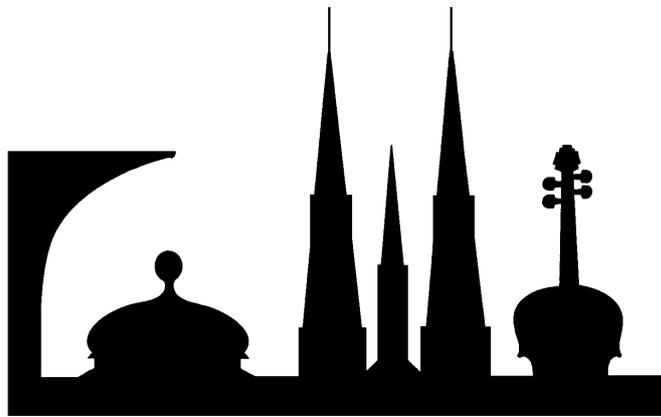


Nina Simone In Concert

Identifying Activism and Self-awareness Through Interactive Qualities

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ABSTRACT

The singer and activist Nina Simone played a crucial role in the political and musical outcome of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. This thesis aims to assess how Simone's activism and self-awareness are expressed through interactive qualities by doing a case study of the performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" on the live album *In Concert*. A relational approach has been suggested, where the focus has been on sociological elements of musical encounter such as interaction, rather than the aesthetical. Searching within four dimensions of social relations within which culture is enacted (division of labor, relations of power, tuning in and cultural embeddedness), constructed by sociologist of culture William G. Roy, shows that musical encounter is highly dependent of the social relations within which it manifests. Expressing social strategies such as irony, sing-along and humor as interactive methods shows that the performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" were not solely defined by their composition and musical content, but also by *how* they were performed.

Seeking beyond aesthetical features on the album *In Concert* have shown that the interactive qualities within the performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" are highly dependent of and defined by Simone's activism and self-awareness.

Keywords: Nina Simone, musicology, performance study, interaction, self-awareness, activism.

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INTRODUCTION

“The name of this song is Mississippi Goddam, and I mean every word of it” is how Nina Simone introduced the song “Mississippi Goddam” on her live album *In Concert* from 1964. Earlier, she was mainly known for her great musical talent and varied repertoire, mixing genres such as jazz, classical music and folk music. The album *In Concert* marked a political shift in Simone’s career. After hearing that four African American girls had been killed in a bombing attack against the Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, Simone devoted her music and life to the Civil Rights Movement.¹ The album *In Concert* expresses her activism not only in the songs, but through her performances of the songs, which I aim to explore further.

The sociologist of music Tia DeNora and sociologist of culture William G. Roy criticize the fact that music is often valued solely for the music itself – an analytical perspective which fails to acknowledge music’s sociological functions.² If we consider music to be something beyond its sounds and scores, by treating it as a cultural practice that depends on social and interactive premises, what more can we extract from musicological studies?

Social movements have often been shaped by various cultural expressions with the purpose of amplifying the political stances that they propose. Music in particular has been shown to be an exceptionally effective tool to express politics throughout history. The Civil Rights Movement in the USA is known for its powerful music culture which played a significant role in the political outcomes of the movement. Organizations like the SNCC Freedom Singers, a student led organization which used music as a political strategy to educate people on their basic rights, made the Civil Rights Movement one of the most musical movements in American history.³ Many artists, writers and musicians portrayed the political situation and their cultural activity incited the movement forward. The shift from a southern, non-violent movement to an urban and more militant movement was not only recognized by the rhetoric of the movement, it was also manifested and encouraged through its music. The relationship between social movements and music can be delineated in the following way – social movements organize, protest and can be identified as long as there is a current political

¹ Nina Simone, Stephen Cleary, *I Put A Spell On You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone* (Da Capo Press reprint edition, 2003), p. 91.

² William G. Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* Vol. 23:2/3 (2010), p. 85, Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

agenda, while music by means of its aesthetics can illustrate and encapsulate a social spirit, but also by its activity sustain and incite the political agenda forward.

In the case of Nina Simone, studying her music solely without recognizing the political and interactive implications of her music becomes insufficient for several reasons. As a musical catalyst during the Civil Rights Movement, iconic songs such as “Mississippi Goddam”, which described the political turbulence of 1960’s America as well as her political activism as a public person, helped to reestablish black activism in the 1960’s.⁴ Historian Ruth Feldstein stresses the importance of cultural production such as Simone’s during the Civil Rights Movement by writing:

[...] The political work a song could do and the multiple ways in which cultural production mattered to black activism – far more than as merely the background sound track to the movement, and not simply as a reflection of the pre-existing aspirations of political activists.⁵

Musical production in a given context was therefore not only a reactive way to portray a movement, it was an active strategy to spur it forward. Roy suggests a relational approach when analyzing music, which emphasizes musical interaction over musical content and defines music’s value by the qualities of interaction.⁶ Thus, I believe the relational approach will help promote a greater understanding of Nina Simone and her music by identifying sociological and interactive elements of her musical activity.

The live album *In Concert* is regarded to be one of the most significant albums by Nina Simone, marking a political shift in her music as well as her life. Simone’s performance skills of emotionally enticing her audience as well as her musical breadth, which are both expressed on *In Concert*, create intriguing prerequisites for studying the interactive and sociological indicators that manifest through musical encounters.

⁴ Ruth Feldstein, “‘I Don’t Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s”, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91:4 (March, 2005), p. 1349.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1350.

⁶ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 88.

Purpose

This thesis concerns the political and musical activity of the artist Nina Simone. The purpose is to gain new and deeper knowledge of the importance of sociological elements in musical encounter. I aim to look at how Simone's activism and political self-awareness are expressed through her interactive qualities in the performances of the two songs "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" on her album *In Concert* from 1964.

Considering music to be a practice that has the ability to affect social matters, this thesis aims to help estimating music's social elements as something as important as the musical piece itself. I will apply a relational approach by defining interactive qualities within the performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" in order to produce new insights on the importance of relational studies. It will contain a case study of the performances of the songs "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" on the live album *In Concert*, which was recorded as a concert in Carnegie Hall, New York to demonstrate my purpose.⁷ Hence, I have formulated following research question: *In what ways are Simone's activism and self-awareness demonstrated through interactional activities within her live performances?*

Material

A greater comprehension of the music and activism of Nina Simone is essential in this thesis. I have considered her autobiography *I Put a Spell On You*, written by Simone and Stephen Cleary as a primary source, because it provides first hand material on how her political and musical activities developed.⁸ According to herself, the autobiography was written over a 30-year period, so it is possible to assume that some emotional changes have been made during the given time period.⁹ The motive of using the autobiography as a primary source is not to appoint certain events, nor is it to confirm life occurrences. What the biography can provide, unlike secondary literature, is a first-hand experience of what her political, social and musical experiences meant to her, which counteracts the risk of drawing inaccurate assumptions on her thoughts and actions.

To get a chronological outline on the life occurrences of Simone, the biography *Princess Noire – The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone*, written by Nadine Cohodas, is used as a

⁷ Nina Simone, *In Concert*, Verve Records: UPC: 602498886977, 2006 (1964).

⁸ Simone, Cleary, *I Put A Spell On You*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

complementary resource.¹⁰ This will later be viewed through the works of DeNora and Roy as well as the album *In Concert*, whose audio tracks have been accessed through Spotify.¹¹ Having difficulties in accessing visual tape recordings from the performance of *In Concert*, I am aware that using audio tapes solely can be regarded as problematic or insufficient. Because the emphasis in this thesis is on interactive qualities regarding verbal and musical communication, I still find the audio tracks to provide enough material to fulfill my analysis. The lyrics of “Mississippi Goddam” and “Go Limp” have been transcribed directly from the album record.

Methodology and Theory

The theoretical material consists of different types of complementary sources which will suite the purpose of this thesis. The theoretical core rests on Tia DeNora’s and William G. Roy’s works on the sociology of music and culture, mainly, as well as their affirmation on the necessity of analyzing interactive qualities within musical encounters. Roy has identified four dimensions of social relations within which culture is enacted by looking at them through a relational approach, which emphasizes the qualities of interaction rather than the aesthetics of a cultural piece.¹² The four dimensions he presents are the following: 1) the division of labor, 2) the relations of power, 3) tuning in and 4) embeddedness, where he claims that cultural activity should be valued and analyzed in the same extent as the cultural piece itself.¹³ These four dimensions can be applied on different social situations where culture is practiced, where Roy has made an emphasis on social movements. The theoretical claim that this method rests on follows: although the content of a cultural piece is important to study, the effects of cultural productions are not solely defined by the piece itself, since the different social relation within which culture can be identified also reflects the cultural outcome.

