

All We Are Singing

Popular Musical Responses to the Iraq War

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- 1 In America, critics and proponents of military policy use popular musical forms. The “folk revival” of the 1950s and early ’60s drew on antagonism to the Cold War and responded to fears of nuclear holocaust. Examples include Pete Seeger’s “Where Have All the Flowers Gone,” Barry McQuire’s “Eve of Destruction,” and Bob Dylan’s “Talkin’ World War Three Blues.” The Vietnam era wedded rock music to anti-war sentiments but with occasional expressions of popular patriotic support, as in the “Ballad of the Green Berets” by Sgt. Barry Sadler and Robin Moore.
- 2 Responses in popular culture to past military interventions have been analyzed by scholars and rock critics alike.¹ Already the incursion into Iraq has generated the strongest reaction by popular musicians to any American military adventure since Vietnam. The response is complicated for popular music and broader publics, both American and global. Large street demonstrations, in the United States and elsewhere, reflect acute suspicion of motivations for the war and doubts about its long-term success. At the same time, prominent publics have been highly supportive of the war. Popular musicians reflect these political divisions and perhaps reinforce them. The Iraq War has generated an explosion of songs and videos to criticize or support the war.
- 3 Here I analyze the oppositional music.² The first section examines the texts of anti-war songs. The goals are to clarify the verbal and musical patterns in the lyrics, show the variety and inventiveness of the musical styles, and identify the political themes. The results suggest that recent anti-war songs represent a collective, perhaps not entirely conscious, attempt to voice alternatives to the present course of American foreign policy, conceived as an unapologetic reliance on raw military power as a first response to global challenges. That the artists are not only Americans indicates that this effort to re-make American politics is a global operation.
- 4 The second section interprets political meanings of the music as a whole. Initially it articulates themes identified in the textual

analysis to clarify some of the complicated messages in the music. These reach toward an alternative network of meanings inspired by opposition to the ideological framework of the Bush administration. Then it considers a central peculiarity in the current production of anti-war songs. On the one hand, Operation Iraqi Freedom has generated a huge outpouring of music. Dozens of songs have been released by diverse artists. Some are well-known and have major-label contracts, but others are obscure: signed to smaller labels or not at all. On the other hand, little if any of this music has become a prominent part of the overall popular culture, either in the time leading to the war or the time after it.

- 5 Many pundits make or deny comparisons between the Iraq and Vietnam wars.³ What seems undeniable is that musical reactions against the Vietnam War eventually proved much more prominent than musical responses to the Iraq War have so far become in American popular culture. The high volume, diversity, and creativity of current anti-war music stand in striking contrast to its scant sales and airplay, although these need not mean a negligible impact on the popular culture. We do well to explore the political significance of this peculiar situation.

What Constitutes a Popular Musical Response to the Iraq War?

- 6 Categories of popular culture can be difficult to define, yet analysis requires boundaries. What to include as musical “responses” to Operation Iraqi Freedom is debatable. Even what counts as a “musical” response is contestable. In a post-rap world, it can be hard to distinguish “music” from “poetry.” At least since John Cage, moreover, contrasts between musical tones or rhythms and other sounds have blurred.⁴ By now, it can be quaint or anachronistic to impose narrow definitions of musical form. Some of the most interesting and perhaps powerful pieces in my experience of anti-Iraq-War music speak words over ambient soundscapes. Thus “Two Minutes and Fifty Seconds of Silence for the U.S.A.” is an audio track of a television speech by George W. Bush to announce the invasion, except that his words have been removed by Matt Rogalsky to leave only electronically enhanced background noises. The current musical and political scenes demand that we include such works, appreciating them as “songs” and “music.”

- 7 What constitutes a “response” to the latest Iraq War can be an even more complicated question. The Iraq War is not exactly a discrete political event. The Bush administration has justified it as part of a larger “War on Terror.” This move has become more pronounced as the first military justification for the intervention — that Iraq was an imminent threat to the U.S. — collapsed. The administration continues to present the invasion as a response to 9/11, against even the findings of the 9/11 commission. In popular music, too, responses to the Iraq War often mix with responses to 9/11. Some anti-war songs in response to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan or other actions after 9/11 help articulate opposition to the Iraq invasion as well.
- 8 One example is “Not in Our Name” by Saul Williams. It is part of a song set written in 2002 against a variety of Bush actions, including the invasion of Afghanistan. These songs or poems also form powerful statements in opposition to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Ani DiFranco’s “Self-Evident” is a criticism of Bush policies in the broader context of the history of American military intervention.
- 9 Yet not all popular songs in response to 9/11 “work” as criticisms of the Iraq invasion. *The Rising* by Bruce Springsteen is a two cd set produced specifically in response to the 9/11 attacks. Its ruminations on the meanings of 9/11 are thoughtful and wide-ranging, especially in relation to different communities heavily impacted by the attacks, but it is not exactly an “anti-war” album in general or music directly relevant to the Iraq War.
- 10 Nor does all “anti-war” music, even of late, target Operation Iraqi Freedom. Context can matter enormously. *Peace Songs: A Benefit to Help Children Affected by War* is an interesting compilation. Its highlights include Avril Lavigne’s cover rendition of Bob Dylan’s “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” an updated version by Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens) of his “Peace Train,” Leonard Cohen’s “Anthem,” and the Barenaked Ladies’ cover of Bruce Cockburn’s “Lovers in a Dangerous Time.” Sales are to “help children affected by war through War Child Canada’s International humanitarian projects.” In a sense, this is an “anti-war” album. But it seems neither intended nor received as a political response to any particular war, and none of the songs appear written or performed with the Iraq War in mind. Instead *Peace Songs* is primarily a benefit album, somewhat along the lines of “We Are the World.”

- 11 Working another way is the *Not in Our Name* cd. Released in 2004, it makes no mention of the Iraq intervention, yet the title implies criticism of recent American actions. Moreover the cd bills itself as benefitting the Not in Our Name Project, “a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, created in response to the actions of the U.S. Government in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.” This does not tell a buyer much about how proceeds will be spent, but it does suggest their use for oppositional work of some kind. Moreover the line-up on the cd includes artists known for political songwriting, such as Ani DiFranco and Michael Franti. That its other artists tend to be less well-known – The Looters, Los Pachanga Pistols, Ozomatli – is further evidence that generating sales (by including “major” artists) is less important to the producers than including a diverse range of styles and perspectives. While only two of the songs make direct references to war, all seem to have political bite.
- 12 Two compilations that don’t directly reference the Iraq War but do connect to anti-war sentiment are the two volumes that *Rock Against Bush*. Few of the bands are mainstream, although the cd does contain cuts from legendary punk and alternative artists such as Jello Biafra, Social Distortion, and Ministry. Likewise Billy Bragg joins Less than Jake for a number. Offspring, the one-time college-radio hit-maker, contributes the album’s most explicitly anti-Iraq-War song: “Baghdad.” While the overall target of the album isn’t the Iraq War as such, references to Bush ventures in foreign policy form an important theme. With the Iraq War now and probably forever considered President Bush’s most important act in foreign affairs, an anti-Bush album becomes, almost by definition, an oppositional statement against the Iraq War.
- 13 The compilation most clearly produced to oppose the Iraq War is *Peace Not War*. It apparently began as a bedroom project in the London apartment of the Australian musicians, Kelly and Mudge. The project grew, with three hundred musicians submitting selections. Thirty-two appear on the first two-disc set.⁵ Songs are also available as streaming audio from the website for Peace Not War. A second cd is slated for release, and a Peace Jukebox on the website will feature the anti-war songs of five hundred musical acts. The two-disc set includes many of the tunes that have become most closely associated with the anti-war movement. The artists range from well-known to super-obscure: Ani DiFranco, Public Enemy, Billy Bragg, and Massive Attack along with Alabama 3, the Mark of Cane, and Pok and the Spacegoats.

- 14 The artwork with the album's lyric sheet makes clear references to the Iraq War. One picture shows a military plane flying from an aircraft carrier inside George Bush's open mouth. Another shows Toni Blair hanging onto the tale of a white bulldog with a distorted George Bush face. A long red tongue hangs from the dog's mouth, which is filled with large and ugly teeth, four of them like fangs. Another picture shows military-garbed George Bush and Toni Blair riding in a tank with the grim reaper and a cowboy-hatted, cigar-holding, Texas fat-cat. The Peace Not War Project, not a record company, produced the album and released it in 2003, during the lead-up to the war. The clear intentions were to make a political statement and to raise money for anti-war efforts. The presentational context means that each song on the album could and probably should be considered as a statement about the invasion of Iraq. One value of such compilations is that they invite listeners to increase the variety of themes that they might consider to be "anti-war." This essay depends markedly on material from this album.
- 15 Numerous websites collect anti-war music, sometimes in response to the Iraq War or for broader, archival purposes. "A La Carte" is a political website that collects information on leftist causes, and it contains a section with several dozen "classic" anti-war tunes collected in response to the Iraq invasion.⁶ "Protest Songs" also tends to focus on older songs, by the likes of Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs.⁷ "New Songs for Peace" invites submissions and carries more than a hundred songs from diverse professional artists and amateurs.⁸ One of my favorite sites is the personal-political blog "On Lisa Rein's Radar Screen." Lisa discusses various political topics "on her fair and balanced mind today." In March 2003, she had Operation Iraqi Freedom on her mind and did an admirable job of collecting mp3s, lyrics, and links to other anti-war websites oriented to music.⁹ The "onegoodmove" website has a variety of political content, and a fine collection of recently released anti-war songs, all available as free downloads.¹⁰ The Toronto Coalition to Stop the War posted about 40 anti-war songs on "War Free Radio," also available for downloading.¹¹ Artists such as Michael Franti, Ani DiFranco, REM, and John Mellencamp have posted anti-war work of several kinds on their websites.
- 16 Individual songs, compilations, and websites help to set boundaries for construing what counts as a popular musical response to the Iraq War. With websites, the material can become daunting. A full account would gather all the strands together, but my aim is different. I focus on songs recently written, songs from

anti-Iraq-War compilations, and songs from anti-Iraq-War websites. Please keep in mind, though, that the larger category I am interrogating only in part is potentially vast; so the current exercise is only a start.

