rock and

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[138] Ibid., 69.
[139] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, vi.
[140] Ibid., v.
[141] See Allan Moore, "Patterns of Harmony," *Popular Music* 11, no. 1 (1992), pp. 82-106.
[142] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, pp. 275-276.
[143] Although one can often infer this from the number of examples presented.
[144] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, x.

pop, then it is likely such a precedent could be found in *The Foundations of Rock*.[145]

This concludes the literature directly informing this research. A position has been established and justified of studying the musical text with regards to its musical parameters. Although formalistic, this standpoint complements, and is complemented by cultural, sociological, historical and receptive readings of the same songs. Ignoring these other perspectives does not diminish their importance; rather, it is impractical to cover every angle in one project. The primary focus, thus far, has been theoretical and methodological issues without examining, in depth, analytical findings. These, and other, sources will be further considered in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.7 POPULAR MUSICOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND

2.7.1 Overview and Issues

From an academic perspective, New Zealand popular music studies is in its infancy. Arguably, the most notable sources on New Zealand popular music are from historical and journalistic perspectives. John Dix's *Stranded in Paradise* was the trailblazer, documenting the rise of New Zealand rock and roll in the 1950s through (in the revised edition) to the mid-2000s.[146] Although focusing on the highly visible and successful bands — Split Enz, Crowded House, Dave Dobbyn, Hello Sailor — Dix covers much ground and expands "rock and roll" to include Polynesian and Maori popular music from the 1980s as well as peripheral New Zealand artists. *Stranded in Paradise* is not only highly readable, but also informative in detailing who played what with whom and when. This is useful in a New Zealand context given the tendency for musicians, such as Neil Finn, Eddie Rayner or Dave Dobbyn, to play in multiple bands over a career.

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[145] Ibid., vi.
[146] John Dix, *Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock and Roll, 1955 to the Modern Era, rev. ed.* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2005).

David Eggleton's *Ready to Fly*[147] treads a similar path; the "story of New Zealand rock music" highlights the proliferation of different styles, especially in the 1990s. Thus, in a single chapter, Eggleton ranges from Headless Chickens to Push Push to Supergroove to Pacifier.[148] While covering numerous angles of the New Zealand music scene, Eggleton discusses performing in New Zealand — for example, who went to gigs and where they were held — and consequently, one gains an understanding of New Zealand social history as seen through the music. More recently, Gareth Shute has written broadly on rock from 1987-2007[149], while Chris Bourke has detailed the origins of New Zealand popular music prior to rock and roll in *Blue Smoke*.[150]

There is also a range of archived articles in *Music in New Zealand*, a scholarly journal published from 1988-2002 under the editorship of Dr. William Dart. Although most of the articles concerned classical music, a number addressed prominent popular musicians and bands, such as Wayne Mason, Tommy Adderley, Straitjacket Fits and The Chills.[151] Often, the authors conducted extended interviews with their subjects. These varied in focus from biographical details to particular albums. The articles display sharp, yet accessible criticism and, in conjunction with the historical texts, provide an excellent foundation for studying New Zealand popular music.

Academic research has primarily been conducted outside of musicology. Prominent scholars include Roy Shuker, Tony Mitchell and Kirsten Zemke-White. Because of the small academic field, certain subjects have been addressed multiple times, such as the music industry, the impact of government

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[147] David Eggleton, *Ready to Fly: The Story of New Zealand Rock Music* (Nelson, New Zealand: Craig Cotton Publishing, 2003).
[148] Ibid., pp. 148-163.
[149] Gareth Shute, *NZ Rock, 1987-2007* (Auckland: Random House, 2008).
[150] Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Last Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010).
[151] This list is only a sample and, thus, I have not cited each individual source. For a complete list of articles published in *Music in New Zealand*, see William Dart, "Contents: All Issues," *Music in New Zealand*, from http://www.musicinnz.com/main/listallcontents.htm (accessed 19 May 2011).

policies on the industry, and Pacific Island and Maori music and culture in New Zealand.[152]

Recently, academics have focused on place and identity in New Zealand music, resulting in three publications: *Many Voices*[153], *Home, Land & Sea*[154] and *Dunedin Soundings*.[155] The aim of the three texts is neatly summarized by Henry Johnson: to highlight "a few sounds of a diverse nation."[156] These texts cover a range of musical genres from popular (and its styles) to contemporary classical to electroacoustic to Indonesian gamelan. In brief, the authors attempt to document the relationships between geographical locations, the people of New Zealand, their beliefs and attitudes, and locally produced music.

Although important questions are being asked by academics, those discussing popular music rarely engage with the musical texts. When songs or bands are considered musically, the predominant mode of discussion is generalized, as demonstrated by Shuker and Pickering:

> …the blues-oriented Underdogs withstood comparisons with the early Fleetwood Mac…bands like the Formula [*sic*] turned out solid pop akin to their English counterparts…the disco sounds of the early 1980s were clearly evident in Ardijah and the Holiday Makers.[157]

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[152] See below for a sample of sources concerned with these issues. Roy Shuker and Michael Pickering, "Kiwi Rock: Popular Music and Cultural Identity in New Zealand," *Popular Music* 13, no. 3, Australia/New Zealand Issue (1994), pp. 268-276; Philip Hayward, Tony Mitchell and Roy Shuker (eds.), *North Meets South: Popular Music in Aoteoroa/New Zealand* (Sydney: Perfect Beat Publications, 1994); Tony Mitchell, "*He Waiata Na Aotearoa*: Maori and Pacific Islander Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand," in *Sound Alliances: Indigenous Peoples, Cultural Politics and Popular Music in the Pacific*, ed. Philip Hayward (London and New York: Cassell, 1998), pp. 26-44; and Kirsten Zemke-White, "'This Is My Life': Biography, Identity and Narrative in New Zealand Rap Songs," *Perfect Beat* 8, no. 3 (2007), pp. 31-52.
[153] Henry Johnson (ed.), *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
[154] Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (eds.), *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Auckland: Pearson, 2011).
[155] Dan Bendrups and Graeme Downes (eds.), *Dunedin Soundings: Place and Performance* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011).
[156] Henry Johnson, "Introduction," in *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. Henry Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 10.
[157] Shuker and Pickering, "Kiwi Rock," 273.

Tony Mitchell later dismissed these descriptions as "highly reductive"[158] which is a fair criticism given the lack of detail. Unfortunately, Mitchell's response is no better. Taking umbrage at Shuker and Pickering's account of The La De Das' 'How Is The Air Up There?' as simply a Rolling Stones-influenced cover, Mitchell states, "in actual fact [the song] had significant purchase among local audiences and elsewhere as a locally-produced 'alternative' song."[159] In doing so, he addresses ideas of reception and avoids the argument with which he takes exception.

Furthermore, Mitchell contends that amongst 1960s bands, including The La De Das, "strong indicators of a local identity…[were] always…evident in the performance of the music, in the interstices between the texts and musical and lyrical idioms of the songs and their receptions by audiences."[160] But there is no suggestion as to what these "strong indicators" are or were. Thus the authors' positions are found wanting; in a discussion on the sounds of New Zealand music, none provide any detail of the sounds.

Similar problems abound when Mitchell considers the musical texts. At times, he focuses almost exclusively on the lyrics, only referring briefly to broad stylistic traits or instrumentation, as in his account of The Front Lawn's 'Andy.'[161] Other times, he makes unconvincing points because he possesses little technical knowledge of music.

When discussing Neil Finn's *7 Worlds Collide* project[162], Mitchell cites Radiohead's Ed O'Brien, who said of the album, "it's relaxed, it's joyous. But there's also a dark undercurrent," reflecting the "heart of darkness to this

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[158] Tony Mitchell, "'Kiwi' Music and New Zealand National Identity," in *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. Henry Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 21-22.
[159] Ibid., 23.
[160] Ibid., 23.
[161] Tony Mitchell, "Sonic Psychogeography: A Poetics of Place in Popular Music in New Zealand," *Perfect Beat* 10, no. 2 (2009), pp. 154-164.
[162] For this charity project, Neil Finn arranged for a number of international musicians and their families to stay over Christmas at Piha, an isolated beach west of Auckland. The musicians collaborated on songs and subsequently produced an album, *7 Worlds Collide*.

place."[163] Mitchell takes this as proof that music and place are connected. As it stands, Mitchell presents several pieces of information — Ed O'Brien's quote, the album (*7 Worlds Collide*) and the location (Piha) — and asserts, rather than proves or demonstrates, that they are linked to each other. Mitchell fails to understand that "dark undercurrent" is a metaphor not a musical term. To substantiate the central point, it is necessary to link the various pieces of 'evidence'; the first step is to show, through analysis, how one might hear the "dark undercurrent" in the music.

This practice tarnishes New Zealand popular music literature. Because many contributors are not musicologists, there is a tendency for them to get trapped in non-musical descriptions. Much writing hovers around the music, rather than fully explaining the subject matter, as shown in Mitchell's comments and in a similar manner to Richard Dyer's article on disco, critiqued earlier.

The historical texts, cited above, are aimed at a general readership; it is understandable that there is limited musical detail. One could, however, expect more from the academics. Unfortunately, their bibliographies tend towards journalistic sources, namely newspapers, music magazines, such as *Rip It Up* and *New Musical Express*, and current affairs publications, like *New Zealand Listener* and *Metro*. For studying popular music, these resources are valid and relevant, but they encourage a vague engagement with the music, one that is subsequently reproduced in the scholarly work.

A case in point is found in Jennifer Cattermole's essay on New Zealand reggae. In *Stranded in Paradise*, Dix commented on the Herbs' "Polynesian harmonies" in the vocals without explaining what constitutes a "Polynesian" harmony. Instead of clarifying this particular technique, Cattermole simply restates Dix's interpretation. She notes the vocals are triadic, which is a step in the right direction, but misses an opportunity to identify the specific voicing or voice-

[163] Quoted in Tony Mitchell, "Songlines and Timelines Through Auckland: Music in the 'Queen City,'" in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 127.

leading features that contribute to the Herbs' sound.[164] On this point, Cattermole adds little to Dix's journalistic work. As more academics study New Zealand popular music and build upon their predecessors' work, this problem is further entrenched. Detailed analytical work would help to break this cycle.

2.7.2 Analysis of New Zealand Popular Music

Matthew Bannister has contributed across several publications. In general, he has addressed wider issues and brought in musical details as evidence. Thus, in an article on Don McGlashan (derived from his doctoral thesis), he begins with notions of New Zealand masculinity before mapping them onto McGlashan's songs.[165] This approach is exemplified in his discussion of 'Anchor Me.' Bannister argues the oceanic metaphors and shimmering guitar sound, for example, represent a sense of unknown and exoticism, which, in turn, replicates the male view of the female as 'other.'

In a late *Music in New Zealand* feature, Bannister considers style formation, as heard in the Jean Paul Sartre Experience's 'Flex.'[166] He notes the song's diverse musical traits and argues that their synthesis could be located within the emerging alternative rock style of the 1980s. Finally, Bannister references musical features in his personal history of the Dunedin band, Sneaky Feelings. Although written for a wider audience, and therefore toned down in detail, he acknowledges the importance of melodic shapes and harmonic progressions in conjunction with the lyrics.[167]

Norman Meehan also deserves recognition. He takes a similar approach to Bannister in his chapter on TrinityRoots and the "jazz-dub-reggae" scene in

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[164] See Jennifer Cattermole, "'Oh, Reggae But Different!' The Localisation of Roots Reggae in Aotearoa," in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 50.
[165] Matthew Bannister, "A Thing Well Made? NZ Settler Identity and Pakeha Masculinity in the Work of Don McGlashan," *Perfect Beat* 8, no. 1 (2006), pp. 22-49.
[166] Matthew Bannister, "Predicting Flying Nun's Past: Jean Paul Sartre Experience's Flex," *Music in New Zealand* 34 (Summer, 1998-1999), pp. 35-37, 73.
[167] This point is perhaps best exemplified in the chapter, "Husband House," see Matthew Bannister, *Positively George Street: Sneaky Feelings and the Dunedin Sound – a personal reminiscence* (Auckland: Reed Books, 1999), pp. 110-120.

Wellington.[168] Starting from a "few traits that we can cautiously advance" as specific to New Zealanders, Meehan considers how these traits may play out in a musical context. Thus, he argues that "humility" is seen in the "anti-virtuosity" of TrinityRoots' songs — there are few instrumental solos and when they do occur, they "provide a timbral contrast rather than…showcase an individual musician."[169]

Meehan then connects these details to the music's social context. Most of the musicians had graduated from the Wellington Polytechnic Jazz School[170] at which they were taught wide-ranging techniques in a communal, non-competitive setting. His account could benefit from more detailed analysis — he covers a range of ideas relatively quickly — however, there is enough evidence to forge a link between the music and its contexts. Like Bannister, his knowledge of the musical sounds is welcome and he successfully integrates interdisciplinary ideas.

Finally, Graeme Downes has conducted the only musicological analyses of New Zealand popular music. His most recent work is concerned with songwriting processes.[171] He takes two of his own songs, 'Paraphrasing Hitler' and 'They That Once Were Eager Fellas,' from The Verlaines' 2009 album *Corporate Moronic*, and explains the reasons for the various musical features. Thus, in 'Paraphrasing Hitler,' Downes notes the Beethovian and late-Romantic musical references used to enhance the lyrics' subject matter. This work is more interesting from a methodological perspective; thus, it will be returned to in Chapter 3.

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[168] Norman Meehan, "'Sounds Like Home': TrinityRoots and 'Jazz-dub-reggae' in Wellington," in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), pp. 134-144.
[169] Ibid., 136.
[170] Now part of the New Zealand School of Music.
[171] Graeme Downes, "Songwriting Process in The Verlaines *Corporate Moronic*," in *Dunedin Soundings: Place and Performance*, eds. Dan Bendrups and Graeme Downes (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011), pp. 43-56.

More relevant here is Downes' earlier modal analysis of several songs by Dunedin band, The Clean.[172] While Downes is wary of sociological and geographical explanations of the so-called 'Dunedin sound,' he argues "what is more fundamental…is the musical content."[173] There seems an implicit challenge in these words; that is, for future researchers to analyse more (perhaps in this context) Flying Nun bands and, generally, New Zealand music. Neither of these challenges has been met.

The analytical findings of Bannister, Meehan or Downes have not been explored in great detail, partly because the concern here is theoretical, but also because their results are somewhat isolated and self-contained. In terms of New Zealand popular music literature, these contributions are important but form a minute segment, and consequently, there are few points of comparison to be made.

It is good to know that 'Safety at Home' is in E Aeolian with a B Phrygian "flavour,"[174] but surely, this information becomes more relevant when placed in a wider context, even if only in analytical terms. That is, how did The Clean's approach to tonality differ from other Flying Nun bands? Or overseas independent acts? Or mainstream artists?

These questions may be answered in time as New Zealand popular music studies develops. For now, the best course of action is comprehensive and systematic musical analysis, which will shed greater light on the existing literature and offer a more rounded picture of the music. The study of *Nature's Best* seeks to fill this gap in the body of knowledge.

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[172] Graeme Downes, "The Clean: Modal Conflict and Resolution," *Music in New Zealand* 16 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 21-23.
[173] Ibid., 23.
[174] Ibid., 22.

3. Methodology

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the analytical methods used for the 100 songs. Problems and issues associated with these methods are also discussed. The analysis was undertaken in two parts. First, each song was analysed according to eight main parameters, each outlined below. The second stage involved collating and organizing the data in order to identify commonalities, differences and trends. This chapter only examines the first step; the second is covered in Chapter 4.

3.2 METHODOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

3.2.1 Corpus Choice

The first task was to select a corpus of New Zealand popular songs. Various options were considered including songs that were awarded the APRA Silver Scroll for songwriting, or New Zealand songs that reached a set position on the New Zealand singles chart within a set time period — i.e. top-ten hits from 1980 to the present.

The first group was dismissed primarily because of its small sample size. There were also issues with the award structure; for many years, the Silver Scroll was judged by a panel, changing to an open vote for APRA members in the early 2000s. Furthermore, 'political' questions were raised regarding the awards.[1] The latter corpus had an appropriate number of songs, but raised other questions, such as how to deal with songs that stayed at number one for multiple weeks compared to a solitary appearance.

[1] One prominent New Zealand musician pointed out that most of the songs were relatively obscure. Further, he suggested that some artists may have been awarded the prize for reasons other than their songwriting prowess. He cited the case of Chris Knox who received the Silver Scroll in 2000 for 'My Only Friend' which could be construed as a sort of 'lifetime achievement' having ignored 'Not Given Lightly' in 1990 and his notable work as a punk musician.

Nature's Best, therefore, appeared to be a satisfactory choice, as it contains an appropriate number of songs that have been objectively ranked. Further, the songs primarily span 1970 until 2000, providing a potential snapshot of New Zealand popular music during this period. Its primary problem may be the 'mainstream' ideological charges, however, one cannot escape ideology in any corpus. Given the few analyses of New Zealand popular music, *Nature's Best* is as good a place as any to start.

3.2.2 Scores and Notation

In their *Rolling Stone* analysis, de Clercq and Temperley avoid sheet music, including lead-sheets, transcriptions or scores.[2] Instead, the analysts relied on their ear and musical intuition. There are two likely reasons for this choice.

The first is practical. As Richard Middleton points out, popular music scores, when they exist, often reduce the music into a "kind of 'thickened heterophony'" that provides only a basic sketch of the song.[3] Chord voicings and instrumental textures are often neglected or misrepresented.[4] This occurs because scores are often arranged for beginner instrumentalists. Further, internet-based chord charts or guitar tablatures are sometimes inaccurate, having been transcribed by amateur musicians. Therefore, there is little guarantee that any popular music score would be reliable, let alone beneficial.

This observation informs the second issue. The presence of a score may influence the analyst to 'hear' the music in a particular way, especially for passages in which musical details are obscured. If an analyst is stuck, it may be tempting to treat the score as authoritative. However, if the score is marred by the problems mentioned above, then it is likely that the analyst's 'answer' will be erroneous.

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[2] Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," *Popular Music* 30, no. 1 (2011), 57.
[3] Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990), 104.
[4] A partial exception would be the Hal Leonard series of keyboard transcriptions, such as *Note for Note Keyboard Transcriptions: Classic Rock* (Milwaukee, WI..: Hal Leonard, n.d.).

De Clercq and Temperley overcame this issue by conducting separate analyses. Differing results were, thus, self-attributable and easily resolved. Unfortunately, this approach is not possible here due to the lack of a research assistant with whom analyses can be compared. Consequently, scores and lead-sheets from published sources were consulted; only thirteen songs were analysed entirely by ear.[5]

Although the transcriptions were occasionally inaccurate, they provided a useful second opinion of sorts. In line with much popular musicology (e.g. Moore, Walser, Everett), the sound recordings of the *Nature's Best* songs were considered the primary text, rather than the traditional musicological approach in which recordings are interpretations of a notated text. Any scores or lead-sheets, therefore, functioned as secondary sources.

Having decided to use sheet music, the issue of notation is raised. This also concerns the presentation of analysis in subsequent chapters. Traditional notation is problematic because it does not always account for timbre or performance details. Of greater concern in this analytical context is what the pitch-rhythm elements of notation can and, importantly, cannot convey.

In terms of pitch, standard notation refers to discrete pitches in accordance with the equally tempered scale as heard on a tuned keyboard instrument. Obviously, however, more than twelve fundamental pitches exist; a violinist with poor intonation may produce notes that are fractionally flatter or sharper than one of the discrete notes. Similarly, the rhythmic structure of Western music is predicated upon the division of single bars by multiples, most commonly, of two and three. Thus, a bar of 4/4 divides into two minim beats, or four crotchet beats, or twelve triplet quaver beats, and so forth. Like pitch, rhythm notation is

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[5] The following sources were consulted: Dave Dobbyn, *The Songbook* (Nelson, New Zealand: Craig Potton Publishing, 2009); *Nature's Best: New Zealand's Top 30 Songs of All-Time* (Roseberry, N.S.W.: Wise Publications, 2002); *Nature's Best 2: More of New Zealand's Top Songs of All-Time* (Sydney: Wise Publications, 2004); Bic Runga, *Bic Runga Songbook* (Taren Point, N.S.W.: Alfred Publishing Ltd., 2006); *The Little Black Kiwi Songbook* (Sydney: Wise Publications, 2007).

mathematically oriented and does not, in itself, admit much flexibility or freedom.

The issue is whether this model is appropriate for popular music. Shepherd and Vulliamy argue, with regards to popular music, notation and education, that

> When the radical potential of an oral-aural musical language is defused in the classroom by a notational filter derived from functional-tonality, the students are…socialised into fundamental epistemological assumptions underpinning industrial, capitalist society.[6]

There are several problems with this extreme view, primarily relating to the authors' links; essentially, notation equals tonality, which equals dominant ideologies, which equals education, which equals capitalism, *ipso facto*, notation equals capitalism. Swanwick later responded that no causal relationship between the variables has ever been established. Furthermore, popular music, the non-notated "radical" idiom, is closely bound to capitalist markets.[7]

Nonetheless, Shepherd and Vulliamy rightly point out that "the improvisatory and inflectionary characteristics of Afro-American musics are not capable of being notated analytically."[8] In short, standard notation does not record vocal melismas, microtonal pitches, and pitch bending and slides; nor does it account for subtle rhythmic displacements slightly before or after the beat divisions.

Peter Winkler's transcription of Aretha Franklin's 'I Never Loved A Man' engages these issues.[9] Guiding the reader through the transcription process, Winkler attempts to notate Franklin's vocal inflections and to "measure the groove" through precise rhythmic calculations that go far beyond triplets and

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[6] John Shepherd and Graham Vulliamy, "A Comparative Sociology of School Knowledge," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 4, no. 1 (1983), 10.
[7] See Keith Swanwick, "Problems of a Sociological Approach to Pop Music in Schools," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 5, no. 1 (1984), pp. 49-56.
[8] Shepherd and Vulliamy, "A Comparative Sociology of School Knowledge," 5.
[9] Peter Winkler, "Writing Ghost Notes: The Poetics and Politics of Transcription," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, eds. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (United States of America: University of Virginia Press, 1997), pp. 169-203.

quavers.[10] Winkler frequently relates how subjective, challenging and fruitless the transcription process can be when dealing with these finer details. His narrative is painful; yet it illuminates the problems of notation.

The challenges encountered by Winkler are almost insurmountable or require such dedication and time that their analytical applicability is limited. Does this render notation redundant? Despite Shepherd and Vulliamy's Marxist indictment, notation is a useful tool for providing a "sketchy notion of what it [the music] might sound like."[11] Notation is beneficial as long as its limitations are recognized; it serves only as a "blueprint."[12] Therefore, any notation used in this thesis should be read in conjunction with the recording. Likewise, if a melody is described as proceeding from D to C on the first and third beats of a bar, some leeway in the exactitude of this description may be tacitly assumed. Whatever problems may befall notation, there are few better alternatives.

3.2.3 Analysis in Practice

Much of the analysis was conducted at the piano with manuscript paper. Analysis not involving transcription was conducted by ear using high quality headphones that highlighted the subtle nuances of recordings. For some musical parameters, the computer programme *Sonic Visualiser* was employed.

Sonic Visualiser was developed at the Centre for Digital Music, Queen Mary, University of London for the purpose of analysing recordings. The programme allows the analyst to view recordings in terms of sound waves; from there, one can make inferences regarding, for example, pitches, instrumental layering and performance techniques, such as vibrato.[13] Figure 3.1 demonstrates its use in this context.

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[10] Ibid., pp. 181-192. The latter task is similar to analysis of John Lee Hooker's guitar playing in Fernando Benadon and Ted Gioia, "How Hooker Found His Boogie: A Rhythmic Analysis of a Classic Groove," *Popular Music* 28, no. 1 (2009), pp. 19-32.
[11] Winkler, "Writing Ghost Notes," 193.
[12] Ibid., 193.
[13] See Nicholas Cook and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "A Musicologist's Guide to Sonic Visualiser," from "Sonic Visualiser," *CHARM*, King's College London, from http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/analysing/p9_0_1.html (accessed 19 October 2011); and C.

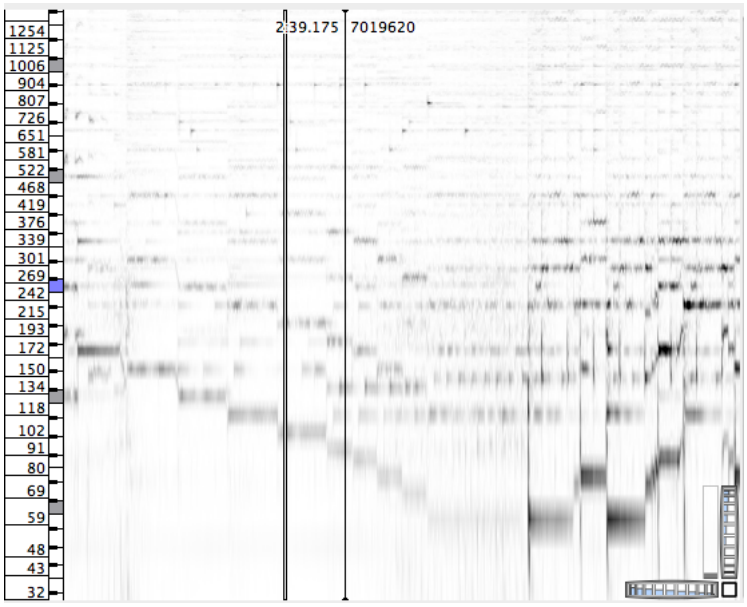

Figure 3.1 *Sonic Visualiser* Spectrogram of 'Stuff and Nonsense,' 2'25"-3'02"

This screenshot shows the end of the bridge leading into the final chorus of Split Enz's 'Stuff and Nonsense.' The passage was difficult to analyse because of the heavy synthesizer texture that blends the notes of the chords into a rather singular sound. Specifically, the chords had been identified, but not the inversions.

Looking at the passage in the "Melodic Range Spectrogram" window, it is clear there is a descending bass line, before the bass guitar re-enters as signaled by the thicker sound waves at the bottom of the screen. When one hovers the keyboard mouse over the various sound waves, *Sonic Visualiser* provides a range of frequencies for each sound. These frequencies are then approximated to a note or notes of the chromatic scale.[14] Where multiple pitches are presented, the 'correct' pitch can be ascertained through the tonal context. Thus, it was quickly established that the bass line moved from E♭ down an octave to the tonic, B♭.

Cannam, C. Landone and M. Sandler, "Sonic Visualiser: An Open Source Application for Viewing, Analysing, and Annotating Music Audio Files," *Proceedings of the ACM Multimedia 2010 International Conference, Firenze, Italy, October 2010*, pp. 1467-1468, from http://www.sonicvisualiser.org/ (accessed 19 October 2011).

[14] The range of approximated notes is dependent on the register. That is, a range of 20Hz corresponds to a third, or thereabouts, in the lowest octave on a keyboard; in upper octaves, 20Hz would barely register as a change in pitch.

Sonic Visualiser was used in similar situations to determine specific notes in chords.

3.3 ANALYTICAL METHODS

3.3.1 Harmony

Harmonies were analysed using Roman numerals as per classical music analytical conventions. The system assigns each chord a numeral based on its relationship, distance-wise, to the tonic note. Upper case numerals were used for major chords, lower case numerals for their minor counterparts; the superscript $^{+}$ and ^{o} symbols denoted augmented and diminished triads, respectively. The diatonic triads in a major key would, thus, read: I-ii-iii-IV-V-vi-vii^{o}.

Some writers (e.g. Walser, Moore) use only upper case numerals with a modal qualification. Thus, Ionian VI in C major would be an A minor triad; Aeolian VI in C minor would be an A♭ major triad. Although relatively clear, it is more helpful to differentiate systematically between the major and minor triads, partly for ease of presentation and partly to avoid problematic cases of mixed modes.

The main issue concerning Roman numerals is harmonic function; the label "V" is implicitly synonymous with "dominant" and its associated baggage. The problem is the fit between label and interpretation, especially when extended to non-diatonic harmonies. In, for example, the Rolling Stones' 'You Can't Always Get What You Want' the harmonies alternate, predominantly, between C major and F major, I and IV in C.[15] In the chorus, the progression is interrupted by a D major chord.

In much classical and popular music, D major would function as an applied dominant of G, i.e. V/V. There is no subsequent dominant, which renders this explanation less applicable. The particular progression works, as such, because

[15] The presence of only two chords leaves it open to the suggestion that C and F could be V and I, respectively, of F major. This is implausible, however, because of the phrase structure in which C major is clearly placed in the focal points, that is, the beginning and end.

of the voice-leading, F-F♯-F-E.[16] The major supertonic is frequently used in such a contrapuntal fashion in popular music. This certainly suggests why the progression sounds natural; in saying this, the song's instrumental textures conceal this exact line, except, perhaps, if one listens intently to the choir.

The effect of D major, however, is arguably marked because it is a non-diatonic chord in C major. Not coincidentally, the chord appears when the lyrics change perspective — "You can't always get what you want // But if you try sometimes…" — which serves to strengthen its musical impact. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the harmony's non-diatonic nature, without overstating its theoretical function.

To this end, Roman numerals should be interpreted, first and foremost, as only representing the root of the chord and its quality; any function can be interpreted depending on the context.[17] By using the standardized framework for diatonic triads in any key (i.e. I-ii-iii etc. in a major key; i-ii^{o}-III etc. in a minor key), one can easily identify non-diatonic chords and modify the labels. For example, an F major chord in A major is built on the flattened sixth degree, hence, it would be marked ♭VI, in comparison to the diatonic vi in a major key.

Added notes have been labeled only when their omission would misrepresent the identity of the harmony as it is heard. This is similar to classical analysis in which passing and neighbour notes are not included in the harmonic description. For example, in the introduction of Bic Runga's 'Sway,' the acoustic guitar and bass articulate a IV-V-IV-V progression in A major; above, the lead guitar plays the melodic line A-G♯-A in each bar. The harmonic analysis of these four bars reads IV-V-IV-V because there seems little point in complicating the simple progression with IV$^{sus♯4}$ and V^{sus4} chords that only last for a single quaver.

[16] I am grateful to Walter Everett for discussing this point by email, July 2011.
[17] This is obviously the case in classical music analysis as well. I stress this point here, however, because of the greater prevalence in popular music for harmonies to behave differently from set theoretical functions.

By comparison, the verse in Dave Dobbyn's 'Beside You' repeats IV^{add9}-I in D♭ major. Here, "^{add9}" is suggested because the A♭ is maintained in the same register on the guitar between each chord as a kind of pedal. Its presence softens the progression as it minimizes the voice movement from chord to chord; hence, the description seems justified and warranted.

The full list of chord symbols is summarized in Table 3.1. The system is straightforward and similar to that used by Harte *et al*.[18]

Type of Chord	**Symbol**	**Notes**
Seventh	C^7 (Cm^7) /I^7 (i^7)	C, E (E♭), G, B♭
Major Seventh	C^{maj7}/I^{maj7}	C, E, G, B
Diminished Seventh	C^{o7}/I^{o7}	C, E♭, G♭, B♭♭
Half-Diminished Seventh	$C^{ø}$/$I^{ø}$	C, E♭, G♭, B♭
Added Ninth/Eleventh etc.	C^{add9}, C^{add11}/I^{add9}, I^{add11}	C, E, G, D; C, E, G, F
Ninth	C^9/I^9	C, E, G, B♭, D
Suspended Fourth	C^{sus4}/I^{sus4}	C, F, G

Table 3.1 Chord Symbols for Harmonic Analysis

Inversions are then indicated by the subscript letters $_b$ and $_c$ for first and second inversions, respectively. For situations in which a bass note does not 'belong' to the triad, these harmonies are conveyed like a lead sheet, with the figuration, Roman numeral chord/bass note.

A common example occurs with a descending bass line from the minor submediant to the subdominant, as in the bridge of The Mockers' 'Forever Tuesday Morning.' Technically, these chords could be labeled vi-$vi^7{}_d$-$vi^{♮6}{}_d$-IV, but in reality the keyboardist is playing the same G minor triad in the right hand with the descending bass line, G-F-E-E♭. Thus, this progression in Roman numeral terms would read vi-vi/F-vi/E-IV. Similarly, V^{11} chords, in C, are understood to be an F major chord over a G in the bass (i.e. IV/G), not containing the 3rd and 5th that the ^{11} implies.

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[18] See Christopher Harte *et al.*, "Symbolic Representation of Musical Chords: A Proposed Syntax for Text Annotations," *ISMIR 2005: Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Music Information Retrieval, London, 11-15 September 2005*, from http://ismir2005.ismir.net/proceedings/1080.pdf (accessed 27 May 2011).

Roman numerals are only appropriate when the key is established, given that harmonies are related to the tonic note. In the majority of examples, this condition is not an issue — the tonic is established through its placement in phrases, cadences, and so forth. When songs change or move through different keys, one can generally find a localized tonic. The harmonies are, therefore, related to the different tonics.

There are several songs in which the tonic is less evident including Blam Blam Blam's 'There Is No Depression in New Zealand' and sections of The Chills' 'Pink Frost.' Roman numerals then become somewhat redundant, as chords are related to a relatively arbitrary point. In these instances, other relationships, such as motivic or intervallic, may be sought in the music.[19]

3.3.2 Melodic Structure

"Melody" refers to the lead vocal line, thereby excluding backing vocals, instrumental parts that provide melodic fills, and instrumental sections, which are covered in a separate category. The melodies have been analysed in terms of contour, rather than fundamental pitch relations. That is, the analysis seeks to identify shapes in a melody, whether ascending, descending, arched, axial or static. Each category is defined in Chapter 4. This method responds to the problems of notation by avoiding the notes with which notation is ill equipped to deal.

Everett's transcription of the bridge from Elvis Presley's 'Love Me' highlights the benefit of this method.[20] Presley's vocal is characteristically embellished but if one were to play the transcription on a keyboard, for example, it is unlikely

[19] Graeme Downes, for example, is an ardent advocate of motivic relationships in Nirvana, particularly in 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.' I am grateful to Graeme for pointing this out, firstly in his songwriting course at the University of Otago, and more recently by email correspondence. Downes alludes to the idea in Alex Ross, "Nothing's Going to Happen: The Story of New Zealand Rock Music," *Alex Ross: The Rest is Noise*, 15 April 2008, from http://www.therestisnoise.com/2008/04/nothings-going-to-happen-the-story-of-new-zealand-rock.html (accessed 29 May 2011).

[20] Walter Everett, "Pitch Down The Middle," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), 121.

the same 'notes' as Presley's singing would be reproduced. Although this example is rather straightforward, there is a certain futility in getting absorbed in exact pitches when it is unclear what the exact pitches are. In the case of 'Love Me,' the important analytical feature is that the vocal phrases are arched, returning twice to the tonic and, the third time, to the supertonic. Unsurprisingly, the structural pitches are those easily captured by notation.

The melodic analysis is, thus, based on reductive techniques, in terms of stripping away the embellishments to reveal the basic melodic shape. This places the method in the same family as Schenkerian analysis. As Covach points out, Schenker, in an objective sense, demonstrated how works of the German tradition were related to one another.[21] The reductive method here is similarly intended to uncover the principles of melodic construction for *Nature's Best* songwriters.

This is close to Middleton's view of how Schenkerian analysis could be appropriate for popular music. Discussing Gershwin's 'A Foggy Day,' he notes that finding the Schenkerian *Urlinie* becomes an arbitrary process and removes the pitches from their rhythmic context; however, the analysis reveals that much of the melody, against a backdrop of chromatic harmonies, revolves around the tonic triad.[22] This piece of information should not be rendered "anti-historical" — that is, any other piece with tonic triads as the basis of the melody is "*essentially* the same"[23] — but could be used to explore how such a melodic trait is articulated differently across or within stylistic and historical boundaries.

Vocal phrasing guided the analytical process. One of the main criticisms of Schenkerian analysis is the tendency to fit the music to the theory; that is, to 'find' a descending 3-2-1 line as explication of the *Urlinie*.[24] There is, arguably,

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[21] John Covach, "We Won't Get Fooled Again: Rock Music and Musical Analysis," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, eds. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (United States of America: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 77.
[22] Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 193.
[23] Ibid., pp. 193-194. Italics are original.
[24] See Lori Burns, "Analytic Methodologies for Rock Music," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 66-70.

also a temptation for the analyst to emphasise obvious features, such as scales or arpeggiated triads, because they work well within set harmonic frameworks. But as Temperley points out, it is not uncommon in popular music for non-chordal melodic notes to remain unresolved compared with classical music conventions.[25] The implication of Temperley's argument is that the analyst should 'hear' the melodic structure, rather than construct it according to predetermined rules. Therefore, every attempt was made to identify melodic contours from a combination of vocal phrasing, vocal rhythm, pitches, melodic context, and the intangible sense of musical movement.

