

5-2015

**Roots, Rock and Public Relations: A Study of the U.S.  
Government's Use of Music as a Tactic in Its Cultural Diplomacy  
Efforts**

Katherine Sartain

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Roots, Rock and Public Relations:  
A Study of the U.S. Government's Use of Music as a Tactic in Its Cultural  
Diplomacy Efforts

by

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Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

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Submitted to the LSU Honors College in partial fulfillment of  
the Upper Division Honors Program

May, 2015

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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**Roots, Rock, and Public Relations:  
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Its Cultural Diplomacy Efforts**

**I. ABSTRACT**

As music takes the form of a nonverbal art, it has the power to affect the emotions and emotionally charged beliefs of its listeners. When partnered with political backing, it has in the past become a tool for diplomatic cultural persuasion. This study focuses on the use of American musicians as a tactic in various public relations communications processes within the government's cultural diplomacy efforts, beginning with the Cold War. The purpose is to uncover the extent to which the U.S. government has and continues to use musicians as state representatives to accomplish its cultural diplomacy goals, as well as the functionality of the practice within strategic public relations work.

## II. INTRODUCTION

As a form of communication, public relations is as versatile as it is individually unique. Anywhere you look, you are likely to find a varied definition of the practice, depending on both the speaker and the time. Experts will tell you that the prime objective of modern public relations practices is to “foster open, two-way communication and mutual understanding, with the idea that an organization-not just the target audience-changes its attitudes and behaviors in the process” (Wilcox & Cameron, 2011). Standing within the realm of social sciences, the process of public relations requires the application of the scientific method to fulfill its role as a strategic form of communication between the masses (Grunig, 1992).

The American government, like governments across the globe, transmits its strategic diplomatic messages through several media of communication. For example, in 1956 the State Department sent the Syracuse men’s basketball team along with a selection of choral groups to the Middle East to highlight the many unique facets of American culture in entertaining ways (*NY Times*, 1956). This was part of a covert operation under the State Department and President Dwight D. Eisenhower that sponsored international diplomacy tours in areas of geopolitical significance. This operation will be discussed in more detail later.

These promotional tours are seen domestically as well. The U.S. Air Force Band is known for performing random flash mob concerts in various public areas across the country during the holiday season. The USAF band does not constrain its

musical outreach to our borders, as its official vision statement explains (USAF Band History, 2015):

*Through world-class musical presentations and ceremonies, The U.S. Air Force Band helps create bonds between the United States and the worldwide community. Using music to bridge language, cultural, societal and socio-economic differences, the Band's performances advance international relationships and inspire positive and long-lasting impressions of the U.S. Air Force and the United States of America.*

This study aims to decipher the extent to which the U.S. government has and continues to use music and musicians as public relations instruments to accomplish its cultural diplomacy goals. The ideals of this study are based on the systems theory of relationships. Systems theory focuses on the interdependence of an organization with its internal and external environments in an economical, social and political nature. This study serves to continue the universal dialogue on the topic of two-way, open system rhetoric between an organization and its target audience and the most strategic ways to accomplish public relations goals under these circumstances.

Given that relationship maintenance is a large part of a public relations practitioner's job, systems theory provides a theoretical look into how this ongoing task can be accomplished in a symmetrical and teleological<sup>1</sup> manner, in ethics and structure.

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<sup>1</sup> The political and rhetorical aspects of this study deplete any deontological qualities of action. A cultural diplomacy initiative and the mass communication process of public relations personify an offensive, purpose-based form and function.

I interviewed ten subjects – musicians, music historians and professional communicators - to get a unique sense of music's power of communication in the modern era of mass communication.

### **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **A. Public Relations and Diplomacy**

##### ***1. The Communication Process of Public Relations***

The concept of strategic communication has existed in the minds of men as long as documented history can recall. The ancient Olympic Games were originally meant as a publicity stunt to boast the heroic aura of the athletes, similar to the aura around Olympic Games in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Wilcox & Cameron, 2004). As long as humans have lived in large societies, the need for mass communication has been prevalent. According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the concept of public relations is defined as:

“...a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (PRSA, 2012, *Public Relations Defined*).

The term *strategic* can be defined as “to do only what will enhance the interests of an organization” (Grunig, 1992). Professors Robert L. Heath and W. Timothy Coombs define public relations in a more comprehensive manner as:

“...the management function that entails planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision making to help any organization’s ability to listen to, appreciate, and respond appropriately to those persons and groups whose mutually beneficial relationships the organization needs to foster as it strives to achieve its mission and vision” (Heath & Coombs, 2006).

Both of these definitions personify the two key functions of the practice of public relations: *management*, or the practitioners’ initial responsibility of interpreting the organization’s values and goals; and *action*, or the ongoing two-way communication activity with the target public and without which nothing will get accomplished (Wilcox & Cameron, 2011; Heath & Coombs, 2006).

This study focuses on the use of music as a specific *tactic* in the public relations process. The framework of the public relations communication process comprises four tiers of action:

1. Research: the client/organization, target audience/publics, and the problem or potential problem are studied to disclose the opportunity for public relations that is available;
2. Objectives/Program Planning: this tier involves identifying the goals and objectives of the client/organization, selecting the target audience, and constructing a thematic concept to strategize the campaign around;
3. Develop and Implement Communication Tactics: at this point, the specific tactics for communicating the chosen message to the target audience are decided, as well as a timeline and a budget for the campaign;



4. Evaluation: this is carried out during and after the campaign by identifying research methods to measure whether the campaign successfully reached the goals and achieved the objectives.

The first two stages of research and program planning reflects the managing aspect of public relations previously defined by incorporating the goals and objectives that inversely reflect the declared problem/s spurring the process implementation. The *goals* of an organization, created in the second tier, are broad statements of the desired accomplishments of the campaign (Anderson, Hadley, Rockland, & Weiner, 2009). The *objectives*, developed on behalf of the stated goals, are measurable statements of desired results that will lead to goal achievement. The development of the campaign theme in the second tier involves constructing logical *strategies* to achieve the different objectives that support each goal. The latter two steps personify the active nature of the public relations process. The strategies reflect the theme of the specific campaign for which they are created by including specific steps to achieve the objectives to which they pertain. These specific steps are the *tactics* that are developed in the third tier and illustrate the specific actions to be taken. These terms will be used in later sections to decipher specific campaigns and propose various forms of each.

## ***2. Public Relations in American Politics***

Since its beginning days, America has always been known for its public relations prowess: PRWeek has called the Boston Tea Party of 1773 “...the greatest and best-known publicity stunt of all time...” (Wilcox & Cameron, 2011). Although

we did not originate the practice, “nowhere else is it so widely practiced, so lucrative, so pretentious, so respectable and disreputable, so widely suspected, and so extravagantly extolled” than in America (Pimlott, 1951).

In the political scheme of communication we have diplomacy, specifically of a cultural focus for the benefits of this study. Researchers at Vanderbilt University’s Curb Center of Art define cultural diplomacy as:

“...a domain of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states by way of culture, art and education.” (Ivey & Hurlburt, 2008).

