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# Music and sound as discourse and ideology

## The case of the national anthem

*David Machin*

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### Introduction

Like all semiotic resources, sound and music have very specific affordances, which means they can be used in special ways. Scholars have argued that music has a special kind of force as a carrier of collective memory and tradition, working more, in ‘an emotional and almost physical sense’ (Eyerman 1999, p. 119). Unlike texts and pictures, the sounds in music enter and flow through our bodies, calling us to move with their rhythms, and feel the texture of their pitches and sound qualities (Machin & Richardson 2011). A migrant child *sat* in a classroom while their classmates sing the daily national anthem may not understand the words, but they will physically experience its power (Abril 2012). In this chapter, I show how we can document and analyse the way this power and the ideas, values and identities that it communicates, are realised. I explain how we can approach sound as discourse using the case study of two national anthems: ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ and ‘O Canada’. The first part of the chapter introduces what a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) approach to sound looks like. It then moves on to apply these ideas to the anthems by looking at the lyrics and then at how these are realised through sound.

### Sound, ideology and discourse

MCDA assumes that communicators deploy different kinds of semiotic resources to achieve particular goals, to communicate specific ideas, attitudes and identities, in other words, to disseminate discourses that support their own interest. In this chapter, I show that it is productive to take these principles to approach sound in a social-semiotic sense where we identify the underlying resources available to communicators, presenting these as a kind of inventory of meaning potentials. In the analysis of specific texts, it is then possible to look at how these meaning potentials are used to achieve particular communicative goals and meanings. In practice, this kind of analysis, by identifying the building blocks of sound as communication, allows us to look, not just at what sound communicates, but how it does so. Barthes (1977) argued the need for a critical approach to sound, but urged that a systematic analysis of sound must be able to go beyond the kinds of adjectives we commonly use when

we say a sound or piece of music is ‘romantic’ or ‘uplifting’. The aim of MCDA when applied to sound should be to do just this, by describing the details of the features of the music that might communicate such things, and to show how these are used for ideological purposes.

Important in a social-semiotic approach is that semiotic resources will always carry traces of the socio-political contexts in which they were formed (Bezemer & Kress 2010) and will have certain meanings, therefore, built into them (Kress & Selander 2012), which reflect the ideologies and kinds of social relations of this context. To some extent, these meanings are regulated and crucially will then go on to shape social interaction. In this sense, we are interested in the underlying resources available for communication in sound and music, but we depart from a fundamentally social question: what semiotic resources are drawn upon in communication, or discourse, in order to carry out ideological work? Here, we ask this specifically of the national anthem.

But how can all this apply to sound and music? Tagg (1984) has worked on how sounds and music emerge over time as a set of established associations that can communicate specific ideas, attitudes and identities. He was interested in the emergence of sounds and music as communicative acts in hunting-and-gathering-type societies and how they could be used to communicate about the nature of activities, such as initiation rites, marriage ceremonies, harvests and the hunt. Tagg suggests:

Obviously, the pace required in conjunction with a hunt – intensity of heartbeat, speed of eye, of hands, arms, feet and breathing – will be far greater than that needed for singing a child to sleep [...] In the case of the hunt, quick, sudden movements enacted with the precision of split seconds are vital ingredients of the activity, but they would be detrimental when trying to send a child to sleep.

(Tagg 1984, p. 8)

What is clear here is that there are much more precise and predictable aspects of sound as communication than we tend to assume and that these can convey quite clear ideas, attitudes, and sequences of events and identities. So, we cannot use sharp sounds to mean relaxed, nor soft lingering sounds to convey urgency. It is not just that music is ‘scary’ or ‘fun’, but that it can communicate specific things about what goes on in a social practice, about how it should be evaluated and what kinds of identities are involved. Here, we begin to see the sense of sound and music being used to code the world.

What Tagg does not address in this case is the ideological nature of this coding. Scholars have pointed to the ideological nature of marriage ceremonies as part of promoting a ‘princess’ model of femininity and serving to legitimise patriarchal notions of gender relations (Wolf 1991; Otnes & Pleck 2003). The music of the wedding ceremony is part of this process.

