Why was there a ‘Rock Revolution’ in Britain?
Comparing the Production and Evaluation of Popular Music in Britain and West Germany, 1950–1980
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Introduction
The term ‘Rock Revolution’ is commonly used as a shorthand to describe developments in popular music in the 1960s in which British protagonists played a key role and that transformed the landscape of pop globally. This so-called revolution began immediately after the meteoric rise of British beat and rock groups to international stardom around 1963/64. British bands – first the Beatles and then the Rolling Stones, The Who, Pink Floyd etc. – reversed the influx of American tunes and started what became known as the ‘British invasion’, to use another battlesome metaphor. Its most important outcome, however, is that the sounds, images and values associated with the rock genre became firmly established and dominated the discourse of popular music, arguably until today.

The following paper deals with the question why and how this ‘revolution’ started in Britain in the 1960s. It follows the production of culture perspective as devised by the US sociologist Richard A. Peterson and others, focussing on institutional developments within the music industry, rather than explaining cultural change as caused by a clash of generations, musical genius, consumer demand or changing mentalities. The paper analyses the interplay of the six facets that cultural production systems consist of: technology (broadcasting media and recording facilities, for instance), law and regulation (i.e. copyright legislation and the roles of copyright collecting societies), industry structure (the relationship between firms in the music business and related sectors), business organisation (the organisational structure of individual firms), occupational careers (the professional socialisation of actors) and market perception (assumptions about what kind of music will be popular with a perceived audience). It takes the view of the actors involved, looking at their motives, skills and strategies and taking into account opportunities and the limits of their perceptions.1

Going beyond older production-of-culture studies, the present article does not limit itself to analysing the production of ‘content’, but also looks at the institutionalisation of values and conventions that become an

attribute of cultural genres and that form the frame of reference for musicians, music managers and record producers, critics and fans alike. The conventions that require heavy metal rock or classical music to be played, produced, marketed, judged and appreciated in a certain way inform all actors involved in the respective genres. Consequently, studying the institutionalisation of genres offers a possibility to look at the production, the meaning and the reception of culture, the three aspects of culture that are commonly dealt with individually. 2

To be able to identify crucial conditions and factors that facilitated the rise of rock, I am going to contrast the British case with developments in West Germany, a country where domestic music production declined steadily under the impact of first American and then also British imports. My leading question is why the makers of popular music in Britain, where the share of US-hits had been even bigger in the mid-1950s than in Germany, managed to stem the tide of American songs and to create an internationally successful product, while German ‘Schlager’ music was still produced when it had become obvious that it had lost touch with the majority of consumers even in Germany, let alone with listeners worldwide.

Before I come to this comparison and present part of the answer to this question, I have to briefly qualify the term ‘Rock Revolution’. As a first and necessary step in order to find causes for this development, I have to explain in what respect events in the mid-sixties might be called ‘revolutionary’. My point is that rather than bringing about a new sound or fundamentally changing the power relations within the music business, the events of the mid-1960s primarily affected the symbolic value of the rock genre. The ‘Rock Revolution’ was mainly about transforming a style of popular music into a genuinely artistic expression. Whereas before Rock ‘n’ Roll had been marketed and evaluated more or less like any other form of popular music with its glitzy but disposable stars, its shallowness and short life cycles of hits, at the end of the 1960s rock had become a ‘serious’ form of expression. During the 1960s, rock was elevated above the rest of pop and became something superior to the passing fads of ‘merely’ commercial music. The genre established its own values around the notion of ‘authenticity’, a term that shifted in meaning and then stood for a true, undistorted expression of the artist’s ‘inner self’. Rock developed its own canon of landmark albums and had its own genealogy – the ‘family tree’ of bands and styles that would eventually be put up as a poster in every musical instruments shop. So the ‘Rock Revolution’ describes a rapid


transformation of a genre from the ‘lowes’ of entertainment to the ‘heights’ of ‘serious’ cultural expression.1

Analysing this transformation requires study of both the production of musical ‘content’ and the efforts to make it valuable and meaningful. Consequently, the following paper will be looking at actors of the music industry such as publishers, producers and record company people, but also at the role of critics. It will become apparent that the latter played an important part in bringing about the ‘Rock Revolution’.