The practical process of melodic analysis involved writing out each individual pitch of the vocal line, removing only repeated notes. This provided a graphic representation of each song and a suggestion of the contour. This 'score' was then combined with aural perception to settle on a discrete shape. In some cases, this task was straightforward; in others, it was difficult and rather subjective, a problem for which there are, unfortunately, no solutions. Discussion of the results in Chapter 4 will provide further insight into how analytical judgments were formulated in specific contexts.

3.3.3 Form and Structure

The form of popular songs is often simple insofar as most listeners understand the most common structural divisions. From an analytical perspective, the challenge is not always to identify the song's sections but to settle on appropriate terminology. Although terms such as "verse" and "chorus" are standard, others such as "climb" and "pre-chorus," or "bridge," "break," and "middle eight," are used with a degree of interchangeability and refer to similar temporal sections within a song. Each, however, has subtly different connotations — "middle eight" in AABA form, "bridge" suggests a different section between two points, a "climb" indicates rising tension levels, and so forth.

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[25] David Temperley, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock," *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007), pp. 324-334. The examples of Elton John and the Rolling Stones are the most pertinent, where a non-chordal note is left hanging at the end of a phrase.

Ultimately, it does not matter whether one calls it a "chorus" or a "refrain," but for the purpose of corpus analysis, some consistency is required. The following terms were thus used: introduction, verse, pre-chorus, chorus, bridge, instrumental, instrumental bridge, and coda.

Prior to the analysis, literature on this issue was avoided; instead, the analysis relied on musical intuition and knowledge of popular music. This approach was taken in order to avoid conflicting interpretations of particular details. It is worth noting that Jimmy Webb's songwriting bible *Tunesmith* was consulted post-analysis; discussing the forms a popular song can take, his divisions are almost identical to those listed above and with similar connotations.[26] This vindicates the particular method used here.

By and large, the choruses could be differentiated from the verses by either differing musical content that resolves the verse's tension, the presence of the song's title, or lyrics that are repeated each time. The change from verse to pre-chorus is more subjective; a pre-chorus was expected to heighten the musical tension through varied harmonies, an ascending melody, or lyrics that lead into the chorus.

The bridge section was defined by a musical change compared to the verse and chorus. Often this involved a new harmonic progression that would 'resolve' back to the familiar verse/chorus material. It follows that an instrumental bridge differed from an instrumental section by the same virtue; an instrumental would simply run through the verse or chorus progression without lyrics.

Introductions were predominantly instrumental, however, a couple of songs featured vocalists, such as 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' and 'Poi E.' The introductory content is analysed and discussed below. Codas were marked as sections that either introduced new material, such as 'One Day Ahead,' or

[26] See Jimmy Webb, *Tunesmith: Inside the Art of Songwriting* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), pp. 107-135.

revisited existing material to conclude the song, such as in 'Sway' or 'Gutter Black.' Only instrumental codas were analysed in any depth; codas were identified primarily to assist with the harmonic analysis.

An alternate approach would be to label different sections alphabetically; thus, verse/chorus and chorus/verse forms would both be "AB." Although this renders immediate comparisons easy across a large body of work, it distances the analysis from the music. That is, a song opening with a chorus has a different effect, lyrically and musically, to one beginning with a verse. Therefore, in the interests of musically sympathetic analysis, this system was deemed inadequate.

3.3.4 Tempo

The tempo of each song was determined using a purpose-built tool in *Sonic Visualiser*. Having opened an audio file in the programme, the user inputs the number of beats per bar and then marks the bar lines by tapping the keyboard in time with the music. *Sonic Visualiser* calculates the time between each bar line, which is then converted into the standard beats per minute (bpm) format and shown as a line-graph through time. Because of the user's inability to beat every bar line in precisely the correct place, the tempo varies slightly from bar to bar. To this end, the tempo was taken when the line-graph remained at a relatively constant level, within a range of about two bpm. This is the most accurate method available.

3.3.5 Introductory Hooks

The 'hook' is important in popular music — it is the song's feature that catches the listener and makes them want to hear the song again. The hook analysis takes as its starting point Gary Burns' study; he works from Monaco and Riordan's definition of a hook as "a musical or lyrical phrase that stands out and is easily remembered."[27] Burns then progresses through distinctive song features, including melody, harmony and lyrics as well as sound effects, such as

[27] Gary Burns, "A Typology of 'Hooks' in Popular Records," *Popular Music* 6, no. 1 (1987), 1.

in Pink Floyd's 'Money,' and even fade-ins, evident in Boston's 'More Than A Feeling.' As an introduction to the topic, the wide-ranging article is an excellent resource. Furthermore, Burns is clear about the need for further investigation into both the nature of the hook and its relationship with wider technological and stylistic factors.[28]

The broad scope of the article, however, is slightly problematic because it does not create a tight framework in which one can conduct further research. That is, almost any feature has the potential to be a hook in a popular song. This renders the analysis subjective and makes it difficult to achieve consistency across a selection of songs. For example, Burns argues of 'Tumbling Dice' that Charlie Watts' groove, returning after the bridge, "may have a powerful hook effect."[29] The issue is not with Burns' judgment, but with the hook's placement in the song. Essentially, how does one compare a bridge hook with a verse hook, or a musical hook with a lyrical hook?

To overcome this issue, the current analysis has been narrowed to the introduction, in terms of anything occurring prior to the lyrics. Songs that begin with a verse or chorus are considered to have no introductory hook. As it stands, many of Burns' hooks are heard at the start of songs; this approach simply refines his investigation. It is also in line with the, perhaps apocryphal, practices of the record industry — the producer listening to the first three seconds of every demo sent in by prospective artists.

Within the narrow confines of a four- or eight-bar introduction, it is possible to compare how different artists use this space and how this subsequently relates to the song. That is, some introductions present the verse's harmonic progression; some use a particular instrument to evoke a mood or sentiment. Without viewing popular music as organic in the same way as classical music, it is clear that the introductory material usually has some importance in the song's context. The analysis does not necessarily indicate if the particular musical detail is, in

[28] Ibid., 18.
[29] Ibid., 7.

fact, a hook. But by concentrating on a particular aspect of the song, it will be possible to refine and develop Burns' ideas.

3.3.6 Instrumental Solos

Robert Walser writes, the "electric guitar is the most important virtuoso instrument."[30] Discussing Van Halen's 'Runnin' With the Devil' and heavy metal music, he argues that guitar solos "take the form of rhetorical outbursts."[31] Aside from Shihad, *Nature's Best* does not contain any metal songs, but a large percentage of rock and pop songs contain non-vocal sections that provide a platform for instrumental solos. It is, thus, worth considering, like the introductions, how this group of artists uses this temporal space.

In some songs, the instrumental solo is obvious; few would disagree that the soloist in 'Brown Sugar' is Bobby Keyes on saxophone after the second chorus, not Keith Richards in the guitar interlude after the first chorus. By comparison, Billy Idol's 'White Wedding' contains a non-vocal section (ca. 1'51"-2'24") without projecting a specific instrumentalist into the spotlight. To avoid distinctions along these lines, all non-vocal sections were initially counted. It was then possible to separate the songs according to their instrumental content. Songs concluding with an instrumental section were included; this section has historically provided the potential for virtuosity and 'jamming' in the same manner as a mid-song break.[32]

The instrumentals were analysed according to three parameters: first, the instrument/s used; second, the content of the instrumental; and third, the harmonic progression used. Instrumental sections could contain vocals but only as "oohs" or "aahs" as is the case in 'Dominion Road' by The Mutton Birds, or in Split Enz's 'Six Months In a Leaky Boat,' in which Tim Finn "daa-daa-dahs" the coda melody. In songs with two instrumental sections, both were analysed.

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[30] Robert Walser, *Running With The Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hannover: University Press of New England, 1992), pp. 50-51.
[31] Ibid., 53.
[32] The classic example would be Lynyrd Skynyrd's 'Freebird' with its seven-minute, double-time break over a repeated chord progression.

The instrumentation element refers to the predominant instrument of the section; when this was not clear, multiple instruments were noted.

There were four main categories for instrumental content: a melody borrowed and, sometimes embellished, from earlier in the song; a harmonic progression with little sense of melody; a percussion solo; or a new melody. Finally, the harmonic content of the instrumental was either static (i.e. a single chord), based on a previous section, new, or a combination of the above.

3.3.7 A Note on Other Features

Lyrics, instrumentation and production features were also analysed but are not discussed in Chapter 4 because of space constraints. Aspects of each appear throughout Chapter 4 and 5 in relation to other analytical features; thus, they have not been ignored. It is worth briefly outlining the methods used for these elements.

Lyrics were only analysed in terms of broad categories: Love, Social Concern, Escapism, Rebellion, Fantasy, Death, and Unknown. 91 songs belonged to Love, encompassing positive and negative views, Social Concern, ranging from overtly political ('French Letter') to humourous ('Outlook For Thursday'), and Unknown. This method borders on content analysis, which Frith warns against as it fails to account for metaphors, irony or sarcasm.[33] These lyrical techniques were taken into consideration where applicable; thus, as an introduction, the analytical method was sufficient. The song's persona was also noted; 85 songs were sung from a first person perspective.

Instrumentation was ascertained primarily through listening, although liner notes were occasionally consulted to clarify particular instruments. Unknown sounds were generally classified as "synthesizer" on the assumption that they originated from a keyboard instrument. The make-up of bands was fairly

[33] Simon Frith, "Why Do Songs Have Words?" reprinted in Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 209-212.

conventional. Guitars, bass, drums and vocals dominated; keyboards/pianos, keyboard strings and other percussion instruments were also prevalent. Rarer instruments included accordion, flute, saxophone and horn sections; these will be discussed further with regards to instrumental solos.

Production elements were analysed with regards to the "sound-box."[34] Moore's term refers to the three-dimensional space in which the music resides — the vertical axis denotes pitch, the horizontal axis indicates left-right panning, and the front-back axis gives the impression of depth, either through microphone placement or production effects such as reverb. The volume of individual instruments affects their conceptual positioning. The overall size of the "sound-box" can also be interpreted. 'I Hope I Never' appears to be performed in a church-size room given the copious reverb; by comparison, 'Dominion Road' has much more cramped instrumental texture, as if heard in a small practice room.

Several general features stood out. Nearly all the vocalists had varying degrees of reverb added; the notable exception was Julia Deans' dry vocal on 'Lydia,' which creates a sense of intimacy between the singer and listener. Backing vocalists were often double-tracked and placed either side of the lead vocalist; similar left-right splits were present with guitar tracks, such as in 'Language,' 'Be Mine Tonight' or 'Nature.' Some songs featured left to right movement in instrumental parts, particularly in the introduction. Presumably, this acts as a type of hook. These songs included 'French Letter,' 'System Virtue' and 'Venus.'

The broad results for these elements are relatively conventional; however, deeper investigation would be worthwhile. From a lyrical perspective, construction details could be analysed, such as rhyme schemes and length of lines or phrases. Dai Griffiths provides interesting methods of analysing the lyrics, in terms of rhyme, language and lyric versus "anti-lyric"; his work could

[34] See Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text, 2nd ed.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 120-126.

easily be applied in other contexts.[35] This analysis could feasibly compare lyrics by 'bands' and singer-songwriters; this distinction is particularly relevant in the case of *Nature's Best*.[36]

Regarding production, the obvious path would to be track production features against technological developments, such as multi-track recording or MIDI. Another issue concerns specific production contexts. Flying Nun songs were traditionally renowned for their reverb-laden, jangly guitar sound; a detailed comparison with other record labels or studios around New Zealand could be fruitful and illuminating.

3.3.8 Interviews

In Chapter 2, the problems of popular music analysis were outlined; the conclusion was reached that popular music is fundamentally similar to classical music, but sometimes diverges in its practices. The hardest task for the analyst is walking this tightrope and understanding when traditional analytical tools and theories are less appropriate. To assist in this process, the songwriters of *Nature's Best* songs were contacted and, where possible, interviewed.

Sara Cohen points out that popular music researchers have often embraced journalistic and socio-statistical sources which provide some insight into how the music is received; however, fewer researchers have examined the personal aspects of producing popular music.[37] Negus' *Producing Pop* is one exception that focuses primarily on industry issues.[38] Cohen argues that there is a need to consider the "people and their musical practices and processes" which would "emphasise that popular music is something created, used and interpreted by different individuals and groups."[39]

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[35] Dai Griffiths, "From Lyric to Anti-Lyric: Analyzing the Words in Pop Song," in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan F. Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 39-59.
[36] Comparing, for example, Tim Finn and Neil Finn in Split Enz and Crowded House, with Bic Runga, Shona Laing and Dave Dobbyn as solo artists.
[37] Sara Cohen, "Ethnography and Popular Music Studies," *Popular Music* 12, no. 2 (1993), 127.
[38] Keith Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992).
[39] Cohen, "Ethnography and Popular Music Studies," 127.

Cohen works, by and large, from an ethnomusicological position and is thus more concerned with music as a social activity, rather than a specific text. This can be a frustrating approach. In one case, she discusses Jack Levy, a Liverpool Jew, and reaches the rather general conclusion, "Music reflects social, economical, political and material aspects of a particular place in which it is created. Changes in place thus influence changes in style."[40] It is not considered whether a listener would or could identify any music as being specifically from Liverpool.

Whereas Cohen's ethnographical work focuses on social and biographical details, the interviews for the present study began with the musical texts and their composition. Questions were formulated around analytical details that were relatively open to interpretation, such as unusual harmonic progressions, melodic lines, modulations, instrumentation, production features, and so forth. The interviews revealed multiple compositional approaches, ranging from "that's just what we did," to specific reasons for a particular detail, either musical, stylistic, or pertaining to the lyrics. Songwriters were also invited to speak more generally about music in New Zealand and other stylistic and cultural issues. Given the focus on "New Zealand music" in this thesis, it seemed pertinent to ask whether the songwriters identified with such an idea.

This method is similar to four studies. In *The Beatles as Musicians*, Everett refers to primary and secondary sources —studio outtakes, manuscripts and published interviews — to better understand how The Beatles' songs were composed.[41] That said, Everett's analysis is still undertaken from a distanced standpoint like most analytical work. The authors analysed the texts in conjunction with songwriter interviews (in Downes' case, 'with himself') and

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[40] Sara Cohen, "Sounding Out The City: Music and the Sensuous Production of Place," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 4 (1995), 444. For a more insightful ethnographic-analytical combination, see Sara Cohen, *Decline, Renewal and the City in Popular Culture: Beyond the Beatles* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 55-59.
[41] Walter Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians:* Revolver *through the* Anthology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

were thus able to ascertain why particular features appeared in the songs. This technique helps bridge the gap between the songwriter and the analyst.

Musicians were initially contacted through email; most had promotional websites that contained a "contact" link, either directly to the artist or to their manager. The musicians were given an overview of the research, which included the aims and reasons for interviews. Subsequent arrangements were made to meet in person or talk by phone or email. Early in the project, Mike Chunn was interviewed; he then contacted other musicians and recommended they participate in the project.

The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. Although brief questions were prepared, most interviewees spoke freely without prompting. As well as discussing musical details and songwriting craft, they often offered historical information around their music. For example, when discussing The Front Lawn's 'Andy,' Don McGlashan began by recounting his time in New York during the mid-1980s, in which he was exposed to Irish folk music. This experience encouraged a more stripped-back approach to songwriting, as heard in *Songs from the Front Lawn*.

At times, interviewees made mistakes, such as recalling historical events or musical details inaccurately, although these did not impact significantly on their views. It was necessary, however, to treat some comments with a degree of critical suspicion. One songwriter, for example, explained that he only wrote "original music — if I find traces of another song while I'm writing, I throw the song away." The underlying point is obvious enough, but at face value, the comment is absurd. To take this statement and use it as evidence of 'unique' New Zealand music, for example, would be misleading. In other cases, songwriters held strong opinions on people or other artists in the New Zealand industry. Although these opinions are informative and valid, one must be aware of each interviewee's own agenda.

The interviewees are quoted in this thesis by name with their permission. Because of the sole musical focus, there was not enough space to include the

contextual information from the interviews, fascinating as the stories were. The benefit of the interviews was that they encouraged rounded interpretations of songs and provided greater perspectives on issues within New Zealand music. Thus, many of the ideas put forth in Chapter 5 were influenced by the interviewees' views, even if they are not quoted directly. This relates, in particular, to artists discussing their influences and stylistic compasses; this information shaped the arguments concerning New Zealand styles and indicators. Similar conclusions may have been reached without the interviewees, however, it was reassuring to have ideas supported and challenged by the people about whose music this thesis is written.

4. Analytical Findings

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the analytical findings. In Chapter 3, the analytical methods for individual songs were outlined; here, the musical data is collated so as to identify larger trends and features of the *Nature's Best* songs. Because of the small sample size and the partly subjective nature of the analysis, conclusions should be treated not as scientific proof but as inferences that may warrant further investigation.

In Chapter 2, it was noted that large-scale and empirical analysis can convert music into statistics, a practice removed from the experience of writing, performing and listening to music. The corpus analyses by Bowman, Fitzgerald and Everett avoided this problem by continually referring to examples; the same measure will be taken in this context.

4.2 HARMONY

4.2.1 Keys

The distribution of keys across the *Nature's Best* songs is summarized in Table 4.1.

Tonic Note	Major	Minor	Total
C	16	1	17
D♭	3	0	3
D	11	6	17
E♭	6	0	6
E	14	0	14
F	6	0	6
F♯	1	0	1
G	9	1	10
A♭	3	1	4
A	10	2	12
B♭	1	1	2
B	8	0	8

Table 4.1 Distribution of Keys by Note

This only takes into account either the opening or predominant key of each song. For example, Split Enz's 'I Hope I Never' establishes D major in the chorus with an extended ii-V-I cadence. Similarly, nineteen songs contain full modulations, while others oscillate between related keys, such as Shihad's 'Home Again.' The main guitar riff is a descending F-E figure, underpinned by alternating F and D minor chords. In this context, it is immaterial whether one labels the song in the major or relative minor key.

Furthermore, it is difficult to assign keys to three songs — 'There Is No Depression in New Zealand,' 'History Never Repeats' and 'Cruise Control.' The first two eschew traditional harmonic relationships. 'History Never Repeats' was tentatively analysed in G major, giving rise to awkward Roman numeral progressions, such as I^{sus4}-II^{sus2} in the chorus and II-vi-I-v in the verse. That said, the final instrumental repeats I-II-$\flat$III-$\flat$VII-IV-V all over a G pedal, suggesting G major.

'There Is No Depression in New Zealand' does not contain any cadences that would confirm a key. Don McGlashan, the songwriter, said, "I've got no idea what key it's actually in."[1] He said the song was written during a band practice, sitting behind the drum kit shouting chords for the guitarists to play. Thus, there was a random element to the compositional process, with the harmony conceived as a single barre chord that could be moved anywhere on the guitar fretboard. The introduction and final chorus, however, repeat E major chords for eighteen and fourteen bars, respectively; the other harmonies can be read logically enough in relation to E and thus, it seems as good a choice as any.

Headless Chickens' 'Cruise Control' is built on a bass riff that outlines an E^7 chord. This riff is present until the bridge in which the static harmony gives way to a sliding chromatic line of A, G$\sharp$ and G chords, all in second inversion and moving in parallel motion. This leads to a sample break in which Shona Laing's '1905' is played in sync with the 'Cruise Control' beat. This further undermines

[1] Interview.

the harmonic centre. Again, it is only the strong presence of E in the bass riff that makes it a sensible option as the key.

The keys can also be arranged according to the circle-of-fifths as shown in Table 4.2.

Key	Major	Minor	Total
D♭/B♭m	3	1	4
A♭/Fm	3	0	3
E♭/Cm	6	1	7
B♭/Gm	1	1	2
F/Dm	6	6	12
C/Am	16	2	18
G/Em	9	0	9
D/Bm	11	0	11
A/F♯m	10	0	10
E/C♯m	14	0	14
B/G♯m	8	1	9
F♯/D♯m	1	0	1

Table 4.2 Distribution of Keys by Circle-of-Fifths

Several important details stand out in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. The first is the overwhelming preference for major keys. Only twelve are in a minor key; of the twelve, five modulate to major keys, while 'Room That Echoes' is dominated by power chords, which hover between major and minor depending on the vocal melody. Arguably, this major-minor ratio is similar to much pop and rock music. In support, Bowman found only ten of 95 Stax recordings were in a minor key, an almost identical proportion to *Nature's Best*.[2]

The second trend is the tendency towards keys on the 'sharp' side of the circle-of-fifths. 54 songs are in keys with sharps; when C major, F major and their relatives are included, this number increases to 84. Although key choice partly relies on the vocalist's range and preference, it is easier for guitarists to play in keys, generally, from F major onwards to the sharp side due to guitar string tuning. One suspects this tendency would be even more marked were chord shapes taken into account. It is likely a song such as 'Don't Dream It's Over'

[2] Rob Bowman, "The Stax Sound: A Musicological Analysis," *Popular Music* 14, no. 3 (1995), 296.

would have been played D but raised by either using a capo during recording or increasing the tape speed post-recording.

An interesting point of comparison would potentially be the keys used by male and female lead singers, however, there is little difference to be observed. The 22 songs with female vocalists span all the major keys but B♭, B and D♭, hardly noteworthy exceptions. Male vocalists sang in all major keys, while the two songs with male and female vocalists, 'For Today' and 'Poi E,' are in C and F, respectively. The prominent feature was that four females sang in D minor. This is a high proportion for a minor and a specific key, although, given the small sample size, this may be a coincidence. Further investigation into vocal ranges or keys used by other female singer-songwriters (i.e. Carly Simon, Joni Mitchell, Stevie Nicks etc.) could be fruitful.

Overall, the conclusions are relatively basic. Furthermore, as Sean Sturm, lead singer of EyeTV, revealed, 'One Day Ahead' was recorded in E♭ but often performed in D to help the guitarists, or in E. The latter key enabled the bass guitar to hit a deep, rich tonic note in the chorus and helped to raise the vocal intensity.[3] Therefore, it seems keys are not only dependent on personal preferences, but those used in the studio may also be somewhat arbitrary choices.

4.2.2 Chord Distribution

From the individual harmonic analyses, the results were collated and an overall distribution of harmonies was established. In Roman numeral terms, 27 different chord types were used, including diminished and augmented triads on several scale degrees. Added notes and inversions were omitted in this context — V^{sus4}, V^{11}, or V_b were all considered as "V." Non-harmonies were counted separately, labeled "N.C." in line with chord-chart notation.

[3] Interview.

The Roman numerals show the distance from a localized tonic; however, functionality was also considered. For example, 'Cheryl Moana Marie' contains an apparent ♯V chord in the final bar of the second chorus. Given the modulation up a semitone in the subsequent bar, it is obvious this harmony anticipates the shift; hence it is marked as "V." The same can be said of other pivot chords; this step is taken to more closely reflect harmonic contexts. That said, applied dominants were initially related to the tonic, not the tonicized note (i.e. a major supertonic is II, not V/V). It was then possible to return to the data and establish which instances of II, for example, were applied chords and which were not.

De Clercq and Temperley establish their chord distribution as counted instances of each chord; from their corpus, I occurs 3,058 times.[4] Their method was modified slightly so that harmonies were measured as proportions of a song's various sections, such as introduction, verse, chorus, bridge and so forth. For example, 'Nature' begins with a four-chord progression heard four times: i-III-IV-VI, without inversions.[5] The riff lasts two bars, with two chords per bar. Under the present method, each chord is registered as "0.25," signaling that each chord occupies a quarter of the introduction. This approach has advantages and disadvantages.

First, proportions highlight the relative weight, and possibly importance, of harmonies. Over a body of songs, the prevalence of particular harmonies will be evident regardless of the method. But for individual songs, greater accuracy is beneficial. For example, The Mockers' 'Forever Tuesday Morning' opens I-ii-IV-♭VI V, where the hyphens indicate barlines. If each chord were counted, ♭VI and I would be judged equally. Under the revised method, I would score "0.25" compared to "0.125" for ♭VI[6], better reflecting the latter chord's role as an embellishing upper neighbour to the dominant.

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[4] Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," *Popular Music* 30, no. 1 (2011), 60.
[5] The bass line descends from the tonic to the submediant; thus, i-III_c-$IV^7{}_b$-VI.
[6] The introduction also contains twelve bars of drums, i.e. "N.C." This is counted in the actual analysis but avoided here for clarity's sake.

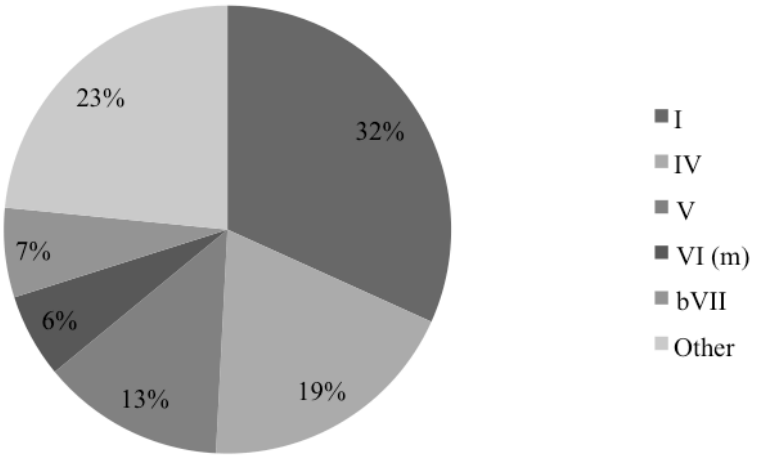
Second, counting harmonies can produce skewed results according to the lengths of songs. Chris Knox's 'Not Given Lightly' features a less conventional major submediant, G♯ major, not G♯ minor, in B major. It is heard sixteen times during the song. The same VI chord, albeit as a secondary dominant, is present in 'Bursting Through' by Bic Runga, but is only heard three times. Is VI in 'Not Given Lightly' five times more important than in 'Bursting Through?' It is difficult to answer, but the frequency of VI in Knox's song is predicated upon the frequency of the verse progression, which is only four bars long and played sixteen times in the song. By comparison, VI appears in the chorus of 'Bursting Through,' which only occurs three times. The relative proportions, "0.25" (Knox) and "0.08" (Runga), avoid distorted results, while still reflecting the chords' prominence within their respective sections.

This method also has disadvantages. The distributions do not account for placement within phrases and songs, an issue discussed below. Second, at times the quantity of chords is an important feature. In Split Enz's 'Spellbound,' the introduction rocks between Bm^7 and E^7 chords in four-bar phrases. The tension in the introduction derives partly from the lack of harmonic orientation and modal implications, and partly because the section lasts 44 bars before the vocals enter. In this case, the important harmonic feature is not that ii and V each occupy half the phrase, but that they are both heard 22 times, the music meditating on their Dorian inflections. The results should, therefore, be interpreted cautiously.

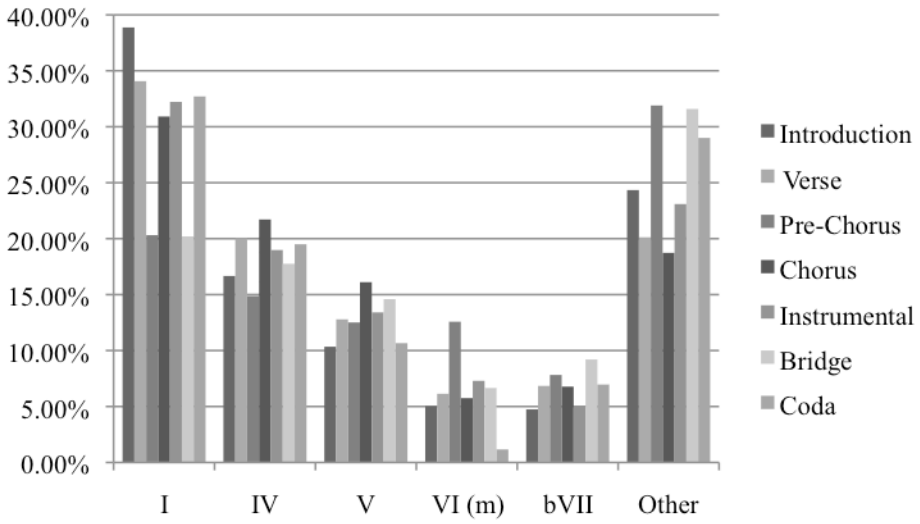
In many cases, proportions could be calculated as divisions of four- or eight-bar units. When sections varied in length across a song — for example, 'Don't Dream It's Over' contains choruses of 32, 30 and 26 beats — the length of individual chords was summed and divided into the total length of the section (i.e. proportion of 88 beats for 'Don't Dream It's Over'). Every effort was made to divide bars and phrases accurately, but syncopation and anticipation, such as in 'Sensitive To A Smile,' was rounded to the nearest quaver. One option would be to use a computer programme to segment harmonies temporally; that said, the extra precision would affect the results so little that the time spent on programming would be of marginal benefit.

The data for each song were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This enabled straightforward calculations, such as overall and sectional proportions. Furthermore, it was possible to filter the list of songs according to variables, such as chart position, *Nature's Best* position or other musical details. The results were updated automatically, allowing for quick comparisons, some of which are considered below.

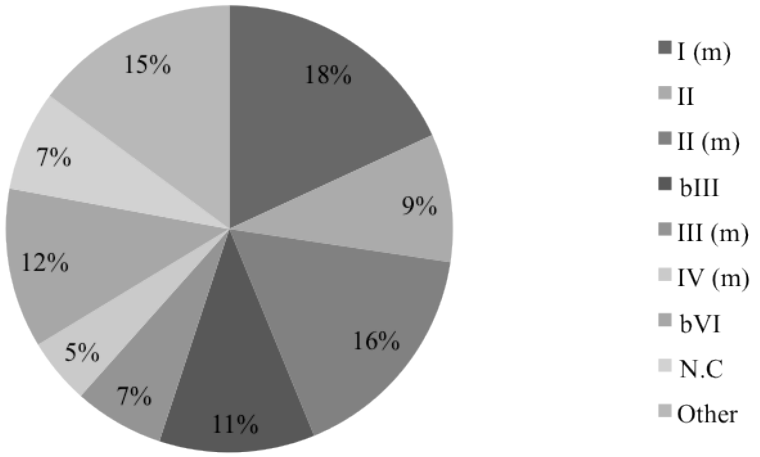
The complete distribution of chords is presented in Appendix B. Graph 4.1 shows a condensed distribution of the major primary triads, the flattened leading-note and the minor submediant; Graph 4.2 presents the same distribution according to songs' sections. Graph 4.3 presents a condensed distribution of the "Other" harmonies from Graph 4.1. The top-right segment in each graph corresponds to the first chord in the legend, before moving clockwise (graph) and down (legend); thus I occurs 32 percent of the time overall.



Graph 4.1 Overall Weighted Harmonic Distribution



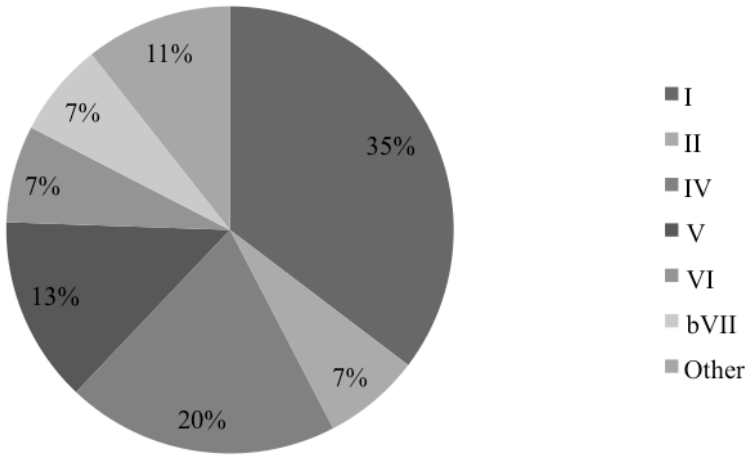
Graph 4.2 Weighted Harmonic Distribution by Section



Graph 4.3 Weighted Harmonic Distribution of "Other" Chords

The "Overall" percentages in Graph 4.1 are the arithmetic means from each song section. The data has been weighted to counter the uneven distribution of sections — 99 songs have choruses, whereas only eighteen have a pre-chorus. The weighting system is outlined in Appendix E. The "Other" category of Graph 4.1 contains 23 chords ranging from the minor supertonic, ii, to the flattened mediant, $^{\flat}$III, to an augmented chord on the flattened submediant in Citizen Band's 'Julia.' Chord colourations were omitted, however, I^{sus} and II^{sus} were counted from the introduction and chorus of Split Enz's 'History Never

Repeats.' Here, the suspensions are the essence of the chords; they are non-resolving and contribute to the tonal ambiguity.



Graph 4.4 Harmonic Distribution by Root

When the harmonies are tallied according only to the root note, the majority is built upon the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth scale degrees, as shown in Graph 4.4. The primary harmonies — I, IV and V — account for approximately 60 percent of all chords. The prevalence of ♭VII, however, is notable; this chord is comparatively rare in common-practice classical music, both in major and minor keys as it eschews the leading-note. This is not the case for popular music. The ♭VII chord is used more than vi or ii; its relatives, ♭III and ♭VI, also appear frequently enough to support Moore's earlier suggestion that flat-side harmonies are engrained in popular music's harmonic language.

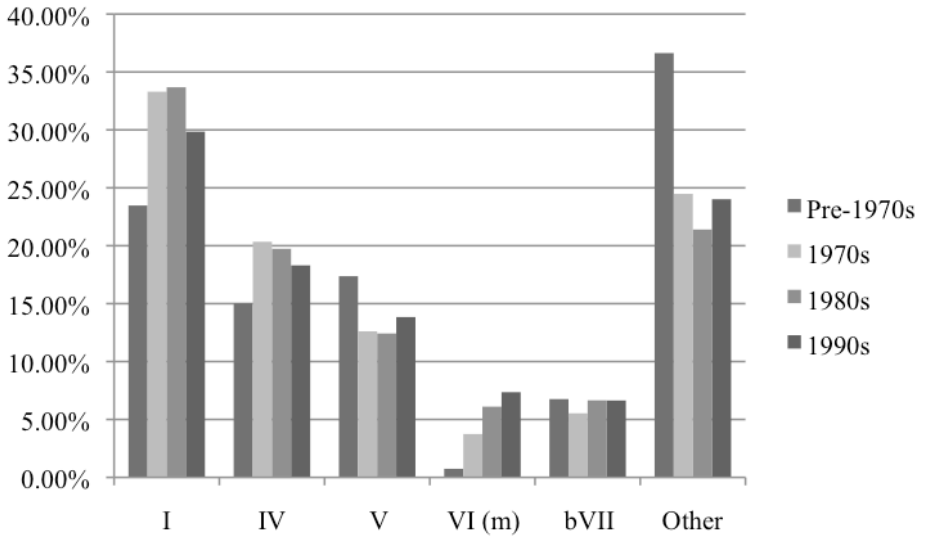
This is complemented by the apparent preference for IV over V. Certainly, if popular music has strong subdominant foundations, then harmonies such as ♭VII (i.e. IV/IV) and ♭III (♭VII/IV) will naturally occur. This point is, in part, corroborated below in Section 4.2.3 regarding modulations; more songs modulate to flat keys than to the dominant and its relatives.

The numbers alone, however, do not explain how the harmonies are used. Two examples should clarify this point. Sharon O'Neill's 'Words' is built upon a I-V-IV pattern, all over a tonic pedal; in the chorus, this idea is varied slightly and placed in F major. By virtue of this harmonic shift, the subdominant occurs more frequently than the dominant. One could argue, here, that IV is structurally more important; this claim is supported by the numbers.

'For Today' would return similar figures; the song's eight-bar progression only uses primary chords in C, I-IV-V-IV, each lasting two bars. Proportionally, IV is twice as common as V. But, compared to 'Words' in which IV is emphasised as a harmonic region, the subdominant in 'For Today' essentially acts as a passing chord. The phrase is structured so that the bass line arches from tonic to dominant. The ascent rests on F, while the descent from dominant to tonic is softened by again landing on the fourth degree. The pentatonic melody undermines the traditional tonic-dominant relationship, but the frequency of IV, in this case, has fewer theoretical implications and indicates little more than a particular progression.