So too, anthropologists have drawn attention to the way that hunting as an activity is deeply related to power and politics within a society, often providing little in terms of food supply compared to the agricultural work of women, which also requires skills, planning and collective work (Lee 1969). But the sound and music used to represent the hunt foregrounds and positively evaluates certain kinds of skills, activities and identities.

From a social-semiotic perspective, we can see in the case of both the hunt and the wedding that the communicator draws on a set of available meanings in sound, as regards things like pitch and roughness and as regards different kinds of rhythms, all of which come – to some extent – loaded with meaning potentials, to provide an account of social practices,

of what happens, of what attitudes and identities are required. It is this kind of observation that I want to extend here to think about the sounds used to communicate about the nation and nationalism.

There has, in fact, been a lack of scholarly work into the details of music semantics. One notable exception, drawn on extensively in this chapter is Cooke's (1959) attempt to identify the language of music through a study of classical and opera music, looking for the kind of patterns in uses of pitch, melodies, articulation, notation and rhythms that were used for different purposes. So, for example, he established that certain patterns of expanded or limited pitch ranges in melodies clearly related to how emotionally expressive or contained a character was to be depicted. Abrupt and more sudden articulation in how notes were sounded related to confidence, arrogance or certainty, whereas longer lingering notes would be used for emotional dwelling and thoughtfulness.

One rare example of scholarship that related sound meanings to ideology was McClary (1991) who considered gender representations in music. She argued that there is a long tradition of representing men and women in European music using particular kinds of instruments, rhythms and phrasing. For men, we find dotted rhythms, melodies that ascend, notes that are played sharply with staccato. We find louder brass instruments and a wide pitch range in the melodies. In contrast, for women, we find softer, connected and longer articulation of notes, softer instruments such as woodwind and strings and a narrower pitch range in the melodies. The difference between the two, she suggests, is that the male is more precise, outward-looking and assertive. The female is more subjective, inward-looking and gentle.

It is this level of observation about sound qualities, connecting them to ideology, that is the aim in this chapter in the case of the national anthem and the kinds of ideas, values, attitudes and identities they communicate, not only through lyrics, but also through specific semiotic choices in music, rhythm and arrangement.

## **The national anthem as discourse**

In Critical Discourse Studies, it has been shown how nationalism and the idea of a monolithic nationalist identity have been used for ideological purposes (Wodak et al. 2009), as a means to go to war (Graham et al. 2004), to delegitimise migrant populations (Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2008) and to distract from social inequalities based on distribution of wealth and resources (Abousnougá & Machin 2013) – in short, to mobilise populations around deeply ideological projects (O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008, p. 578). These discourses are communicated through political speeches and news media, but also routinely through banal everyday events and objects, such as weather maps, school books and international sporting events (Billig 1985). Through these processes, the idea of a 'world of nations' become naturalised (Malešević 2011, p. 272). It is clear that discourses of nationalism and national identity are realised and disseminated by different modes and through different kinds of communicative genre. But, given what has been said so far in this chapter about sound and music, what can we learn about their role in this nationalist project? Before analysing examples of anthems, I look first at the history of the national anthem and show its part in the nation-building project.

## **The origins and deployment of the national anthem**

The origin of the national anthem, like nationalism itself, lies in the eighteenth century, although most anthems are much more recently composed, or have gone through many

modifications due to local political and power changes. And even where some anthems do date back several hundred years as musical compositions, it is only recently that they have become understood in the present sense of a national anthem, such as the Dutch ‘Wilhelmus’, composed originally in the sixteenth century, yet not officially recognised as an anthem until 1932. Two of the very first national anthems were the German ‘Deutschlandlied’ and France’s ‘La Marseillaise’, which provided models for many that followed.

