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Deposited in DRO:

26 May 2014

Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Kerrigan, F. and Larsen, G. and Hanratty, S. and Korta, K. (2014) 'Gimme shelter' : experiencing pleasurable escape through the musicalisation of running.', *Marketing theory*, 14 (2). pp. 147-166.

Further information on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1470593114521451>

Publisher's copyright statement:

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‘Gimme Shelter’: Experiencing Pleasurable Escape through the Musicalisation of Running

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Abstract

This study examines the ubiquitous nature of music in the context of the running community. Data collected from an online running forum and a series of diary studies and interviews indicates that runners use mobile music technologies to create soundscapes in order to enhance their running experience. Our findings suggest that these soundscapes play an essential role in providing and supporting the experience of pleasurable escape when running. Through the musicalisation of running, people escape their humdrum existence, the Cartesian dualism of mind/body, the very act of running and the urban environment. This multifaceted manifestation of escape contributes to our understanding of hedonic and experiential consumption. These findings also challenge existing instrumental notions of performance-enhancing music consumption in sports activities and offer instead a complex, socially-constructed musicalisation of running which involves the remixing and reconfiguration of the aural landscape in an attempt to create the perfect running experience.

Keywords

Running, music consumption, pleasure, experiential and hedonic consumption, escape

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers from the Academy of Marketing Conference and this Special Issue of Marketing Theory for their feedback.

Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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Introduction

The call for papers for this special issue recognises that music has become ubiquitous in contemporary society. This has much to do with various technological developments that have enabled engagement with music across all walks of life, but it is also because the production and consumption of music is inextricably embedded in, and mediated by the market and marketing practices which pervade everyday life (O’Reilly et al., 2013; Atali 1977/1985). Not only is music created and made available through the market, but it is also used as a stimulant in the marketing of other products (Oakes and North, 2008) and it is a significant site of both mundane and extraordinary aesthetic consumption experiences (Bradshaw and Holbrook, 2007).

Technological developments have meant that music can be listened to on the move and that it is both more individual and individualisable (Lacher and Mizerski, 1994). These factors are integral to the ubiquity of music generally as they allow it to infiltrate spaces where it was previously unable to be produced and consumed. Specifically it has led to the musicalisation of running, as people can now easily listen to a good quality reproduction of self-selected music on portable music devices while running. The quest for ideal running songs is an endlessly fascinating pursuit and hence hundreds of websites and blogs debate this subject (Pearlman 2008). While Terry and Karageorghis (2006) believe that training music preferences are a matter of personal taste, Pearlman (2008) claims that favourite running tunes are not always consistent with individuals’ general music taste, thus suggesting that this is a unique and interesting site of music consumption. However, the extant literature on music and running which mostly emanates from the sports science literature (e.g. Karageorghis and Terry, 1997, 2001; Wilson 2012) offers a singular focus on the performance enhancing effects

of music. The broader experience of the musicalisation of running includes an extensive range of aspects that literature on the consumption of music in urban environments (Bull, 2001, Simun, 2009) suggests should be significant, such as escape, but which remain unexamined.

Because music is a rich and complex political, symbolic and social product (Bradshaw and Shankar, 2008), it is produced and consumed for a variety of reasons and in all manner of ways. However, while the experiential reasons for consuming music are widely acknowledged (e.g. Lonsdale and North, 2011; North and Hargreaves 1997), Bradshaw et al., (2010) have recently argued that marketing theory has neglected the engagement with, and understanding of, aesthetic experience. In the specific case of music, this assertion is supported by Prior (2013) who argues that sociologists have discarded musical properties, such as how it activates our emotional states, in their accounts of the sociology of music consumption. Consequently, this paper aims to provide an account of the multifaceted experience of pleasurable escape through the musicalisation of running. Our study draws on literature from sociology of music consumption, sports science, marketing, and consumer behavior in order to explore the use and experience of music among the running community.

We consider the use of music by amateur runners and examine their experience of escape through a combination of content analysis of the UK's largest running forum, Runner's World, and a diary study where seven participants were asked to keep a record of their use of music while running. Our study draws upon the ideas of hedonic and experiential consumption and in doing so we propose an expansion of these notions to account for multifaceted notions of pleasurable escape. The experience of escape through music while running is about reconfiguring the present, rather than getting away from it. Our runners were escaping humdrum existence through the act of running and similarly they developed their own soundscapes in order to reconfigure and control their acoustic environment and provide further escape; from the Cartesian dualism of mind/ body, the very act of running and from the urban environment. This positions music consumption within a complex web of escape, the exploration of which contributes to furthering our understanding of experiential and aesthetic consumption.

Music, Running and Soundscapes

The digitalisation of music has had a significant impact on the ubiquity and use of music in running. However, although portable music devices are relatively new, the beneficial impact of music for sports performance has a long research tradition and a strong intuitive appeal (Brownley, et al., 1995; Terry and Karageorghis, 2006). Synchronization of music with repetitive exercise has been shown to result in extended work output; enhanced acquisition of motor skills; increased likelihood of athletes achieving flow states; and subsequent enhanced performance (Karageorghis and Jones, 2000; Karageorghis and Priest, 2008; Karageorghis and Terry, 1997; Karageorghis and Terry, 2001; Terry and Karageorghis, 2006). For example, motivational synchronous music improved running speeds by ~.5 s in a 400-m sprint, compared to a no-music condition (Simpson and Karageorghis, 2006).