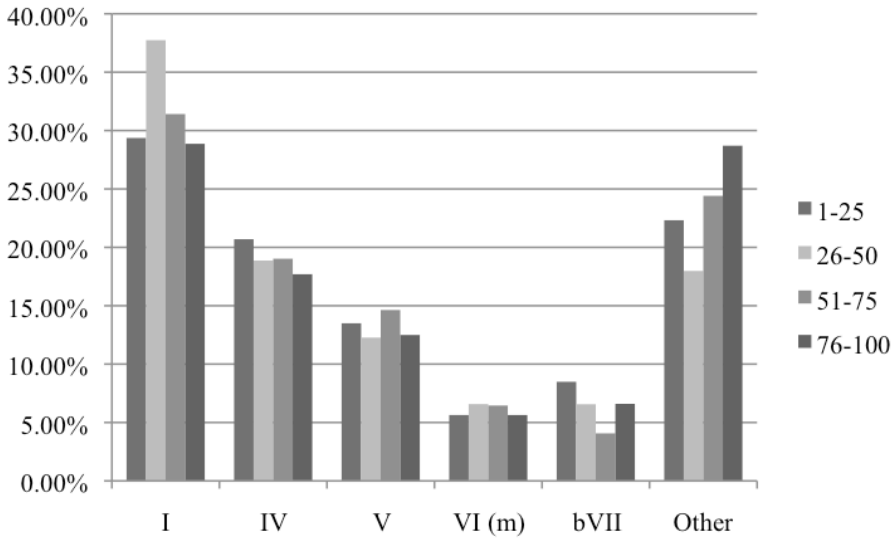
Other trends from Graph 4.2 are relatively straightforward with regards to songwriting techniques. The tonic major is used less in the pre-chorus, seemingly in favour of the tonic minor and the relative minor harmonies. This is likely to increase harmonic tension. Subsequently, the chorus has the highest sectional proportion of primary triads, which helps resolve harmonic tension and confirm the key. 'Jumping Out A Window' by Pop Mechanix and 'I Hope I Never' by Split Enz are prime examples in this regard. The proportion of tonic chords also decreases in the bridge, the section which explores new harmonic ground in preparation for the final chorus. Again, this seems to be predominantly a tension-related device, as demonstrated in 'Better Be Home Soon' or 'Blue Day.'

It is possible to compare the distribution of harmonies according to decade, as shown in Graph 4.5.



Graph 4.5 Harmonic Distribution by Decade

The small sample sizes prohibit sound conclusions. There are only four songs written pre-1970; thus, the high proportion of "Other" results, in part, from the frequent use of ♭VI in 'Blue Smoke' and 'Let's Think Of Something' rather than any idiomatic differences. Likewise, the tonic major occurs slightly more often than the overall average in the 1980s songs, but remove Front Lawn's 'Andy' and Blam Blam Blam's 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand' and the figure falls by several percentage points. Both songs, written by Don McGlashan, have extended sections with a static harmony. In a small sample, these cases skew the results. Overall, however, there is little change over time.



Graph 4.6 Harmonic Distribution by *Nature's Best* Position

When the *Nature's Best* list is segmented, as in Graph 4.6, harmonies are similarly distributed. Tonic major harmonies spike in the second quartile of songs; however, the difference between songs ranked 1-25 and 26-50 equals approximately one extra bar of I every sixteen bars. In the context of a song, such a variation would hardly be noticeable.

The chord distributions change little according to the peak chart position, dividing between, for example, top twenty hits and those outside the top twenty. Overall, this supports Moore's claim that popular music has historically been founded on a "static" musical language[7], although greater sample sizes would be beneficial. This observation does not render these results irrelevant; they provide important insights into pop and rock's musical language, discussed further in Chapter 5.

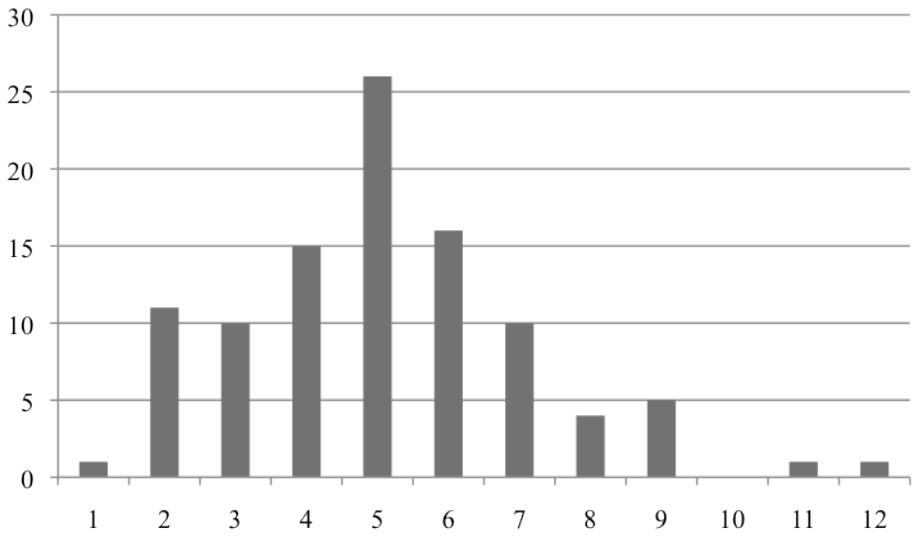
4.2.3 Use of Chords

The distribution of chords provides good, but limited quantitative data. The picture can be developed by considering how songwriters used particular

[7] Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text, 2nd ed.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 215-216.

harmonies. This will help identify the varying degrees of harmonic complexity across the *Nature's Best* songs.

On average, *Nature's Best* songs featured just over six fundamental harmonies, in relation to a localized tonic note. This excludes inversions, colourations and "No Chords." The frequency of chord quantities is shown in Graph 4.7. Citizen Band's 'Julia' contains thirteen chords, while the Herbs' 'French Letter' uses only two.



Graph 4.7 Frequency of Chord Quantity

Graph 4.7 can be read in conjunction with Graph 4.1 and Graph 4.3. There are five chords with proportions greater than five percent — I, IV, V, vi and ♭VII — and another five between two and five percent — i, II, ii, ♭III and ♭VI. It should be expected that the majority of songs contain between three and nine different harmonies.

Of the songs with fewer than five chords, six can be located in hip-hop or R & B influenced styles, which place less emphasis on harmonic elements. These songs include 'How Bizarre,' 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation,' 'Can't Get Enough,' 'In The Neighbourhood,' 'Chains' and 'Poi E.' Similarly, 'French Letter' is a politically motivated reggae song; the limited harmonic movement

allows for clarity of their anti-nuclear message; much the same technique is evident in Dylan's 'Blowin' In The Wind.'

Jordan Luck's three songs, under the Dance Exponents and The Exponents monikers, only use the primary triads; again the harmonic simplicity allows for an uncluttered narrative. Dave Dobbyn also follows this trend. 'Whaling' uses I, IV and V and 'Bliss' is built on I, IV and ♭VII, perhaps reflecting the stasis of binge drinking — "Get yourself another" implores lead vocalist Peter Ulrich as the band endlessly cycles through ♭VII-IV-I. Dobbyn's 'Naked Flame' uses only I, IV, V and vi but blends the chords through added notes and a slippery bass line.

With the exception of Bic Runga's 'Drive' and the hip-hop examples, it seems that the three-chord song was abandoned by the 1990s generation of songwriters. By comparison, only one song, 'Glorafilia' by Zed, explores more than eight chords. Of the new songwriters in the 1990s, the average number of chords per song falls to 5.67. Furthermore, of the songs with five chords, 30 percent were written post-1995. This begs the question whether songwriters became more harmonically conservative, with neither the adventurous nature nor the concision of their predecessors. This issue will be revisited in Chapter 5.

Harmonic complexity can be measured, to a certain extent, with regards to a diatonic-chromatic spectrum. "Diatonic" refers here to chords taken from a single mode throughout a song; thus, 'Drive,' 'Liberty' and 'Victoria' are diatonic, using the Aeolian, Mixolydian and major modes, respectively. Conversely, a "chromatic" song borrows chords from another mode; the more intriguing aspect is the degree and type of chromaticism.

Overall, 21 songs were strictly diatonic. Four of these songs — 'Slippin' Away,' 'Poi E,' 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' and 'Can't Get Enough' — contained key changes but maintained the same diatonic progressions within each section. By default, these songs contained few chords, averaging less than

four per song. Strawpeople's 'Sweet Disorder' was the only song to use all diatonic triads, except for vii^{o}, in E♭ major.

The remaining songs contained chromatic chords of some description. That said, the chord distributions change little between chromatic and diatonic songs. This indicates that diatonic harmonies predominate across all the songs. In terms of chromaticism, it is easy to distinguish between 'Loyal,' which introduces ♭VII for the final four bars, and the harmonically anarchic 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand.' It is more difficult to classify and categorize the songs in between.

A number of chromatic harmonies function as applied dominants, briefly tonicizing another note. This also includes implied interrupted cadences, such as E-F in the key of C. The E chord acts as an applied dominant of A minor, but resolves to F, essentially VI in the 'new' key.

In 'Loyal,' the introduction of ♭VII neither disrupts the tonal order nor disturbs the sense of key, rather, it embellishes the final cadence. Chromatic chords that had a similar function have been labeled "secondary," not to be confused with the term's conventional use as a synonym for applied dominant. Rather, "secondary" reflects the harmonies' relative importance. That is, the chords themselves may be significant, providing colour or dramatic interest, but their chromatic nature does not impact on the overall harmonic structure.

'Forever Tuesday Morning' presents two examples of secondary chromatic chords. The introductory progression, I-ii-IV-♭VI-V, drives from I to V; the chromatic addition, ♭VI, is a pleasant surprise but serves as an upper neighbour that slips down to the dominant, altering the expected IV-V movement. The bridge features a descent from vi to IV. Across eight bars, the bass line falls G-F-E♮-E♭, the third note not 'belonging' to B♭ major. Again, the chromatic note does not signal any tonal change but passes from F to E♭. Both harmonies are, therefore, subordinate events within the phrases.

Secondary chromatic harmonies, by definition non-diatonic, are borrowed from outside the home key. "Mixed mode" chromatic harmonies are, therefore, closely related but differ by degree. That is, mixed mode harmonies impact on the harmonic orientation of the phrase or section. There is no rule for determining mixed modes, compared to a secondary harmony. Usually, they will have some structural importance so as to undermine the prevailing mode. A couple of examples should help define this distinction.

The verse of 'Nature' proceeds as follows in A♭ minor:

i III_c – IV_b VI i – IV VII – III VII IV

Each chord lasts two crotchet beats, except for the latter III and VII (one crotchet beat each), with the hyphens indicating barlines. The issue is the subdominant harmonies, borrowed from the parallel major key. The initial D♭/F (IV_b) is a secondary chromatic chord because it is part of a descending movement from A♭ to F♭ in the bass, analogous to 'Forever Tuesday Morning.' The latter IV harmonies would count under "mixed mode" because they signal a temporary shift away from the tonic. Although III, C♭, and VII, G♭, are diatonic in the Aeolian mode, they are heard as a Mixolydian double-plagal cadence onto D♭. Thus, the two modes are "mixed" in the one phrase.

'Part of Me' by Stellar also mixes modes. The majority of the song is built on Mixolydian harmonies — I, IV, v and ♭VII. Within the two verses and instrumentals, I and ♭III alternate, although the synthesizer textures are harmonically ambiguous, often omitting the third. The vocal line provides the major third, which, therefore, clashes with the flattened third of the subsequent chord. Given this phrase only uses the two chords, ♭III cannot be regarded as secondary. Although understated compared to 'Nature,' there is a degree of harmonic ambiguity in 'Part of Me' that leads to a mixed mode classification.

Sectional key changes, such as in 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat' (chorus to coda) or 'Nature' (verse to chorus), are not noted in this context, even though the songs, in their entirety, present different modes. The classification identifies the chords that blur tonal boundaries at a particular point in the song. Despite

the issues of subjectivity, the analysis was guided by musical details such as phrasing or accents. Others may, of course, classify the songs differently.

Without further explanations, Table 4.3 presents the frequency of chromatic types within *Nature's Best*. Some songs are represented multiple times; 'Nature' provides one count of a secondary chord — IV_b in the main riff — and two of mixed modes — in both the verse and chorus. Multiple instances of the same harmony in a song are only counted once; different harmonies using the same technique are counted individually. Thus, Ruru Karaitiana's 'Blue Smoke' is counted twice for using both I^7 and II as applied dominants. This approach ensures shorter songs, with fewer frequencies of a specific harmony, are not discriminated against. Simultaneously, it recognizes variations of a particular technique adopted by songwriters.

Chromatic Type	Frequency
Applied	31
Secondary	61
Mixed Mode	60
Substitute	3
Pivot	6
Colour	1

Table 4.3 Frequency of Chromatic Chords

The categories not yet discussed are easily explained. Sneaky Feelings' 'Husband House' is the only song with chromatic colours added to the chords; the tonic harmonies are infused with major ninths and sharp elevenths. Pivots are chromatic chords used in the process of a modulation, as heard twice in 'I Hope I Never' and '1905' and once each in 'Don't Fight It Marsha' and 'Fraction Too Much Friction.'

Substitute chords are theoretically recognized as pairs of chords with two common notes, such as IV and ii. In this context, the term denotes a non-diatonic chord that seemingly fulfils the same function as a diatonic option. Accordingly, substitutes were deemed to occur in Crowded House's 'Don't Dream It's Over' and 'Distant Sun' — III, with the leading-note, instead of V to conclude phrases — and The Mutton Birds' 'Dominion Road' in which each

chorus ends vii-IV-I, instead of the more conventional ♭VII-IV-I. The substitute chords are, thus, subtle variations on the expected chord progressions.

Within the mixed mode section, it one can identify the combinations used by songwriters, as shown in Table 4.4.

Modal Combinations	Frequency
Major/Aeolian	26
Major/Mixolydian	12
Mixolydian/Aeolian	7
Major/Dorian	1
Aeolian/Dorian	1
Composite	8
Parallel	4

Table 4.4 Frequency of Modal Combinations

The description "composite" does not imply a sense of polytonality. It is employed when chords do not fit, as such, the seven modes.[8] Composite modes, therefore, ranged from single chords — a non-functional VI in 'Pressure Man' or a III-iii-IV progression in 'If I Were You,' both of which obscure the key — to lengthier progressions, such as I-II-♭III-♭VII-IV-V in 'History Never Repeats.' This song also contains an unusual II-vi-I-v riff in the verse; the harmonies alternate between major and minor chords in fourths. 'I Hope I Never' is also regarded as using composite modes; it opens with B^7-A^7, suggesting the Mixolydian mode on both harmonies.

The parallel category was coined for the four cases in which chromatic harmonies moved in parallel motion outside diatonic conventions. Two instances are similar in that the songs' bridges rock between harmonies a major second apart, ♭II-♭III in 'Julia' and vice-versa in 'Sensitive To A Smile.' Similarly, the bridge in 'I Got You' repeats I-II-III before leading into the chorus with ♭III-IV. Finally, in Shona Laing's '1905' the final chorus revisits the IV-V-VI movement that had been used in the bridge as a pivot progression.

[8] The seven modes are Major (Ionian), Dorian, Phyrgian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian, corresponding, to the white keys, C-C, D-D, E-E (etc.), respectively.

Like the composite modes, the parallel harmonies do not have Lydian or whole-tone implications.

The prominence of major, Aeolian and Mixolydian combinations reflects the relative prevalence of ♭III, ♭VI and ♭VII in the chord distributions. ♭VII, in particular, appears in each of the three categories, suggesting either the Mixolydian mode, or Aeolian mode when combined with ♭III and ♭VI.

Although some songs genuinely juxtapose different modes, such as 'Nature,' a number conform to Everett's fifth type of "rock's tonal systems" whereby each note of the pentatonic scale supports a major triad.[9] The most common triads in these cases are I, ♭III, IV, V and ♭VII, which can also be read as combinations of the major, Aeolian and Mixolydian modes. This feature is idiomatic of popular music. Everett points to its origins in the blues tradition and 1960s pop, such as 'Proud Mary' or the introduction of 'In The Midnight Hour.' The technique was later entrenched in the barre chords of hard-rock styles, 'Smoke On The Water' being an early and prime example. Of the *Nature's Best* songs, The Crocodiles' 'Tears' harks back to the 1960s, while Darcy Clay's post-punk 'Jesus I Was Evil' stylistically derives from the latter category.

Don McGlashan, for The Front Lawn and Blam Blam Blam, is the only songwriter to experiment with Dorian inflections, aside from Shihad whose chorus for 'Bitter' hints at D Dorian. The Front Lawn's 'Andy' is debatable in this context; there is a shift away from the tonic, F, in the bridge, to either G major or D minor, depending on one's perspective. The G-Dm progression could either be considered G Mixolydian or D Dorian. Although G is heard on the stressed bars of each phrase, the D minor melody suggests the latter interpretation. In 'Don't Fight It Marsha,' the introduction contrasts iv and IV within D minor. According to McGlashan, the Dorian twist enhances the narrator's manipulative and twisted nature.[10]

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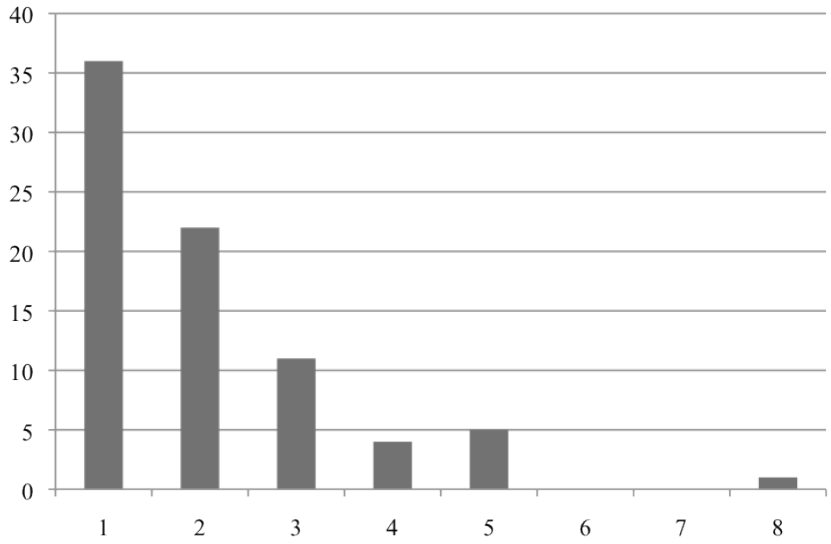
[9] Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (2004), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.w_everett.html (accessed 23 September 2011).
[10] Interview.

One can also mention 'Spellbound' and Crowded House's 'Weather With You.' The songs open Bm^7-E^7 and Em^7-A, respectively. This is the same progression as heard in the bridge of 'Andy.' With no other reference points, one can interpret the chords as a Dorian i-IV. When A major and D major are introduced in the respective choruses, however, it becomes clear that the modal implications mask the tonic whose appearance is delayed. The difference between 'Spellbound' and, for example, 'Don't Fight It Marsha' is that the latter maintains its guise of Aeolian/Dorian conflict, while the former hints at the Dorian mode before subsuming the harmonies into standard major tonality.[11]

Another way of examining chromatic harmonies is the number of different types employed in each song. 'Blue Smoke,' as mentioned above, uses two applied dominants and three secondary chromatic harmonies, and hence it 'scores' five. This method, to a certain extent, measures the degree of chromaticism in each song. Its weakness is that there is no differentiation between complex mixed modes and a single secondary chord, nor between mixed modes in an eight-bar bridge, such as 'Glorafilia,' and mixed modes throughout an entire song, such as 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand.' A weighting system was considered, but determining the relative weights would be overtly subjective. Therefore, the results, shown in Graph 4.8, need to be considered in light of other harmonic features.

[11] I am grateful to Graeme Downes for providing the eloquent description of this technique.



Graph 4.8 Frequency of Chromatic Scores

The most notable trend is the lack of contemporary songs with higher scores. Of the twenty scoring three or higher, only five were written in the 1990s, and two of these were penned by Neil Finn. The Feelers contrast VI and vi in 'Pressure Man,' while the bridge of Bic Runga's 'Suddenly Strange' turns to a beautifully coloured $\flat III^{maj7}$, complementing the sliding chromatic lines in the verse. But overall, these moments have a fleeting impact within the diatonic framework.

The ten highest scored songs were written before 1990 and can be split in two groups. 'Blue Smoke,' 'Counting The Beat' and 'Blue Day' have a tight harmonic structure and, in general, use chromaticism to embellish progressions. 'Better Be Home Soon' likewise is diatonic in the verses and choruses, but moves towards the flattened leading-note in the bridge without ever confirming a new key. The harmonies hover away from the tonic, a move which strengthens the tonic's return for the final verse.

'I Hope I Never,' 'Don't Fight It Marsha' and '1905' are more fluidly chromatic, exploring modes and keys with little warning. Neil Finn's 'Message To My Girl' also glides between different modes, which enhances the narrator's message to his "girl." The introduction and verse begin in a hollow Mixolydian mode, before descending into the relative minor. The verse ends unusually $I^{7}{}_{d}$-II, offering a glimmer of hope in the major supertonic, before rising to IV-V^{11} as

the singer promises that he will "sing it to the world // A simple message to my girl." The chorus initially maintains the upbeat mood, but again, falls into the minor mode. The middle pair of harmonies within the eight-bar phrase is a dark v-♭III, which resolves into the brighter and optimistic IV-I cadence.

'Message To My Girl' is not complex; rather, the chromatic harmonies are precisely deployed to maximize their contrast with the diatonic harmonies. In the chorus, for example, the Aeolian pair of chords is surrounded at either end by only I and IV. The harmonic structure is thus arched — the simplicity of the opening chords gives way to a conflicting mode before returning to its original point.

Citizen Band's 'Julia' garnered the highest chromatic score. The song is in E major but makes frequent recourse to E Aeolian. This is pronounced at the end of each section. The introduction presents a subtle iv-I cadence; the minor plagal movement is slowly expanded so that by the second chorus, there is a full iv-$\flat VI_c$- $ii^{7\flat5}$-$ii^{7\flat5}{}_d$ progression, the resplendent descending line emphasized by the lead guitar. The verse also revolves around a descending pattern, the chromatic path from vi-IV.

The remarkable chromatic point of 'Julia' is the F major chord that opens each verse. As ♭II in E, the harmony is startling. It is possible to interpret F as being tonicized by the preceding C major chord (i.e. ♭VI-♭II equals V-I), but this does not fit with its presentation, appearing to float free of harmonic, rhythmic and phrase structures. This problem is compounded by the 'resolution' down a major third, via E minor, to C♯ minor.

The instrumental preceding each verse ends on ♭VI and thus, the listener may anticipate a minor plagal cadence.[12] Instead, the harmonies twist and turn through a host of unexpected chromatic chords before finding the tonic after eleven bars. The irony is that 'Julia' is a straightforward love song. The narrator plainly states in the chorus, accompanied here by diatonic chords, "Julia // Hear

[12] I.e. treating ♭VI as a substitute for iv in a major key.

me now // I'm head over heels // And I'm turning in circles" and concludes each verse, "You see you are the one I love." The extensive chromaticism, perhaps, reflects the overwrought emotions not expressed by the narrator's words.

It is not surprising that 'Julia' was the only song to contain thirteen different chords. Furthermore, there appears to be a general relationship between the number of chord types used and the chromatic score. This is not revelatory, but it suggests those songwriters who are keen to expand harmonically are likely to do so in a range of ways. This situation also highlights the potential benefit of a weighting system. Such a system would help to further distinguish between songs that feature extensive chromaticism in a diatonic framework and songs that have a stronger chromatic foundation. This issue is taken up further in the following section, which moves from surface to structural harmonic relationships.

4.2.4 Tonicizations and Modulations

Everett differentiates between tonicizations, "a temporary toniclike emphasis of a nontonic area," and modulations, "a permanent abandonment of one tonal centre for another."[13] Although these are useful definitions, a modulation need not be a "permanent abandonment"; those occurring between, for example, verse and chorus sections will often return to the original tonic key for the succeeding verse. In general, a tonicization may be considered a subservient event within a phrase or section. A D chord acting as an applied dominant in C major tonicizes G, but the dominant does not assume the role of tonic. By comparison, a modulation results in a new tonic key, even if only briefly.

This distinction is somewhat blurry; different analysts may reach different conclusions for some songs. To provide a slightly complex example, the verse of Larry's Rebels' 'Let's Think Of Something' progresses as follows:

Am – Am – G – G – Am – Am – G – G – C – D – G – B – E – E – A – A

[13] Walter Everett, *The Foundations of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 280.

The opening bars indicate an Aeolian i-VII in A minor, but from Bar 8 onwards, there is a tonal shift. The final five bars are in A major, with a II [V/V]-V-I cadence, but Bars 9-11 are more problematic. The opening phrase ends with a G major chord (Bar 8), which is succeeded by C and D, potentially IV and V in G major.

This is not, however, a modulation. First, the vocal melody in Bar 8 lands on B, yearning to resolve upwards to C, which duly occurs in Bar 9. Second, when the 'tonic' harmony, G, is reached at Bar 11, the music is propelled towards B major in Bar 12, the focal point of the phrase. Thus, even though the IV-V-I progression into Bar 11 suggests G, its placement does not lead the listener to G as a new key, but as a well-prepared tonicization, following the earlier tonicization of C major in Bar 9. Although long-winded, this explanation should clarify how such judgments were made.

It is not necessary to note every applied dominant as an example of tonicization; Table 4.5 lists, chronologically, the twenty songs in which a different tonic area was emphasised without being fully established. Those marked with asterisks also contain full modulations and will be discussed further below.

Song	Tonicized Key Area/s	Section/s
Let's Think Of Something	Flat Leading Note*	Verse/Bridge
Nature	Subdominant*	Verse
Out On The Street	Dominant*	Chorus
April Sun In Cuba	Subdominant	Chorus
Stuff and Nonsense	Subdominant/Tonic Minor*	Pre-Chorus/Bridge
Words	Subdominant	Chorus/Bridge
Rust In My Car	Subdominant	Bridge
Maybe	Dominant	Bridge/Instrumental
Sierra Leone	Tonic Major	Pre-Chorus/Chorus
Forever Tuesday Morning	Relative Minor	Instrumental Bridge
Room That Echoes	Tonic Major	Verse/Chorus
Better Be Home Soon	Flat Leading Note	Bridge
Sensitive To A Smile	Flat Mediant*	Instrumental Bridge
Andy	Major Supertonic	Bridge
Four Seasons In One Day	Relative Minor	Verse
Distant Sun	Relative Minor	Bridge
Sweet Disorder	Relative Minor	Bridge
Anchor Me	Tonic Minor	Bridge
Private Universe	Relative Major	Bridge
One Day Ahead	Tonic Minor*	Bridge

Table 4.5 Examples of Tonicization

In eight of these examples, the harmonic transition in the bridge serves to heighten the musical tension, a standard songwriting technique. Sean Sturm stated that 'One Day Ahead' was a "musical experiment" in moving "unobtrusively" away from the tonic so that the subsequent dominant had greater impact.[14] Thus, the first four bars of the bridge progress to the flat-side harmonies, ♭III-♭VII-IV-i, leading to the tonic minor; the second four bars vary the pattern so that ♭VII falls by step, rather than a fourth, through ♭VI to V. The same principle is at work in 'Maybe,' 'Rust In My Car,' 'Forever Tuesday Morning,' 'Anchor Me,' 'Better Be Home Soon,' 'Four Seasons In One Day,' and 'Distant Sun,' the latter three written by Neil Finn.

The Front Lawn's 'Andy' can be regarded similarly, however, the tonicization of G major is more effective because of the lyrics it accompanies:

> A man gets angry
> But what can you do?
> Don't know why I'm telling all this to you,
> On Takapuna Beach…

[14] Interview.

The first line is anticipated by a six-bar D major harmony, the longest dominant of the song. When the chord resolves, the lyrical tension also breaks, as the narrator expresses his despair at the urbanization of Takapuna on Auckland's North Shore. As discussed earlier, G major itself is undermined by the vocal melody, which contrasts G Mixolydian and D Dorian modes. Therefore, although G is strongly suggested, one can hear the conflicting harmonies in conjunction with the narrator's anger at losing his brother and losing his hometown.

Other examples are straightforward. In 'April Sun In Cuba' the chorus transposes and adapts the verse progression, I^{sus4}-I in A, up a fourth to $\flat VII^{maj7}$-IV, or IV^{maj7}-I in D. 'Out On The Street' utilizes a similar technique, with the initial chorus progression repeated up a fifth. Finally, 'Words,' 'Sierra Leone,' 'Room That Echoes,' 'Sweet Disorder' and 'Private Universe' float between two keys. 'Words' could be considered in C Mixolydian or F major; 'Sierra Leone' uses a major tonic harmony to accompany a change in lyrical perspective during the pre-chorus and chorus; 'Room That Echoes' indiscriminately juxtaposes C major and C minor; 'Sweet Disorder' contains jazz-inflected harmonies that blur the boundaries between C minor and E♭ major; while 'Private Universe' emphasizes C major at the start of the bridge, but without any strong cadences.

Nineteen songs contained modulations, summarized, again chronologically, in Table 4.6. Keys in brackets indicate a tonicization prior to a modulation. The hyphens indicate where in song the modulation occurs.

Song	Modulation/s	Section/s
Let's Think Of Something	Am-(G)-A // G-A	Verse // Bridge
Nature	A♭m-(D♭)-A♭	Verse-Chorus
Cheryl Moana Marie	A♭-A	Final Chorus
1905	C-A	Verse-Chorus
Out On The Street	E-(B)-A	Chorus-Coda
Slippin' Away	C-D	Final Verse-Chorus
Stuff and Nonsense	A♭-(D♭)-B♭ // B♭-(B♭m)-B♭	Verse-Chorus // Bridge-Chorus
I See Red	F-C	Chorus-Verse
Tears	A-C-E♭-D♭-B-D♭	Verse/Chorus-Verse/Chorus-Bridge-Chorus-Verse-Chorus
I Hope I Never	B-Dm-Em // Em-D	Verse-Pre-Chorus // Chorus
Don't Fight It Marsha	Dm-D-G-Dm	Instrumental-Verse-Chorus-Instrumental
Six Months In A Leaky Boat	D-Dm	Final Chorus-Coda
Maxine	Dm-E♭m	Chorus-Instrumental Bridge-Verse
Fraction Too Much Friction	D-B-D	Introduction-Verse-Chorus
Poi E	E-F	Final Chorus
She Speeds	E-D	Chorus
Sensitive To A Smile	F-(A♭)-F // F-G	Bridge // Final Chorus
Bitter	Dm-F	Chorus-Bridge
One Day Ahead	E♭-(E♭m)-E♭// E♭-B♭	Bridge // Instrumental Coda

Table 4.6 Examples of Modulations

Five songs feature a "truck-driver" modulation in the final sections, whereby the music modulates up a semitone or tone and retains the same chord progression.[15] The device often has a powerful rhetorical effect, giving the impression of a new tonal space and heightened intensity, but is considered to mask a weak structure.[16]

The modulations in 'Slippin' Away' and 'Poi E' occur immediately after an instrumental break, while in 'Cheryl Moana Marie' the shift up is preceded by the new dominant. In 'Sensitive To A Smile' the vocal line, instead of descending F to D at the end of the chorus, ascends F to G, anticipating the new tonic by a quaver. In these cases, the tonal change is unprepared, somewhat unexpected and rather simple. They are, therefore, textbook examples of the "truck-driver" modulation.

Sharon O'Neill's 'Maxine' is more sophisticated. The music modulates during a saxophone solo between the second chorus and third verse, from D minor to E♭ minor. The solo has been transcribed below in Figure 4.1.

[15] Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," (accessed 1 September 2011).
[16] Ibid., (accessed 1 September 2011).

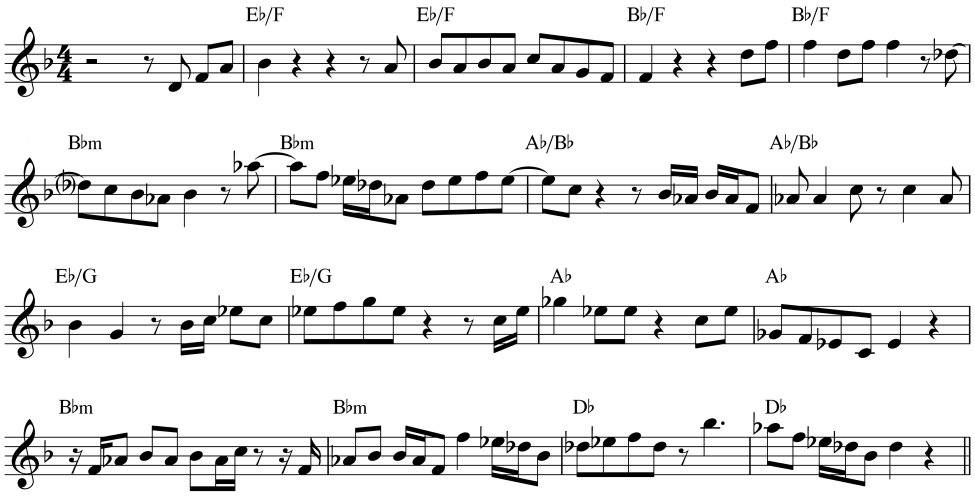


Figure 4.1 Saxophone, 'Maxine,' Solo, 2'37"-3'12"

The bridge has been tentatively analysed, first, in B♭ and then in E♭, although the initial saxophone melody could be read as quasi-pentatonic on F. The harmonies repeat a IV-I pattern in the first ten bars in B♭ and E♭. The B♭ minor chord in Bars 5-6 appears to act as a pivot — the tonic minor in the initial key, the minor dominant in the new key. This is supported by the melody, which moves closer to an E♭ hexatonic scale from Bars 8-11. The scale is then transformed into a minor hexatonic scale, first by way of blues licks (Bar 12), and then supported by a shift to Aeolian harmonies (Bar 14). In the final four bars, the B♭ minor chord shifts up to D♭, a simple chord substitution, which then resolves upwards to the new tonic. This movement recalls the Aeolian VII-i present in each verse and chorus. The distance moved is only a semitone but with the elongated solo, O'Neill avoids the clichéd character of such a modulation.

The remaining songs can be split roughly between sectional and transitional modulations; that is, those occurring across a single barline and those involving an extended progression, respectively. Guy Capuzzo discusses sectional modulations in terms of "sectional tonality" in which "each section projects a distinct key."[17] He argues that keys are not necessarily related or connected through pivots or other modulation techniques. This idea is applicable to the

[17] See Guy Capuzzo, "Sectional Tonality and Sectional Centricity in Rock Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 31, no. 1 (2009), pp. 157-158.

Nature's Best songs, as explored below. The techniques used to effect sectional and transitional modulations are more varied than the previous examples. It is worth examining each case individually.

The sectional modulations tend to be more abrupt and unexpected. Thus, in Shihad's 'Bitter,' the bridge utilizes a new chord progression in the relative major without any preparation for the shift. Furthermore, although using the same key signature, there is little overlap of chords — Dm-F in the verse, compared to A♭-E♭-F in the bridge. This technique can be compared to, for example, Crowded House's 'Private Universe' in which the same harmonies, drawn from A minor and C, are used in the verse and bridge sections but differently ordered.

As stated above, the verse of 'Nature' uses a descending A♭ Aeolian progression, i-III_c-IV_b-VI, which moves to i-III-VII_b in the pre-chorus. The chorus then switches to A♭ Mixolydian, ♭VII-IV-I, with an ethereal ♭III-I cadence. Thus, the same chord, G♭, links the pre-chorus and chorus, albeit in different inversions; however, there is no indication of the impending change in tonality. When returning from the chorus to the instrumental, the tonic chord switches from major back to minor. The same process occurs in the coda of 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat.' With the chorus ending in D major, the instruments fade out. The synthesizer maintains a solitary D and when the piano re-enters, the key is suddenly D minor.

'I See Red' modulates between F and C for each chorus and verse respectively, with no real harmonic connection between sections. The chorus concludes on a D minor chord; the verse then begins with G^7, the new dominant. One could read D minor as a pivot chord, effecting an extended ii-V-I progression in C; however, the significant textural contrast between chorus and verse distorts any sense of a cadence. The verse ends with a four-bar G^7, which 'resolves' to F major, again emphasizing the self-contained nature of each section.

‘Stuff and Nonsense’ also modulates into the chorus with a dominant that does not resolve as expected. Having begun in A♭, D♭ is tonicized by implication in the pre-chorus — the second phrase progresses iii°[vii°/IV]-IV-V, anticipating a perfect cadence in D♭. Instead, one hears a skewed interrupted cadence as the harmony lands on B♭ major (VI of D♭), which suddenly becomes the new tonic. At the end of the first chorus, the key simply changes back to A♭ for the second verse. Of ‘Stuff and Nonsense’ and ‘I See Red,’ both Tim Finn songs, one could conclude that the first modulations have a twisted logic, a slight subversion of tonal ‘rules,’ but, overall, their effect is predicated upon an element of surprise.