The ‘Deutschlandlied’ had its origins in the growth of nationalism in the newly unified German state from 1871, where there was a need for national symbols around which the population, from many formerly distinct territories, could be mobilised (Reimer 1993). The first song to be used as such a national symbol was ‘Deutschlandlied’ based on a composition by Joseph Haydn, written in Vienna at the end of the eighteenth century. While initially being a song about heart, land and brotherhood, it was later adapted in the First World War to become more aggressive (Hermand 2002). As with many of the earlier national anthems, it only became widely recognised through the nation-building and intensive propaganda of the First World War.

‘La Marseillaise’ was originally called ‘Chant de guerre pour l’Armee du Rhin’ (War Song for the Army of the Rhine). It was composed in 1792 by Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle as part of the mobilisation against armies from Prussia and Austria that had entered France to stop the Revolution. (It was also called ‘Auf, Brüder, auf dem Tag entgegen’ as many of the soldiers were non-French speaking). The lyrics are highly aggressive, referring to fighting on the streets and spilling the blood of the invaders. But this was not used properly as a national song until the end of the nineteenth century and – like other anthems – gained its full recognition through the propaganda of the First World War (Marshall 2015). Its lyrics have been criticised as militaristic and xenophobic (Riding 1992). Marshall (2015) notes the uncomfortable nature of the present-day use of the song with its colonial legacy and as a tool by the far right where the lyrics ‘Let’s water the fields with impure blood’ can allude to contemporary immigrants.

The ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ (SSB) was originally written as a poem in 1814 called *The Defence of Fort McHenry*, based on a melody by a British composer, which was already popular in the US in sheet-music books (Lichtenwanger 1978). It has therefore always had military associations. By the Civil War, the song had become associated with the North as opposed to the whole of the US (Abril 2012). It was not until the late nineteenth century that the song was taken on as a more official national anthem as it became officially required for all armed forces ceremonies (Weybright 1935), although some commentators complained that the military associations were an unsuitable identity for the country (Weybright 1935). But it was only during the First World War that the SSB took force, when it became a requirement at public events (Tischler 1986).

The rising interest in nationalistic symbolism in nineteenth-century Europe also spread to the colonies as in the case of the Canadian national anthem ‘O Canada’ (OC), where there was rising French nationalism. One song written for this movement was ‘O Canada’, which was commissioned by the governor of Quebec in 1880. English lyrics were added in 1901 for a visit by British royalty. These were rewritten several times through periods of nation-building. Again, there was little public acknowledgement of the song until the First World War, when it was heavily promoted by the authorities (Cook 2008).

What are now presented as timeless national anthems were part of a deliberate nation-building process by the ruling classes; for the most part, anthems only became more widely known during the intense nationalism of the First World War. As Veblen (2012) points out, anthems were used as an instrument to gloss over and suppress the internal diversity of

populations in the interests of what was represented as a monolithic dominant culture, often creating experiences of exclusion for minority groups (Avila 2006; Yudkoff 2012). Here is acknowledgement that music and sound have a crucial role to play in political ideology.

## The lyrics of national anthems

I begin with the lyrics of two anthems. I then go on to discuss the manner in which these are realised as melodies and how they are articulated rhythmically. Here, I take the first two verses of each anthem, which are those commonly sung during ceremonies.

The lyrics of the SSB claim to tell a story relating to a battle, where America won its freedom, and OC tells of guarding a land of hope. But in many ways, the two sets of lyrics share features that are typical of many other anthems. To begin with, we find a lexis that positively evaluates the nation, in SSB, words such as ‘glory’, ‘brave’ ‘gallant’ and in OC in ‘strong’, ‘free’, ‘hope’, ‘glorious’.

Anthem lyrics often refer to features of dramatic natural landscape where it is commonly thought that the spirit of a nation dwells (Thurlow & Jaworski 2010), such as high mountains, broad rivers and deep oceans, and celebrating a united people willing to defend its borders. In SSB, we find references to the sea (the deep), the shore and the sun shining on the stream. In OC, too, we find the same references to nature and to landscape: oceans, great prairies, lordly rivers, pines and maples.