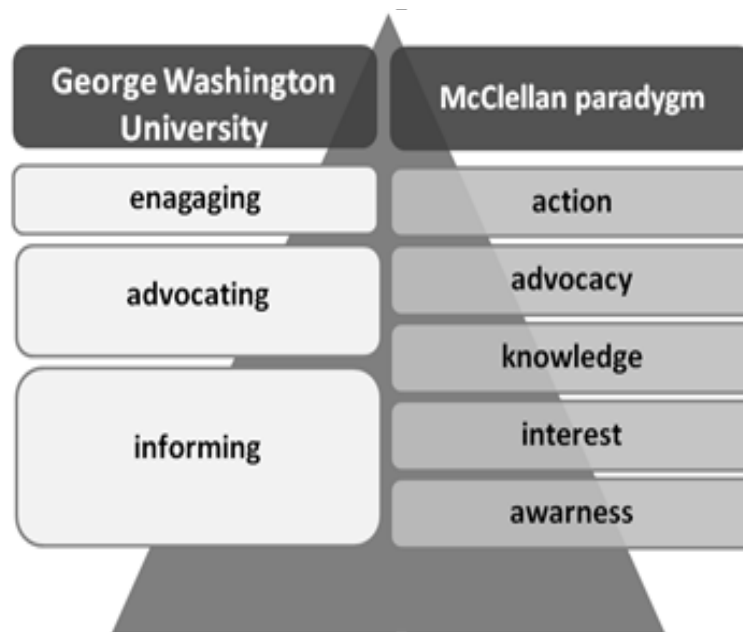
In other words, diplomacy incorporates a nation’s expressive nature as well as political and societal nature. The 2015 Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines diplomacy as “the work of maintaining good relations between the governments of different countries,” which implies the political nature of the practice. L’Etang (2009) describes diplomacy of the cultural sort as a long-term campaign for “the hearts and minds, aimed at developing emotional bonds with overseas domestic publics to gain their identification and sympathy.” Echoing the emotional chord she mentions, this study argues that the art of live music has the innate ability to acquire audience identification and sympathy by means of personal experience, which is noted as a proven successful way to acquire such attitudes (Carr, 2004; L’Etang, 2009; Goehr, 1998; Hill & Beshoff, 1994).

American cultural diplomacy can be traced back to the Enlightenment era in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the development of national learned societies and the international exchange of students, missionaries, as well as both secular and

religious values and ideas that have continued until modern times. Public relations and American politics have been intertwined since the early 19th century when Andrew Jackson's "kitchen cabinet," known for its unconventional creation and implementation, included a former Kentucky newspaper editor named Amos Kendall (Wilcox & Cameron, 2011). Herein lies the first unofficial presidential press secretary, whose job included producing news releases, speeches and positive media clips on behalf of the president to send to supportive newspapers.

L'Etang (2009) argues that diplomacy is a single aspect of organizational public relations work and that "skills of diplomacy are important to effective public relations." Hamilton and Langhorne (1995) note that because of the responsibility of managing relations, "the value of a diplomat lay not in any specialist knowledge he might possess, but in his ability to communicate, negotiate and persuade." Cultural diplomacy is a subset of the wider concept of public diplomacy, which includes all things cultural plus initiatives such as health care and community and economic development (L'Etang, 2009; Ivey & Hurlburt, 2008). Therefore, the words of public diplomats have merit in regards to this study, which focuses on cultural diplomacy.

U.S. Public Diplomacy Counselor Michael McClellan created a paradigm of public diplomacy communication that ranks the five functions of government diplomatic communication from most critical at the apex, down to the initial functions at the bottom, each existentially reliant on the step below it (Bogdal, 2013). The paradigm, shown below next to a similar pyramid by researchers at George Washington University, illustrates the mental response process of the audience receiving the communicated messages:



Source: Bodgal, 2013.

Beginning at the bottom of the pyramid: one must first be *aware* of the message being communicated in order to *develop interest* in order to *seek knowledge* in order to become an *advocate* in order to take *action* on behalf of the message or idea advocated.

This model is similar to the high-involvement Think-Feel-Do model of advertising message effects, which chronologically maps the cognitive, emotional and behavioral response of an audience to a message (ur Rehman, Javed, Nawaz, Ahmed, & Hyder, 2014). This model, created by Lavidge & Steiner (Heuvel, 2012), illustrates the persuasive effect of an advertising message and the resulting response process of the target audience:



Source: <http://marketing-insider.eu/>

By appealing to the audience's cognition (awareness and knowledge), affection (feeling, interest or desire) and behavior (responsive action) the organization will theoretically influence responses of the same quality (cognitive, emotional and behavioral.) These terms can be equally applied to McClellan's paradigm: awareness and knowledge compose the cognitive "Think" step, while interest and advocacy equate to the emotional "Feel" step. Supporting the systems theory with their attention largely on the audience, both processes leave room for freedom of choice in the progression of one's response to the rhetorical message at hand.

Both the McClellan paradigm and the Think-Feel-Do model of effects support the validity in music as a productive communication tactic: the all-encompassing mental and physical effect music has on a live audience has the ability to encapsulate the cognitive and emotional steps of both models, leaving the ultimate

behavioral steps left up to the free will of the audience. An example of this is the use of music in television and radio commercials, which, based on these models, leads me to believe would have the same effect if used in diplomatic messages. Given that the musical style and form strategically caters to the audience-organization relationship, music has the ability to transcend language, culture and socioeconomic barriers, presenting unique set of skills that can result in strong, stable relationships.

The rhetorical nature of these models calls for the need of a strategic communication plan. Based on their experiences and research, Millar and Dinan (2003) perceived, “the role of PR and promotion in [policy processes and governance] is not really about public communication or about public debate (although it certainly impinges upon it) but about private circuits of power and communication.” This study supports this observation and suggests the powerful force that music embodies to communicate the power of American culture democratic policy to foreign audiences.

### **B. Diplomacy and the Arts**

Cultural diplomacy became a nationwide priority for the U.S. during the onset of the Cold War. In 1938 the State Department established the Division of Cultural Relations after realizing the success of an advanced cultural agenda (U.S. Good Neighbor Policy) in South America during World War I. The purpose of the Division was to “direct the official international activities of the Department of State with respect to cultural relations” (Cherrington, 1939). The East and West German governments initiated the battle of cultures by structuring their citizens’ cultural consumption as the center of their political reconstruction efforts during post-war

transition into the Cold War world (Poiger, 2000). The government's carefully chosen culture frame distracted the citizens from the white noise of the churning Cold War relations.

In 1956, the U.S. government began its counterattack against the German cultural battle of the minds. With this ever-expanding global Cold War environment, the U.S. State Department and the Eisenhower Administration exerted many different public relations campaigns across the globe, utilizing different forms of two-way communication. These programs continued until 1978 when they became part of the U.S. Information Agency and were terminated. The overall goal was to sway the unfavorable attitude toward American culture and contradict growing communist ideologies during this tumultuous time of political reconstruction worldwide. It was a "cold" battle against communism altogether while also representing a defense of American democracy the U.S. government believed was being threatened. The strategies of these public relations efforts can be organized into four categories:

1. Cultural exchange programs focusing on artistic exposure;
2. American Libraries and Centers which served to disseminate American literature as well as the English language;
3. Radio broadcasting of cultural content programs such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe – both of which are still in use today;
4. And student, professional and citizen exchange programs, which brought more than 250,000 visitors to U.S. borders and half as many Americans overseas (Curb Center).

My research focuses on the cultural exchange programs, whose agendas were filled with artists, art works, filmmakers, writers, musicians and performers.

The specific tactics of these cultural exchange programs included presenting American jazz and classical musicians as cultural representatives in areas of geopolitical conflict, specifically the Near and Middle East (Carr, 2004). University of Washington, Seattle Assistant Professor of History Uta G. Poiger, illustrated the power of these tactics. She explains how “American popular culture held an important place in East and West German attempts to regulate the cultural consumption of their citizens” due to its “increasing pervasiveness in daily German life” (Poiger, 2000). The legitimization of popular music studies in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century developed a professional interest in the conjoining of music and public discourse, both as a representation of culture and institutionalized activity. The Cold War was, in terms of international relations, the prime recipient of the effects of this new interest in cultural studies (Carr, 2004).