Even within the sports science literature, there is an acknowledgement that music mediates between the body and mind and therefore has not only a physical, but also a psychological impact on athletes' performance (Pearlman 2008; Saarikallio and Erkkilä, 2007). A recent BBC Radio 4 programme interviewed a number of elite athletes about their use of specific music prior to competition or during their training and found that athletes selected music based on tempo and lyrics in order to provide inspiration (Wilson, 2012). During high intensity work, music improves the experience, as 'it makes hard training seem more like fun, by shaping how the mind interprets symptoms of fatigue' (Karageorghis and Priest, 2008). While most athletes use loud, upbeat music to 'psych up', softer tunes can be used to 'psych down' (Karageorghis and Priest, 2008). Additionally Karageorghis et al. (2006) noted that ideal training music consists of positive lyrics associated with movement; rhythmic patterns matched to movement patterns of the athletic activity; uplifting melodies; and associations with exercise, sport, triumph, or overcoming adversity. Thus athletes implementing music in their training can benefit from: increased positive moods and reduced

negative moods; pre-event activation or relaxation; dissociation from unpleasant feelings and reduced ratings of perceived exertion (Karageorghis and Terry, 1997; 2001). What we see emphasised here are the general functional aspects of the music, such as tempo or types of narratives that inspire, like the narrative of triumph, which are consumed in order to create, change or mediate the experience of running.

In order to develop an understanding of the experience of music when running, the marketing and consumer research literature is insightful. While the sports science studies discussed above focus on tempo, lyrical content and sports performance, marketing and consumer research scholars have also found a link between tempo, texture and tonality (Kellaris and Kent, 1993); tempo and mode (Knöferle et al., 2011); tempo (Holbrook and Anand, 1990) and various aspects of consumption. These studies focus on product design, servicescape or advertising contexts and as such are concerned with general responses to these musical characteristics. As such, they are looking 'from the outside in', focused on creating soundscapes which will encourage specific responses by consumers.

A key aspect that is likely to be important in understanding the musicalisation of running, is the 'inside out' focus, whereby runners configure very personal soundscapes and as such links to the ability of music to get people 'in the mood' for social events (DeNora, 1999), thus helping people transition from one role and identity to another. Such mood regulation is not confined to the facilitation of transition between roles, but once transition has taken place, music can provide further physical and emotional release. Goulding et al. (2002) reflect on the tribal aspects of music consumption and the fragmentation of the self. Focusing on the rituals involved in rave culture they emphasise the multidimensionality of the self and how the rituals enable escapism. Those who participate in rave culture see it as a way of getting away from the banality of everyday life, forgetting responsibilities and work. These notions of escapism and transition are significant for this study as running can be seen as a way of releasing stress and breaking free for a short time. Additionally, Goulding et al. (2009) consider pleasure in the context of clubbing, from a biosocial perspective. Here, the biology of pleasure and the pleasure of sociality are brought together with the consideration of the

regulation of pleasure. A significant element of their biosocial analysis focuses on the use of psychoactive substances, but although performance enhancing drugs are used by professional athletes, our study does not focus on the use of such substances. However the biology of pleasure is relevant to considerations of music consumption and running, as the notion of music as a stimulant is clearly established in the literature (e.g. Holbrook and Anand, 1990). We are concerned with the resulting experience of pleasurable escape.

By using music in this way, individuals are reconfiguring what is variably known as the sonic environment, soundscape (e.g. Schafer, 1969, Arquette, 2004) or sonic ecology (Atkinson, 2007). This in itself is not a new idea - Thibaud (2003) observes 'musicalised' people taking shelter from the city's sonic ecology through the use of such gadgets as personal music players (from Walkmans to MP3 players). Portable music players are primarily associated with the urban spaces, because in the noise-filled urban environment, individuals crave their own noise (Bull 2001). The development of MP3 technology has enabled users to carry vast music libraries which they can use to transform and personalise 'alien spaces of daily life' (Bull 2001: 188) bringing a private experience of individualised music listening into public realms, and consequently transforming them into a collection of private and pleasurable sound worlds (Simun, 2009). Thus commuters control their urban journeys by producing a personalised soundscape which they use to escape what Simmel (2003) called the over-stimulation of the senses.

As the control of the urban environment is achieved by disengaging from it, listeners musically mediate rather than change their surrounding. 'While the control the MP3 gives users does allow them to attend to their musically mediated environments in an enjoyable way, this very mediation prevents users' full participation in urban space' (Simun, 2009: 937). In studying runners' use of personalised soundscapes in this way, we complement existing research that considers the collective, 'pleasure of sociality' (Goulding et al., 2009), and consumption of music in outdoor spaces (Oakes and Warnaby, 2011) with considerations of the individual and their selection and use of music in the context of their running.

Experiential Consumption, Pleasure and Escape

The literature above signals a need to consider the nature of the experience and review our conceptualisation of the use of music as a form of escape. While the sports science and consumer behaviour studies link tempo and lyrics to performance and stimulation, they also indicate a need to give further consideration to the notions of pleasure and escape. The relative neglect of “experience” as a topic in academic debates about the advancement of marketing concepts and methods is surprising considering the long-standing interest in the consumer experience in the marketing literature (Addis and Holbrook, 2001; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Kozinets et al., 2002).

Experiential marketing draws on developments in the cognitive sciences (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) and in experiential learning theory (Sternberg and Zhang, 2001) that conceive of experiences as 'memory based-activities' (Payne et al., 2008). It is not surprising therefore that experiences are considered to be 'private events that occur in response to some stimulation. [...]' (Schmitt, 1999), involving the entire living being. This is similar to Hesmondhalgh's (2008) view of music as enriching inner lives as well as allowing connections with others. To be engaging and memorable the stimulation needs to be unique and distinct from other experience people are confronted with in their daily lives (Schmitt, 1999). Their interest in the consumption of esthetic products inspired Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) to consider the 'experiential view' of consumption. This view regards consumption as a 'primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and esthetic criteria' (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982: 132). Studying consumption from a more experiential standpoint breaks away from previous information processing models, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying reasons for behavior. Lacher (1989) notes the significance of the uniqueness of music as a product, reflecting on several hedonic aspects of consumption such as personality traits, music training, emotions, experience and preference which affect purchase decisions.