A modification of Roy’s model will be necessary to make the four dimensions applicable on my analysis. The model is suitable for different types of cultural activity, which the title implies (*How Social Movements do Culture*). This study includes musical activity solely, therefore I will not make any attempt to approach other cultural practices to justify the model, merely use it as a tool to speak of musical matters.

¹⁰ Cohodas, Nadine: *Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

¹¹ Nina Simone, *In Concert*, Verve Records: UPC: 602498886977, 2006 (1964).

¹² Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 88.

¹³ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, pp. 85-86.

Tia DeNora discusses the emotional and sociological dimensions of musical encounter among individuals through case studies in *Music in everyday life* (2000) and *After Adorno – Rethinking Music Sociology* (2003), by stating that one important element that musical encounter circulates around is the principle of *shared time*, a feature that every performance depends on.¹⁴ Being relevant in the case of musical activity in the Civil Rights Movement, she mentions Ann Swidler’s theory Cultural repertoires. Claiming that Cultural repertoires emerges under circumstances where different cultural expressions are being articulated for a longer time period, these eventually transforms into cultural repertoires where social structures are being expressed and restored simultaneously.¹⁵

My final analysis, a case study of the album *In Concert*’s two songs “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” will be analyzed through the theoretical and methodological framework that Roy’s four dimensions of social relations within which culture is enacted provides, in order to survey how Simone’s self-awareness and activism are expressed through her interactions with the audience.

Previous Research

In the academics, the attention often has been aimed towards feministic, racial, political and contextual theories when analyzing the life, songs and performances of Simone. Rarely it solely focuses on the interactive qualities through a sociological perspective. Jasmine A. Mena and P. Khalil Saucier in their article “‘Don’t let me be misunderstood’: Nina Simone’s Africana Womanism”, finds that the music of Simone did help her listeners to gain a greater awareness of different socio-political matters, e.g., racial and gender related issues.¹⁶ This was done by applying a qualitative ethnographic content analysis on 44 of Simone’s songs. Ruth Feldstein’s book *How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement* narrates the complexity and diversity of Simone by considering racial, gender based, activist and musical implications which have affected the outline of Simone’s career by analyzing pieces from the album *In Concert* by its lyrics and earlier mentioned factors.¹⁷ Unlike Feldstein, Daphne A. Brooks focuses on the performance qualities and strategies of Simone on *In Concert*,

¹⁴ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, p. 5; Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 83.

¹⁵ DeNora, *Rethinking Music Sociology*, pp. 120–121.

¹⁶ Jasmine A. Mena, P. Khalil Saucier, “‘Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood’: Nina Simone’s Africana Womanism”, *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 45:3 (2014), pp. 247–265.

¹⁷ Ruth Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

focusing on irony as an essential element in her article “Nina Simone’s Triple Play”.¹⁸ The political and musical consciousness of Simone is assessed in “Nina Simone & the Civil Rights Movement: Protest at Her Piano, Audience at Her Feet” by A. Loudermilk as well as in “The Quadruple-Consciousness of Nina Simone” by Malik Gaines, who focuses on how artefacts as voice, multiple personas and clothing can coalesce as a conscious performance strategy.¹⁹ Another dimension when analyzing Simone has focused on how the music of Simone has either been used in contemporary popular music, or shaped music that was produced after her. The former approach is presented in “Strange Sampling: Nina Simone and Her Hip-Hop Children” by Salamishah Tillet and the latter by Tammy L. Kernodle in her article “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free: Nina Simone and the Redefining of the Freedom Song of the 1960’s”.²⁰

Beyond academic research, there are numerous journalistic publications and biographies written on the life and music of Simone. Nadine Cohodas provides a detailed overview on Simone’s life and career in *Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone* (2012).

The realm of music sociology has been viewed on through different perspectives by several scholars, hence I will list previous research which may be regarded valuable in relation to this thesis. Tia DeNora’s two books on music sociology, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (2003) and *Music In Everyday Life* (2000), does not only provide a detailed description of how music sociology has been treated in the academics through time, it also introduces the idea of music being something that do not merely reflect social behaviors, but as something that is constitutive of them.²¹

“What is Sociological about Music?” by William Roy and Timothy J. Dowd explores the bonds between music and social behavior by discussing whether music should be regarded as an object which consists of musical content that reflects social interactions or as a dynamic activity which shapes social behaviors to the same extent as it reflects it.²² Studying how social

¹⁸ Daphne A. Brooks, “Nina Simone’s Triple Play”, *Callaloo* Vol.34:1 (2011), pp. 176–197.

¹⁹ A. Loudermilk, “Nina Simone & the Civil Rights Movement: Protest at Her Piano, Audience at Her Feet”, *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, vol.14:3 (2013), pp.121–136; Malik Gaines, “The Quadruple-Consciousness of Nina Simone”, *Journal Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, vol. 23:2 (2013), pp. 248–267.

²⁰ Salamishah Tillet, “Strange Sampling: Nina Simone and Her Hip-Hop Children”, *American Quarterly; College Park* Vol. 66:1 (2014), pp. 119–137; Tammy L. Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free’: Nina Simone and the Redefining of the Freedom Song of the 1960’s”, *Journal of the Society for American Music* Vol. 2:3 (2008), pp. 295–317.

²¹ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, p. 5.

²² Timothy J. Dowd, William Roy, “What is Sociological about Music?”, *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 36 (2010), pp. 183–203.

movements perform culture by pointing to different dimensions where culture mobilizes people in the book *Red, Whites, and Blues: Social Movements, Folk Music, and Race in the United States* (2010), William Roy assesses the cultural productivity of the Civil Rights Movement by sociological means.²³

Disposition

The thesis is divided into five chapters: Introduction, Theoretical background, Civil Rights and Freedom Songs, In Concert and lastly Conclusion in order to thematically distinct the themes from each other. The first chapter presents my subject shortly, and is followed by a theoretical chapter which narrates different theories on music sociology as well as introduces the four dimensions which my analysis will be viewed through. The chapter Civil Rights and Freedom Songs discusses the term Freedom Songs used in the Civil Rights Movement, and provides a presentation of Nina Simone. The chapter In Concert analyzes the songs “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” separately and together, and is followed by the chapter Conclusion, where I summarize my analysis.

Appendix A and B have been attached, containing lyrics of “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” by Simone in appendix A, and Alex Comfort’s lyrics of “Go Limp” in appendix B.

²³ William G. Roy, *Reds, Whites, and Blues: Social Movements, Folk Music, and Race in the United States* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

MUSIC IN THE SOCIAL

Music – an Object and an Activity

Pursuing musicological studies is a discipline which allows scholars to perceive and build an understanding of history by looking at where and under which circumstances music has been used. Often, music is regarded and studied as an object which has derived from a specific time and place, telling about its context by its musical characteristics. It can be analyzed as something static; an object which has been studied in hindsight connected to a specific period of time, context, location or as an autonomous object disconnected to elements external to it. Seeing music as something static opens up to the possibility of analyzing the content of music (lyrics, harmonies and musical structures) and how it has been used as a structural reflection of social interactions. According to Oxford Music Online, the term “musicology” suggests different implications. The traditional, historical way of pursuing musicological studies have been by treating music as an art form – a definition that assesses music as an object, evaluated by its aesthetical content.²⁴

Nonetheless, a content-based perspective lacks to provide understanding in how music can also be seen as constitutive of the social – something dynamic that is constantly being produced in social life and thus, shaping society. Looking at the content of musical or other cultural pieces focus on the observer’s ability to *listen* and transform the information one is given by combining the content of the piece with the social context it is connected to. As Timothy J. Dowd and William G. Roy articulates it; “Transforming the fleeting sounds of music into an object is a social achievement that requires sociological explanation”.²⁵ Inquiries on whether music is only a passive holder of social essence and everything coming with it, or if there is more to extract from it, is a profound question that Dowd and Roy tries to answer. DeNora explains it by saying “As sociologists and social theorists turned to music in the twentieth century, it was typically *not* to take up the topic of music’s social power. Instead, music has been posed more remotely, as a medium that ‘reflects’ or otherwise parallels social structure”.²⁶ The analytical focus according to DeNora maintains in defining music as an art

²⁴ Duckles, Vincent, Pasler Jann, “Musicology”, *Oxford Music Online*, (visited May, 2018), <www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

²⁵ Timothy J. Dowd, William G. Roy, “What is Sociological about Music?”, *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 36 (2010), p. 185.

