

ABSTRACT

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PROTEST MUSIC IN THE 1989–90 PITTSTON
STRIKE

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Music making was a common practice during the 1989–90 strike against the Pittston Coal Company, an action led by the United Mine Workers of America. The types of music made varied greatly based on the contexts in which musicians and protesters were participating. In this thesis, I discuss how performers and audiences engaged with the music of the Pittston strike, with a focus on how different participatory and presentational contexts included music with similar or the same lyrics to achieve different goals. I argue that the musicians' understanding of the people around them as potential participants, audiences, or inherent audiences shifted their use of music as they worked to use music strategically and effectively for the strike. The musical methods and considerations of the Pittston strike protesters have had a lasting impact on more recent protest movements.

“FOR THE UNION MAKES US STRONG”: PROTEST MUSIC IN THE 1989–90
PITTSTON STRIKE

By

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Dedication

To my grandmother, Elizabeth Rogers, who has inspired and supported me through many adventures.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all of the people in Appalachia who helped me with this project and supported me during my time there, in particular Elaine Purkey, Burl Rhea, and Jane Branham. Without their contributions, this study would not have been possible, and without the many friends I made through the RReNEW Collective and the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, my time in the mountains would have been incredibly lonely. I would also like to thank my committee—Dr. Fernando Rios, Dr. J. Lawrence Witzleben, and Dr. Patrick Warfield—for their thoughts, their support, and their patience throughout my time with this project. I am also indebted to my cohort at the University of Maryland, particularly Sarah England and Nathaniel Gailey-Schiltz, who talked me through ideas, read portions of my work, and gave ample feedback. Finally, I need to thank my parents, who have always supported my academic and musical pursuits with enthusiasm and interest.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Primary Sources	3
Scholarship on the Pittston Strike	5
Scholarship on Protest Music in U.S.	7
Scholarship on Protest Music in Ethnomusicology	11
Definitions	12
Functions and Roles of Protest Music	15
Participatory and Presentational Music	17
Structure of Thesis	19
Chapter 2: Making Music and Crafting Songs for the Cause	20
The Pittston Strike	23
Participatory Music	25
At the Picket Line	25
Sit-Ins	27
Songbooks	30
Camp Solidarity	32
Presentational Music	36
Elaine Purkey	36
Burl Rhea	39
Presentational Moments in Participatory Settings	43
The Participatory-Presentational Spectrum	46
Chapter 3: Inherent Audiences: Complicating the Participatory-Presentational Continuum in Protest Music	50
Outsiders: Inherently Looking In.....	53
Antagonists: Dividing Friends from Foes.....	59
Media: Audiences Across Space and Time	63
Chapter 4: The Legacy of the Pittston Strike: Protest Music Moving Forward	71
Inside Appalachia: A Brave New World	72
Pittston's Legacy on a National Scale	77
Media to the Next Level	79
Occupy and Anti-Mountaintop: A Tale of Two Protests.....	82
Chapter 5: Conclusions	84
Appendix A: Selected Song Lyrics from the Pittston Song Book.....	88
Appendix B: Interviews Conducted	93
Bibliography	94

List of Figures

Figure 1. Women singing during sit-in.	30
Figure 2. Songs and tunes from Pittston Handbook	31
Figure 3. The Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers at a rally in Pittsburgh.....	41
Figure 4. Participatory-Presentational Spectrum	47
Figure 5. Lyrics from “Stop Tearing the Mountains Down.”	75

Chapter 1: Introduction

My choice to go to Appalachia, Virginia, for my thesis fieldwork was a choice that highlighted how large the southwestern region of the state truly was. I had lived in southwestern Virginia for most of my life, but I had not been to the coalfields, and I had underestimated how far they would be from my childhood home. I drove the interstate to a small town called Abingdon, and from there a few highways locally referred to as “four-lanes” took me to winding mountain roads that tested the abilities of my small car’s transmission. The sides of the road were lined with trees and rocks covered in Japanese knotweed, invading every space the plant could occupy. I drove into the town of Appalachia and saw some United Mine Workers of America offices, which seemed to be unoccupied during most hours of the day. The presence of coal, however, could not be missed. While my initial trip to the mountains was uneventful, I would later find myself regularly caught behind coal trucks, with dark grey dust puffing out the back and reminding me to keep my distance. Other times, I would drive alongside train tracks, with big chutes overhead, filling each train car with mountains of black rocks. As I drove to and from Big Stone Gap, I would always see the Pizza Hut with a sign below the logo stating, “WE SUPPORT COAL.” This energy source was on the minds of people in the coalfields, and there was no doubt during my stay in Appalachia, Virginia, that this was coal country.

I went to southwestern Virginia to find miners and community members who had been involved with or remembered the 1989 Pittston Strike, a ten-month strike that took place in the central coalfields of Appalachia, and primarily in Virginia. I was able to find and talk to a number of people who helped me to understand the strike and the music that

happened throughout that time, and who pointed me to archival resources to help my search. Men and women told me stories about the picket line, sit-ins, rallies, and other events during which there was singing, dancing, and music making. In this thesis, I discuss how the music of the Pittston Strike was used by its performers, with a focus on how different participatory and presentational contexts included music with similar or the same lyrics to achieve different goals. I argue that the musicians' understanding of the people around them as potential participants, audiences, or inherent audiences shifted their use of music as they worked to make music strategically and effectively for the strike.

To make connections between music and the strategies of protest, I have divided the musical contexts into two main categories established originally by ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino: participatory and presentational (2008). These distinctions highlight how different contexts require different aesthetics, musical characteristics, and performance practices to satisfy the people involved with music making. A protest is not a single place or event, but a series of different practices, and as such the music made in different places has different purposes. While much of the scholarship on social protest has documented the activities of protesters, musical activities have been neglected; similarly, in protest music scholarship in the United States, much of the focus has been on the songs and songwriters rather than the actual acts of protest. While I will be focusing on the music of the Pittston strike throughout the majority of this thesis, I will spend some time describing how more recent musical protests relate back to the strategies used by the protesters at Pittston.

To preface discussions on the music of the Pittston strike, this introduction includes some necessary background information and definitions that I will be using throughout this thesis. First, I will briefly discuss some sources from which I drew primary source material, many of which have musical aspects yet to be explored beyond the scope of this project. Then, I will discuss the literature that exists in several different realms: secondary sources written about the Pittston Strike, scholarship on protest and political music in the United States, and finally some relevant works on other countries and regions that deal with protest and music. Throughout this section, I will note some common foci with which I engage in this work, but also from which I will deviate to provide new perspectives. I will then discuss several definitions important to this thesis and the study of protest music. Next, I will present theoretical framings drawn from ethnomusicology and sociology that encompass the goals of this thesis. Finally, I will give an outline of the chapters that follow.

Primary Sources

I engaged with a number of sources to find data and information for this project. I spent three months in southwestern Virginia, conducting formal interviews with several miners and musicians in the area, as well as informal interviews with some community members and miners who did not wish for their names to be shared in my thesis. These people contributed opinions, sentiments, and information about the strike and about protest music in Appalachia. I found interlocutors through a number of paths; first, I found names of people involved with the strike in books and newspaper articles, and then found their current contact information. Many people had moved away or had passed on since their involvement with the strike, but it still led to many fruitful conversations.

Additionally, the many friends I made in the region, particularly through the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, introduced me to people who had been in the area during the protests.

While these voices were vital to my project, I also wanted to include as much data from the time as I could, and for this I was able to view video footage from a number of sources: documentaries made by Appalshop and CBS's *48 Hours*, as well as some content that is accessible through Youtube. I also gathered content from the Steffi Domike Collection at University of Pittsburgh, and Appalshop's extended archives from their documentary. These films, while not a replacement for true participant-observation, give the viewer some sense of the events that took place during the strike, and many segments feature music and music making. Most of this archival material is not digitized, and so I watched the videos on site at the collections. Because of this, I was unable to play much of the material for my interlocutors, but I did make reference to it in conversations with them.

Finally, I found articles from a number of newspapers, including the *Dickenson Star*, *Washington Post*, and *Roanoke Times*, to illuminate some of the proceedings in more detail, and they even provided information about some musical events. Many articles from the *Dickenson Star* about the Pittston Strike have been republished with additional photographs (*Dickenson Star* 1990). While these newspaper articles are technically secondary sources, because my work examines connections with news media, my interactions with these texts became more akin to those with primary sources; I considered them to be firsthand accounts of music made during this time.

Scholarship on the Pittston Strike

There is a small amount of scholarly literature published about the Pittston Strike. Most notably, political science scholar Richard Brisbin's *A Strike Like No Other Strike* discusses how the Pittston Strike provided a context for understanding different meanings of law and politics that are held by the various groups involved in this event (Brisbin 2002: 5). Brisbin theorizes the strike as a "tale": a narrative that "has the objective of teaching its readers or audience a moral or political lesson" (ibid.: 5). He ends his book by giving several lessons, all related to how resistance and law are related. Brisbin conducted interviews to develop his argument, some of which will be referenced in this work as well. The history he provides, because it is both based in written and oral accounts, gives a rather full picture of the strike as a whole, albeit focused on the legal processes and ramifications. While he does discuss acts of resistance in great detail, he focuses on their legal meaning, and thus does not carefully examine music making, nor does he look for the functionality of such events to the protesters beyond their legal meaning.

Several other major topics related to the strike have received academic attention, including gender and the roles of women during the event. Two articles have been published on the latter topic. Political science scholar Karen Beckwith has several articles that note how gendered frames were involved in creating new strike methods, which she refers to as repertoires (2001). She briefly discusses the sit-in that occurred at the Pittston Coal Group's headquarters in Lebanon, Virginia, an event that will be discussed in chapter two of this thesis. In another article, she goes into this event in more detail, while discussing how women created and negotiated their gendered collective identity

throughout the context of the strike (Beckwith 1998). Economist Adrienne Birecree gives a broader overview of women's activities, and notes the importance of their involvement (1996). While Birecree is most focused on the concrete ramifications of the women's participation that she connects to the collective bargaining agreement, her approach is similar to the one in this thesis.

Fighting Back in Appalachia, an edited collection on resistance and protest in the Appalachian region, has three chapters that are strongly related to the Pittston Strike, with other references made to it in other chapters (Fisher 1993). An in-depth account of the Moss 3 Preparation Plant takeover is given; this chapter is mainly meant to describe the action, although the authors imply that the action was a very successful one, particularly because the leaders were well organized and the takeover occurred without any incidents of violence. Political scientist Richard Couto discusses in his chapter how coal miners connect capital gains made by coal companies to the physical losses they endure (Fischer 1993: 165). He goes on to state that protests and strikes provide miners with a "free space," a communitarian setting in which group identity is enhanced, as well as individual self-worth and a number of other qualities (ibid.: 166). Guy and Candie Carawan are musicians and collectors who were actively involved in the strike; their chapter focuses on the progression of cultural practices involved with protests in Appalachia, ending with a discussion of Pittston and what they saw as a "cultural flowering in Appalachia" (ibid.: 260). Another discussion of the music of the Pittston Strike can be found very briefly in the dissertation of ethnomusicologist Jennifer Noakes (2010). She, like the authors from *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, approaches the music from the broader context of Appalachian music making, noting that this music often

includes a form of dissent. Noakes's observations are related to the inherent audience of outsiders explained in chapter three of this thesis.

Several of the above-mentioned works were written shortly after the strike and have an optimistic view of its impact on the region, both culturally and politically, as seen in the quote from the Carawans and in Beckwith's work, where she notes its position as a "turning point" for organized labor (1998: 258). Birecree instead notes that it was unlike previous disputes that had led to unfavorable outcomes for the union, but does not go so far to say that it was a pivotal moment for the union, and Brisbin deals with this issue in a similar manner. While evaluating the effects of the strike is not a core goal of this thesis, this is something I address in chapter four and five. In the recent strike against Patriot Coal, miners saw some significant political success, but mining in southwestern Virginia has steadily declined in the past decade; as the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy has reported that the coal produced has doubled (*The Roanoke Times*, March 22, 2015). The current connections between Appalachian musical practices and the United Mine Workers of America (hereafter UMWA) is something that needs to be addressed. While I will touch on this during my conclusion, there is still quite a lot of room for researchers to explore.

Scholarship on Protest Music in U.S.

The scholarship on protest music of the United States has long been dominated by non-music scholars, perhaps due to the history of academics in English, folklore, and sociology being involved in the development of research in Anglo-American vernacular

music.¹ Early works like those of folklorist John Greenway and protest music scholar David Rosen provide collections of musical texts that occasionally include musical notation as well. These authors use fairly simple methodologies; songs in Rosen's collection are presented with minimal commentary, while Greenway provides some more historical background on the individual pieces. This is an extension of early balladry scholarship, which was mainly focused on collecting and preserving pieces rather than providing significant commentary.

Later literature has been a bit more varied, but there are a number of recent works that show that a collector's approach to protest music research has not completely died away. An extensive recorded collection entitled *Songs for Political Action* includes well over two hundred songs that have political messages or have been associated with political movements and musicians (1996). This set has a fairly sizable book included as "liner notes," and it gives the historical background to the songs in a way that is similar to Greenway's tome on this subject. The two works differ in two important ways. Greenway focuses on songs that are associated with middle and working class groups, rather than prominent musicians of the time. *Songs for Political Action* is comprised of recordings done by notable protest singers, such as Pete Seeger, Joe Glazer, The Almanac Singers, and the Weavers. The format of each work denotes another significant difference; while the anthology provides actual music for each of the songs discussed in the liner notes, Greenway provides musical notation for the songs in his volume sporadically.

¹ David King Dunaway wrote a brief overview of this literature, focusing on historical influences that shaped the work of these scholars (1987).