Columbia University Professor of Philosophy Lydia Goehr explains the diplomatic power of music the best: “Music’s freedom from external constraints gives music a freedom to express itself in, with, and on its own terms, which in turn gives it a freedom to express or reflect upon a society at a critical distance...” (Goehr, 1998). The artists selected by the State Department were carefully chosen to boast the “non-discriminatory aspects of American relations...” especially amidst an increase in negative international attention over civil rights issues in America (Heath, 1956). Dizzy Gillespie described his band as “a complete ‘American assortment’ of blacks, whites, males, females, Jews and Gentiles” (Gillespie and



Frazer, 1980). Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, The Golden Gate Quartet and multitudes of choral groups from all across America were selected to channel American form and content through their jazz music, which Dave Brubeck considers “the most authentic example of American culture...our single native art form” (New York Times, 1956). By 1960 there was a measurable increase of American record sales and of American radio show popularity broadcasted in these non-Western, geopolitically significant areas (Carr, 2004). Foreign policy advisor and scholar Rajan Menon notes how “few Americans appreciate the degree to which knowledge about American culture, whether acquired by participating in our exchange programs, attending our cultural presentations, or simply listening to the Voice of America, contributed to the death of communism” (Finn, 2003).

This method of public relations work that couples music and politics stood as an untapped form of cultural diplomacy when introduced during the Cold War. The basis of these diplomatic music tours was the government’s strategy of framing American music and artistic culture as the sole representative, and irresistible product of, democracy. Researchers in the field have expressed the need for further research of this cultural diplomacy method in order to more deeply understand its potential in modern times (Carr, 2004). The largest error in the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency’s<sup>2</sup> Cold War musical tours program was that the government officials and the media assigned to the tours were strictly foreign affairs

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<sup>2</sup> The USIA was created by the Eisenhower administration in 1953. Upon implementation, it took over all ongoing government information programs abroad, including those run by the State Department and the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information (Hixson, 1997).

policy experts and in no way, shape or form knowledgeable of musicology (Carr, 2004). A musicologist would have the knowledge required to make the most educated decisions possible in regards to the genres of music chosen and the specific musicians/entertainers selected. For example, including music experts in the diplomacy team leading the campaigns would deliver the necessary areas of expertise that would in turn greatly improve the quality and effectiveness of this interdisciplinary method.

### **C. Rhetoric and Persuasion in Public Relations**

#### ***1. Classical Theories of Rhetoric: The Sophists***

When researching any topic related to public relations, the word *persuasion* is seen a multitude of times. To understand persuasion one must first understand the concept of rhetoric, which dates back to the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers of the Sophist family. The 2015 Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of the term rhetoric is “the art of speaking or writing effectively, especially the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion.” In his publication titled *Rhetoric*, Aristotle argues the term in specific regards to the systemic speaker-audience relationship (Corbett, 1990b). He conceptually describes rhetoric as “a dialogue in which the speaker engages an audience based on shared knowledge to put forth an argument about something that may not be ‘known’ in the sense of a shared truth,” (Edwards, 2006). The word “dialogue” here implies open, two-way communication, and his notion of the lack of a “shared truth” implies the subjectivity of truth in a given dialogue. In this classical

theory of rhetorical communication, the audience's subjective idea of truth gives way to the speaker's use of persuasion due to the innate civil liberties of freedom of judgment, choice, will, and an open-ended dialogue in which the outcome is undeterminable on both ends. Similarly, many contemporary scholars see the rhetorical dogma of Plato, Aristotle's teacher, as "dangerously asymmetrical." The concept of symmetrical communication is explained in the section. Plato's theory, introduced in the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*, calls for an unwavering strive for absolute truth and nothing else. Scholars throughout history argue this canon produces unbalanced messages and simultaneously led to the development of "...intolerance and ideological oppression that has characterized Western history" (Kennedy, 1994; Marsh, 2001; Kauffman, 1994/1982). In Plato's mind, rhetoric was only useful if it served to acquire absolute truth and knowledge, a concept that by definition is mutually exclusive with ethical persuasive discourse.

Isocrates, pupil of Aristotle, gave way to the more contemporary concept of symmetrical communication with his views on rhetoric. Isocrates believed that wisest is the man "...who is able by his own powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course," as quoted from his publication *Antidosis* (Marsh, 2001). Distancing himself from Plato's oppressive service toward absolute truth, Isocrates allowed mankind to cross the threshold into ethical rhetorical communication:

"The man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honourable name among his fellow-citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction

when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words?

Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honourable and to have the esteem of his fellow citizens."<sup>3</sup>

Isocratic canonization led to the theoretical junction of rhetoric and morality, as well as rhetoric's "practical relevance to political action" (Castle, 1961). By prioritizing rhetorical communication practices in which both parties win, Isocrates introduced to his fellow scholars the audience as a key ingredient in the outcome of persuasive communication. The Isocratean school of thought emphasizes the "persuasive value in true integrity," which comprises one of the most important aspects of public relations, honest transparency (Edwards 2006; Marsh, 2001; Castle, 1961; Porter, 2010).

## ***2. Modern Theories of Rhetoric: The Symmetrical Communication Model***

In modern times, public relations scholars frequently declare *symmetrical perspectives* as the normative ideal of rhetorical analysis (Porter, 2010). This paradigm of thought stems from Grunig and Hunt's (1984) widely used symmetrical communications theory of public relations, which categorizes communication into three models:

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<sup>3</sup> As quoted from *Antidosis* (Marsh, 2001).

- Two-way symmetrical, which engages communication between a target audience and an outsourced representative of the organization - such as a hired practitioner from a public relations firm;
- Two-way asymmetrical, which engages communication between a target audience and a speaker from within the organization sending the message - such as an in-house marketing or public relations manager; and
- One-way communication, which engages solely organization-to-audience communication and derails any possibility of a dialogue – such as a press agent or a public information official.

The difference lies in the varying levels of importance placed on the audience and the balance of influence within an organization and its audience. Many contemporary public relations scholars voraciously oppose the classical definitions of rhetoric on the grounds that they produced solely asymmetrical communication. Modern scholars, following the arguments of Grunig, deem this branch inferior to symmetrical communication due to its unjust disregard for the audience, which they define as “inactive” in this category (Curtin & Gaither, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Porter, 2010).

The difference between classical and modern theory lies in their vastly different societal epochs. In the ancient Roman and Greek societies that bore Aristotle and the sophist philosophers, one’s behavior while outside the public arena was not judged. For example, Aristotle stated that the ethical standards of a speaker – his/her relation to the organization, personal moral standards, his/her

loyalty to the organization's goal versus the good of the dialogue – are relevant only during the time of his/her speech on the specific subject (Porter, 2010; Gaarder, 1994). In other words: his theory sees no difference between an outsourced public relations practitioner, an individual not affiliated with the organization outside of the public arena of organization-audience communication at hand, and an in-house press agent or public information officer, who is affiliated with the organization both publically and privately by job definition. This narrow view eradicates the difference in asymmetrical and symmetrical communication and yields only the possibility of asymmetrical.

On the other hand, Isocrates and most modern theories see the ethical standards of a speaker as an infinite representation of his/her status as a speaker and as a branch of the organization, insomuch as that any personal activity outside of the relevant speech is within the limitation of an audience's absorption and judgment of the message being delivered.