Finn’s ‘Fraction Too Much Friction,’ which alternates between D major and B major for the choruses and verses, respectively, combines a conventional technique and the interrupted cadence heard in ‘Stuff and Nonsense.’ Each verse concludes with an F♯ pivot chord — it is the dominant of B and a dominant substitute in D, as it contains the leading-note, C♯. At the end of the chorus, in D major, two bars of VI are added, fulfilling a quasi-interrupted cadence, that is, IV-V-VI. The vocal melody exploits the tonal ambiguity, lingering on a C♯, but instead of rising to D, it falls to the subsequent tonic of the verse, B. This technique, therefore, appears to be a songwriting fingerprint of Tim Finn’s, however when asked about this feature, Finn replied, “I just follow my instincts and do what feels right.”[18] One might find a source for this technique in George Harrison’s ‘Something’ which cadences G^7-A, or V^7-VI, into the bridge.

Shona Laing’s ‘1905’ and Blam Blam Blam’s ‘Don’t It Fight Marsha’ feature both unprepared and prepared modulations. ‘1905’ begins in C major for each verse and, ending on I^{maj7}, moves straight to A major for the chorus. This section concludes with a D minor chord, iv in A and ii in C, and, thus, acts as a weak pivot back to C. The same relationship is exploited in the second chorus, in A, when progressing to the bridge, in C. At the end of the bridge, Laing gets lost in her own thoughts, repeating the lyric “Time, oh Time” in a rising line. The harmonies at that point ascend in parallel motion, C-D-E, mirroring the singer’s

[18] Email.

sense of floating away from reality. From a harmonic perspective, the latter chords function as IV-V in A, ensuring a smooth final modulation.

'Don't Fight It Marsha' modulates from D minor to D major to G major. These keys correspond to the instrumental, verse and chorus, respectively. Each change occurs across the sectional barline; of most interest is the return to D minor following the chorus. Given songwriter McGlashan's propensity for adventurous harmonies, it is not surprising when the I-IV-I progression is replaced by a directionless ♭III-♭VII-♭V. The D♭ (C♯) harmony contains the leading-note of the new key, D minor and thus, the chord acts as a highly unusual pivot. Like Finn, McGlashan was quick to note, "I'd be claiming too much to say it [the modulation] came out of any theory."[19] It may be unwise to stress these complex explanations; that said, the presence of the leading-note explains the glimmer of logic within this progression.

Space Waltz's 'Out On The Street' likewise modulates using a pivot chord, but in the abrupt manner that marked the earlier examples. The final chorus ends on IV in E, which, across the barline into the coda, is reinterpreted as I in A. The coda then alternates between A^{maj7} and D^{maj7}, I-IV, before coming to rest in A major. Like 'Nature,' 'I See Red' and others, the modulation is unexpected, however, the change is smoothed partially by the A major pivot which connects both sections.

The final example of sectional modulations, 'Tears' by The Crocodiles, is the most unusual. The verse and chorus of the song are built on a simple progression, I-♭III-IV; the difference between sections is the halved harmonic rhythm in the chorus. After the first verse and chorus pair, the music modulates up a minor third, from A to C, for the second verse and chorus without any pivots or other harmonic devices. The same modulation occurs into the bridge in E♭ major, suggesting a possible harmonic motif of ascending minor thirds, at local and structural levels.

[19] Interview.

When asked about this feature, Fane Flaws admitted he was stuck during the songwriting process. Lacking inspiration for the bridge, he tried his favourite 'rule': "when in doubt, go to E♭."[20] Such a simplistic explanation is, perhaps, a little facetious; however, the modulation works well because it continues the upwards trajectory of the music.

Moving out of the bridge, Flaws felt that D♭ major followed by B major were the logical choices given the vocal melody. The vocal line and chords of the bridge passage are notated in Figure 4.2.

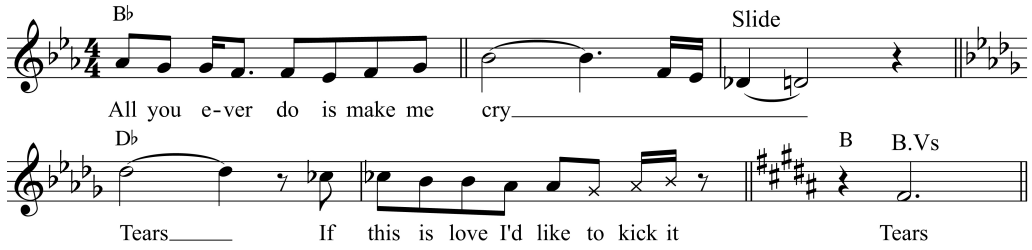


Figure 4.2 Vocal, 'Tears,' Bridge, 1'58"-2'12"

Jenny Morris finishes the bridge on a D♭ that slides up to the natural; the initial note pre-empts the new tonic sung by Morris an octave higher. The shortened chorus — "If this is love, I'd like to kick it" — descends C♭-B♭-A♭. Although rising on "it" to a half-sung B♭, the fourth verse begins on F♯ (G♭) in B major, a natural continuation of the falling line.

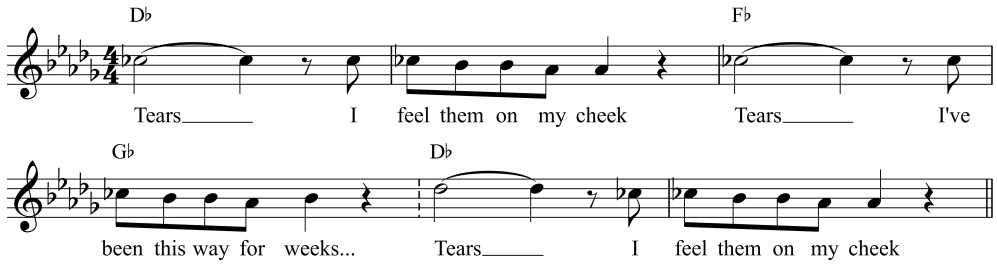


Figure 4.3 Vocal, 'Tears,' Chorus, 2'51"-3'15"

For the final choruses, Flaws wanted to experiment with the melodic-harmonic relationship. Across the barline, the harmonies move up an enharmonic second

[20] Interview.

to D♭ major, but as Figure 4.3 shows, the main melodic note (on "Tears") remains the tonic from B major. The dotted barline in Figure 4.3 shows the flattened seventh 'resolving' up to the tonic in the third phrase of the chorus.

With the exception of, perhaps, 'Nature,' the particular modulations do not explicitly connect with the lyrics. That is, while the minor/major contrast in 'Nature' reflects the narrator's psychological shift[21], there appears no reason why '1905' or 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' for example, should move to the major submediant over any other keys. One can say the same of the multiple modulations in 'Tears.' There is no particular pattern; instead, one hears a songwriter exploring different tonal landscapes and, consequently, transforming a simple chord progression into a well-crafted pop song.

The examples discussed so far modulate at easily identifiable points during the songs, often demarcating the various sections. The four remaining songs — 'Let's Think Of Something,' 'I Hope I Never,' 'She Speeds' and 'One Day Ahead' — contain transitional modulations, occurring within a section and often with pivot or other modulatory techniques.

The modulation in 'One Day Ahead' is achieved primarily through force of repetition. In the coda, a new harmonic idea is introduced, G♭-A♭-B♭, which is a condensed version of the flat-side progression from the bridge. Over time, B♭ is established as the tonic; with no recourse to E♭, the chords appear not as an imperfect cadence, but more as ♭VI-♭VII-I, *à la* 'Lady Madonna,' in the new key.

[21] I am grateful to Graeme Downes and Ian Whalley for both making this point.

Figure 4.4 outlines the three main chord progressions of ‘She Speeds.’

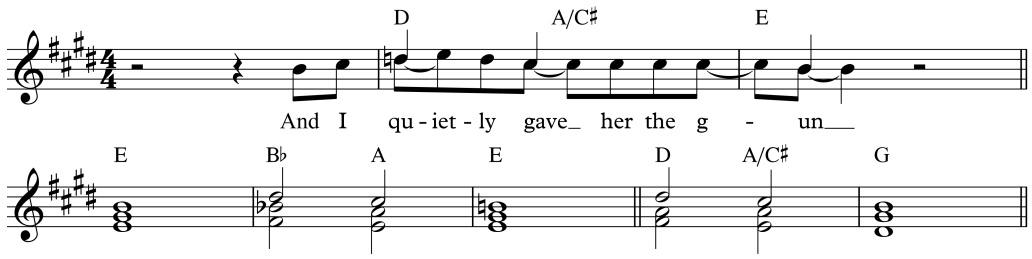


Figure 4.4 'She Speeds,' Harmonic Reduction

The vocal line of Figure 4.4 opens the verse and highlights the descending line, D-C♯-B; this line is emphasized by the lead guitar in subsequent bars. The chorus reverts to the ominous introductory riff, E-B♭-A, before modulating across the barline to D major, with a D-A/C♯-G progression. Implied in the two chorus progressions is the voice-leading from the verse, as shown by the raised stems in Figure 4.4. The modulation, from E to D, is similar to other sectional modulations in that it occurs at a single point; however, it is also comparable to a common-tone modulation with a continuity between sections.

‘Let’s Think Of Something’ has already been discussed above with regards to the tonicization of G major in the verse. The subsequent transition to A major happens quickly; the vocal melody lands on B with a G harmony in the eleventh bar of the verse. With the melody note maintained, the harmony switches to B major, functioning as an applied dominant in A. In the bridge, the harmonies fall G-F-E. The first two chords can be read as I-♭VII in G, heard in both the verse and chorus; the F chord then acts as a pivot, leading to a drawn-out ♭VI-V cadence in A, also used to conclude each chorus. ‘Let’s Think Of Something’ relies, therefore, on textbook execution of common-tone and pivot chord modulations.

Split Enz’s ‘I Hope I Never’ also utilizes pivot chords. The opening rocks between I^7 and $♭VII^7$ suggesting a Mixolydian or Dorian inflection in B major. At the end of the verse, A^7 pivots the music into D minor, where the tonic/flattened leading-note relationship is maintained. The pre-chorus concludes with a variation on the circle-of-fifths, C-F-B-Em, or VI-♭II-V-i. The

chorus begins on the E minor harmony, oscillating with A major. After eight bars, it becomes evident these chords are functioning as ii and V in D major, which is confirmed on the final perfect cadence. Tim Finn uses this technique often — as mentioned above, ‘Spellbound’ and ‘Weather With You’ also delay the tonic chord after extended ii-V progressions.

Having examined individual examples, it is pertinent to consider any trends or features across the songs with regards to both modulations and tonicizations.. The nineteen songs display a variety of modulation techniques, including abrupt shifts, songwriting experimentation, repetition, common-tone modulation and pivot chords. Most, however, emphasise a particular chord or melodic line that ensures a smooth transition from one key to the next. In this regard, the modulation processes share a fundamental trait with classical music.

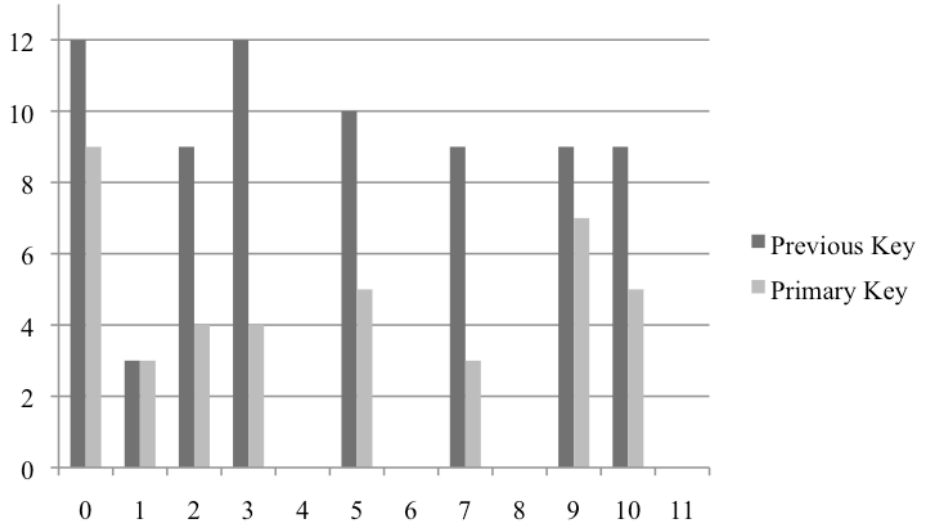
From Tables 4.5 and 4.6, the notable feature is the key areas to which the music shifts. One can examine tonal changes in two ways, either in relation to the song’s primary key, or in relation to the previous key. Thus, for ‘I Hope I Never,’ the harmonic structure would read as VI-i-ii-I or I-♭iii-ii-♭VII, according to the two categories. There are problems with both methods. The former involves a judgment as to the “primary” key, which can be difficult for some songs; the latter is badly represented by Roman numerals and does not convey, for example, the teleological nature of D major in ‘I Hope I Never.’

To overcome these issues the “primary” key is considered the tonic of the chorus, or the key into which the music cadences immediately out of the chorus. ‘Fraction Too Much Friction,’ therefore, is ‘in’ D major with its implied perfect cadence at the end of each chorus; by comparison, ‘Don’t Fight It Marsha’ is ‘in’ D minor as the chorus steadily moves away from its G major origins and cadences into D minor from chorus to instrumental. This decision reflects the chorus’ structural importance.

The final problems with this analysis are the implications of Roman numerals. ‘I See Red’ modulates from F major to C major to F major, yet it is not perceived as tonic to dominant movement and thus, I-V-I would be a misleading

modulation label. To this end, modulations were calculated numerically in terms of ascending semitones. A shift from F to C, as in 'I See Red,' is scored as "7," whereas a modulation from, for example, C to F, is scored as "5."

Graph 4.9 outlines the frequency of tonicizations and modulations by semitones according to both the primary key and the previous key. One gains a well-rounded picture by comparing results from both measurements.



Graph 4.9 Frequency of Tonicizations and Modulations by Distance (Semitones)

The "previous key" column has higher frequencies because each shift is counted. That is, 'She Speeds' registers under both "11" and "2" — E to D and back to E. Under "primary key," this would only be considered a single modulation to "11." For the "previous key" column, there is a correspondence between complementary pairs of intervals, such as fourths and fifths or sixths and thirds. In this regard, it becomes irrelevant whether 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' for example, is in D or B major as both modulations, to "3" and "9" are tallied. In the case of modulations corresponding to various sections, each change is counted so to complete the cycle; hence, 'Nature', structured A♭m-D♭-A♭, is marked in the third column under "5," "7" and "0" reflecting the shift back to the tonic minor from chorus to verse.

One would expect the relative keys, "3" and "9," to poll highly. This is partly the case, although of the 40 tonal changes, only six are between relative majors and minors. Other songs, such as '1905' and 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' move between the tonic and major submediant, which is a significant distance in tonal terms. This suggests the underlying principle of relative keys is present, but articulated differently, perhaps adding spice to a conventional harmonic relationship.

There are frequent parallel modulations between the tonic major and minor keys. A shift from I to i is the same distance as I to VI in the circle-of-fifths but in the opposite direction. Movement down a tone also occurs on several occasions. Here, the "previous key" column is more telling — a song such as 'Tears' contains awkward modulations to ♭IV and II in relation to the primary key; in actual fact, there are consecutive modulations to ♭VII.

There is, therefore, a tendency for songwriters to explore distantly related keys. This inference becomes more significant in light of the few I-V modulations. With regards to Graph 4.9, the frequency of "7" is misleading — any modulation to the subdominant will return to the new key's dominant. Only two songs exploit the tonic-dominant relationship — 'Maybe' in the bridge and 'Out On The Street' in the chorus. 'One Day Ahead' modulates to the dominant in the coda without going back to the tonic. 'I See Red' alternates between F and C; however, as discussed above, there is no sense of an overarching I-V-I structure.

This is, arguably, the most prominent departure from classical music practices in which the structural I-V-I relationship was entrenched until the harmonic advances of late-Romantic composers.[22] Furthermore, only 'Bitter,' 'Don't Fight It Marsha' and 'Fraction Too Much Fraction' could be considered in terms of the classical arch structure whereby the music travels away from and eventually comes back to the home key. It is foolish to describe the *Nature's*

[22] This is intended as a very generalized statement; the I-V-I structural plan may be compared to the progressive tonality of Wagner or Mahler.

Best examples in terms of Wagnerian or Mahlerian wandering tonality, but there is a stronger sense of tonal departure without return in many of these songs. In the case of a "truck-driver" modulation, this idea should not be overstated, however, there is possibly some insight here into pop song structures.

The second trend is the correlation between songs that explore different keys and historical eras. The three 1960s songs, 'Nature,' 'Cheryl Moana Marie' and 'Let's Think Of Something,' contain modulations. As Larry Morris, lead singer of Larry's Rebels explained, the modulations were not specifically tied in with the lyrics, but "typical of what was going on at the time. We [Larry's Rebels] were definitely influenced by what we were hearing in the Top 10."[23] Although Morris did not provide prototypical examples, 'Good Vibrations' and 'Penny Lane' had earlier topped the New Zealand charts in 1967; both contain modulations by seconds, while 'Good Vibrations' contrasts an Aeolian verse with the brighter Mixolydian chorus. Both are, thus, structurally similar to 'Let's Think Of Something.' 'Cheryl Moana Marie' and 'Nature' can be regarded in the similar vein, their modulations mirroring international pop music trends.

Eight songs from the 1970s feature key changes; this number rises to fifteen in the 1980s, but drops to seven for the 1990s. When expressed proportionally, the figures are revealing, as shown in Table 4.7.

Decade	Proportion of *Nature's Best* Songs	Proportion of Tonicizing/Modulating Songs	Tonicizing/Modulating Songs as Proportion of Decade
1960s	3%	9%	100%
1970s	17%	24%	47%
1980s	38%	45%	39%
1990s	41%	21%	17%

Table 4.7 Tonicizing/Modulating Songs as Proportions

The first three decades are over-represented when comparing the proportion of *Nature's Best* songs against songs with key changes. By comparison, the 1990s are under-represented; if only modulations are taken into account, the second column falls to 11%. Furthermore, it is notable that four of the five 1990s songs

[23] Interview.

with tonicizations were written by Neil Finn, Tim Finn and Don McGlashan, all of whom had established their careers in earlier decades.

One should be careful, however, of painting a misleading picture of the 1970s and 1980s. If the 1990s songs are removed from this sample, one is left with 24 songs, eight of which were written by the aforementioned songwriters —Finn, Finn and McGlashan. This trend, therefore, could reflect individual songwriting techniques rather than a generational shift.

The 1990s also saw the ascension of hip-hop and other technologically oriented styles that place greater emphasis on non-harmonic domains. This possibly accounts for six songs — 'Cruise Control,' 'In The Neighbourhood,' 'Can't Get Enough,' 'How Bizarre,' 'Chains' and 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' — but less those considered under rock and pop banners. Only two bands, EyeTV and Shihad, experimented with modulations during the 1990s, adding weight to the theory that newer generations of songwriters are harmonically more conservative.

4.2.5 Cadences

A cadence marks the conclusion of a musical unit, whether a phrase, a section or an entire song. One could analyse the cadences used to end each phrase across the songs, but this task would require great time compiling and classifying the data. Furthermore, popular songs often avoid cadences, per se, at micro levels, such as when a verse is built upon a riff or other repetitive pattern. Such a progression does not provide closure and, therefore, cannot be analysed as a cadence.

For example, the first phrase of 'Anchor Me' repeats I-vii-IV-iii; similarly, 'Tears' is founded on a I-$^{\flat}$III-IV riff. Neither of these examples contains a cadence within the phrase — i.e. IV-iii or $^{\flat}$III-IV — nor does one necessarily hear a cadence across the barline into the next phrase. The verse of 'Don't Dream It's Over' is more problematic; I-vi-IV-III is heard twice before the chorus. With the leading-note present, III can be considered a dominant

substitute. The question is whether this signals an altered perfect cadence within the verse, or an interrupted cadence from verse to chorus.[24] These issues are unhelpful when trying to draw large-scale conclusions.

Temperley argues that most popular songs are built upon "verse-chorus unit[s]" (VCU); thus, the logical position for important cadences is the end of the chorus as this completes the larger-scale section.[25] Temperley defines the "sectional cadence" by the approximate coincidence of a tonic harmony and the end of the vocal line, often occurring on "hypermetrically strong measures." This definition provides a normative, but flexible standpoint, "approximate" being the operative term.

One can often determine when the vocal melody concludes; by examining the concurrent harmony, one can determine what type of cadence is used. In some cases, the cadence occurs within the chorus section, such as in The Exponents' 'Why Does Love Do This To Me?'; in others, the music cadences across the barline into the subsequent section, such as Dave Dobbyn's 'Loyal' or 'Lydia' by Fur Patrol. In order to provide consistency, the cadences were first analysed only in terms of the former category. Consequently, a number of examples ended the chorus on a non-tonic harmony. The analysis was then expanded to include the latter category; this shows how the non-tonic harmonies resolve.

34 songs contained cadences within the choruses. The frequency of cadence types, and their associated chord progressions, is listed in Table 4.8.

[24] If one treats III as V/vi, then III-IV is essentially V-VI in the relative minor.
[25] David Temperley, "The Cadential IV in Rock," *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 1 (2011), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.1/mto.11.17.1.temperley.html (accessed 10 September 2011).

Cadence Type	Chord Progression	Frequency
Perfect	V-I/V-i/V_b-I	14
Plagal	IV-I/IV-i/iv-i	5
Double-Plagal	♭VII-IV-I	2
Modal VII	♭VII-I/VII-i/V-vi	4
Modal III	♭III-I/III-i	4
Blues	V-IV-(♭VII)-I	1
Supertonic	ii-I	3
Other	II-I_b	1

Table 4.8 Frequency of Cadences Within Choruses

The first four types are self-explanatory. The chorus of 'She Speeds' ends D-A/C♯-D; this helps define the key, but without the force of a standard V-I cadence. The Modal VII cadences are Aeolian in nature. Dave Dobbyn's 'Oughta Be In Love' ascends ♭VI-♭VII-I, thereby combining Aeolian and major mode features. Graham Brazier's 'Billy Bold' and Strawpeople's 'Sweet Disorder' both conclude the chorus V-vi, which is technically an interrupted cadence. However, given the tonal ambiguity of the songs, floating between relative keys, this progression functions as VII-i of the minor key, thus it is categorised as such.

The Modal III cadence in 'Private Universe' is also Aeolian, although it is cleverly preceded by a local perfect cadence. The chorus attempts to find the relative major, C, progressing F-G-C (i.e. IV-V-I), before lapsing back to A minor. 'Bitter' is similar except in the Dorian mode. Mixed modes are used in 'Nature,' which, when combined with the high vocal harmonies, give the ♭III-I ending an ethereal quality. The upper voice leading, G♭ to A♭, suggests the Mixolydian mode, given the major tonic harmony. Yet this is undermined by the lower voice movement, C♭ to C, which juxtaposes Aeolian and major modes. Finally, 'Jesus I Was Evil' conforms to Everett's fifth type of rock tonal systems, mentioned above.[26] The ♭III-I cadence should be considered, not in terms of voice-leading, but as parallel chords falling a minor third.

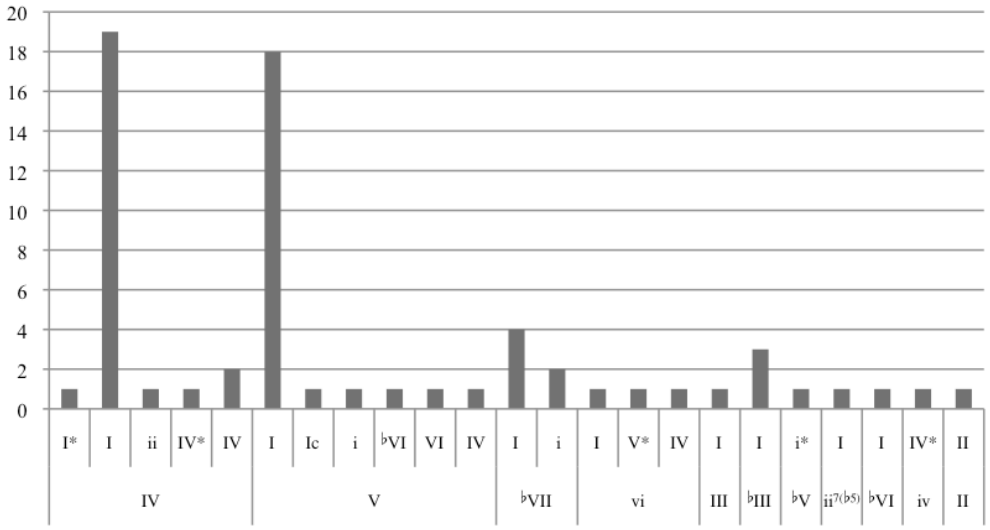
Regarding the remaining songs, the ii-I cadences in 'French Letter' and 'Slippin' Away' appear to be substitutes for IV-I cadences. 'Husband House'

[26] Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," (accessed 12 September 2011).

gains its hymn-like character from the descending bass line within each phrase; the verse concludes IV-iii-I, while the chorus is a related IV-ii-I. The cadence should be read, therefore, as a passing chord to complete the IV-I motion, similar, albeit stylistically different to The Beatles' gospel-influenced 'Let It Be.'

The ♭VII chord of 'Good Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll" has been bracketed because it embellishes the fundamental blues cadence, V-IV-I. Finally, the "other" example is heard in The Chills' 'Pink Frost' but can hardly be regarded as a cadence given there is no sense of tonal closure. The chorus alternates II-I_b and there is no progression towards a harmonic focal point as is expected of cadences. This sets 'Pink Frost' in stark contrast to Temperley's VCU model.

Four songs — 'Can't Get Enough,' 'Cruise Control,' 'Home Again' and 'Screems From Da Old Plantation' — were not analysed here because the choruses contained only one chord. The remaining 63 songs end the chorus on non-tonic harmonies. These examples were categorised according to the chorus' final harmony and then subdivided according to the subsequent harmony directly after the chorus. The frequencies for each category and sub-category are presented in Graph 4.10. For example, nineteen songs end the chorus on IV and cadence to I across the barline.



Graph 4.10 Frequency of Chorus Cadences by Final and Successive Chords

Several points from Graph 4.10 require explanation. First, the subsequent chords are those of the next Verse-Chorus Unit and do not take into account bridge or instrumental sections. This allows for consistency and clarity, but, like 'Pink Frost,' several songs did not necessarily cadence at the end of the chorus. Dave Dobbyn's 'Naked Flame,' for example, blends the divisions between sections so that the chorus flows into the bridge and back to the verse seamlessly; this is an area where the VCU model could be refined. Second, three songs — '1905,' 'Blue Day' by Mi-Sex and Straitjacket Fits' 'Down In Splendour' — were counted twice because contrasting progressions are used in different choruses. Finally, chords marked with an asterisk indicate a change of key. Thus, the first case, 'Tears' cadences from IV in A to I in C across the barline, as discussed in Section 4.2.4.

From Graph 4.10, non-tonic harmonies mostly resolve to the tonic. Of the eleven non-resolving examples, three were written by Tim Finn, and two, 'I Got You' (V-I_c) and 'History Never Repeats' (II^{sus2}-II), by Neil Finn for Split Enz. Although these songs have clear Verse-Chorus structures, the harmonies are arranged sectionally, rather than driving towards a point of resolution. 'Spellbound' typifies this point; the chorus alternates between I and IV, while the verse alternates between ii and V. The cadence, as such, therefore occurs from verse to chorus, not as a concluding statement.

'Rust In My Car' (V-♭VI) is similarly structured, while The Feelers' 'Pressure Man' is riff-based, hence the vi-IV progression. Two Exponents' songs are counted here, 'Victoria' and 'I'll Say Goodbye'; the subdominant harmony on both occasions reaches the tonic in the subsequent verse, but is delayed by intermediary chords, IV and vi, respectively.

The combination of Table 4.8 and Graph 4.10 provides an overall picture of the cadences used to conclude choruses.

Cadence Type	Frequency
Perfect	33
Plagal	19
Double-Plagal	8
Minor Plagal	1
Plagal Descent	1
Modal VII	10
Modal III	7
Blues	1
Supertonic	3
Interrupted	1
Other	7
Non-Resolving	8

Table 4.9 Overall Frequency of Chorus Cadences

The results of Table 4.9, not surprisingly, tend towards plagal and perfect cadences, and their variations. For example, the double-plagal cadence is no different to the plagal cadence, however, the $^{\flat}$VII-IV-I progression is common in popular music, compared to classical music, and is thus categorised separately. The minor plagal cadence refers to iv-I, usually preceded by IV and with the voice-leading, 6-$^{\flat}$6-5. 'Down In Splendour' cadences II-IV-$^{\flat}$VI-I, however the aforementioned line is present in the lead guitar, implying that F major is a substitute for the minor subdominant, D minor. The plagal descent, iv-$^{\flat}$VI$_c$-ii$^{7(\flat5)}$, in 'Julia' is an extension of iv-I, but also alludes to the more conventional IV-iii-ii-I descending cadence.

If the minor plagal cadences are included, plagal cadences account for 29% of the total. The number of V-I progressions would also increase were 'Jumping Out A Window' (V-III-I) and 'I Got You' (V-I$_c$) counted; both rely on, but subvert the V-I relationship. As discussed earlier, 'Don't Fight It Marsha' modulates using $^{\flat}$V as the leading-note in the subsequent key; again, in a skewed manner, this 'cadence' is founded upon leading-note to tonic movement. Similarly, the final II-III 'other' cadence of '1905' is used to modulate to VI, also relying on the dominant-tonic principle.

It is significant that perfect cadences are highest ranked, especially in light of the previous sections. The chord distribution outlined in Graph 4.1 and the variety of modulations listed in Table 4.6 intimated that the tonic-dominant

relationship was less prevalent in these songs. Within the chord distributions, IV appeared, on average, almost fifty percent more than V; similarly, movement to the dominant was less favoured compared to parallel and leading-tone modulations. Table 4.9 paints a different picture. In comparison with the previous data, the number of perfect cadences suggests that the dominant harmony is deployed at structural junctures.

'Four Seasons In One Day' and 'Distant Sun' are good examples in this context. In the former, the verse and chorus run into each other, which directs the music towards a chorus cadence point. When the chorus begins, the harmonies move by step between IV and iii; V is delayed until the penultimate bar where its tonal impact is most emphasized. 'Distant Sun,' another Neil Finn song, is similar in that the dominant is missing from the verse before entering in the chorus to reinforce the harmonic hierarchy.

Scanning through the list of songs with perfect cadences, it is tempting to label them "pop" songs. This is not to debate the fine line between "pop" and "rock" but, arguably, only four songs — 'She Speeds,' 'Gutter Black,' 'Andrew' and 'Dance All Around The World' — would automatically qualify for the latter category.[27] Everett intimates that pop can sometimes be distinguished from rock on the basis of its "tamer, perhaps simply more institution-oriented" foundations, although this is a highly provisional definition.[28]

If Everett is correct about pop's relative conservatism, one may expect a high correspondence between songs with perfect cadences, a relatively conservative technique, and chart performance. Seventeen of the 33 songs with a V-I cadence were top ten hits. But this proportion is almost identical to songs with IV-I cadences (ten out of twenty) and very close to the other categories. Whether this says more about the New Zealand music industry or the relative unimportance of harmony in popular music is a matter that could be explored further.

[27] Even then, 'Gutter Black' has reggae overtones, such as in Brazier's vocal.
[28] Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," (accessed 25 September 2011).

The presence of perfect cadences should not be overstated, given they only account for a third of the sample. Plagal cadences and its relatives are prominent suggesting the IV-I relationship is fundamental to popular music. One can also note the high number of "modal" and "other" cadences, both of which undermine, to some extent, conventional tonal relationships. That said, the "other" cadences likely reflect the analytical method used here. They appear in songs with clearly demarcated sections — 'Rust In My Car' is a good example — and thus, one would expect less impetus towards a harmonic focal point, as may occur when the sectional boundaries are more fluid.

As noted above, the cadence analysis is founded on a normative theory. Temperley's framework is sound but not always applicable. For the final piece of analysis, cadences were expanded to include all sectional divisions. The aim was to identify the songs using chromaticism at such points. Approach chords were excluded; thus, 'Let's Think Of Something' which ends the chorus ♭VI-V-I is not counted. Rather, the chromaticism had to be a fundamental part of the cadence. This method had two benefits. First, the greater sample provided flexibility to Temperley's model; second, it adds weight to ideas developed in Section 4.2.3. Assuming cadences are musical focus points, those with chromatic chords obviously draw attention to their chromatic nature. It, thus, potentially indicates another degree of chromaticism.

23 songs contained chromatic cadences, ranging in degrees of complexity. A number were based on ♭VII-I movement, such as in the bridge of 'Don't Dream It's Over' or the chorus of 'Sensitive To A Smile,' or other modal variations — ♭VI-♭VII-I or ♭VII-IV-I, both of which occur in 'Blue Day.' These are common enough in popular music that their effect is less remarkable. The same might be said of the power chord-laden ♭III-I cadences of 'Counting The Beat' or 'Jesus I Was Evil.' More complicated examples, such as those by Don McGlashan and Shona Laing, have already been discussed above.

An unusual case is the ending of Fur Patrol's 'Lydia.' In E major, the last chorus is slower as the band winds down to the final chord, A minor, effecting a IV-iv

cadence. The minor subdominant, to some ears, may convey a sense of open-endedness as it does not resolve to the tonic. Throughout the song, the narrator has addressed her partner, having caught him cheating with the titular "Lydia." Songwriter Julia Deans said the lyrics depict the gamut of emotions felt by someone in the narrator's position, ranging from "oh right" to "no that's fine" to "how dare you" to the despairing "but why…"[29] The final unresolved chord, perhaps, leaves the story unfinished with the listener unknowing as to the relationship's fate.

Deans, however, wanted the song's ending to signal the relationship's end and felt the minor chord would deliver this finality better than returning to the major tonic harmony. This is a departure from classical music principles in which the tonic is equated with closure. That said, the minor subdominant had previously been heard in the bridge where the narrator is at her most furious. The A minor harmony, therefore, provides a subtle connection between sections, replicating the singer's state of mind at each point.

Finally, 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand' has already been mentioned in terms of its inventive harmonic structure. Consequently, the final cadence, in all its bizarre glory, should be expected. Although 'in' E major, the song ends on F♯ major. The final cadence, however, is harmonically divorced from the local tonic, as the guitarist punches D♯-D-C-F♯ in syncopated triplets. In relation to E, the chords read VII-♭VII-♭VI-II; in relation to F♯, VI-♭VI-♭V-I. Either way, the Roman numerals are non-sensical and somewhat pointless given the song's harmonic anarchy.

4.3 MELODIC STRUCTURE

4.3.1 Melodic Contour

Melodic contours were arranged into five categories: Ascending, Descending, Static, Axial and Arch. In practice, it is difficult to systematically differentiate

[29] Interview.

between the categories. One method considered was to match each category with an interval — i.e. a static melody had to remain within a major third, or an arch melody had to rise and fall at least a fifth. This option was discounted because it fails to account for what one could call "melodicity," to borrow Stefani's term.[30] Middleton points out that different melodic shapes can be represented graphically, but are better "'felt' as kinetic patterns."[31] Musical intuition, rather than notation, has, therefore, been used as a primary tool for this analysis.

The melodic contours were analysed separately in each of the four main song sections: Verse, Pre-Chorus, Chorus and Bridge. This is in line with Burns' assertion that popular songs often employ different melodic and harmonic shapes in different sections.[32] The results are outlined in Table 4.10.

Melodic Shape	Verse	Pre-Chorus	Chorus	Bridge
Ascending	4	3	3	12
Descending	22	4	21	11
Arch	49	7	59	14
Axial	9	1	6	2
Static	12	1	7	5

Table 4.10 Frequency of Melodic Shapes

In some cases, it was possible to differentiate between upwards and downwards arches — compare the verses of 'Four Seasons In One Day' and 'Not Given Lightly' — although other melodies rose and fell within the same section, such as 'Words.' To avoid complications, these melodies were all categorised under "arch."

A further issue was the difference between phrase shapes and sectional shapes. In 'Message To My Girl,' for example, the verse is fragmented into two-bar phrases, each an arched arpeggio figure. In terms of the structural tones that

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[30] Gino Stefani, "Melody: A Popular Perspective," *Popular Music* 6, no. 1 (1987), 21.
[31] See Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990), pp. 205-207.
[32] See Lori Burns, "Analytic Methodologies for Rock Music," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 66-69.

begin and end each phrase, there is little movement. The verse begins on C♭, rises to D♭ and then falls to B♭. But to label this as "descending" or "static" would ignore that the melody is borne out of an arch foundation. Most songs were structured in this way, with overall sections developing out of repeated figures.