Because this thesis covers songs that have been discussed in collections, I use some of the methodologies provided by these works, while maintaining a focus on some other sociological approaches. Still, because the words are so important to the songs and because, according to many of the people I interviewed, the words were maintained or changed with quite a bit of intentionality (p.c., 13 July 2013; p.c., 22 June 2013), I will offer some textual analysis of these pieces. This will connect my work with those of earlier scholars. Rather than going through the history behind each piece, something that has been well documented by earlier scholars, I will focus on the performance practice and context for the music discussed. I will only provide notation when a direct comparison is needed between syllogistic songs or pieces, but in general many of the melodies of the songs performed during this protest are widely known or already documented to some degree elsewhere.²

Most of the works on protest music deal a great bit with the idea of musical categories, particularly the dichotomy between folk and popular music. Greenway focused on what he considered to be “folk music,” or specifically music that may be written by an individual but expresses the opinions of the “folk” community and is within their style, presenting no new ideas to the conversation (1953: 8). He does not give a full definition for the folk, but notes that he has a sense of what is and is not a folk song, and chooses to work backwards from there. Other authors, such as Rosen, choose to focus on

² For those interested in proscriptive transcriptions, there are a number of books written by prominent performers that provide this. Rephrase An interesting collection that includes some protest songs was published recently but created much earlier by Alan Lomax, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger (2012). It is not uncommon for musicians involved in protest music of the US to work with scholars and collectors; beyond those just mentioned, Joe Glazer also spent some time at the Library of Congress.

popular music; he does not give a definition for this, but his collection has a wide variety of types of music, from recorded anti-war songs of the 1960s to abolitionist songs from the eighteenth century, presumably all would be considered popular or mass-marketed at some level. Journalist Hardeep Phull's more recent book solely covers music that was recorded during the twentieth century, limiting the idea of what is popular to what is mass mediated (2008). Archie Green also focused on recorded music, although he does not equate recorded or mass mediated music with popular music (1972).

For a number of reasons, this thesis will avoid the folk music and popular music dichotomy that has been set forth by earlier scholars. Perhaps the most compelling reason for doing so is that the protesters whom I interviewed about the music of the Pittston Strike never made these distinctions themselves. The interviewers may make note that this music is for the people, but the terms "folk" and "popular" do not come up within the dialog surrounding this music, in either my experience or in the fieldwork conducted by Noakes and Brisbin. Also, folk music as a theoretical concept does not illuminate much in this case study that has not been covered in the previous scholarship. Finally, not only are the definitions of popular and folk music adequately hazy, but the music involved in the Pittston Strike itself is varied enough that the terms may be difficult to apply to even a set of music within one performance context. Music at a rally could include gospel tunes with no known author, as well as songs performed by professional musicians who had CDs for sale off stage. Complicating matters would be those who adapted well-known songs and tunes that might in one context be known as folk, but then would record them and perform them in a way that might be considered more in a popular style.

Biographic works on prominent protest songwriters and performers have also been a major part of protest music scholarship. Historian Jerome Rodnitzky's book on several musicians and songwriters from the 1960s uses information from the lives of four musicians to illustrate meanings that exist in their music (1976). Shelly Romalis, an anthropologist, published work on Aunt Molly Jackson that discusses issues of identity in relation to singing style and songs; Romalis focuses particularly on Jackson's life in both rural Appalachia and more cosmopolitan cities, as well as her position as a female protest singer (2004: 9). Justin Labinjoh wrote a brief biography of Fela Kuti that served a similar purpose (1982), so this type of scholarship is not limited to protest music in the United States. Most of the musicians who have received individual attention from scholars have been professional musicians (or those whose primary source of income was from performing music) who were not directly involved with labor unions. Because they have already received considerable scholarly attention, I chose to focus on performers who were directly associated with the UMWA and the Pittston Strike. Elaine Purkey's husband was a miner, and she began singing for the union during the Pittston Strike, while Burl Rhea and the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers were involved in several earlier strikes. These musicians brought certain traits to presentational contexts during the strike that others who were more well-known did not.

Scholarship on Protest Music in Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicologists who study protest music have largely focused on movements outside of the U.S. or on diasporic groups, but these studies have some striking similarities to the Pittston case study. There have been a number of fairly recent studies on various folk traditions that have come to have political meaning after various

transformations (Ritter 2002; Lee 2012). These cases share a lot of similarities with the case of the Pittston Strike as well. Lee notes in her article that *p'unmul* was potentially not as widely used as a protest genre initially because it was purely instrumental, but because it could instill energy in those participating, the style became more widespread (2012: 182, 198). A similar situation will be outlined in chapter two of this thesis, where musicians would play instrumental music that would, for a time, become associated with the protest because of the function it served for the protesting miners and their supporters. Ritter's work describes the *pumpin* tradition in the Ayacucho region of Peru, describing how the performance practice shifted from a more informal setting to a formal competition, and how the music shifted in meaning from more general themes to those that were specifically political (2002: 23). While there is not a single musical performance tradition involved in the Pittston Strike, the differences I am highlighting between participatory and presentational music in chapters two and three follow this pattern as well. Presentational settings included more specifically political music generally, while the participatory settings were more open.

Definitions

While much of the literature on protest music is concerned with the definition of folk songs and popular music, none of the articles or books focus on specific definitions for protest music or protest songs. To begin defining these topics, it is useful to understand what a protest is. Political scientist Peter Eisinger defines protest, in the sense used within this thesis, as a “host of types of collective manifestations, disruptive in nature, designed to provide ‘relatively powerless people’ with bargaining leverage in the political process” (1973: 13). He goes on to note that some defining characteristics of

protest are its collective nature and its association with issues rather than specific political representatives. Eisinger is drawing from several other scholars' definitions here, including Lipsky and Wilson (1968; 1961). This definition works for the scope of this paper, but Wilson's idea that protest is a form of bargaining would not apply to all situations in which protest is involved, particularly some anti-war demonstrations. I would argue that perhaps protest is instead designed to provide Lipsky's aptly named "relatively powerless people" with political "capital," which is often used to bargain for political change but occasionally is not.

Based on the above definition of protest, I would like to suggest that protest music is any and all music that becomes involved with these "collective manifestations." This allows for songs that had previously been written with other meanings to become involved with protests and still be considered "protest music." I use the word 'involved' here to allow for multiple levels of association with a protest movement. Some songs will be performed or played at protest events, and if they are not repeated, they will not become associated in the minds of listeners with the protest, even in the near future, but they are still an active part of the protest. Similarly, other songs may never be directly associated with in-person protest actions, but may appear on commercials or various other forms of media, and thus they can gain associations with protest without having been actively played or performed at a protest. This is particularly helpful in the case of instrumental music, which can be a crucial part of a protest but does not have any specific lyrical references to protest activity. This definition allows for quite a bit of flexibility in understanding how music can be a part of protests.

Protest songs, however, seem to be used in a more rigid context in scholarly contexts, and this thesis will reflect this understanding. For the purposes of this project, protest songs are musical pieces that were created to be involved with protest. Note that protest songs still have the same relationship with protest as protest music does; the difference is in the intentions of the creator. Protest music includes protest songs, but it also includes pieces that were not intended to be associated with protest movements. A clear example from the Pittston strike is the use of “Amazing Grace” on the picket lines. This piece was written as a Christian hymn, and yet for the duration of the strike it was involved with protest activity. In contrast, songs such as “Solidarity Forever” and “Which Side Are You On?” were clearly written for protest activity due to their lyrical content; these are protest songs. This definition would include both music that is mass mediated and music that has no clear author; while having an author gives the clearest picture of their intent, much can be surmised from the lyrics of protest songs.

These definitions are useful when dealing with the music found in the Pittston Strike. Clearly all music that was performed at Pittston Strike sites of activity can be considered protest music, and those pieces of music that were made for the purposes of protesting are protest songs. The differentiating factor between the two is in authorial intent: whether the music was made to be used in a protest or not. I should note that my use of the word “song” is more in a colloquial context than has been used by music historians; rather than considering whether the song has text or not, my main consideration is the intent of the author. I deviate from the understanding of song used by historical musicologists, particularly those working with western classical music, because the relationship between text and music here is complicated. My definition reflects much

of what is implicit when the phrase “protest song” is used colloquially, while acknowledging some of the considerations at a scholarly level as well.

There are some areas in which these definitions do not have clear boundaries, something that could be highlighted in the future with comparative studies. An example of such a music would be that which is consumed by protesters, but not necessarily during active protesting, nor at a site associated with the protest. Here, I believe that repetition is key to considering whether the music is truly protest music or not. If such an activity was involved in a gathering of protesters after every shift on the picket line and there was some consistency to the music that was listened to, it might qualify as protest music, particularly because many of the protesters may have created connections in their mind between that music and the protest. If the gathering occurred once and never again, and included some people who were not a part of the protest, then it would likely be better interpreted as music outside of the protest. The definition is a bit loose to allow for scholarly discretion here; perhaps one such moment could have big impact as well on the protesters who were there. Regardless, these terms are meant to help illuminate the intentionality involved in a social protest, and while their differences are not the highlight of this thesis, the understanding of music that was made for protest and music that is used for protest is an important one to note.

Functions and Roles of Protest Music

A goal of this thesis is to consider the functions of music in different protest activities. This is not a new concept to ethnomusicology, and was in fact suggested by Alan Merriam in his book, *Anthropology of Music* (1964). In his chapter on the uses and functions of music, he makes a distinction between these two terms; uses “refer to the

situation in which music is employed in human action,” whereas functions are concerned with the reasons that the music is employed in that situation which are unstated (ibid.: 210). The distinction between use and function is not particularly useful in this case study; many protesters were aware of what effects the music was having beyond just generally serving the protest. Still, considering some of the functions outlined by Merriam highlights some ways in which we might understand the roles music played in protest. Merriam discusses many functions briefly in his work, but those which were most clear in the music of the Pittston strike included functions of emotional expression, communication, enforcing conformity to social norms, contribution to the stability of culture, and entertainment (ibid.: 223–225). Several others noted here might have been involved in some of the music performed during the Pittston strike, but not as clearly as those just listed. Merriam does not give a lot of detail about these functions, which allows scholars to engage with them and provide details specific to their case study.

David Dunaway’s overview of protest and political songs in the United States provides some more specific functions that are often present in protest songs (1987). He gives a list of eight functions:

1. Solicit or arouse support for a movement.
2. Reinforce the value structure of individuals who support this movement.
3. Create cohesion, solidarity and moral for members of the movement.
4. Recruit individuals into a specific movement.
5. Evoke solutions to a social problem via action.
6. Describe a social problem, in emotional terms.
7. Divide supporters from the world around them (an esoteric-exoteric function).
8. Counteract despair in social reformers, when hoped-for change does not materialize. (ibid.: 286-287).

All of these functions can be found within the music of the Pittston strike. Dunaway notes that the decline in labor song groups in the twentieth century may have developed out of musicians' reluctance to respond to changing functions of protest music (ibid.: 288). This is an interesting observation on the part of Dunaway, who wrote this article before the Pittston strike. I would argue that his observations would have been true at the time; leftist musicians who were involved with labor movements were under considerable scrutiny during the cold war; Dunaway even notes that scholars seemed to have negative slants against them during the early days of the war (ibid.: 270).

Although I am not directly referring to Dunaway throughout this thesis, the considerations he made about protest music in general are ones that I am making about the Pittston strike in particular. Throughout the scholarship discussed in this chapter, scholars have often neglected to consider what it means to protest, and how music is a part of this act: what it does for the people protesting and the people targeted by the music and the actions of the protesters. Each chapter approaches this in a slightly different way; the second chapter considers how protest music functions based on how participatory or presentational it is, the third chapter focuses on how music is directed at various groups of people, and the fourth chapter considers how some of the strategic uses of music have been taken and developed by more recent protest movements. This helps to emphasize the significance of this relatively unknown protest.

Participatory and Presentational Music

While a discussion of functionality of music is at the core of this thesis, the main theoretical framework I use within this work is the concepts of participatory and presentational music, drawn from the work of Thomas Turino. In his book *Music as*

Social Life: The Politics of Participation he refers to participatory performance as an “artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role” (2008: 26). Presentational performance is defined as “situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing” (ibid.: 26). In creating this framework, Turino recognizes that it focuses more on the roles, values, and goals of the people involved in the music, rather than particular stylistic features of the music, although the style of the music is often affected by how participatory or presentational the performance is. It should be noted that, while music may exist in one “frame” or the other, it remains on a continuum between participatory and presentational, with some types of participatory music being more presentational than others, and vice versa.

The participatory–presentational continuum is an ideal framework for understanding the music of the Pittston strike. This is because in many situations, while the music might seem simple and intended for participation, there are actually a number of presentational elements that push the performance to the other end of the spectrum. For instance, if I were to transcribe melodies performed at rallies by trained musicians and compare them to melodies performed by the protesters together, the notes and rhythms themselves might be quite similar. However, these two contexts have greatly different goals in mind, and the people making the music often have vastly different values for a successful performance.

Structure of Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is divided into three chapters, each of which highlights the uses and functions of protest music during the Pittston strike in different ways. Chapter 2 considers where the many musical practices of the Pittston strike fall on Thomas Turino's concept of the participatory-presentational continuum. By considering the variety of contexts in which music was made during the strike, I highlight how the same or similar songs might have entirely different purposes for the protesters, depending on how participatory or presentational the environment was. In Chapter 3, I present the concept of *inherent audiences*, people who are not seen as potential participants in a music-making environment, no matter how participatory that setting is. These people are separated due to their background, associations, or even by space and time, and because the musicians/participants are aware of these people, they direct their actions to them, which complicates our understanding of participatory music. The issues I raise in these chapters and throughout this work are not unique to the Pittston strike, something I highlight in Chapter 4. I use this space to show how the strategies of the Pittston strike have been adopted and adapted by more recent protest movements, specifically the Occupy Movement and anti-mountaintop removal groups in southwestern Virginia. These groups were aware of the Pittston strike, and whether unconsciously or consciously, many of the ways in which they made music highlight the approaches employed by the Pittston protesters. I conclude with a chapter considering some of the broader themes that can be taken from this thesis, and consider how they might affect protest music scholarship.