This development of modern thought has led to theoretical dissonance in the existence of both asymmetrical and symmetrical two-way communication, as well as the ongoing debate of advocacy versus symmetry within public relations communication strategies. The basis of this public relations study agrees with these symmetrical communication theory scholars in that two-way symmetrical communication between and active audience and a receptive organization, carried out by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party speaker who serves to facilitate mutual understanding on both sides of the message, renders the most ethical use of rhetorical communication to

reach excellent understanding of a message. The next section will discuss persuasion and its rhetorical relevance in the public relations process.

### ***3. Persuasion***

For many, the term “persuasion” is a pejorative used to camouflage organizational manipulation, or sometimes, blatant lies (Porter, 2010). Grunig’s symmetrical communication model was constructed with the goal of eradicating the manipulative nature within the public relations process by deciphering between asymmetrical and symmetrical communication as well as determining the difference in closed and open system public relations actions. The model promotes symmetrical communication, a system that opens up the communication process to a dialogue, which allows for the transparent and scientific communication between organization and audience. The model’s specific categorization depletes the manipulative nature of the persuasion that lies within the public relations process by placing implicit value on an open, facilitated dialogue and the intrusion of ethical standards within the rhetoric.

Richard Perloff, a distinguished professor and scholar of persuasion and political communication, defines persuasion as “a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice... It does not automatically or inevitably succeed.” By describing it as a process, Perloff implies the long-lasting nature of the act, which mirrors the longevity of any given public relations campaign – hence, their junction. Edward

Bernays, the founding father of modern day public relations, believed persuasion to be an “integral function of public relations,” and stemming from his vision of public relations’ role in the American democratic society, “an inseparable part of a democratic way of life” (Pfau & Wan, 2006; Wilcox & Cameron, 2000).

However, some professionals in the field (Pfau & Wan, 2006; Edwards, 2006) prefer to distance their work from persuasion based on beliefs that Bernays’ method leads to audience manipulation for the sole benefit of the organization, similar to the classical asymmetrical theories of Aristotle and Plato. Grunig’s symmetrical communication model exemplifies this growing sentiment in how its reconstructive aspirations serve to ameliorate persuasion’s classification as a pejorative in acts public relations. This study supports the ethical values regarding open, facilitated dialogue maintained in the symmetrical model while adhering to persuasion’s rhetorical percussive nature that Bernays qualifies as adding to the success of a public relations act.

Perloff and other experts (Miller, 1989; Edwards, 2006) classify persuasion as a symbolic process, whereas public relations is a strategic communication process with a bold presence upon implementation. In essence, persuasion is one of many factors that work together in the delivery and rhetorical symmetry of any planned public relations process. Eisenhower’s diplomatic music tours contained the notion of persuasion within their strategies. The musicians acted as the separate agents sent to communicate the subtle messages of the State Department’s agenda, were fully informed of the diplomatic purpose of their performances and utilized the freedom embodied in their music to facilitate two-way symmetrical



communication with the active audiences. All the State Department musicians took their jobs as non-state actors to heart, embodying the patriotic aura the government agents so hoped for (Carr, 2004; *New York Times*, 1956).

Key aspects shared by the rhetorical communication process and the persuasion process are freedom of choice, patience, and the undetermined conclusion of the both processes (Gruing, 1992; Kauffman, 1994/1982). The lowest common denominator among these actions is the end goal of influencing behavior and/or attitude, which many scholars agree is the overall end goal of the public relations process (Grunig, 1992; Pfau & Wan, 2006; Elwood, 1995b; Murphy, 1991).

#### ***4. Propaganda***

The practice of public relations has been blamed for a growth of negative American culture sentiment across the world (Carr, 2004). However, many would consider these specific government-run public relations campaigns more actions of propaganda than mass communication. Defining propaganda is not a simple task due to its ability to take a variety of different forms. The American Historical Association argues that, “[propaganda] can be concealed or open, emotional or containing appeals to reason, or a combination of emotional and logical appeals” (American Historical Association, 2013). A common belief is that propaganda embodies only white lies and concealment of the full truth. It has been proven that while some propaganda does involve deceit, not all does. “A shrewd propagandist prefers to deal above the table, knowing just what the reaction of a propaganda-

conscious public will be to dishonest trickery when it is exposed...” says the American Historical Association (2013).

During times of war, propaganda has a specific goal of demoralizing the enemy (American Historical Association, 2013). One music historian that I interviewed from Louisiana State University defined propaganda as “...what we call it when the bad guys do it. When we do it, it’s called ‘dispensing the truth,’” which he then equated to the likes of public relations. All things considered, we can say the boundaries of propaganda are essentially limitless due to the vast forms of propagation America has used in its history. Whatever definition one believes, propaganda as an act will always be the strongest tool in influencing the behavior of individuals because of how it “resorts to suggestion and persuasion” as opposed to using violence or force to influence others (American Historical Association, 2013). Aristotle is quoted for praising how, “...the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs” in his *Rhetoric*, mirroring the American Historical Association’s modern statement of the power of rhetoric over violence and force during times of war<sup>4</sup>.

Going off of the systems theory of relationships, the content of this study follows the belief that propaganda is inherently restricted to a closed system of one-way communication. The only response asked of by the organization – the government in this case - is action on its behalf. This theoretically requires full completion of McClellan’s paradigm of public diplomacy communication previously

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<sup>4</sup> Given that Aristotle’s Athenian civilization was constantly engaging in political combat against other civilizations, it is safe to assume his statement from *Rhetoric* can be applied to times of war as well.

mentioned, as well as the audience's compliance in the organization's persuasive communication efforts. By completing the chronological steps in McClellan's paradigm, the audience implicitly acknowledges the acts of persuasion bestowed upon them and must make the individual choice to pursue further mental and physical action on behalf of their changed beliefs. If an individual receiving the message is not affected by the rhetoric on account that it already matches his/her beliefs, the one-way communication aspect is not a hindrance to that particular subgroup of the target audience.

This study also serves to continue the ongoing dialogue of symmetrical communication in the public relations industry by suggesting the inclusion of strategic public relations actions within propaganda efforts by substituting one title for the other. What would it look like to inject the systems theory's value of the audience into the propaganda process? Removing from diplomatic practices the label of 'propaganda' and replacing it with public relations opens up the door to a more innocent, symmetrical delivery of messages, which could yield a more open and receptive audience. This would make the messages' persuasive goals easier to accomplish and would give the audience a stronger feeling of control. The seemingly intangible definition of propaganda allows this nomenclature reform example to remain within the ethical boundaries of rhetorical communication because of the required presence of free will inherent in both rhetorical communication processes. This topical label change requires adjustment from both external and internal environments of the organization, seeing as that an individual can theoretically categorize communication of this sort however he/she seems fit.

The State Department's Cold War musical tours are classified as propaganda by some and as public relations by others (Carr, 2004; Hixson, 1997; Ivey Hurlburt, 2008). Regardless of their label, the strategic process carried out creatively embodied two-way symmetrical qualities to deliver American democratic ideologies and rhetoric using various media of communication (music and unaffiliated state actors) to active audiences. Although the success of the tours was short-lived in many of the targeted Middle Eastern and African nations, the structural design of the campaign proved itself effective. This study aims to draw attention to the temporary success of these tours and the future use of similar tactics in modern cultural diplomacy campaigns.