First, I am going to sketch the West German case that is characterised by the dominance of music publishers, who, with the profits reaped from the import and adaptation of American copyrights, secured their central position within the domestic music industry. Around 1960, a number of German publishers began to act as record producers, making it difficult for domestic producers of alternative sounds – i.e. rock music – to find a position in the German music business. Second, I am going to point out differences in the British case which might contribute to an explanation of why rock musicians and their managers found a niche in the British music industry. In this part I will highlight a structural peculiarity of the British case: Whereas in continental Europe American music was generally translated, re-arranged and re-recorded by domestic publishers, composers and lyricists, in Britain American recordings were mainly imported as matrices and then simply reproduced. This weakened the older generation of British publishers, authors and composers, but at the same time opened a window of opportunity for the protagonists of what then became the British beat and rock boom. Another British particularity to be pointed out in that section was that parts of the music press took the new popular music seriously. The invention of rock criticism can be seen as the most important contribution to the 1960s rock ‘revolution’. In the third part of my chapter I will return to the German case to assess the implications of the import of the then established Anglo-American rock canon around 1970. I will argue that while this transfer of musical classifications and conventions fostered the interest in rock music generally, it turned out to be another disadvantage for domestic rock bands, who could by definition at best be a good copy of the British or American original. ‘Authentic’ rock and its aesthetic value became widely accepted, but ‘authenticity’ sprang from sources in Britain and the USA and could only be consecrated by American or British authorities.


Sub-Publishing as a Resource for the Established Music Business: the German Case

In Germany, like in other Western European countries, songs that were written in the USA had a huge share among the hits at least from the mid-1960s. In 1966, 41 of Germany’s hundred top record hits were American copyrights.1 US tunes most commonly entered the German market in a different form to the one that American listeners knew. In most cases, they were re-arranged and re-recorded by a German performer with German lyrics. “Sixteen Tons”, for instance, had been written by country songwriter Merle Travis, recorded by Tennessee Ernie Ford and reached the American Top20 record charts in January 1956. In Germany, the song was released as “Sie hielt Mary-Ann” (She was called Mary-Ann), recorded among others by Freddy Quinn and Ralf Bendix and reached the German record charts in June, five months after the original had appeared in the Billboard charts. The song was re-arranged by Bert Kämpfer and Ralf Amme, two well-known composers of light music; the German lyrics were penned by Peter Milscher, who was Freddy’s regular lyricist.2 During the transfer, the song that dealt with dependency, hopelessness and anger of a miner became a sentimental song about a sailor who is true to his ship, the “Mary-Ann”, and sinks with it in the last verse.

The person at the centre of this so-called sub-publishing business was the music publisher. He would have spotted a potential foreign hit for the German market, negotiated a contract with the original publisher, given the score or record to a German arranger and a lyricist and approached dance bands, radio stations, film production firms and record companies. The latter had the star performers – like Freddy, Peter Kraus or Caterina Valente – under exclusive contract; hired the musicians and organised a recording. In the 1950s, the choice of repertoire in the German recording business depended very much on the taste, expertise and contacts of music publishers.

The original publishers in the United States were very much interested in sub-publishing deals, firstly because it was common knowledge that a song could only be successful if it was translated into the language of the receiving country. Leaving the exploitation of a song to a publisher who was familiar with a foreign market seemed the most effective way to sell it internationally, especially as the establishment of foreign subsidiaries that could have collected royalties at source was costly and faced certain difficulties, to which I will come back later. Moreover, German publishers still promoted music via live performances of dance orchestras, which meant that they produced sheet music. This gave publishers from the

2 Information on subpublishers, arrangers and lyricists of individual songs can be found in the GEMA online database, https://online.gema.de/web/id [14 July 2010].
States the opportunity to save money by leaving the printing job to their sub-publishers and buying the scores from them at a low price." All this explains why original publishers were in retrospect quite generous and conceded their European partners 50% of the royalties generated in the respective country. The writer of the new lyrics would also benefit from the income of a song. In Germany, he got 12.5% that were deducted from the original publisher's share. Finally, the arranger who produced a written score and was the first to get it registered with the GEMA, the German collecting society, also earned a share of the royalties from performing rights. This means that established publishers, authors and composers profited from the adaptation of a foreign-language song to the German market.