Emergent Themes: Popular Music as Counter-Narrative

- 17 Much has been written about the significance of “political” music.¹² Does it try to persuade listeners to take some political perspectives rather than others? Can a three- or four-minute song have that impact? Perhaps in some cases: a devoted fan might adopt a political stance because of a song by a favored artist. Yet it seems unlikely that large numbers of people are swayed only by hearing a particular piece of music, no matter how powerful. Music can also be used to mobilize the committed. Classic folk tunes such as “Which Side Are You On?” and “We Shall Overcome” show that music can be important for political movements.¹³ But popular music is not the same as folk music. And, with one or two possible exceptions, it is doubtful that any songs considered here will become anthems, sung in mass at political rallies.
- 18 More likely is that the voluminous production of anti-war music in response to Operation Iraqi Freedom signals a collective effort in the popular culture to develop a counter-narrative to the dominant justification for the invasion from the Bush administration. As with most myth-making, this is not entirely conscious or coherent. In the dominant narrative, Saddam Hussein supported “terrorists,” posed an immediate danger to the U.S., and was one of the worst tyrants of the twentieth century. Recent anti-war music tells different stories. These may be less well-ordered than counter-narratives available from print journalism, political institutions such as the Democratic Party, or even cultural controversies over Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 911* (2004). The unruliness of popular music can work against clear narrative structures, but it seems to expand political imaginations.¹⁴
- 19 To organize the musical messages into a single counter-narrative might be possible, but it is apt to sacrifice too much valuable information. It would merely be my take on the music; and in any event, my aims are as much empirical as interpretive. The question is what themes and lessons a diverse community of listeners might take from the songs. There is little reason to think

that fans often turn popular lyrics into ideologies or worldviews. For one thing, it is often difficult to make out words in pop songs, so that listeners pick up a phrase here, a chorus there, and might or might not try to tease larger meanings from it. Whatever the writers intend, the “messages” of their songs amount more to themes or provocations than theses or arguments.

- 20 The rest of this section evokes several clusters of recent anti-war songs in some detail. It shows shared themes emerging from individual songs. Attention to these particulars is important for the style of cultural study practiced here. Still some readers may want to cut to the chase; and if you are willing to trust my sense of the songs, you can skip to the concluding section of interpretations, where I consider what the anti-war themes might imply for our politics and popular music.

Connecting the Dots: From 9/11 to Baghdad

- 21 The September 11 attacks on the United States spurred a variety of musical responses. Bruce Springsteen’s *The Rising* exemplifies the ones relatively specific to the time and place. Others questioned American foreign policy over the years, even decades, before the attacks. These attempted to move beyond the President’s position that the attackers were simply “evil-doers” who “hated us because we are free.” None, let me emphasize, attempted to justify the killing of civilian bystanders.
- 22 Ani DiFranco’s “Self-Evident” rises to the moment without being imprisoned by it, including many elements of what has become an evolving counter-narrative to the Bush War on Terror. Performed live, the spoken-word piece starts with a distorted guitar in the background. This lends it an ambient feel until, about halfway through, drums and bass kick in with horns adding punctuation. The lyric’s first references are to 9/11: “A perfectly blue sky on a morning beatific / on the day that America fell to its knees / after strutting around for a century / without saying thank you or please.” We hear the crowd begin to react as DiFranco entertains the idea that U.S. policies might provide some explanation for the terrorist attack. As the piece continues, DiFranco implicates big oil, American interventions into El Salvador, the first Gulf War, the CIA, the FBI, and the Weathermen as she cleverly gathers, but doesn’t exactly weave together, various facets of U.S. foreign and domestic affairs over the second half of the twentieth century.

- 23 Particularly telling is the multi-referential phrase “self-evident.” It pulls several strands toward one another. “We hold these truths to be self evident: / #1 George W. Bush is not our president. / #2 America is not a true democracy. / #3 The media is not fooling me.” The allusions are readily evident to many listeners: President Bush was not chosen democratically in 2000 because Republicans essentially “stole” that election; the U.S. has been unmoored from its democratic foundations; and mainstream media help unhinge American democracy. DiFranco also suggests that 9/11 attacks should have been “self-evident” in prospect, given the earlier WTC attack. “Remember the first time around?” she asks. “The bomb, the Ryder truck, the parking garage? / The princess that didn’t even feel the pea? / Remember joking around in our apartment on avenue D? / Can you imagine how many paper coffee cups would have to change their design / following a fantastical reversal of the New York skyline?!”
- 24 As the song moves toward its conclusion, DiFranco suggests that honor for the dead of 9/11 lies, not in our seeking revenge, but in our resisting political forces that would use the attacks to increase their own power. “3000 some poems disguised as people / on an almost too perfect day / must be more than pawns / in some asshole’s passion play / So now it’s your job / and it’s my job / to make it that way / to make sure they didn’t die in vain / sshhhhh Baby listen / Can you hear the train?” DiFranco reverses the standard 9/11 notion that honoring the attack victims means a military response. Yet “the train” stays unspecified. It could represent anything from the relentless train of modern history to a rising global tide of anti-militarism (the “Peace Train” of Cat Stevens), to the tit-for-tat train of America going to war in reaction to a military attack. The train heralds something important, but listeners may debate what.
- 25 A second sort of response to 9/11 comes from Saul Williams, who has been described as a “Poet-preacher-actor- rapper-singer-musician ‘hyphen-artist extraordinaire.’”¹⁵ After becoming well-known for his spoken-word performances in the mid-1990s, he landed a leading role in the extraordinary film, *SLAM*, which won the Sundance Film Festival’s Grand Jury Prize and the Cannes Camera D’Or in 1998. Williams has proceeded to perform with a Who’s Who of poets, rap artists, and other musicians reaching from the Fugees and Erykah Badu to Allen Ginsberg. In the film, Williams plays a young man, unfairly arrested for drug use, who resists gang members in the DC jail with mesmerizing wordplay. His poetry transforms the lives that it touches, and it turns violent

battles into non-violent contests of words.

- 26 Williams' poetry has long tied religion, especially Old Testament images, to politics. This holds for *Not in My Name*, his EP in the wake of September 11. It includes three spoken-word pieces: "Pledge to Resistance," "September 12th," and "Bloodletting." The build-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom led Williams to create the "Not in Our Name" website, which offered downloadable versions of the original pieces with remixes of "Pledge of Resistance" by DJ Spooky, DJ Goo, and Coldcut.
- 27 "Pledge of Resistance" is a short, powerful burst that calls for democratic forces to challenge the militarism provoked by 9/11. "We believe as people living in the United States / that it is our responsibility / to resist the injustices done by our government / in our names / Not in our name will you wage endless war / There can be no more deaths / no more transfusion of blood for oil / Not in our name will you invade countries, bomb civilians, kill more children / letting history takes its course over the graves of the nameless / Not in our name will you erode the very freedoms that you have claimed to fight for / . . . Not by our hearts will we allow whole peoples or countries to be deemed as evil / . . . Another world is possible, and we pledge to make it real."
- 28 The next track, "September 12th," has a chorus that picks up where "The Pledge" leaves off: "No not in my name / not in my life / not by my hands / That ain't my fight / Not in my name." "September 12th" explores historical themes of racial oppression in the U.S., and it challenges listeners to resist that legacy. It invokes a range of religious images in arguing that war is not a proper response to the attacks on September 11.
- 29 Seize the Day has taken a different tack. It is an acoustic English band whose deep and complex harmonies harken to hundreds of years of Celtic folk traditions. Its music has been described in the *Guardian* as "big, beautiful, frontline folk." Politics, especially of environmental protection, are explicit in the group's agenda. On its webpage, for example, the members describe themselves as "stand[ing] for personal empowerment, social conscience, caring for the environment and challenging ourselves to make a difference." They describe Monsanto as "satan," and cite accolades for their performances from *Permaculture Review* and the journal of Britain's Green Party. Band members have been arrested for various political actions. In 2003, for example, the band entered its music in the English Folk Music category of the Radio 3 (BBC)

World Music Award, and it won the audience vote for best act. At the last minute, the BBC disqualified the band on the ground that anti-war activists had been generating votes for the group's "politics," not for its "music." At the final awards ceremony, three band members responded by climbing onto the stage with signs that read "BBC Cover UP," lifting them to expose their naked bodies where "Peace Not War" was written across their chests.¹⁶

- 30 Seize the Day's "United States" seems to have been written in response to 9/11, even though the music is reminiscent of an earlier generation of English popular folk artists, such as Pentangle and Fairport Convention. That helps make the lyrics disturbing, almost shocking, in their depiction of U.S. military policy. The song describes America as "my family" and notes sympathetically that "the whole world feels your pain," but it shifts quickly to a stinging appraisal of U.S. action. "Before this war is over," the singer suggests, "you'll make sure we do again / even as the tower tumbled on that fire-fighting team / we wondered who you'd barbeque for puncturing your dream." A similarly harsh ambivalence appears in another part of the song, which addresses the U.S. to say, "You're beautiful, big-hearted / in many ways you're free / and you're smart enough to get the world how you want it to be." Other lines patronize the U.S. opponent: "I am not an Islamicist, / religion's not my thing, / but they're friendlier than Christians, / and I like the way they sing." "United States" unsettles even more because it seems to tap evolving global expectations that U.S. responses to the September 11 attacks would be unnecessarily violent and vengeful. The invasion of Iraq did nothing to dispel these fears.
- 31 The invasion of Afghanistan seems to have provoked Michael Franti's "Bomb the World." A song in the tradition of John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance," it melds elements of reggae and gospel through a chorus that rises as the song builds. Franti's tone is sorrowful, not angry, as he calls for "power to the peaceful." Sounding many themes mentioned in other music, the song starts with 9/11: "Fire in the skies / many people died / no one knows why." But Franti has explanations aplenty: "It's big corporations / World trade organization / Tri-lateral action / International sanctions, satan." Franti rejects nationalist fervor: "I don't understand the whole reason why / You tellin' us all that we need to unify / Rally round the flag / And beat the drums of war / Sing the same old songs / Ya know we heard 'em all before / You tellin' me it's unpatriotic / But I call it what I see it / When I see it's idiotic." And he rejects war as a solution for terrorism: "You can

bomb the world to pieces / But you can't bomb the world to peace."