### **E. Cultural Diplomacy Post-9/11**

Cultural outreach efforts by the government have lessened in recent years due to a technological growth spurt, prominence of American capitalism, our popular decentralized societal structure, and, most importantly, the demise of the Soviet Union in 1990 (Ivey & Hurlburt, 2008). Helen Finn explains that during the Cold War, "policymakers understood the link between engagement with foreign audiences and victory over ideological enemies and considered cultural diplomacy vital to U.S. national security. Such a perspective is sorely lacking today: many policymakers appear to believe that military force has become a sufficient response to radical Islamist terrorism," which she says grew in common belief post 9/11 (Finn, 2003).

On that fateful day, 19 Arab men facilitated the hijacking of four American airplanes on behalf of al Qaeda, a Muslim terrorist organization led by Pakistani Osama Bin Laden. “By 8:00 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, they had defeated all the security layers that America’s civil aviation security system then had in place to prevent a hijacking,” says *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Al Qaeda’s goal was to elicit unimaginable levels of fear in the American people, who they believe represent all the qualities their culture aims to eradicate, such as “religious and political pluralism, the plebiscite, and equal rights for women,” the Report says. It was a premeditated act of global terror. Four planes were hijacked, two of which were flown into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City, one plummeted directly into the Pentagon, and the fourth crash landed in an empty field Shanksville, Penn., about 20 minutes flying time outside of Washington, D.C. after the passengers valiantly fought back against the hijackers. The number of total deaths is uncertain. The emotional trauma brought upon the American people is incalculable.

Since then, the government has declared global terrorism a cultural problem affecting the national interest. This has yielded a prioritized public relations and advertising agenda for the government’s public diplomacy fund<sup>5</sup>. Contributing to this surge of importance in the government’s eyes is the documented global collapse of positive public sentiment toward the U.S. (Finn, 2003). This increased negative sentiment poses a threat to U.S. foreign relations (Carr, 2004). In the *Report* government officials note the need for change:

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<sup>5</sup> As of 2006, about half of the U.S. public diplomacy budget was being spent on radio and television broadcast programs (Ivey and Hurlburt, 2008).

“Recognizing that Arab and Muslim audiences rely on satellite television and radio, the government has begun some promising initiatives in television and radio broadcasting to the Arab world, Iran, and Afghanistan. These efforts are beginning to reach large audiences. The Broadcasting Board of Governors has asked for much larger resources. It should get them.”

The key conclusion of this quote is that the United States needs to do more to communicate its message of global anti-terrorism. This should become the blatant priority of all diplomatic efforts. “Just as we did in the Cold War, we need to defend our ideals abroad vigorously. America does not stand up for its values,” the *Report* preaches.

The U.S. government has, in past years, experimented with highly creative cultural diplomacy exports that focus on musicians, the arts and their transcendental communication power against negative predispositions. U.S. efforts to build mutually beneficial relationships and good will by means of public relations tactics must be partnered with the face of cultural diplomacy to have a positive, long-term global impact.

#### **IV. Research Questions**

- R1. How functional is music as a public relations tactic in representing an organization’s culture while supporting goals of cultural diplomacy and political persuasion?

- R2. To what extent have musicians performed overseas in the past as representatives of the U.S. to aid in cultural diplomacy?
- R3. Is American music a practical tactic for diplomatic use today? Why or why not?

## **V. Methodology**

This study was conducted over a one-month period by means of face-to-face and telephone interviews. I met with subjects within the local Baton Rouge, La., community, primarily in the vicinity of LSU's campus. The target population of interviewees for this study was musicians who have traveled abroad, are planning to travel abroad, know of musicians who have traveled abroad to play music, music historians and professionals from the communications field. The population was selected by means of a convenience sample, a form of nonprobability sampling in which the researcher selects a group of readily available and accessible subjects. Convenience samples produce known quantities of error on any given use. To ensure the relevance of my subjects to the study, I began with subjects I knew to be musicians, music historians and others involved in the music industry. From there the population segued into a snowball sample of more interviewees based on suggestions and contacts from the initial population. Snowball sampling is another form of nonprobability sampling. Known as "referrals" in the private sector, the method enables the researcher to contact a number of qualified subjects for the

study and then ask them for names of other qualified subjects they might know to further the population of subjects (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013).

The interviews began with a series of screening questions to outline the subject's relevance to the study. I proceeded to ask each subject about their views of overseas cultural diplomacy, how they view the use and feasibility of musicians transmitting diplomatic messages via their music, and their personal opinions about the topic. I also asked questions about where these musicians have traveled, any sponsorships they might have had, the nature of their performances based on the audience and objectives of their performances. Finally, I transcribed each interview and gathered the relevant data for my study conclusions.

I was unable to contact jazz historians from the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation for interviews due to communication difficulties. Interviewing subjects from this organization would have added to the discussion of music's communication abilities and historical use carried out in this study. Reaching out to local musicians posed a difficulty during the peak of Spring and festival season across the state. Musicians that I know personally were eagerly willing to sit down for interviews and pleasant discussions about this study.

## **VI. Results/Discussion**

The conversations and answers generated by my interviews confirmed my theories about the strong functionality of music in diplomatic relations. The explanation of my results will be organized according to the three research questions previously stated and the answers called for by each of them. The



subjects of my interviews were asked each question, regardless of their specific area of expertise. The following discussion is an aggregated conclusion based on all interviewees' answers and the information presented in the literary review.

**R1: How functional is music as a public relations tactic in representing an organization's culture while supporting goals of cultural diplomacy and political persuasion?**

Diplomacy and public relations are two concepts that share many qualities, as discussed previously. For example: both practices aim for two-way communication, both require a central message that mirrors the overall goal, and both strive for a change in behavior, attitude, or both, of the target public(s). The addition of a political agenda on the organization's end, whether disclosed to the publics or not, presents a sensitive external factor when dealing with cross-cultural communication. Using a culturally apt medium to communicate the desired message, whether that is a specific persuasive message or an ideology, is the key strategic decision that must be made. When asked to define cultural diplomacy in their own terms, many of the musicians I interviewed had a difficult time pinpointing a definitive description. "The 2 words almost seem to contradict one another in my mind, as my initial reaction to the word diplomacy is that it involves selfish/ethnocentric ends and has no concern for the other's culture," said Mike, a drummer and solo instrumental composer from California. While similarly fumbling around with a definition, Alex, a professional communicator and musician, digresses to his observation on how "culture is something America has always sold, it's always been one of the big things we've done. Whatever the 'American Dream' is, you don't

have the ‘German Dream’ or the ‘Welsh Dream.’ It’s one of the best [public relations] things anyone’s ever come up with in the U.S.” Stemming from that particular tangent, I argue here that bolstering the “American Dream” rhetoric with an ongoing soundtrack of, for example, the globally dominating American pop music genre, would paint a more lucid image of American culture and political ideals for foreign audiences to absorb and, hopefully, be persuaded of.

The power that lays within music, regardless of the style, to elicit emotional, even visceral reactions from those in its presence was the greatest common denominator in my interview results. Bill describes jazz as a conversational art form that represents freedom. “We’re not bound by the score, we’re not obligated to play what somebody else composed. We have freedom. And that’s a concept that if you’re a dictator, you don’t want that concept spread around the people. That’s why jazz music was prohibited.<sup>6</sup>” This explains the State Department’s selection of jazz musicians to represent American diplomatic ideology: jazz music represents freedom. He explains the *conversational* nature of jazz music by comparing jazz composition to the formation of a sentence in a conversation:

"Improvisation is [defined as] spontaneous composition. When I play a jazz solo, I’m composing something I’ve never played before. I have a vocabulary of patterns and licks and I’ll call on those patterns and licks.

