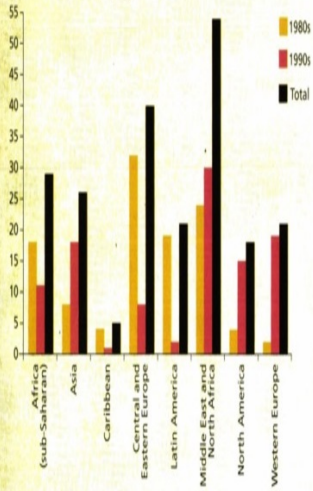
SOUND FACTS

While radical musicians often risk censorship or worse in many parts of the world, the global entertainment industry helps keep them poor and disenfranchised while reaping huge profits.

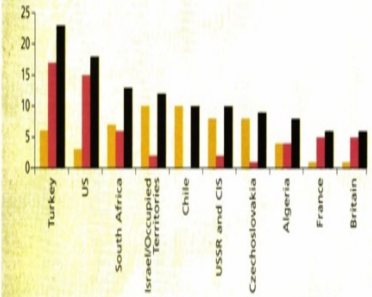
A cacophony of censorship

Index on Censorship has reported 214 cases of music censorship in the last 20 years. A breakdown of these incidents, though not necessarily an accurate reflection of music censorship worldwide, provides some insight.[1]

Top censors (1980-99) by region[1]



Top 10 censors (1980-99)[1]

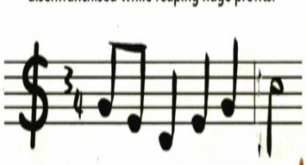


- 57% of British students support censorship to younger audiences when musicians use their songs to convey political, violent or sexually explicit material. 38% of students see it as a form of art that should not be censored at all.[2]

Selling sound

- Britain buys more music per person than any other country – four units each annually.[3]
- Music products represented more than 25% of all cultural imports and exports in the world's market in 1998, up from 20% in 1980.[3]
- North America accounted for 41.9% of the value of global music sales in 2002.[3]
- Since 1997 the main exporter of audio equipment has been Mexico, responsible for 18% of trade in 1998 ($6.2 billion). Most is manufactured in *maquilladoras* or sweatshops operating in export-processing zones just over the border from the US.[3]
- There are approximately 420 radio receivers for every 1,000 people in the world: an average of one radio receiver per person in the rich countries compared to one for every four persons in the Majority World.[3]

JOKER PLANET IMAGES



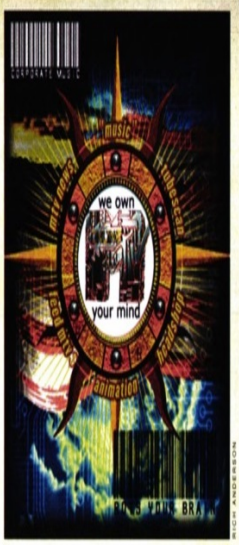
Cashing in or selling out?

- Total US gross touring-dollars for the year rose 8.6% to a record $1.7 billion, with record attendance up 6.2% to almost 42 million.[8]
- Paul McCartney was the top touring artist in the world for 2002, with a global take totalling $126.1 million ($98.8 million in North America alone). U2 held the title for 2001, raking in $109.7 million.[8]

FRANCO ORIGLIA / GETTY IMAGES

The Gang of Four

- In terms of sales, just four corporations – AOLTimeWarner (EMI Group), Vivendi (UMG), Sony (SME) and Bertelsmann (BMG) – control approximately 85% of the global music market.[4]
- In 2002 the then 'big five' (EMI has since merged with AOLTimeWarner) paid out $67.4 million and distributed $75.7 million in CDs to public and non-profit groups to settle a lawsuit led by New York and Florida over alleged price-fixing in the late 1990s. Consumers were estimated to have been overcharged by $480 million.[5]
- In the US, four groups – Chancellor, Clear Channel, Infinity and Capstar – control 63% of Top 40 Radio stations (61 million listeners) and 56% of Country Music stations (28 million listeners).[6]
- Radio, promotional and advertising giant Clear Channel, which owns more than 1,200 radio stations across the US, added only 3,000 songs by just 550 artists to their playlists in 2002.



RICK ANDERSON

The music piracy myth

During the recent downturn in the global economy, record companies artificially deflated sales in order to strengthen their arguments that music piracy was severely crippling the industry.

- While it is true that CD shipments were down 10% in 2001, in terms of revenue per title, 2000 was the best year in industry history.[10]
- Companies deliberately reduced the number of recordings manufactured from 38,900 titles in 1999 to a mere 27,000 titles in 2000 and 2001.[10]
- In both 2000 and 2001, there were fewer new CDs released than in any year since 1993, and revenues per title were at record highs of over $500,000 per title, from a decade-long average of around $400,000.[10]
- Over the last 5 years, the global recording industry has sold more than 2 billion items of recorded music making a retail value of more than $20 billion.[10]

Musical feudalism

While a select few musicians make millions, the majority are beholden to the record company they signed with and earn a pittance. Steve Albini – an independent record producer famous for his work on Nirvana's *In Utero* – suggests that many bands who sign with major labels may be earning about a third the salary of an average convenience-store employee.[9]