- 32 John Lester also reacts to the war in Afghanistan, but differently. A folk-singer, bassist, and songwriter, Lester contributed "Out of the Clear Blue Sky" to the cd for *Peace Not War*. The song tries to come to grips with the sense that invading Afghanistan is a justifiable response to 9/11 attacks while still resisting the larger politics and rhetorics of the Bush administration. "Say I'm a coward not a patriot / Well I know that we had to strike back / I just don't think we've planned the hardest battle yet." Lester doesn't like demonizing "enemies." Yes, "everyone is rightfully filled with rage" after the 9/11 attacks. But the President should not be "pointing his finger" and saying "'we're one nation under God / and by God we're gonna get them back one day" when he makes no attempt to understand the motives of those who inflict such atrocities. Of course, "they were evil and they were wrong / but all the weak take a desperate measure / when they're backed into a corner by a foe too strong." Feeling its way thoughtfully through contradictory feelings in the aftermath of 9/11 and American responses, "Out of the Clear Blue Sky" won an award for the best lyrical commentary of 2003.

Causes and Consequences

- 33 Many songs focus on the Iraq War, explaining it in terms that differ markedly from the Bush administration. Often these songs explore the view, held widely in the U.S. and around the world, that the war was fought to increase American control over oil stocks in the Middle East.
- 34 Billy Bragg's "The Price of Oil" is the clearest, least qualified indictment of this kind. The song is sparse, with Bragg singing and strumming an acoustic guitar while an electric guitar slowly builds in the background. Its four-minute explanation for the invasion is simple: "It's all about the price of oil / It's all about the price of oil / Don't give me no shit about blood, sweat, tears and toil / It's all about the price of oil." Still the song does argue for its view, rebutting other possible explanations. Bragg declares that he is not a "fan of Saddam;" but if the invasion was initiated to free Iraqis from a dictator, "why him, why here, why now?" Bragg notes that the U.S. has supported other unsavory characters, including Augusto Pinochet "and even Bin Laden." "Just like that election down in Florida," he tells the listener, "this shit doesn't all add up." If the U.S. isn't intervening militarily for humanitarian

purposes, or to support democratic forces, what's left? Bragg answers: the "stock market" and the "price of oil."

- 35 By context, at least, "Jacob's Ladder" by Chumbawamba implies a somewhat more differentiated explanation. Chumbawamba is an English anarchist collective that made a big splash in the U.S. with "Tubthumping." "Jacob's Ladder" is on *Peace not War* and turns up on various anti-war websites. It does not seem to have been written in direct response to the Iraq War. But the tune is catchy; and the brief refrain pulls together themes of religiosity, oil politics, and war skepticism: "Like a sermon on the mountain / said the dumber got dumb / hellfire and brimstone / swapped for oil and guns / When we're pushing up daisies / we all look the same / in the name of the father / but not in my name." The first line refers to the most famous sermon of Jesus, when he prophesied that the "meek shall inherit the earth." Yet the title refers to Genesis, where an exhausted Jacob fell asleep on some stones and dreamt of a ladder "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." There Jacob could "behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it."¹⁷ Jacob's ladder is also a child's toy, a climbing perennial, a rope ladder used on ships, and particular pattern of the sunlight. Chumbawamba's song taps such multiple and contradictory meanings. The ladder's ascension to heaven pleads for peace and evokes the souls of war victims rising to heaven. But it also symbolizes the aspirations of empire builders who would create heaven on earth by marshalling religious convictions and military forces.
- 36 When Michael Franti turns to the Iraq War in "We Don't Stop," his account is much more complicated than Bragg's. Spoken words give the song a rap feel, but the beat owes as much to reggae and Motown as hip-hop. The tone is upbeat but sustains a political edge. The song starts with an inventory: "They gotta war for oil, a war for gold / A war for money and a war for souls / A war on terror, a war on drugs / A war on kindness and a war on hugs. . . . The war on pot is a war that's failed / A war that's fillin' up the nations jails / World war one, two, three and four / Chemical weapons, biological war / Bush war 1, Bush war 2 / They gotta a war for me, they gotta a war for you!" So "we don't stop," says the chorus. What "we don't stop" seems to be music and dance as antidotes to continual war. "We can't stop until we hit those heights! / And we don't stop / We can't stop because we love this life." Then the song evokes a "new day" when wars will be eliminated: "They try lockin' it, though, but we about to explode / We got the firefly, tiger eye apocalypse flow." The song ends with a

riff on the notion of a New World Order: “New world jails see the new worlds hard / New world names sing the new world songs / New world planes are the new world bombs / New world’s flying, the new world’s dying / . . . New world fight the new world’s fists / The new world lighting up the new world spliffs / New world smoke in the new world lungs / New world’s choking, the new world’s done.” The Iraq War, Franti suggests, might generate a political and spiritual response that ends a bankrupt practice. Thus this song participates in the popular traditions of psychedelia, which often tie anti-war sentiments to post-apocalyptic visions of a peaceful paradise brought forward by art, music, and dance.

- 37 A different inventory informs “21 Today” by Slovo. Slovo is a musical project put together by one-time Faithless guitarist, Dave Randall. It involves collaboration by artists from diverse places: Iceland, the U.S., Kurdistan, Finland, the Palestinian Territories, and more. “21 Today,” might be described as “conceptual music.” Its electronic soundscape provides a foundation for twenty-one different voices. Each names one of the twenty-one nations that the U.S. has bombed since dropping an A-bomb on Nagasaki in 1945. The place and year(s) are stated by a person from the place; and the effect is haunting. The track ends with a cash register ringing. “21 Today” makes no specific references to the Iraq War, oil, George W. Bush, or the 2000 election; yet in context, it encourages listeners to consider the Iraq War in relation to a recent history of American military intervention. The sheer recitation of facts is less didactic than many anti-war songs discussed here – and more powerful.
- 38 The target of Outkast is “Bombs Over Baghdad.” At the time of the Iraq invasion, Andre and Big Boi were a band on the cusp of commercial breakthrough. Outkast had received critical recognition, won several Grammys, developed a devoted fan base, and gained moderate success in selling records. It was the leading edge of “Southern hip-hop,” a style that owes as much to Jimi Hendrix and George Clinton as to Public Enemy and Dr. Dre. Still the massive success of “Hey Ya,” a cut from its second album, *The Love Below*, was in the future; so at a crucial point in its career, Outkast was taking a big risk in releasing “Bombs Over Baghdad” in the lead-up to the war. The lyrics are stream-of-unconsciousness, with scattered references to the rigors of touring, unpredicted rainstorms, 9/11, aids, Janet Jackson, hurricanes in Florida, and Taco Bell. Underlying the fast-paced lyrics is a hard drum beat. As the song unfolds, it quickens until it sounds like a

machine gun. The song, on an otherwise non-political album, gets its political edge from the chorus: “Don’t pull the thang out, unless you plan to bang / Bombs over Baghdad! Yeah! Ha ha yeah! / Don’t even bang unless you plan to hit something / Bombs over Baghdad! / Yeah! Uhh-huh.” Via clever juxtaposition, the lyrics tie together the attractions of power, war, violence, and sexual conquest.

- 39 “Pain of Life” is less an explanation of the Iraq War than an exploration of its consequences. By GM Babyz, a British techno group, this song targets the impact of war on children, emphasizing the Iraq War. It suggests that children raised in violence become violent themselves: “The rain’s made of metal when apaches blaze / light up the sky turn the warm nights cold / You know 10 people murdered and you’re 10 years old.” The song speaks especially to affluent children who live in peaceful circumstances: “You think you’re rebelling cause your smokin’ weed / There are kids in the world that are ten years old / and all they want to do when they grow up is explode.” An upbeat dance track delivers dark images of what happens “when the bombs fall down,” and the contrast between music and message seems to contrast the world’s privileged children of peace to the Iraqi children whose lives have been defined by war.
- 40 The optimism and dread of the pre-invasion movement against the Iraq War are evident in the video for “We Don’t Want Your War.” The song, from Arizona-born Jynkz, is a folk-rock anthem.¹⁸ The lyrics don’t mention Iraq or the “War on Terror,” yet both lurk in implications of the opening: “When you can’t believe / the words they say / and you’re haunted by / the swords they raise / like a rabid dog / we’ve seen before / they refuse to hear / the world pounding / pounding down their door.” “We don’t want your war,” repeats the chorus, closing with, “You keep telling us we do.” The video makes such ties explicit. It starts by dissolving an American flag into pictures of President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Next come pictures of anti-war demonstrators in San Francisco, a Vietnam vet, Adolph Hitler, then Hitler and Mussolini together. Words across the bottom of the screen expand on themes in the lyrics. More anti-war demonstrations appear during the chorus, as the screen says that the depicted city “says no.” The second verse sings that the “devil’s bombs have an oily smell,” while “death for profit” looms on the bottom of the screen. Overall the mood is ominous.