Axial melodies revolve around one or two central pitches; in other words, on an axis. Often the axis is the tonic triad, such as the verses of 'Gutter Black,' 'Blue Day' and 'Stuff And Nonsense.' Axial melodies are closely related to static melodies by virtue of their limited movement; the difference is, arguably, one of degree. In 'Stuff And Nonsense,' for example, the verse melody moves freely within a range of a sixth, but returns frequently to the mediant and dominant notes. By comparison, the verse of 'Heavenly Pop Hit' does not venture outside of the notes A, B, C and D, in C major, and for the most part, moves only between A and C. This was considered a static melody.

The Chills' other song 'Pink Frost' also contained static vocal melodies, in particular, during the chorus with an abrupt and directionless B♭-C-A♭ figure. The verse is marked by an angular melody F-A♭-C, although it is balanced somewhat by the descending guitar line E♭-C an octave lower. The melody is harsh, despite being a simple F minor arpeggio, partly because it ascends quickly without any intention of falling, and partly because of the sound. Martin Phillipps' vocal is deadpan, while the excessive reverb adds a shrill quality in his upper register that penetrates the murky accompaniment.

Whatever problems arise in categorizing individual melodies, some general trends emerge from Table 4.10. First, there is an overwhelming preference for arch melodies. This is not surprising for historical reasons. Moore suggests the "downward sweep," a descending arch, is a basic contour in rock music, derived from the blues tradition.[33] The example he cites is Howlin' Wolf's 'Somebody's Walkin' In My House'; this shape can be heard clearly in Headband's 'Good

[33] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, pp. 50-51.

Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll.' Furthermore, Winkler identifies the arch melody as central to Afro-American music, from which much popular music originated.[34]

There is, perhaps, a more fundamental reason for this trend. Arch melodies are prevalent throughout Western music, popular, folk and art musics included.[35] As Stefani points out, "Many ways of singing and playing melodies are clearly marked by speech"[36]; one can reason that the arch melody mirrors a sentence with rising and falling inflections. There may also be relevance in Scruton's words: one hears "*in*…sounds a melody that moves through the imaginary space of music."[37] The arch shape fosters the sense of movement by exploring the horizontal (time) and vertical (pitch) dimensions of the "musical landscape."[38] One could discuss further this issue; suffice to say, the arch shape should be expected as a foundation of melody.

Regarding the other types of melodic contours, Jimmy Webb's "emotional intensity scale" is useful. Webb suggests the formal design of a song can be mapped in relation to an "emotion line"; in general, pre-choruses are higher than verses, choruses are higher than pre-choruses, and bridges are higher than verses but lower than subsequent choruses.[39] The "emotion line" is an arbitrary measure, but, arguably, many songwriters would agree with these basic principles of tension and release. One means of affecting the song's intensity is through melody. Further, one can tentatively suggest that higher pitches create an "overall affective elevation."[40]

This could explain the increased proportion of ascending melodies in pre-chorus and bridge sections. 'Forever Tuesday Morning' and 'Six Months In A Leaky

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[34] Peter Winkler, "Randy Newman's Americana," *Popular Music* 7, no. 1 (1988), pp. 9-11.
[35] For example, 'Greensleaves,' 'Amazing Grace,' Beethoven's 'Ode To Joy,' the first subject in Mozart's Piano Sonata in C, K. 545.
[36] Stefani, "Melody: A Popular Perspective," 29.
[37] Roger Scruton, *Understanding Music* (London: Continuum, 2009), 43.
[38] See Mark L. Johnson and Steve Larson, "'Something In The Way She Moves' — Metaphors of Musical Motion," *Metaphor and Symbol* 18, no. 2 (2003), pp. 71-72.
[39] See Jimmy Webb, *Tunesmith: Inside the Art of Songwriting* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), pp. 105-135.
[40] Robert Walser, *Running With The Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hannover: University Press of New England, 1992), 123.

Boat' are excellent examples of the former, both ascending by a fourth; 'Not Given Lightly,' 'Jesus I Was Evil' and the dominant seventh arpeggio in 'Good Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll' are typical of the latter.

If higher pitches are more emotionally charged, then the high number of descending melodies may appear odd, especially in chorus sections. In a number of songs, however, the descending melody allows the initial note of the chorus to be the highest point. In 'Weather With You,' 'I Got You,' 'One Day Ahead' and 'Mercy of Love,' the first note of the chorus is the highest vocal note in the song. In 'Why Does Love Do This To Me?' Luck reaches an F♯ on the chorus downbeat, which is superseded only by an A in the final chorus. Similarly, the chorus of 'Sway' begins on the tonic, A; only the embellishing B in the third bar of the chorus is higher. Songs' melodic highpoints are also heard in a number of arched choruses including 'She Speeds,' 'Victoria,' 'Don't Dream It's Over,' 'Beside You,' 'I Hope I Never,' 'Down In Splendour,' 'Message To My Girl' and 'Husband House.' These two observations confirm the songwriting principle of having the chorus as the song's focal point.

It was proposed above that movement is central to melody; it is, therefore, pertinent to offer some words on melodies in which movement is barely felt. Putting aside disagreements over classification, it appears that static melodies are used as a tension device. If the first statement of this paragraph is true, then this position seems logical.

Of the twelve songs with a static verse melody, each uses a different melodic shape in other sections. Six turn to an arch in the subsequent chorus. A good example is 'For Today' in which the declamatory verse lingers around the tonic and third; even though the pitches are similar, the chorus gives the impression of a small arch and of greater movement. This feature relies on a tighter vocal rhythm and more precise vocal pitches compared to the verse. A similar effect is heard in 'Spellbound,' although the tension is maintained through both the verse and chorus in conjunction with static harmonic progressions. In the bridge, an applied dominant, VII [V/iii], changes the harmonic tone and ushers in a lengthy

arch melody that spans a ninth, in contrast with the minimalist verses and choruses.

The same trend can be observed in axial verse melodies, a shape also limited in movement. 'Stuff And Nonsense' is an appropriate example, although the arch chorus is preceded by a descending pre-chorus. Two contrary examples are 'Gutter Black' and 'Rust In My Car.' 'Gutter Black' moves from its axial verse to a static chorus with the backing vocalists repeating a descending line only from B to G. The chorus of 'Rust In My Car' is barely sung; Geoff Chunn half-speaks the title line. In both cases, however, instrumentalists provide a foil to the sparse vocals. In the former, Brazier's virtuosic saxophone takes the melodic lead; in the latter, Chunn's vocals punctuate the descending lead guitar riff. The chorus melody is not, therefore, lost but found elsewhere.

Jimmy Webb's basic instruction for melodic construction is to "weigh the balance between adjacent tones and skips."[41] Analysing the "adjacent tones and skips" would be fascinating yet laborious; the key principle of Webb's words is balance. It appears that *Nature's Best* songwriters follow this idea, both at a surface level, as shown by the proliferation of arch melodies, and at a structural level. No song uses the same shape in all its sections; the vast majority change shape from section to section. This technique is epitomized in 'Pressure Man.' The verse is centred on C♯, the third; the chorus is arched through a fifth; and the bridge inverts the chorus melody into a reverse arch.

34 songs employ the same melodic shape in the verse and chorus, but 26 of this group move from one arch melody to another. These melodies are, thus, inherently balanced. Of the remaining songs, 'Jesus I Was Evil' and 'Spellbound' have contrasting bridges; 'Andrew' contains two distinct descending melodies; while 'Renegade Fighter' and 'Venus' rely on axial melodies but vary the instrumental textures from verse to chorus. Only one song, 'Pink Frost,' flouts the melodic rulebook, which, perhaps, signals the song's 'alternative' status. This issue will be investigated further in Chapter 5.

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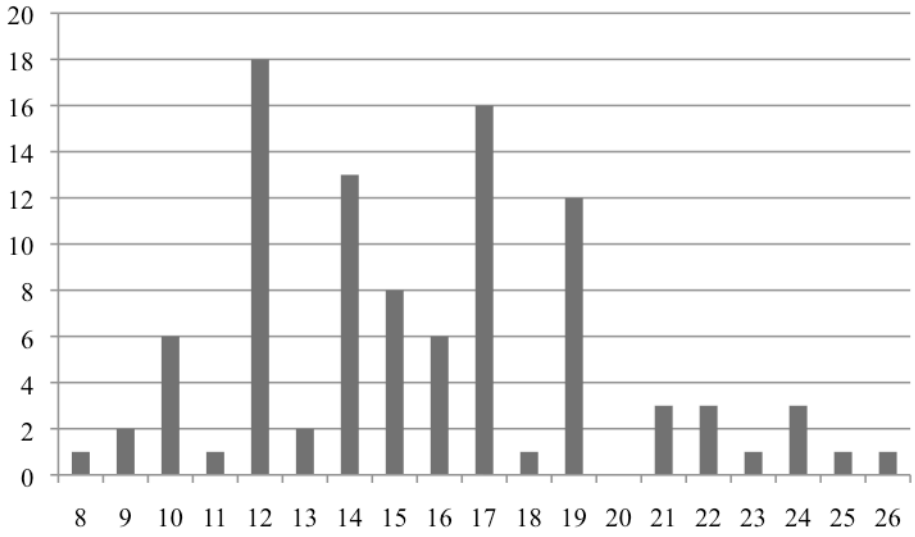
[41] Webb, *Tunesmith*, 171.

4.3.2 Melodic Range

Melodic range was measured in absolute and relative terms for the lead singers. For a few songs this proved problematic, either because of non-pitched notes, such as in 'Counting The Beat' or 'Jesus I Was Evil,' or because a 'lead' vocalist was not present, such as in 'Poi E.' This method was similarly troubled by the Herbs and King Kapisi, both of whose tight vocal harmonies give the impression of a singular, but multi-layered voice. The latter artists both deserve further investigation into their vocal sound as it is integral to their songs and, more generally, to New Zealand reggae and hip-hop.

Dave Dobbyn sung the lowest note, G2 in 'Whaling.'[42] The lowest female note was sung by Boh Runga, C♯3, in 'Part Of Me.' Leza Corban hit the highest female note, A5 in Strawpeople's 'Sweet Disorder.' The highest male note was a melismatic "you" up to C♯5 by Tim Finn in 'Spellbound.'

The distribution of melodic range is presented in Graph 4.11.



Graph 4.11 Frequency of Vocal Ranges in Semitones

[42] Middle C is C4; the A a sixth above is A4.

In relative terms, the average range of a song was between fifteen and sixteen semitones, or an octave and a third. James Reid had the narrowest range, at a minor sixth in 'Venus'; Dave Dobbyn spanned two octaves and a second, G2-A4, in 'Whaling.' Corban claimed the widest female vocal range, just under two octaves from B♭3 to A♭5, in 'Sweet Disorder.'

The most frequent melodic ranges revolve around the octave, fourth and fifth. Twelve of the octave ranges were from either tonic to tonic, or fifth to fifth; 'Cruise Control' and 'Liberty' spanned an octave on the third. Although less common, nine songs ranging an octave and fourth ascended from either the fourth below to high octave, such as in 'Slice of Heaven,' or the low tonic to a high fourth, as in 'I Got You.' Songs spanning nineteen semitones predominantly ranged from the tonic to the high fifth. Few patterns emerge from songs with a major ninth range; for example, five songs work between E3 and F♯4, yet are in E, C, A (twice) and B majors.

Dave Dobbyn consistently employed the widest vocal range; seven of his songs were wider than the average and three were at least two octaves. This feature can be attributed to Dobbyn's tendency for octave leaps. Frequently, he interrupts a line in his middle register with the same note, often the tonic or fifth, an octave higher in a falsetto voice. This technique will be explored further in Chapter 5.

It is difficult to interpret the vocal ranges a great deal because it is unknown whether the findings represent the singers' vocal capabilities. For example, The Feelers' James Reid is notable for occupying the lower relative ranges — a minor sixth in 'Venus' and a minor seventh in 'Pressure Man.' One cannot assume that Reid, in general, has a small vocal range; 'Anniversary' from *Communicate* would suggest otherwise. But one can conclude The Feelers' songs that were selected for *Nature's Best* contain a relatively small vocal range. By examining Reid's vocals over the band's career output, one could one determine if the detail uncovered here is meaningful.

Overall, most male vocalists fit a tenor range, approximately C3-C5, with some latitude at either end. Of the female vocalists, only Corban extends past E5; the remaining singers are categorised around the alto range, G3-E5. Furthermore, Julia Deans, Bic Runga, Sharon O'Neill, Jenny Morris, Shona Laing and Boh Runga extend below G3. Their voices, therefore, sit at the lower end of the scale, an observation that leads to questions of vocal virtuosity or lack thereof. The present discussion will be put on hold and returned to in Chapter 5.

4.4 FORM AND STRUCTURE

The majority of the *Nature's Best* songs conformed to standard popular music forms of alternating sections which correspond to verses and choruses. Approximately half the songs contained a bridge section, either vocal or instrumental, while only sixteen had a pre-chorus. The frequency of different structures, in their skeleton forms, is presented in Table 4.11.

Structure	Frequency
V-C	26
V-C-B	44
V-P-C	12
V-P-C-B	5
C-V	5
C-V-B	6
AABA	1
12-Bar Blues	1

Table 4.11 Frequency of Song Structures

A few cases were problematic. As with the harmonic analysis, 'Cruise Control' and 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' did not fit the verse/chorus mould well. The songs were still divided into identifiable sections, often with a degree of repetition throughout the song, however, terms, such as "rap," "break," or "sample" may have been more appropriate. That said, the conventional terminology was more applicable to other hip-hop influenced songs by Che Fu and Supergroove, which contained chorus sections, in the more literal sense of the term.[43]

[43] That is, something everybody could sing together.

In some cases, the repeated sections labeled "chorus" contained different lyrics each time and were united by a single refrain, such as "Halfway down Dominion Road" in 'Dominion Road.' In other cases, one could not imagine audiences singing with the artist, as in Bic Runga's melancholy 'Drive.' Furthermore, Don McGlashan said of 'Don't Fight It Marsha' that he wanted to subvert songwriting conventions and make the instrumental section analogous to the chorus. Therefore, it is the guitarist, not the vocalist, who plays the 'catchy' melody above a stable harmonic foundation.[44]

All of the songs mentioned here were included in the "Verse-Chorus" category, which should be viewed as an umbrella, rather than concrete definition. One would ideally include more classifications to distinguish between, say, chorus and refrain songs, although these distinctions are less useful for consistency and comparative purposes.

The notable feature of Table 4.11 is the low count in the final categories, AABA and 12-Bar Blues, both of which are historically significant in popular music. It may seem unusual, therefore, that only two songs utilise such forms. The lack of AABA structures, however, should be expected. The form stemmed from Tin Pan Alley and reached its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, eras in which New Zealand artists were predominantly recording cover songs. By the 1970s, AABA form had been replaced by verse-chorus as the standard form in popular music, with the *Nature's Best* songs confirming this trend.[45]

As for the blues song, 'Good Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll' is technically in AABA form as the first two verses and, later, the two instrumentals are succeeded by an eight-bar bridge, which builds to a re-transitioning dominant. It has been analysed as "12-Bar Blues" because each verse has the conventional twelve-bar structure; that is, four bars of I, four bars of IV, and a four-bar turn.

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[44] Interview.
[45] Although verse-chorus-bridge forms are simply an extension of AABA, so that each verse-chorus section corresponds to "A."

Like AABA form, the absence of 1960s rock and roll likely explains the absence of blues structures.

The forms are distributed evenly according to year or *Nature's Best* position. The exception is songs with the chorus preceding the verse; aside from the problematic cases of 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' and 'Cruise Control,' they were all written before 1990. One suspects, however, this is not a trend but an historical anomaly. Another observation is the few songs with pre-choruses. This may reflect the particular method of analysis, but more likely, indicates the section's relative unimportance for songwriters. Again, it seems a rather trivial detail. Thus while their may be some terminology difficulties, overall the *Nature's Best* songs conform to the formal norms of popular music.

4.5 TIME, TEMPO AND BEAT

4.5.1 Length

The longest song was 'One Day Ahead' at 6'48"; the shortest was 'Good Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll' at 2'46". The times are taken from the *Nature's Best* albums; they may differ slightly to cuts released for radio. 'One Day Ahead,' for example, was recorded at 4'11" for radio, removing most of the final instrumental. 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' has a short section (approximately twenty seconds) before the introduction proper that also would have been removed on the radio.

The average length is 3'57", while the median is 3'48". These times correspond to 'Dominion Road' (3'57"), 'Andrew,' 'How Bizarre,' 'E Ipo' and 'Sensitive To A Smile' (all 3'48"). 51 songs are between three and four minutes long, while only nine are longer than five minutes. This fits with recording standards, dating back to vinyl singles, and by extension, the conventions of commercial radio which favour three to four minute songs. The four songs recorded pre-

1970 are relatively short, which is typical of the era according to Everett.[46] 'Let's Think Of Something' is the longest of these songs at 3'32".

There are a couple of trends that can be cautiously inferred. First, one can read an inverse relationship between song length and tempo. This is somewhat self-explanatory; within a stable framework of around three verses, three choruses and, perhaps, one bridge or instrumental, it will take longer to get through the same amount of material at a slower speed. One could argue this point of 'Asian Paradise' or 'Julia.' 'Slippin' Away' is long courtesy of the "truck-driver" modulation and slow tempo, clocking in at 5'38". Conversely, 'I See Red,' 'Counting The Beat' and 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand,' three of the four fastest songs, are significantly shorter than the overall average. 'Distant Sun' and 'Poi E,' both around the average tempo at 114 bpm, are a few seconds shorter than the average length, suggesting the relationship is weak but present nonetheless.

A more interesting relationship is between length and chart positions; the notion of the 'three-minute single' and radio playlist conventions intimate longer songs may achieve less commercial success. Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone' was famous, in part, for defying these odds.[47] For *Nature's Best* songs charting at either one or two, the average length falls to 3'37", but rises to 3'49" for top-ten hits. Songs charting above twenty or not at all averaged 4'09", slightly longer than average.

These figures are somewhat intriguing but inconclusive. A New Zealand commercial radio programmer suggested length was not a "deal breaker" but short songs were preferable for scheduling. Furthermore, longer songs, by default, contained more "hooks" and thus, the song would "burn faster. If [the song's] short, you tend to leave people wanting more."[48] There may, therefore, be a relationship between length, the number of choruses or hooks and chart success that warrants closer examination.

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[46] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, 326.
[47] Ibid., 326.
[48] Email, 25 October 2011. The name is withheld for privacy reasons.

4.5.2 Tempo

Tempi in the 100 songs ranged from 58 beats per minute (bpm) in 6/8 time — Citizen Band's 'Julia' — to the 4/4 shuffle of 'Counting The Beat' at 196 bpm. The average tempo was 113 bpm, which roughly corresponds with Crowded House's 'Distant Sun' or 'Heavenly Pop Hit' by The Chills. Further, the median value was 114 bpm, suggesting a balanced distribution of tempi across the sample. If the songs are segmented into four blocks — <80 bpm, 81-110, 111-140, >140[49] — the tempi roughly fit a normal distribution. When segmented into groups increasing by twenty bpm, the distribution is more skewed to the slower speeds, although the small sample size likely contributes to this trend.

The three fastest songs — 'Counting The Beat,' 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand' and 'Bitter' — belong to punk and metal styles, both marked by their quicker speeds. The fourth fastest, the new-wave 'I See Red,' is stylistically related to punk; the aggressive tempo is also congruous with the lyrics. At the other end, both 'Julia' and 'I Hope I Never' are sentimental love ballads, as are five other songs slower than 80 bpm.

The tempo marking does not always reflect the perception of speed, although this idea requires more substantial evidence. For example, 'Sensitive To A Smile' could be heard equally as a slow 2/2 ballad, 82 bpm, or more upbeat at 164 bpm in 4/4 time. 'Andy' is a fast waltz at 168 bpm but sounds slower due to the elongated word-setting; the title is set over two bars with a bar rest before the refrain, as shown in Figure 4.5.

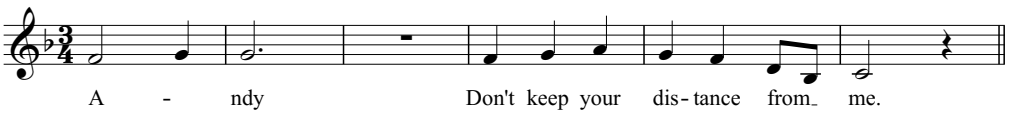

Figure 4.5 Vocal, 'Andy,' Refrain

[49] These categories could broadly correspond to slow, moderate, upbeat and fast, although such classifications are somewhat pointless.

‘Out On The Street’ and ‘Gutter Black’ interchange between slow tempi and double-time in the chorus and bridge, respectively, while the coda of ‘Six Months In A Leaky Boat’ is in half-time.

It is difficult to interpret the tempo findings, as there is little other quantitative data on this matter. Bowman found that around 60 percent of his Stax recordings fell between 102 and 132 bpm[50]; from Everett’s sample of 570 early pop and rock recordings, the median tempo is around 132 bpm.[51] Therefore, at a mean of 113 bpm and median of 114 bpm, the *Nature’s Best* tempi seem standard, if a fraction slower, overall, than other bodies of songs.

4.5.3 Beat

The most common time signature was 4/4, used in 93 songs. ‘I Hope I Never’ and ‘Sensitive To A Smile’ were both analysed in 2/2 time, although this difference is somewhat trivial. Three ballads were written in compound time, ‘Oughta Be In Love’ in 12/8, and ‘Julia’ and ‘Not Given Lightly’ in 6/8 time. Thus, there was an overwhelming preference for time signatures with two or four beats to the bar. Only ‘Andy’ and ‘Blue Smoke’ were in triple time.

These figures reflect the predominant time signature in each song. A number of songs had very brief changes in time. The most common changes were a single bar of 2/4 or 3/4 in 4/4 time. Good examples are the bridge of ‘Six Months In A Leaky Boat’ and the opening verse of ‘I Got You’ which are fifteen and thirty beats long, respectively.

One can also note the introduction of ‘Dominion Road’; it is four bars of 4/4, but the harmonic rhythm is slightly skewed to give the impression of shorter bars. The first four bars read: I (4 beats) – ♭VII (2 beats) – IV (8 beats) – ♭VII (2 beats). The rhythm guitar accents the ♭VII chords on the final two crotchet beats of the fourth bar. This unusual pattern, compared to the expected ‘strong-weak’

[50] Bowman, “The Stax Sound,” pp. 303-304.
[51] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, pp. 318-321.

emphasis, further disorients the metre and undermines the 4/4 time signature. McGlashan, however, pointed out that the kit remains firm in its 4/4 beat and, thus, any metre changes were unintended. He likened the effect to the title line of The Beatles' 'Any Time At All'; one could add the refrain of 'I Fought The Law' as another case of a 'strong-strong' stress on consecutive beats in a bar of 4/4.[52] These examples are outlined below in Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8.

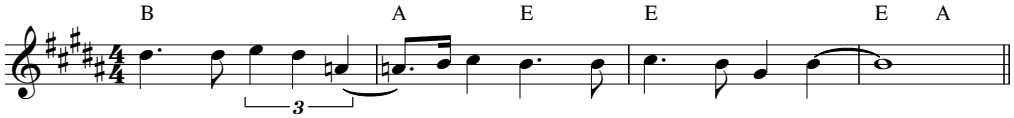

Figure 4.6 Lead Guitar, 'Dominion Road,' Refrain

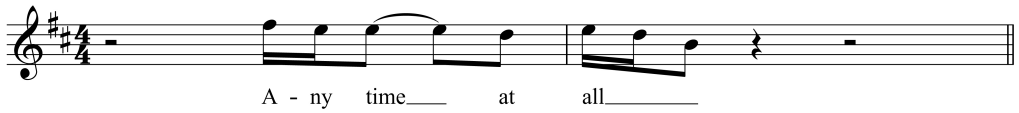

Figure 4.7 Vocal, 'Any Time At All,' Refrain

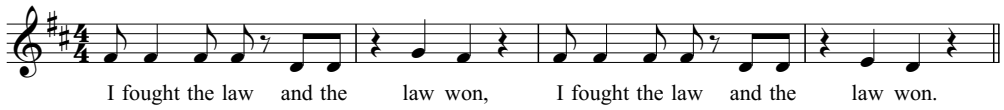

Figure 4.8 Vocal, 'I Fought The Law,' Refrain

These techniques are, therefore, conventional songwriting fare, either as a means of avoiding unnatural word setting or to provide greater rhythmic drive. The truncated first bar of 'I Got You' works on both levels. The rigid guitar riff and drum beat necessitate a snappy lyric; a bar of 2/4 provides the solution in conjunction with a line that is only three syllables in length.

Despite the homogeneity of time signatures, there is some variation in the type of beat. 80 songs rely upon a straight-eight beat with alternate kick-snare crotchets supplemented by even quavers on the hi-hat or cymbal. This normative pattern crosses stylistic boundaries, including 'Victoria,' 'I See Red,' 'French Letter,' 'Loyal' and 'System Virtue,' although subtle variations are heard in different songs. The songs in compound time have the same drum pattern but with each crotchet divided into three quavers. 'Andy' uses a much sparser

[52] Everett cites Bobby Fuller; The Clash's remake further emphasises this metrical feature. Ibid., 315.

percussion section and does not have a drum beat, per se, but the cymbal pattern breaks each crotchet into two quavers.

The remaining songs have a swing or shuffle beat of some kind. The first group use a standard shuffle beat in which quavers are swung in triplet rhythm as long-short. Often the drums emphasize only the kick and snare on each crotchet; the swinging quavers are then added by the rhythm guitar, keyboards or vocal, as in 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand,' 'Forever Tuesday Morning' and 'I'll Say Goodbye,' respectively. That said, in each of these songs, drum fills on the toms highlight the triplets at the ends of phrases.

In line with the conventional swing beat, there is an implicit drive towards the first and third beats in each bar, by presenting quavers only on beats two and four. This is heard in the chorus vocal of 'I'll Say Goodbye' and in the bass line of 'Cheryl Moana Marie.' 'Counting The Beat' relies in part on this technique, as is evident in the electric guitar's four-bar introduction. The song's energy, however, stems from the slight variation of this pattern in the bass guitar.

The bass riff works in two-bar phrases. The bass guitar, generally, outlines crotchets for the first six crotchet beats, although sometimes swung quaver are added to the second beat of the first bar. The third and fourth beats of the second bar are then divided into swung quavers, generating extra momentum towards the next phrase. This pattern is subverted in the second verse, when the vocal "oohs" (instead of lyrics), have swung quavers on beat three, leading to beat four; by comparison, the lead guitar swings, first, quavers on beat three, then, beats three and four, and finally, on each beat throughout the bar. The drums continuously alternate between kick and open hi-hat on beats one and three, providing a solid foundation for the dynamic patterns above.

The final group of songs has a half-time shuffle beat, a groove that requires some explanation. In a conventional bar of 4/4, the kick and snare play on alternate crotchet beats, with the hi-hat on even quavers. In half-time, this pattern is extended over two bars; thus, the 'backbeat' on the snare moves to crotchet beats three and seven of the two bars. Crucially, half-time does not

slow down the tempo, but gives the impression of a slower tempo because the kick and snare beats are temporally spaced further apart. A good example is the beginning of the chorus in The Beatles' 'Magical Mystery Tour'; the vocal rhythms remain the same, indicating no tempo change, however, Starr's drumming pattern is halved in time, which affects the song's rhythmic feel.

This half-time pattern relies on changes within a song. By comparison, the half-time shuffle is often used as a standalone beat, notwithstanding songs such as Def Leppard's 'Rocket' or The Beatles' 'Martha My Dear' and 'Something.' The same principles are at work — the snare backbeat is heard on beat three of each 4/4 bar, with the crotchets now divided into triplet quavers. This basic pattern is the foundation for the grooves famously employed by Bernard Purdie, John Bonham and Jeff Porcaro on 'Babylon Sisters,' 'Fool In The Rain' and 'Rosanna,' respectively. In these songs, the busy instrumental and vocal lines intimate a moderate-fast, not slow tempo, as would be derived from the kick-snare beats. Thus, 'Fool In The Rain' falls around 130 bpm, 'Rosanna' around 170 bpm.

Ultimately, the tempo marking and notated divisions are immaterial; the half-time shuffle can *sound* like a slow 4/4 beat with even quavers but triplet semiquavers. Figures 4.9 and 4.10 demonstrate this point. The triplets are on the hi-hat; the kick drum is the bottom space on the stave, the snare is on the middle space.

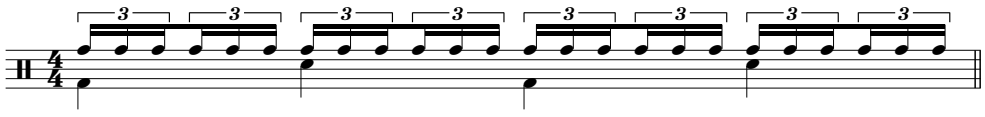

Figure 4.9 Half-Time Shuffle Single Bar

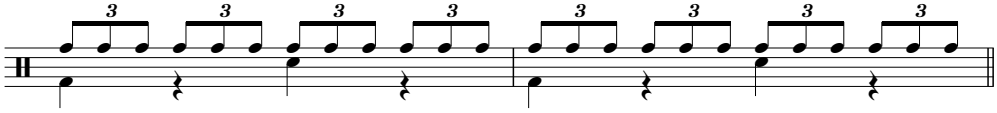

Figure 4.10 Half-Time Shuffle Two Bars

At a tempo half as fast, the drum pattern in Figure 4.9 sounds identical to that in Figure 4.10. The beat divisions, as outlined in Figure 4.9, are best heard in Jimi

Hendrix's version of 'Hey Joe' — the kick and snare beats sound slow, although the bass guitar plays fast crotchets after the solo (ca. 2'45") and the tom-tom fills at the end of each verse are often played in triplets. The most important feature is that the time between the downbeat and backbeat, as heard on the kick and snare, is divided into two and then further into three equal parts; thus, one can count six triplets between the kick and snare.

The term "half-time shuffle" refers, here, to this particular division of the beat, which, in the case of *Nature's Best*, is present in ten songs. Of the ten songs, 'Can't Get Enough' is arguably closest to the classic "Purdie shuffle," which is not surprising given the influence this beat had on later funk and hip-hop music.[53] At the fast tempo, the drum line is quite sparse. It relies mainly on the kick and snare with hi-hats fractionally behind the beat hinting at triplets; the stronger triplet groove is achieved by the horns and rhythm guitar. In the hip-hop genre, 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' and 'Chains' have a related beat.

'Pacifier' is similar in that the triplet groove is rather explicit in the guitar riff and the double kick drum pattern — each downbeat is preceded by a kick on the third triplet. As per above, it does not matter whether 'Pacifier' is 120 bpm or 60 bpm, however, the latter seems more appropriate. The hi-hat plays repeatedly in the guise of straight quavers; similarly, the distorted guitars and elongated vocal delivery gives the impression of a slow tempo. 'Suddenly Strange' also incorporates a double kick as the song progresses to add a little swing.

The remaining songs have a much more subtle semiquaver shuffle. All are underpinned by a 4/4 beat with even quavers, as typified by 'In The Neighbourhood.' The semiquaver shuffle is not clearly delineated, but rather implied from one part. In 'Renegade Fighter,' for example, the hi-hat is struck on each quaver offbeat. It is hit open and then shut to cut the sound. It is closed just before the subsequent crotchet beat. This rhythm is not as rigid as a dotted rhythm, and suggests a light semiquaver swing. One can identify this rhythmic

[53] See Jim Payne, *100 Famous Funk Beats* (New York: Face the Music Productions, 2006).

feature in the acoustic guitar of ‘In The Neighbourhood’ and the vocal of ‘Four Seasons In One Day.’

This is only a brief introduction to the rhythmic foundations of *Nature’s Best* songs. Overall, however, the drum patterns are relatively standard within popular music conventions and there is almost no recourse to complex time signatures. More analysis could consider the different drum patterns used within the larger subsets; this would distinguish between, say, the metal patterns of Shihad’s ‘Bitter’ and the Latin-infused beat of Shona Laing’s ‘Mercy Of Love.’ Further analysis could also employ computer programmes to break down the beats into minute segments; one could then analyse in detail particular beats, such as the more intricate shuffles. It would be highly beneficial to move from accurate but interpretative descriptions, as has been done above, to precise measurements that explain exactly how a groove is constructed.

4.6 INTRODUCTORY HOOKS

The introductory material was classified according to five categories: Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, Beat and Instrumentation. The categories are fairly self-explanatory; a harmony hook, for example, is a harmonic progression. A beat hook only outlines the song’s beat on the drum kit; a rhythmic hook is expected to be more rhythmically engaging. Evidently, one cannot have harmony or rhythm without beat or instrumentation; the aim was to identify the most prominent and important musical feature of the introduction, regardless of whether it ‘hooks’ the listener or not.

In cases with two hooks, a decision was made regarding primary and secondary status. Sometimes, primary and secondary correspond to temporal unfolding, such as ‘Not Given Lightly’ where the beat is introduced before the harmony. Other times, the distinction was a matter of judgment — the violin melody, for example, in ‘Glad I’m Not A Kennedy’ is more striking than the harmonies that underpin it.

The frequency of hook types is outlined in Table 4.12.

Primary Hook	Frequency	Secondary Hook	Frequency
Harmony	46	Harmony	26
Melody	29	Melody	18
Beat	9	Beat	2
Rhythm	2	Rhythm	3
Instrumentation	0	Instrumentation	18

Table 4.12 Primary and Secondary Hooks

The "primary" column totals 86 because fourteen songs begin without an introduction. Five of these fourteen songs start with the title line in the chorus. Sharon O'Neill's 'Maybe' also opens with the title line, while 'Out On The Street' catches the listener's attention with the bold, yet mysterious command, "Watch out young love…" These examples indicate a lyrical, rather than instrumental hook.

The "secondary" column totals less than the "primary" column because of the nineteen songs deemed not to have a second hook. In 'Andrew' by Fur Patrol, this is obvious enough; the four-bar introduction lays down the drum beat and nothing else. In Crowded House's 'Distant Sun,' Neil Finn strums repeated I-IV chords on the acoustic guitar. A ringing electric guitar plays fragments behind Finn throughout the eight bars, but serves more as a harmonic embellishment than another hook. Similarly, there is "rhythm" and a "beat" to Finn's playing but neither are remarkable and, thus, the harmony was considered the only hook of this introduction.

The most frequent primary hook is harmonic, often with the purpose of establishing a central progression of the song. Only 'E Ipo' contained material that did not recur during the song. Its introduction is unexceptional; it asserts the key with an extended circle-of-fifths progression ending on V. More common were the 36 songs with primary harmonic hooks reappearing in the verse. These included riffs, such as I^{sus4}-I in 'April Sun In Cuba,' fragments of the verse progression, such as I_c-$\flat$VI in 'I Got You,' $\flat$III-IV in 'Tears' or I-$\flat$III in 'Part Of Me,' or a full verse progression, such as in 'Venus,' 'Sierra Leone' or 'Be Mine Tonight.' In 'Husband House,' two ideas combine to form a hook. The opening

guitar line of hollow fifths is complemented by a single major ninth chord; both reappear throughout the verse.

The other harmonic hooks are heard again either in the chorus, such as ‘She Speeds’ and ‘One Day Ahead,’ or in instrumental sections, as in Hello Sailor’s ‘Blue Lady.’ The introduction of Bic Runga’s ‘Bursting Through’ forms the genesis of the verse — a four-bar I-IV-V morphs into I-iii-IV-V over eight bars — but the particular instrumental arrangement from the introduction is not heard again until the coda. The same technique is heard in Runga’s ‘Sway’ and The Mockers’ ‘Forever Tuesday Morning’; the identical opening and closing statements provide a structural frame to each song.

Whereas the harmonic hooks more frequently recurred in the verses, the melodic hooks resurface more often in the instrumental and chorus sections. In ‘Weather With You,’ ‘Violent’ or ‘Anchor Me,’ the hooks form an interlude between the first and second verses, and thus, their importance should not be overstated. In other cases, such as ‘Don’t Fight It Marsha,’ ‘Gutter Black’ or ‘Dominion Road,’ the instrumental sections are laced throughout the song, which turns the melodic hook into a quasi-refrain. Similarly, the opening guitar lines of ‘History Never Repeats’ and ‘Rust In My Car’ are heard in the choruses, the former underneath the vocals and the latter in counterpoint to the singer.

This observation should be expected, as the melodic hook is analogous to a chorus line. Both should be memorable in their own right and also recur frequently throughout the song to enhance this memorable nature. Given that choruses and instrumental refrains provide the best opportunity for repeating material, compared to a verse or bridge, it is not surprising that the melodies are initially used to ‘hook’ the listener.

Don McGlashan appears frequently in this category; four of his five songs have melodic hooks. This feature resonates with one of the songwriter’s comments on musical construction. McGlashan said more could be achieved musically when

bands write "lines" as opposed to just chords.[54] This remark was made regarding 'Anchor Me' and so is not directly applicable to his earlier Blam Blam Blam work; however, it suggests his compositional process may involve thinking melodically, hence the prevalence of melodic hooks in his songs.