*Table 28.1* US and Canada national anthem lyrics

‘Star-Spangled Banner’	‘O Canada’
Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn’s early light, What so proudly we hail’d at the twilight’s last gleaming? Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro’ the perilous fight, O’er the ramparts we watch’d, were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof thro’ the night that our flag was still there. O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?	O Canada! Our home and native land! True patriot love in all thy sons command. With glowing hearts we see thee rise, The True North strong and free! From far and wide, O Canada, We stand on guard for thee. God keep our land, glorious and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee; O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
On the shore dimly seen thro’ the mists of the deep, Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes, What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep, As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses? Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam, In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream: ‘Tis the star-spangled banner: O, long may it wave O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!	O Canada! Where pines and maples grow, Great prairies spread and Lordly rivers flow! How dear to us thy broad domain, From East to Western sea! The land of hope for all who toil, The true North strong and free! God keep our land, glorious and free. O Canada, we stand on guard for thee! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!

Also in anthems, the nation tends to become fused with natural cycles, such as the changes of the seasons, sunrise and sunset, or of harvests, and to natural elements, such as the wind (Aboussnougá & Machin 2013). In SSB, we find the ‘coming of the dawn’, ‘the twilight’, a ‘beam of sunlight’ and the ‘blowing breeze’. In this way, nations become as eternal as these natural cycles and the features of the natural landscape. In the lyrics of these anthems, we find, therefore, a form of legitimation based on the authorisation (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 92) of the timelessness, inevitability and purity of nation. This lays claim to moral evaluation, because when nation is fused with nature and beginning-less time, it becomes natural and unquestionable.

We can also think about representation of the social actors and transitivity in anthem lyrics. Typically, we find collective pronouns such as ‘we’ and ‘us’. Although in the SSB we also find ‘you’ being addressed personally as in ‘Say can *you* see’. We also find reference to ‘foes’ in SSB, which are implied in OC, since it is repeated that people must ‘stand guard’. In OC, we also find ‘sons’ of the nation, also typical of anthems where nation is related to a family. Plaques commemorating war often refer to ‘the sons of the nation who gave their lives’. Finally, in OC, we have the reference to God.

As regards what the participants do, we find ‘proudly we hail’d’, ‘we watched’, in this sense, the collective is bearing witness. In OC, people ‘hold true’ and ‘stand guard’ and we find a positive evaluation of the citizens as dedicated workers in ‘all who toil’. We also find legitimation in reactions (van Leeuwen 2007) where, in SSB, people are proud seeing the flag and in OC, people have glowing hearts.

In sum, we find the nation as fused with cycles in nature and rural features. All are timeless and somehow pure and spiritual. We find a lexis of ‘glory’ and ‘bravery’. Collective pronouns are used where people are selfless and doubtless as regards the nation, which God will protect.

## Analysis of sound

I now turn to the sounds of the anthems, here taking a typical case of their performance at the 2012 Olympic Games. In order to do so, I break down the anthems into a number of components, necessary for the purpose of analysis.

### Creating emotion in a melody

Melodies can communicate about mood and emotional engagement through a number of semiotic means. I begin with pitch, which relates to how high or low a sound is: a scream would be a high note, thunder a low note. Pitch itself has lots of meaning potential, but, importantly, it is how pitches shift in melodies that can communicate more complex meanings.

At a basic level, pitch is rich in metaphorical associations. Cooke (1959, p. 102) shows that in the history of classical music and opera, high pitch has been associated with high levels of energy and brightness and low pitch with its opposite – in other words, low levels of energy, being contained, or something substantial, or even grave and dangerous. Both can have negative meanings: higher pitches can mean flighty and superficial, and lower pitches immobile and static. Higher pitch can also extend to mean agitation, and lower pitch can mean low, drooping despair. I summarise these in Table 28.2.

We would not expect a national anthem to use only extreme high pitches, which might suggest something light, flighty, or even hysterical, nor only deep, grave and gloomy pitches. Of course, melodies involve changing pitches, which we come on to now.