Chapter 2: Making Music and Crafting Songs for the Cause

In a short documentary put together by the pro-union organization, Union One, a montage of video clips depicts life on the picket lines of Pittston. In front of the entrance to a coal preparation plant, men and women of various ages stand along the edges of a muddy road. Almost all of them are completely covered in camouflage, from their hats to their pants, creating what looks like a solid wall of mottled green. As the scenes progress, these people are shown shouting, chanting, and singing with ferocity at passing coal trucks and the state troopers who hover in the background with large buses behind them. The buses' purpose becomes clear quite quickly: as coal trucks approach the gate to the plant several men and women sit down in front of it, refusing to move. The troopers pick the protesters up and then carry or drag them over to the bus to be incarcerated. Throughout this process, two major songs punctuate the action: "We Shall Not Be Moved" and "Which Side are You On?"

In the documentary *Justice in the Coalfields*, a coal miner's wife, Elaine Purkey, is interviewed, and in between telling the interviewer about her experiences during the strike, she sings protest songs that she wrote for rallies for Pittston. While the tunes may be familiar to the casual listener, the words are not. Purkey has crafted each song to serve the strike, and as such the lyrics reflect the values of the protest: "Our great and mighty union stands unbroken still today. It's helped us through hard times before; we know it's here to stay." These are the words to "America, Our Union," sung to the tune of "America, the Beautiful." Her delivery is loud, strong, and full of emotion, with restrained but noticeable vocal embellishments, and the song is performed without accompaniment.

These two scenes present participatory and presentational music made during the Pittston strike. In this chapter, I will discuss the many contexts in which music was made during the Pittston strike. Because, as mentioned in the introduction, much of the literature on protest music has focused on the lyrics and reactions to the lyrical and stylistic content of music, many case studies do not include a comprehensive examination of *how* music was used during a protest: when music making occurred, who made the music, and why music was thought to be useful at any particular time. To preface this discussion, I give a history of the Pittston strike so that the many music performances discussed thereafter are understood within the greater context of the strike itself. To organize the ways in which music was made, I am using Thomas Turino's concepts of participatory and presentational music, as outlined in the first chapter of this thesis. First, I describe music that can be broadly understood as participatory, in which there are no artist-audience distinctions. These music-making moments include picket line protesting, a sit-in at the Pittston company's local headquarters, and some community gatherings. I then discuss presentational music, which primarily occurred at rallies to support the protest, as well as a few other instances. In this section, I highlight some of the different performers of this music, including Elaine Purkey and Burl Rhea. Throughout this discussion, I argue that the participatory and presentational natures of the music were crucial to serving greater needs of the protesters, which are multiple, layered, and complicated.

The use of both participatory and presentational music within a strike is not necessarily unique to Pittston; its particular blend of protest actions and associated musical activities are similar to and perhaps even inspired by the Civil Rights movement.

There are a few factors that make Pittston unique, however; first, a central organizing body (namely, the UMWA) was responsible for both participatory and presentational musical practices. While the Civil Rights movement involved a number of major organizations, including the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership, a coalition of sorts between most major groups involved in the Civil rights movement, none of these groups truly was involved in every single protest activity, nor were they involved in the making of all music that became associated with the protest. In the case of the Pittston strike, participatory and presentational events were both put together by UMWA organizers, and many if not most of the musicians who made presentational music were UMWA members or family members of UMWA workers. Union organizers may not have been actively involved in all of the protest activities, but all of them were associated with the union. Another major difference was the popularity of musical styles being used to make protest music at the time of the Civil Rights movement and the time of the Pittston strike. The folk revival's timing made it possible for artists singing protest songs to gain mainstream popularity, such as Odetta, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan.³ The more presentational performers at Pittston, while trying to accomplish similar goals to earlier singers, faced an incredibly different music market. Throughout the discussion of how both of the participatory and presentational frames were incorporated into the strategy of this strike, I will highlight how musicians involved in the Pittston strike were taking the lessons from previous protests and applying them to their current situation.

³ It should be noted that these musicians did not gain popularity because of their protests songs necessarily; their other work as musicians also contributed greatly to their careers. For more about their careers, see Rodnitzky 1976.

The Pittston Strike

The Pittston strike began on April 5, 1989, when the UMWA declared a strike against the Pittston Coal Group, specifically affecting the states of Virginia and West Virginia.⁴ The UMWA had worked for fourteen months without a contract, due in part to Pittston's secession from the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA), which held industry-wide pension and health care funds for union workers. The union agreed to negotiate with Pittston separately, but facing declining coal prices, Pittston raised deductibles and lowered coverage for current miners, and discontinued benefits for miners who had retired before 1974. Pittston also increased work hours to include Sundays, a move that was highly contested for Christian miners. While the moves by Pittston after its withdrawal from the BCOA served as an impetus to begin the strike, leaving the BCOA was seen as an act of "union busting" by many UMWA members. By leaving the BCOA, Pittston had destabilized the agreement for other union miners as well.

The Pittston strike included approximately 1950 miners, and the strike lasted 270 days, until February 19, 1990. The leaders of the UMWA expressed that their primary tactic was going to be non-violent civil disobedience; this included "Wednesday 'morale' meetings, courthouse rallies for those arrested during sit-ins, walkouts by local high school students during school hours, a 3-day occupation of a coal processing plant, and a continued, high-visibility presence in Greenwich, Connecticut, where the Pittston Corporation [national] headquarters were located" (Beckwith 1998: 152). Some violence

⁴ The following history is largely derived from Birecree 1996, with corroboration obtained from Beckwith 1998 and *Dickenson Star* 1990.

and destruction of property was reported in the *Dickinson Star*, but the union denied that any of its members had participated in such activities. Negotiators working with both groups included secretary of labor Elizabeth Dole and former secretary of labor William Usery, who were able to get the parties to agree to a new contract in December of 1989, although it would not be signed by the union until February of the next year.

The strike resulted in a number of successes for the miners. The current employees would receive health and retirement benefits, which had been halted during the time the miners had worked without a contract. Pittston would pay ten million dollars toward the retirement benefits of the miners who had retired before 1974. Pittston would, however, be allowed to open the mines on Sundays, as long as they were closed from 8 AM to 4 PM. The UMWA had been fined sixty-four million dollars over the course of the strike; some fines were levied against individual miners, and some against the union as a whole for its participation in non-violent but illegal acts, such as the takeover of the Moss 3 preparation plant. Many of these fines were dropped in exchange for extensive community service hours. Pittston too lost money, due to the slowdown of production in their mines. While the final compromise seems like an obvious solution in hindsight, Beckwith notes that, at the time of the strike, such an outcome was very unclear (ibid.: 151). Interviews conducted at the time of the strike show miners who were incredibly concerned with the outcome of the strike, stating that a bad outcome of this strike could mean the end of the union (Lewis 1995). The miners were perhaps afraid at the time that any moves to compromise with Pittston would not be accepted, and thus it would weaken their positions with other mining organizations.

Participatory Music

At the Picket Line

Singing was quite common at the picket line. Much of the video footage of the picket lines in the Pittston Strike depicts some sort of singing or chanting. The exact situations are varied. As described in the introduction of this section, much of the most active singing seems to have occurred when there were replacement workers present, or when the state troopers carried off protesters to the buses to be sent to jail. Shouts, fist pumps, and claps accentuate these moments; they are not always in time with the music, but rather appear to be random outbursts to indicate the protesters' fervor. A few on the picket line will sing with their hands cupped around their mouths, and even a few more might have megaphones. Alternatively, there are some scenes that show protesters sitting, swaying, and singing during what appear to be fairly calm times in comparison to the tumultuous activity that occurs upon the arrival of a coal truck. Occasionally, men and women are sitting on the sides of the road, rather than standing. When faces are visible, it appears that in both cases all of those on the picket line are singing.

Different emotional levels are marked not only visually, but aurally by stylistic changes in the singing. The more rambunctious events are often accompanied by chanting, or the more fast-paced union songs: "Solidarity Forever," "Which Side Are You On?", and "We Shall Not Be Moved" seem to be favorites for these moments. Spoken or shouted words often explore themes along the lines of "We won't go back!" In contrast, the more calm moments seem to rarely include these songs, and instead are often variations on religious songs. "Amazing Grace" seems to be the most common, often with the lyrics replaced with simply "Praise God" over and over. "This Little Light

of Mine” appears in a number of videos with no alterations to the lyrics being sung, and it also appears in one of the union songbooks with new lyrics, as discussed later in this chapter.

The number of singers who jump into higher registers throughout the songs seems to be a disproportionate for what would be expected in participatory singing, even from those who are vocally tired. These voices stand out, and so this could be what Turino describes as a way to allow for multiple layers of participation, with more experienced singers jumping out of the texture, giving each person a moment to shine, although the singers can rarely be identified due to the number of people and uniformity of outfits (2008: 30–31). While none of the people present at the protests addressed this in interviews, there are a number of reasons that this may have occurred. It is possible that, knowing that many would have trouble maintaining vocal quality throughout the day, those with control over their voices would extend into the higher registers to make everyone feel comfortable to sing, regardless of whether they had any vocal control. Another possibility is that the singers felt that this helped to demonstrate their passion for the union and for the strike. By creating a sonic picture of people exerting themselves to the point that they lose vocal control, the singers are perhaps indicating that they will not back down, even after hours of picketing.

Perhaps one of the most compelling explanations for the high-pitched interjections is that it is a value associated with the Appalachian region, where this strike was taking place. Bluegrass, country, and Appalachian ballads are all associated with a concept known as the “high, lonesome sound” (Tunnell 1995; Tichi 1994; Price 1975). This concept can refer to a number of stylistic features of these genres, including their

lyrical content and tempo, but most scholars agree that it also points to the vocal range; specifically, the lead vocal parts are quite high, and can require the vocalists to strain their voices. The singers on the Pittston picket lines could very well be emulating this stylistic feature; although they are not singing in any of the genres that are considered to have a “high, lonesome sound,” interjecting regional preferences would seem logical in the circumstances, and participatory music in other locations often has features similar to this that cannot be explained by the participatory framework. An example of this would be the “lift-up-over sounding” in the music of the Kaluli from Papua New Guinea (Feld 1988; 1984). Ethnomusicologist Steven Feld noted that the Kaluli valued this intricate series of overlapping voices, which added density but much like the Pittston singers utilizing the “high, lonesome sound,” would create moments where an individual would stand out.

Sit-Ins

Another major strike activity involved several sit-ins, one at the Moss 3 Preparation Plant and one at the Pittston offices in Lebanon, Virginia. These actions drew considerable media attention, as they would shut down mining operations while the protesters occupied these spaces. The Pittston offices sit-in occurred early in the strike, on April 18, 1989. Women who had been picketing the Pittston offices began the discussion of actually taking them over (Beckwith 1998: 154). There are contradicting sources as to who was involved in organizing the sit-in; it is generally agreed that the women themselves organized the sit-in, but the level of involvement of the UMWA spans

from active support to implicit encouragement.⁵ Regardless, women had been targeting the Pittston offices for months before the strike; they had been picketing at the Pittston headquarters before the strike, due to the company's call for applications for replacement workers (Birecree 1996) The women ended up occupying the offices for thirty-six hours, during which time they only identified themselves as "Daughters of Mother Jones" when asked for their names, connecting themselves with the greater history of activist women in the history of the UMWA.⁶

The Moss 3 takeover took place much later in the strike, during a time when there was a perception that the union was losing power and did not have enough influence with which to bargain. There was also increasing frustration about fines and arrests being made by the state troopers, and both the state and federal governments were, at the time, claiming jurisdiction over the behaviors of the protesters (Fischer 1993: 199). Jim Sessions, who was the director of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, was asked to participate as an unaffiliated witness to the takeover, and so he and ninety-eight miners entered the preparation plant on a Sunday, September 17, 1989 (ibid.,: 198). The sit-in or occupation lasted for four days, at which point the UMWA was given notice that a federal judge had issued an order to arrest the protesters, and that the National Guard had

⁵ While there is no record of the women who were involved in this event, it is likely that all of them had at least some affiliation with the UMWA through their family members. Most of the women who were interviewed in videos had sons, husbands, or fathers. While there were and are female miners, they still represent a small percentage of the industry.

⁶ Women were active throughout the Pittston Strike, although their ability to articulate their gendered presence in the strike was limited by the UMWA for a number of reasons, including general acceptance of standard gender norms in the region and a strategy of the UMWA of emphasizing "community" and "family" above any gendered groups within the strike. For more information on this, see Beckwith 1998.

been called in to assist with the arrests, at which point the UMWA leadership decided to end the occupation (ibid., 219). The Moss 3 takeover involved some participatory singing and chanting, but the majority of the music made during this takeover was presentational, so it will be discussed in the following section. The sit-in done by the Daughters of Mother Jones, however, was extremely participatory.