**Fortunate Son:
Questioning the President's
Legitimacy, Motives, and Judgment**

- 41 Given his personal association with the Iraq War, it is not surprising that many popular musicians would explore the biography and character of George W. Bush when writing about Operation Iraqi Freedom. Moreover he is a relatively easy target, as the dyslexic rich kid who achieved wealth and power because of family connections. Unlike journalists, popular musicians are not constrained by conventional demands for “balance,” “accuracy,” or even (literal) “truth.” Bush, members of his administration, and his British partner Toni Blair are fair game.
- 42 Bush is a prominent target of Chuck D, whose political commitments are long-standing and who took an active role in the anti-war movement even before Operation Iraqi Freedom. D’s group, Public Enemy, paved the way for what has become known as “conscious rap.” Its music has been innovative and commercially successful. “Son of a Bush” lacks the power and appeal of such Public Enemy classics as “Don’t Give up the Fight” or “Bring on the Noise.” But it has some clever lines, such as “have you forgotten, I been through the first term of rotten.” It also sounds a key theme in the evolving narratives counter to the Iraq War: George W. Bush is a pretender whose office comes from family connections that are politically and morally corrupt: “Coke it’s the real thing / Used to make you swing / Used to be your daddy had you under his wing / Bringin kilos to fill up silos / You probably sniffed piles / Got inmates in Texas scrubbin tiles.” Repeated over and over to end this song, the refrain is a twist on an old blues line: “He’s the son. . . . He’s the son of a bad man.”
- 43 Bush is another kind of imposter for Stephen Smith, a noteworthy singer-songwriter who mixes traditional folk motifs with inventive musical styles and electronic effects. Jim Hightower has described his music as “folk-rap that rocks, like Chuck D channeling Woody Guthrie.” “You Ain’t a Cowboy” is a biting satirical take on George W. It tracks W’s life from his aristocratic roots, through his military non-service and cocaine use, to his photo op on the Abraham Lincoln. The tune is clever and ironic, with a catchy, electronically processed chorus accentuating the irony: “You ain’t a cowboy because you wear the clothes / No one here is fooled by what yer up to / You can’t stop this / The harder that you try / The harder it’s gonna roll all over you.” There is an eerie echo of this take on Bush in *Time’s* selection of the President as its “Person of

the Year” for his “ten gallon leadership style.”¹⁹

- 44 For Zack de la Rocha, Bush has become a villain of epic proportions. It would have been surprising if de la Rocha had *not* responded musically to the Iraqi invasion. For years, he was the front man of Rage Against the Machine, known as much for its in-your-face leftism as its heavy grooves. Rage achieved notoriety when, after performing a song on Saturday Night Live, its members attempted to hang an upside down American flag over the front of an amplifier; they weren't brought back to perform their promised second song. De la Rocha continues to make political music. “March of Death,” a collaboration with DJ Shadow, channels vivid anger against Bush: “Who let the cowboy in the saddle? He don't know a missile from a gavel.” Bush is: “This man child, ruthless and wild / Who's gonna chain this beast back / on the leash? / This Texas führer, for sure a / compassionless con who serve a / lethal needle to the poor, the cure for crime is murder?” Referencing the decision to invade Iraq, De la Rocha shouts: “he flex his Texas twisted tongue / the poor lined up to kill in desert slums / for oil that burns beneath the desert sun / Now we spit flame to flip this game / all targets are taking aim / We're the targets are taking aim.” The background music uses drum, bass, and electronic distortions to menacing effect. The song is dark, aggressive, unrelenting – like an electrical storm unleashed.
- 45 The illegitimacy of Bush is the focus of the 1970s punk band Crass. Formed by Steve Ignorant and Penny Rimbaud, it is known for noisy guitars, frantic drumming, a commitment to anarchism, and a disdain for fellow punk rockers, the Clash, as posers. Although the band split up in 1984, the *Peace not War* album led Rimbaud and Harvey Birrell (formerly Ignorant) to rework the earlier “Major General Despair” into the “Unelected President.” This music is punk, with grating, slicing guitars and straight, heavy drum beats. Uncertain whether it wants to speak or sing, the voice tells listeners that the “unelected president sits at his desk / planning another attack / since the dramatic coup of September 11 / he's never had to look back.” The images go for gruesome, with “festering corpses” and the “eternal stare of eyeless skulls” supposedly suiting an unelected president who “would “destroy us all with his cancerous mind and his greed for the power of black-gold.” Seemingly determined to cast Bush as a shocking monster, Crass spills over-the-top toward an irony it apparently does not intend. The song samples a speech by British labor historian E.P. Thompson: “We don't have civilization any more / what we have is a state of barbarism.” Presumably this bow to an important

intellectual of the left is to give the cut a serious tone, while lending the deceased Thompson a level of street credibility that he might or might not have welcomed.

- 46 Bush is a populist manipulator in the anti-war music of the Peasants, mostly available by contacting the band or downloading from its website. (Two of its self-produced albums are not available, for example, from Amazon.com.) “Anti-Folker,” a.k.a. Pete Cassani, fronts for the Peasants. He is a long-time Boston street performer, recording artist, and touring musician who writes the Peasants’ songs. His “Take ‘Em Out” starts with whistling and exploding missiles in the background then moves quickly to a hard-core drum and guitar line reminiscent of Metallica. Bush is the clear target: “Can’t find Osama / Crank up the drama / You were not elected / Better keep ‘em distracted / Daddy couldn’t kill him / What’s another trillion / In dead women and children / It’s only television.” This follows “The Patriot Song,” written by Cassani in response to the Gulf War. The earlier song provides an exceptionally unflattering depiction of its topic: “I’m a patriot,” Cassani sings, “I don’t ask questions / I get my opinions from the television / I’m a patriot, an armchair hero / My attention span is damn near zero.”
- 47 Bush is a lying manipulator, too, for the Beastie Boys. “In a World Gone Mad” is one of the few songs released in response to the Iraq War that has enjoyed any sort of commercial success, appearing briefly on some top-ten playlists. “Not willing to wait until their album is finished to comment on the America’s imminent course toward war,” said the webpage for the Beastie Boys, “they offer the new track ‘In A World Gone Mad’ . . . as a free download.”²⁰ This rap achieves the kind of inspired goofiness that has marked the Beastie’s work from the start. To Bush, they sing: “Mirrors, smokescreens and lies / It’s not politicians, but their actions I despise / You and Saddam should kick it like back in the day / With the cocaine and Courvoisier / But you build more bombs as you get more bold / As your midlife crisis war unfolds.” Other lines are more strained: “Now don’t get me wrong ‘cause we love America / But that’s no reason to get hysterica.” Eventually this evolves toward a traditional peace song, calling for an end to all violence: “Murder going on all day and night / Due time we fight the non-violent fight.” The stance is consistent with Adam Yauch’s long time support for the Tibetan Freedom Movement and the band’s sponsorship for the Milerapa benefit concerts.
- 48 Context is the name of the game for John Mellencamp’s war-time

treatment of President Bush. "To Washington" is a short history of American politics from the Clinton administration through the Iraq intervention. The song has the style of an old folk tune, while a jaunty acoustic guitar and a fiddle accompany Mellencamp's now crackly voice. First were the Clinton years of prosperity and scandal, apparently spurring a desire for change. Then came the election recount, when both sides "looked pretty guilty, but no one took the blame." The result was a "new man in the White House / With a familiar name." Unfortunately, the singer concludes, "it's worse now since he came / From Texas to Washington." Bush "wants to fight with many / And he says it's not for oil / He sent out the National Guard / To police the world / From Baghdad to Washington." Mellencamp concludes with a rebuke: "What is the thought process / To take a human's life / What would be the reason / To think that it is right / From heaven to Washington / From Jesus Christ to Washington." As with other songs against the Iraq War, the references to religion seem to question the meaning, more than the sincerity, of Bush's religious commitments.

- 49 Bush is often personalized as the primary target for popular musical hostility to the Iraq War, but Stephen Taylor's "Go Down Congress" criticizes the entire government. This folk tune is featured on *The Fugs Final Album* and is available on many anti-war music websites. As Taylor strums an acoustic guitar, the words are sung slowly to the tune of "Go Down Moses": "Bin Ladin was George senior's clan / not so long ago / Set him up with a retirement plan / lots of low tax dough / Go down White House / Way down in payoff land / Tell the CIA / Leave the Saudis alone." Taylor discusses oil in Uzbekistan, loss of liberty from the Patriot Act, and corporate war-profiteering. But he also touches on the Florida recount fiasco: "Tell the Justices / not to let my people vote." He winds things up with a reference to the resurgence of the opium crop in Afghanistan. "Go down Wall Street / Sell off my shares today / Put it all in blow."
- 50 As in "life," so in "art," Bush and Blair are political allies, especially for songs by artists from the U.K. and Australia. (These predominate in the *Peace not War* compilation.) An example is Life's "Bush and Blair," which sings insistently over Middle Eastern music: "Bush and Blair, two leaders that don't care about humanity, that's why they're starting wars everywhere." A review on u.k.h.h.com isn't particularly positive, assessing the track as "boring" and "formulaic," relying on "a blitz of clichéd couplets with simple a, b, c rhyme structures." Yet repetition has long been

important to the cultural power of popular music; and repetition can lend this cut a hypnotic resonance. The cut also explores the hypocrisy of the intervention, given past U.S. support for Hussein and other dictators. We may wonder if there is a bottom-basement appeal of sorts to the tasteless, preposterous, even demented suggestion that Cherie Blair suffered a miscarriage as a kind of karmic repayment for Blair's decision to support Bush. As Life puts it, "what goes around comes around in this miscarriage of justice / maybe that's why Blair's wife miscarried her child and she lost it / you might say that's so cold that it's frosted / but I'll tell you something / what about the thousands of kids caught up in war dying for nothing."