In the late 1950s, the first German music publishers began to invest some of the income from selling American hits in setting up their own production facilities. This way, they reacted to a fundamental shift "from print to plastic", a structural change of the music industry that was caused by the establishment of new communication media and affected music publishers not only in Germany. Before this shift, music publishers had occupied the key position between the originators of music, the songwriters, and the consuming public. On the one hand, they bought or took compositions into commission by paying the author a fixed sum or granting a royalty, which is a share of the income from sales and performance fees. On the other hand, they promoted the song by providing bands and orchestras with scores, paying well-known performers or organising performances themselves. In the late nineteenth century, the British publisher Thomas Chappell for instance initiated a 'popular concert' series to present compositions from his catalogue to a public of potential consumers.

With sales of sheet music (i.e. "print") declining and the new media radio and record entering a symbiotic relationship, music publishers gradually lost their power to select what the public would like to hear to the record companies – the manufacturers of "plastic" – and their artist and repertoire managers. As a sound recording became necessary to turn a song into a hit, songwriters approached record companies directly as these could offer a recording deal and had the well-known performers under contract. The record companies welcomed the songwriters because they realised that they could do the publishing job themselves. They could reap

6 Sarpek, American Popular Music, 324f.
9 William Bovey, Fifty Years of Music (London: Ernest Bevin, 1931), 80ff.

the publishers' royalties that a song earned when a record was sold and when it was broadcast or used in a film. Consequently, the shift from "print" to "plastic" began to re-assemble the commodity chain of popular music and threatened to reduce the publishers to administrators of musical rights, if not excluding them from the business altogether. The complaint of a veteran publisher from New York's "Tin Pan Alley" to a music journalist in 1953 pointedly describes the changing role of the publisher and the decline of his influence and understanding of quality: "Everybody but the music publisher, who used to be pretty good at that, nowadays picks songs. And don't tell me that in the final analysis the public really picks ten. We [....] used to have a pretty good concept of quality and values in songs that we published. [....] Today, we don't dare publish a song until some artist perhaps likes it, or when the white of an M&B genius decides it should be done. [....] A record should be a by-product of publishing, not the spawling of songwriting and publishing." Against this backdrop, publishers who did not see themselves as administrators of copyrights, who wanted to remain musical gatekeepers and attract new talent had to offer the possibility to make recordings to their composers and authors. Income from sub-publishing enabled them to do this and set up recording studios. Ralph Maria Siegel, who had entered the music business as a singer and composer in the 1930s and founded several publishing firms in 1948, started in October 1958 as one of the first German publishers to produce his own recordings. After what he described as a learning period he managed to place his tapes with radio stations. Another 'pioneer' in Germany was Will Meisel who, as a composer, had founded his publishing firm in 1926 and formed the production company Monopol in 1960. Meisel's sons Peter and Thomas, who entered the publishing trade by working on the Intro catalogue that had been given to them by their father, founded the Harsa production company in 1964 that went on to become the most prominent German independent record company. Running Intro and Harsa meant that Peter and Thomas Meisel were at the same time importing international hits by, for example, Steppenwolf and Elton John and producing German 'Schlager' by Michael Holm, Joachim Heider and other domestic composers. As the latter found less and less favour with music consumers, one may ask, why did the German publisher-producers not just change their style and adapt it to what apparently was the popular demand? Why didn't they emulate rock rather than stick to 'Schlager'? The answer to this question is to be found in the publishers' training, their self-understanding of their occupation and their professional routines that shaped their
outlook and their actions. Although German publishers ventured into production, they remained publishers at heart. Men like Willi Meisel and Ralph Siegel had undergone a classical musical training, so they had an eye for a well-made composition, but still had to train their ear for rock and pop sounds. Writing songs themselves, they were very much respected composers, but thought much less of the recording star whom they primarily considered as the pretty face of a song. Coming from an era of dance bands and radio programmes which offered no opportunities for individual choice, they aspired to the one hit which would please everyone at a time when more and more listeners apparently preferred music to be ‘edgy’. This rationale would in the 1970s prove to be compatible with disco music and is one explanation for the relative success of Hansa in a genre that was on the other side neglected by the rock-dominated British production firms.10 In the 1960s, however, the publishers’ way of producing music meant that they recorded music which appeared outdated in comparison with the new and more distinctive rock genre. Between the 1950s and the mid-seventies, the share of ‘Schlager’ records among the records sold in Germany dropped from about 50% to under 10%, while international productions made up more than 60% of the records listed in the German Top50 charts in 1977.11