While the records of the sit-in are fairly sparse, there is some video footage of what appears to be a sit-in as part of a news segment on the beginnings of the strike.⁷ In it, the women are singing “Solidarity Forever” in unison, much less dense than the singing on the picket lines. The women are sitting down, and while some do not sing, most are waving American flags to the beat of the others’ voices, as seen in Figure 1. It seems that the women are using the singing to pass the time as they sit in the offices, which would presumably be fairly dull, and not particularly confrontational, unlike the picket lines. The recording of the women does not contain much background noise, or even talking, so it seems as if the women had the space to themselves, apart from those recording the event. There is no clear audience as the women are facing in multiple directions based on the layout of the Pittston lobby, and they are singing “Solidarity Forever,” a well-known protest song to the tune of “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

⁷ The clip is located at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEuSCN1GJ-E&index=1&list=PL8863ACF32B8FA9AF>. While I have not been able to verify the news company that made the video, Melvin Mathews, who is interviewed in the clip, was also interviewed by the *Bristol Herald Courier* (May 21, 1989), and Mike Odom, a representative for Pittston, is recognizable as well. The following photo is from this source. The April 18 sit-in is also the only one I found mentioned in any records or that came up in any interviews that involved all women, and while there might have been some meetings of the women’s auxiliary, most of the events involving women were integrated with the men, and this was increasingly the case as the strike wore on.



Figure 1. Women singing during sit-in.

Songbooks

The two women visible in the front of the picture are singing from a songbook. Songbooks were created by the UMWA for the Pittston strike, as well as many previous strikes. While the cover of this particular book does not seem to match the Pittston and several of the other songbooks produced by the CIO and UMWA, in an interview, miner and musician Burl Rhea told me that they would often produce new pamphlets for every strike. This was in part because they would be lost quite easily, as protesters brought them to a variety of events, and not everyone was able to hang onto their songbooks as the protesting grew more intense, or as they were taken to jail by the state troopers.

Another reason for making switches between strikes and protests was the content of the songbooks. Lyrics in the Pittston songbook often referred to specific people, issues,

and events from this strike, whereas earlier songbooks would be about issues from that time, contain more generic songs, and/or contain songs depicting more history about coal mining accidents and strikes. Figure 2 gives the songs and the tunes that are given in the Pittston songbook.

Song Title	Tune
Down at the Picket Line	Down by the Riverside
Give Me That Old Time Union	Old Time Religion
Which Side Are You On?	N/A
We've Been Working for Pittston	I've Been Working on the Railroad
We Shall Not Be Moved	N/A
The Picket Boogie	The Hokey Pokey
This Old Man	N/A
Staying Out on the Line	This Little Light of Mine
This Little Light of Mine	N/A
I'm Working with the Union	I'm Working on a Building
Oh, Mike Odom	Oh, Susannah
Paul Douglas Don't Allow	Mama Don't Allow
Roll the Union On	N/A
Solidarity Forever	Battle Hymn of the Republic
Union Maid	N/A

Figure 2. Songs and tunes from Pittston Handbook.⁸

Several of these songs have Pittston or specific Pittston references in the title, and out of the fifteen songs, thirteen have specific references to either Pittston or the demands of the union for this strike (i.e., pensions and benefits). Also of note is how many of these

⁸ From Pittston strike song book, 1989, United Mine Workers of America, President's Office records, HCLA 1823, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University. To see some of the more detailed lyrics from this songbook, see Appendix A.

songs were based on well-known American folk tunes. While earlier songbooks featured more complex songs with stories about coal mining, these songs were clearly made with participatory singing in mind. It is possible that the UMWA realized that this would be more useful in the context of the protest; while one person could sing “Disaster at the Mannington Mine,” a song featured in an earlier UMWA handbook, a group could not, and then the usefulness of having lots of songbooks diminishes. Rhea told me that these were kept on the picket lines and used occasionally, although there is no video footage of these instances, and reporters often would give simple names for songs, rather than the more Pittston-specific ones, as they may have not heard the lyrics clearly or perhaps the lyrics were not sung clearly during sections about Pittston, when the protesters were more likely to revert to other versions of the song that they knew. In more presentational settings, musicians might also use the books to extend versions of the songs they already knew, which would have been useful for lengthy events such as the sit-ins and the time on the picket line.

Camp Solidarity

Camp Solidarity was a campground in Castlewood, Virginia, used as a central gathering place for the protesters and a location for housing for those who were from out of town. While the Pittston strike was mainly supported by miners and their relatives from the central Appalachian region, people would come to support the protest from a variety of different backgrounds and locations, and they would often stay at Camp Solidarity during their time of support. Steffi Domike’s recordings depict a good bit of the camp and some of its daily activities. The camp was set up in a sizable clearing, surrounded by trees and mountains on all sides, a visual and daily reminder of the

Appalachian space in which this protest was taking place. Gravel roadways had been made around the edges of the clearing; one went up to a small shelter, and elsewhere it snaked around for visitors to set up their motor homes, cars, trucks, and tents for sleeping. Domike's video shows at least a dozen or so cars set up along the edges, although there could easily have been more. Friendly dogs wander around the camp throughout the clips, and they latch on to protesters who feed and pet them. The shelter, which appears to be made out of a combination of concrete bricks and two-by-fours, has a sheet metal roof, and houses an ample kitchen area, as well as tables and chairs. Domike's records include a film of some men and women making breakfast: about six people stood around a large griddle, and as one man poured an egg mixture onto it, the others would begin pushing the running mix towards the center, simultaneously preventing the eggs from becoming a runny mess and creating the folds that add the expected texture of an omelet.⁹

Domike's depiction of the site, while given without commentary, seems rather idyllic, and it should be noted that other accounts of the site were no less glowing. Jim Sessions's account of the space highlights the diversity of people who would be found there:

[Being at Camp Solidarity] creates an opportunity to meet with neighbors, find out the latest strike news, and participate in group plans and discussions about evolving union and community strategy. Sitting around a table one evening over sausage biscuits and pinto beans, you might find

⁹ Most sources I have read have indicated that Camp Solidarity was run by the women, whether it be the Daughters of Mother Jones or the Freedom Fighters, and Jim Sessions said that the communal meals were explicitly seen as a contribution made by local women (Fisher 1993: 203). Domike's recording does not seem to support this, but this evidence is far from conclusive. Domike's presence could have easily affected the behavior of those at Camp Solidarity, or breakfast was seen as a more informal meal, made by whomever was awake at the time.

an autoworker from Michigan, an Eastern Airlines flight attendant from California, a British labor journalist, a Free Will Baptist preacher, and a Jesuit priest discussing the future of the U.S. labor movement and its relation to justice for unemployed workers in Latin America. (Fischer 1993: 203).

Sessions goes on to note that there was a community center that was also being used to provide food and shelter for visiting and resident miners, but it was a less isolated location, and so those participants using the center received considerable harassment from company supporters. Hans Angrawal of the *Harvard Crimson* was comparing the environment of the strike to that of a war, but when it came to the camp, he wrote, “[Camp Solidarity] set among the mines, and was softer than most military bases. Dozens of encouraging banners from universities and labor organizations hung on the walls of the shelter, which provided almost all the amenities anyone could want under the circumstances—a well-stocked kitchen; warm blankets; scathing hot showers” (January 3, 1990). Historian and labor activist James Green described the variety of people as well, and how the camp had begun to represent a people’s movement, rather than simply a UMWA strike (2000: 241–242).

I provide this as a backdrop for the music that took place at Camp Solidarity because the purpose of the camp, the sense of community, and the variety of people there affected the type of music that was made. Steffi Domike recorded a significant amount of music made by a collection of musicians at the camp. Their instruments were that of a typical string band from the region: banjo, spoons, string bass, and a flat-picked guitar, and most of the instrumentalist sang, sometimes in unison but typically in multi-part harmony. All of the instruments except for the spoons had a yellow ribbon tied to them in some place, which was seen as a sign of support for the striking miners and was worn by

many in the community (*The Free Lance-Star*, June 19, 1989). The repertoire of the group was varied, including country songs such as “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” and what sounded like a variation on “I Don’t Want Your Ramblin’ Letters,” bluegrass tunes such as “Foggy Mountain Breakdown,” and some more traditional string band tunes in an AABB format. From my experiences playing with various “traditional” jams in the region, including one with the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers, playing songs from a variety of genres is more common in the central Appalachian region, in contrast with many jams across the country that are more genre-specific (Crowley 1984).¹⁰

Despite the fact that there are onlookers during this session, I would suggest that these men view this as an informal music jam. Rob Baker, a union organizer from Pennsylvania present at Camp Solidarity, said in a tape pre-roll before an interview that the band was made up of local musicians and miners who had never played together before. I am not completely convinced of the validity of this statement; the band was incredibly in-sync, and there are a lot of regional variations of songs, even within a region, as I learned playing songs with different musicians in the region myself. They do show moments of disagreement on lyrics of songs, but they certainly seem quite well acquainted with each others’ musical stylings. Also, the instrumentation of the ensemble featured in Domike’s footage of Camp Solidarity did not have any significant doubling of instruments visible in the video; this would indicate that the musicians knew what instrumentalists would be showing up at the camp. It is possible that these individuals were asked to come to the camp, knowing that they played these instruments, as a

¹⁰ There are certain contexts in which musicians play separate styles in the area, particularly at the Galax festival/competition every year (Goertzen 2003).

presentation for Domike and for the non-musicians. Also, the video footage cuts in and out of the songs, so it is also possible that Domike chose to record songs that were played well, while omitting ones in which the musicians were not together. Regardless, there seems to be an informality amongst the musicians that is reminiscent of a jam session, and it does not seem like a situation in which a new musician would be turned away, should one arrive. While this would be a participatory setting for those familiar with Appalachian jams, to the visiting supporters from outside the region this could have easily been seen as a presentational moment, something I will discuss in chapter three.

Presentational Music

There are also more clearly presentational frames that occurred during the Pittston strike. The most well known of these frames, and perhaps the most important to the strike, were rallies held throughout the country. Rallies would feature speakers from the UMWA who would discuss the issues of the strike, and for entertainment, musicians would often sing and/or play protest or coal-mining related songs. Because rallies almost always took place in locations where speakers and musicians were on a stage, they fall under the broad category of presentational music, as there is a clear distinction between people who make music and people who listen to it. Musicians such as Elaine Purkey and Burl Rhea were featured in these rallies, and in my interviews with them, they recounted some of their experiences participating in these events, including how they got to be involved with the Pittston strike and how they came to make music for the union. Their stories illustrate how rallies were organized in a strategic manner by the UMWA, and in a way that took advantage of their presentational nature.

Elaine Purkey

Elaine Purkey, a singer, guitar player, and songwriter from West Virginia, got involved with the Pittston strike because the union was looking to represent all of the states in which Pittston had mines at their first rally (interview 22 July 2013).¹¹ Her husband was a union coal miner and had always worked for a union, and was very interested in organizing, and Purkey had been singing on a local radio program, the Friendly Neighbors Show (a show she now runs herself), and so local union workers had asked her husband to ask her to sing at the rally. She had done some singing at local union gatherings, but she had not been involved in any mining union strikes, and therefore did not think she knew any union songs. However, as she sang more for rallies in the Pittston strike, she realized that she knew many tunes and even some full songs that had come to be associated with unions and labor protest. The first major rally was held in Castlewood, Virginia, and Purkey sang “Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine,” which Purkey notes is the first song she sang for the union. “Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine” is a lament by a child, wishing they could give their father back his youth, and Purkey had chosen to sing this particular song because the retirees and older members of the union were the ones whose health benefits and pensions were being taken away by Pittston. Purkey recalls that at the event, she had tried to get Guy Carawan to play banjo for her, but he would not do it, telling her instead to sing and play by herself. She described the audience’s reaction, saying that “you could hear a pin drop” when she started, and immediately after, the audience “went crazy.” After her success at the first rally, she was asked to participate in many performances afterwards.

¹¹ The following discussion will be informed by this interview.

Elaine Purkey's performance style allows for audience participation, but she also sings with vocal prowess that would have impressed audiences, and certainly impressed me. Our interview took place at a restaurant, and before she began singing, she turned around to the staff and other patrons, and warned them that she was going to "show [me] something that's going to get kind of loud." Purkey has a strong, loud voice, with a very pure tone. While she does not overly embellish melodies, she often stretches notes to pull out emotional moments in songs, and she has a wide range, beyond that of an average singer. When I asked her about how she wrote songs, or how she sang songs, she said that she "tried to gear [her] songs... to grab [listeners'] attention in the first three, couple [of] seconds." She did this with both her vocal style, singing loudly and with intensity, and also with the melodies she writes. She stated that in composing "One Day More," perhaps her most well-known song, she decided to go to a higher register for a particular line simply to grab the attention of her listeners. Her hope is that the use of melody will get people to listen to the lyrics of song as she sings them.

Purkey's songwriting practices balanced between making songs with quick, catchy choruses and verses that were meant for deeper listening, rather than singing along. The lyrics to the chorus of "One Day More" are as follows: "One day more / One day more / If the company holds out twenty years / We'll hold out one day more" (*Classic Labor Songs from Smithsonian Folkways* 2006). This set of lyrics is repetitive in and of itself, but the material is repeated even further, giving audiences a chance to catch onto the lyrics. The verses contain some more complicated lyrics, and Purkey does some impressive vocal embellishments, but as with many popular songs, the chorus still acts as a grounding feature that would allow audiences to sing along. When I commented on

Purkey's thoughtfulness in crafting songs, she immediately stated that she had not always been so conscientious, and had focused early in her career on writing new lyrics to well-known tunes, such as "This Land is Your Land." These songs that she wrote, because people would be more familiar with the tunes, would have been more conducive to participatory performances. Purkey made it clear that she would often make verses with specific lyrics to the protest with which she was involved, and then would keep the choruses the same in these cases, to allow audiences to join in with her for the parts that they knew.