Table 28.2 Meaning potentials of pitch

Pitch	Positive meaning	Negative meaning
High	Bright/energetic/happy	Lightweight/trivial/flighty
Low	Important/solid	Clumsy/depressed/dangerous

Star Spangled Banner

O say can you see by the dawns ear - ly  
light what so proud - ly we hailed at the twi - lights last  
glean - ing? Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the

Figure 28.1 'Star-Spangled Banner'

O Canada

Oh Can - a - da Our home and na - tive  
land True pa - triot love in  
all thy sons com - mand with glow - wing hearts we

Figure 28.2 'O Canada'

A melody line will usually rise and fall in pitch, which can create meaning at two levels. These are *direction* of pitch movement and *extent* of pitch movement.

Beginning with pitch direction, a movement from a high pitch to a low pitch can communicate a sense of falling energy, of bleakness, or inward contemplation (Cooke 1959). The opposite, a gradual slide from low to high pitch, can give a sense of spirits picking up, or of an outburst of energy. Where there is no pitch movement, there would be a sense of stasis, or of emotional containment. These are summarised in Table 28.3.

We can now begin to consider what may or may not be appropriate for the melody of a national anthem. It would not be appropriate, for example, for a melody to begin at a very



Table 28.3 Meaning potentials of direction of pitch movement

<i>Pitch direction</i>	<i>Meaning potential</i>
Ascending melody	Building of mood/outward expression/increase in energy
No pitch movement	Emotional stasis/containment/reservation
Descending melody	Drooping of emotions/inward contemplation/decreased energy

high pitch and then descend to a very low pitch. Should this be used for SSB, it would suggest a shift from hysteria to a bleak falling away of emotional energy.

Many national anthems use stepped increases in pitch to suggest a steady and regulated building of emotion and brightness associated with the national spirit. This will be interspersed with some use of lower pitch to suggest inner reflection on the gravity of the nation. These regulated, rather than flamboyant, sequences are also important for the co-ordination of voice, and therefore sense of social unity, that the anthems are designed to bring about.

We learn more about the kind of emotion communicated by melodies when we also consider the *extent* of pitch movement. Cooke (1959) shows that in music, a large pitch range communicates a sense of letting more energy out, whereas a small pitch range means holding more energy in. Linguists show that larger pitch ranges in speech are heard as more emotionally expressive, whereas more restricted pitch ranges are heard as more contained, reserved or closed. Brazil et al. (1980) note that pitch range in speech is akin to excitement, surprise or anger. These are summarised in Table 28.4.

We can now apply what we have seen in the three tables to the two melodies.

Looking at the pattern of notes for the SSB, we can see a pattern of descending notes and then stepped ascending notes. It starts by going down in pitch for the words ‘Oh say’. This is a sense of inward reflection – a shift to something important. The choice of notes here, which I do not want to deal with in detail, communicates a sense of grounding, since they go down through the major or happy note, to the root note of the tune, which creates a feeling of grounding. The melody then ascends in a stepped, regular fashion, as opposed to one that is emotional wavering or flamboyant, to rise steadily over ‘say can you see, by’. This marks a considerable level of emotional expression, rising a whole octave. This pattern then repeats.

‘O Canada’ has similar qualities. We begin with deeper notes for ‘O Canada’, with a rise for the words ‘our home and native’. In fact, these are the very same combination of notes as SSB, including the happy major note for the ‘Oh’ and the grounding root note of the key for the last note of ‘Canada’. The lower pitches for ‘Oh’ and ‘Cana-da’ also suggest weight and importance. Had the same phrase been carried out with higher-pitched notes, we could imagine a different meaning. What we find in the rest of the opening line ‘Our home and native land’ are a sequence of stepped, regulated increases in pitch, resolving again to lower, introspective and, in musical terms, grounding notes.