The two primary rhythm hooks are heard in Supergroove's 'Can't Get Enough' and Crowded House's 'Don't Dream It's Over.' 'Can't Get Enough' immediately establishes its funk shuffle groove with the horns playing in three-note bursts that anticipate the downbeat of each bar. This transforms into a punchy two-bar riff that begins on the backbeat and hits every fourth quaver thereafter. The harmony remains on a vague I^7; the cross-rhythms between the 4/4 drums and horns provide the introduction's impetus.

The introduction of 'Don't Dream It's Over' is similarly marked by an energetic guitar. The electric guitar riff blurs I-$^{\flat}$VII harmonically, with the fifth running through the progression. This feature is in contrast to the crisp rhythms. Neil Finn clips the upstroke on the fourth semiquaver of each downbeat, except for the final crotchet in each two-bar phrase, which is sustained. In this regard, the guitar riff is similar to the "Pacific" strum, which has historically been appropriated by New Zealand artists to add a local flavour to their work.[55] The upstroke defines the introduction and, by anticipating each backbeat, drives the guitar riff. Further, the rhythmic pattern underpins the verse progression, albeit with less clarity, suggesting it is an important component of the song.

Of the secondary hooks, harmony and melody were again prominent; overall, 36 songs used a melody-harmony hook combination, which should be of little surprise as both are fundamental elements of any song. Instrumentation hooks were also frequent. Some of these songs introduced one or more instruments that are less common in the rock/pop band lineup, such as the picked, steel-string acoustic guitar in 'How Bizarre,' the gamelan and lap-steel guitar in

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[54] Interview.
[55] See Jennifer Cattermole, "'Oh, Reggae But Different!' The Localisation of Roots Reggae in Aotearoa," in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), pp. 51-52.

'Andy,' or the percussion and double bass combination in 'Bursting Through.' Other songs added distinctive effects to common instruments, such as light phasing on the guitar in Emma Paki's 'System Virtue' or heavy guitar distortion in 'Jesus I Was Evil' and 'Pacifier.' Others featured instruments memorable for their sheer grandeur, such as the lush synthesizers and keyboards of 'I Hope I Never,' 'Message To My Girl' and 'Oughta Be In Love.'

In several songs, the opening instrumentation foreshadows the lyrics. This includes the accordion[56] in 'French Letter,' and the synthesizers and percussion of 'Asian Paradise' that evoke the sounds of traditional Chinese instruments. Similarly, the synthesizer in 'Room That Echoes' has a short echo added and creates a hard, metallic sound that would bounce around a room, as per the title. Other instrumental hooks indicate style, such as the synthesizers and saxophone in Sharon O'Neill's 1980s-pop hit 'Maxine' or the techno synthesizers in Stellar's dance-rock 'Violent' released in 1999. That said, instrumental hooks are difficult to judge, especially when the listener is removed from the songs' original contexts. 'Message To My Girl' or 'Oughta Be In Love,' for example, stand out because their keyboard arrangements appear exaggerated; to a listener in the 1980s, this may have been a less remarkable feature.

Finally, three secondary rhythmic hooks are used in Dave Dobbyn songs. 'Language,' 'Bliss' and 'Be Mine Tonight' are in 4/4 time, but the guitar accents contravene metrical conventions. 'Language' is the most straightforward with accents in each bar falling on the first, fourth and seventh quavers; thus, the quavers are grouped in three, three and two. In 'Be Mine Tonight' the rhythm guitar plays four-bar phrases. The first three bars are divided into groups of three quavers, with the accent shifting through the bar. The fourth bar contains evenly accented quavers as the harmony shifts to the dominant. 'Bliss' is more irregular; the initial chords are accented on offbeat quavers before a variation on the three-three-two grouping heard in 'Language.' Over two bars, quavers are

[56] The tracks sounds initially like a solo accordion, but it was actually doubled by a saxophone during recording. From email contact with Dilworth Karaka.

grouped in threes but beginning on the second beat of the bar; thus, the final two quavers of the two bars are grouped together.

These rhythmic groupings are comparable to those listed by Traut; he argues these accent patterns functioned as hooks in much 1980s pop and rock music and would have been "stock gestures" for musicians of that era.[57] Dobbyn falls outside Traut's specific timeframe; however, as a member of Th' Dudes, Dobbyn was working in the same mainstream rock context. The hook in 'Language' (1994) may be a musical hangover from Dobbyn's time in rock bands. Traut suggests one function of these accent patterns is to establish songs' grooves[58]; this is the case in Dobbyn's songs, with each hook retained after the introduction in the subsequent verse.

To understand these findings, a comparison with other data is appropriate, such as with the *Rolling Stone* "500 Greatest Songs" list. Of the top twenty on the *Rolling Stone* list, four begin immediately with lyrics, a similar proportion to *Nature's Best*. Primary harmony hooks appear in ten songs; of these, eight lay a structural foundation for the verse, such as in 'Imagine' or 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.' Melodic hooks in 'Like A Rolling Stone' and 'Satisfaction' both reappear in the songs' respective choruses. Instrumentation hooks are also important, ranging from the distorted guitars in 'My Generation' to Richards' fuzz guitar in 'Satisfaction' or Al Kooper's organ in 'Like A Rolling Stone.'

The introductory hooks of *Nature's Best*, therefore, appear to be on par with the *Rolling Stone* songs. This is not to directly relate the two bodies of songs, but to again suggest common songwriting techniques. There is little correlation between the hook type and other variables, such as chart position, *Nature's Best* position or year. Instead, there are traces of individual songwriter traits, such as McGlashan's propensity for melodic hooks, Dobbyn's tendency for driving guitar rhythms or Runga's use of introductory hooks in her songs' formal

[57] Don Traut, "'Simply Irresistible': Recurring Accent Patterns as Hooks in Mainstream 1980s Music," *Popular Music* 24, no. 1 (2005), pp. 63-66.
[58] Ibid., 70.

designs. Further research could expand on these observations and determine whether there are stronger relationships between hooks and styles.

4.7 INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS

83 songs contained instrumental sections of some description. They are analysed below, first in terms of instrumentation, and second, in terms of content. Some songs contained two distinct instrumental sections that were marked by either a harmonic or instrumental change. 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat' is a good example of the former, contrasting a jaunty flute melody over the verse harmonies with an extended coda in the tonic minor. The latter is exemplified in 'Blue Lady.' After the final chorus, the same harmonies, I_c-II_b-IV, provide a foundation for a harmonica melody, which gradually transforms into a clean guitar solo. After 28 bars, the harmonies shift to I-II-IV, the same progression but in root position, and a more powerful, overdriven guitar takes over the solo.

4.7.1 Instrumentation

The instrumental sections were dominated, predictably, by guitars and keyboards, however as Table 4.13 demonstrates, a range of instruments was used. Some songs employed multiple instruments in these sections, such as 'Four Seasons In One Day' in which electric guitar, acoustic guitar and harpsichord play in counterpoint to one another.

Instrument	Frequency
Electric Guitar	53
Acoustic Guitar	5
Piano	10
Organ	3
Synthesizer/Keyboard/Harpsichord	9
Bass	2
Saxophone	6
Flute	5
Accordion	2
Strings	5
Horns	3
Violin	2
Trumpet	2
Drums	2
Vocal	8
Harmonica	2

Table 4.13 Instrumentation of Solos

The electric guitar appeared in a variety of guises, ranging from slightly overdriven in Bic Runga's 'Sway' to distorted in 'Pressure Man' to a clean wah sound in 'Lydia' and 'Anchor Me.'[59] The acoustic guitar was primarily finger-picked in broken chords, as in 'Maybe' or 'Loyal,' but receives more adventurous melodic treatment in 'Nature' and Shona Laing's 'Mercy Of Love.'

The instruments encountered less frequently can mostly be explained through lyrical or stylistic references. Thus, acoustic guitars are used in the folk-rock song 'Nature,' as well as the 'light' pop ballads, 'Loyal,' 'Mercy Of Love,' 'Maybe,' and 'Four Seasons In One Day.' Similarly, the funk band Supergroove use a horn section in 'Can't Get Enough'; the brass in 'For Today' point to Motown and ska influences on the Netherworld Dancing Toys.

Drum breaks appear in Max Merritt's 'Slippin' Away' and Patea Maori Club's 'Poi E,' the latter complemented by synthesizer effects. In both cases, the drum solo is succeeded by a "truck-driver" modulation; thus, the instrumental section pads out the song's structure without introducing any new musical material.

[59] Curiously, David Long played the lead guitar in The Mutton Birds' 'Anchor Me' and later produced Fur Patrol's 'Lydia'; however, any connection between the two, with regards to the guitar sound, is purely speculative.

The piano and saxophone seemed to become unfashionable in the 1990s; the only example of either is veteran Dave Dobbyn's 'Beside You' in which the piano melody and Neil Finn's backing vocals precede the final chorus. Of the ten instrumental sections with piano, six are Split Enz songs, clearly on the back of Eddie Rayner's keyboard prowess.

The saxophone takes the solos in 'Sensitive To A Smile' and 'Long Ago' by the Herbs, while Graham Brazier gives a virtuoso display on the instrument in Hello Sailor's 'Gutter Black.' The Herbs were New Zealand's premier Pacific reggae band in the 1980s and Hello Sailor were part of the "Ponsonby reggae" scene of the late-1970s[60]; thus, the saxophone is a stylistically appropriate instrument. The other saxophone solos are also stylistically apt. Robert Gillies plays a screeching solo on the early Split Enz song 'Spellbound' that recalls Dick Parry from *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Finally, the energetic saxophone in O'Neill's 'Maxine' is cut from the same mould as Gerry Rafferty's 'Baker Street.'

'Good Morning Mr Rock 'n' Roll' is notable for its fusion of influences, melding Jerry Lee Lewis piano, early-1960s vocals, and a wah pedaled-guitar, possibly a nod to Jimmy Page.[61] Larry Morris, close friend and contemporary singer of Tommy Adderley, noted the song was an homage to those who had preceded Adderley in rock history.[62] Thus, the rock-flute solo, a seemingly unusual feature, takes it cue from Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull.

Finally, the synthesizer and keyboard solos incorporate sounds that cannot be pinned on a particular instrument. For example, the solo instrument in 'I Got You' sounds like a combo organ with a tremolo function; in the absence of confirming evidence, "keyboard" seems an appropriate description. Often, the synthesizers mimicked a wind/strings combination and evenly filled the texture, such as in 'In The Neighbourhood' or 'Blue Day.'

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[60] Interview with Dave McArtney.
[61] The Yardbirds had toured New Zealand in 1967, a time when Page was experimenting with new guitar sounds. This tour had quite an impact on a young Larry Morris and likely others, including songwriter Tommy Adderley, around the Auckland rock scene. From interview with Larry Morris.
[62] Interview.

4.7.2 Instrumental Content

More important is the content of the instrumental sections. By analysing content, one can distinguish between transitional passages that are predominantly chordal, instrumentals that revisit or expand on previous material, and solos featuring new melodies. Some songs are counted in multiple categories in Table 4.14, such as 'Gutter Black' in which Brazier begins the instrumental with a new melody before reverting to the introductory saxophone riff after four bars. The second instrumental sections mostly functioned as codas, as in 'One Day Ahead,' 'Blue Lady' or 'Be Mine Tonight.' In 'Fraction Too Much Friction' and 'I See Red,' the two instrumental sections occur consecutively. In both examples, the second solo is sufficiently differentiated from the first, by harmony, melody and instrumentation, that it warrants separate mention.

1st Solo Type	Frequency	2nd Solo Type	Frequency
Harmony	30	Harmony	5
Percussion	2	Percussion	0
Introduction Melody	12	Introduction Melody	1
Verse Melody	7	Verse Melody	0
Chorus Melody	7	Chorus Melody	2
New Melody	27	New Melody	9

Table 4.14 Instrumental Content

Second instrumental sections were evidently rare. Eight of the second solos are rather lengthy — for example, approximately 50" in 'Julia,' 2'30" in 'Be Mine Tonight' — and six can be considered as the band 'jamming' after the final chorus, either on a new guitar melody — 'One Day Ahead' or 'Be Mine Tonight' — or embellishing an existing part — 'Julia' or 'Blue Lady.' Strawpeople's 'Sweet Disorder' similarly ends with an extended instrumental, the trumpet tones lingering in a wash of reverb, which hints at the band's jazz and electronic influences. These codas, therefore, provide a platform for instrumental prowess once the focus is removed from the song's vocalist.

The notable feature of the first solos is their reliance on existing material. That is, 25 repeat earlier melodies, although often these are varied or embellished. The solo of The Exponents' 'I'll Say Goodbye' begins on the chorus tune and then expands into the guitar's upper register, whilst maintaining the original phrasing. The guitar solo in Fur Patrol's 'Andrew' similarly derives from the verse melody, but gives the impression of freedom by shifting up an octave for the second phrase.

Furthermore, a number of songs feature instrumental sections that are harmonic in nature. For example, the lead guitar in Straitjacket Fits' 'Down In Splendour' plays a repeated figure in seconds during the instrumental, leading to delicate suspensions as the harmonies change underneath. Arguably, this is not a melody, per se, but a decoration for the harmonic progression. 'I Hope I Never' is comparable in that adventurous chords create an ascending line throughout the instrumental section. However, this relies less on a specific melody and more on the voicings in the string instruments for each harmony.

It is, perhaps, also significant that the saxophone solos feature new material. One might argue that the saxophone has a degree of novelty in popular music; thus, by giving the instrument free rein, one can highlight its distinctive timbre. The relevant examples are split between the Herbs' songs, 'Sensitive To A Smile' and 'Long Ago,' and 'Maxine,' 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' ' Spellbound' and 'Gutter Black.' Morrie Watene's solos for the Herbs revel in long, sultry notes; in the latter four, the melodic line is more expansive. This difference might reflect genre differences with reggae avoiding a sense of individuality.

Related to instrumental content are the harmonies used in these sections, as outlined in Table 4.15.

Harmonic Content	Frequency	Harmonic Content II	Frequency
Introduction	7	Introduction	1
Verse	46	Verse	3
Chorus	17	Chorus	7
New	17	New	6
Static	4	Static	1
N.C	2	N.C	0

Table 4.15 Harmonic Content of Instrumentals[63]

The harmonies are somewhat expected, reflecting the standard position within a song for an instrumental to occur; namely, after the second chorus. Thus, the verse progression is most common as it would lead back to either a repeated verse or the third chorus. 'Glad I'm Not A Kennedy,' 'Lydia' or 'Message To My Girl' typify this feature. In some cases, the verse progression is altered to increase the harmonic tension before the vocals return. Neil Finn is an exponent of this technique; in both 'Don't Dream It's Over' and 'Better Be Home Soon,' the verse harmonies give way to ♭VII, thus strengthening the subsequent return to the tonic. In a similar fashion, the "new" chords are those that form an instrumental bridge as opposed to another verse in the middle of the song, as heard, for example, in 'History Never Repeats' or 'Suddenly Strange.'

The chorus harmonies generally fall into three groups. First are songs which repeat the second chorus but as an instrumental, such as 'I'll Say Goodbye,' 'Distant Sun' or 'Jumping Out A Window.' These instrumentals function analogously to a bridge, leading to another chorus or back to the verse. The second type is an instrumental chorus at the end of a song. These cases are often the second instrumental section, as discussed above, and thus, serve as a coda. Finally, several songs proceed through an entire verse-chorus structure as an instrumental, such as in 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' 'Spellbound' or the end of 'Andy.' Examples of this kind are all attributable to older generation

[63] The columns tally differently to Table 4.14 because some songs use two harmonic progressions and only one content type; i.e. 'Spellbound' features an improvised melody over the verse and chorus harmonies.

songwriters, the most recent being ‘Why Does Love Do This To Me?” written by Jordan Luck and released in 1992.

5. Discussion

5.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter relates the analytical results to wider contexts. The first section examines theoretical matters, with particular reference to harmonic language and structures. General trends are discussed as well as the argument that songwriters became harmonically more conservative in the 1990s. The second section focuses on the notion of "New Zealand" popular music — what the results reveal about New Zealand songwriters, whether one can speak of a New Zealand style and whether musical features relate to ideas of New Zealand identity. These ideas are too substantial to cover in full; the aim is to introduce aspects of them, which may suggest areas for further research.

5.2 ANALYTICAL ISSUES

5.2.1 Harmonic Language

The harmonic language used by *Nature's Best* songwriters is comparable to international pop and rock artists of a similar period. This is supported by comparing the *Nature's Best* harmonic distribution with de Clercq and Temperley's from the *Rolling Stone* corpus. There are several methodological differences between the studies; the main difference is that de Clercq and Temperley's distribution only accounts for the root note of each chord. Thus, a minor tonic and a major tonic are both counted as "I." In this study, the two chords were counted separately. Furthermore, slightly different counting methods were used, as was outlined in Chapter 4. The overall results are nonetheless comparable, as suggested in Table 5.1.

Chord/s	*Nature's Best*	*Rolling Stone*
I	36.4%	32.8%
IV	20.2%	22.6%
V	13.7%	16.3%
♭VII	6.5%	8.1%
Primary (I, IV, V)	70.3%	71.7%

Table 5.1 *Nature's Best* and *Rolling Stone* Harmonic Distributions[1]

To further confirm similarities between the data, the minor submediant, vi, was the fifth most common harmony in *Nature's Best* songs; all harmonies with a submediant root were the fifth most common of the *Rolling Stone* corpus.

These results can be compared again to Temperley's earlier statistical analysis of classical music harmony.[2] His analysis of excerpts from Kostka and Payne's theory textbook *Tonal Harmony* revealed tonic and dominant harmonies to be used more often (40.9% and 22.3%, respectively), subdominants much less frequently (6.8%), and the major flattened seventh almost never (0.6%). Furthermore, supertonic harmonies score higher at 8.8%.

Of particular note are the different roles of the subdominant between classical and popular music. When Temperley analysed I_c chords as V, it emerged that IV was succeeded most often by I and almost as frequently, by either II or V.[3] Thus, he argues IV had three main functions in classical music: as part of a plagal cadence, as part of a tonic expansion (I-IV-I) and as a dominant approach chord. Changes from IV to II are chord substitutions that retain the dominant approach function. One can infer from Temperley's data that these three functions account for around 80 percent of subdominant harmonies.

In popular music, the presence of IV is significantly higher and II somewhat lower, suggesting that the same functions do not reveal the full harmonic picture. For example, in *Nature's Best*, ii and II have proportions of 3.85% and

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[1] From Trevor de Clercq and David Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," *Popular Music* 30, no. 1 (2011), 60.
[2] The following discussion of classical music harmony, unless otherwise stated, is taken from David Temperley, "A Statistical Analysis of Tonal Harmony," from http://www.theory.esm.rochester.edu/temperley/kp-stats/ (accessed 15 November 2011).
[3] This is because I_c is often considered to be an expanded V harmony.

2.17%, respectively. Compared to the norms of classical music, supertonic harmonies often appeared in capacities other than dominant approach chords.[4]

The major supertonic chords are still used as applied dominants, such as in 'Better Be Home Soon' or 'Blue Smoke,' or as a passing chord between I or V and IV, as is heard in 'Down In Splendour,' 'Blue Lady' and 'In The Neighbourhood.' The latter function supports the voice-leading 5-♯4-4. But also frequently, II concludes a phrase as what Everett describes as a "dead-end colour chord."[5] Neil Finn favours this technique in 'Message To My Girl' and the instrumentals of 'Better Be Home Soon' and 'I Got You.' The same can be heard briefly in 'Slice Of Heaven.'

Further analysis would be required, but one can reasonably postulate that the subdominant also serves as more than a dominant approach chord in popular music. A number of examples confirm the traditional approach function, such as 'Not Given Lightly,' 'Loyal,' 'Sway,' 'I See Red' or 'Don't Dream It's Over.' But other examples suggest IV holds greater significance in relation to V in popular music.

'Whaling' is built upon I-V-IV_b; 'How Bizarre' repeats I-V-IV; 'Lydia' progresses I-vi-iii-IV in the verse and I-V-vi-IV in the chorus; and 'Venus' descends I-V_b-♭VII-IV. This observation is supported by de Clercq and Temperley's findings regarding common three-chord progressions in popular music. The combined total of VI-IV-I, ♭VII-IV-I and V-IV-I progressions far exceed the combination of IV-V-I and II-V-I progressions.[6]

The results from both studies confirm the fundamental harmonic principle of "tonicity"[7] common to classical and popular music harmony. Middleton argues that the tonic is prolonged through "structures of harmonic difference."[8] The term "prolonged" is specific to Schenkerian analysis, but the basic premise is

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[4] Temperley found II was followed by V approximately two-thirds of the time.
[5] Walter Everett, *The Foundations of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 278.
[6] De Clercq and Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony," 63.
[7] Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990), 196.
[8] Ibid., 196.

appropriate; that is, the tonic chord is the most important within the harmonic hierarchy.

The harmonic analysis suggests that the next level in the hierarchy is much more contested in popular music than classical music. Whereas the latter contains an inherent "V-I bias,"[9] the subdominant is often treated as a harmonic focal point in popular music, as evident in the examples provided above. This observation was also supported in Section 4.2.5 on cadences, where it was noted that perfect and plagal cadences occur roughly as frequently at the end of choruses. Cadences from ♭VII and ♭III to I were common enough to argue that the V-I, and by extension leading-note/tonic relationship does not axiomatically define popular music harmony.[10]

In further support, tonicizations and modulations avoided the dominant as an alternate key area. In terms of tonicizations, the flattened leading-note was explored as frequently as the dominant, while the subdominant and tonic minor were more common. Only two songs modulated to the dominant. More often, the music modulated to parallel keys or in seconds or minor thirds. 'Tears,' for example, contains five modulations with not one by a fifth. The sum of these observations is that there remains a harmonic hierarchy in popular music, however, it is articulated differently from classical music.

The implications of this argument were considered in Chapter 2. From a methodological standpoint, Schenkerian approaches must be adapted so to incorporate other structural harmonic relationships. Lori Burns outlines a way forward for analysts by combining different Schenkerian-based graphs, each of which reveals some aspect of the harmonic structure.[11] Although Burns only analyses one song, Tori Amos' 'Crucify,' the framework is flexible enough that other songs could be admitted.

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[9] Ibid., 196.
[10] See Allan Moore, "The So-Called 'Flattened Seventh' in Rock Music," *Popular Music* 14, no. 2 (1995), 187.
[11] See Lori Burns, "Analytic Methodologies for Rock Music," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: Critical and Analytical Essays, 2nd ed.*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 69-71.

The more important implication concerns interpretation. Everett was criticised in Chapter 2 because his analysis of 'Soma' equated tonic and dominant harmonies with harmonic stability with listener relief, in a context that, arguably, did not justify such an explanation. There is little doubt the dominant-tonic relationship can signal closure, security and stability to listeners in certain contexts. But this effect cannot be accepted *a priori* as normative, because the evidence suggests the V-I relationship is not normative in popular music.

One cannot argue the converse position either — songs without a V-I relationship lack the aforementioned qualities. There is nothing to prevent Everett hearing the music as he does, but his "critical argument," to return to Scruton, is not sound. Moore tentatively suggests various modes and their cadences have attentive qualities, such as the "nonetheless" quality of the Aeolian cadence ♭VI-♭VII-i[12] or the "illusory possibility of escape" contained in the raised Dorian sixth.[13] But as Moore also states, "This hermeneutic construct is yet to be empirically tested."[14] Although this study has not carried out the empirical testing sought by Moore, it is clear ♭VII and, especially, IV are used in popular music to effect harmonic closure. Thus, one must critically examine songs on their merits, rather than fit them into rigid frameworks. This is a challenge for the popular music analyst, but can lead to greater interpretative rewards.

5.2.2 The Musical Narrative

In *Conventional Wisdom*, Susan McClary distinguishes between tonal classical music (essentially Bach, Beethoven and Brahms) and blues music on the basis of musical narrative. She argues that classical music is predominantly founded

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[12] Moore does not state whether this applies to cadences with a major tonic; given the same rising voice-leading occurs, it would still seem an apt description. See Allan F. Moore, "The Persona-Environment Relation in Recorded Song," *Music Theory Online* 11, no. 4 (2005), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.4/mto.05.11.4.moore.html (accessed 16 November 2011).
[13] Moore, "The So-Called 'Flattened Seventh' in Rock Music," 188.
[14] Moore, "The Persona-Environment Relation in Recorded Song," (accessed 16 November 2011).

upon a "quest narrative" whereby the tonic is departed from and returned to within a single work.[15] By comparison, the blues structure, with its repetition of often identical strophes "minimizes narrativity in the musical process"; McClary further contends that "we tend to dismiss as primitive" those musical forms lacking the "quest narrative" such is Western cultural conditioning.[16]

Julian Johnson vindicates McClary's view when he bluntly dismisses popular music because it lacks internal tension. According to Johnson, the 'fade-out' is the antithesis of musical resolution. He argues the feature is ubiquitous in popular music because the music does not require resolution in the first place.[17] Without engaging Johnson's aesthetic argument, the aim here is to work from McClary's ideas.

McClary is concerned, in her comparison, with larger musical structures and, implicitly, harmony.[18] Thus, it is appropriate to examine the structural harmonic relationships in *Nature's Best* songs in relation to her argument. She contends blues has "most shaped [the music of] our era."[19] This discussion seeks to uncover the extent to which blues has bequeathed its minimal narrativity to popular music more generally.

In Section 4.2.4, songs containing modulations and tonicizations were listed. Of the nineteen songs in the former category, sixteen ended in a key different to the opening key. In seven of these songs, the transition occurred moving from the verse to chorus; seven others modulated towards the end of the song in either a coda or final chorus.

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[15] Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 66-67.
[16] Ibid., pp. 66-67.
[17] Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56
[18] Although she also refers to the static lyrical narrative of Bessie Smith's 'Thinking Blues.' McClary, *Conventional Wisdom*, pp. 42-49. It is debatable whether a static lyrical narrative is representative of all blues music. Even the twelve-bar structure is set up so the 'problem' of the first eight bars is 'resolved' in the ninth bar.
[19] Ibid., 34.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the "truck-driver" modulation is employed mainly to artificially expand the song, but for other modulations, the sense of departure is fundamental to the song. Sean Sturm, for example, agreed that the modulation in 'One Day Ahead' from E♭ to B♭ in the coda could be interpreted as the titular "one day ahead." The subsequent darkening of the harmonies, from major to major/Aeolian mixture, represents the unknown of the future.[20] The same can be said of 'Stuff and Nonsense' in which the chorus rises a tone, indicating the narrator's increased determination and conviction when addressing his love interest.

Three songs — 'Fraction Too Much Friction,' 'Don't Fight It Marsha' and 'Bitter' — begin and end in the same key, yet none have a sense of "quest narrative." The reason is that the modulations in these songs occur within relatively self-contained sections. For example, 'Bitter' starts in D minor and moves suddenly to F major/Mixolydian in the bridge, before returning to the original D minor riff. These abrupt modulations are heard in the other two songs.

One can observe in these structures an amalgamation of classical and blues narrative principles. On the one hand, the "quest narrative" intimates a journey or a goal-directed progression, which in classical music is taken to mean towards the tonic. In this regard, the *Nature's Best* examples represent a departure from this practice; rather, they are founded on progressive harmonic narratives. Even in the songs that return to the tonic, the harmonic narrative is scarcely a journey, but rather a series of discrete points that are visited as the song unfolds. This point may require further evidence in support, but in each section, the structural tension appears to be minimal because these sections are, more or less, harmonically self-contained. This sense of containment is similar to the static musical narrative of the blues.

On the other hand, the progressive nature of the modulations, often beginning and ending in different keys, is derived from the "quest" principle. 'I Hope I

[20] Interview.

Never' is exemplary in this regard. Beginning in a quasi-B Mixolydian, the music employs pivot chords and applied dominants to move through D minor to E minor, which in turn, enacts an extended ii-V-I cadence in D major. Although Tim Finn claimed no theoretical knowledge[21], this type of harmonic movement would not be out of place in the development section of sonata form.[22] The difference is that in classical music, the "affirmation of original identity is guaranteed in advance."[23] In the popular examples, the final destination is not known until it is reached. But at the heart of both idioms' structures is the notion that the harmony is moving towards some point.

If the narrative idea is extended outwards towards surface relationships, one can identify other features that are goal-directed. Examples of tonicizations are predominantly found in songs' bridges and, thus, primarily serve to strengthen the tonic's return. This is, albeit in shorter form, analogous to the classical harmonic narrative. In a related area, Moore distinguishes between open and closed principles with regards to sectional phrasing; he considers the most common verse/chorus pair is open/closed, in which the former ends on V and the latter on I.[24] That most of the *Nature's Best* songs cadence onto the tonic at the end of the chorus suggests this principle is at work. Again, the harmonic motion is teleological.

Although beyond McClary's scope, the prevalence of arch melodies, outlined in Section 4.3.1, relates to a sense of musical narrative; the melody starts at a given point, departs and returns. This description can only be applied generally because precise pitch relations were not sufficiently analysed, but arguably, the basic idea stands. This point is raised here for comparative purposes, using The Chills' 'Pink Frost' as a brief case study. Although the arch shape may not be

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[21] Email.
[22] By which I mean the sense of moving through multiple keys before settling into the tonic, not the specific progression.
[23] This is not necessarily the case with Wagner and other late-Romantics, but is generally applicable to classical music, especially that underpinned by sonata form principles. McClary, *Conventional Wisdom*, 66.
[24] The terminology is borrowed from Schoenberg. Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text, 2nd ed.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 58-59.

considered normative, this song provides a fascinating contradiction to the overall melodic and harmonic trends.

Whereas the majority of *Nature's Best* melodies involve movement or tension-and-release techniques, 'Pink Frost' is notable for its sense of stasis. The song's verse, chorus and bridge contain their own melodic ideas that, on the surface at least, appear unrelated. The verse contains angular F minor arpeggios rising in one-bar fragments as part of two-bar phrases. This riff is extended in the third and fourth phrases to include an arpeggiated descent. At the end of the third phrase, the melody lands on the leading-note G, while the other phrases end on C. The harmony repeats vi-V-I in each two-bar phrase, with the guitar accenting the line E♭-C in the second bar. Combining these details, the tonic is avoided in both lines. Hence the melodies begin away from the tonic, hovering around the relative minor, but never appear to reach the tonic within the phrase and instead remain stuck to C.

The chorus inverts these features.[25] The vocal is much more constricted, only spanning a third. Here, the vocal melody falls to the tonic, a low A♭, in each phrase, but this is undercut by the guitar and bass which rise from B♭ to C, supporting a weak II-I_b progression. The introduction of the major supertonic, as well as a lack of other harmonic reference points, ensures that the tonal orientation is distorted once again, and without this orientation, the sense of stasis remains: there is nowhere to go.

This brief analysis is important because it may provide insight into alternative rock techniques. It appears that either progressive or "quest" narrative features, or in other words, musical movement, are fundamental to popular music at various structural and surface levels. This is not to dismantle McClary's earlier assertions as they have been taken and applied to areas outside their original contexts. What is interesting, however, is whether the musical stasis of 'Pink Frost' could be construed as an 'alternative' music trait.

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[25] I am grateful to Graeme Downes for pointing out this musical trait.

Bannister notes that independent (indie) or alternative rock does not share an antithetical relationship with the mainstream; the dynamic is much more complex.[26] Nonetheless, several musical traits stand out in 'Pink Frost' as potentially oppositional to mainstream popular music, including the rough recording quality, the blurred instrumental textures especially in the lower registers and the minimal harmonic and melodic movement. This observation mirrors Graeme Downes' harmonic and modal analysis of The Clean, noted in Chapter 2. He concludes The Clean's "special place in the history of this country's popular music" stems from "clearly discernable compositional differences [modal tensions] that distance them from the mainstream."[27] Downes emphasises this view when stating Dunedin bands "shared [unusual] compositional strategies relating to form…irregular phrase structures…[and] polymodality."[28] Furthermore, McDonald notes alternative rock bands in the 1990s used unconventional harmonic relationships, such as movement by thirds, as the foundation for songs. This can be heard in Nirvana's 'In Bloom' and 'About A Girl' or Soundgarden's 'Head Down.'[29]

The details identified, such as phrase or riff structure, by Downes and McDonald have not been closely analysed enough here. But one can argue that the musical narrative analysis suggests another strategy employed by The Chills to denote an alternative position. Further research into contemporaries of The Chills, both locally and internationally, may confirm if this particular trait is common to other artists outside the mainstream.

5.2.3 Harmonic Conservatism

It was proposed in Chapter 4 that the 1990s songwriters were harmonically more conservative than their predecessors. This was noticeable amongst those who

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[26] Matthew Bannister, "'Loaded': Indie Guitar Rock, Canonism, White Masculinities," *Popular Music* 25, no. 1 (2006), 77.
[27] Graeme Downes, "The Clean: Modal Conflict and Resolution," *Music in New Zealand* 16 (Autumn, 1992), 23.
[28] Graeme Downes, "Songwriting Process in The Verlaines *Corporate Moronic*," in *Dunedin Soundings: Place and Performance*, eds. Dan Bendrups and Graeme Downes (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011), 43.
[29] See Chris McDonald, "Exploring Modal Subversions in Alternative Music," *Popular Music* 19, no. 3 (2000), pp. 357-361.

had *Nature's Best* songs only from on this decade. The claim is supported by several results of harmonic features including: a lower number of harmonies per song on average; lower 'chromatic' scores; and substantially fewer tonicizations or modulations compared to the decade's proportion of songs on *Nature's Best*.

Moore argues that since the 1970s, different styles simplified rock's harmonic language, while following a modernist path in the comparatively indeterminate areas of timbre and texture.[30] From *Nature's Best*, Peking Man's 'Room That Echoes' typifies this point. The harmonies are a straightforward Aeolian pattern in C; the song's central feature, however, is the echo effect, applied liberally to the synthesizer, flute and vocal throughout the song. Although not rock, Bic Runga's 'Bursting Through' is similarly experimental in its instrumental textures; there are great 'holes' in the sound-box between Runga's voice, the cello and the percussion.

Moore's argument resonates with James Reid's comments. When discussing The Feelers' 1998 debut album *Supersystem*, from which two singles made the *Nature's Best* list, Reid said the band were aiming for an electro-pop-rock fusion.[31] Thus, one can hear the synthesizer in 'Venus' that bounces left to right behind the acoustic guitar and vocal; similarly, 'Pressure Man' opens with a high-pitched percussion synthesizer, like a triangle, above a string synthesizer pad, which also swirls from side to side. This is then complemented by distorted guitars and a drum pattern that evokes 1990s drum 'n' bass. Whatever one makes of this stylistic amalgamation, the emphasis has shifted to technological rather than pitch aspects of the music.

As noted with Runga, Moore's argument is applicable to other styles. 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation,' 'Chains' and 'How Bizarre,' for example, bestow prominence upon the lyrics with their stories of living in the Pacific Islands and the poorer suburbs of South Auckland. This feature is typical of hip-hop

[30] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, 216.
[31] Phone conversation.

music.[32] Thus, the change in harmonic elements may simply reflect the ebb and flow of popular music with different styles at different times exploring different features.

Another factor warrants investigation: the creation of New Zealand On Air.[33] In 1989, the organization was established; one of its primary objectives, in conjunction with the Broadcasting Act (1989), was to encourage and increase the broadcasting of New Zealand music. In 1991, local artists comprised approximately 1% of commercial radio airplay in New Zealand.[34] New Zealand On Air's response to this statistic has been two-pronged. The organisation has provided funding to artists for music videos, singles and albums, although the latter two only came into effect in 2000, and thus post-*Nature's Best*.

More relevant is the "Kiwi Hit Disc" scheme. Since 1993, New Zealand On Air has released a monthly album containing tracks of current New Zealand artists, who apply to be part of the compilation. New Zealand On Air sends the album to radio stations around New Zealand. For radio programmers, the Hit Disc provides a ready-made selection of New Zealand music, thus encouraging stations to add the songs to the their playlists. New Zealand On Air selects tracks that are "airplay-ready" and have a "promotional plan to help market the song."[35] Of the 33 songs on *Nature's Best* released since the Hit Disc's inception, only six did not appear on New Zealand On Air's CDs.

One of the main criticisms leveled against New Zealand On Air is that the organisation is overly focused on commercial avenues.[36] Furthermore, New Zealand radio stations are conservative in their playlist choices, mainly

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[32] See Kirsten Zemke, "New Zealand Hip Hop Stands Up," in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), pp. 104-105.
[33] The organization's legal title is the Broadcasting Commission.
[34] Chris Caddick, "Review of New Zealand On Air's Domestic Music Promotion and Funding Schemes," (December 2010), 41, from http://nzonair.govt.nz/publications/pbcurrent.aspx (accessed 16 January 2011). The document can be downloaded for free from New Zealand On Air's website.
[35] "About Kiwi Hit Disc," *New Zealand On Air*, from http://kiwihits.co.nz/hitdisc/about (accessed 23 November 2011).
[36] See Caddick, "Review of New Zealand On Air's Domestic Music Promotion and Funding Schemes," 5.

following overseas trends.[37] New Zealand On Air's criterion of "airplay-ready" standards is designed to ensure New Zealand records are of comparable quality to their American and British counterparts. The flipside of this situation is that artists, in order to gain exposure, may feel pressured to follow the trends of commercial radio. This may have resulted in songs that take fewer musical risks, hence the apparent harmonic conservatism.