To make matters worse for German producer-publishers. American and British publishers realised that the German audience did not seem to mind listening to songs in the original version. Quite the contrary, from around 1963/64 English-language songs began to dominate the hit lists.12 As a result, the terms for sub-publishing became worse for German publishers who got 25%, later only 20% of the royalties and had to accept shorter and shorter contract periods. Moreover, original publishers demanded ever rising advances for their copyrights which led German publishing companies to pool their resources and jointly publish a song. From the second half of the 1970s, the number of songs that had more than one sub-publisher grow, as the trade journal ‘Musikmarkt’ observed.13

Nevertheless, German publisher-producers and their music dominated the German music business until the late seventies. Firstly, they used their influence in the GEMA to hold foreign publishing interests at bay. According to GEMA rules, foreign music publishers as well as the publishing arms of the international recording firms could only become ‘ordinary’ members as an exception. As ‘associated’ members, they had very limited influence on the negotiation of the scheme that regulated the distribution of royalties. This way, the established publishers, along with established composers and lyricists, managed to divert a disproportionate amount of the royalties that were generated increasingly by international hits into their own pockets. They, for instance, awarded more points to so-called evergreens— which were often German songs that were played occasionally— than to current hits— which were primarily Anglo-American origins. In 1979, they also paid themselves a bonus for twenty years of membership in the GEMA.14 It should be stressed that from the perspective of the incumbent publishers, the rents that the royalty regime offered were not illegitimate, but necessary to sustain a long-life career in the business of fads and fashions. For newcomers with new musical ideas, however, this regime worked as an obstacle.

Secondly, music publishers benefited from a labour market regulation which ruled out free labour agents and claimed a monopoly for the state-run job centre. In theory, a record company or music promoter who was looking for a performer would have had to turn to the job centre. In practice, it meant that this service was provided by those who had contacts and could operate as agents as part of their general business. These people were quite often the established music publishers. In effect, the labour market regulation strengthened the position of the publishers to the detriment of rock bands. These stood outside the music industry and would have required professional help by people who both understood their music and could sort out a lot of time-consuming managerial tasks from booking gigs to administering the finances.15 The importance of effective management for rock bands becomes apparent when one looks at the British case, where independent managers such as Brian Epstein, Andrew Loog Oldham, Tony Stratton-Smith, Chris Wright and Terry Ellis, Chas Chandler, Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert, despite spectacular triumphs and failures, contributed a great deal to the success of their bands. In Britain, music management was an important starting point for people who would eventually become producers and would set up their own record companies. Immediate (1965), Track (1967), Chrysalis (1969) and Charisma (1969) were among the independent labels that were formed

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by the above mentioned entrepreneurs who had begun their career in the music business as managers or publicists.29

Windows of Opportunity and the Institutionalisation of Rock: the British Case

For British publishers, the situation in the late 1950s was in some respects similar to the one in Germany. British publishers experienced the same ‘shift from print to plastic’ and reacted by investing in recording facilities. Like their counterparts in Germany, the denizens of Denmark Street, a short street in London’s West End where much of the British music publishing was concentrated, set up recording studios from around 1960. Bigger publishers founded their own studios; others used the services of Regent Sound, a small studio that opened in July 1961 at 4, Denmark Street, and would soon also be frequented by independent rock producers.29

But while German publishers retained an important role in the domestic music business, the role of their British colleagues was weaker due to several circumstances. Firstly and most obviously, songs from the US needed no translation in Britain as they were sung in English already. Even though British audiences may have preferred domestic performers, the common language facilitated the release of original US recordings which had a share of around 75% of hits in 1956, much higher than in Germany, Italy or France. Language, which is sometimes referred to as a factor that contributed to the rise of British music, was at that point in time a disadvantage for British composers, lyricists and publishers, as it opened the market to the American competition.