- 51 Bush-Blair is also a principal concern for a truly haunting cut on *Peace not War*. It remixes a speech by Tariq Ali on the eve of the war. A Pakistani expatriate in Britain who has been involved with leftist politics since the 1960s, he has written numerous non-fiction books and novels as well as dozens of articles for academic journals. The speech criticizes American policy: "if they took a vote in the general assembly the vote would be 80% against them and they know it." It evokes a rising global tide of popular opposition to the war: "1.2 million people demonstrated in Italy against the war." It castigates Blair: "when people find out I am from Britain they say could you just explain to us Tony Blair? They just want an explanation saying why is he so constantly ensconced in the posterior of the American president?" And it scorns the Bush doctrine of pre-emption: "don't you dare do anything because we will use our military power to crush you. that's what they're saying openly." As the speech proceeds, the remix soundtrack adds an ambient sense of foreboding and eventually dissolves into a crescendo that represents the rising pitch of war preparations. As with other anti-war cuts, Tariq's speech emphasizes U.S. arrogance and isolation in deciding to invade Iraq. But it also condemns Toni Blair as a lapdog of President Bush: a theme that American artists tend to ignore.

A Digitally Remastered President

- 52 The power of electronic manipulation of sounds became clear to a large public in the wake of Howard Dean's notorious Iowa whoop. Amateur mix-masters around the world put together rhythm tracks which highlighted an embarrassing performance with devastating political consequences.²¹ The response to Dean revealed the presence of a digital infrastructure, in place and ready to act in short order. Several noteworthy works of digital sabotage

have appeared in response to the Iraq War, and they have been aimed primarily at Bush's leadership.

- 53 "Bushwhacked v. Osymyoso" is one of the most entertaining and effective. It can be found on the Smokehammer website.²² Osymyoso is a digital artist known for his "mashup" approach to production, "fusing meaty underground electro, breaks and dirty instrumental hip-hop with contemporary pop, adverts, film clips and daytime TV samples."²³ Co-produced with Chris Morris, "Bushwhacked" was released on the day that Operation Iraqi Freedom began. The collaborators formed clips of Bush speeches into re-rendering of his 2003 State of the Union address. Osymyoso says the aim is a version of the address "closer to the truth."²⁴
- 54 A video version seems to show Bush delivering the redone address before both houses of Congress. The audio version is laid over a stately piano track that eventually becomes Lee Greenwood singing the chorus of "God Bless the U.S.A." There are slight differences between the speech in the audio and video versions, but both begin with welcoming remarks then have Bush say that, "Every year, by law and by custom, we meet here to threaten the world. The American flag stands for corporate scandals, recession, stock market declines, blackmail, burning with hot irons, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, terror, mass murder . . . and rape." The assembled leaders applaud, and the President continues, "Our first goal is to show utter contempt for the environment. I have sent you a comprehensive energy plan to devastate communities, kill wildlife, and burn away millions of acres of treasured forest." The video pans to Christie Todd Whitman, who nods her approval. But the climax of the speech comes as Bush says, "Tonight I have a message for the people of Iraq. I can't help you. Go home and die."
- 55 John Stewart and his staff at *The Daily Show* have mastered the art of splicing political speeches to reveal a different version of the truth than the speaker was attempting to provide. They are particularly good at using this device to lampoon the deer-in-the-headlight hesitations, verbal stumbles, moments of apparent panic, and general incapacity to articulate policy positions beyond talking points that critics take to characterize Bush. Where this might be seen as unfair or deceptive depends on one's political commitments. There are no rules for fairness or accuracy by "fake news" shows, in spite of their potential impact.
- 56 Yet "Bushwhacked v. Osymyoso" takes the technique further. In

the guerilla theater of the digital underground, the subversion of narrative is de rigeur. Any viewer or listener would, no matter how approving or outraged, would have to be impressed by the effort and skill that went into re-producing the “Bush” address. In diverging from the initial narrative, this “remix” opens the possibility that other kinds of truth lie within the original lines, truth revealed only by the application of digital creativity.

- 57 New Horizons in Violence has a website for re-mixes of Bush statements that add electronic background music. A posting on the “Liberty Unites” website claims that the NHIV release in September 2003 of its video on “The World’s Worst Leaders” was soon downloaded by 60,000 “would-be terrorists.” Wearing Bush and Hussein masks, the video’s makers then distributed copies of the EP version to media outlets throughout Melbourne, Australia.²⁵ The video shows “George Bush” wearing a sheriff’s badge on a cowboy outfit. He chases then is chased by a squirt-gun-toting “Saddam.” Soon Bush wields a red-tipped plastic missile that he sometimes carries between his legs. “The world’s worst leaders” is a phrase that the video takes from the 2003 State of the Union message, only to sneak a quick and barely discernable “we’re” into the sentence. Soon the phrase expands to include “The world’s most dangerous regimes / with the world’s most dangerous weapons.” As we hear “Bush” repeat these phrases, we see pictures of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and other members of the administration. Several times, the phrase “I can’t see, because I can’t see. . . . I can’t see, because I can’t see” is sampled. Accurately, the video quotes Bush to say that “We cannot let terrorists or rogue nations hold this nation hos *tile* or hold our allies hos *tile*.” It also lets him mispronounce “nuc-le-ar” as “nuc-u-lar.” As in the Osymyoso track, we hear wild applause from both houses of Congress as Bush says, “We can’t help you, go home and die.” At the video’s end, Nelson Mandela’s voice intervenes with the unfinished suggestion that “A President who cannot think properly”
- 58 A second New Horizons in Violence video is entitled “I’m a War President with War on My Mind.” It opens with “Saddama Bin Ladin” asking the President whether “the war” was “based upon sound intelligence.” Next an interview with Tim Russert lets Bush give his take on “intelligence.” That we cannot be clear whether his hems and haws are enhanced electronically is unsettling. A loopy synthesizer line suggests vertigo or worse. Then Bush finds his footing with the declaration that “I need war. I need war. I want there to be a . . . full . . . war.” Things pick up as a rhythm

track sounds and the video explores various forms for his (actual) statement that “I’m a war President, with war on my mind.” Soon it becomes “I’m a war President, with war on my mind. I wish it wasn’t true.” These phrases intercut with Bush “saying” such things as “We need a good war. . . . I’m trying to avoid intelligence. . . . I want war. . . . I look forward to war.” By the end, “I’m a war president, with war on my mind” becomes a kind of chant. It serves to deconstruct Bush as President by “revealing” the arguable implications of his policies.

- 59 Matt Rogalsky’s “2 Minutes, 50 Seconds of Silence for the USA” also merits mention. Rogalsky is an English sound and video artist whose works include “The Smell of Money,” a video installation in the Judge Institute of Management Studies at Cambridge University that featured the display of one hundred currency exchange rates from around the world as they rose and fell in relative value in real time.²⁶ In response to the Iraq invasion, Rogalsky continued his earlier explorations of radio silence. To explore the “farmyard of ambient noise,” he had been digitally cropping silences from BBC radio broadcasts. Tests had revealed that, for every hour of audible sound on a radio broadcast, there is approximately twenty minutes of silence.²⁷ Thus “2 Minutes, 50 Seconds of Silence” presents an electronically enhanced version of the silence removed from the President’s address to the nation on March 17, 2003, on the eve of the Iraq invasion. The effect is disquieting. We hear vague echoes and a kind of whisper that might be the sound of the President’s breathing. Do we hear Darth Vader? Even more disconcerting is the cropped picture of Bush’s smile on the website where Rogalsky’s piece is available.²⁸

War and the System of Global Inequality

- 60 The economic and social consequence of war can range widely. Not all songs associated with opposition to the Iraq War focus on Bush, Blair, or even American policy. Several songs on the *Peace Not War* compilation, for example, attend to larger issues of war, poverty, violence, and racism.
- 61 One is a short, powerful cut by Ms. Dynamite (Niomi McLean-Daley). At twenty-one, she had a huge hit in England with “Booo!” – recorded on an independent U.K. “garage label.” She became known for a distinctive voice and a penchant for singing about ghetto violence. *A Little Deeper*, her first album, led one British critic to write that, “in an age in which British urban music is characterized chiefly by macho posturing and tedious materialism,

[the album] is a work of rare depth and vision.”²⁹ “Watch Over Them” is in the style of a spiritual. The theme is urban gang warfare. It is a plea for young black men to stop carrying guns, using violence, and participating in the drug trade as a response to white racism. Ms. Dynamite calls for a more directly political response. “You g’won like yer brave / that’s an illusion. / Brave man wouldn’t kill his own / would start a revolution.” She recognizes, though, that her call may remain unanswered; and she pleads, “oh, Father, watch over them.”