In sum, the anthems use a considerable pitch range, although not to the extent, for example, of a soul or rock singer who may use two octaves. There is the use of stepped,

Table 28.4 Meaning potentials of pitch range

<i>Pitch range</i>	<i>Meaning potential</i>	<i>Effect</i>
High	Emotionally expansive	Emotionally open/subjective
Low	Emotionally contained	Repressed/contained/objective

regulated and gradually rising melodies, rather than those that might waver about with fluctuations and hesitations. This regulated expression of emotion relates to subjection to the state. This is organised emotional expression. There are higher bright notes as well as lower notes, which suggest importance and inward contemplation. There are lots of happy major notes and certainly no discordant notes.

### **Certainty and commitment in music**

McClary (1991), in her study of classical music, observed that where male characters are represented, we tend to find a more staccato type articulation of note, which bring a sense of liveliness and abruptness. In contrast, where female characters are represented, we tend to find longer legato articulation, which is more emotionally lingering. These observations can be related to those observations made in linguistics where shorter phrases are associated linguistically with sincerity, certainty, weight and therefore authority. In contrast, longer, lingering articulation suggests the opposite (Bell & Van Leeuwen 1993). This creates a useful meaning potential for communicating attitudes and identities in musical compositions. Table 28.5 summarises these.

In the history of the national anthem, as in the case of the German anthem, it was important that the music connoted industriousness and the national spirit. Longer lingering notes tend not to communicate industriousness, but rather contemplation, as we might find in a jazz ballad. Longer notes would point to subjective experience, perhaps to suggest something like longing for the homeland. This would suggest something too baleful, self-searching, or individualistic and would be inappropriate for a sense of collective spirit. Dotted notes, however, suggest certainty and commitment to the nation. What we usually find is a dominance of shorter notes with some slightly more lingering notes to point to emotional contemplation.

The opening melody of SSB on ‘Oh say can you see’ has shorter dotted phrasing through the individual syllables. In the first line, words such as ‘see’ and ‘light’ have slightly longer duration. But for the most part, SSB is about dotted phrasing. There is rising and extensive regulated emotional expression, but this is articulated through short, certain phrasing.

‘O Canada’ opens with ever-so-slightly more lingering notes for the words ‘O Cana-da’, but then shifts to more dotted notes for ‘our home and native land’ and the pattern then continues.

In sum, the music of anthems does point to inner contemplation, the ideas for which can be provided in the lyrics. But it also points to certainty. Emotions are clearly present, but always build in a steady, structured fashion suitable for subordination to the state.

*Table 28.5* Meaning potentials of note articulation

<i>Articulation of notes</i>	<i>Meaning potential</i>
Shorter dotted notes	Abrupt, lively, hurried, certain, objective/clumsy if played in deep-pitched brass or woodwind
Longer lingering notes	Emotionally lingering, subjective

## The sound qualities of nationalism

Earlier in the chapter, I suggested that we cannot use sharp sounds to mean relaxed, nor soft lingering sounds to convey urgency. It is this level of observation to which I now turn. What kinds of sound qualities are suitable, or unsuitable, for a national anthem? Here, I draw upon both van Leeuwen (1999) and Machin (2010).

Anthems are recorded with many different kinds of instrumentation, genre and voices, and even in parody. In this case, I have chosen official public performances of SSB and OC from the Olympic Games in London 2012.