Negus and Velazquez (2002: 143), state that 'music does not always contribute to the construction and reinforcement of identities but to the temporary release from identities'. This notion of 'temporary release' could be linked back to Goulding et al.'s (2002) 'escapism'. Such escape is very much in keeping with consumer research studies that focus on escaping the mundane through extraordinary consumption (cf. Belk, 1996), entering into an alternative fantastical world.

Pleasure is seen as a central tenet of experiential consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Goulding et al. (2009: 760) distinguish between 'ascetic pleasure' and 'ritualistic spiritual communality of ecstatic pleasures'. While the literature on pleasure is relatively extensive, the importance of the remembrance of past pleasures and the sensorial and psychological elements of Le Bel and Dubé's (1998) typology of pleasure are important in understanding the role music can play for runners. Dubé and Le Bel (2001) critique the unitary notion of pleasure that has emerged from much of the consumer research literature, which considers pleasure as 'independent of the stimuli that produced it' (p. 222). In doing so, they offer alternative views of pleasure in moving towards a multifaceted model of differentiated pleasurable experiences. They bring to our attention Duncker's (1941) identification of three types of pleasure: sensory pleasures, aesthetic pleasures and accomplishment pleasures. Sensory pleasure refers to the stimulation of sensory responses and in the context of our study could refer to the physical act of running and the cognition of the physical sensations involved as well as the physical response to the music as found by Holbrook and Anand (1990). Aesthetic pleasures can relate to responses to music, landscape or memories of such and finally, accomplishment pleasure which in the case of this study can relate to running a certain distance, on a certain terrain or achieving a personal best time. Dubé and Le Bel (2001) combine this understanding of pleasure with that of Tiger (1992) in developing their model of pleasure, which consists of sensorial pleasure, emotional pleasure, social pleasure and intellectual pleasure. However, they still do not account for the nature of pleasure evident in the running experience, where approach and avoidance are not opposing forces, but an ongoing tension in the mind and body of the runner.

Methods

This study combined the use of netnographic data collection, a diary study and in-depth interviews in order to explore the experience of pleasurable escape through music among amateur runners. Although our runners are 'amateur', what can be seen among these runners is a desire to develop their running, by for example increasing their speed and/or distance. They go in search of information via forums such as the one reviewed for this study, as well as joining running clubs and gaining information from other runners. The use of music and music devices can be viewed as part of a wider set of consumption practices resulting from people's identification as runners.

As we are interested in the experience of pleasurable escape through the musicalisation of running, it is instructive to observe the sense-making that occurs within the running community itself. Netnography (Kozinets, 1998, 1999, 2002), an ethnographic approach adapted to on-line fieldwork (O'Reilly and Doherty, 2006) has therefore been chosen as an appropriate method. It enables researchers to 'study consumers' needs and desires, opinions and attitudes, experiences, and interaction' (Langer and Beckman, 2005: 191) as part of a community or herd (Earls, 2003). Research into virtual communities (VC's) requires methods and procedures that suit the distinct on-line environment (Hemetsberger, 2006). Thus the on-line discourse of the members of an Internet forum devoted to running has been analysed with the application of tools derived from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000). The forum selected is a part of the UK's largest Internet portal and magazine, Runner's World (RW). Articles published in the magazine are reproduced on the RW website to provide the running community with advice and inspiration. People are able to express their views and opinions on published articles as well as to read comments of other community members on the forum. The portal also employs an asynchronous bulletin board service, where individuals can begin new 'threads' of communication by posting a question or statement to which others

can respond. These posts become cultural artefacts, which are amenable to content analysis (Williams, 2006). The forum fits the definition of a VC, as it has developed its own 'norms, its rules (netiquette), its own emotional vocabulary—guidelines for posting, acceptable subjects, regular users, leaders, oldtimers, and a constant circulation of newcomers' (Denzin, 1998: 99-100).

The netnography was complemented by off line research, based around a diary study of seven runners regarding their use and experience of music in running. This was seen as important in order to capture a wider range of runners' views on their use of music. This method is considered to be a quasi-ethnography (Elliott, 2004) and has been used previously by researchers (e.g. Larsen et al., 2010 and Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977) who believe that it eliminates the possibility of the 'disruptive influence' of the observer in participant observation of daily experiences. As music listened to while running is done in private through personal earphones, observation would be challenging. Convenience sampling was used to seek participants who could self classify as either casual or serious runners. The diary study lasted for two weeks and required participants to complete an entry describing their run and their use of music following each run. Before starting the diary, an interview was conducted which focused on the participants music tastes in general and while running, and how they used music in running. A second interview was conducted at the end of the diary period, which enabled more detailed discussion of the diary entries and the opportunity for participants to reflect on their use of music when running having participated in the study.

Thematic analysis was undertaken on the combined data and once initial themes were identified, provisional categories were developed and relationships between these categories were explored. The themes and categories were studied further and knowledge from existing literature was incorporated to develop conclusive findings. The use of both methods ensures triangulation of findings.

The emergent themes identify the different aspects of music that enable and therefore structure the experience of pleasurable escape. These are (1) musical technologies of escape, (2) music, meaning and escape, and (3) music, hedonic consumption and escape. These

themes provide the foundations for the account of the experience of pleasurable escape through the musicalisation of running. In the discussion of the themes, data from the netnography is denoted by a runners number and that from the diaries and interviews are identified by pseudonym.

Musical Technologies of Escape

The main focus of our study is on the experience of escape through music when running, however, the question of how music has become ubiquitous in running is important and what technologies enable and structure this experience. While the RW forum dates back to 2002, few early discussions related to the use of music in running and those that did mainly focused on the inconvenience of carrying heavy music devices as well as technical difficulties encountered. For example, Runner 1 explains that they:

Tried a couple of CD players that were supposed to be "jog-proof". I think most of us are passed the jogging stage and CD players just don't stand up to more serious running.