Secondly and also due to the common language, American hits were imported not simply as copyrights like incontinental Europe, but generally arrived as matrices which could be pressed and distributed instantly. This minimised the opportunities for British publishers to generate income from a foreign copyright, while in a country like Germany publishers, but also lyricists and arrangers got their share from an imported hit by translating and re-recording it for the domestic market.

Thirdly, US publishing interests had already taken hold in Britain, so that the services of domestic publishers to administer rights were often not required. Unlike in Germany, in Britain the established actors did not want to or could not prevent American publishers acquiring British firms or forming subsidiaries in the UK. According to a statement by the Songwriters’ Guild of Great Britain to a government committee on broadcasting in 1970, by 1959 ‘eighty-four London music publishing companies’ were controlled as to 50 per cent or more by foreign (almost entirely American) interests.23

Whereas in the German case publishers played the key role in importing predominantly American music, British publishers had a much lesser influence on this. The only way they could benefit from foreign hits was to spot a promising song and negotiate with the original publisher the terms of a new recording with a domestic performer. But even on what can be seen as their very own terrain the publishers faced competition from a new breed of independent producers like Mickie Most or Andrew Oldham, who went over to the US and searched for songs to produce in Britain.30

With the position of the established publishers weakened, the British record companies did not rely on their expertise or their catalogues to bring out commercially viable music. American producers would turn to them directly, or newcomers would search for potential hits, stepping on the publishers’ turf. In addition to that, the major British record companies, first and foremost EMI and Decca, opened their studios to domestic talent, and this is where the new beat and rock bands enter the scene. The bands were hired to reproduce American tunes, but occasionally recorded their own compositions, which became the rule after the success of the Beatles and other groups in the mid-1960s.

Irrespective of how ‘good’ their compositions were or what they sounded like, the new groups had something to offer that was very attractive for the record companies: they were relatively cheap. Elaborate pop productions of former times had involved a number of session musicians, which caused a good deal of paper work and required dealing with the Musicians’ Union. Compared to this, record companies faced lower costs when they contracted a bunch of teens or early twentys, especially as these musicians did not have a clue about royalties and were just eager to make a record. At that point, bands like the Beatles or the Rolling Stones drew their income from playing concerts and saw themselves as performers first and foremost. Songwriting and earning money with records would become important when they realised that they could sell millions of them, but until then recording does not seem to have been a priority, maybe something which could draw a bigger concert audience.30 Consequently, these bands did not demand much money, both in terms of production costs and royalty shares. Hugh Mendel, a former in-house producer for Decca, remembers that his superiors had allowed him to record the music of Chris Barber and Lonnie Donegan, as long as he did not spend too much money on it. The musicians received £25 for their efforts, with no further royalties, and the copyright went to Burlington’s, Decca’s publishing arm. The result of this was Rock Island Line (1954), a

23 Thompson, Please, Please Me, 83; Oldham, 25street, 191.
24 With reference to the Beatles Thompson, Please, Please Me, 199.
record that remained in the New Musical Express charts for months and
laid the foundation for Donegan’s solo career. 28

While the decline of the traditional publisher-centred music business
opened a window of opportunity for beat and rock bands to enter the
recording studios, it still has to be explained why the recording
experiments were continued and had indeed a ‘revolutionary’ influence on
popular music. For British beat and rock to be sustained and eventuallyecome established, success was vital. How did it come about?