²⁶ DeNora, *Rethinking Music Sociology*, p. 2.

form reacting to social behavior rather than acknowledging it as a practice which incites social interactions and behaviors.

Confirming music as an interactive activity, both among individuals and in the relation between performer and audience, can extract deeper understanding in why music often have deep sociological explanations. Musicologists as well as sociologists have wished to aim what defines the close interaction between music and social essence using different approaches through time. The approach focusing on cultural production and social behavior has developed since Howard Becker published *Art Worlds* in 1982, and was also discussed by musicologist and philosopher Theodor W. Adorno.²⁷ Claiming that music was linked to historical developments, cognitive habits and dimensions of awareness, he considered music to have a social power in our everyday life by conscious and unconscious means. This is exemplified in two different social constructions where music takes form according to Adorno: through music that “trains the unconscious for conditioned reflexes”,²⁸ and music that “aid[ed] enlightenment”,²⁹ providing society with music that challenges the intellectual, emotional and subconscious habits that human beings are reproducing on a daily basis by avoiding musical stereotypes.³⁰ For example the music of Arnold Schoenberg, whom according to Adorno managed to do so with his invented twelve tone technique because of its preservation of dissonances instead of harmonic resolution that required the listeners attention and participation.³¹ Thus, Adorno confirmed music and social matters to have a strong connection, but lacked to prove the factor that connected music and social action.³²

Beyond Adorno in the academics, DeNora claims that the aesthetic elements within social activities often has been ignored in both social sciences with its cognitivist bias, and in the studies of arts and humanities, musicology included, with their priority on text-objects.³³ Instead of continuing research favoring this perspective, another angle is being presented in *Music in Everyday life* by DeNora. The difficulty in offering studies that treats the realm of the aesthetic as something interlinked to the production of culture as a dynamic and active material

²⁷ For further studies on Adorno’s Music sociology, read DeNora, *After Adorno* pp. 1–35 and DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, pp. 1–20.

²⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, Trans. E. B. Ashton (New York, 1976), p. 53.

²⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Trans. A. G. Mitchell and W. Blomster (New York, 2010), p. 15.

³⁰ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, p. 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, preface p. ix.

in social life is being discussed consistently throughout the book.³⁴ A concern is expressed by DeNora about early models where music is analyzed as something acting parallel with society, because this model is best applied within static analytical frames, which means studying composers or works and shifts that are made in musical styles. It gets less applicable when trying to address issues not related to specific factors as mentioned above, factors that are identified by social measures for example.³⁵

Determining the “Music and Society” Nexus

DeNora uses a term she calls the “music and society” nexus, where the nexus comprises the sphere where music and social matters correlate.³⁶ The musical production and activity that emerges from this sphere can be seen in social movements as well as through individual musical actors. Especially social movements reveal remarkable social and musical outcomes within the “music and society” nexus. In the Civil Rights Movement, musical and political activity were equivalent in the sense that a lot of the communication was done through collective singing as a strategy to unify and educate people.³⁷ In this manner, studies of *how* people interact through musical practices becomes more adequate than the musical piece itself.

Proving a legitimate theory when studying the nexus of music and society is one of the great difficulties. A difficulty when studying the nexus of society and music is providing a legitimate theory. It has partly to do with the lack of theoretical explanation which is suitable for this type of correlation between music and social behaviors. Outcomes of the “music and society” nexus cannot be scientifically proved in the same way as physics for example, because these derive from real life experiences that is a highly subjective field. DeNora underscores this academic challenge by quoting the French sociologist Antione Hennion: “it must be strictly forbidden to create links when this is not done by an identifiable intermediary”.³⁸ Hennion is correct in the sense that music connected to social behaviors or activities cannot and should not be assumed. Rather than assumed, the connection between the two should be illustrated, claims DeNora, until it is possible to identify a relevant link that can connect the two.³⁹ By illustrating

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, pp. 4–6.

³⁶ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, pp. 1–20.

³⁷ T. V. Reed, *Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (University of Minnesota, 2005), p. 28.

³⁸ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, p. 4.

³⁹ Ibid.

how aesthetic productivity can play a constitutive role within different social interactions like social movements, it is possible to survey the basis for them. Although it is regarded more difficult to draw conclusions between social matters and musical activity, it is clear that these two co-relate to a great extent.

Reproducing Cultural Behavior

The Cultural repertoires perspective, partly established by sociologist Ann Swidler, affirms how it is possible to analyze culture in action by applying different strategies.⁴⁰ According to Swidler, adapting cultural expressions for a long period of time transforms the expressions into Cultural repertoires.⁴¹ Cultural repertoires that emerges under these circumstances are then being comprehended as strategies where social structures can both be expressed and restored at the same time.⁴² Analyzing social movements' cultural (in this case, musical) production through this theory, emphasizes the perception of treating music as an activity rather than an object. The Civil Rights Movement is famous for its usage of music as a communicative way of inciting the movement forward by constantly practicing music in different social constructions – among artists like Nina Simone who communicated a message to their audience, in protest marches, in jail, in school et cetera.⁴³ The cultural repertoires perspective confirms the music's importance in the Civil Rights Movement, regardless of whether it was used in collective contexts or by artists singing for their audience. In situations where musical practice is embedded in social behavior and vice versa to the same extent as in the Civil Rights Movement, music sociology can help to provide answers which content-based music analysis cannot.

Roy demonstrates the musical impact during the Civil Rights Movement by a model which he created to demonstrate the importance of doing culture in social movements, which takes brace in many of DeNora's thoughts within the field of the "music and society" nexus.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ DeNora, *After Adorno*, p. 120.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 88.

Four Dimensions of Social Relations where Culture is Enacted

To assess musical productivity and how it relates to social movements, the model presents four dimensions of social relations within which culture is achieved: 1) the division of labor, 2) the relations of power, 3) tuning in, and 4) embeddedness. The purpose of applying this model is to identify *how* cultural expressions, in this case musical expressions, are used in social movements as social strategies to enroll more participants and educate people. Roy argues that far too few studies have been made on the concrete interactive social relations within which social movements do culture, while most academic that illuminates the cultural production in social movements have focused on presenting and contextualizing different pieces that has been produced.⁴⁵ The four dimensions are presented aims to fill this academic gap through a relational approach.

A relational approach emphasizes the interaction and decides the value of the musical activity by defining it through the qualities of interaction, because the content itself with its words, narrative and melody can represent very different things depending on the context within which it appears.⁴⁶ The span of interaction is wide and concerns everything from physical encounter to an emotional agreement.⁴⁷ A relational approach can be manifested in different ways depending on what is wished to extract. The most common way a relational approach is demonstrated is through the network approach, where the cultural piece, defined by its content, is analyzed with an emphasis on the structure of relations that a person has been embedded in.⁴⁸ This means to locate different types of interactions that this person has had in order to draw assumptions on how the interactions have affected the persons aesthetic decisions. Another relational approach underscores interactive qualities between people in a long-term spectrum, where lasting connections based on emotional bonds and a sense of community are elements that makes people open to influence with their cultural work.⁴⁹ The last way to apply a relational approach in a cultural analysis is by looking at social relations and interactive qualities as they happen by identifying different social relations in which the culture is practiced, which is the focus that will be emphasized throughout this study.

⁴⁵ Dowd, Roy, "What is Sociological about Music?", p. 186; Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 85.

⁴⁶ Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 88.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

There are two situations where it is possible to identify direct interactive musical practice. Music can be performed by a *performer* towards an *audience*, which may be regarded as the most common way of presenting a musical activity. Within every performance, a dimension of interaction can be manifested, since it postulates a dimension of shared time between the performer and the audience.

It can also be manifested as a social interaction where there are no definite roles such as a *performer* and an *audience* – as a group action. Roy emphasizes the latter approach when presenting his theory, arguing that music is not only something we consume, but also something people incorporate into their daily life.⁵⁰ The musical activity during the Civil Rights Movement blended into people's daily life in a way so that doing music became a political action without necessarily dividing people into consumers or performers.⁵¹ I interpret this as Roy claiming that doing music itself was self-fulfilling, a political action defined not solely by the musical piece itself.

The study object which is presented further on at first sight identifies with the first type of interactive musical practice – as an artist presenting a musical piece by displaying it to an audience. Although this is not the perspective emphasized by Roy, I argue there are strong elements of interaction within different dimensions of social relations, both physically and emotionally, within every performance which relies on the fundamentals of a relational approach, making the four dimensions relevant in this angle of approach.