- 62 Another song of general social criticism is by Roots Manuva (Rodney Hylton Smith). Born in London to parents from a small village in Jamaica, he had a radio hit in England with “Brand New Second Hand.” He borrowed the phrase from his mother, who used it when he was growing up to describe used clothing she had acquired for the family.³⁰ Manuva’s contribution to *Peace not War* is “Juggle Things Proper.” Laced with apocalyptic references, it is a critique of globalization: “The beast keeps the masses toeing the line / with them sneaky tactics they’ll keep them boys running / so they can have a market for their guns and ammunition / keep the third world in a stagnant position . . . and all because the beast wants to gain control / of each and every mind, body, spirit and soul.”
- 63 “When R They Going to C” is a similar contribution by SuperNovar. A white underground rapper from London, he debuted on a small independent English label in 2001 with “When SuperNovar Explodes.” The flip side of his second major release, “Make Way,” is what appears in *Peace Not War*. “When Are They Going to C” criticizes the violence of urban youth that is celebrated in some popular rap records. SuperNovar’s message is more positive: “It could all end tomorrow if the war hits / but really I think you’d get more kicks / out of life if you tried livin’ a small bit more positive somebody’s gotta give.” The exposure in *Peace Not War* was undoubtedly the most that SuperNovar had had; more than the other contributors, he appears there as a truly underground and largely undiscovered artist.
- 64 A psychedelic critique of globalization is available in “Flag” by Alabama 3, a British techno-country band best known for the theme of HBO’s *Sopranos*. “Flag” is catchy, dancey. Its free play of images wed electronica with 1960s internationalism in something like an update of John Lennon’s “Imagine.” “Another psychopath in Iowa, loading up another round, while the NRA in Columbine hunt Marylyn Manson down.” Alabama 3 implies a

British connection with “hypocrites in Downing St. pouring petrol on the flames.” The lyrics explain how actions of the radical right serve the purposes of power elites, so that together they support a global system of economic inequality and oppression: “some mother in Jakarta / lays down her weary head / in some free trade zone compound / where they work you ’til you’re dead.”

- 65 Lyrics from System of a Down tie the Iraq War to globalization and media manipulation. “Boom” was released as a song and a video by a Los Angeles band that describes its music as “a manic brand of post hard-core everything.”³¹ The video was produced by Michael Moore. To jump-cut among demonstrations around the world on February 15, 2003, the video begins with a black screen that says, “On February 15, 2003 . . . 10 million people . . . in 600 cities around the world . . . participated in . . . the largest peace demonstration . . . in the history of the world . . . because we choose peace over war. . . . we were there too.” An insistent, hard-core beat emerges for a series of voice-overs as we see demonstrations in Capetown, Madrid, Tokyo, Minneapolis, Rome, with numbers like 7,500, 8,000, and 800,000. One stanza states, “Modern globalization / Coupled with condemnations / Unnecessary death / Matador corporations / Puppeting your frustrations / With the blinded flag / Manufacturing consent / Is the name of the game / The bottom line is money / Nobody gives a fuck / 4000 hungry children die per hour / From starvation / While billions spent on bombs / Create death showers.” The video cuts to the band for the chorus: “Boom, boom, boom, boom / Every time you drop the bomb / You kill the God your child has born / Boom, boom, boom, boom / Boom / boom / boom / boom / boom / boom / boom.” Although the video criticizes the war as an aspect of a globalizing political economy, it also shows the anti-war movement as global.
- 66 Nitin Sawhney’s “Cold and Intimate” was released as a single in 2001 and included in the album *Prophesy* because it surfaced again in *Peace Not War*. Born in East London, Sawhney has a long list of artistic accomplishments, including a comedy act for the BBC – “Secret Asians” – that became a television series. He has played jazz, remixed records for the likes of Paul McCartney and Sting, and produced several albums of his own. “Cold and Intimate” is a beautiful pop song that features the vocals of Nina Grace. It explores human relationships, including romance. Initially it seems to refer to a specific romance that was “cold and intimate,” but it evolves into a larger, more existential exploration. “We search within / We search without / We touch the corners of

our minds / We play our lives / Deceive our friends / We taste the fruit of our own lies / Pointless ventures / Endless games / We were never here at all / Nothing in this world / could ever change / while we're cold and intimate." In the anti-war compilation, these lyrics suggest how war stems from a lack of human intimacy and an unwillingness of humans to deepen connections with one another. For Sawhney, the path toward intimacy is spiritual: "Wisdom is the key / to the heart of prophecy / Synagogue, temple, mosque, church / each and every place we search."

- 67 For something different, Massive Attack, the hugely influential UK "trip-hop" band, contributed "Hymn of the Big Wheel" to *Peace Not War*. Its theme is the damage that humans do to nature and to one another in the process of destroying nature. Here electronica meets world-beat and gospel to form a kind of environmental hymn. The chorus is catchy: "The big wheel keeps on turning / on a simple line day by day." In between, the narrator speaks to his son, wishing for him a world where he can "be free / look up at the blue skies / beneath a new tree." Massive Attack laments the shadows / where the factories drone / On the surface of the wheel / they build another town." In the meantime, "one man struggle while another relaxes." With war in the background, the song is a lament for lost nature and a plea for a better world.
- 68 On the edges of anti-Iraq-War politics are three songs from the *None in Our Name* cd that explore implications of warfare. The inequalities fostered by automobility and the decline of public transportation concern "I Don't Have a Car but I Live in L.A." by Los Pachanga Pistols. Implicitly, at least, the song criticizes the heavy dependence of the U.S. economy on imported oil. In "Manzanar," the Looters allude insistently but perhaps cryptically to the U.S. internment in World War II of citizens from Japan: "How far . . . to Manzanar . . . tell me, tell me," the refrain runs. The Looters are a world-beat band together for almost twenty years from San Francisco, so they could be expected to know what we might not: that Manzanar, California was the site of one of the ten relocation camps; now registered as a National Historic Site, it is one of the best preserved. A third contribution from Les Claypool, lead singer of Primus, seems to target the media-military-industrial complex when he tells us through the voice of "ten o'clock newscaster, David Macalaster" that "the shit has just hit the fan." Macalaster asks, "wouldn't it be nice to live in a world, where everything's exactly as it seems?" As a realist, though, he notes that "instead we live in a world where bastards

come along to piss on your dreams.” So the song directs listeners to “get off your ass [since] vengeance is back in style.”

War as a General Theme

- 69 Many popular songs contribute to a more general kind of anti-war music. These might not mention the Iraq War at all, but their timing or appearance in anti-war compilations can mark them as relevant to Operation Iraqi Freedom. These works reach for universality by criticizing war in general, so that they relegate the Iraq War to possible implications.
- 70 “Lone Pine,” by the Mark of Cain, an Australian hard-core band, expresses the futility of war from the perspective of soldiers. John Scott’s speaks the bleak vocals over crunchy guitars: “stepping and trudging this endless grim mile / nothing ahead but the naked and the dead / deceased and devoid / nothing ahead / stepping and trudge / the naked and the dead / nothing moves forward, nothing ahead / deceased and devoid / the naked and the dead.”
- 71 Cat Power’s song, “Rockets,” turns up on many anti-war websites. Its attraction is in the atmosphere and ambiguity. This dark, grunge-like piece has its vocals rise over steadily building drum beats to ratchet tension. The song is a lament, a warning, a plea. “Where do the dreams of babies go? / ‘Cause you know they’re all so good,” asks Chan (pronounced Shawn) Marshall. “Where do the rockets find planets?” she wonders repeatedly. “Where are the dreams of babies going / ‘Cause you know they’re all gone fast.” The lyrics fall just on the other side of accessible to draw listeners in. The band is suggesting something awful about war, about demented dreams of world conquest.
- 72 Exploring power relationships at the dark heart of war, “The Bell” may become a classic of the folk genre. Pete Seeger sings his lyrics with Stephen Smith, and DJ Spooky provides the rhythm track. “A man at a desk” confronts “a child” who wants to leave for the “new world.” The man doesn’t want the child to leave, and warns that “I’m sounding drums of war.” But the child refuses to participate. Angry, the man asks, “Don’t you love your country?” The child turns the tables: “Yes, I do, but you don’t.” Now standing above the man, the child accuses him of lies that he calls “the truth.” The man accuses the child of cowardice: “You must be scared to die.” The child answers, “I’m prepared, you’re scared.” Then the man hears “a bell.” “Yes,” the child says, “it’s ringing you to hell.” Instantly recognizable, the Seeger voice and effective folk

repetition join the melody, crescendo, and trance rhythm track to create a sense of something old but new. “The Bell” draws on familiar tropes to reinvent the folk form for current audiences.

- 73 In “Rape (Tactic of War),” Fun’da’mental attacks warfare through one of its horrifying practices. The group is known for infectious trance beats and leftist politics. In this piece, the opening synthesizer suggests that a wild disco track is on the way; but electronic street drums make a noisy entrance, and the song becomes a frenetic dance track. It samples some vocals, but Louis Farrakan is the only one speaking in English. No continuous vocal track elucidates the title; instead a sheet of lyrics provides words that may be read as the song plays. They say that rape is a tactic with a “long history” in warfare, including atrocities by European conquerors of the Americas, English conquerors of Scotland, German soldiers in World War I, and Soviet soldiers in World War II. “Rape is not an accident of war, or an accidental adjunct to armed conflict. Its widespread use in times of conflict reflects the special terror it holds for women, the special contempt it displays for its victims.” The song ends with the suggestion that “rape will continue to be a favourite weapon of the aggressor,” and it asks, “have any of them thought how it would feel if it was one of their own who were the victim?” To focus on “one of their own” rather than themselves might be faulted as paternalistic. But Fun’da’mental deserves kudos for tackling a subject rarely, if ever, addressed by popular musicians – even “political” ones.
- 74 Lenny Kravitz earned some acclaim for releasing an anti-war song during the clamor for war. Infectious beats and catchy hooks mark much of his music, and Kravitz has not inclined to taking many chances, political or musical. His themes have been neo-psychedelic, summoning images of parties, love, and nature that don’t threaten the middle-class or middle-aged Americans who provide many of his listeners. Thus “We Want Peace” is an anti-war tune, but it is generic enough to offend only the most determined war-monger. It repeats a few vague lines over a forgettable rock-funk rhythm. “It’s time for the revolution!” Kravitz shouts, but what revolution is unclear. “We’re at the crossroads of the human race,” he continues. “Why are we kicking our own ass?” The title is the only place that “peace” appears. Kravitz originally released this tune exclusively on MTV’s “Rock the Vote” website. Kazem Al Sahir, probably the best-known Iraqi musician at the time, introduces the song by playing his oud, a Middle Eastern lute. So the cut seems designed to suggest a

political position without criticizing any particular leader or policy.