Although, the portable mp3 player was introduced in 1998 (van Buskirk, 2005) and the Apple iPod three years later, these devices were not popular among runners on the RW forum prior to 2004. It seems that runners may have been put off by poor experiences with prior and alternative technologies and therefore became late adopters of new devices. Runner 2 explains that although they did not have first-hand experience with these devices, feedback from other runners in the community warned them they might not be suitable for running:

I often put a walkman on when I run, and have been through about ten or so in my years. Keen on a smaller portable device with better sound quality for running. I am told that some MP3 players dont work when you run, eg the ipod. (Runner 2)

However between January and April 2005, there was a 558 per cent increase in the sale of iPods on the same period in 2004 (Beer 2008). This rapid increase in popularity of the iPod,

greater affordability of other digital music devices and improved technical capabilities were reflected in a growing number of music-related discussions in the RW forum. There was a shift in discourse from technical problems to music genres suitable for training and the enhancement of runners' performance. Once this shift occurred, the most common reason for beginning a discussion about music on the forum was to seek suggestions for inspiring music. An example of the types of comments starting such threads is;

Being an avid MP3 ripper and runner, I am always in need of new music recommendations as I find I get so used to tracks once I have downloaded them and listened to them in the gym/outside (Runner 8).

Therefore, our data illustrates the importance of technological developments in facilitating the musicalisation of running. In saying this, there are divisions within the running community regarding the use of MP3 players while running with most running clubs banning the use of such devices during training sessions and many race organisers also discouraging or banning their use, both for social and safety reasons. However, despite this, the data revealed that there is a sizable running community, which does use music as part of the training process and to stimulate particular experiences while running.

For both urban and rural runners, running provided an escape, and the inspiring or distracting soundscape created was an important element of that escape. But interestingly, how this happens differs depending on the environment. People who run in rural areas preferred a soundscape comprised of the natural sounds of their surroundings, whereas the use of personal music players enables 'users to enjoy surroundings they may otherwise disengage from by helping them gain control over their relation to the urban environment' (Simun, 2009: 932). The following exchange between runners 17 and 18 on the forum illustrates this difference:

I run 99% of the time in a huge forest and would never wear earphones (...) to me, the peace and quiet of the forest, natural bird sounds etc. are a really pleasant change from the everyday furious pace of high tech sounds, mobile phones, traffic

noise etc that surrounds most of us from waking to bedtime. There's just too much noise in the world. (Runner 17)

Music, Meaning and Escape

The primary reason provided for the use of music while running was distraction or escape. In Bull's (2001) and Simun's (2009) studies portable music devices were used by individuals to reconfigure urban public spaces into '*personalised soundworlds*', thus enabling 'users to enjoy surroundings they may otherwise disengage from by helping them gain control over their relation to the urban environment' (Simun, 2009: 932). In this way, music can be viewed as empowering people to construct and deconstruct personal meaning of the inhabited space (Simun, 2009). Our runners described similar experiences as they actively used personal meanings of music to reconfigure their surroundings.

The memory triggering aspect of music can be linked to motivation. Certain music reminded participants of particular memories, often centered around previous positive running experiences. For some, music reminded them of times during a race when they were doing well and feeling great. Replaying this music recalled that feeling, urging them to continue.:

For me a lot of stuff with music, it's memory stuff. I'll look at my iPod, a lot of the stuff on here reminds me of certain races, there's certain songs that kind of lift you up because it's the same song that you know, as you were finishing a marathon, or you started a certain run with, its' stuff that is more uplifting. (Julia)

This can be linked to the cyclical nature of pleasure outlined by Le Bel and Dubé (1998), where past pleasures are drawn upon in anticipating (and experiencing) pleasure. Indeed, nostalgia for past events (see Holbrook and Schindler, 1991) aids runners to keep going. What is interesting here is that many of these memories are running related, with runners gaining

inspiration from previous running experiences. This results in an escaping into the world of the runner.

Julia is also a running trainer, and in that role she purposefully uses the motivating power of such memories through the technique of ‘visualisation’:

I think some of the music that people listen while running helps them visualise how they were previously. So picture yourself when you enjoyed a run previously, picture yourself in that situation, and if you associate a song with that and play it while you’re running, you’re more likely to feel that same (Julia).

Often the memories are of non-running related experiences, such as nights out and times spent with friends, serving more as a distraction. Many participants discussed the ability of music, particularly when coupled with running, to help them ‘get away from it all’. The notion of escapism through music consumption is not a novel idea (see Goulding et al., 2002), however, it is pertinent to this study as both running and music consumption are often recognised for their stress relieving abilities and therefore the interaction of the two is quite powerful, transformative and central to the well-being of the runner and also those with whom they share their lives. This study adds weight to the multi-faceted understanding of a meaningful experience of escaping into (approach) rather than from (avoidance) and the associated elevation of mood that comes from the combination of the physical act of running and important music related meanings. Marc describes the feeling he gets from running:

Energetic. My wife calls it an addiction because sometimes I can get kinda grouchy if I haven’t had my run, had my fix. If you’ve had a big day in the office then it’s a good way to relieve any stress or issues, gives you a chance to actually go out and think about things, or chill out and listen to the music that you enjoy and forget about any issues that you’ve got.(Marc)

What is most interesting is that when speaking about running alone, participants spoke primarily about stress relief, yet, when they were asked how they felt when listening to music while running, there was more of an element of escapism to their responses. So, the addition of the music provides another layer to the experience of running. As Negus and

Velaquez (2002) discuss in relation to music, running with music appears to allow for a 'temporary release from reality':

I'm in my own zone, listening to the music quite literally, it's like you go on a journey by yourself which is why I like to listen to music while I do it because you can run around beautiful scenery and you're in a world, you forget everything. (David)

The experience of escape has a surreal quality, as Jane likened running with music to being in your own life movie:

It does sometimes feel like you're in a film or something, yeah, playing a little soundtrack on your life, because I don't listen to music when I'm just walking around, the only time I use my iPod is when I'm running. (Jane)

While, as noted above, the connection between music and escape is not a novel finding, Goulding et al. (2002) found that music (in the context of collective consumption and drug taking) provided a means of escape for clubbers, our study illustrates the complex nature of escape. Runners were not escaping **from** their lives but **into** their lives. These runners use music to anchor themselves further into their inner world rather than distracting them.