1) The Division of Labor

The first dimension of social relations within which music is achieved is in the division of labor.⁵² Division of labor in social relations where music is identified appears different depending on the social prerequisites that sets the context. To set an example of how the division of labor can be illustrated, Roy shows how labor often is divided and distributed in Western music for example: among performers, composers, listeners and interpreters.⁵³ In other social contexts, the labor distribution can manifest itself differently, because the distinction between the roles are not always as definite as they are within Western music. When acknowledging music in its active sphere, the process of distribution of labor becomes decisive,

⁵⁰ Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 86.

⁵¹ Leslie P. Rose, "The Freedom Singers of the Civil Rights Movement: Music Functioning for Freedom", *National Association for Music Education*, Vol. 25:2 (2007), p. 59.

⁵² Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 87.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

because it tells us a lot about the power distribution being made in order to maintain the labor division. Although the traditional division of labor within Western music provides individuals very specific roles, there are some genres where these distinctions dissolve. Improvisational genres, jazz for example, diminishes the power- and labor division between composition and performance because the genre relies on musicians being able to compose at the moment with their improvisational skills.⁵⁴

2) Relations of Power

The second dimension to identify where social relations do music is within the relations of power. In interactive scenarios where music is produced, different relations of power can be identified according to Roy.⁵⁵ The relations of power are to some extent connected to the division of labor, because the power relations are often revealed in how the labor is distributed among individuals. Music which affects the social context by any means implies that the one distributing the music has gained a social power, because that person gets the opportunity to form the framework within which actions are made.⁵⁶ Distribution of power within cultural spheres is often, just as the division of labor, highly dependent of the situation it manifests in. Roy argues that decentralized movements such as the Civil Rights Movement have allowed music to take different shapes to be able to suit as many social contexts as possible, because the collective experience was valued greater than the content, while other centralized movements have the opposite rhetoric by fixating the cultural outcome to be able to monitor the general message.⁵⁷

3) Tuning in

Tuning in musically within social relations means that a collective action is made by people through singing or chanting for instance by looking at how the collective action can generate in a fortifying collective spirit.⁵⁸ The idea of a “we” and how it can be reinforced by cultural participatory behavior is what tuning in suggests. Roy refers to the philosopher Alfred Schütz, who argues that music has the ability to synchronize people’s consciousness by the power of

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 88.

⁵⁶ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, p. 20; Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 89.

⁵⁷ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

tuning in.⁵⁹ He also states that the more tuned in the performer and the audience are, the greater impact they have on each other by something he calls pre-communicative interaction, which means communication that is based on a reciprocal understanding toward one another.⁶⁰ Roy claims that music's power is not solely dependent of its lyrics, because the level of understanding the lyrics is dependent on how well tuned in people are. Thus, tuning in is what makes collective singing so powerful, because it provides a sense of community.⁶¹

4) Embeddedness

Cultural embeddedness addresses how music is valued in different societies, and during which circumstances music is valued high or low. Music in Western society is considered to be of most aesthetic worth when being as pure as possible, while music used with political, profitmaking or similar purposes is when it is the most aesthetically negotiated.⁶²

If the premises of valuing music are regulated by these Westernized standards, the answer to why content based musicological analysis is a convectional approach can be found here. If Western society implies that music is least aesthetically compromised when being disconnected from political, commercial or other elements and can be valued solely by the music itself, music that does not attain the same advanced level as music theory may duly become less valued. A piece that is less theoretically advanced so more people can tune in to collectively sing for example, automatically is considered less valued, because it does not live up to its fullest aesthetic potential.

Valuing how good music is by how autonomous it is regarded from its social context underestimates the power of musical activity during the Civil Rights Movement, since the collective actions within meetings and gatherings created the ideal setting for music making to the same extent as the collective music making fortified and reinforced the social forums where music was made.⁶³ If an interest in understanding where the sphere of aesthetics and the sphere of social encounter correlate, one of the most important factors to survey is the cultural embeddedness, because it focus on what happens when people practice culture.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 90.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 95.

By looking at the Civil Rights Movement briefly through the four dimensions of social relations within which social movements do culture, it is possible to state that music not only fill an aesthetic purpose, but also a political and social.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM SONGS

Singing for Freedom

Two elements played a significant role in the cultural production during the Civil Rights Movement, religion and music.⁶⁴ The Christian churches in America were important in the sense that musical expression which was used during the Civil Rights Movement had its roots in there, where music was done collectively through spirituals or gospel music.⁶⁵ In the Civil Rights Movement, singing was one of the most central strategies to communicate and teach people of their basic rights.⁶⁶ Spirituals were sung together, and the discrepancy between performers and audience appeared vague.⁶⁷ The songs which congregated the church and music were called Freedom Songs, and became a musical genre which was used and incorporated into people's everyday life – people sang in schools, in jail, in meetings et cetera.⁶⁸

It is a matter of scholarly debate exactly how the term Freedom Songs was and is considered. Musicologist Tammy L. Kernodle claims Freedom songs were divided into two categories in the early 60's – as the collective songs that grew out of spirituals and gospel music which was relying on group participation, and as professionally composed songs by musicians and artists that did not necessarily need participation in order to exist.⁶⁹ The former category of Freedom Songs changed the lyrics of gospels and spirituals from first person singular to first person plural, and by so created a sense of collective, bringing southern and middle class activists closer culturally.⁷⁰ The difference in how the term Freedom Songs were used have historically chronological implications. Practicing Freedom Songs during the 50's and earlier implied a public usage of music as a collective action, while the Freedom Songs after 1961 which Kernodle discusses were either attached to organized entities like the Student Nonviolent

⁶⁴ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Marcy C. Turck, *Freedom Song: Young Voices and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Chicago Review Press, 2008), p. 3.

⁶⁶ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Roy, *Red, Whites and Blues*, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Kernodle, "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free", p. 296.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 297.

Coordinating Committee Freedom Singers (SNCC),⁷¹ who used musical activity as a political strategy to achieve a collective spirit and knowledge of basic rights, or to popular artists that started singing about the movement.⁷² The strategy of the SNCC Freedom Singers with using music was to make people commit to the movement in different ways and making them participate instead of being spectators. By singing along in Freedom Songs that addresses the issues of segregation and racism, it became more likely to commit to the movement than if one only listened to others who talked about the same issues. By doing so, it was also possible to make people engage into leadership in different levels, because it encouraged people to initiate different musical strategies to make more people commit to the movement.⁷³ This marks a division of labor where the relations of power are revealed.

One way to engage people, according to Mississippi organizer Sam Block, was encouraging them to take gospel songs and change them into Freedom Songs by modifying the lyrics and adapt them to make them usable.⁷⁴ Modifying existing songs to make a political statement was a very common strategy used by both organizations as the SNCC Freedom Singers and artists like Nina Simone. Old love songs or protest songs linked to other political movements originally were re-used with lyrical or musical adjustments to fit the context, and all went under the definition of Freedom Songs.⁷⁵ The group Nashville Quartet used this as a tactic when they adapted the hit song “You Better Leave My Kitten Alone” by Little Willie John by replacing the word “kitten” to “segregation” and making the “you” plural, implementing political indications to a former love song.⁷⁶ Artists closely linked to the Civil Rights Movement like Nina Simone also used the same method to imply her political stance to her audience, which will be discussed further in the analysis of “Go Limp”.

The different definitions of Freedom Songs justifies an important point about social movements and music – it tells that the Civil Rights Movement mobilized around music, which means that music was not merely reflecting the political climate, but something that people used as an active strategy to encourage political activism.⁷⁷ Roy’s model of four dimensions within which culture is enacted appears valid when stating this fact, because Freedom Songs,

⁷¹ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 21.

⁷² Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”, p. 297.

⁷³ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 29.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Reed, *Art of Protest*, p. 20.

⁷⁷ Roy, *Red, Whites and Blues*, p. 16.

irrespective of if they are defined by their spontaneous and collective singing or by artists well-composed Freedom Songs, are all dependent on the social relations within which they occur.

Becoming Nina Simone

This chapter will present the artist and activist Nina Simone briefly up to 1964, before discussing the performances of “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” on the album *In Concert*.