It’s not any different than the conversation we’re having now... That’s

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<sup>6</sup> Jazz music was prohibited by many communist governments such as those in the Soviet Union and Germany, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to 1) its American origins, and 2) it’s improvisational nature to break the rules of classical music and dance. It also embodied notions of racial equality, or liberation, that many communist leaders did not want to leak into their society (Schuller, 1968).

how you put together a phrase, which becomes a sentence, which becomes a paragraph. We're improvising this conversation now..."

This description of musical rhetoric resembles the symmetrical model guidelines of two-way symmetrical communication. Although this specific example does not include an active audience, the definitive nature of *improvisation* within jazz music assumes a communicative presentation of the music in that the innate purpose of improvisation before a live audience is audience response. "If the audience isn't there for me to feed off of, I have a hard time playing," says Josh, lead vocalist and guitarist in a touring jam band<sup>7</sup> from Texas. "The audience is in you, man," says his drummer, Nick.

Supporting this conversational nature of music is the common declaration of the participatory aspect of music that may not exist in other art forms. "When you make a movie, the audience isn't there to tell you how you're doing, to give you feedback" says Josh. "Even if it is not a live consumption of the music to actively participate in, or, "...even if we're not making the music, we participate in that we listen, talk about it, [and] spread the word of it," says Alex. This implies the versatile nature of one- or two-way communication present in music consumption and how it can be visceral or verbal. Whether the listener responds to the melodic message by dancing and cheering in support of the people producing the music or by telling others about the experience, the listener is cognitively and emotionally impacted by the message and

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<sup>7</sup> The Oxford University Press Dictionary (2015) defines the title jam band as "a rock band that plays music characterized by long improvisational passages."

a behavioral mode of action has occurred, as is the end goal of a public relations communication process on behalf of the organization.

Contributing to the participatory power of music is the importance of word-of-mouth communication to ensure credibility and trust in a message. “Word-of-mouth is the best way to get to people who are decision makers,” says Alex. Live musicians, especially American pop artists, pose as excellent representatives to facilitate these word-of-mouth messages in the global field. “We look up to the people who create art we respect, even if they are just human. Their ideas seem to be stronger, greater, even if they have absolutely no clue what they are singing about,” says Mike.

Partnering public relations and cultural diplomacy implies the coming together of *strategically* chosen communication *tactics* to support the client’s (the government’s) *goals* and *objectives*. The political nature of diplomacy puts a certain strain on the construction of strategies and tactics because of the cultural standards any government strives to maintain. During the Cold War, combatting communism with the democratic freedoms embodied in jazz music was the perfect recipe. However, like Graham Carr says in his report in Popular Music History, “...audiences in the Near and Middle East—and elsewhere for that matter—could appreciate American music but dislike US foreign policy” (Carr, 2004). The bright side to this obtrusive fact is that the same possibility lies within any diplomatic output; audiences anywhere could enjoy our contemporary artwork, for instance, but dislike our foreign policy. The key difference is the reputation of empirical cultural juggernaut that American pop culture holds across the globe today. These “larger-than-life” pop stars, as Mike describes them, possess such great rhetorical power

thanks to their extraordinary ranks in global society, which their listeners and audiences have allowed them to reach. Following what French Enlightenment writer Voltaire preached, “with great power comes great responsibility.”

In any country in Europe, South America and in many Asian nations<sup>8</sup>, the Top 40 songs playing on the radio are American pop songs. Almost all headliners at commercial music festivals across the world are American artists. Alex reports facts from a recent article he read focusing on the concept of world music in different regions of the world, from Africa to the Middle East to Scandinavia. The author wrote about traveling through these regions and concluded that “world music is 50 Cent<sup>9</sup>. 50 Cent is everywhere. There are posters of him in small villages” and young children idolizing him. “These kids are thinking, ‘man, here’s this guy with bullet holes and all, someone who looks like me and is the biggest star in America.’ He seems unstoppable,” reflects Alex. Especially for a kid with nothing, 50 Cent doesn’t even have to have a message. Music can transmit these types of ideas and base points and that’s where the power is. “Whatever 50 Cent is representing within the American Dream, these people are drawn to it,” adds Alex.

Similar to this is a scene from the 2001 movie *Behind Enemy Lines* where Owen Wilson’s character, a Navy soldier trapped and being hunted in enemy territory in Bosnia, hitches a ride with a family of innocent-seeming civilians and compliments the young boy’s Ice Cube t-shirt he is wearing. “Aw yes, I love Ice Cube,” the kid says

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<sup>8</sup> Communist governments in China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea do not allow the broadcast of foreign or unapproved entertainment on their radio waves.

<sup>9</sup> Curtis Jackson, known by his stage name 50 Cent, is one of the biggest hip-hop stars of the 2000s. He is most known for his violent upbringing and his “rags-to-riches” story (50 Cent, 2015).

in broken English, then freestyles his favorite lyrics. Five minutes later the truck arrives in a sparsely populated city and the boy's father turns Wilson's character over to Bosnian military personnel and a firefight erupts, with the young boy in the middle of it. Whether this is a simple Hollywood marketing act or a political comment on the globally-encompassing American pop music culture, the nature is still the same: whatever aspect of American culture Ice Cube and 50 Cent represent, people of all cultures around the world appreciate and identify with it. This pop culture is a cultural representative that, if aggregated with the backing of professional communicators, can positively characterize the American political image in the minds of politically significant audiences.

Each musician interviewed spoke of the strong affinity felt for their favorite musicians due to their ability to *identify* with the artist and the feelings transmitted through the songs. "There is a certain interface you get with music," says Margaret, a former recording artist turned public relations professional. "There's incredible commiseration in music that you're not going to get in other things," notes Alex. Dizzy Gillespie is remembered for acknowledging that jazz would have died out if it were not for "white college kids" in the 1950s and 1960s (Gillespie and Frazer, 1980). "It's that poor black life experience that those college kids aren't gonna [sic] have, but they get that interface through jazz," explains Alex when asked about the subject. This is similar to politicians' universal goal of identifying with their constituents, which ideally generates their behavioral response of a vote.

Live music elicits phrases of an open dialogue when a note or melody is struck and the audience responds vocally or viscerally, with shouts of admiration or

distaste or body language syntax. Any musician will heed the audience's response to his/her notes and melodies and theoretically will proceed to further the conversation in a manner that appeals to the audience while still maintaining the original thematic message. This conversational exchange of affect theoretically continues until both parties reach individual understanding of the message or external factors set in. The rhetorical nature of public relations communication is maintained in this proposed situation by the manner in which the music supports the ideals of American politics and aims to persuade foreign cultures of this way of life within their free will.

This transcendental medium that is music has no political or socioeconomic barriers, as Dizzy Gillespie and 50 Cent and Ice Cube have shown. If you identify with it, you identify with it, and nothing can change that. The hierarchy of advertising effects and McClellan's diplomacy paradigm exemplify the power in identification: when you gain interest and knowledge about a subject and grow to identify with it, your beliefs and actions are consequently effected, at which point external environments are also indirectly influenced and affected. This networking pattern beholds the power of change, and it all starts with symmetrical communication. It is that emotional connection that fuels the two-way communication a public relations and diplomatic campaign strives for. Supporting these conclusions is the proven use of this public relations tactic in American diplomatic history.