Runners often noted that they ran to music that was incongruous to their general music tastes and their personal identity, admitting embarrassment at the music used while running. Runner 29 was not able to name any of the artists that she listened to during her training, as she did not have any interest in that type of music. A similar pattern was noted by Pearlman (2008), who observed general preferences towards less sophisticated running soundtracks, even among 'those with exquisitely hip taste in music' as illustrated by runner 36:

I listen to different tunes running than I do for pleasure, a bit like having a split personality 😊. I like something with a strong beat, fast tempo to run to, so clubby, dance-based stuff. Whereas my actual musical preference is independent rock & pop from 80s- current.

Runner 36 indicates the complex nature of pleasure, here depicting running (and listening to music while doing so) more as an ascetic pleasure, distinguishing this from a more sensorial pleasure, where music may be consumed for its own sake. This implies a utilitarian function of music among runners. The deviation from 'normal' tastes may be instrumental and related to situational congruency, as implied a number of runners:

It's strange how disappointing your favourite tunes can be when you try to run to them, whilst something you only "quite like" can be perfect. (Runner 37)

Break Stuff - Limp Bizkit (I know I usually hate them, but this is a good one for hill training) (Runner 39)

Stronger (yes, I know it's Britney, but it works!) (Runner 40)

The common RW forum practice of providing some sort of justification or explanation for selecting music which does not fit with the runners general tastes strongly hints that the relationship to identity is significant. The link between music consumption and identity is well established in the literature, however the consumption of music that is congruent with avoidance selves is not yet well understood (Larsen, et al., 2010). In the context of running, we suggest that the selection of self-incongruent music points to another dimension in the use of music for escape; the use of running as a form of escape which is multidimensional, ascetic, sensorial and emotional in nature. The majority of runners treat their training time as something different from other everyday life activities, and hence allow themselves to venture into different music genres and perhaps even experiment with different identities than they would willingly engage with in their daily routines.

I live in concrete jungle - music is a must - otherwise it's just cars cars cars. _ I'm faster without, but not that it makes a big difference. (Runner 18)

This short exchange shows that Runner 18 chooses to listen to music as it enables him to escape the urban environment and makes the experience more pleasurable, albeit at a slower pace. This observation, supported by other runners, contradicts the previous studies that focused on tempo and found increased performance through the use of music, indicating that the relationship between performance and music consumption is more multifaceted. In a

similar vein, music enables Runner 19 to exclude the outside world from his experience by escaping unwanted interaction with tourists.

ANYTHING to distract me from the constant numpty tourist dodging along the prom!
(Runner 19)

Runner 19's comment confirms Simun's (2009) findings that thanks to portable music devices individuals are no longer submissive to the auditory forces of the urban environment. Quite the opposite, music empowers them to construct and deconstruct personal meaning of the inhabited space (Simun, 2009). Individuals who choose to run in the urban environment without music, quote safety as the main reason. Simun notes that '[w]hile the control the MP3 gives users does allow them to attend to their musically mediated environments in an enjoyable way, this very mediation prevents users' full participation in urban space' (Simun, 2009: 937). Runners see this prevention from participation in the urban space as a real safety hazard. However, the draw of the music-mediated environment is so strong that it causes that more cautious runners seek innovative solutions to be able to enjoy running to music, yet not being completely absent from the urban space:

I used to get annoyed with not being able to hear things - like the traffic mainly.. so I took the scissors to my headphones and cut one off.. it works!! (Runner 58)

Music, Hedonic Consumption and Escape

Much of the early discussion on the forum related to searching for new running music. Runners requested recommendations for both inspirational/ motivational music as well as music which could enhance their performance. The most common posts on the RW forum are personal recommendations of motivational music. Continuing the thread in the previous section regarding the multifaceted nature of 'performance' beyond simply running faster, that we observed, the focus on inspiration over 'performance' illustrates that running is more than an ascetic pursuit. Certain genres of music seem to be preferable to runners, and therefore in

order to identify which ones were perceived to be the most motivational, 265 comments posted between the year 2002 and 2011 in the forum were analysed. When specific song titles or artists' names were mentioned, the Internet search was employed in order to identify the music genre that they belonged to.