This is, however, a tenuous link to draw for several reasons. The argument implies that songwriters write songs solely to get accepted onto a Hit Disc and be commercially successful. While such an attitude should not be ruled out, it is too simplistic. As Julia Deans said, Fur Patrol was assisted by New Zealand On Air, but they aimed to mould the New Zealand On Air criteria to their songs, rather than vice-versa.[38] Second, there are few harmonic differences, in measurable terms, between the 1990s *Nature's Best* songs on the Hit Discs and the 1990s *Nature's Best* songs that were not.

The final point concerns the validity of the comparison. The 1990s songwriters are being compared to Don McGlashan, Tim Finn, Neil Finn, Shona Laing and others; in other words, they are being held up next to a relatively small group of artists. To validate this argument, it would be necessary to locate the 1970s and 1980s songwriters within their wider musical contexts. This would help determine if, in fact, the earlier songwriters are representative of their era.

The required path from here is more in-depth analysis. As mentioned above, analysis of other samples — international and local — would provide useful points of comparison. There may be some merit in analysing larger selections of the Hit Disc songs to ascertain if they are marked by similar harmonic characteristics. This would, again, help indicate if the 1990s *Nature's Best* songs are representative of wider trends or not. Most importantly, greater rigour could be brought to measuring harmonic complexity, even if one's musical intuition serves as a good guideline. Everett undertakes this sort of task by scoring a

[37] Ibid., 20.
[38] Interview.

selection of songs in terms of harmonic techniques, such as the appearance of V-I structural cadences or the use of functional harmonies.[39] Although requiring some methodological adjustments, such a task could prove highly fruitful in this context.

5.3 *NATURE'S BEST* AND NEW ZEALAND CONTEXTS

5.3.1 Local Indicators and Issues of Style

In Chapters 1 and 2, issues concerning a specifically "New Zealand" popular music were raised. Two broadly opposing positions were quoted. On the one hand, Lealand claimed all New Zealand music is "derivative"; on the other hand, Mitchell stated, "strong indicators of a local identity…[were] always…evident… in the interstices between the texts and musical and lyrical idioms of the songs." Lealand's argument does not necessarily preclude the existence of local "indicators," but he works from the position that New Zealand popular songs are spin-offs of overseas models. Unfortunately, both authors' sweeping generalizations are unsupported by any musical evidence.

It is worth noting, in response to Lealand, that nearly all the songwriters interviewed for this study believed there were qualities unique to New Zealand popular music, but none could pinpoint these qualities. Fane Flaws, for example, recalled sending music to an Australian friend who replied, "Oh, this is so New Zealand," but without any musical qualification.[40]

There are several details that point to New Zealand. Lyrical references are the most obvious. Twelve songs reference New Zealand in the lyrics, in terms of either places ('There Is No Depression In New Zealand' or 'Dominion Road') or local issues. French nuclear testing in the Pacific, for example, is the subject of 'French Letter' and 'Chains'; the songs reflect New Zealand's growing

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[39] Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (2004), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.w_everett.html (accessed 23 November 2011).
[40] Interview.

commitment from the 1980s onwards as a leading nation in the South Pacific. Four songs use Māori language.[41] 'Poi E' is entirely in Māori, 'E Ipo' is mostly so; 'Cheryl Moana Marie' contains the Māori word "Moana" in the title, while 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat' opens with the word, "Aotearoa." Dave Dobbyn's 'Outlook For Thursday' references a New Zealand attitude; the song is literally about the weather forecast because, as the joke goes, this is the only part of the news New Zealanders care about.[42]

Instrumentation is also important. The Hawaiian slide guitar in 'Blue Smoke' and the Pacific log drums in the Herbs' 'French Letter' and 'Long Ago' locate the songs in a Pacific context. The accordion and flute invoke a sea-shanty in 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat,' encouraging New Zealand's sense of geographical isolation — the fact it took the pioneers "six months" to sail from Britain. 'Slice Of Heaven' features a Māori flute, also contributing to the local flavour.

It is possible to view other musical features in relation to local contexts. The Herbs' vocalists, for example, sing in three-part harmony in the chorus of 'French Letter.' Often the voice-leading is minimal; on the line, "I'm making nuclear tests," each singer stays on the same chordal note, before descending on the word "test" down the triad (i.e. the third drops to the tonic, the fifth to the third etc.). The lines "No nukes" and the subsequent "aahs" are in four-part harmony with the major ninth added. The layered harmonies can be heard prominently in 'Slice Of Heaven' and, albeit to a lesser extent, in 'Sensitive To A Smile' and 'Long Ago.' In each song, the vocal delivery and attack is crisp which creates a unified, chorale-like texture.[43] This feature would appear to derive from Pacific Island and Maori church music; as Dilworth Karaka said, "we always looked into sounds from our different cultural backgrounds…and where possible we put them into the tracks."[44] Thus, even if the vocal harmonies

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[41] Māori is the language of New Zealand's indigineous inhabitants.
[42] The origins of this joke may lie in New Zealand's economic dependence on agriculture; alternatively, it may be a dig at New Zealanders' tendency to take more trivial matters seriously.
[43] This trait is exemplified on another Herbs song, 'E Papa,' an a cappella *waiata* from their 1987 album *Sensitive To A Smile*.
[44] Email.

themselves are not unique to New Zealand, their use relates to the specific context in which the Herbs' music was created.

Although these details are important, the songs form a minority within the *Nature's Best* corpus. As Mike Harding pointed out twenty years ago, "very few rock songs… feature anything of a local [New Zealand] content."[45] Furthermore, identifying the local indicators above may only paint half the picture. For example, 'Poi E' references Māori culture through language, the group singing and the kapa haka gestures; these features evoke the communal setting of the marae. On the other hand, the synthesizers, drum machine and "truck-driver" modulation in the final chorus place 'Poi E' firmly in a 1980s international pop style. There is a temptation to label 'Poi E' either unique to New Zealand, on account of the Māori components, or "derivative," on account of the accompaniment. Neither approach is satisfactory; rather, it is necessary to balance local and global indicators.

At this point, issues of styles and genres are raised; these terms are problematic because of the variance in meaning and connotations.[46] The two concepts can be split along the lines of social construction (genre) and technical articulation (style). Thus, in Walser's words, "genres are defined not only through the internal features of the artists or the texts but also through commercial strategies and the conflicting valorizations of audiences"[47]; and in Moore's words, "I shall treat 'progressive rock' as a series of related but separate styles, each with their own internal consistencies," although he is careful to note that styles are also socially grounded.[48] By comparison, Middleton defines genre as the type of song, such as a single, dance-song or ballad.[49] This seems closer to Samson's conception of genre in nineteenth-century concert music, when the title of the work, such as sonata, prélude or étude, invoked certain musical characteristics.[50]

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[45] Mike Harding, *When The Pakeha Sings Of Home* (Auckland: Godwit Press, 1992), 7.
[46] See Allan F. Moore, "Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre," *Music & Letters* 82, no. 3 (2001), pp. 432-442.
[47] Robert Walser, *Running With The Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hannover: University Press of New England, 1992), 7
[48] Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, 64.
[49] Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 174.
[50] See Jim Samson, "Chopin and Genre," *Music Analysis* 8, no. 3 (1989), pp. 215-217.

The common theme in this debate is that different musical elements operate according to various "levels of code,"[51] an idea derived from structural linguistics. Middleton proposes nine levels, more or less hierarchically arranged, including *langue*, dialect, style, sub-code and idiolect.[52] From linguistics, the structural *langue*, which Middleton considers a "general Western musical code," can give rise to an infinite number of surface features across different styles and sub-codes.[53] For Middleton, "sub-code" is similar to what others, such as Moore, refer to as "style." In line with this common usage, "style" will be used here as an equivalent to "sub-code."

Jerry Lee Lewis' 'Great Balls Of Fire,' for example, can be analysed rather crudely on different levels. The use of primary triads are central to functional tonality and thus operate at the *langue* level; their arrangement into a 12-bar blues form could be considered a feature of the rock and roll "style"; Lewis' stride piano technique with frequent glissandi may form part of his idiolect, the details associated with a particular artist. In general, it seems the former codes refer to structural elements and the latter codes to surface features, although this is not always the case. As Moore and Ibrahim point out, the use of AAB form could be considered part of Radiohead's idiolect.[54]

From this introduction, one can locate the current analytical results within the levels of code. It has been noted in Chapters 4 and 5 that neither the harmonic nor melodic analysis revealed unusual tendencies. But this should be expected because the analytical methods uncovered those details at the deeper levels of musical coding. The harmonic distributions confirmed that popular music blends functional tonality and blues principles; the prevalence of perfect and plagal cadences further confirms this amalgamation. Identifying the most common types of chromatic harmonies — applied, secondary and mixed — similarly

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[51] Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 174.
[52] Ibid., 174.
[53] Ibid., 174.
[54] See Allan F. Moore and Anwar Ibrahim, "'Sounds Like Teen Spirit': Identifying Radiohead's Idiolect," in *The Music and Art of Radiohead*, ed. Joseph Tate (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 147-153.

reflects a structural element, although the chromatic scores move closer to surface details. The melodic analysis reveals structural relationships in terms of contour and relative vocal range.

Furthermore, most songs had a verse-chorus structure, as is the norm for popular music since the mid-1960s. Even those that did not correspond closely to verse-chorus form, such as 'Dominion Road' or 'Cruise Control,' were built on repeated and contrasting sections. Similarly, the common 4/4 time signatures and the songs' lengths, mostly between three and four minutes, are typical foundations of popular songs. What the analysis therefore shows is that New Zealand songwriters are using the same musical building blocks as international popular songwriters.

The question is whether these observations render New Zealand popular songs heterogeneous spin-offs of overseas models. If one were to give an affirmative answer, based on the present results, then one would have to admit all popular music is derivative. It is to a certain extent with a set of relatively constant deep structures. But the issue here, from Lealand, is the sound of New Zealand music, or how the deeper structures are articulated at surface levels. This is seemingly the process whereby styles come into existence — for example, when functional harmonies are arranged into a twelve-bar form with an upbeat tempo, one may be in the rock and roll style; when they are arranged into a I-vi-IV-V pattern, one lands in doo-wop territory.

This research cannot satisfactorily answer the question of a New Zealand style because the songs' surfaces have not been scrutinized closely enough; this is a viable area of future research. That said, it is debatable if such a style exists. This claim is based first on general listening and awareness — the fact that many of the songs can be heard in relation to overseas songs, such as Bon Jovi and Coconut Rough's 'Sierra Leone,' early Massive Attack and Strawpeople, or the music hall piano in The Exponents' 'I'll Say Goodbye' which, courtesy of the music hall piano, recalls 'Penny Lane.'

Furthermore, the songwriters interviewed took their musical bearings from international artists, looking outside New Zealand for inspiration and trends. This was stated in explicit terms by Larry Morris, quoted in Chapter 4, and more implicitly by others. Julia Deans, for example, on the possibility of grunge influences, replied, "it was the nineties!" Mitchell, without any supporting evidence, argues that the Pop Mechanix and The Dance Exponents were important bands in 1980s Christchurch[55], yet neither Andrew McLennan nor Jordan Luck identified with this scene or any notions of a local style. Finally, Sean Sturm said his early band, The Nixons (pre-EyeTV), avoided New Zealand references or identification. Although influenced by similar artists, such as the Velvet Underground, The Nixons wanted to disassociate themselves with the low fidelity production aesthetic that distinguished Flying Nun records in the 1980s, and aimed to emulate artists, such as Jane's Addiction, from the American independent scene.

5.3.2 An Anti-Virtuosic Idiolect?

There is possibly a surface trait common to this group of New Zealand artists. The instrumental solo analysis demonstrated a reliance on existing melodic or harmonic material. New material featured in instrumental sections only a third of the time. The issue to arise from this analysis is instrumental virtuosity or lack thereof.

Virtuosity cannot be measured in absolute terms, but Walser's statement provides a good starting point: "the classical virtuoso not only possesses unusual technical facility, but through music is able to command extraordinary, almost supernatural rhetorical powers."[56] Musically, this often translates into fast instrumental playing across wide registers with some form of instrumental effect. Walser cites Eddie van Halen, Ritchie Blackmore and Randy Rhoades in

[55] Tony Mitchell, "Flat City Sounds Redux: A Musical 'Countercartography' of Christchurch," in *Home, Land & Sea*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 189.
[56] Robert Walser, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity," *Popular Music* 11, no. 3 (1992), 278.

a heavy metal context; keyboardists Jon Lord, Rick Wakeman, Keith Emerson or Don Airey would also be relevant.

Further to technical aspects of virtuosity, one might add a certain attitude; as Walser explains, guitar solos "create a sense of perfect freedom…they model escape from social constraints, extravagant individuality."[57] Two ideas here are important and widely applicable. The first is the sense of freedom, the second is the notion of individuality and using the song, or sections of the song as a platform for individual performance. In this regard, a virtuosic performance does not necessarily have to be technically brilliant, but may draw attention to itself through flashy playing above the other instruments. This attitude runs through, for example, the hair metal bands of the 1980s.

It is possible to hear the solos on *Nature's Best* as generally opposed to this notion of virtuosity. The songs reliant on existing material are naturally less free, being tied to the song's structures. That said, these instrumentals still give the impression of virtuosity at times, such as Eddie Rayner's keyboard solo in 'I See Red'. Rayner takes the verse melody and embellishes it with crushed semitones and semiquaver arpeggios, all at a fast tempo. Other solos, such as those from 'Beside You,' 'Distant Sun' and 'Six Months In A Leaky Boat,' are much closer to the original melodies.

The instrumentals featuring new material seem to eschew "extravagant individuality." Notable in this context is 'Be Mine Tonight.' The song ends with a lengthy instrumental section, providing an opportunity for Dobbyn's lead guitar. The basic pitch and rhythm structure of the first eighteen bars is presented in Figure 5.1.

[57] Walser, *Running With The Devil*, 53.

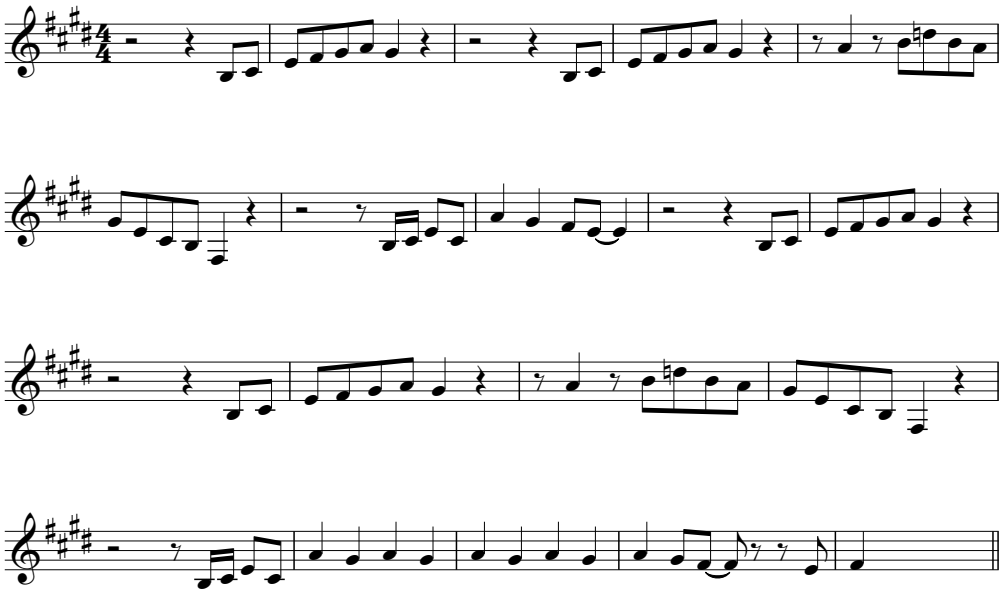

Figure 5.1 Lead Guitar, 'Be Mine Tonight,' Solo, 4'06"-4'41"

The solo begins with short pentatonic phrases, succeeded by held notes with slight bending on the guitar string. This phrase structure is repeated multiple times without launching into more expansive phrases. Further, the lead guitar line begins each phrase on the fourth beat of the bar, ending on the third beat of the subsequent bar. This works in rhythmic counterpoint with the rhythm guitar, which displaces its quaver accents throughout each bar. One can also note how the oscillating crotchet pattern in Bar 16 (of Figure 5.1) concludes the second phrase and is then used as the riff for the third phrase. This development, combined with the other features, promotes the solo section as a moment of craft rather than rhetoric. Such phrase repetition can also be heard in 'Lydia' and the call-and-response phrases of 'Why Does Love Do This To Me?' as shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3.

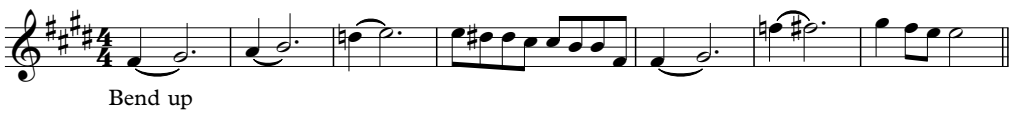

Figure 5.2 Lead Guitar, 'Lydia,' Solo, 2'07"-2'21"

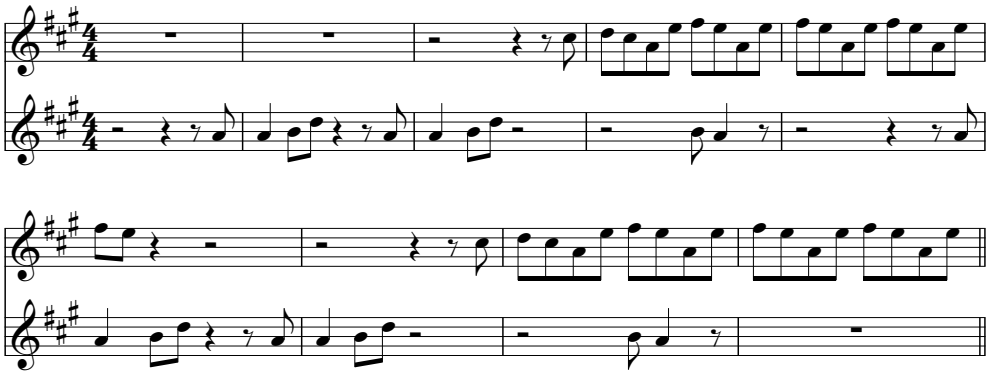

Figure 5.3 Lead Guitars, 'Why Does Love Do This To Me?' Solo, 1'05"-1'19"

A sense of anti-virtuosity is also identifiable in the vocalists. According to Ken McLeod, rock audiences have "witnessed an equal fascination [with opera] with high register male vocalists…and female pop divas."[58] This idea is exemplified by, for example, Freddie Mercury, Brad Delp, Robert Plant, Ann Wilson, Janis Joplin, Beyoncé and Mariah Carey. Like guitar solos, McLeod argues this fascination arises because the high vocal ranges represent a transgression of social norms. Further, for American divas, the songs often serve as a vehicle for the singer; the pitch apex normally arrives in the final or penultimate chorus, sometimes after a grandiose modulation, bringing the notion of individuality to the fore.

The *Nature's Best* singers do not fit this framework. One must acknowledge that the aforementioned singers possess "unnatural" abilities and therefore, it is unreasonable to expect the male singers to reach the heights of Freddie Mercury, for example. This is where the idea of virtuosity as an attitude is useful; for singers, this may involve pushing registers to their limits or reaching the higher notes in a strong chest voice. The *Nature's Best* vocalists appear anti-virtuosic because they rarely extend themselves in this way.

This trait is particularly marked in the female vocalists, who instead emphasise their lower registers. For example, Julia Deans in 'Lydia' pushes to C♯5 in a shaky head voice, reflecting her song's persona, but descends as low as E3. The

[58] Ken McLeod, "Bohemian Rhapsodies: Operatic Influences on Rock Music," *Popular Music* 20, no. 2 (2001), pp. 189-190.

same contained range is evident in other songs with female vocalists; 'Part Of Me' is more remarkable in that Boh Runga extends only to G♯4 yet comfortably sinks to C♯3. The highest singer, Leza Corban, reaches A♭5 in 'Sweet Disorder.' Her melismatic vocal line concludes the bridge section but does not seek attention; rather it is sung in a light head voice that floats above the washed synthesizers below, almost like a soprano saxophone.

The same tendency is evident in the male singers. A brief examination of Dave Dobbyn's vocal lines is instructive. At the climax of 'Language,' in Figure 5.4, he ascends to A4 in his chest voice. In multiple other songs, his highest notes are reached through octave leaps into a falsetto as demonstrated in Figures 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8.

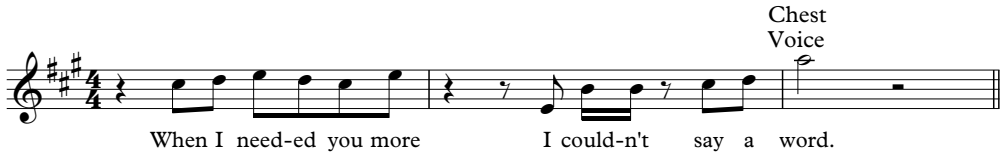

Figure 5.4 Vocal, 'Language,' Coda, 3'02"-3'10"

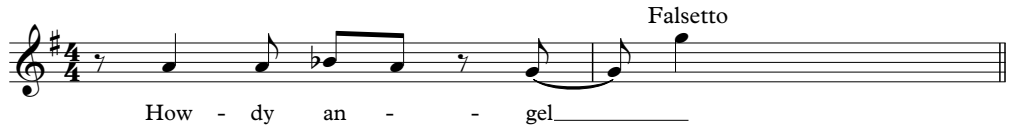

Figure 5.5 Vocal, 'Slice Of Heaven,' Pre-Chorus, 1'18"-1'22"

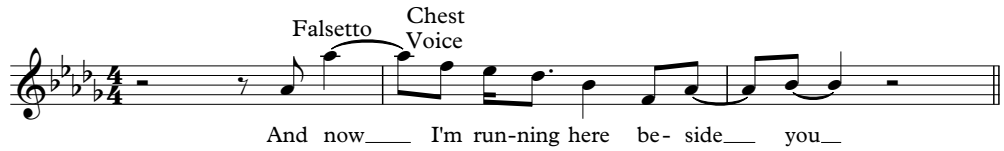

Figure 5.6 Vocal, 'Beside You,' Chorus, 2'04"-2'11"

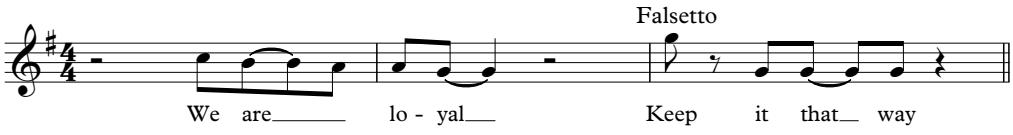

Figure 5.7 Vocal, 'Loyal,' Chorus, 1'23"-1'30"

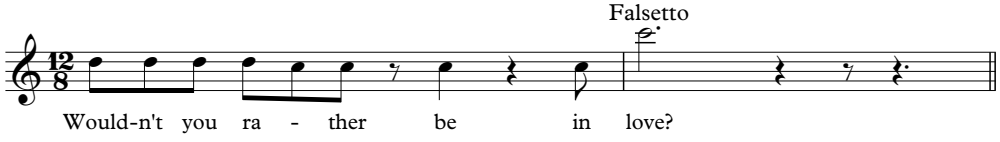

Figure 5.8 Vocal, 'Oughta Be In Love,' Chorus, 1'23"-1'28"

The contexts of this technique suggest it is intended to add colour to the melody by varying the repeated note in the phrase. Given Dobbyn finds A4 in his chest voice in 'Language,' it is notable that notes of a similar register are sung in a falsetto voice. The examples provided stem from Dobbyn's solo career as a singer-songwriting, but the same technique appears in the chorus of 'Outlook For Thursday' ("Otherwise just dan-dy") and the backing vocal of 'Whaling,' both of which were recorded with Dobbyn part of DD Smash. Tim Finn's vocal for 'I Hope I Never' features a dramatic leap at the end of the chorus to B4, but again the falsetto is fragile not extravagant. Other male singers, such as Jordan Luck and James Reid, seem content to remain within a conventional tenor range.

Lest this point be misconstrued, the vocal anti-virtuosity does not reflect poor vocal technical ability. Considerable skill is required to execute octave leaps and to maintain a clean lower register. The same might be said of the instrumentalists; the crafted instrumental solos require a sense of musicality. The analysis suggests that individual performers are utilizing their skills for means other than showcasing an individual.

Don McGlashan's experiences corroborate this point. He said his lead guitarist in The Mutton Birds, David Long, could always find the right guitar tone for a song's narrative.[59] In 'Dominion Road' a wobbly whammy bar reflects the drug addict's struggle for sobriety, and in 'Anchor Me' the chorused guitar enhances the ethereal and exotic nature of the narrative. Walser regards virtuosity as pertaining to the notes, as such, of guitarists; audiences arguably share this view too. But perhaps, it is necessary to search elsewhere for notions of technical ability — in production and sound related techniques, in vocal ability other than singing in a high register, or crafting a solo to interact with other musicians. This is not simply to validate the subjects of this study, but to acknowledge the varied areas in which musical ability can be deployed.

It is arguable whether this feature constitutes a New Zealand idiolect. This intimates that a listener, upon hearing two songs in the same style, one from

[59] Interview.

New Zealand and one not, would be able to distinguish the New Zealand song on the basis of a contained guitar solo and vocal range. Such an argument seems tenuous at best. One imagines numerous international popular songs would return similar analyses. This feature is striking, however, because it appears regularly across *Nature's Best*, a selection of songs that are supposedly New Zealand's best. This possibly reflects aspects of New Zealand identity, discussed in the following section.

5.3.3 Anti-Virtuosity and Identity

The relationship between music and identity is complicated because, as Frith notes, "identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being."[60] In practical terms, it is difficult to claim a singular identity for New Zealanders at any historical moment, let alone over an extended period. Nonetheless, one may follow Norman Meehan who argues for "a few traits that we can cautiously advance" as belonging to New Zealanders.[61]

Meehan proposes humility as a potential national trait. Frith is again useful here; he states, "an identity is always an ideal, what we would like to be, not what we are."[62] Thus, humility as a New Zealand trait does not necessarily mean New Zealanders are humble, but rather that they value humility in others or wish to appear humble. It is important that Meehan cites national heroes Sir Edmund Hillary and Willie Apiata[63] as examples. Stephen Jones' report on meeting sporting icon Dame Lois Muir during the 2011 Rugby World Cup also emphasizes this point. [64] Few New Zealanders could confirm whether Hillary,

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[60] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," reprinted in Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 293.
[61] Norman Meehan, "'Sounds Like Home': TrinityRoots and 'Jazz-dub-reggae' in Wellington," in *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, eds. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 135.
[62] Frith, "Music and Identity," 308.
[63] Sir Edmund Hillary was the first to scale Mt. Everest and spent much of his life engaged in philanthropy in Nepal; Willie Apiata is a New Zealand soldier recently awarded the Victoria Cross.
[64] Stephen Jones, "The Day I Met a Real Dunedin Dame," *Stuff*, 25 September 2011, from http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/our-experts/5679241/Jones-The-day-I-met-a-real-Dunedin-dame (accessed 2 December 2011). Jones was struck by Muir's generosity and welcoming nature as a volunteer at Dunedin's Forsyth Barr Stadium.

Apiata or Muir are humble, even if their actions suggest so. Rather this perception has been enhanced through the media; their humility is very much something New Zealanders would like them to possess.

Bannister examines identity issues, but from an opposing standpoint. Discussing New Zealand masculine identity, he notes an egalitarian undercurrent, which has historically stemmed from New Zealand's cultural and geographical isolation: the settlers "left [behind] aspects of working class culture that would have been important to a sense of counterhegemonic cultural identity."[65] He goes on to argue, "local egalitarianism seems to relate more to a fear of standing out than a positive belief in consensus."[66] The so-called "Kiwi Bloke" has appeared in the literature of Frank Sargeson or John Mulgan, was satirized by John Clarke, under the pseudonym Fred Dagg, and is often epitomized in the media by figures such as Sir Colin Meads, ex-All Black. They are perceived as men of few words, who infrequently express themselves emotionally. This persona resonates with Dave McCartney's comment that New Zealand music was traditionally defined by a "fear of being bold."[67]

Bannister is concerned with masculinity, but the characteristics he notes may be more widespread in New Zealand culture, as evidenced by Meehan's argument. Thus, the pair can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Bannister presents a negative view of New Zealand masculinity which prohibits individuality; Meehan identifies a character virtue. From Meehan's perspective, one might see the anti-virtuosic streak as a type of humble understatement. From Bannister's perspective, the same trait might be seen as avoiding emotional displays, the antithesis of a Robert Plant-esque outburst.[68]

Recalling Walser's definition of virtuosity, a central notion was power — power over the instrument (or voice), the power of rhetoric, and the power to transcend

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[65] Matthew Bannister, "Kiwi Blokes: Recontextualising White New Zealand Masculinities in a Global Context," *Genders* 42 (2005), from http://www.genders.org/g42/g42_bannister.html (accessed 2 December 2011).
[66] Ibid., (accessed 2 December 2011).
[67] Intervew.
[68] As heard, for example, at the apex of Led Zeppelin's 'Since I've Been Loving You.'

social forces and boundaries. This power is tied to the notion of individuality. If virtuosity and power are conjoined, then one can conflate anti-virtuosity and a lack of power. This resonates with Bannister's comments that New Zealand egalitarianism is based on the "apparent absence of immediate authority."[69] With little desire for power, there is thus little desire for individuality and, perhaps, virtuosity.

This idea echoes comments made by James Reid of The Feelers.[70] Reid said he learnt music as a child at church and, later, at social gatherings, where someone would play guitar and others would sing along. In short, music-making was communal. This attitude carried through into The Feelers, formed with Hamish Gee. The lineup remains almost unchanged after twenty years. For Reid, a band revolves around camaraderie and fraternity; it does not serve as a vehicle for an individual. One can intimate that this sense of community permeates throughout New Zealand artists and explains, in part, the anti-virtuosity. This musical egalitarianism may reflect the small size of New Zealand's music industry; compared to the United States or Britain, New Zealand is very much a "community." Alternatively, the seeming musical camaraderie may be tied to New Zealand identity as it upholds an ideal of "what we would like to be."

To conclude, Andrew McLennan remarked that New Zealand music is unique because the overseas sounds are heard by "New Zealand ears."[71] Tying the ideas together, one can argue that the overseas sounds are filtered through New Zealanders' characteristics (their "ears"). The musical output then becomes an overseas sound infused with a New Zealand flavour. Regardless if New Zealanders' characteristics are to be celebrated or not, one can postulate some kind of relationship here between the music and New Zealand identity.

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[69] Bannister, "Kiwi Blokes," (accessed 2 December 2011).
[70] The following paragraph is from an interview with the author.
[71] Phone conversation.

5.3.4 Other Local Factors

The analysis of *Nature's Best* was justified on account of popular music being a sound-based art. A brief note is required on other factors that contribute to the texts' sounds. Further, in these factors one may find attributes common to New Zealand artists. These features fall outside the scope of this study and could form the basis of future research.

In Chapter 3, it was mentioned that production details require more examination. This relates to overt features such as added reverb, echo or distortion, as well as more subtle techniques relating to the mix — how the parts are heard in relation to one another. Here, one might find common features amongst groups of artists, especially with a relatively concentrated number of producers. For example, American Mitchell Froom produced all the Crowded House songs featured on *Nature's Best*; similarly, Malcolm Welsford produced Shihad, The Feelers and Supergroove, amongst others, in the 1990s. Mike Chunn commented, regarding 1970s and 1980s bands, that those from Auckland "sounded complex but were musically quite simple" whereas those from Wellington "sounded simple but were musically quite complex."[72] The Crocodiles' 'Tears' and Th' Dudes' 'Be Mine Tonight' possibly typify this split, although production elements may also contribute to this distinction. Thus, while there may be not be a unique New Zealand production style, there may be fingerprints amongst songs from the same region or with the same producer.

Related to this idea is the process of recording and performing popular music. This does not concern so much live performance, but the physical act of playing in a studio and the effect this may have on the recorded sound. As Bowman recounts, the delayed backbeat on Stax recordings arose because the singers had to be set up behind drummer Al Jackson in the studio. Thus, by the time Jackson heard the singers, there was a slight delay in the sound.[73]

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[72] Interview.
[73] Rob Bowman, "The Stax Sound: A Musicological Analysis," *Popular Music* 14, no. 3 (1995), pp. 308-309.

Furthermore, the interaction between musicians during recording is important. Again in the Stax studios, guitarist Steve Cropper helped form the tight rhythm section because he carefully watched Jackson's left hand.[74] Keith Richards makes a comparable point about Charlie Watts in his recent autobiography; Richards notes Watts' ghosting of the hi-hat on the backbeat. This creates a slight delay which, as Richards states, contributes to the "languid feel" of Watts' drumming. The sound of the Rolling Stones then develops from how Richards, Wyman and Jagger *et al.* respond to this groove.[75]

One of the key factors, therefore, in the popular music text is how the players mesh, so to speak. One could uncover all the analytical details necessary to produce the same notes as the Rolling Stones, but without the particular combination of players, it is near impossible to replicate the same music. This idea refers back to Andrew McLennan's statement, above, and is, perhaps, what Don McGlashan was referring to when he stated the people made New Zealand music unique.[76] That is, the musicians and their histories and playing styles are a significant aspect of New Zealand popular music. It is doubtful there exists a singular New Zealand 'school of rock'; however, within a relatively small industry, there may be common performance practices amongst groups of musicians. One should acknowledge, therefore, the importance of the musicians and their interaction with one another on the sound of popular music texts.

5.4 A MODEL SONG

Having deconstructed the *Nature's Best* songs, an attempt was made to piece the analytical findings back together. This process sought to construct a model of sorts from the most common or average musical and structural details of the 100 songs. This model could then be related back to the *Nature's Best* songs. In other words, do the most common features correlate with a particular song? Are the highest ranked songs statistically average? Or, is there a structural recipe for writing a "top" New Zealand song?

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[74] Ibid., 308.
[75] Keith Richards, *Life* (London: Phoenix, 2011), pp. 135-136.
[76] Interview.

The data for seventeen variables were collated for each song. These variables were outlined in Chapter 4 and included sectional melodic contours, form, length, tempo, number of chords used, examples of modulations, beat, and so forth. A full list is included in Appendix F. Each song's variables could then be compared to the most frequent or average value of the respective variables. For example, the most common verse melody shape was an arch; the average number of chords used was six; the average length was 3'57".

When songs' variables matched the overall average, they received a point. For variables with precise measurements, such as length and tempo, songs within a quarter of the standard deviation received a point. Thus, any song ranging from 105 bpm to 119 bpm was considered average. It was assumed that songs varying in tempo by, for example, two bpm would be heard as roughly the same speed. The standard deviation calculation brings a little mathematical rigour to the process. Songs would receive a score of seventeen if every ingredient matched overall trends.

These calculations were undertaken before deciding that a weighting system may be more appropriate. For example, the particular key is less important compared to the shape of the chorus melody or the type of beat. Relative weights were assigned according to what a songwriter may consider the key components of a popular song; thus, melodic traits, number of chords and beat were highest ranked. Full details are provided in Appendix F.

These calculations are problematic for several reasons. First, the weights are unscientific, based only on musical intuition. Second, some of the variables, such as instrumental solos, are less accurately measured in quantitative terms. Third, for some variables, the most common type was marked (arched chorus melodies); for others, one type was only slightly more common than another (perfect compared to plagal cadences). Despite these flaws, this approach provides a different perspective on the songs and amalgamates the results of Chapter 4.

When weightings were calculated, the highest potential score was 28.6. No song reached this mark. The highest was Prince Tui Teka's 'E Ipo' with 19.8, followed by The Chills' 'Heavenly Pop Hit' which scored 19. As an alternative Dunedin band in the 1980s, The Chills' song can be regarded as, if not a parody, then an ironic musical commentary on a "pop hit." It is not surprising that it many of its features are common to the style it seeks to emulate. In a further ironic twist, the song reached number two on the New Zealand charts in 1990, thus fulfilling its own title.