Eunice Kathleen Waymon who later would become known as Nina Simone, was born on February 21, 1933 in the small town Tryon, North Carolina. She was the sixth of eight children, with both parents engaged in the Methodist church. Her mother, Kate Waymon, became an ordained church minister by the time Simone was three years’ old and all children were integrated in the church life from an early age.⁷⁸ Eunice’s musical talent was revealed early in life, and by the time she was six she was the permanent pianist at her local church. In hindsight, she has described the church as the place where she learned rhythm, an element that followed her as a central part of her music from then.⁷⁹ Playing gospel at the age of six as the regular pianist at her local church later established a sense for improvisation.⁸⁰ To gain a connection with her audience she early learned how to use musical improvisation as a bridge between her and the audience where both parts corresponded to each other. In her autobiography *I Put a Spell On You* she writes how gospel improvisation made it possible for her to shape the music in response to the audience and then further form the audience’s mood with her music, suggesting a self-awareness with her music performance from an early age.⁸¹

The bilateral relation that was established between the audience and Simone when she used improvisation identifies as a musical activity according to Dowd’s and Roy’s description of music as an activity, whereas the improvised social interaction constituted the musical outcome of the situation she was in.⁸² The ability to make people resonate with what she played, was one of the skills that later made her a political figure, because she could make people enjoy her concerts and feel what she wanted them to feel and therefore mobilize people through her performances.⁸³ In *I Put a Spell On You*, she refers to the audience state of mind as a “mass hypnosis”, and that she knew exactly how to get them there.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸² Dowd, Roy, “What is Sociological about Music?”, p. 186.

⁸³ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 92.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The artistic name Nina Simone was created in 1954 when moving to Atlantic City to work as a bar pianist for economic reasons.⁸⁵ After this, she got well known in the underground cult scene of New York and Philadelphia through her performances at famous clubs such as *The Village Gate* in New York.⁸⁶ She managed to master different musical genres by playing in different night club situations – popular music, jazz songs and classical songs around which she improvised.⁸⁷ Although she received more and more recognition, it was most likely not what she had had in mind initially. From childhood, her musical practice was dedicated to classical music, which she was originally trained to be, first through private lessons by the acquaintance Mrs. Muriel Mazzanovich and later at Juilliard in 1950.⁸⁸ Her attitude towards her audience was shaped by her classical years.⁸⁹ Because silence and respecting the musician on stage are the two ground corners in audience behavior within classical music, confronting loud and messy audiences as an underground musician became difficult for Simone. If the audience would not be quiet, she refused to play – “An audience chooses to come and see me perform; I don’t choose the audience. I don’t need them either, and if they don’t like my attitude they don’t have to come and see me”, she writes in her autobiography.⁹⁰ Simone’s relationship with her audience continued being a well-discussed matter, defined by what many considered to be a hostile or angry temperament, because of her assertive ways of admonishing her crowds.⁹¹ The tense relation could be explained by her lack of respect towards her audience because of how easily entertained they were.

The cultural and sophisticated distinctions between classical music and popular music/jazz music was revealed not only in her ambivalent relation towards her audience, but in how she perceived herself. She considered the music which her career was built on as inferior to classical music and despised everything from nightclubs to the popular music itself.⁹² By the time she became more politically active and started admiring her audiences for their activism instead of despising them for their lack of musical orientation, this attitude changed.⁹³

⁸⁵ Cohodas, *Princess Noire*, pp. 60–62.

⁸⁶ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, pp. 66–67.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁸ Cohodas, *Princess Noire*, p. 48, Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 22.

⁸⁹ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 52.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Brooks, “Nina Simone’s Triple Play”, p. 180.

⁹² Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 90.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

“Not exactly a jazz performer – [...] more than just a jazz performer”.

For a long time, Simone participated in political discussions at the *Village Gate*, which was considered to be the cultural center of New York 1956-1959, where intellectuals and artists such as James Baldwin, Langston Hughes and Lorraine Hansberry gathered and created a new political area where all types of backgrounds, classes and political perspectives convened.⁹⁴ Simone was present, “laughing at their political jokes” as she described it, but never fully understood the importance/how she was connected to all of this.⁹⁵ It was not until when she was home after giving birth to her daughter Lisa in 1962 that she started to analyze her own participation in the Civil Rights Movement that was happening around her.⁹⁶

Gaining a wider political frustration combined with developing a close friendship with screenwriter and activist Lorraine Hansberry formed a new political consciousness in Simone which was reflected in her music from 1963.⁹⁷ Before this, Simone felt disconnected to the movement because of her musical career, but Hansberry persisted that she was involved whether she liked it or not by virtue of being black in a segregated America.⁹⁸ Supporting African American activist organizations like the SNCC Freedom Singers, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) by headlining at benefit concerts and mentioning them when performing were the first steps of becoming a full-fledged activist.⁹⁹

Chronologically it is possible to follow Simone’s musical career by looking at the different genres she embraced – starting as a classical pianist and later getting involved in the underground nightclub world as a musician and a singer can be regarded as a strength in the sense that wherever she played, she appealed different listeners, collecting fans from different socio-cultural contexts. It was not until 1963 that her music started to reflect her increased political consciousness.¹⁰⁰ After the bombing and killing of four girls in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama on September 15, 1963, Simone wrote her first Civil Rights song, “Mississippi Goddam”.¹⁰¹ The song came to her in a “rush of fury, hatred and determination”, and was the first song she wrote where she contributed to the musical

⁹⁴ Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free*, p. 28.

⁹⁵ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 86.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Cohodas, *Princess Noire*, p. 138.

⁹⁹ Feldstein, “I Don’t Trust You Anymore”, p. 1360.

¹⁰⁰ Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”, pp. 299–300.

¹⁰¹ Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free*, p. 84.

production that was strongly attached to the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁰² The musical development of Simone took a shift as a result of “Mississippi Goddam” – after this song she wrote some of the most indisputable Freedom Songs from the 1960’s.¹⁰³

Before “Mississippi Goddam”, she did not consider herself to be a political figure in greater extent than that she occasionally encouraged activist behavior from the stage.¹⁰⁴ But what she felt and what she represented did not correlate, when it later turned out that the SNCC Freedom Singers already considered her to be a protest singer before she did so herself and often used her music in their campaigns while she was focusing on her career in New York without her knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Her activism was two-folded in that way, one side being describing what she felt, the other one what she represented publicly. After “Mississippi Goddam” and on, the music of Simone was dedicated to the struggle of the Civil Rights Movement. The reluctance in putting these different sides together before “Mississippi Goddam” came out was because of the way she had been brought up “the Waymon way” according to herself, which was to turn away from possible unequal treatment and trying to live in the best way possible.¹⁰⁶

As a result of her political wake-up call, musical and performance changes were made. She started writing protest music and developed a new sense of performing which focused on connecting to her audience spiritually and emotionally, by consciously making them feel what she wanted them to feel, using tricks to get them there.¹⁰⁷

IN CONCERT

The musical and performative changes as a result of Simone’s developed political activism became clear on the live recorded album and concert *In Concert*, which became her transitional landmark.¹⁰⁸ The album, consisting of seven songs in total confirms Simone’s political consciousness by the active interaction with the audience as well as the songs.

Cultural embeddedness takes different shape in classical spheres than in popular culture. Like Roy emphasized, Western culture often premiere music when being able to stand for itself

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”, p. 300.

¹⁰⁴ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 90.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁰⁶ Cohodas, *Princess Noire*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁷ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free*, p. 96.

regardless of its social context, a genre that closely relates to the sphere of classical music. Audience at classical concerts are often detached from interactive elements between audience and musicians to the extent that even applauding is restricted, because the music is supposed to be as autonomous from its social context as possible. The cultural embeddedness determined by this context does not correspond to the popular music scene, which Simone came to understand when becoming more political. The audience did not only value her for her music, but for the stands she was making as a public figure as well.¹⁰⁹

Looking at the political and musical development of Simone in hindsight reveals how these two factors correlated in a high extent, indicating that they spurred one another. Hence, coming to greater political insights automatically made Simone develop a new approach towards her audience. When she started interacting with her audience and no longer regarded herself to be a ‘side kick’ of the Civil Rights Movement, her self-awareness and activism could be expressed through her interactions with her audience.

The strategic use of Freedom Songs by organizations such as the SNCC Freedom Singers draws parallels to Simone’s usage of music in the sense that it is possible to identify certain strategies in order to achieve political influence by the help of music. As an organization, the SNCC Freedom Singers used the power of creating and playing music collectively instead of using rhetoric to educate people their basic rights. After 1963, when becoming more politically involved, Simone’s performance technique appears to have been strategically developed to benefit her political purpose. Being equally devoted to her artistic development as to her political activism, creating music that was dedicated to a social purpose became more important than excellence defined by classical music’s measures.¹¹⁰

The emotional outcome in musical encounter as a result of Simone’s developed self-awareness and activist leads to DeNora’s discussions on the correlation between emotional outcome and musical encounter in.¹¹¹ According to DeNora, the musical capacity is often associated with strong emotions, moods and subjectivity, unlike art or literature for instance, where portraying is considered to be central in the cultural outcome.¹¹² The most important factor that differentiates music from art and literature has to do with time – musical experiences often evolve around socially shared time between individuals.¹¹³ Musical

¹⁰⁹ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 91.