- *Tension*: This is related, in some ways, to speech and the difference between having a closed, restricted throat when we are tense, or an open throat when we are relaxed. In other ways, it relates to musical sounds, such as where a piano note is allowed to ring out, or restricted and played in a controlled and muted way.
- *Breathiness*: The meaning potential here relates to contexts where we hear people's breath, usually in moments of confidentiality if they whisper in our ear and share their thoughts with us. This can be in moments of sensuality.
- *Loud/soft*: According to Schaffer (1977), louder sounds can mean weight and importance. Loud sounds can take up physical and social space. Loud sounds can be used to suggest power, status, threat or danger. They can also be overbearing and unsubtle. In contrast, softness can suggest subtlety and measure, and also gentleness or weakness.
- *Distortion/degrees of raspiness*: Raspiness can mean worn or dirty, or suggest aggression, excitement or difficulty. Smoothness can mean natural, simple and easy.
- *Reverb/echo*: Reverb can create a sense of huge space as in a large religious building or a rocky valley. This can suggest something momentous, sacred, magical, or it can suggest isolation and internal mental states (Doyle 2006).
- *Focused versus spread sounds*: This is a sound quality musicians often speak of to distinguish a sound made by an instrument such as a trumpet from that made by a tenor saxophone. It is a little like the tension from lack of tension. It is useful to think about the way that sounds suggest precision and focus, or the lack of these. Often in comedy music, lower-pitched instruments with spread sounds can be used as they sound less precise and more clumsy.
- *Vibrato*: van Leeuwen (1999) relates vibrato to our physical experience of trembling. Its meaning in music will depend on its speed, depth and regularity. Highly regular can suggest something mechanical. Where it increases and decreases can suggest increasing or decreasing levels of emotion, excitement or stress.

Both performances of the anthems share the same sound qualities. We find tension neither in vocals, nor the brass instrument accompaniment. Voices and instruments are allowed to freely resonate. Cymbal clashes ring out openly: unrestrained. This communicates that national belonging is an easy and unproblematic matter, even though, at another level, the melodies are highly regulated. Brass instruments boom out rather than being played with muted tension as we might find in some kinds of blues or jazz. It is common, however, to find some tension in snare-drum roles. These are often used at the start of anthems, along with brass section fanfares in nineteenth-century military style. The tension is then released as the lively and expansive singing begins.

As regards breathiness, the public performances of the two anthems are not whispered or strained, nor are they confidential or sensual (and with microphone technology it would be

possible to do so). The anthems are about social and public events, about open sharing of national pride. The public performance of the anthems takes up social space through loudness. Olympic winners are granted social space to their national anthem, which everyone in the arena must hear and experience. The anthems often start with louder drumrolls, cymbal crashes and brass fanfares. Brass sections boom out the accompaniment. However, it can be the case that louder brass sections are accompanied by lighter-sounding instrumentation. At the Olympic performance of OC, lighter, higher-pitched, quieter bells, were also played, thereby accenting beats that brought a feeling of delicacy and brightness – suitable for the magical moment of the victory, which nevertheless moves along with the rhythms and melodies of the overall arrangement.

As regards levels of raspiness/smoothness, public performances of anthems are played on brass instruments, usually with crashing cymbals and snare drumrolls. Brass instruments themselves tend towards a more raspy sound than strings. In McClary's (1991) account of masculine and feminine sounds in opera, she explains that women tend to be associated with softer, smoothly articulated strings and men with dotted brass notes. The brass brings slightly more aggression and power in this sense.

As regards reverb, anthems are often recorded with reverb to bring this sense of scale and sacredness. Performance of anthems in large roofed stadiums can also bring natural reverb and echo.

When it comes to vibrato, we find none on the brass instruments that provide the backing or melodies for the two anthems. In this sense, it appears that anthems are not about quivering emotions, but about the joy of belonging. Where this is emotional, as we have seen, it is regulated and certain, expressed through stepped increases in pitch and through dotted notes.

As regards focused/spread sounds, what we find is more focused instrumentation. We could imagine the effect where anthems use the bottom-range notes of a bassoon or tuba. This would act against the liveliness and movement communicated by other semiotic resources. The nation would become cumbersome, vague or clumsy.

In sum, anthems, use a relaxed sound quality that takes up social space, using focused and dotted instrument sounds and articulation. Emotional expression is regulated and structured and not fluctuating or trembling, and where possible, reverb will be used to add to the timelessness and sacredness communicated by the lyrics.

## Moving with the nation: the meaning of rhythm

Here I draw on Cooke's (1959) inventory of rhythm, which draws attention to how music implies some kind of movement and structuring of movement in time, which can be used to activate a set of associations. Tagg (1984) pointed out that music associated with a hunt, for example, will include quick and sudden musical movements, perhaps punctuated with periods of waiting. A lullaby, in contrast, would utilise a gentle and regular rhythm.