Sisters are doing it for themselves

The world's most recorded artist is a toss-up between Lata Mangeshkar – the 'Nightingale of India' – and Bollywood legend Asha Bhosle. Both are extremely popular and prolific Indian film singers and they also happen to be sisters. Between them they have recorded nearly 100,000 songs in over 20 different languages.[11]

1 Martin Cloonan and Reebee Garofalo, *Policing Pop*, Temple University Press, US, 2003, based on data collected by *Index on Censorship*. 2 Index on Censorship and Orange, *Rebel hearts heed authority's words*. www.indexonline.org/news/20030203_a2z_survey.shtml 3 UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), *International Flows on Selected Cultural Goods 1980-98*. www.uis.unesco.org/en/pub/doc/facts&figures_eng.pdf 4 US Federal Trade Commission, *Statement of Chairman Robert Pitofsky and Commissioners Sheila F Anthony, Mozelle W Thompson, Orson Swindle, and Thomas B Leary*, www.ftc.gov/os/2000/09/musicstatement.htm 5 Curtis Lee Fulton, 'Record Labels Pirated American CD Customers Too', *The Online Reporter*, 11 October 2002, Issue 317, New York and London. 6 Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and other industry groups as well as the Future of Music Coalition, Association for Independent Music and the American Federation of Musicians, *Joint Statement on Current Issues in Radio*, abcnews.go.com/sections/pdf/radioissuesstatement.pdf 7 US Commerce Committee hearing, *Media Ownership: Radio Industry*, 30 January 2003, http://commerce.senate.gov/pdf/mays013003.pdf 8 *Billboard Magazine*, 13 April 2003. 9 Steve Albini, *The Problem with Music* www.negativland.com/albini.html 10 George Ziemann, 'RIAA's Statistics Don't Add Up to Piracy', *Mac Wizards Music*, 11 December 2002, www.azoz.com/music/features/0008.htm 11 Based on statistics mentioned in Broughton, Ellingham, Muddyman and Trillo, *World Music: The Rough Guide*, London, 1994 and estimates of recordings made since 1991.

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Pariah bea

Dalits in India are using traditional music to subvert the caste system. **Julian Silverman** explains how.

'NO-ONE will say this openly. Gandhi has done the greatest harm… he did not intend any good for the country!' Professor Subramanian, retired scholar of South Indian classical music, a man of the highest Brahmin caste, turns in his chair back to the singers' recital. He sniffs loudly and again turns to complain bitterly. The 'untouchables of India' are getting above themselves, he insists. They should know their place at the bottom of the Hindu hierarchy. Gandhi campaigned all his life for greater tolerance for the country's most dispossessed peoples – the Dalits – whom he called *harijans* or 'children of god'. Subramanian was getting hot under his Nehru-style collar just thinking about the upstarts. 'They say the *harijans* are being crushed, but in fact it is the Brahmins being crushed!'

The Dalits[1] are fighting back. Born into marginal existences they increasingly assert their human rights. They are by far the largest group amongst the fifth of India's population who live in extreme poverty and destitution. Condemned to labouring in the fields of high-caste families in return for a subsistence diet, millions are undernourished and exploited by landowners, officials and moneylenders.

The unique music of the Dalits has long been viewed by high-caste élites as a degenerate culture born of an essentially 'impure people'. Their presence and cultural practices are viewed as polluting by people of high status.

Professor Subramanian dismisses all music not made by people of high caste. During the recital in Chennai (formerly Madras), cultural capital of the refined classical music of the Brahmins known as Carnatic, he says:

'There is folk music and classical music. Carnatic music is scientifically organized, folk music is not so… people who are not properly trained just sing out of emotion, enthusiasm. Folk music can be sung by any child. Quacks! Carnatic is not like this, you need a talent.'

Despite the prejudice of people of high caste, those at the gutter level of the Hindu hierarchy are reclaiming their music. It is becoming a source of powerful resistance, the basis of new and revolutionary identities. As Dalit women come together to share and find solutions to their problems at meetings of self-help groups in villages throughout India, they learn that they are not to blame for their individual problems. They become 'conscientized' – in the term coined by Paolo Freire, the Brazilian revolutionary educator – to the fact that their problems are rooted in an oppressive social structure. With this realization comes a new sense of self and community as they band together to fight for fair wages, access to clean water, electricity and land rights.

Ambu, an activist with the NGO Village Action Group, describes how Dalit women use song in their daily struggles. 'The women are used to singing about agriculture work… on suffering, temples, gods, but sing here about problems and solutions. We sing songs about the problems of women, dowry, chastity, about who will change these problems. We sing songs at women's meetings. The power of the songs is that they help women to pick up meanings fast.'

A thousand humiliations

Mr Arokiasamy is a Dalit. He is an intense man, whose heart burns at how untouchability is imposed upon communities such as the Pariyar through a thousand humiliations. At another nearby grassroots organization, the People's Multipurpose Development Society, he describes the many village teashops in which Dalits are still forbidden to drink out of the same glasses used by people of high caste. In certain villages they are prevented from 'contaminating' entire streets by being forbidden to walk in shoes or ride bicycles.

Arokiasamy may have been born at the wrong end of the Hindu caste ladder, but like Professor Subramanian he too is critical of Gandhi's position on caste. An intensely religious man, Gandhi believed that the caste system of the Hindu scriptures is divinely ordained and should remain in

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