Burl Rhea

Burl Rhea of the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers is also a singer and instrumentalist, but he is based in Cleveland, Virginia. He comes from an extremely musical family; all but three of his fourteen brothers and sisters played music, and so he and several of his brothers formed a band called the Buffalo Mountain Boys (interview 7 June 2013).¹² Rhea and many of his siblings ended up as coal miners, and Rhea was working for Pittston at the time of the strike, and so he became actively involved in all of the strike activities discussed in this work, as well as many others. Rhea would bring his guitar to the picket lines, and soon he began playing with his band for protesting miners. He spent most of his time on Rabbit Ridge, and so his band got the name the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers during the protest, which has stuck with them ever since then. The Pea Pickers' involvement on the picket lines led to their involvement in many of the rallies around the region, both at smaller, local rallies, as well as larger rallies, which included a major,

¹² Unless noted otherwise, the following paragraphs about Burl Rhea's involvement in the strike are informed by this interview.

multi-union rally in Pittsburgh, where thousands of union workers attended to listen to speakers (*Associated Press*, 13 August 1989).

Rhea's repertoire is focused around songs traditionally found in mixed-genre jams, and he and several members of the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers currently host/attend a weekly jam in Cleveland, Virginia. I attended the jam for several weeks, and I was generally able to play the songs at some level, although the Pea Pickers were able to play much faster than I was as an amateur banjo player. Rhea has a unique style, where he hits the head of the banjo with his right hand throughout each song, creating a percussive sound, and he joked in his interview that he could be his own backing band. The result is something a bit more dense than would be heard in other bluegrass bands, particularly because Rhea plays in the clawhammer style, which is less common in bluegrass music outside of the Appalachian region. While Rhea, like Purkey, would add or change lyrics to many of the songs he performed to reflect the positions and problems of the Pittston strike, the music itself largely remained the same in style.

Rhea and the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers typically performed during the Pittston strike on some sort of makeshift stage; formal stages were used for the rallies, but the Pea Pickers would also perform on smaller stages for protesters on the picket line. In this context, where audience members do not have instruments to play with the musicians and the band is standing on stage, making the distinction between audience and performer much more marked than in Rhea's bluegrass jam sessions.



Figure 3. The Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers at a rally in Pittsburgh.

I do not mean to suggest here that the audience does not participate in any way. As is the case with Purkey's music, there are opportunities for audience participation, although in the case of the Pea Pickers, this is much more in the form of dancing rather than singing. When Rhea discussed the reactions to his performances, he noted most especially how audiences would break into dance when his band played. This seemed to be in contrast with what was typical for the rallies; he did not make any explicit comparisons to other musicians, but noted that sometimes the audience's energy would be falling, and the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers could play fast tunes to bring the energy level back up.

While musicians like Rhea and Purkey did not see mainstream popularity like the more presentational musicians of the 1960s, I would argue that mainstream popularity was not the goal of their performances; rather, organizers were looking to get more monetary support and more physical support from those who were already in support of the UMWA's cause. Jim "Buzz" Hicks, a UMWA camp coordinator for Camp Solidarity, mentioned the support that they were receiving in terms of money and food, but

commented that “What we appreciate most is the people, because this is a ‘people’ strike” (Steffi Domike Papers). It seems clear that the UMWA was not targeting those outside the cause as much due to the style in which these musicians played. The Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers’ music has a mix of Appalachian styles, taking influence from religious songs, old-time, bluegrass, and country. Purkey’s singing style is very much in the Appalachian ballad idiom, and when she sings with guitar, it can be reminiscent of the folk revival musicians. While these are styles that had seen popularity in earlier eras, they are far removed from the popular music of the 1980s. In the Steffi Domike recordings of the rallies, all the musicians performing were of these general rural or folk styles, and in the Associate Press report on the rally, the presence of music was not mentioned, which indicates that no artist with national name-recognition had performed at the rally, as that is something that likely would have been mentioned to improve interest in the article. These characteristics seem to indicate that the musicians were being selected to perform at rallies were not there to attract national attention the way artists like Bob Dylan did at the March on Washington in 1963.

It is possible that the lack of involvement of popular musicians was due to their disinterest in participating in a union strike, but I would suggest that this was, at least in part, a strategic move by the UMWA organizers. In a review of Rodnitzky’s *Minstrels of the Dawn*, R. Serge Denisoff notes that, in sociology, it was widely believed that popular music is not particularly persuasive, except for those already in agreement with the cause, and goes on to say that “the protest singers of the 1960s were essentially entertainers, *not* movement oriented activists” (1977: 269–270; emphasis in original). While later scholars and those in different fields have certainly debated this point, organizers may have felt

that the popular music approach was not an effective one, and instead focused on presentational music events that highlighted the issues at hand and mobilized those who were already supportive of their cause.¹³ Rhea and Purkey's discussions of where they traveled mostly included locations that were likely to be liberal, or those that had large coal mining operations, where other miners could come out and show their support. I would still argue that the organizers had broader, more national and politically diverse audiences in mind at various times (something I will highlight in chapter three of this thesis), and that music was a crucial part of their strategy, but it seems that the majority of presentational music made by the Pittston strikers was focused on engaging with active supporters.

Presentational Moments in Participatory Settings

Despite the fact that the main musical practices were participatory in protest spaces such as the picket line and sit-ins, they also had interspersed presentational moments as well, which were documented by newspapers and picket line attendees. The frequency of these moments is unclear; in discussing such events with miners, I was given the impression that they happened frequently, but irregularly (interview 19 June 2013). Also, unlike the rallies, which were organized by the UMWA, these moments were simply at the whim of the performers themselves. The places where they were singing were general spaces where the union had some control, such as the picket lines

¹³ See Perris 1983. Even this study would not convince Denisoff, who was looking for more survey/data-driven evidence that music had changed the opinions of music listeners in the PRC. Denisoff is not arguing against the ability of music to be symbolic, something he has highlighted in a discussion of post-folk revival protest music (1969: 434). He is instead focusing on music's inability to explicitly alter the opinions of listeners, something he himself had surveyed and found, at least with one group of students, to be true (1971).

and at the Moss 3 takeover, but the musical moments in and of themselves were planned by the individuals who made them. They happened in a variety of places where protest activity was occurring.

One of these more participatory settings was that of the Moss 3 occupation. While there is not any video footage of the Moss 3 Preparation Plant takeover, Fran Ansley's account in *Taking Back Appalachia* describes singing at the plant by the Students'

Auxiliary:

In the summer, kids had walked the picket lines, written irreverent songs about particularly hated figures in Pittston management, and staged strike support rallies. On this evening they are there to sing to the Moss 3 brigade, and sing they do, at the tops of their voices. They sing the Appalachian labor hymn "Which Side Are You On?"... They sing "We Shall Not Be Moved." They sing new songs about the strike against Pittston (Fisher 1993: 214).

This account, presented by Jim Sessions and Fran Ansley, depicts the Students' Auxiliary coming to perform for the men who had taken over the Moss 3 plant. The Students' Auxiliary was incredibly active during this strike, and even garnered some media attention (*48 Hours*, 1989). While they were singing some songs that would have been familiar to the miners in the plant, and it is possible that they were attempting to get the miners to sing with them, the mentioning of "new songs" implies that they had also been working on some additional repertoire that was not known to those working on the sit-in. These songs, it could be presumed, would have been a presentational performance for the miners and supporters involved in the Moss 3 takeover.

Ansley and Sessions' account also notes that the young men and women would sing on the picket line, and there they would also sing songs that were specific to the strike, not only the songs that had more general lyrics that would have been known to all

protesters. While the video footage of the Students' Auxiliary only shows them performing more standard protest songs, a newspaper article references some of the various songs made by musicians on the picket lines (*Free Lance-Star*, Fredericksburg, VA 5 June 1989). One woman wrote a ballad about her experiences, and arranged for some women to accompany her on instruments. Several musicians, like the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers, would play instrumental tunes to allow for dancing. Still others would write songs more in the style of the protest songs, noting particular issues they were fighting for during the strike. While there do not seem to be recordings of these musicians out there, it is clear that these moments occurred with enough frequency to draw the attention of journalists within the state.

There were more different circumstances in which music was participatory during the Pittston strike, but this is not to say that these moments were more important to the strike, nor does it imply that the music made in them was more varied. In fact, from the records of the events I found, it seems that the presentational music had more variety, whereas the participatory frames tended to be more similar in nature. The participatory frames tended to also exist on the far end of the participatory-presentational spectrum; when the music making of the Pittston strike was participatory, in many ways it was extremely participatory. However, the presentational music varies significantly more in its placement on the participatory-presentational spectrum. Some of this music was staged, some of it was not, and the music seems to have been quite varied in style, from songs that would have been more conducive to participatory settings, to those that were meant to cause an audience to fall silent. The variety of musical contexts that occurred within this strike in some ways is specific to this event, particularly because organizers

had a long history of protest in the U.S. to draw upon for inspiration for their tactics.

However, these events are emblematic both in terms of what had past and what was to come.

The Participatory-Presentational Spectrum

As this last section highlights, the music of Pittston did not exist as a binary of presentational and participatory music, but instead represents a wide variety of positions on a theoretical spectrum. Some music and situations were more or less participatory and presentational than others. The main consideration marking music on one side or another of the spectrum is whether or not there is a distinction between the performers and the people not currently performing the music. If the non-performers are not divided from the performers, and there is a sense that they could join the musicians at some level, then the music is participatory. If there is some distinction between those performing and those not, then the music is presentational. While this might seem like a simplistic model, the complexity lies in finding the music that exists near the middle of the spectrum, and discerning whether it is participatory or presentational, because determining which side of the spectrum it falls on tells us quite a bit about how the music is being used in a given context. In figure 4, I have drawn a participatory-presentational spectrum and given some approximate placements of musical contexts from the Pittston strike.

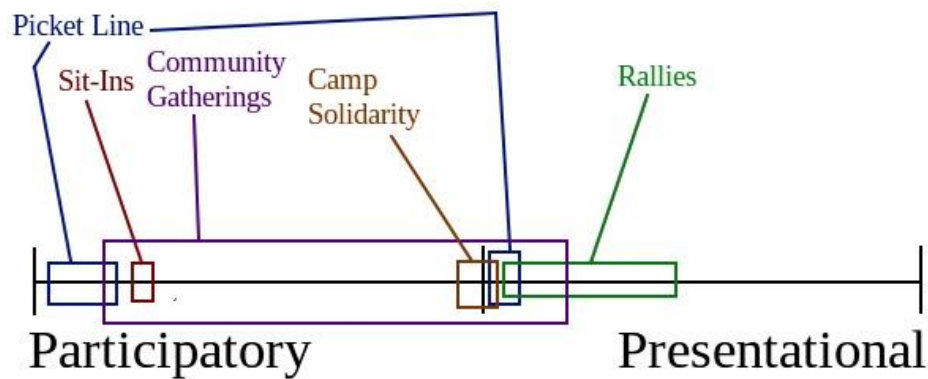


Figure 4. Participatory-Presentational Spectrum

This spectrum is an approximation; many of the events could be argued to be further in either direction. Also, each “context” represents a number of different events and performances, and to illustrate that, I place boxes on the spectrum, rather than lines. For example, community gatherings included performances by musicians like Burl Rhea, but they also included communal singing, which involved almost everyone present. The performances at camp solidarity could easily be viewed as either participatory or presentational. The bounded edges of these situations in which music was made are in fact blurry; each context can be roughly placed on the spectrum, but their positioning can be flexible even well after the event has taken place, depending on how the musicians felt when performing, how they felt afterwards; perhaps in hindsight, they were thinking differently about the people around them than they had initially planned.

The picket line singing is one of our clearest examples of participatory music in its format, and carries many of the musical qualities described by Turino as participatory

(2008: 59).¹⁴ While a melody can be heard in one key during the singing, there is a density to the sound caused by many of the protesters having trouble matching pitch, potentially due to overuse of the vocal chords resulting in dysphonia. Certainly, there are many indicators that show that the protesters' singing may have been affected by their long shifts on the picket line: some singers come in early or late at times, and others will have their voices break momentarily, their voices cracking and shifting into higher registers while harboring a harsh tone, often with a growl. The singing of vowels has a spoken quality to it, rather than the rounded tones of a choir. This is emphasized by the southwestern Virginian accent that is somewhat audible throughout the clips. In the *48 Hours* documentary, a few words stick out throughout the video footage, such as "united," where the letter "i" is pronounced with a variety of accents; some say it as "eye," but many of the protesters pronounced it as "ah." All of these characteristics indicate that the picket line protests had a mixture of people, from different regions and musical backgrounds, with varying levels of singing ability, and hence depict some of the musical characteristics of participatory music, as well as the format of the performance.

Presentational music also has a set of characteristics that solidify its positioning on the spectrum, which can be heard in music from the rallies. Musicians demonstrated instrumental and vocal virtuosity, making it challenging for audience members to sing along at times, or to easily join in with their own instruments. The songs would have more complex lyrics, and occasionally even more complex melodies, much more suitable to a number of musicians who had rehearsed to perform pieces for an audience. Clear

¹⁴ Many of these characteristics are drawn from Charles Keil's work on "participatory discrepancies," but the concept of presentational music is unique to Turino's work (2008: 26).

tones do not allow for masking of mistakes; instead the musicians have to be precise in their performances. Elaine Purkey, Burl Rhea, and the bands/groups who played for audiences at rallies and community gatherings embodied some of these characteristics, but depending on where they fell on the participatory-presentational spectrum, would include more or less participatory elements as well.

By describing participatory and presentational characteristics of each protest context, I have highlighted how music was being used during the strike. Rather than understanding the lyrical composition of protest songs, something that has been well-documented, this case study demonstrates how musicians and protesters found many ways to bring music to their cause. In the case of the Pittston strike, the music included both presentational and participatory contexts, and many moments when the distinctions between audience and potential participants were blurred. Performers frequently created environments in which any people listening in the music could potentially become performers themselves.