- *Even/uneven*: Rhythms can be even (as in much pop music) or uneven (as may be the case in jazz). Uneven rhythms can communicate a sense of difficulty, or if the unevenness is repeated, a sense of being prevented from moving forwards or remaining in one particular place. Unevenness can also suggest creativity as movement changes, reacting and refusing to conform.
- *Fast/slow*: Rhythms can suggest energy, relaxation or sluggishness – hurry versus leisure; rush versus patience.

- *Lightness/heaviness*: Rhythm can be due to instrumentation. For example, if dominated by a deep, loud bass drum, or in contrast, by a flute, it can suggest heaviness versus lightness, clumsiness or mobility, strength or weakness, importance versus unimportance. van Leeuwen (1999) observed that rhythms can be more or less artificial. An example of a more artificial rhythm is the waltz. It suggests lightness as opposed to the forwards-moving binary rhythms used in most pop music.
- *Stasis/motion*: Through constant beat tones (such as a single bass-drum pulse), rhythms can suggest stasis, waiting, hesitation or restriction. Forwards motion can be suggested by alternating tones, such as between a snare and bass drum. There can be degrees of this such as in reggae music, which suggests a feeling of hesitation. Furthermore, some music suggests a side-to-side or rocking movement rather than a forwards motion, which is often used to suggest emotional dwelling.
- *Metronomic time/no metronomic time*: Lack of rhythm can be used to suggest timelessness, sacredness or spirituality (Tagg 1984). We find this in Gregorian chant music, where rhythms are deliberately suppressed, and also in new-age type music.

Both the SSB and OC have even rhythms. It would be problematic for a national anthem to have an uneven rhythm, which stuttered, moved quickly and then slowed again. It would also be problematic for anthems to have rhythms that suggest stasis and hesitation. Nor must they be rushed. Slowness itself can connote importance and thoughtfulness. They must also combine a sense of weight to communicate substantiality with sufficient lightness to allow for mobility.

In the Olympic performance of SSB, cymbals strike at the first beat of each bar, giving a sense of clockwork regularity and repetition. These strikes also bring additional momentousness to each step forwards. The national spirit here is dependable, powerful and emotional.

In fact, SSB uses a waltz-type basic beat structure, giving it a lightness. This brings more of a sense of a gentle side-to-side sway than the full forwards momentum of a march. But it remains even and is fairly slow. There is no sense of urgency.

Likewise, OC is fairly slow in pace and has an even, marked, rhythm. This also suggests not fast, forwards motion, but something unrushed. It also uses cymbal crashes to give emotional bursts to the rhythm. These are sometimes accompanied by taut snare drumrolls, which bring tension. The combination suggests steady and certain forwards motion, where each step is important. In contrast to SSB, OC sounds slightly heavier in motion and, in combination with other sound features, slightly more contemplative.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how we might critically approach how the sounds of the national anthem also play an important role in nationalism. In the lyrics, there are ideas of glory, freedom and gallantry related to a former era of colonial warfare. There are references to mountains and rivers, and to cycles in nature and the cosmos, pointing to eternity and spiritual connection with natural cycles. These ideas enter our bodies through sound. The music brings regulated rises of emotion and moments of inward contemplation, all done through happy notes and through articulation, which suggests certainty and rhythms that move gently forwards. We must not overlook how these different modes play a crucial role in the legitimization of discourse. Foucault (1972) noted that discourses are never really present in one place, or one instance of communication, but are infused throughout social

practice, material culture and in our very embodiment of them through clothing and how we move our bodies. And it is because of this that they appear to be natural, which further acts in making them appear legitimate and more difficult to challenge.

This analysis has shown the potential for including analysis of sounds in other kinds of communication. Political advertisements tend to carry music and sound, as do documentaries and soundtracks for movies, television programmes, news bulletins, Youtube clips and computer games. With its unique set of affordances, in each case, how does music call on us to emotionally and physically relate to the discourses communicated through other semiotic modes?

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