¹¹⁰ Brooks, ”Nina Simone’s Triple Play”, p. 178.

¹¹¹ DeNora, *After Adorno*, pp. 83-17.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

encounter is therefore very special, because everyone involved in the context, whether producing or consuming the music, are doing so for the same amount of time and the same music at the same time. This aspect becomes crucial in the case of the album *In Concert*, because the album encapsulates all those aspects at once, since it is live recorded with an audience. Studies on emotional and musical outcome of a certain shared musical time period as *In Concert* is, supports Roy's hypothesis that studies of what happens when people perform and produce music is as essential as studies of the music itself.

According to Daphne Brooks, Carnegie Hall, known as a well-established classical concert hall, can be presumed to have attracted an audience from a certain socio-cultural sphere.¹¹⁴ Because the live recordings of *In Concert* are only audial, it is not possible to visually confirm the socio-cultural status of the audience by features such as clothing, heritage or gender. Brooks claims that although there are only audio tracks available, it is possible to presume that the majority of the audience were white and liberal, considering what kind of audience Carnegie Hall usually consisted of.¹¹⁵ Performing "Mississippi Goddam" and "Go Limp" in this situation, creates interesting premises for the social and emotional outcome of Simone's performance in *In Concert*.

"Go Limp"

"Go Limp" was written by Alex Comfort and published in *Broadside Magazine* in 1962 as a protest song for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, is the penultimate song of the album *In Concert* and features a woman protagonist who in a conversation with her mother, tries to convince her why she wants to go out marching.¹¹⁶ The song is constructed with a simple verse-refrain form of six verses and five refrains. Adapted to fit the Civil Rights Movement, Simone made minor lyrical adjustments as many other protest singers did in the Civil Rights Movement to suite their purpose better, using the same strategy as the Nashville Quartet which was earlier mentioned. In the first verse she changed the acronym CND, which stands for Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament,¹¹⁷ to NAACP, referring to the political organization the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, by singing:

¹¹⁴ Brooks, "Nina Simone's Triple Play", p. 181.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

¹¹⁶ *The Broadside Magazine* Vol. 5 (May 1962), [p. 4].

¹¹⁷ Christopher Riches and Jan Palmowski, "CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament)", *Oxford Reference* (visited may, 2018), <<http://www.oxfordreference.com>>.

Alex Comfort lyrics

Oh Daughter, dear Daughter,
Take warning from me
And don't you go marching
With the **C-N-D**.

Nina Simone lyrics

Oh Daughter, dear Daughter
Take warning from me
And don't you go marching
With the **N-A-A-C-P**

The song is a humorous parody song of the folk music genre, where Simone in the live version on the album constantly invites the audience to participate by singing along during “hootenanny time”, referring to the refrain. Simone encourages the audience to sing together with her:

Singin too roo li, too roo li, too roo li ay
Singin too roo li, too roo li, too roo li ay

every time the refrain returns, mocking the folk music genre by exaggerating the sing-along moment of the song. The foolish sing along occurs parodic, which makes the audience act indecisive and hesitant of singing along. Moving on after the refrain, the song continues to develop, applying sexual implications in the lyrics. Warning about the sexual consequences of getting involved in political movements, the protagonist’s mother makes her daughter promise to remain a virgin and non-violent as a compromise in the second verse, where Simone sings with a great portion of sarcasm:

Oh Mother, dear Mother,
I'm not afraid.
For I'll go on that march
And I'll return a virgin maid.

With a brick in my handbag
And a smile on my face
And barbed wire in my underwear
To shed off disgrace.

When coming back to the second refrain, Simone immediately spurs the audience to participate in the “hootenanny time”, which they do from the second time and on, successively letting go of their uncertainty on whether Simone is making fun of the whole situation. Before entering the third verse, Simone acts as she forgot the lyrics of it as a way of keeping the audience’s attention and the comical spirit up. The band loops the accompaniment and she says: “I forgot the next verse... I really did.” The audience and Simone laugh at it, then Simone asks: “I forgot it... Well, I’ll take my time. I told you about Mama, didn’t I?” to check the audience attention and interest. Then she continues the third verse: “Okay, I got it now”. The song peaks in its humor when reaching the second part of the third verse, when Simone teases the audience with a long pause in the middle of the verse after singing:

And before she had time
To remember her *brick*...

Making them speculate in what word is to rhyme with brick, the audience bursts out in applause and laughter at the sexual implications of the rhyme. She holds the pause for about 25 seconds, laughing at their assumptions until everyone in the audience seems to agree with that word should come, before singing the last part of the verse:

...They were holding a sit-down
On a neighboring *hayrick*.

In the fourth verse she modifies the lyrics slightly by changing the second part of the verse. The first part of the verse goes:

Oh meeting is pleasure
And parting is pain...

And in the second part, she goes:

Alex Comfort lyrics

I don't need to sing
All that folk stuff again.

Nina Simone lyrics

And if I have a great concert,
maybe I won't have to sing
those folk songs again.

Mocking with the audience and the genre once again, Simone also hints about the musical shift she made from this record and on towards becoming a political singer, implying that if she once and for all satisfies the audience with this music, she could go on doing music that could be dedicated to the political fight towards freedom of African American people.¹¹⁸ Pointing out the simplicity of the folk music genre and how easily entertained the audience appeared to be, Simone subtly directs an ambivalence towards her performance in the given context.

Listening to her interactive way of communicating with her audience by taking the role of a narrator, commenting on both the song's lyrics (in the end, she pauses and laughs then says: "It's a funny song") and the audience's participation, signifies her new strategies in her performances. If a comparison is made between Simone's earlier attitude towards her audience with this performance, it is possible to identify a significant change in her attitude towards her audience. Going from being reluctant towards a loud audience to stubbornly encourage them to participate shows how musical and social priorities in Simone had been developed to the extent that musical excellence was no longer necessarily associated with classical music's definition of a respectful audience. Rather, the interaction in *In Concert* draws resembling parallels to her gospel playing in church as a child, where she let her musical and improvisational skills create the social outcome, to be able to make people connect and feel what she wanted them to feel, which she described in her autobiography. This interactive skill developed to the extent that she on the album *In Concert* dialogues and charms the audience not only by the music, but by how she chose to interact with the audience.

¹¹⁸ Brooks, "Nina Simone's Triple Play", p. 178.

“Mississippi Goddam”

Unlike “Go Limp”, “Mississippi Goddam” has an aggressive and questioning lyrical content, disguised as a show tune. The song is the last song of the album *In Concert*, and is played immediately after “Go Limp”. For the first time Simone integrated her political ideology and consciousness into her music, which moved her from being regarded as a jazz singer to a political singer.¹¹⁹ Starting abruptly with a vamping piano playing, Simone introduces the song by saying “The name of this song is Mississippi Goddam... and I mean every word of it”, upon which the audience laughs. The song strictly centers around the refrain that is introduced directly after the intro:

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about
Mississippi Goddam

“Mississippi Goddam” is composed with a slightly modified verse-bridge-refrain construction, reminding of a loosely repeating AABA-form. Between every repetition Simone interacts with the audience by talking to them, commenting on the song or their reactions on the music. After the first AABA-section she says “This is a show tune, but the show hasn’t been written for it yet”, while continuing to play, which the audience reacts upon by laughing once again. Although they are laughing, there is a serious undertone in Simone’s comment, where the “show” which the tune was written for could be interpreted as the segregated society they live in. Unlike in “Go Limp”, the interactive premises are much more uptight in “Mississippi Goddam”, due to the fact that Simone does not demand any participation from the audience no longer. Following her comments between the repetitions throughout the song, the seriousness in both Simone and the audience develops noticeable parallel with the lyrical intensification.

In the second repetition of the AABA-form, the lyrics go:

¹¹⁹ Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”, p. 301; Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 88.

Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path
I think every day's gonna be my last

Lord have mercy on this land of
mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there
I've even stopped believing in
prayer

The last sentence conveys hints of secularism, where she expresses a hopelessness in praying about better living conditions for her people. Comparing “Mississippi Goddam” to earlier Freedom Songs which derived from gospel music and spirituals, shows that the concept of Freedom Songs developed into one spiritual and one secular genre.¹²⁰ The accompanying instrumentation of bass, piano and drums allows Simone’s voice to be the center of attention throughout the whole performance, narrating the lyrics to her audience. A small hint of call-and-response technique is displayed during the bridge before going into next verse, where Simone jumps between the role of herself, descriptive on slave labor in the south (“Washing the windows/Picking the cotton”) and a satiric interpretation of a white supremacist going “You’re just plain rotten” and “You’re too damn lazy”, responded by her band that goes “Do it slow”:

But that’s just trouble (do it slow)
Washing the windows (do it slow)
Picking the cotton (do it slow)
You’re just plain rotten (do it slow)
You’re too damn lazy (do it slow)
Thinking crazy (do it slow)

¹²⁰ Kernodle, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”, p. 296.

Where am I going?
What am I doing?
I don't know, I don't know

By the time she finishes this section, no laugh or applause are heard by the audience any more, pointing out the seriousness in the lyrics. They are not included in the call-and-response element as they might have if it was a spiritual or gospel, but are only invited to listen to the band interacting with each other. The last time she makes a comment towards the audience during the song is after a slightly modulated refrain that comes immediately after the call-and-response inspired bridge, going:

Just try to do your very best
Stand up be counted with all the rest
For everybody knows about
Mississippi goddam

She comments on the audiences changed mood after the modified refrain, going: “I bet you though I was kiddin’ – didn’t you”, addressing the increasingly tense atmosphere within the audience which by now is demonstrated by the few uncomfortable, remaining laughs. Having lured the audience into thinking it was a comical and sarcastic song considering its musical encapsulation as well as jocular intro, the audience hesitant reaction can be interpreted as either a developed sense of listening due to the unexpectedly serious lyrics, or as a reluctant silence towards Simone’s refusal to play her expected part as an entertainer. Regardless of the audience opinion of the song’s lyrics, Simone surely proclaimed the socio-cultural distinctions that divided her from the audience in a way that made them understand so.

“Mississippi Goddam” truly opposes the cultural and racial delusions about the Civil Rights Movement and its participants by asking for acknowledgement more than activism from allied non-African Americans. This is expressed lyrically when she finishes the last refrain of the song by singing:

You don't have to live next to me
Just give me my equality

Everybody knows about Mississippi
Everybody knows about Alabama
Everybody knows about Mississippi
Goddam

The audience shows a tremendous appreciation towards the song regardless of their possible discomfort by the lyrics when the song is finished by applauding intensely.

Identifying Activism and Self-awareness within Performance and Interaction

If “Go Limp” can be seen as a slow, humorous song, “Mississippi Goddam” can be seen as the opposite – it was performed as an up-tempo show tune with a vigorous content, leaving no space for joking around between the audience and Simone herself, as in “Go Limp”. Instead, Simone emphasizes the lyrics which conveys anger and grief against the living situation for African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement by distancing herself from Martin Luther King’s non-violent rhetoric. The performance of “Mississippi Goddam” does not reveal the same level of interaction as “Go Limp”, but instead show greater depth of activism and self-awareness in the music itself and in the seriousness of her performance. Although the frequency of interaction is not as high in “Mississippi Goddam”, it is substantial on a deeper level, because the very few interactive moments all represent different stages of the emotional outcome of the audience on point.

As earlier mentioned, “Mississippi Goddam” marked a political as well as a musical shift in Simone’s career, being the song that summoned up all her political frustration which reached new levels when she heard of the killing of the four girls in Alabama.¹²¹ With the political awakening, a self-awareness was developed in the sense of understanding her part in the movement, which is manifested in this performance in two ways. Partly, it is shown by her reluctance to maintain a good ambience when performing “Mississippi Goddam” – she appears fearless and determined in her performance of the song. The other part has to do with her relation to her audience – she expresses no concern in pointing out the socio-cultural factors that divides her from them by her ironic questions as “I bet you thought I was kidding, didn’t you?”. Her self-awareness can be understood as a reaction to her political development,

¹²¹Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, pp. 89–90.

because she did not reflect over her part in the movement until she fully understood the importance of civil resistance.

Through the four dimensions by Roy, it is possible to extract further interactive qualities of the performances of “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam”. The interaction initiated by Simone in both songs plays with relations of power between the audience and her. Roy claims relations of power often are defined by the labor distribution among individuals. The labor division in this case is decided by the hierarchal order of who has the power of what. By being separated from the audience by virtue of being an artist, Simone’s role can be seen as a powerful role, maintaining a certain level of power.¹²² Sustaining the power as an artist, she constantly decides when the audience are allowed to participate or not, depending on the purpose of the song. Letting the audience participate during “Go Limp” in a higher extent than in “Mississippi Goddam” therefore becomes explainable, whereas the political message is much more aggressive and non-humorous in “Mississippi Goddam”. Although Roy emphasizes that the Civil Rights Movement’s purpose was to dissolve the musical labor distribution by singing collectively and to a certain extent dismantle hierarchal categories such as performer, audience or composer, there are more ways to express relations of power where it can manifest in the opposite way. The purpose of the SNCC Freedom Singers as oppose to Simone, was to dissolve these power relations because the collective experience of singing together was valued higher than the music itself.¹²³ In the case of this performance of “Go Limp”, the relations of power are not dismantled even if there are moments of collective singing. Rather, I would argue that they are persistently sustained by Simone in the sense that she strictly lets them participate on her premises. The interactivity is two-folded – on the one hand, it allows the audience to participate, making them feeling closer to her and more involved in the situation. On the other hand, Simone upholds the structures of power in many ways during the whole song by distributing labor roles among the audience and herself. In “Go Limp”, she takes the role of a narrator during the whole song as if she was telling a story by alternating between the role as the daughter, the mother and herself, commenting on the song’s lyrics and audience participation. She makes it very clear that they are the one’s consuming her music and she is the one displaying it to them. Upholding these roles by becoming the narrator makes it possible for her to take control of the social and musical outcome of the performances the whole time.

¹²² Roy, ”How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 89.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 95.

Using irony in both “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” is another way of determining the relations of power between her and her crowd, because the power of irony often lies within the amount of control the actor is having of a given situation. If a growing sense of self-awareness had not been initiated, it would not have been possible to use irony as a way of mocking with neither the genre nor the audience.

Commenting on “Go Limp’s” lyrics while playing as well as pausing before certain rhymes to play with people’s imagination on possible words that might fit in (referring to ‘To remember her brick...’) and letting them assume what she is about to say, are all self-conscious, playful methods to test how well tuned in the audience are. Tuning in in order to experience a “We” is not necessarily the purpose of this, as according to Roy,¹²⁴ because there are no implications in the performances which encourage mobilizing against a specific target. What can be understood though, are the humorous agreements that postulates a certain level of mutual understanding between Simone and her audience through pre-communicative interaction, as according to Schütz definition of levels of tuning in.¹²⁵ If the audience were to be activists in the same way as Simone, marginalized by society in the same way, the dimension of tuning in would exist under different conditions. Because the audience occurs predominantly white and upper class,¹²⁶ tuning in instead becomes a measure of cultural and intellectual tuning in. According to Roy, pre-communicated interaction only requires that “people are on the same page” in order to be able to react and interact, which is representable of these performances.¹²⁷

By virtue of being an African American activist, an awareness by Simone about the socio-cultural barriers between the audience and her can be presumed. Tuning in culturally also goes the other way – Simone’s familiarity with different socio-cultural spheres as a result of her musical transformative skills made it easy for her to know how to reach the audience’s interest and make them feel participatory during “Go Limp”.¹²⁸

Playing the two songs after each other can also be expressed as a performance strategy motivated by self-awareness to really affect the audience. Playing “Go Limp” first and then immediately perform “Mississippi Goddam” creates a noticeable emotional dissonance, since the audience becomes more quiet, uncomfortable and less interactive the further the

¹²⁴ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 89.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 89–90.

¹²⁶ Brooks, “Nina Simone’s Triple Play”, p. 183.

¹²⁷ Roy, “How Social Movements Do Culture”, p. 90.

¹²⁸ Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free*, p. 84.

performance goes. It seems like the socio-cultural differences between the audience and her are more revealed the further “Mississippi Goddam” goes on, making them aware of how inappropriate it would be for them to participate. When Simone premiered with “Mississippi Goddam” in the Village in 1963, where like-minded activist hung out, it ‘brought the place down’ by peoples enthusiasm according to herself, which marks the different interactive stages depending on the context the song was presented in.¹²⁹

“Go Limp” is softer in the sense that it appears less aggressive than “Mississippi Goddam”, both in its lyrics and in the performance style. It does not reject non-violent methods entirely, but it still plays with the prospect of presenting a more radical political approach where violence is a considered option gently, as in the second verse:

*With a brick in my handbag
And a smile on my face
And barbed wire in my underwear
To shed off disgrace.*

After warming up the audience with “Go Limp”, “Mississippi Goddam” makes a powerful and unexpected conclusion of the two songs and concert.