By comparison, 'E Ipo' is a Maori showband ballad. The showband style was musically conservative, often seeking to mirror the features of contemporary pop. Thus, one might expect the structures of 'E Ipo' to correlate strongly with overall trends. Similarly, the next two highest entries — Sharon O'Neill's 'Maybe' and Dave Dobbyn's 'Language' — are more sincerely constructed popular songs and both were top twenty hits. At the other end, the hip-hop songs 'Chains' and 'Screems From Tha Old Plantation' scored only 3.3, although this observation likely reflects the types of analysis conducted here. Other low-scoring songs included 'There Is No Depression In New Zealand' and Shona Laing's '1905' on 5 and 6.8, respectively. Both are unsurprising given their harmonic complexities, noted in Chapter 4. More surprising was the low score for 'Sensitive To A Smile' (7.8) and the higher score for 'She Speeds' (16.5).

The average score was 12.1. There was little correlation between the scores and *Nature's Best* positions, although the top and bottom 25 songs were slightly below and above average, respectively. There was no relationship between the scores and chart positions. Scores and date were weakly correlated, with later songs scoring slightly higher. It was proposed above that 1990s songwriters were more harmonically conservative. The observation here suggests that these songwriters wrote structurally more 'average' songs; this could be read in terms of a more conservative songwriting strategy.

The methodological flaws make any conclusions or interpretations weak; nonetheless, it is notable that the songs scored well below the potential highest score. In Chapter 4, it was demonstrated that there were often dominant trends

for each parameter. The reconstructive analysis shows that each song follows some, but not all of these trends. For example, 'Private Universe' relies on arch melodies, but is markedly longer than average and drifts away from the tonic in the bridge. This compositional strategy seems to mirror the popular music industry; there exist multiple products of a similar nature, although each is subtly different in order to stand out from the competition. One can reason, from this analysis, that songwriters in a commercial context, as the *Nature's Best* ones primarily are, would combine common features with others to differentiate their songs in the market.

It was noted that most songwriters interviewed for this research were following overseas musical trends. Although beyond the scope of the interviews conducted here, it would be fascinating to gain insight into how songwriters specifically deal with these economic realities — do they consciously 'adjust' their songs from the market norms? Do they write with money in mind? And if so, how does this affect their songwriting? Such questions might reveal whether individual songwriters have their own model song as a benchmark.

Overall, however, this analysis does not provide a musical model of a New Zealand song, nor can it be suggested how one might write a "top" New Zealand song. This raises the question then, of what, exactly, is the *Nature's Best* list? The final section will offer some thoughts on this matter.

5.5 THE *NATURE'S BEST* LIST

There are no musical trends within the *Nature's Best* list, as discussed in Chapter 4. The songs are obviously different, in terms of musical structure, from one another, but it is not clear whether groups of songs are different; thus, it is not clear whether the voters were looking for particular musical traits in their favourite songs. From here, one might reach for sociological explanations of the list; drawing from Marxist theory, the voting demographic reinforced dominant societal values by selecting a group of songs by mostly white males. There is some weight to this argument, but it is rather simplistic. It does not explain how, for example, Dave Dobbyn's 'Naked Flame' less encapsulates those values than

'Loyal,' or why, and how, Dave Dobbyn is more of a white male than, for example, Hammond Gamble or members of The Clean or other artists not included on *Nature's Best*.

Voters may have been influenced by songs' exposure. It is surely no coincidence that 'Don't Dream It's Over' was ranked number two on *Nature's Best*, having also reached number two on the *Billboard* charts. Similarly, 'Slice of Heaven' appeared in a classic New Zealand film, *Footrot Flats: The Dog's Tale* in 1986. It could be useful, therefore, to track the life of each song after its release until 2000. As von Appen and Doehring point out, the "culture industries" have an important role in shaping voters' memories and the subsequent "All-Time Greatest…" lists created by critics.[77] That said, they argue that critics and fans when evaluating music frequently invoke aesthetic values. Thus, the same lists are likely based, to some extent, on artistic and aesthetic criteria.[78]

The problem in assessing *Nature's Best* is that the total votes cast is unknown. Mike Chunn made two comments that are useful: first, 'Nature' was a runaway winner; second, songwriters tended not to vote for multiple songs by the same artist, such as Split Enz, Crowded House, Dave Dobbyn or Bic Runga.[79] What this suggests is that the gap between, for example, 'Don't Dream It's Over' and 'For Today' (number 51) may have been closer than 'Nature' and 'Don't Dream It's Over.' If this were the case, then one might not expect such musical variance in the songs across the list.

Ultimately, one needs to assess *Nature's Best* against other New Zealand songs. The analysis conducted in Section 5.4 only compared the songs to themselves; if one could compare the *Nature's Best* songs to those of comparable styles or eras, one may get a stronger idea of why these 100 particular songs were chosen.

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[77] Ralf von Appen and André Doehring, "Nevermind The Beatles, Here's Exile 61 and Nico: 'The Top 100 Records of All Time' — A Canon of Pop and Rock Albums From a Sociological and Aesthetic Perspective," *Popular Music* 25, no. 1, Special Issue on Canonisation (2006), pp. 28-29.
[78] Ibid., pp. 29-34.
[79] Interview.

'Out On The Street,' for example, scored relatively lowly in the model analysis, likely because its glam-rock features (half-spoken vocal, chorus and coda modulation, no introduction) did not relate to the overall trends of *Nature's Best*. But, by comparing 'Out On The Street' with other glam-rock songs of the 1970s, it may be evident why this song was both successful upon release and has survived to be canonized on *Nature's Best* 25 years later.

One can approach this task informally. That is, given The Verlaines' 'Slow, Sad Love Song' is not on the list, one can argue that voters steered away from more avant-garde approaches to songwriting.[80] But to substantiate these positions, a more systematic method would be required. This is where a model-type approach, used above, could be profitable, because it indicates quickly where songs sit relative to others.

The final issue is that the analysis does not account for the lyrics, which certainly would have been of interest to songwriters. Thus, also missing is the relationship between the lyrics and the music. It may have been that the music, in and of itself, was of little interest to voters; more important may have been how the song's narrative was articulated, in musical notes, in a particular style or as a performance. One eventually returns to Hennion's argument, which opened Chapter 2, that the popular song comprises multiple individual parts, which coalesce into a single product. Each detail is only relevant in relation to the coherent whole.

It is pertinent to conclude with reference to 'Nature.' If the song did receive so many more votes than its nearest rivals, can one expect something unique? Keir Keightley argues that rock music is valued in terms of either Romantic or Modernist authenticity; the most innovative acts are often those who employ

[80] 'Slow, Sad Love Song' is notable for its dark, Phrygian cadence in the verse and increasing tempo throughout the song. This culminates in a furiously chaotic conclusion that, for this listener, recalls Velvet Underground's 'Heroin.'

both strands in "a productive tension."[81] This distinction roughly corresponds to simplicity against innovation, although in practice this distinction is less tenable.

In 'Nature,' one can see both sides of the debate. The song is in simple verse-chorus form; its lyrics, on the surface, can be easily comprehended; and its acoustic guitars and 'natural' percussion invoke a sense of folk authenticity. On the other hand, the guitar picking and vocal harmonies are sophisticated; the chord progressions and modal combinations are, perhaps not innovative, but, quirky and unusual. The song is significant as one of the first original New Zealand popular songs. Finally, even if not intended by the songwriter, Wayne Mason, the lyrics can be interpreted as encapsulating New Zealand's natural image.[82] Musically, historically and socially, 'Nature' is engaging, important and relevant. It is of little surprise, therefore, that it was voted New Zealand's best song.

[81] Keir Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, eds. Simon Frith, Will Straw and John Street (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 131-139.
[82] See Wayne Mason's interview on Disc 2 of *Kiwi Gold Disc 1: 1965-1970*, New Zealand on Air, 1996, Compact Disc.

6. Conclusion

6.1 SUMMARY

This thesis began from the need to systematically analyse New Zealand popular music. The literature review moved through the major issues in the field, covering the text-versus-context debate, analytical approaches to popular music, and the role of formal analysis within popular musicology. The primary methods for analysing the *Nature's Best* songs — Roman numeral harmonic analysis and reductive melodic analysis — were drawn from traditional musicology and adapted for a popular music context. Other parameters analysed, such as form and beat, were more specific to popular music and were based on conventional terminology and ideas.

The results found New Zealand songwriters on *Nature's Best* follow conventional principles of Western popular songwriting. These principles include a reliance on diatonic harmonies, balanced melodic contours, structures built from repeated and contrasting sections, and 4/4 time signatures. Using Middleton's levels of musical coding, it was suggested that these analytical features operated at deeper structural levels. Analysis of the instrumental solos uncovered a musically anti-virtuosic trait, which was related to aspects of New Zealand identity and masculinity.

In terms of the original research questions, one can conclude that these New Zealand popular songs are not fundamentally different to American and British popular songs of the same timeframe. This point was corroborated by comparing the results with the work of Everett, Moore and de Clercq and Temperley. The question of a New Zealand style remains unanswered; Lealand's claim will need to be addressed another time. Some musical features, notably instrumentation and lyrics, indicated a New Zealand or Pacific context, but examples of this kind were relatively rare across *Nature's Best*.

Heaving reached the final stages of this research, little insight has been offered into the make-up of the *Nature's Best* list. Although disappointing, this outcome

is to be expected in the absence of voter profiles. Because the analysis examined structural details, there was often little variation across the list or historical periods, with the exception of apparent harmonic conservatism in the 1990s. Ultimately, one might conclude that *Nature's Best* contains a mix of commercially popular songs, including a number that were current at the time of the vote, and songs that, from the vantage point of the new millennium, may have been regarded as significant in the history of New Zealand popular music.

One should not, however, dismiss *Nature's Best* as a trivial selection of songs, for nestled amongst the 'hits' ('Slice of Heaven,' 'Sway,' 'I Got You,' 'Poi E') are album tracks and songs from outside the commercial mainstream, such as 'Stuff And Nonsense,' 'Jesus I Was Evil,' 'Naked Flame' and 'Bitter.' That Straitjacket Fits' haunting 'She Speeds,' for example, sits comfortably next to Dragon's 'April Sun In Cuba' in the top ten of *Nature's Best* is important for two reasons.

First, it reflects that the list was determined primarily by songwriters, who appeared unfazed by commercial success. Furthermore, most compilations of this type are arranged by record companies with the seeming intention of making quick money by repackaging past hit songs. As Mike Chunn stated,

> It [*Nature's Best*] wouldn't have been like that if you had got record companies to put [it] together. Because we've had those, Hits of the 70s, some banal shit goes on there like [sings] "Let's get a little sentimental…" instead of 'Jesus I Was Evil.' And I think that's when we realized that the public have it in them to buy something that at times will demand something of them.[1]

Second, *Nature's Best* is a possible reflection of the New Zealand music industry. Roy Shuker noted that in 2001, the industry remained "insufficient to support full-time professional performers."[2] In 2007, high-profile manager Campbell Smith complained that his artists, including Bic Runga, had to take

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[1] Interview.
[2] Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture, 3rd ed.* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2008), 215.

day-jobs because a music career was unsustainable in New Zealand.[3] Another industry figure, Ian Jorgensen, estimates that a "really active band" in New Zealand plays 30 shows a year, a "sad reality" that means "everyone is losing money."[4] The small size of the market has been unappealing to major record labels; historically, most local artists have tried to break overseas markets, such as Australia, Britain or United States, to achieve greater commercial success.

The flipside to this predicament is that it possibly encourages greater stylistic variety. As Julia Deans argued, New Zealand artists were happy to indiscriminately borrow sounds and styles from overseas because there was not the support for numerous 'niche' markets; this was compared to Australia where smaller "scenes" were more rigidly defined.[5] Dilworth Karaka of The Herbs described this situation as a big "salad bowl" — everyone is mixed in together but maintains their original identity.[6] Don McGlashan concurred that there is less pressure in New Zealand to write "lowest-common denominator" music and "make squillions from it" because the market cannot support this top layer of superstars. He believed these conditions encouraged New Zealanders and aspiring musicians to value musicality over image, money and fame, simply because the latter three are less accessible in New Zealand.[7]

Nature's Best is, perhaps, a testament to these statements — the songs were not all commercially successful and a multitude of styles and influences prevail, from folk to rock to metal to pop to grunge to indie to funk to hip-hop. Whether or not the albums represent New Zealand's "Top" songs, as promised by the album cover, is another debate to be had by critics, fans and musicians.

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[3] Nik Dirga, "NZ Music's Offstage Achiever," *The New Zealand Herald*, 12 May 2007, APN Holdings NZ, from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/employment/news/article.cfm?c_id=11&objectid=10439266 (accessed 5 February 2012).
[4] Mike Chunn, Jeremy Chunn, Barney Chunn, *I'm With The Band: How to Make a Career in Popular Music in New Zealand* (Cambridge, New Zealand: Hurricane Press, 2011), 66.
[5] Interview. Deans based this observation on having spent several years working in Melbourne.
[6] Email.
[7] Interview.

6.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research was limited by four main factors: the scope of the thesis, the small sample size, the particular analytical process and the subjective position of the analyst. These issues have been introduced throughout the thesis and thus only a brief summary is required here.

There is only so much that can be read from a sample of 100 songs, particularly when these songs span over 30 years. Because most of the songs originated from a pop-rock context, it is possible to draw tentative conclusions from the body as a whole. But when the sample is segmented into smaller groups, such as specific historical eras, interpretations of the data become increasingly shaky. This was particularly marked for 1960s songs; three songs is not a representative sample. Furthermore, with the list as a whole dominated by Neil Finn, Tim Finn, Dave Dobbyn and Don McGlashan, one must question whether the findings represent their eras or their compositional style. The obvious solution is increased and more varied samples, but in the interests of time and space, this is not always possible.

During the analytical process, a number of individual tools were formulated and applied to each song. This helped to isolate specific elements, such as tempo, harmonic distribution by percentage, melodic range, the lyrical perspective or introductory hook. Thus, each song was analysed approximately fifteen times. Alternatively, a more holistic approach could have been taken, with each song being examined in full once with regards its predominant features. The benefit of the latter is that it may have provided greater insight into how the different musical parameters interact with each other.

This problem is exemplified in the introduction of 'She Speeds.' A cello opens the song alone playing a tremolo E; it is rhythmically and harmonically free. After eight seconds, the jangly rhythm guitar enters, playing an oscillating figure on E and G♯ before intimating a B♭ harmony that falls to A. The lead guitar complements the latter chords with harmonics on D and then G. The G is held over into the following E harmony, clashing with the G♯ two octaves

below. The bass guitar joins with steady quavers, filling out the lower texture as the drums only play on hi-hat quavers. When Shayne Carter's vocal finally enters, the texture has been stripped back to the tremolo cello, bass guitar and hi-hat; the voice, with its copious reverb, has an ethereal quality hovering above the bass frequencies.

This introduction is startling on first hearing. It is tonally ambiguous and then, when a potential tonic is introduced, the listener may be thrown off by the B♭ harmony. Even if it acts as an upper neighbour chord to the A, the presence of ♭V is unsettling nonetheless. This effect is reinforced by the instrumental texture, which is hollow, courtesy of the reverb, and dark, courtesy of the mid-low range instruments. There is a sense of anticipation prior to the vocal entry; the instruments have announced their arrival but then faded. One may wonder what exactly is to come.

Whatever one makes of the above description, it is clear that it is based on a more 'complete' listening. The segmented analysis, conducted in this thesis, does not produce such a reading because each feature is only understood on its own terms. That is, one finds that ♭V occupies approximately a quarter of the introduction, the beat is 4/4 and the instrumentation is a standard rock band with added cello; none of these observations capture the essence of the phrase.

This is a valid criticism and there may be scope in future research to take this more critical approach. That said, the method used was appropriate for organizing and comparing a large number of songs because each was analysed in the same way. Throughout Chapter 4 examples for each analytical detail were provided. This was not to show that all these songs are identical, but to guide the interested reader and listener to songs with similar underlying principles. From there, one can hear how these structural features are articulated differently on the songs' surfaces.

Sections of the analysis involved musical elements that can be measured, more of less, objectively; most analysts would likely conduct the Roman numeral

analysis in a similar way. Much analysis, however, relied on more subjective judgments — is the melody arched or descending? Is the hook rhythmic or harmonic? Is this a mixed mode or secondary harmony? Is the instrumental solo virtuous? There is little that can be done to overcome this problem outside of others partaking in the analysis to establish some consistency. Although this would be ideal, in practice it is not possible. To this end, others may reach different conclusions, but, to quote Everett, the analytical results represent a "single, honest attempt" at studying *Nature's Best*.[8]

6.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As stated in Chapter 2, analysis of New Zealand popular music has been sparse. This thesis is a substantial step in the right direction, but it is only the beginning. This final section presents several ideas for future research.

There is much left to be said about the songs on *Nature's Best*. The primary need is to examine the songs with regards to stylistic features. More attention needs to be paid to instrumental textures, production techniques, and performance features, all of which contribute to the subtle differences between styles. This is particularly important for styles such as hip-hop, which featured less throughout the thesis. These styles place less emphasis on the domains analysed here, such as harmony and melody. It is necessary to formulate other methods that may explain the musical construction of these songs; Adam Krims' work could be a good starting point.[9] Further research in this area may help answer the "derivative" question in a New Zealand context.

The analysis could also be expanded to include the lyrics and their intersection with the music. Allan Moore's "persona-environment" article examines the

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[8] Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (2004), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.w_everett.html (accessed 3 December 2011).
[9] See Adam Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

different relationships between the lyrics and the music in popular songs.[10] This is a ready-made model that could be applied easily to this collection.

One could also expand the analysis outwards from subsets of *Nature's Best* by comparing individual artists to others from the same era, either from New Zealand or from overseas. This may further help to answer what exactly *Nature's Best* represents — are the songs any different from contemporaneous examples? And thus, do the albums contain a unique selection of songs or are they simply the product of a populist vote? Throughout the thesis, the chart positions of each song were used as a variable for grouping songs. Although the charts are not transparent and objective, there may be scope for comparing non-commercially successful *Nature's Best* songs with those that were, for example, number one at the same time.

The other major task is to further the ideas put forth in Chapter 5 regarding *Nature's Best* songs and New Zealand identity. There would be scope to discuss the musical traits in relation to themes evident in other New Zealand cultural domains, such as film or literature. The relationship between music and identity was only introduced; more substantial theorizing on this relationship would be welcome. Finally, there are some excellent historical accounts of New Zealand popular music. Now, it is necessary to bring the musicological analysis to bear on this work.

Other future directions fall outside *Nature's Best* explicitly, but could build on the work done here. Because the discipline is in its infancy, popular musicologists have often proposed a theory or idea that then remains in its initial stages with only minimal support. *Nature's Best* provides an excellent body of songs to test some of these theories. Temperley's proposed "melodic-harmonic" divorce is one such example; he argues it is common in popular music for non-

[10] Allan F. Moore, "The Persona-Environment Relation in Recorded Song," *Music Theory Online* 11, no. 4 (2005), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.4/mto.05.11.4.moore.html (accessed 16 November 2011).

choral melodic notes to remain, in the traditional sense, unresolved.[11] Moore's aforementioned "persona-environment" idea is another area worthy of investigation. More recently, Christopher Doll has written on verse-chorus modulations; the examples from *Nature's Best* may add further weight to when and why this technique is employed.[12]

Finally, it would be fascinating to examine the idea of anti-virtuosity in relation to New Zealand popular music post-*Nature's Best*. A potential reason for the anti-virtuosic trait is that New Zealanders have not had direct access to the blues and gospel tradition from American culture, both of which are important influences on vocal virtuosity.[13] Since *Nature's Best*, these cultural influences may have changed somewhat.

For example, three seasons of *New Zealand Idol* have aired on national television. Although the winners have enjoyed little success, much like their American counterparts, there is a possibility that the individualistic and diva-like singing style, derived from gospel and prevalent in such talent shows, may have filtered into New Zealand culture.

The last decade has also seen a significant growth in New Zealand hip-hop. 'Not Many' by Christchurch rapper Scribe epitomizes this growth; the single spent twelve weeks at number one in 2003 and was the third-highest selling single of the 2000s. The song's lyrics begin,

> Yeah! Yeah! And no one like me. Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!
> Congratulations, we made it, welcome to th' crusader,
> It's been a long time comin' yo!
> But I'm here now, so whatchu wanna do,
> How many dudes you really know, can flow, like this,
> like this, like this, lets do it...

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[11] David Temperley, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock," *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007), pp. 323-342. As an interesting aside, I noticed during the analysis that this 'divorce' was prevalent in 'songwriting' songs, in particular by Dave Dobbyn and Bic Runga. Further investigation could certainly be illuminating.
[12] Christopher Doll, "Rockin' Out: Expressive Modulation in Verse-Chorus Form," *Music Theory Spectrum* 17, no. 3 (2011), from http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.doll.php (accessed 3 December 2011).
[13] I am grateful to Kirsten Zemke for raising this point.

It is undeniable that any anti-virtuosity has dissipated into the swagger and braggadocio of American rap.

Dave McCartney of Hello Sailor remarked that New Zealand culture has historically been "shaky…there is no solid ground."[14] This likely reflects New Zealand's previously unsettled national identity: halfway between a British colony and an independent nation. By the new millennium, one could reasonably argue for greater confidence in New Zealand culture as a result of economic prosperity, increased awareness and recognition of New Zealand artists, and a developing identity as a leading Pacific nation. There may be interest in changing musical styles in relation to these social and political developments.

There thus remains much work to be done. With the recent publication of three books on New Zealand popular music, it is clear this is a burgeoning area of scholarship.[15] But the current work either focuses on non-musical features or does not engage the musical features in a detailed manner. If New Zealand popular music and its related issues are to be understood in depth, then future work must involve substantial musical analysis. This study of *Nature's Best* is one of the first steps on this long path.

[14] Interview.
[15] As cited in Chapter 2, *Many Voices*, *Home, Land & Sea* and *Dunedin Soundings*.

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10. Appendices

Appendix A. *Nature's Best* List

Song	Year	Artist	Songwriter	Peak Chart Position
Nature	1969	Fourmyula	Wayne Mason	1
Don't Dream It's Over	1986	Crowded House	Neil Finn	1
Loyal	1988	Dave Dobbyn	Dave Dobbyn	19
Counting the Beat	1981	The Swingers	The Swingers	1
Six Months in a Leaky Boat	1982	Split Enz	Tim Finn	7
Sway	1997	Bic Runga	Bic Runga	7
Slice of Heaven	1986	Dave Dobbyn & Herbs	Dave Dobbyn	1
Victoria	1982	The Dance Exponents	Jordan Luck	6
She Speeds	1987	Straitjacket Fits	Shayne Carter	N/A
April Sun in Cuba	1978	Dragon	Paul Hewson and Mark Hunter	9
I Got You	1980	Split Enz	Neil Finn	1
Whaling	1984	DD Smash	DD Smash	8
Not Given Lightly	1990	Chris Knox	Chris Knox	N/A
Pink Frost	1984	The Chills	Martin Phillipps	17
Jesus I Was Evil	1997	Darcy Clay	Darcy Clay	5
Weather With You	1991	Crowded House	Neil Finn and Tim Finn	9
Blue Smoke	1949	Pixie Williams	Ruru Karaitiana	N/A
Dance All Around The World	1972	Blerta	Corben Simpson and Geoff Murphy	N/A
Lydia	2000	Fur Patrol	Julia Deans	1
Blue Lady	1977	Hello Sailor	Graham Brazier	13
Drive	1997	Bic Runga	Bic Runga	10
Chains	1996	Che Fu & DLT	Che Fu	1
Dominion Road	1992	The Mutton Birds	Don McGlashan	31
Glad I'm Not A Kennedy	1986	Shona Laing	Shona Laing	2
I Hope I Never	1980	Split Enz	Tim Finn	33
Tears	1980	The Crocodiles	Fane Flaws and Arthur Baysting	17
Be Mine Tonight	1978	Th' Dudes	Dave Dobbyn and Ian Morris	36
I See Red	1979	Split Enz	Tim Finn	27
Beside You	1998	Dave Dobbyn	Dave Dobbyn	28
Home Again	1997	Shihad	Shihad	42
Outlook for Thursday	1983	DD Smash	DD Smash	3
Down In Splendour	1990	Straitjacket Fits	Andrew Brough	N/A
Better Be Home Soon	1988	Crowded House	Neil Finn	2
How Bizzare	1995	OMC	Alan Jannson	1
Language	1994	Dave Dobbyn	Dave Dobbyn	4
Message To My Girl	1984	Split Enz	Neil Finn	28
Poi E	1984	Patea Maori Club	Ngoi Pewhairangi and Dalvanius Prime	1
Stuff and Nonsense	1979	Split Enz	Tim Finn	N/A
Venus	1998	The Feelers	James Reid	4

System Virtue	1993	Emma Paki	Emma Paki	N/A
Fraction Too Much Friction	1983	Tim Finn	Tim Finn	2
French Letter	1982	Herbs	Herbs	11
Maxine	1983	Sharon O'Neill	Sharon O'Neill	16
Out On The Street	1974	Space Waltz	Alistair Riddell	1
Slippin' Away	1975	Max Merritt and the Meteors	Max Merritt	5
Violent	1999	Stellar	Boh Runga	11
Why Does Love Do This To Me	1992	The Exponents	Jordan Luck	3
1905	1972	Shona Laing	Shona Laing	4
Anchor Me	1994	The Mutton Birds	Don McGlashan	10
Bliss	1979	Th' Dudes	Dave Dobbyn and Ian Morris	25
For Today	1984	Netherworld Dancing Toys	Malcolm Black and Nick Sampson	3
Screems From Tha Old Plantation	2000	King Kapisi	Bill Urale and Kas Futialo	N/A
Cheryl Moana Marie	1969	John Rawles	Nathan Kipner and John Rawles	1
Blue Day	1985	Mi-Sex	Murray Burns and Colin Bailey	36
Glorafilia	1999	Zed	Zed	9
Good Morning Mr Rock ‘n’ Roll	1972	Headband	Thomas Adderley	N/A
History Never Repeats	1981	Split Enz	Neil Finn	5
In The Neighbourhood	1994	Sisters Underground	Sisters Underground	6
Julia	1978	Citizen Band	Geoff Chunn	N/A
Pacifier	1999	Shihad	Shihad	48
Let's Think of Something	1967	Larry's Rebels	Roger Skinner	4
Bursting Through	1997	Bic Runga	Bic Runga	33
Liberty	1997	Greg Johnson	Greg Johnson	N/A
Sweet Disorder	1994	Strawpeople	Strawpeople	27
Asian Paradise	1979	Sharon O'Neill	Sharon O'Neill	24
Don't Fight It Marsha	1981	Blam Blam Blam	Don McGlashan	17
Gutter Black	1977	Hello Sailor	Dave McArtney	15
Long Ago	1984	Herbs	Herbs	22
There Is No Depression in New Zealand	1981	Blam Blam Blam	Don McGlashan	11
You Oughta Be In Love	1986	Dave Dobbyn	Dave Dobbyn	2
Andrew	2000	Fur Patrol	Julia Deans	24
Billy Bold	1981	Graham Brazier	Graham Brazier	N/A
Distant Sun	1993	Crowded House	Neil Finn	5
Suddenly Strange	1997	Bic Runga	Bic Runga	26
Forever Tuesday Morning	1984	The Mockers	The Mockers	2
Cruise Control	1991	Headless Chickens	Headless Chickens	6
Pressure Man	1998	The Feelers	James Reid	29
Private Universe	1994	Crowded House	Neil Finn	N/A
Room That Echoes	1985	Peking Man	Neville Hall	1
Sensitive To A Smile	1987	Herbs	Herbs	9
E Ipo	1982	Prince Tui Teka	Ngoi Pewhairangi, Missy and Prince Tui Teka	1
Andy	1987	The Front Lawn	Don McGlashan and	N/A

			Harry Sinclair	
Bitter	1995	Shihad	Shihad	20
Four Seasons in One Day	1991	Crowded House	Neil Finn and Tim Finn	33
Heavenly Pop Hit	1990	The Chills	Martin Phillipps	2
Husband House	1985	Sneaky Feelings	Matthew Bannister	16
Jumping Out A Window	1981	Pop Mechanix	Pop Mechanix	21
If I Were You	1993	Straitjacket Fits	Shayne Carter	N/A
I'll Say Goodbye	1983	The Dance Exponents	Jordan Luck	18
Maybe	1981	Sharon O'Neill	Sharon O'Neill	12
One Day Ahead	2000	Eye TV	Eye TV	9
Renegade Fighter	2000	Zed	Zed	4
Part Of Me	1999	Stellar	Boh Runga	4
Sierra Leone	1983	Coconut Rough	Andrew McLennan	5
Words	1979	Sharon O'Neill	Sharon O'Neill	22
Spellbound	1975	Split Enz	Tim Finn and Phil Judd	N/A
Rust In My Car	1979	Citizen Band	Geoff Chunn	N/A
Mercy of Love	1992	Shona Laing	Shona Laing	N/A
Can't Get Enough	1994	Supergroove	Supergroove	1
Naked Flame	1995	Dave Dobbyn	Dave Dobbyn	20

Appendix B. Complete Harmonic Distribution and Sectional Distributions

Chord Type	Introduction	Verse	Pre-Chorus	Chorus	Instrumental	Bridge	Coda	Overall	Weighted Average
I	38.87	34.07	20.31	30.92	32.22	20.20	32.71	**29.90**	**31.75**
I (m)	7.74	4.22	12.41	2.07	3.13	1.87	3.00	**4.92**	**4.24**
Isus	0.84	0.00	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.00	2.00	**0.51**	**0.44**
bII	0.00	0.10	1.11	0.00	0.10	2.16	0.29	**0.54**	**0.36**
II	1.16	1.58	2.96	2.24	2.92	3.55	2.15	**2.37**	**2.17**
II (m)	2.79	4.33	6.60	3.90	2.34	4.11	7.22	**4.47**	**3.85**
II (d)	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.23	0.50	**0.13**	**0.09**
IIsus	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.08**	**0.11**
bIII	2.12	2.21	3.32	2.45	2.17	5.64	1.26	**2.74**	**2.64**
III	0.40	0.64	1.39	0.26	1.33	2.23	1.00	**1.04**	**0.86**
III (m)	1.12	2.19	1.39	0.95	0.67	3.25	1.29	**1.55**	**1.52**
III (d)	0.00	0.00	0.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.12**	**0.03**
IV	16.67	20.05	14.88	21.72	18.98	17.76	19.50	**18.51**	**19.08**
IV (m)	1.05	0.41	0.00	1.31	1.23	1.54	2.86	**1.20**	**1.11**
bV	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.43	0.10	0.00	**0.13**	**0.16**
bV (d)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.00	**0.13**	**0.11**
V	10.34	12.79	12.51	16.11	13.41	14.59	10.66	**12.92**	**13.22**
V (m)	0.00	0.59	1.39	0.73	0.42	0.79	0.00	**0.56**	**0.50**
bVI	2.05	2.50	0.48	2.66	3.08	3.36	5.29	**2.77**	**2.71**
bVI (a)	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.02**	**0.03**
VI (m)	5.03	6.13	12.58	5.75	7.29	6.66	1.17	**6.37**	**6.06**
VI	0.26	0.70	0.00	0.32	0.35	1.29	1.60	**0.64**	**0.57**
bVII	4.74	6.84	7.82	6.78	5.00	9.21	6.97	**6.76**	**6.46**
bVII (d)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.03**	**0.04**
VII	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.56	**0.16**	**0.10**
VII (m)	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.06**	**0.08**
N.C	4.39	0.26	0.00	0.09	4.93	0.00	0.00	**1.38**	**1.70**

All figures provided in the above table and in other appendices are percentages; that is, tonic harmonies fill 38.87% of all introductions.

Appendix C. Weighted Harmonic Distribution by Decade

Chord Type	Pre-1970s	1970s	1980s	1990s
I	23.47	33.29	33.68	29.85
I (m)	16.48	1.87	3.38	5.00
Isus	0.00	1.22	0.88	0.00
♭II	0.00	1.07	0.38	0.08
II	4.58	1.57	2.60	1.85
II (m)	0.93	6.04	3.14	3.83
II (d)	0.00	0.53	0.00	0.00
IIsus	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.00
♭III	7.78	1.79	2.69	2.54
III	0.00	0.59	0.81	1.08
III (m)	0.00	1.87	1.24	1.76
III (d)	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00
IV	15.03	20.34	19.74	18.30
IV (m)	0.83	1.93	0.79	1.10
♭V	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.14
♭V (d)	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.00
V	17.37	12.61	12.42	13.84
V (m)	0.00	0.14	0.40	0.77
♭VI	6.03	3.18	1.72	3.15
♭VI (a)	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.00
VI (m)	0.74	3.74	6.11	7.36
VI	0.00	0.19	0.42	0.90
♭VII	6.76	5.53	6.65	6.64
♭VII (d)	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00
VII	0.00	0.56	0.02	0.00
VII (m)	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.14
N.C	0.00	1.44	1.99	1.68

Appendix D. Weighted Harmonic Distribution by *Nature's Best* Position

Chord Type	1-25	26-50	51-75	76-100
I	29.37	37.74	31.41	28.87
I (m)	5.96	1.73	3.12	5.93
Isus	0.42	0.00	1.35	0.00
bII	0.23	0.08	0.54	0.57
II	3.10	2.78	2.22	0.63
II (m)	3.12	3.63	4.12	4.53
II (d)	0.00	0.11	0.25	0.00
IIsus	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.00
bIII	2.14	1.54	1.60	5.15
III	1.00	0.73	0.28	1.38
III (m)	1.82	0.77	1.33	2.12
III (d)	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.00
IV	20.69	18.87	19.02	17.70
IV (m)	0.60	1.23	1.52	1.13
bV	0.24	0.00	0.15	0.26
bV (d)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.42
V	13.49	12.27	14.63	12.50
V (m)	0.00	0.32	0.40	1.27
bVI	2.23	1.21	3.17	4.17
bVI (a)	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00
VI (m)	5.64	6.58	6.45	5.64
VI	0.35	0.38	1.09	0.48
bVII	8.49	6.56	4.07	6.60
bVII (d)	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
VII	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.12
VII (m)	0.08	0.26	0.00	0.00
N.C	0.89	3.07	2.43	0.55

Appendix E. Weighting System for Harmonic Distributions

The harmonic distribution calculations began with individual songs and the chord proportions for each section. Then, the individual proportions were summed to give a total proportion for each section. To determine the overall proportions, the arithmetic mean was taken for each chord from the seven sections. This figure is shown in the "Overall" column of the table in Appendix B.

The problem with this method is the relative infrequency of pre-choruses, for example, compared to choruses across the *Nature's Best* list. To counter this problem, a weighting system was devised. Greater weight was assigned to those sections occurring more frequently in the entire corpus.

Because each song could have a possible seven sections, the total possible number of sections in the data set was 700. As it eventuated, there were only 457 different sections. The verses, for example, accounted for 100 of these sections, thus its relative weight was 0.22. This method was repeated when the *Nature's Best* list was segmented. The weights for the complete harmonic distribution are provided below.

Section	Relative Weight
Introduction	0.19
Verse	0.22
Pre-Chorus	0.04
Chorus	0.22
Bridge	0.16
Instrumental	0.12
Coda	0.05

Table 10.1 Relative Weights for Complete Harmonic Distribution

If every section occurred in every song, the relative weights would be approximately 0.14. What the above weights show is that, overall, introductions, verses and choruses appear with an above-average frequency; bridges and instrumentals occur approximately on average within the corpus; and pre-choruses and codas are much rarer.

One assumes that these weights would be roughly similar in other samples of Anglo-American popular music. The weakness of the weighting system is that it assumes equal sectional weight within a song. That is, if every song contained every section, each would be weighted the same. Often however, a chorus would have more structural importance than an instrumental. This weighting system does not account for this observation. To overcome this problem, it would be necessary to determine the proportionate lengths of each section across the corpus and use this data to calculate weights. This method would be statistically beneficial but rather time-consuming and thus, it was not adopted.

Appendix F. Weighting System for the Model Song Analysis

The seventeen variables were weighted as follows in Table 10.2. The figures are somewhat arbitrary and based, above all, on musical intuition. They are intended to reflect what a songwriter may regard, either explicitly or implicitly, as the more important features in a song.

Musical Variable	Weighting
Vocal Range	1.3
Verse Melody Shape	2
Pre-Chorus Melody Shape	1.25
Chorus Melody Shape	2.5
Bridge Melody Shape	1.75
Form	1.5
Key	1
Tonicizations/Modulations (Yes/No)	1.5
Number of Chords	2
Chorus Cadence	1.75
Chromatic Score	1.75
Length	1.5
Tempo	1.75
Time Signature	1.75
Beat	2
Introductory Hook Type	1.75
Instrumental Section Type	1.5

Table 10.2 Weights for Musical Variables