Insert figure 1 approximately here

As illustrated in Figure 1, rock music was identified by 116 individuals in the RW forum as the most motivating music genre. The genres listed were those identified by the runners themselves. Tenenbaum et al. (2004; 94) define the rock genre as 'a popular vocal music characterized by a hard, driving beat featuring electric guitar accompaniment and heavily amplified sound' and it is these characteristics that make it motivating for runners:

film soundtrack by ramstien! and hardcore music like linkin park, korn and prodegy. wouldnt listen to these normally i cant run to music that i listen to chillin and in my car! has to be fast with lots of beats coz you can run to them. (Runner 27)

Still finding the heavy rock beat makes me run faster. I was playing rage against the machine, and was running very fast, didnt realise my heart rate went up to 190!!!! (Runner 26)

The second most popular choice among runners was dance music (house, rave, techno, trance and electronic). According to Tenenbaum et al. (2004), similarly to rock, dance music is characterised by a strong beat, which is responsible for its popularity among runners:

I can't have slowish music (...). if the music is too slow my feet respond to the tempo. The music that I have is dance music quite high tempo...couldn't name any of the artist (Runner 29)

"For me personally it would be the rhythm, tempo, the beat, how fast it is, you know, crescendos in a track, when tracks drop. It's amazing how when you're thinking, I can't, I gotta stop and a particular song comes on and you can feel the adrenaline in your body pushing you."(David)

For the participants of this research, music's motivational function was particularly significant for tough situations, such as coming to the end of a long run, or going up a large hill, they chose music that they knew would enable them to persist:

It was quite a hilly marathon, because it was in Malta, so whenever I was coming up to a big hill I'd put on something motivational. (Lucy)

I ran 10.5km for the first time today. I have to admit, the only thing that really kept me going for the 80 minutes was the music I was listening to. Everytime I felt tired I would switch to a different house music song and would continue to run. (Sarah)

These results confirm findings from Terry and Karageorghis (2006), which demonstrate preference among runners for fast tempo music with a strong energizing rhythm. This also links back to the consumer research studies on the importance of tempo. However evidence from the forum suggest that fast tempo music is not favoured by all runners:

Loud fast music makes my heart rate increase but not necessarily my pace so thats why i avoid it for longer distances (Runner 28)

What we can see here is a disconnect between the biological response to the faster tempo which increases the heart rate and the need to maintain a steady pace in order to complete longer runs. So, we cannot conclude that fast tempo leads to increased performance, if performance is viewed as merely an increase in speed rather than endurance.

I have a recording of the song from the film Blade, it is very fast and I nearly destroy myself trying to keep up with it (Runner 33)

Similarly, matching tempo with ability is an important element of music choice, while faster tempo may inspire greater speed, as seen in the above passages, this must be balanced with this need for endurance.

Whereas, almost everyone in the RW forums agrees about positive psychological effects of running with music, the opinions about physical enhancement are more diverse. Research conducted by Karageorghis and Jones (2000), Karageorghis and Priest (2008), and Karageorghis and Terry (1997, 2001) found that synchronization of music with repetitive exercise brings extended work output and enhances performance. However few forum

members noted improved performance (in terms of increased speed) by implementation of music. Instead, runners noted that incorrect music selection could cause loss of control; running too fast or in some cases injury. Rather than synchronising their movements with music, runners find music to be overtaking their pace, as the following quotes demonstrate:

I dont [run with music] because it takes over my pace and i lose control of my running pace (...). (Runner 23)

(...) quite often notice a subconscious change in pace following on from a slow cheesy rock song into a more upbeat cheesy rock song... (Runner 24)

(...) I used to [run with music] but I found I'd end up stomping my feet to the beat which ended up with little niggle & injury (Runner 25)

Runner 22 believes better performance to be an illusion caused by the psychological impact of music:

I used to think I was slower without music, but after timing myself I realise that I am actually faster without it! I think you just feel like you go faster as your focusing on other things so you are less aware of how long its taking you. (Runner 22)

The reason for the contrast with the extant literature may lie in the naturalistic setting of this study in comparison to the heavily controlled nature of the studies reported above.

The relationship between music, motivation and running does not however simply come down to tempo and pace, but is much more complex and tied into both the wider external environment in which people are living and running and our own inner worlds.

David explained how the events and atmosphere of the London Riots 2011 were central to his musicalised running experience:

Inspired by recent events over the last few days, I listened to fast paced and aggressive music with hard hitting baselines. Day to day news, good or bad, tends to affect my music choice and how hard I want to run.

Extramusical associations and lyrics are great motivational sources due to their capability to influence runners' emotions (Terry and Karageorhis, 2006). Karageorhis et al. (2006) noted that lyrics and extramusical associations which refer to strength and

determination can increase the duration and intensity of exercise. For that reason, music associated with sporting events, films or commercials is often considered to be a great source of motivation (Tenenbaum et al., 2004). In the following extract from the RW forum, Runner 31 describes his experience of running to the theme song from “Rocky” (*Eye of the Tiger* by *Survivor*):

I'd forgotten that I had a Survivor compilation on the MP3 player so was shocked into a series of chuckles as I plodded along and heard "Eye of the Tiger".

Surprisingly though - it's very motivational. You can just imagine yourself running up those steps as Rocky! (Runner 31)

It is evident from Runner 31's comment that *Rocky*'s soundtrack has influenced his emotions, evoked associations and enhanced the production of imagery during his training. He visualised himself training just like the main character of the film - a dramatic, intense fighter. For these very reasons, *Eye of the Tiger* has become a standout soundtrack for running (Pearlman, 2008). Other participants also referred to mood or the motivating force of personal memories in their reference to music consumption while running:

The music did have an effect as it put me in a good mood and it kind of reminded me of being on holiday with the family. I felt very relaxed and comfortable. (Marc)

As the following runner's comment demonstrates, personal meaning of songs can be equally motivational:

(...) before I ran my first marathon back in Feb, I asked a load of my friends to send me a song. Some of the songs were songs with an awesome beat/rhythm, others were merely inspirational or had some personal meaning (...) I used those songs to give me that extra kick of energy during the race. If I was feeling lousy, I could think of the friend who recommended that song to me and try to channel some sort of energy. I had to laugh when my mum recommended Chumbawumba's Tubthumping! And when it came out blasting during the race, it gave me that little kick I needed (Runner 30)

A key aspect of the musicalisation of running is that it helps runners dealing with physical discomfort and embodied displeasure:

I find it exceptionally difficult to drag myself out of bed at 6am unless I can take music with me. (Runner 11)

This tension between the desire to run in order to escape and the physical pain and sometimes monotony of running, were eased through the use of music. The most prominent reason for listening to music for those participating in the diary study, was distraction. The music provided a distraction from the effort of running and, during long runs, from boredom. Claire mentioned how for her, this was the primary function of music when she was running:

When I'm running, music is more like a distraction but I don't pay that much attention to it.