The performance and interactive premises of musical activity carry a great responsibility in how people apprehend the musical piece itself. This statement has been demonstrated by partly looking at interactions between the individuals in this context through a relational approach, and partly through the analytical categories. By searching in the “music and society” nexus, many musicological conundrums can be explained by *how* people use music rather than the music itself, as I have demonstrated. If an analysis is made through a relational approach, emphasizing the interaction instead of the music itself, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of cultural production by looking at what happens when people practice cultural expressions. The songs “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” are both heavily culturally embedded in their context, but not necessarily in the collective action itself as Roy’s definition of music in the Civil Rights Movement suggests. If music is valued by aesthetical measures as Western cultural tradition values it, it is possible to claim that “Go Limp” and “Mississippi Goddam” do not live up to their full aesthetic potential, because both

¹²⁹ Cleary, Simone, *I Put A Spell On You*, p. 91.

of the songs contain a very simple musical structure.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, evaluating these two songs using a relational approach angle, demonstrates that cultural embeddedness plays a decisive role in how music is perceived by people.

Especially activism and interaction in relation to musical productivity shows how dependent they are of cultural embeddedness, because it is within the sphere of the cultural embeddedness that these get to play out. In the case of Simone, self-awareness is more closely attached to interactive skills than cultural embeddedness I believe, because her self-awareness was the element that decided how she chose to interact with her audience.

CONCLUSION

Studying Simone's performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" on *In Concert* by looking at how her self-awareness and activism are expressed through interactive behavior, shows how these three elements played a significant role in inciting one another. Analyzing them from a relational approach that defines quality by activity and interaction is necessary in order to understand why cultural production is as significant as the music itself.¹³¹ The "music and society" nexus in this case surrounds the given time spectrum that the concert takes place in, which shows that in order to fully understand the meaning of music, we need to be able to both analyze music by the music itself as well as the sociological elements that values music by the qualities of interaction.

The analysis of the performances of "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" using Roy's model of four dimensions has been rewarding in several ways, but also proven difficult. What my analysis, as well as the four dimensions, have emphasized is the importance of discovering social elements that can explain *why* music takes certain shapes and *how* these are expressed, based on social preconditions. The difficulty in consolidating the songs and the four dimensions effortlessly has to do with how interaction has been defined by Roy and myself. The emphasis in G. Roy's case has been on identifying different ways how mobilization can develop by the strategy of interaction, while my analysis on interaction has shown that interaction not necessarily result in mobilization.

Comparing Simone's performance strategies in the songs "Go Limp" and "Mississippi Goddam" on the album *In Concert* to organizations such as the SNCC Freedom Singers

¹³⁰ Note that the definition of "Western cultural traditions" is Roy's definition, taken from: Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture", p. 90.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 88.

shows that different strategical considerations have been made by the two agencies. While the SNCC Freedom Singers focused their strategy on utilizing collective singing to educate people and on making music a communicative tool to gain political revolution, Simone's performance did not serve a mobilizing purpose, but rather used interaction as a way of demonstrating socio-cultural distinctions and mocking her audience skillfully without necessarily alienating them. It is not possible to assume that all of Simone's performances had the same interactive level or agenda. Nonetheless, the common denominator between this specific performance and the general usage of music during the Civil Rights Movement, lies within *how* it is being studied. In both cases, musical activity during the Civil Rights Movement, irrespective of its chronological or socio-political categorization, needs to be evaluated and recognized through a relational or similar approach. Assessing Simone's self-awareness and activism through her interactive qualities in *In Concert* through a relational approach has shown that these three had a strong connection in the sense that her self-awareness and activism were revealed in *how* she interacted with her audience. Considering that Simone was as political as she was musical, this analysis proves that studying solely her music becomes inadequate. Emphasizing interactive qualities or other sociological aspects when studying music within the "music and society" nexus is therefore one of many relevant approaches I argue should be further used in sociological culture studies.

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APPENDIX A

Transcribed lyrics of “Mississippi Goddam” and “Go Limp” from the album In Concert.

MISSISSIPPI GODDAM

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam
And I mean every word of it

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Can't you see it
Can't you feel it
It's all in the air
I can't stand the pressure much longer
Somebody say a prayer

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

This is a show tune
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet

Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path
I think every day's gonna be my last
Lord have mercy on this land of mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there
I've even stopped believing in prayer

Don't tell me
I tell you
Me and my people just about due
I've been there so I know
They keep on saying 'Go slow!'

But that's just the trouble
'Do it slow'
Washing the windows
'Do it slow'
Picking the cotton
'Do it slow'

You're just plain rotten
'Do it slow'
You're too damn lazy
'Do it slow'
The thinking's crazy
'Do it slow'
Where am I going, What am I doing
I don't know, I don't know

Just try to do your very best
Stand up be counted with all the rest
For everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

I bet you thought I was kiddin', didn't you
Picket lines
School boy cots
They try to say it's a communist plot
All I want is equality
For my sister my brother my people and me

Yes you lied to me all these years
You told me to wash and clean my ears
And talk real fine just like a lady
And you'd stop calling me Sister Sadie

Oh but this whole country is full of lies
You're all gonna die and die like flies
I don't trust you any more
You keep on saying 'Go slow!'
'Go slow!'

But that's just the trouble
'Do it slow'
Desegregation
'Do it slow'
Mass participation
'Do it slow'
Reunification
'Do it slow'
Do things gradually
'Do it slow'
But bring more tragedy
'Do it slow'

Why don't you see it, Why don't you feel it
I don't know, I don't know

You don't have to live next to me
Just give me my equality

Everybody knows about Mississippi
Everybody knows about Alabama
Everybody knows about Mississippi goddam, that's it!

GO LIMP

Oh Daughter, dear Daughter,
Take warning from me
And don't you go marching
With the N-A-A-C-P.

For they'll rock you and roll you
And shove you into bed.
And if they steal your nuclear secret
You'll wish you were dead.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Oh Mother, dear Mother,
No, I'm not afraid.
For I'll go on that march
And I'll return a virgin maid.

With a brick in my handbag
And a smile on my face
And barbed wire in my underwear
To shed off disgrace.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

One day they were marching.
A young man came by
With a beard on his cheek
And a gleam in his eye.

And before she had time
To remember her brick...
They were holding a sit-down
On a nearby hay rig.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
For meeting is pleasure
And parting is pain.
And if I have a great concert
Maybe I won't have to sing those folk songs again.

Oh Mother, dear Mother
I'm stiff and I'm sore
From sleeping three nights
On a hard classroom floor.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

One day at the briefing
She'd heard a man say,
"Go perfectly limp,
And be carried away."

So when this young man suggested
It was time she was kissed,
She remembered her brief
And did not resist.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Oh Mother, dear Mother,
No need for distress,
For the young man has left me
His name and address.

And if we win
Tho' a baby there be,
He won't have to march
Like his da-da and me.

APPENDIX B

Lyrics of Alex Comfort's "Go Limp" brought from Broadside Magazine Vol. 5 (May 1962), [p. 4].

GO LIMP

Oh Daughter, dear Daughter,
Take warning from me
And don't you go marching
With the C-N-D.

For they'll rock you and roll you
And shove you into bed.
And if they steal your nuclear secret
You'll wish you were dead.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Oh Mother, dear Mother,
I'm not afraid.
For I'll go on that march
And I'll return a maid.

With a brick in my handbag
And a scowl on my face
And barbed wire in my underwear
To shed off disgrace.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

But as they were marching
A young man came by
With a beard on his chin
And a gleam in his eye.

And before she had time
To remember her brick
They were holding a sit-down
On a neighboring hayrick.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Now once at the briefing
She'd heard a man say,
Go perfectly limp,
And be carried away.

So when this chap suggested

It was time she was kissed,
She remembered her briefing
And did not resist.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Oh meeting is pleasure
And parting is pain.
I don't need to sing
All that folk stuff again.

Oh Mother, dear Mother
I'm stiff and I'm sore
From sleeping three nights
On a hard classroom floor.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.

Now mother, don't flap
There's no need for distress
That marcher has left me
His name and address.

And if we win
Though a baby there be,
He won't have to march
Like his da-da and me.

Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.
Singin' too roo la, too roo la, too roo li ay.