Chapter 3: Inherent Audiences: Complicating the Participatory-Presentational Continuum in Protest Music

Participatory and presentational music making were both important features of the Pittston strike, seen clearly in a number of videos taken during the time, and noted in articles from Washington to Los Angeles. This transmission, I would suggest, did not go unnoticed by union organizers. From short conversations caught on camera, and visual cues, it becomes clear that the protesters were aware they were being filmed multiple times throughout their music making. A woman singing from a pamphlet at a sit-in looks up and smiles, as she sees the camera focused on her. An organizer, when interviewed but not asked about the music, gives background information on the band that the documentary-makers had just recorded. These moments, and others like them, portray people who are aware of what a camera represents, and are clearly making an effort to engage with the people who will see that footage. The engagement with the camera highlights one way in which audiences were created in circumstances that would otherwise be participatory, where all people would be encouraged to participate.

In this chapter, I will be discussing how “inherent audiences” are built; a term I am creating to describe particular groups of people in participatory music-making contexts. Inherent audiences are people who are *not* potential participants, but are instead are expected by participants to passively interact with the music. I will discuss three main ways in which inherent audiences are created. First I will highlight how outsidership creates inherent audiences, the only model of the inherent audiences discussed by Turino. Here, I will focus on how outsiders to regional protests engage with the music they encounter almost like tourists, although there are marked differences in the relationships

between outsiders and insiders within the context of a protest. The Pittston strike brought together supporters from around the world, some of whom were not previously union supporters, and so the presentation of regional styles and participatory music is not only a “cultural performance,”¹⁵ but also an opportunity to familiarize outside participants with music they would encounter throughout the strike. Second, the participants saw particular groups of people throughout the strike as what I will refer to as antagonists. These are people who might be familiar with unions and Appalachian music, but whose participation would never be seen as beneficial to the success of the music making. Finally, some audiences were created by the prevalence of news media at the protest sites; the people who would see the news footage from the strike would inevitably be displaced by space and time, and unable to participate. I argue that the creation of these audiences affected the music-making practices themselves, as musicians and participants would be aware of these inherent audiences in their music-making practices.

By considering inherent audiences in participatory music making, I intend to highlight some characteristics of music that are specific to the context of protest. Protest music has not often been treated as a category for analysis, and for a number of good reasons; even within one protest, the styles, genres, and contexts of protest music vary greatly. What constitutes a protest can be challenging to unpack, and so to avoid essentializing the myriad of musical expressions of resistance, scholars often choose to consider the music within alternative theoretical models, such as popular or folk music, or they consider it in isolation. In this chapter, I would like to suggest that there are some

¹⁵ I am using this term as described by Milton Singer (1959). David Guss delineated the key characteristics of Singer’s concept, that cultural performances are discrete events set apart from “everyday life,” and that they allowed participants to reflect on, negotiate, and establish shifting means to the performances, their lives, and their world (2001: 8–11).

aspects of protest music that, while not universal, might be considered across a broader spectrum, and would allow scholars to explore questions of the musical meanings and messages of protest music more deeply. I do not mean to imply that all of the inherent audiences discussed in this chapter will be present in all protest music, but their presence in Pittston does not seem to be unique, as more recent protests encounter similar people at their protest sites. The Pittston case study provides a particularly strong example of a number of different inherent audiences, and each one is approached by the protesters in unique ways.

While my focus in this chapter will be on participatory music, I will also discuss how these practices may have affected presentational music as well. While this music was already being performed in a manner that addressed an audience, having different layers of audiences also affected how they made their music. Burl Rhea and Elaine Purkey would often make music with their specific circumstances and audiences in mind, which often included an understanding that there would be insiders, outsiders, antagonists, and media all in one space. In the case of participatory music, the presence of these inherent audiences affects the actual aesthetic values of the performers, and therefore the musical characteristics, making the music sonically more presentational. In the case of presentational music, the changes are subtler; particular songs are chosen over others because they are able to convey things to each of the audiences who will be engaging with the music at some level.

Outsiders: Inherently Looking In

The scenes from Camp Solidarity are some of the best that show the interaction between insiders and outsiders.¹⁶ As discussed in the previous chapter, the interaction between musicians is one that indicates that they perceived this as a participatory musical moment. At first the music was recorded with a single image of the camp, but in later tapes, Domike featured video of the whole group with people sitting around them. A handful of men were standing and sitting in a rough circle, playing acoustic instruments commonly associated with old-time jams, both in this region and outside of it. The instruments of the ensemble include a string bass, a banjo, an acoustic guitar, and spoons. They play a mixture of old-time and bluegrass songs, including “Will The Circle Be Unbroken,” “I Don’t Want Your Ramblin’ Letters,” and “Foggy Mountain Breakdown.” The men sing three- or four-part harmonies to many of their selections, although occasionally voices drop out or fade in, as each musician seems to be catching the others’ vocal patterns on the fly. The casual nature of the event is made even more evident by the haziness of the lyrics; at the end of the first verse of “I Don’t Want Your Ramblin’ Letters,” the musicians seem to have some disagreements about the last words, resulting in a lack of clarity. The musicians all seem well-rehearsed on their instruments, with perhaps the exception of the spoons player, who keeps time adequately but does not include many of the embellishments characteristic of more advanced musicians. As discussed in the last chapter, these characteristics help mark this music as being more participatory than presentational; the performers clearly are creating an environment that would foster participation.

¹⁶ The following discussion is informed by the Steffi Domike Collection.

In spite of these efforts, this musical moment has an informal sort of audience, which places it more towards the presentational end of the spectrum, at least for the audience themselves. Around the instrumentalists, men and women sit in folding chairs, eating and talking quietly, with dogs roaming around, occasionally begging for food. At the end of each piece, there is light clapping, as might be expected at a restaurant. While it is clear that some people are watching the musicians, others are choosing to focus on other elements of the environment provided by Camp Solidarity. In my time attending jam sessions in the Appalachian region, I found that this context for jam sessions was not uncommon, and often would be used as community gatherings for families and friends. Burl Rhea and the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers played weekly at a community center in Cleveland, Virginia, and many of their spouses would attend and typically would not play (primarily men would play instruments and their wives would listen and chat, although there were some exceptions to this). However, a key difference in the scene recorded by Domike is the lack of interaction between those playing and those not playing. In the jams I attended, audience members would call out songs they enjoyed, give commentary on how the playing was going, heckle particular performers, and even join in for one song or two before going back to sitting amongst the listeners. At Camp Solidarity, the audience talked amongst themselves, but very little, if ever, with the performers.

I would suggest that the more presentational feel of this performance might be attributed to the number of people who lived and visited the site who were not from the Appalachian region. In the interviews filmed by Steffi Domike, at least one woman, Karin Friedemann mentions that she came to know about the strike and wanted to get involved through her work with Greenpeace. She was originally from Michigan and did

not seem to have significant ties to mining. Even those who did have ties to coal mining might have been from a great enough geographical distance to not be as familiar with Appalachian music. The union organizer at the site was from central Pennsylvania, an area that is on the edge of Appalachia as a geographic and economic region, and would perhaps have fewer shared musical traditions with the central part of the region. Baker, the organizer, also lists some states from which people came to the region, including Illinois and Indiana, regions less typically associated with even the geographic and economic boundaries of Appalachia. This mode of music consumption shares some similarities with tourism; musicians are portrayed and thought of as “authentic,” a key descriptor for most forms of musical tourism (Gibson and Connell 2005: 137). Most of the rhetoric presented by Ron Baker and others about the music seems to indicate that this was how it was perceived, and was in fact part of its appeal. Because of this notion, potential participants might be dissuaded from taking part in the jam. Their cultural identities as non-Appalachians mean that their inclusion in the jam would make it inauthentic, and so instead they try to maintain the casual environment while not interrupting the musicians in any significant way.

There are some major differences between these outsiders and tourists, however; they are not at the campsite simply to experience Appalachian culture, they are instead there to help support a protest. If we take this into consideration, certain elements become more important in the performance made by these musicians. While the audience at Camp Solidarity may feel they are seeing and consuming Appalachian music, they could also view this music as a representation the United Mine Workers Association, an organization that some of these audience members have traveled to support. The group is

all dressed in camouflage at some level, whether their hats, jackets or pants show this union symbol. Also, their instruments have yellow ribbons on them, with “UMWA” printed in sparkling paint. These visual features associate the musicians with the union, not necessarily with the region, and so their presentation to the audience can be read as a presentation of union values and ideals. Because they are not playing music that seems to have any union- or protest-oriented lyrics, perhaps they are trying to map some of the values associated with participatory music making to the union itself. Camp Solidarity itself is an excellent site for this; the camp provides an image of union work that brings people together as a community, both men and women, where every person can contribute and benefit. By highlighting this idyllic scene with music that emphasizes group participation, the union might be attempting to ensure that outsiders understand them as a group that values community in this way. Because of this, the music-making process needs to be, or at least seem, as participatory as possible, but encouraging outsiders to participate is not necessary for it to be effective, as long as they perceive it to be emblematic of the union, and a representation of a community-oriented practice, rather than an individual-oriented practice.

Elaine Purkey’s music during this protest was also centered on themes associated with the union and coal mining. She focused on writing music for people who “knew what she was talking about” (p.c., 22 July 2013). I think this indicates two considerations being made by Purkey: focusing on the miners and the people most affected by the protest, or the insiders to the union culture. Purkey felt that songs should be written so that the lyrics could be changed to address the specific problem or industry involved in a protest, but they needed to be specific enough so that they could not be applied

universally in one form. She also felt that the style of the musical elements should sound like music that was associated with the region; she felt that some of her popularity amongst the union workers was because she had a vocal timbre that reflected a “mountain sound,” and her musical stylings were similar to bluegrass and country gospel. Purkey’s perspective on the needed regional and industry-based markers in protest music shaped her own writings, and seems to have had a similar affect on other musicians as well. Burl Rhea noted that when the Pea Pickers performed for outside audiences, they would never know how to react to the music; they would not sing, dance, or shout out during the performances, which was disappointing to her (p.c., 16 August 2013). Also, at the rally in Pittsburgh, the support for multiple unions also seemed to result in a greater variety of musical styles represented in performances; while the songs all talked about union-oriented ideas, some of the styles fit in more with commercial folk or pop music in the United States. This indicates that at least a number of these protest musicians, or at least those selected to play for and represent various unions, were making music that could most easily be mapped onto their region.

Purkey had and has a knowledge of a wide variety of protest songs, and so it is clear that the music here is particularly curated because she identifies with it, and also because her audience could most easily identify with it. Before the Pittston strike, she had read Archie Green’s *Only A Miner*, as well as a book published by *Sing Out!*. She had researched music from both the abolitionist movement and the civil rights movement, but she felt particularly that she lacked have the agency to use the gospel songs that had solely been used in the civil rights movement, saying: “I don’t think I’ve done enough, I don’t think I’ve lived hard enough, and I don’t think I’ve thought hard enough to use

those particular songs. I can't sing them and let people know what they mean because I don't have any experience with that." Purkey's concern here is that she needs to identify with the struggles of the songwriters in order to sing the music, either effectively or appropriately. While she did not address audience in talking about this aspect of selecting music, due to the amount of concern Purkey put into singing music appropriate for the strike for which she sang, it can be presumed that she did not sing music from the civil rights movement because she felt that these struggles would not connect her with her audience as clearly.

Because Purkey, Rhea, and the rally performers represent presentational music associated with the Pittston strike, the differences created by having an insider vs. outsider audience does not effect their music's placement on the participatory-presentational continuum as greatly. Burl Rhea's comments indicate the greatest shift; where, presumably in context of equal formality, people outside of the region would not participate as heavily in performances, whereas at local rallies and events, people would feel more free to interact with the music and musicians. Purkey's music was also often crafted to encourage others to sing along; she kept her songs simple, particularly in choruses, and chose from music that would have been well known to experienced UMWA protesters. When she sang for a concert honoring Hazel Dickens, she recounted that she messed up the lyrics to the song she performed, and she apologized to Hazel afterwards, simply because she knew that her audience was aware of her mistakes, so they were not something she could hide. In Elaine Purkey's case, the participatory elements may not be incorporated to create a participatory environment, however, but to keep the songs in the minds of her listeners. Her music tends to have catchy, repeated

melodic phrases, and for those familiar with the tunes, her words, which she crafts so meticulously, might also get stuck in their minds, allowing the meaning to resonate.

Antagonists: Dividing Friends from Foes

While the protesters engage with ideas of insiderness and outsidership, they also have to consider people around them and their music making who do not support their cause. I will be referring to these people as “antagonists,” or people who are perceived as being counter to the efforts of a protest at some level. The emphasis on perception is important here because, to create an inherent audience, the musicians must see the people in question as outside their tradition. Even if a person or group of people is acting in a way detrimental to the cause of the protesting group, they likely will not act as an inherent audience in the way that an antagonist would. Such people, even if they themselves felt that they were on the other side of the issue, could be greeted as a potential participant to a participatory music making setting. In the case of Pittston, more often forces describe their position as neutral, while the protesters viewed it as antagonistic. The main antagonists important for the music of the Pittston strike were state troopers and replacement workers, referred to as scabs. These people came into contact with the protesting people every single day, and their interactions, as documented, seem to be negative throughout the strike. Note that the main antagonists in this case are not the “targets” of the strike; they are not the owners of Pittston, nor are they the politicians who could be helpful to the union in their negotiations. Instead, the antagonists who become an inherent audience are the ones whom the protesters see, and because of this, many participatory music acts are directed at them.