One factor that contributed to short-term success was the way the
British record charts were compiled. In order to become a number one hit
in Britain, a relatively small number of singles had to be sold (often only
40,000 units). 29 Sales figures were sampled from retailers whose names
were known. Thus, ‘chart hopping’ was a common practice and apparently
a way for rock bands with a certain following to put their names on the
map. Tony Calder, managing partner of Andrew Oldham, describes how
the Rolling Stones record “Little Red Rooster” (1964) was pushed to the
top of the charts:

We used the fan club to do it and buy heavily the first week once we’d bumped up the pre-orders.
[...] it was all very primitive. We only had to do about forty-five ships to get results. Shirley Arnold (the Stones’ secretary, KN) would organise the autographs and the thank-you letters
from the Stones to the fans for getting out there for us. 30

The most important factor contributing to the long-term success, however,
was the creation of artistic value that elevated rock above other forms of
popular music, turning it into a serious form of cultural expression and a
means of social distinction. The success of this move is still evident today,
when the albums produced in the second half of the 1960s, the ‘golden
age’ of rock, are considered to be the canonical recordings of the genre. 31
Transforming a musical genre into a form of popular art was a process of
institutionalization that required the interplay of music producers in the
wider sense on one side and cultural intermediaries on the other. Musicians
and their managers and producers did their part by distancing
their music from the ‘mainstream’ and breaking its conventions. Rock
bands recorded songs that outran the three-minute playing time of normal
pop singles, tried out different musical material, wrote ‘meaningful’ lyrics
and experimented with new studio technology to create ‘progressive’
sounds. In addition to that, bands and their producers sought to associate
themselves with established artists and art forms. Record sleeves, for

28 Louis Barfo, Where Have All the Good Times Come? The Rise and Fall of the Record Industry
(London: Atlantic, 2007), 196.
29 Samek, American Popular Music, 381.
30 Quoted from Oldham, SLOMAF, 70.
31 Ralf von Appen, André Doehring, Helmut Rüting, “Pop zwischen Historisierung und
Geschichtlichkeit,” in: Dietrich Helms, Thomas Hiepes (eds.), No Time for Lovers. Charts, Live-
ne und andere Kontaktsituationen in der populären Musik (Detmold: transcript, 2008), 33.

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press established a symbiotic relationship that was epitomised at the end of the decade by Pete Townshend, The Who’s main songwriter, writing his own column in the *Melody Maker*.  

Music and its criticism complemented each other, not least because in many cases a common art school background facilitated the communication between musicians on the one hand and ‘creative people’ in other fields of cultural production on the other.  

One of them was Richard Lester who went on to make films with the Beatles. Fashion, film, photography and advertising changed in a similar way to music, allowing a great number of younger people to enter the cultural industries and venture from one field to the next, taking ideas, resources and contacts with them. Advertising provided many young future film directors with an opportunity to enter the trade, gain practical experience and funds to go on producing feature films.  

Rock managers like Andrew Oldham, Tony Stratton-Smith, Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert had been working for fashion designers, as publicists and/or in film production before they entered the field of popular music.  

The institutional changes in these cultural fields followed different paths and occurred at slightly different times. Fashion became ‘hip’ earlier than music, and whereas rock music depended on categories devised in the mass media to become a distinct genre, in advertising actors from within the industry managed to shape their field by creating an annual award that provided the industry with a new focus. In 1962, a few designers and art directors with aesthetic aspirations formed the Designers’ and Art Directors’ Association, invited their colleagues to a competition and began to publish what became known in the industry as ‘The Book’, a collection of all the works that received a mention by the judges of the annual competition. The ‘D&AD awards’ shifted the attention of the advertising industry as well as their customers away from market research, which had long been at the heart of the industry, to promoting brand identities. These were to be highlighted not by sincere copy, but by surprising, creative and ‘edgy’ campaigns that became the trademark of the young admen of London. So the different fields of cultural production did not emanate from some sort of sixties

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36 Thompson, Haze, Please Me, 227.
37 Simon Frith, John Hearn, *Art into Pop* (London: Mothers, 1987), passim. Art schools did not only bring young people in touch with applied arts, but also and often more importantly gave those who did not quite fit into straight career patterns time to consider what they were going to do with their life.
44 For an analysis of the reception side in Germany see Detlef Siegfried, *This is on my Side. Künstler und Politik in der neuständischen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).
The Incompatibility Between ‘German’ Rock Music and the Anglo-American Canon