- 75 Another major artist who released a vague song and a related video in conjunction with the Iraq War is Madonna. The lyrics to “American Life” do not mark it as even minimally pro-peace or anti-war. Yet she was reported to have “pulled” the video before releasing it in the U.S. The song poses questions about whether “modern American life” lives up to its promises, and it seems to consider Madonna’s career in that context: “I tried to stay ahead / I tried to stay on top / I tried to play the part / But somehow I forgot / Just what I did it for.” It is another in a long line of musical ruminations on the American ethic of success: nothing shocking or even subversive.
- 76 The video is another matter. It begins with male and female models in a fashion show with a military motif. It follows the models to bathroom stalls where they express anger at one another and frustration with their situation. At times, it cuts to Madonna, dressed in a military outfit while bombs, one a nuclear warhead, explode behind her. Next it moves to a battleship. Here women in military uniforms participate in a dance routine led by Madonna, as jump cuts to planes and bombs occasionally intervene. It intercuts pictures of children, perhaps Iraqi, as well. Later Madonna hops into a camouflaged Mini-Cooper and drives it onto the ramp of the fashion show. She jumps onto the car, where a machine gun has been mounted. Then she lobbs a grenade into the crowd, where it is caught by none other than “George Bush.” He flips open the top, and it turns out to be a lighter. With a look of satisfaction, he lights a cigar; and the video ends.³²
- 77 The video enhances the song’s meaning. Alone, the song is a gentle criticism of American consumerism. At most, it might voice self-indulgent misgivings of a famous and wealthy superstar. The music video connects American prosperity to an infrastructure of war, death, and destruction. But Madonna made the video unavailable soon after its European release. Her statement said that the video had been made “before the war” and was not “appropriate to air it at this time.” She continued, “Due to the volatile state of the world and out of sensitivity and respect to the armed forces, who I support and pray for, I do not want to risk offending anyone who might misinterpret the meaning of this video.”³³ Skeptics wondered whether this was an attempt to publicize the album. Noting that Madonna had made a career of provocation, Alexis Petridis of the *Guardian* thought “The notion that anybody would be offended by a video featuring a troupe of

overweight dancers in military fatigues, and a George Bush look-alike lighting a cigar with a hand grenade, is faintly ridiculous.”³⁴ The cynicism was fed by the fact that the album was widely panned as a mere re-tread of earlier styles.³⁵ A video withdrawn to attract attention might indicate a career in decline. Is it more charitable to infer that Madonna, fearing public backlash, decided to censor herself?

Interpretations

- 78 The wealth of anger, hope, love, and invention that went into creating this sizable set of cultural resources can make us wonder what they might mean for politics. Simple relations of cause and effect are unlikely in either direction to link popular music to social policy or even public opinion. In narrowly instrumental terms, recent anti-war music seems to have had little impact on policy or the latest presidential election. And to imagine that things might have been otherwise is probably naïve.
- 79 Nonetheless the music provides provocations that, taken together, suggest an alternative network of political meanings. Such networks need not be ideologies or cultural discourses, and this one differs. It is not derived logically as political ideologies typically are, and it is neither organic nor comprehensive in the manner of a culture or a discourse. Instead it is a loosely connected and not entirely articulated set of premises, suppositions, facts, reasons, arguments, and articles of faith. Almost by definition, the provocations that constitute this network of meanings are incomplete, sometimes obvious, and perhaps even trite. Yet they should be taken seriously by political leaders and policy-makers. In the present case, they provide insights into an evolving global opposition to the beginning of the war, its conduct, and a variety of American policies that get interpreted as arrogant or hostile to international diplomacy and human rights.

Provocations

- 80 Among the many provocative themes in anti-Iraq-War music are four sets of special significance for ongoing politics:
- 81 **September 11:**
9/11 should have been predicted.
9/11 was used as an excuse for war.
9/11 was not simply the result of a few “evil” people.
9/11 deserved a military response, but not one conducted in the

moralistic terms of the Bush administration.

A leader who has shown little interest in previous injustices cannot claim the “moral high ground” after an event like 9/11.

If they feel severely threatened, the weak will use any means at their disposal to attack the strong.

82 Operation Iraqi Freedom:

The Iraq War was fought for oil.

The U.S. has bombed more countries than any nation in history.

American leaders were determined to go to war in Iraq, period.

You cannot believe the political leaders who organized the Iraq War.

Organizers of the Iraq War are spiritually dead.

Our lives are chaotic, and the Iraq War will make them more so.

The Iraq War is part of a larger war against the unruliness of popular cultures.

The Iraq War is just another in an endless series of American wars.

The Iraq War is part of an attempt at world domination.

The War in Iraq is part of a larger war “on nature.”

The Iraq War is an aspect of globalization.

Costs of the Iraq War in lives and money are staggering, while children around the world are hungry.

The Iraq War has devastated children, and this will lead to future wars.

83 President George W. Bush:

He is stupid.

He is in over his head.

Other world leaders don't respect him.

He is an illegitimate leader.

He is an evil genius.

He is a hypocrite.

He is a liar.

His silences are more revealing than his words.

He tells the truth, but it isn't always obvious and can take effort to reveal.

The Iraq War was the result of George Bush's midlife crisis.

Toni Blair's commitments to George Bush are inexplicable.

He and Saddam Hussein are two sides of the same coin.

He turned against Hussein, a former ally, when it became expedient.

He is a Christian who doesn't understand Christianity.

He is an evil monster of Biblical proportions.

He is the cowboy with a black hat.

He just *thinks* he's cowboy (with a white hat).

He relishes telling people that they will die.
He doesn't smile, he smirks.
He was a cokehead.
He is a sadist.
He loves war.

84 War:

Resisting war is not unpatriotic.
Peace cannot be achieved through war.
Revolution is needed to stop violence and war.
War leads, by necessity, to internal political repression.
Political opposition to war can make a difference.
Wars cannot be separated from the profits they generate.
We must treat the violence of poverty and the violence of war in tandem.
Unsatisfying personal relationships are the basis for violence and war.
Organizers of wars see urban violence as in their political interest.
Positive spirituality is the best response to organizers of wars.
Life goes on, even in the face of endless wars.

Speculations

- 85 A notable quantity of music was produced, released, re-released, or made newly relevant as a result of the invasion of Iraq. The music is highly varied in style: rap, hard-core, punk, rhythm and blues, folk, rock, jazz, electronica, avant garde, and others. Yet virtually none had significant play on radio or music television. It is not obvious why.
- 86 The best comparison might be to music against the Vietnam War, for this was the last time that much popular music expressed doubts about a major military intervention by America. Various anti-war songs from that era had commercial success, and some are now acclaimed as classics. The list can grow long, but a beginning makes the point: "The Masters of War" by Bob Dylan; "Ohio" by Crosby, Stills, Nash; "Volunteers" by Jefferson Airplane; "Wishin' to Die' Rag" by Country Joe and the Fish; Jimi Hendrix's version of the Star Spangled Banner played live at Woodstock; Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On;" "Fortunate Son" and "Bad Moon Arisin'" by Credence Clearwater Revival; "Ball of Confusion" by the Temptations; and Edwin Starr's "War."
- 87 The puzzle gets greater as the political and military situations in Iraq show few gains and stark setbacks.³⁶ It takes on an edge as

disenchantment with the war's conduct has grown within the ranks of the military.³⁷ The same goes for disillusionment within the Republican Party.³⁸

- 88 Three explanations come to easily mind. One is that “political” music doesn’t sell in the U.S. A second possibility is that this particular batch of anti-war music isn’t good, because it has been didactic and simplistic. It is not, some say, among the best work of the few commercially successful artists who have released songs in response to the Iraq War. A third thought is that the successful artists with anti-war songs been too few. Thus the sources of anti-war music this time around have had a double burden: they have had to pull themselves into the commercial mainstream even as they have had to accommodate their politics to current musical trends.
- 89 It is true that the popular lyrics in English that enjoys commercial success are seldom political in overt ways. Music sales favor themes of romance, sex, anger, angst, or material success. There is a tradition of treating “political music” as though it must “break into” the mainstream. As for comparisons between the wars in Iraq and Vietnam, the 1960s are often considered with some justification to be the heyday of politics in popular music. Nonetheless commercially successful artists with political messages have appeared frequently in the recent history of popular music. English punk was highly politicized, and the Clash achieved some success with “London Calling.” Early East Coast rap produced successful political artists, such as Public Enemy and KRS-1. In the early 1990s, riot grrls, Bikini Kill and L7 voiced feminist themes while gaining airplay, at least on independent radio stations. It is not true that political music is simply unmarketable.
- 90 Is it true that recent anti-war songs aren’t commercially viable because they aren’t good? Or at least, is it that they aren’t aesthetically compatible with current commercial arrangements? To judge the quality of whole kinds of music, especially in commercial terms, is difficult at best. The musical tastes of pop audiences are notoriously fickle. Yet the number of songs and breadth of styles turned against the Iraq War leave any blanket dismissal of their quality doubtful. From my perspective as a listener, some of the music is accessible and engaging. It has pop hooks to catch casual listeners. Of course, radio jockeys would have to make an effort to put this music into public play in order for a wide swath of listeners to make their own judgments about its

quality. Few seem willing to do so.