Because the protesting miners were being arrested for their acts of civil disobedience, many of them felt the state troopers were acting not as a neutral force in the protest, but rather as security for Pittston. Many of the community members whom I interviewed informally expressed disdain for the state troopers, even if they were not in full support of the union (p.c., 20 June 2013; p.c. 13 July 2013). For the miners, they felt that the state troopers were acting as security for Pittston so that the company did not have to pay for more of their own; instead, the state troopers were dealing with the miners as they performed acts of civil disobedience. Beyond this, some of the encounters with police had been violent. In the *48 Hours* documentary on the strike, men complain about being choked or hurt by the police officers, although the reporters seem hesitant to accept their stories (1989). Both this footage and that from *Justice in the Coalfields* depict miners being dragged from the road, and in a number of these scenes, there is singing.

As noted in the discussion of music at the picket line in the previous chapter, it seemed that a significant amount of the chanting and singing took place when either replacement workers or state troopers were present. The protesters, while creating participatory music, were interested in doing so for an audience. Burl Rhea noted that they would sing particular songs, depending on the actions being taken by both the miners and the state troopers. As the protesters would sit down in the street, he said they would sing, “Solidarity Forever,” and as they were dragged away by the state police, they would switch to “Which Side Are You On?” (p.c., 7 June 2013). In the *48 Hours* documentary, protesters are seen chanting “We Won’t Go Back!” at the state troopers.

All of these musical moments seem to indicate that the miners saw the state troopers as an audience, for whom they performed.

This situation complicates the music's positioning on the participatory-presentational continuum. The music is seemingly participatory, but while most people would have been viewed as potential participants, the state police would have more likely been conceptualized as a type of audience. Because the state troopers were so disliked and mistrusted, their participation in the singing of protest songs would have been seen with suspicion at best, should they quit their jobs and stand on the picket line. More likely, such an act would be seen as mocking the protesters, rather than supporting them. Because of the state troopers' presence at the picket line, these participatory musical moments now have inherent audiences: people who cannot be potential participants, due in this case to their job title and political affiliations. The resulting situation is music that has the sonic qualities of participatory music, but some of the social interactions of presentational music, where one group of people performs for another. This situation highlights the goals of music making in this context; while the establishment of solidarity among the protesters is important, another goal of this music is to show the antagonists and opposing forces that solidarity. This would not be as effective if only a few people sang the words, but rather because the music is participatory, it makes a better presentation for the state troopers.

Similar interactions occur with the replacement workers, referred to by most miners as scabs. Most members of the community with any union sympathies saw the people who worked in the mines during a union protest with a significant amount of distaste. When watching the *48 Hours* documentary with a coal miner, he remarked at the

sympathetic depiction of the replacement workers, noting that one of the people being interviewed would travel from place to place, looking for work specifically in opposition to union strikes. Another man, who seemed to be local in the video, was lamenting that he needed the job to feed his family, and that he had received death threats and had his tires slashed (1989). The miner with whom I watched the video commented that the man was not being respectful of the other miners' needs to feed their own families, and for them to have healthcare to survive the retirement they hoped to have. In response to the violent activity the man had experienced, he commented that it was likely that the company itself hired people to do these things to bring negative press to the union (p.c., 22 June 2013). He went on to note that replacement workers were often involved in violent outbursts during protests. In my time talking with miners and community members, few people were sympathetic to the positions of replacement workers. In one instance, a man I talked with noted that he had actually crossed the picket line during the strike, and attempted unsuccessfully to get a job. His friend, whom was with us, showed disbelief at this, and while he did not say much beyond his expression of shock, it was clear that he disapproved of the first man's actions.

It is from this mindset that men and women directed their music at the replacement workers as they entered the mines at Pittston. These instances are mixed with those in which the protesters are engaging with the state police, in part because their acts of civil disobedience are usually intended to halt work by replacement workers, and thus the state troopers are present to remove the protesters. Songs such as "We Shall Not Be Moved," "Solidarity Forever," and "Which Side Are You On?" could be directed at either the state troopers or the replacement workers. "Which Side Are You On?" provides

the most interesting message to the workers. If that song is directed at the state police, it seems to ask them if they are truly a neutral force, or if they are on the side of the Pittston Company. If we consider it to be directed at the replacement workers, then it can be interpreted as being against the community as a whole. As a non-mining community member told me; many people in the area had families to feed, including the miners themselves, and so to put your own family's needs above the community was selfish (p.c., 13 July 2013). Also, she pointed out, there were services available to support the miners and their families throughout the strike; places like camp solidarity collected clothes and toys for children, and had food available for anyone involved in the strike. Another point worth adding is that this strike was not about the wages of the miners in the first place, but instead primarily focused on health benefits for retirees, so current miners were striking for the benefits of those who had since left. They likely recognized that their own benefits would be cut upon retirement as well, but the main goal of the strike was still focused on those who were not giving up their own livelihood during this time.

Media: Audiences Across Space and Time

To get the message out about the protest's goals, the UMWA would make use of a number of media outlets. All forms of media saw ample growth throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, but it was broadcast media that saw the greatest growth; the number of journalists working for television stations doubled between 1971 and 1992 (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996: 2). Also, with cable television gaining popularity and dedicated news channels growing in popularity during this time, there was a growing need for more video footage and to provide live coverage of events happening across the

nation. Because of these developments, a protest such as Pittston, which would have likely only received regional television coverage if available, was afforded much more screen time on a national scale. For instance, in comparing the number of clips available from the NBC News archives, the 1973–74 Brookside Strike has one video segment, while the Pittston Strike has twenty (<http://www.nbcuniversalarchives.com>). This is in spite of the fact that the Brookside Strike was significantly more violent than the Pittston Strike, which potentially could have been seen as more newsworthy. While Pittston still garnered mostly regional media attention, the changing media environment allowed it to reach a national stage that had not been possible for earlier strikes (Brisbin 2002: 186).

An important aspect of televised media is also its ability to present aural elements to people around the world, something that is more challenging in print media. While in earlier strikes, protesters would be dependent on written descriptions of their actions and music, the miners at the Pittston strike had the opportunity to present their music to the public more directly. In a lengthy feature article from the *Chicago Tribune* on June 4, 1989, journalist Mary T. Schmich is verbose when describing the images and feelings of the Pittston picket line: “A truck . . . rumbled down the road, stirring up coal dust on the hot blacktop. The dust swirled through the wet air, then settled into the sweaty grooves of the miners’ necks and faces.” Music is not mentioned in the article, and the protesting is described as a series of “taunting matches” between the miners and replacement workers, rather than a more organized effort. Similarly, a feature appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* from April 30, 1989 does not discuss sonic qualities of the picket line; journalist Lee May focuses more on interviews with those affected, but no music is mentioned. One article in the *Los Angeles Times* referenced music, but it was a more presentational

moment: Bob Baker's August 23, 1989 article depicts a confrontation between a community member and a union organizer, which was interrupted by four Canadian miners beginning to sing a dirge about a mining accident. He is able to depict this moment using lyrics, which he might have collected after the event, something that would have been more challenging in a participatory environment.

The lack of music in written media and the prevalence of music in video format is a stark contrast. While more disorganized shouting and protesting are shown in the video clips, virtually all of the footage I have surveyed for this project had some music making in it, and descriptions of clips I have not viewed also mention singing or chanting, rather than simply shouting. The *48 Hours* feature produced by CBS was one of the longest national news features on the Pittston strike, and it contained not only passing clips of singing and music, but also a feature on the high school students who had formed a singing group for community gatherings and the picket line. The documentary footage from both Steffi Domike and Anne Lewis show ample musical practices during the strike. Other than several of the short national news clips, most clips that last at least several minutes include at least a glimpse of music making.

The difference in the presentation of music between print and broadcast media may be purely due to the journalists, editors, and producers involved trying to craft the most appealing work possible. Musical sound is challenging to describe in words, and thus the authors of print articles may have overlooked such behavior in favor of more compelling aspects of the strike, such as the insults traded between miners and replacement workers, which often included colorful language, or depictions of rural Appalachia, which translate well to poetic text. These sorts of depictions were important

to print news media, because the strike was not providing the level of violence that had been seen in the past, and so the actions that were happening were considered by the media to be “unnewsworthy” (Puette 1992: 119). Indeed, what was reported on the most were the arrests, but media scholar William Puette notes that the actual actions of civil disobedience are often not mentioned, just the arrests and fines levied against the union (ibid.: 124). The broadcast media also featured arrests, but because of this, the singing was also captured on film, as a lot of the chanting and singing took place while people were dragged away by state police officers. Also, while music is difficult to describe in text, its presence in videos could have been seen as beneficial: the soundscape of the protest was made more lush by this, rather than just shouting and the rough sounds of the coal trucks. It is likely that the biases of the media producers came into play when deciding whether or not to feature protest music in their works.

I would also suggest that the protesters themselves made active decisions to be more musical in front of video cameras because they are also aware of the video media’s ability to share sonic information more effectively than print media. While none of the protesters who spoke to me mentioned the presence of broadcast media at the strike, it is likely that people recording videos around the camp would not go unnoticed. As described in the introduction to chapter two, women at the sit-ins looked directly at the camera and smiled nervously, and in Steffi Domike’s recordings, people wandering around the camp will often glance over at the camera, typically with apprehension. It is clear that the cameras were noticeable. Also, the UMWA was aware of the power of the broadcast media at the time; they had paid for advertising space on over one hundred networks (Brisbin 2002: 186). So it would make sense for the protesters to play up certain

actions when the cameras were on, particularly because national media attention was challenging to receive.

This awareness means that some of the most participatory music making that occurred during the Pittston strike had some presentational elements, as the picket line protesters performed for an inherent audience represented by the media. The people watching the music on their televisions were or are displaced from the musical events by time and space, and so there was no way that they could participate in the musical practices of the Pittston miners. This inherent audience share several characteristics with the other two, but is not entirely like either. First, the people the music is directed at are not actually present at the music making. This is true of much recorded music, but this type of recording is different. Its dissemination is not through an obviously commodified path, where the music will be bought and sold (which is the case for the types of recorded music discussed in Thomas Turino's work), but instead it is presented as fact, as a sign for the Pittston strike itself to all of the viewers watching the news (2008). Because the music is presented in this way, the miners have to be all the more careful about how they present themselves.

Videos provide the best samples of the music from the Pittston strike, and as such it is difficult to determine if or how the musicians alter the music for the camera. The music might remain the same, with performers making similar music in both contexts. It could be that the miners would attempt to sing in a more presentational style; they might focus more on the accuracy of their pitch to reduce the density of the sound, and while it is still clearly a participatory setting, the vocalists might be performing a bit more carefully. Alternatively, the musicians might be acting out a bit more, displaying more

passionate singing and playing, perhaps to underscore the passion they feel for their cause. Any of these interpretations could have been true, and should new, more surreptitiously recorded material come forth, it would be worthwhile to compare the performances to understand how the performers were making this participatory music for an inherent audience.

And this is the greater point: even if the musicians were performing in the exact same style as they were when no media representatives were present, their awareness of an audience beyond their immediate surroundings would have likely shaped, at the very least, how the performers conceptualized their music. What was once an act with messages and meanings directed primarily at the miners becomes a multifaceted deed, with different messages being sent to newcomers to the cause, the police and replacement workers, and finally to an audience full of people who could be on either side of the fence. This is perhaps what makes this particular inherent audience the most challenging to consider; the news would be watched by people with all sorts of opinions and feelings about the strike, from the most amenable to the most adversarial. For those who were amenable, the performers would likely want this music to encourage them to support the cause, either by getting them to come to Camp Solidarity and support in person, or to send money and support financially. For those who are potential antagonists, perhaps the protesters' participatory performances would show solidarity and strength in the face of their opposition. By singing together in this way, the protesters could present such ideals to those who were not at the protest, and hopefully gather support and quell opposition.

In terms of the effects of the broadcast media on public opinion, scholars seem to agree that the broadcast media portrayed the Pittston protesters in a negative light

(Parenti 1996: 119; Puette 1992; Brisbin 2002: 187). This was often illustrated by noting how the interviewers would present company views in their own text and give more time to interviews with company officials, while giving less time to union members, and discussing union points of view with increased skepticism. While this is certainly true of the video footage taken by mainstream news media, I would suggest that some of the video taken of the miners and protesters singing works against that message. Even short clips of the miners singing rather than shouting haphazardly at trucks portrays the miners as organized as well as passionate, thoughtful as well as strong. In this way, the miners were able to use music to possibly subvert some of the intentions of the news media directors, and instead present themselves in the way they most wanted. Whether or not this worked is unclear; Bob Baker's August 23, 1989, article in the *Los Angeles Times* had a community member stating that the public was against the miners, and yet it also depicted a situation in which international support had arrived to help out the protest efforts. Also, one community member commented to me that they had a relative outside the region who was quite conservative typically, but sympathized with the union during the Pittston strike because he felt that the actions taken by Pittston were unfair (p.c., 22 June 2013). While this is not necessarily representative of a larger movement, there is still a suggestion that attempts by the media to present the UMWA in a negative light were not overwhelming successful, and this may have been contributed to by the portrayal of the protesters' music.

The groups of people I have discussed in this chapter—outsiders, antagonists, and people watching the news—were clearly on the minds of the protesters at the Pittston strike, and I would suggest that they should be on the minds of scholars who research

protest music as well. While much work has been done on studying audiences of music, little work specifically on protest music has addressed these issues (a notable exception being the work of R. Serge Denisoff). These issues are important when considering protest music, simply because there are so many divisions that exist in such a context. Understanding those divisions and how protesters negotiate them can provide new insights into how people who protest with music conceptualize their craft, and also how exactly music-making intersects with the act of protesting.