Part of the manifestation of this escape was the separation of the mind from the body as evidenced by runner 21's statement.

I'm finding the music such a help. It helps me to relax, forget the pain and also blocks out my gasping for breath (Runner 21)

This need to find ways to manage the physical demands of running led many of our runners to use music as an integral part of their training. Regulation of moods is one of the most frequently quoted functions of music in psychology (Saarikallio and Erkkilä, 2007), marketing (Larsen et al., 2010) and sports science and psychology (Hargreaves et al. 2002). Saarikallio and Erkkilä (2007) believe it to be the main reason for music consumption. The trend is also reflected in the RW forum, where the most frequently quoted reason behind implementation of music in training, was 'taking mind off running'. In his post, Runner 13 refers to running with music as 'diversion therapy':

Strange though it is, I do tend to run a little faster and can run for a little longer when accompanied by music. I think it is a good diversion therapy, takes your mind off your heart rate and pace...After all, a good run, (distance and pace) is a lot to do with your mental state as well as physical... (Runner 13)

As music enables runners to divert their minds from running, they often find themselves deeply emotionally involved with their training soundtracks:

(...) when I get a bit tired....properly tired I mean, I get all emotionally mushy and then it's pop tunes all the way Take That, KT Tunstall in fact the cheesier it is the more I like it...but worse than just needing the simplicity is that I find myself REALLY emotionally connecting with the kind of trite nonsense you wouldn't believe. There have been tears 😊 (Runner 46)

Discussion and Conclusions

While our findings may be seen as challenging existing studies regarding the use of music and running performance, we argue that this results from the methods employed in such studies. Our interest in the broader musicalisation of running led us to consider other manifestations of performance such as motivation, endurance, distraction, and escape through the use of music and in considering these we interrogate the nature of pleasure. Our findings contribute to understandings of experiential and hedonic consumption in that we argue that such consumption is complex and multifaceted. As Jantzen et al. (2012: 150) note, pleasure and pain are 'not opposite poles on a scale of more or less discomfort but...two forces of motivation'. Drawing on Bentham (2007/1789), Jantzen et al. (2012: 150) argue that pain is satisfied with relief (from pain), while pleasure is driven 'by the urge to experience the extraordinary, which produces bodily excitation or relaxation leading to either ecstatic or meditative emotions'. This resonates with Holbrook's (1980, 1981) commentaries on esthetic consumption, where it is possible to reach a state of extreme stimulation through the consumption of esthetic 'products'. Our study, in its combination of the consideration of the physical act of running and the esthetic act of music consumption, provides insight into the combination of the pleasure and pain function in mainstream consumption activity. While Jantzen et al. (2012) do refer to the practice of sadomasochism in their discussion of hedonic consumption, we argue that this is still a non mainstream consumption practice, while running

and the use of music while running is a popular activity. From the respondents included in this study, we can characterise running as a hedonic experience, in that 'escape' was a key element of the running experience. We argue that this escape is multifaceted in that the runners use running to 'escape' the humdrum of life and music is layered on top of this escape in order to assist the runners to escape further; from the pain/ noise of the body, from the urban soundscape, from the mundanity of the long run or lack of fitness. What is interesting at the second order of escape evidenced here, is the manifestation of this 'escape' as 'escaping into' rather than from something. We characterise this escape as consisting of ascetic, sensorial and emotional dimensions which lead to four manifestations of escape; from predetermined (musical) identity; the stresses of life; lack of motivation; physical pain and urban soundscapes (see figure 2).

Insert figure 2 approximately here

These notions of diversion from the physical pain of the body and consciousness of time, highlight the complexity of the notion of escape in running. People run to escape the drudgery or stresses or inactivity of everyday life, and central to the effectiveness of running as an escape is that it is physically demanding and therefore produces physical and emotional states that are in the end pleasureable, relaxing, relieving and so on. However, often the means to these ends is painful, difficult, exhausting and runners also find ways of escaping from that, in this case through the use of music. This also highlights that the notion of escape should not always be interpreted as escape 'from' but that escape 'to' is equally important. For example, getting to a level of fitness where the physical and psychological benefits come more easily and without such physical pain, could be understood as an escape 'into' running.

The use of the soundscape, which conjures up memories, distraction and inspiration, allows our runners to escape into their run for longer or to escape the physical pain that can often be experienced when pushing the body. Reflecting back on Attali (1985), we can say that runners use the soundscapes that they create in order to exert control over both their

external and internal environment, screening out undesirable noises and creating an internal soundscape which provides inspiration and distraction, contributing to the various forms of escape found within our runners. Drawing on Bull (2001) we see that our runners used their portable music devices to assert greater control over the urban environment. While Simun (2009) characterised MP3 users as illusory in that rather than engaging with the urban environment, they were screening it out, this is not the case for our runners, as they recognised the threat to safety that may come with complete disengagement, therefore, they tended to reside partially in and partially removed from the urban environment. Therefore, their escape could not be total, but rather, degrees of escape, from escape, a more nuanced relationship with the urban soundscape.

The musicalisation of running has been aided by technological advances and as such facilitates these multifaceted manifestations of escape. The ability of runners to draw on music and memories and emotions associated with this music allowed them to create soundscapes which provided both distraction and inspiration. Similarly, the tempo and lyrics of the music contributed to this distraction, increased motivation and inspiration, aiding running, not just (or even) in terms of running faster, but embarking on the run, running longer, tackling hills or overcoming physical hurdles.