**R2. To what extent have musicians performed overseas in the past as representatives of the U.S. to aid in cultural diplomacy?**

This question is answered in the literature review, but not to the full extent. As stated previously, the cultural programs presented by the State Department during the Cold War utilized jazz and classical musicians to spread the aura of American democracy. This is most prominently personified by Louis Armstrong's performance in the Gold Coast of Africa (now Ghana) in 1956. Sent on behalf of the State Department on a world tour, Armstrong traveled to Africa's Gold Coast and performed an outdoor concert in the midst of an ongoing civil war between warring tribes in the region. "It was bloody, it was brutal," described Bill when telling the details of the occurrence in our interview. When Louis Armstrong came to play, the two warring sides set down their weapons for one day and came together in the arena to witness the one-of-a-kind entertainment they knew to be Armstrong's New Orleans jazz music. The brutality and killing continued the next day, but when the jovial melody and liberating rhythm of this American's jazz music was reverberating through the air, there was peace. Not only was Armstrong embodying the liberating ideology of American democracy, "he was the representative of 15 million American Negroes" in the eyes of the cheering Africans, during a time of much dissent amongst African Americans and native Africans<sup>10</sup>. The saliency of music, personified perfectly by Armstrong's Gold Coast concert, was a fact each one of my interview

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<sup>10</sup> The impact Armstrong made overseas was undermined one year later when he openly denounced Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas and President Eisenhower for their handling of the Little Rock Nine desegregation efforts. He boldly refused any further participation in "good will" tours overseas. "The way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell," he declared, followed by the opening of an FBI file on him for interview quotes in a North Dakota newspaper prompted suspicions of him being a communist sympathizer (Appy, 2000).



subjects agreed on. When I asked Alan, a wildly successful music producer from London now residing in Baton Rouge, about cases of American musicians promoting diplomacy overseas, he replied “there’s one name you need to know: Joan Baez.” A protest singer from the 1960s known for her deeply passionate folk songs and boldly pacifist political views, Baez traveled the world, and the country, promoting peace and harmony through her songs. By nature of folk-rock protest music, the lyrics of Baez’ music were deemed too controversial to be publicly supported by the federal government, hence her absence from any State Department-sponsored tours.

The popularity of this previously unheard sound called jazz caught on all across the world. “There are jazz festivals all over the world now... it has become an international thing,” explains Bill. After the globalization of jazz music after these diplomatic tours in the 1950s-1970s, subcultures of jazz fanatics became popular in Europe and Asia. Russia has an annual jazz festival dedicated to the music of Django Reinhardt, a Belgian jazz guitarist known as the face of European jazz. The annual North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague, The Netherlands, has grown to be one of the biggest jazz festivals in the world since its inception in 1976 after years of influence by American jazz performers. The Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, a 2-3 week festival every July, has one or two nights every year dedicated to American university jazz programs. “I played there in 1992, it was my conservatory, Eastman, and University of North Texas and University of Miami, three of the most smoking hot jazz programs in the world and we all played on the same stage. It was bizarre,” recounts Bill of his experience at the festival. According to industry leaders, of which Bill is easily overqualified, the modern face of American jazz and classical music is

the talent being produced from universities and even lower education facilities.

Earlier this year a local Baton Rouge high school co-ed choir was selected to perform for the Pope in the Vatican City. This was an amazing opportunity for young kids from a small South Louisiana town. Although not officially representing the government or American democracy during their travels, these kids represent the globally recognized standard of American music: talent and sophistication fit for the Pope, one of the most powerful decision makers in the world.

The practice of using musicians as a diplomatic tool to circulate our democratic culture was a powerful slam against communism, global strife, civil wars and negative American sentiment. It represented revolutionary social landmarks like African American and Caucasian Americans playing together on the same stage, and female musicians also performing on these stages<sup>11</sup>. In 2011 American punk-rock band The Black Lips went on a self-promoted tour of rock diplomacy through North Africa and the Middle East (Adams, 2012). Their purpose was not only to share their music but to “learn as much from the cultures we experience as they hopefully learn from us,” says drummer Joe Bradley, “but hopefully we can get them movin’.” NPR Music covered their journey. The band steered clear of politics in their performances and focused on their classic American rock and roll backbeat. “[The audience members] might not even know rock and roll, but it makes your big toe

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<sup>11</sup> This resonated deeply with the female audience in many of the Middle Eastern nations. Trombonist Melba Liston tells of how “it wasn’t so much that [people]...didn’t think I was capable, but they wondered about the male-female relationship in the U.S. I had lots of women come to me in the Middle East tours to find out how life was over here for women and how in the world I could be running around there traveling and single when they were so subjected [sic] over there,” (Gillespie and Fraser, 1980).

shoot up in your boot and makes your hips go back and forth. I think they'll enjoy it all," said Bradley. The band focused on a goal of enlarging their audience beyond America while making sure to appeal to the more conservative audiences in these foreign lands. "You have to build a circuit," says band member Cole Alexander. "Like when the Berlin Wall fell, and the Iron Curtain was rolled back, some punk bands started trying Eastern Europe, to kind of like, make connections, and then share the connections with other people." The international tour was successful according to audience members as well as The Black Lips themselves. "There's no reason why the world can't be ours," said lead singer-guitarist Ian St. Pe.

My research produced no evidence of these tactics being used directly by the government in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, at least not in a disclosed manner. A large reason for this could lie in the shift from diplomatic force to militaristic force priorities after the events of 9/11, as previously discussed. This transition from a largely cultural offensive to a boots-on-the-ground, forceful mindset in the name of the War on Terror diverted the attention away from cultural diplomacy, most likely due to finite resources. The contents of this study serve to illustrate reason and examples as to why cultural diplomacy deserves a powerful role in government foreign affairs.

### **R3. Is music a practical tactic for diplomatic use by the U.S. government today? Why or why not?**

In today's society, the genre of music with the most universal appeal is American pop music. The Hot 100 charts on Billboard.com show the global infatuation with this genre. American artists headline nearly all of the lists since its inception in 1956

(quantified from Billboard.com). One subject of this study, Kent, a touring bass player from Lafayette, La., explains how he felt the audiences he has played for while touring around Europe “enjoyed the music more. They responded to our music more exuberantly than most audiences I play for at home.” He highlighted the fact that all of the songs he and his bands play are American or British in origin. This observation of his led me to the conclusion that this music, this unique style of cultural expression so clearly distinct from that of these audiences’ cultures, resonates with them in an equally distinctive way. It exemplifies a cultural apparatus with a unique ability unlike any other art form, visual or performing. “Musicians open up doors that other people can’t,” says Alex.

Each one of my interviewees shared the observation that 21<sup>st</sup> century technology has greatly changed the broadcast, consumption and sharing of music. The Internet has “dismantled the power structure” of the music industry, explains Alex, depleting artists’ need for record labels to promote and distribute their music. For international audiences, YouTube, Spotify and social media provide live entertainment for anyone with access at any time of day. Bill questioned the modern need for world tours to provide live entertainment to propagate democracy through music. “Nowadays, a live concert is just a real life version of what kids see in the media,” says Alex, as opposed to a live performance being the *only* method of visual consumption prior to the Internet. Before the mass communication improvements brought on by the Internet, a live performance by a musical artist could be designed to send any kind of message so desired by the organization in charge; the ubiquitous nature of the Internet has stripped away the unique quality of the live performance.

However, all eight of the musicians interviewed boldly stated the vast difference in a visual recording of an artist and a live performance, primarily the loss of two-way communication in a recording.

The nature of music as an art form and its innate power of communication have not faltered in the last century. However, the technological advances of the last 20 years have changed the consumption of this art form. The uniqueness of an American musician is depleted by the instantly gratified consumption possibilities of the Internet, making a live performance nowhere near as special for anyone with access to the Internet. "Music is the most powerful force in the world," said Andy. The conclusion of this question states that music as a communications tactic still stands as a viable choice for diplomatic messages in today's world.