- 91 Yet it is easy enough to agree that anti-Iraq-War songs from “name” artists such as Public Enemy and the Beastie Boys is not as good as their commercially successful music. On the other hand, Billy Bragg and Ani DiFranco never were staples of commercial radio. John Mellencamp is another matter, and “To Washington” is excellent, but it is done in a style unlikely to capture radio attention. As one dj from a “classic rock” station has said, moreover, “It’s been a long time since pop radio had to play a new R.E.M. song or a new John Mellencamp song or a new Lenny Kravitz song.”³⁹ Thus the political music of newer *and* established artists could be ignored by radio arbiters; and so far, it has been.
- 92 Most commercially successful artists – Fifty Cent, Eminem, Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears – either ignored the Iraq War or, like Spears, were quoted in support of the President’s policies.⁴⁰ A possible exception is Outkast, but “Bombs Over Baghdad” appeared just before its major break into the mainstream. The height of the Vietnam War, by contrast, was also a high point for many of artists of that time. This was not mere coincidence. They couldn’t be ignored, so they weren’t. The political situation even contributed to the commercial success of some such as Country Joe and the Fish. Yet the music had to be played to be heard, and it had to be heard to engage people musically or politically.
- 93 Music against to the Iraq War has been ignored in important part because it *could* be. These days radio-station managers and djs show no interest in pushing boundaries or challenging listeners. Radio, even “college radio,” seems principally concerned to confirm expectations both musically and politically. Independent stations are often dominated by “emo,” a version of white punk organized around an ideology of teenage-male romanticism. The political economy of an increasingly consolidated communication industry reinforces the homogenization. The largest owner of radio stations in the U.S. is Clear Channel, owned until recently by Lowry Mays, who has close ties to the Bush family. The company’s pacs have given over \$400,000 to Republican candidates.⁴¹ That leaves station managers unlikely to support play for songs with an anti-war message. In more general terms, communications conglomerates are unlikely to play music with even the slightest chance of antagonizing modest segments of potential listeners.
- 94 Careerism in the music business discourages top-selling artists from political risks. At times, popular music has been dominated

by talented amateurs who succeeded by heavy touring only after honing their musical skills for a long time on some local scene. At the moment, however, success often comes to artists spotted (ideally at an early age) by talent scouts who manage for commercial payoff. People successful in such a system seldom challenge any larger systems of power that it reinforces.

- 95 It might be inaudible over the radio and therefore selling much less, but interesting, creative, even subversive “political” music is alive and well. The history of popular music suggests that a creative underground presages changes in the mainstream. The consolidation of the communication industry might disrupt this pattern. Yet the global underground emerging for pop music is not likely to disappear soon, given devices for recording at home then distributing music over the Internet. Tune in there for new musical and political possibilities that challenge dominant systems of power.

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Notes

¹ See Lee Andersen, *Battle Notes: The Music of the Vietnam War*, XX, WI, Savage Press, 2000; Kenton Clymer, *The Vietnam War: It's History, Music, and Literature*, El Paso, Texas Western Press, 1999; Jim Cullen, “Borne in the U.S.A.: Springsteen and the Burden of Vietnam,” *Born in the U.S.A.*, New York, HarperPerennial, 1997, pp. 75-98; Charles Krauthammer, “This Is Hardly Vietnam,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2004; James Perone, *Songs of the Vietnam Conflict*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 2001.

² Oppositional music has tended to favor a few genres: folk, rock, rap, and techno. The musical genre and culture inclined to support the war has been country, but the full relationship between country music and the war is complicated. Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks provoked a backlash from others in the industry with her declaration during the lead-up to the war of shame that George W. Bush is from Texas. See Warren St. John, “The Backlash Grows Against Celebrity Activists,” *New York Times*, March 23, 2003, p. 9-1. In 2003, Toby Keith sparred with ABC News anchor Peter Jennings about Keith’s removal from a Fourth of July television special where he planned to play his patriotic hit “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue.” Yet a variety

of country singers – including Steve Earle, Emmy Lou Harris, and Lucinda Williams – have spoken against the Iraq War. See Craig Havighurst, “Iraq War Splits Music Industry Here,” *Tennessean.com*, March 4, 2003.

³ See Susan Page, “Is Iraq Becoming Another Vietnam?” *USA Today*, April 14, 2004, p. A1; Kirk Johnson, “Views of Iraq through Vietnam Eyes,” *New York Times*, May 3, 2004, p. 16; Paul Krugman, “The Vietnam Analogy,” *New York Times*, April 16, 2004, p. 19; “Senator Kennedy, Iraq is No Vietnam,” *National Review Online*, April 8, 2004; Evan Thomas, “The Vietnam Question,” *Newsweek*, April 19, 2004, pp. 24-26.

⁴ The definitive scholarship on distinctions between “music” and “noise” is still Jaques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987. For a variation on this theme, the distinction between “dirty” (distorted) and “clean” music, see Robert M. Poss, “Distortion Is Truth,” *Leonardo Music Journal*, 8, 1998, pp. 45-48; Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, especially pp. 36-206.

⁵ “Give Peace a Chance,” *New Musical Express*, <http://www.nme.com/news/105157.htm>.

⁶ http://www.lacarte.org/songs/anti-war/index.html#Search_Anti-War_Songs.

⁷ <http://www.sfheart.com/protest/index1.html>.

⁸ <http://www.newsongsforpeace.org/>.

⁹ <http://www.onlisareinsradar.com/archives/001160.php>.

¹⁰ <http://onegoodmove.org/1gm/1gmarchive/000628.html>.

¹¹ <http://www.nowar.ca/top40.php>.

¹² See Rebee Garofalo, *Rockin' the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, New York, South End Press, 1991; Carson Holloway, *All Shook Up: Music, Passion, and Politics*, Dallas, Spence, 2000; Mark Mattern, *Acting in Concert: Music, Community, and Political Action*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1998; Ray Pratt, *Rhythm and Resistance: Explorations in the Political Uses of Popular Music*, New York, Praeger, 1990.

- 13 Ron Eyerman and others, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- 14 <http://www.johnlestermusic.com/>.
- 15 <http://www.annonline.com/interviews/990715/biography.html>.
- 16 <http://www.seizetheday.org/action.htm>.
- 17 Genesis 28:12, *King James Version*.
- 18 The streaming video can be viewed at the Jynkz website: <http://www.jynkz.com/yourwar.html>.
- 19 "Person of the Year," *Time Online*, <http://www.time.com/time/>, December 20, 2004.
- 20 <http://www.beastieboys.com/beasties.php?Year=2003#9>.
- 21 Excerpts of the performance have been remixed with Guns n Roses, "Welcome to the Jungle," Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train," and AC DC's "T.N.T." See "Howard Dean's Psycho Rant Remix," *methodshop.com*, January 20, 2004, <http://www.methodshop.com/fun/politics/dean/index.stm>; "'Yeagh,' The Remix," *Newsweek.com*, January 22, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4021146/site/newsweek/>.
- 22 <http://www.thesmokehammer.com/>.
- 23 <http://www.discogs.com/artist/Osymyso>.
- 24 <http://www.osymyso.com/>.
- 25 <http://www.rfsafe.com/tributes/article352.html>.
- 26 <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/dp/2001021901>.
- 27 See "Artist to Release cd of Silence," *BBC News*, October 24, 2001, <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/dp/2001021901>.
- 28 <http://mrogalsky.web.wesleyan.edu/gwb170303/>.
- 29 "Ms. Dynamite," *girl.com.au*, <http://www.girl.com.au/msdynamite.htm>.

30 “Roots Manuva Biography,” <http://www.rootsmanuva.co.uk/biography.shtml>.

31 <http://www.systemofadown.com/montage.html>.

32 The version noted here is the third available. A first showed Madonna throwing the hand grenade into the crowd at the fashion show. A second showed “Bush” light the cigar of “Saddam Hussein” at the show. The edits may be seen as Madonna’s attempt to soften the video. See “Madonna Yanks Controversial American Life Video,” *MTV.com*, March 31, 2003, <http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1470876/20030331/madonna.jhtml?headlines=true>.

33 *Ibid.*

34 “Madonna: American Life,” *Guardian Unlimited*, April 11, 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/reviews/story/0,11712,933936,00.html>.

35 See Bill Aicher, “Disaster Peace,” *Music Critic.com*, April 22, 2003, http://www.music-critic.com/pop/madonna_americanlife.htm.

36 See Daniel B. Schneider, “Driven from Iraq, Aid Groups Reflect on Work Half Begun,” *New York Times*, November 14, 2004, p. 13; Edward Wong and Eric Schmitt, “Iraq Falls Short on Vote Security,” *New York Times*, November 23, 2004, pp. 1 and 3.

37 Specialist Thomas Jerry Wilson’s questions for Secretary Donald Rumsfeld about the lack of vehicle armor for American troops indicated deeper, moral problems within the military. See “Strains Show As Iraq Stretches Military Thin,” *USA Today*, December 10, 2004, p. 23A; Thomas E. Ricks, “Rumsfeld Gets an Earful from Troops,” *Washington Post*, December 9, 2004, p. A1.

38 In December, after the incident involving Specialist Wilson, Senator John McCain said that he had “no confidence” in the Defense Secretary’s conduct of the war. See Stephen Farrell and Ali Hussein, “John McCain Savages Rumsfeld on Iraq,” *Times* [London], December 14, 2004, p. 30.

39 Andrew S. Hughes, “Anti-War Music Skips Beats,” *South Bend Tribune*, April 6, 2003, p. A1.

40 During an interview with CNN’s Tucker Carlson that followed

“the kiss” with Madonna at a Grammy ceremony, Spears was asked, “Do you trust this President?” Carlson responded, “Yes I do. . . . [We must] trust our President in every decision that he makes” (Joe Sciacca, “Bush Bursts Kerry’s Pop Star Bubble,” *Boston Herald*, September 8, 2003, p. 4). The interview clip appears in Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 911*.

41 Sanford Nowlin, “Money & Politics: Law Doesn’t Keep Companies’ Cash from Reaching Its Intended Target,” *San Antonio Express-News*, October 3, 2004, p. 1L.

“Give Peace a Chance,” *New Musical Express*, <http://www.nme.com/news/105157.htm>.