So, our runners could access technology, emotion and meaning in order to escape into past running achievements; other places, the past and nostalgic remembrance; alternative soundscapes and alternative musical identities (see figure 2). In doing so, they engaged in forms of pleasurable escape of ascetic, sensorial and emotional dimensions, straddling these forms of pleasure through the use of music. A significant contribution of our study is the focus on responses to the individually constructed soundscapes rather than those that are commercially available for group consumption. In this way, we move theoretical understanding of music consumption on the individual level on from a main focus on identity. We also move beyond existing understanding of outdoor music consumption which is either designed to increase spending behaviour, enhance consumption experience or showcase creative output. Our study focuses on individuals in social spaces and their curated music

consumption which balances aesthetic, identity and instrumental consumption practices. The benefit of this focus is in understanding the ongoing process of learning, experiencing and pleasuring that consumers (in this case runners) go through in personalising and taking advantage of such soundscapes. Managerially, our account of pleasurable escape through music seems to suggest that the personal connection with music derived from meaning and emotion leads us away from general complications of music tracks based on genre or tempo alone, towards community based recommendation systems which allow personal curation and community recommendations to sit side by side. Future research could examine this notion of pleasurable escape in other consumption contexts. We envisage that this would be most relevant to understanding situations where consumers are seeking to experience and achieve a particular transformative goal, such as learning a language or other new skill; where there is both an element of pleasure as well as pain or effort.

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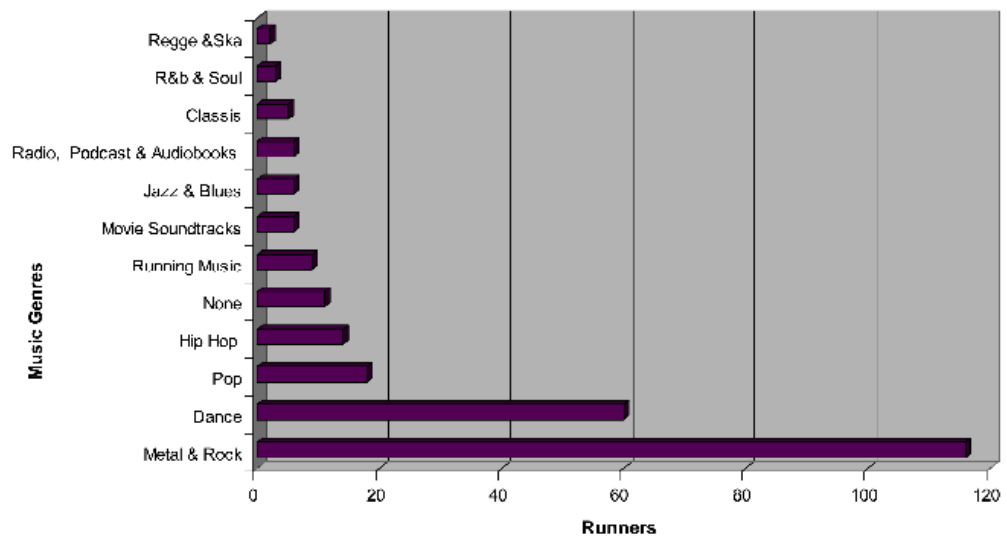


Figure 1 Music Genres and Running
Source: Authors

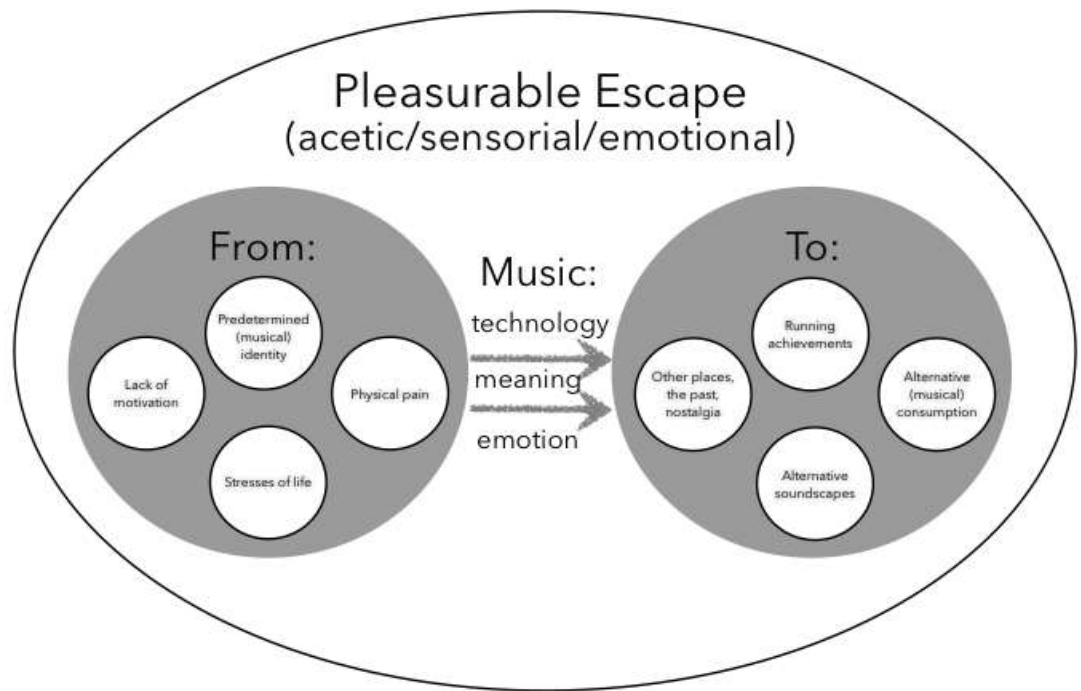


Figure 2 **Pleasurable Escape**
Source: Authors