## **VII. Conclusion**

### **A. Discussion**

America's de jure monopoly of the entertainment industry across the world has been fortified in recent years due to many factors, one of which being the networking prowess of the World Wide Web. The U.S. government has used this cultural prominence to its advantage since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These global tours of cultural diplomacy used public relations to spread the message of democratic freedom and anti-communist subversion, masking them in the face of music. The outcome turned out as temporarily improved American sentiment and increased record sales, lasting until the next global act of violence, depleting the prominence of these tours in the minds of those in danger across the world (Carr,

2004). However, for a short time these campaigns accomplished the government's goal of rebranding America overseas, culturally and politically, by fighting communism with democracy. These tours proved the validity in this specific public relations tactic of music, even though the changes in diplomatic prioritization in recent years have stalled its repeated use.

Furthermore, the Internet has shifted the communication origin of diplomatic and entertainment messages from primarily sanctioned voices to the more powerful voice of friends and family on social media and other Internet-based communication and networking platforms. Alex strongly suggested the need for public relations practitioners to "get creative" in this decade. The increasing rates of media consumption and the never-ending influence of the Internet allows ideas to be generated from an infinite range of sources. If public relations campaigns are to obtain and maintain audiences' attention this day and age, they must find a way to be highly unique and boldly creative in this era of mass communication.

### **B. Call To Action in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, communication experts and scholars have stated that mass communication as a field of practice is slowly replacing the power of government-sponsored messages (Bogdal, 2014). "Usually to get a message out you have to be a sanctioned voice. But that's not where a message gets out anymore. There is no official mouthpiece," says Alex about the power of the Internet in communication tactics. Universities across the country are adding social media education courses to their mass communication department curriculum to prepare

students for the future of the field. “We hire interns and recent graduates primarily to help us old people with the social media campaigns we do,” says Margaret of her local public relations/adaptive communications firm.

In the area of cultural diplomacy, “culture functions as a contributing, rather than a determining, factor in global attitudes about America,” says Shibley Telhami, the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland, College Park (Telhami, 2005). Professor Carr talks about internal project audits the government has conducted on its ongoing cultural and public diplomacy efforts of the U.S. A major conclusion drawn from these audits is the increased need for private-sector partnerships to gather public support for current State Department projects and productions (Carr, 2004), suggesting cultural products such as movies, music and television. The power of private-sector products revealed in the Curb Center study merits the transition of this “art diplomacy” to the frontal cortex of the State Department’s focus, especially considering the newly categorized cultural issue of global terrorism, as previously explained.

New evidence in the industry shows that commercial media has made non-elite audiences impervious to branding, slogan and endorsement messages (Ivey & Hurlburt, 2008; Kocchar, 2015). This tells us that it is virtually impossible to make a difference in the minds of these audiences, the long-term goal previously stated, when using actions publically coined as public relations or advertising. This is juxtaposed by the facts stated previously that the majority of long-term post-9/11 cultural and public diplomacy efforts have been classified as public relations or advertising actions.

The marketplace controls all diplomatic decision-making because the export of American entertainment industry products takes precedence over any public investment in cultural diplomacy or exchange efforts thanks to global business models (Ivey and Hurlburt, 2008). However, FCC laws have no direct regulations regarding public diplomacy and cultural exchange equity with its regulations over the entertainment industry, further protected by the First Amendment.

Because of these puzzle pieces American popular entertainment has the power to reach the largest audience out of all other diplomatic measures. It has the ability to do this while simultaneously maintaining its reputable excellence for its productions since the American entertainment industry is already so popular across the globe. For example, the power and force in Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" lyrics are inevitably political for many, primarily the song's target demographics during the 1960s social and political revolution. However, many people listen to this song simply for pleasure, with no politically charged sentiments involved, simply enjoying the humble character of the ballad. The number of people who felt no political connection to the song in the 1960s is almost certainly a smaller population than the statistic in today's society. Ignoring Dylan's cultural (and political) significance during the mid-20th century, the timeless nature of this song and many others of his, the way they resonate with international audiences just as much as with Americans, is an example of how music with a diplomatic message can still positively affect audiences even if the political messages are not clearly understood, or if they are simply refused.



Dylan used his own music, written and composed by him, to spread his political and existential ideologies without support or backing from any government agency, and it spread like wildfire across the U.S. and the world. This illustrates how in a time of political uncertainty, audiences are searching for a message or a belief to support. Successfully creating a message that people cling to depends on how it is presented and pure sincerity in the theme. Although a large part of Dylan's popularity was his open defiance of and protests against U.S. government operations, his personal ideals and universally relatable lyrics gave way to his global popularity. His transparent honesty earned people's hearts.

The next step for today's diplomats is to find a way to infuse policy objectives into entertainment industry products, which we have seen done before. According to the Institute of Public Relations' Research Insights Report from 2014, social media has a limited influence on people's attitudes towards the government, with the strongest influence being the news (Kochhar, 2015). Supporting the previous statements, a new method must be implemented to achieve our cultural diplomacy goals in a way that maintains the audience's trust while circumventing the audience's negative predispositions caused by global commercialization of American cultural products. The IPR Report for 2014 states that "advertisers and media companies need to get over themselves, and stop worrying about platform proliferation. Instead, the focus should be on delivering to their audiences-wherever they are" (Kochhar, 2015). This supports the audit conclusions for the strategic need of private-sector involvement in diplomacy. In other words, American cultural

diplomacy lies in the hands of the Internet, the private sector, and the creativity of public relations practitioners to represent the government.

## **VIII. Appendix**

### **A. Interview Questions**

1. What is your relation to music/the music industry?
2. What initially prompted your interest in music?
3. How has it affected your life?
4. Do you think music has a certain power to communicate messages more so than other art forms? How so? Have you personally experienced this?
5. Have you ever before seen or experienced the dissemination of any sort of message or idea by means of musical expression?
6. What do you think of the relation between music and public relations?
7. When you hear the term “cultural diplomacy,” what do you think of? Is it positive or negative?
8. My thesis study stems from an article I found about the State Dep’t covertly funding/sanctioning musical tours in geopolitically significant areas during

the Cold War. They would send jazz musicians to perform free concerts for not only politically important people but also civilians. It was propaganda but it wasn't branded as a government sponsored tour because they wanted strictly the music to transmit these diplomatic messages. I immediately saw this as a public relations tool, using these musicians. What are your thoughts of the practicality of this concept of musicians representing American culture?

9. What do you think about jazz music having a transcendental power to transmit sorts of diplomatic and emotional messages?
10. Do you believe there is a difference in public relations and propaganda in the field of cultural diplomacy?
11. Do you think jazz music is in any way related to freedom? Do you think this is a universal pillar of thought/has been before?
12. What do you think is today's equivalent genre of this jazz music from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, if any?
13. Would you classify jazz as a musical art form or a form of entertainment?

14. Did you know that in the 1950s Louis Armstrong caused a cease-fire amidst an ongoing civil war in South Africa for one day by coming to the Gold Coast and performing a free outdoor concert close to the battlegrounds? What do you think of that?
15. How would you define pop music?
16. In this day and age do you think if the state department was to send tours over to geopolitically significant areas, what genre of music do you think would have the strongest effect in disseminating American culture?
17. Where do you think America stands in the music/entertainment industry of the world today?
18. Do you think the Internet has changed the way public relations functions across the globe? How has it affected the music industry?

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