The importance of discourse for the institutionalisation of rock as a genre is asserted negatively by the German case. ‘Serious’ writing about popular music had been ‘invented’ in Britain and was then quickly taken up in America. With American and British writers observing and conversing with each other, the rock discourse matured in the second half of the 1960s. Fanzines became successful journals, articles were followed by books, and around 1970 rock had its own terms, values and a canon of landmark albums and artistic ‘geniuses’. At this moment, the Anglo-American canon was adopted by German music writers as sacerdotal and applied to the domestic scene in a rather uncritical fashion. Before this time, terms like ‘rock’, ‘peep’ and ‘Schlager’ had been used rather randomly for all kinds of popular music. Now, German publishers brought out books by British and American authors like Nik Cohn and Hunter Davies in German translation, and domestic critics began to write about popular genres on the basis of the Anglo-American literature, carving out the boundaries between certain musical styles.88

German music writers, who were often older than the musicians they wrote about and often observed the rock music scenes as outsiders, were informed by the established canons and consequently perceived domestic rock music as a mere copy of the Anglo-American original. They accepted ‘authenticity’ as the main feature of valuable music, but reserved it for British and American performers who were thought to express experiences of deprivation that musicians in Germany could not make themselves. Musicologist Tibor Kneif, for instance, born in 1930 and one of the most prolific writers on rock music in the 1970s, explained the British and US-American dominance in rock with this questionable argument. In an article published in 1975, he stated that ‘rock music is essentially an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, not only because it originated in the United States and Britain, but also because it is entangled in the history and the mentality of some of the minorities living there (black people, urban youth, colleges, and surfing).’93 Many German music journalists shared Kneif’s view of rock music as the angry expression of underdogs. The cliché that rock and similar musical forms ‘came from the slums’ proved to be persistent and informed music journalism until the late 1970s, when a new generation of younger writers who were closely connected with the punk scene tried to find a different language.94

89 Tibor Kneif, “Über die Schwierigkeit, deutschen Rock zu hören,” Musik und Bildung 8, 4 (1975), 217. [translation KNJ]

Conclusion

This article has sought to explain changes in popular music that are commonly referred to as the ‘Rock Revolution’ and which centrally involved British protagonists. The paper contrasted the British case with the West German experience and has identified factors that explain the difference between the two national cases firstly in the structure of the music business and secondly in the role of the discourse on rock music.

Concerning the music business, the British situation until the early 1980s was characterised by a bigger market share of American imports than in continental Europe. While in Britain the US imports sidelined many domestic publishers and songwriters, German publishers, composers and authors benefited from adapting foreign hits to the home market. To some extent this difference was due to the common language.

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90 Idem, 167.
91 Idem, 166.
Creative Industries in the United Kingdom

Franz-Josef Brüggemeier

Several months ago, when Christiane was preparing the conference on which this book is based, she phoned and asked me whether I could talk about creative industries, concentrating on Britain. At that time the term creative industries did not mean much to me and I viewed it with some scepticism, assuming it was dreamt up by spin doctors and PR consultants.

As you all know, in Britain the debate about creative industries goes back a long way. But it really started in the late nineties, when the Blair government wanted to show the world how ‘Cool Britannia’ really was. The Prime Minister invited the pop world into No. 10, and creativity became one of the buzz-words of his government. In 1997, shortly after New Labour had won the election, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport was created, replacing the Department for National Heritage. As one of its major tasks, the new department named ‘the fostering of the creative industries’, and one of its first documents was called the ‘Creative Industries Mapping Document’.

So when Christiane phoned, I was quite sceptical, but she persuaded me: I gave in and agreed to look more closely at these industries. Having done so, my scepticism has not entirely disappeared. But I also learnt that creative industries are an important topic, that interesting developments are taking place and that a lively debate is going on. So far, this debate mainly takes place among economists, sociologists, geographers and not least politicians, and it covers many aspects. Of these, I will concentrate on the effects creative industries are said to have on class, class structures, economic growth and town planning. To do so, I will, firstly, describe two important concepts of this debate: creative industries and creative class.

Secondly I will present some data on the size of these industries and the number of people working there. Thirdly I will sketch some of the consequences these industries might have on class structures, on economic