Chapter 4: The Legacy of the Pittston Strike: Protest Music Moving Forward

As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, my initial inspiration for pursuing research on the Pittston strike was to uncover how it had affected the Appalachian region. I was interested in contacting local musicians, particularly those who performed protest music, and asking them about ways in which the strike had affected their music making practices. I also wanted to see if Guy and Candie Caraway's observations from the mid-1990s were applicable to today, whether the cultural revolution they saw had lasting effects for the specific area in which the strike took place. I found that, while most musicians were aware of the Pittston strike, their connection to the strike and its music was quite minimal. This led to the project outlined in chapters two and three of this thesis. However, in my time in Appalachia, I came into contact with many people working to create better opportunities and living situations, and they did this alongside and through political protest. While their efforts were not directly tied to the work of Pittston, I would argue that they represent an extension of that cultural revolution, and they show how the music and protest strategies of Pittston have continued on in many ways.

Through my work with the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards (which I will refer to as SAMS throughout this chapter), I was able to meet and discuss making protest music and its effects with Jane Branham, a board member for SAMS and a musician who had written extensively in protest of surface and mountaintop removal coal mining.

In this chapter, I will set Jane's story alongside a brief analysis of another protest movement, the Occupy Movement. I do this to discuss the legacy of the Pittston Strike.

Although the Pittston protest is not relatively well-known, the issues raised by and the strategies of the protesters have some strong connections to those used by the Occupy protesters. Similarly, Jane Branham has written protest songs with many of the characteristics and considerations made by protest songwriters during Pittston, particularly with considerations being made for regional identity. By highlighting the similarities these more recent protest movements had with the Pittston strike, I also focus on the inherent audiences discussed in chapter three. Many of the considerations being made by more recent protesters have to do with both confronting oppositional forces, as I have called antagonists, and gathering media attention. In the case of the continued struggle over the coalfields, the issue of insiders and outsiders understanding and hearing the music at different levels remains an important factor in how acts of protest are perceived by audiences. The presentation of these more recent protest movements is not meant to be a comprehensive look at their methods, but rather a closing note to illustrate how the theoretical models in this thesis and the strategies used by the Pittston strike protesters reach beyond the regional strike that took place in 1989 and 1990.

Inside Appalachia: A Brave New World

Jane Branham was born in Wise County, and after a few years away, returned to settle back in a house surrounded by trees and wildlife. I interviewed her on her porch, where we had a beautiful view of her full and thoughtfully designed garden. I recorded our interview with my smartphone, which she commented on: “You see everyone staring at their phones... it’s like *A Brave New World!*” Jane knew me as a media intern with the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, so our conversation often swung around to the uses of technology for promoting music and activism, although I tried to always bring us

back to discussing protest music in Appalachia. With a light breeze rocking the metal pipes of some wind chimes, I asked her about her return to Wise County, saying, “It’s nice here, yeah?” This was my first mistake of the interview; Jane gave me a look that implied that I had made a massive understatement. “Yeah, it’s home. It’s beautiful.” (p.c., 5 July 2013).¹⁷ Jane showed a great love for the area, and in particular the beauty of the mountains around the region, which is why, upon returning to the region, she was moved to action by the destruction caused by various surface mining procedures that had become common practice in central Appalachia. Because of her great love of the mountains, it followed logically that the music she makes is rooted in traditions that she associates with a mountain sound.

Jane was hesitant to call herself a musician, but she had performed across the region off and on throughout my time in Appalachia. She had picked up singing in church, realizing quickly that she had a talent for harmonies. When her parents bought her a guitar, she began to write songs, some of which would later become part of her repertoire. Jane played with a southern rock band for some time, performing primarily covers. This group dissolved, but she kept playing with Buddy, another member of the band, and they moved to performing original songs as a major part of their repertoire. Their duo, named Strawberry Jam, performs music that deals with a variety of topics, including protest related to coal and environmental activism.

Putting a genre label to Strawberry Jam’s music is very difficult; Jane noted that she was often asked about the group’s genre, and she never really had an answer. She told me that Buddy would refer to the group as Americana, which she seemed to appreciate,

¹⁷ This section will be largely informed by this interview.

but Jane was “still looking for the word” that would fully define the group. Jane settled on “Appalachian folk,” commenting that you could hear the regional influence in the music of Strawberry Jam. Her associations with the word “folk” included playing music in a grassroots way and paying attention to older traditions based on the instruments and songs being performed. Jane’s choice of genre name shows how she associates music with place, particularly when it comes to her own music. She was aware of the combination of folk styles that she incorporated in her music, including particular Celtic elements, as well as the use of a Native American flute she had made.

Jane had participated in a number of protest, both musically and without music. She listed a number of places she had been, including Washington D.C., Richmond, Kingsport, and the town of Appalachia. These events would include music as part of the protest, although it would be more presentational, audience participation would still be important; Jane would perform some of her protest songs, and other musicians would come with a banjo or mandolin and perform songs as part of the protests as well. Jane felt that the best protest songs, “One that’s easy for everyone to sing, one that has a clear message, tells a good story, and compels people to tears.” I asked about the effectiveness of instrumental music, which also was included at these protests, and Jane noted that this music could have different effects on people as well (calming, inciting), and the fact that it was often played on banjo or mandolin brought a “cultural feel to the protest” where the Appalachian music is represented at the event.

Jane’s most popular song for mountaintop-removal coal mining protests is entitled “Stop Tearing the Mountains Down.” The lyrics can be seen in figure 5. Like many other protest songs, Jane uses the names of specific politicians to get her message across; in

this case, the name of Dick Cheney. She is also careful to reference major geographic landmarks in Appalachia: the Clinch River and High Knob, which are both located near a major mountaintop-removal site. In fact, Jane wrote the song about visiting High Knob and seeing the destruction that had been caused by the mountaintop removal mining process.

“Stop Tearing the Mountains Down” by Strawberry Jam

I was standing on top of old High Knob
Looking down at the valleys below
Looking south to the mountains in maroon majesty
I see the Clinch River flow
Then I turn my head to the northeast and west
I just can't believe my eyes
Oh Lord have mercy on the Appalachian people, hear our cries

Chorus

Stop tearing the mountains down
All for the love of the coal in the ground
Blood money stains the rich man's ground
But he keeps on tearing the mountains down

I'm back on the streets of Appalachia
Where the people just barely survive
The ground starts to rumble and the mountains crumble
Underneath the coal-blackened sky
'Cause men like Dick Cheney think the rich man's claim
Is more important than people's lives
Now the river runs black and there's no turning back
Oh Appalachia, hear her cry

(Chorus)

That coal company said, "They're just hillbillies,
Let 'em move, or let 'em die.
'Cause we need the money more than they need to live."
So they justified the sacrifice
That third-world America is fighting back
App. voices will be heard
This is our home, we don't want to move on
Oh Appalachia, hear us cry

(Chorus x2, with last line repeated)

Figure 5. Lyrics from “Stop Tearing the Mountains Down.”

The song features instrumentation common to Appalachian folk music: a fiddle, a banjo, acoustic guitar, and no electric instruments or traditional percussion, with percussive sounds being added by the string instruments. The instruments provide accompaniment and counter-melodic material for Jane’s vocal part. The chorus is catchy, and simple enough to pick up after a few listens, making it a particularly good song for singing along—especially in the context of a protest, where the repeated line is “Stop tearing the mountains down.”

While Jane definitely has some more progressive harmonies and rhythmic elements in her music, it is clear that she wanted to incorporate Appalachian culture into her music and provide an enhanced experience for those who are familiar with the music, region, and culture. Without knowing the landmarks referenced by Jane in this song, a listener would not understand exactly what she is looking at in the first verse. While it can be assumed that she is referencing a mountaintop removal site, those who have knowledge of the region would be more familiar with the locations and would be able to hear that without needing to look up any information. While this does create a slight division between insiders and outsiders listening to Branham’s music, I would suggest that Jane’s music might get people more interested in the region and its geography. Listeners who are initially unfamiliar with the Appalachian region might hear this song at a protest, and feel the sense that they are missing out on certain important elements of the

region. Jane noted that one of her goals was to bring people to the community, through music as well as political actions. Both tourists and more permanent newcomers helped to build and support the community of central Appalachia, something she felt very passionate about.

Jane's work builds on the idea that protest music brings people together who are from different regions, and have different understandings of Appalachian culture, but who are all supportive of a particular political cause. By emphasizing Appalachian/mountain elements in her music, Jane is able to essentially educate newcomers to the region about its geography, and she is able to provide some representations of Appalachian culture at protests that include people from around the world. As outsiders become aware of their lack of knowledge about this region, they might be more inclined to visit, learn more, and support Appalachian musicians, artists, and businesses. Particularly when a protest is more regional or location-oriented, the use of this strategy makes sense, particular in the Appalachian region with its strong associations with tradition and music.

Pittston's Legacy on a National Scale

While the Pittston strike may have not garnered a significant amount of attention when it first took place, a number of newspapers websites dealing with protest, class issues, and social activism have featured articles on the strike since its twentieth anniversary. Debra Mccown of the *Herald Courier* of Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia published an article on September 6, 2009 for the anniversary of the strike, interviewing those involved to give a detailed account of the events of the strike. Mccown discussed the balance between non-violence and violence, with some violence occurring throughout

the strike, despite efforts by the union to keep such acts from happening, although she notes that many union protesters believed that the company itself started the violence to bring bad press to the union. The article also contains a section that discusses the region now, noting that very few union mines exist in Virginia now, and coal mining as a whole has declined, with most energy companies diversifying into other natural resources.

While several such articles exist that were made for the anniversary of the strike, many others were published a few years after the anniversary, when the Occupy Movement began. The Occupy movement was a series of protests that occurred around the world, all addressing economic inequality, with other issues such as social inequality and political corruption being addressed in some protests. This began with Occupy Wall Street in New York City on September 17, 2011, according to the movement's website, occupywallst.org, although marketing for the beginning of this protest began several months earlier. The protest involved the occupation of public spaces near financial buildings, and then included more traditional protest acts. Many of the organizers of the Occupy movement were/are scholars as well; in an interview with Kalle Lasn, an Occupy leader, journalist Ben Piven of *Aljazeera* asks her questions about the historical and philosophical background behind the movement, which she is able to answer with what seems to be relative ease (7 October 2011). Because many such interviews went this way, it can be seen that the Occupy movement had a strong sense of its linkage to social protests over the twentieth century, and the philosophies of the Occupy protest either grew out of or in reaction to past protest.

These conclusions are corroborated by the articles on the Pittston strike that came about several years after the anniversary, many of which seem to be connected to the

Occupy movement. In an article from January 4, 2012 on Socialistworker.org, Brian Tierney discusses the Pittston strike directly in relation to the Occupy movement. He sees both as being in reaction to anti-worker attacks, stating “From the 99 strikers at Pittston to the 99 percent movement today [referencing the motto of the organization, that they were fighting against the 1% richest people in the country], the tradition of disrupting the profit system of the one percent is alive and well.” The article focuses on the mix of militant, non-violent tactics used to disrupt Pittston’s activity, something that would likely resonate particularly with the Occupy Wall Street protesters, who were endeavoring to slow down work on Wall Street with their presence. Other articles appeared like this on counterpunch.org, lawyersgunsandmoneyblog.com, and voicesoflabor.com. Not all of these articles directly referenced Occupy, but many were discussing the Moss 3 Preparation Plant takeover that occurred during the Pittston strike, which took place on September 17, 1989, the same date chosen in 2011 to begin the occupation of Zuccotti Park for Occupy Wall Street. While this might have been a coincidence, it seems that the Occupy movement might have wanted to link itself to the militant and non-violent actions of the Pittston protesters.

Media to the Next Level

The Occupy movement used many of the strategies associated with the Pittston strike, including many of its musical practices. A YouTube clip posted by alcanyon depicts a rather informal music jam taking place at what is called Camp Liberty, with a number of core musicians taking lead roles in making the music, including a woman on a drum, a man singing in a classical vocal style, and a saxophonist. People stand around them in a circle, mostly just listening, although they do begin to chant “Occupy Wall

Street” in time with the drums after a while. As the clip goes on, the saxophonist breaks into “The Star Spangled Banner,” and several audience members sing along with the performance. While this is a more participatory setting than that of the Camp Solidarity jam, the similarities in the role music plays are striking. The musicians and audience members seem to be taking this opportunity to relax some from the rigors of living in a park and protesting on the streets on New York City. Also, the use of music associated with a place—in this case, the United States—is important to the context; the protesters here are all familiar with the song, however, and it in many ways could have been sung in a partially disingenuous way, where the protesters are critiquing the U.S. through music. Alternatively, as is suggested in the description of the video, they could see themselves as the more “true” patriots and as representing the true spirit of the United States.

The use of social media was used not only to share music such as this, which occurred at the strike, but also to share “music videos,” where people created songs about the protest in a number of styles and then juxtaposed this music with clips from the protests. One such video is labeled as the “Occupy Wallstreet Anthem,” uploaded by Muhammad Ayers. The song has the instrumentation and vocal styling of a pop ballad; the recording quality is clearly that of a piece produced in a studio environment, rather than outside at the protests. The lyrics directly reference the protest at hand: “I am the 99 / And I’m not the only one / We’ve come to occupy / And we ain’t leaving until we’ve won.” Other songs uploaded to YouTube are from the rap and folk genres. There are thousands of videos, either containing music from the strike or based on it, and almost all of these videos contain footage of people protesting, raising signs in front of building in Wall street, chanting, and interacting with police officers around the park.

The prevalence of social media and its use by the protesters to reach new audiences was crucial for spreading the message of this movement beyond New York City. As was noted by DeLuca et. al. in their article on the use of social media during the Occupy Movement, the mainstream media did not afford the Occupy Movement much attention until much later in the strike, and so making people aware of OWS's presence and success was challenging. However, unless the Pittston protesters, who had to do what they could with whatever media attention they got, the people involved with the Occupy movement were able to use social media and the internet to share what was happening, which in turn forced the mainstream media to give their protest more attention.

The use of social media to create an inherent audience, rather than broadcast media, has some interesting implications. First, because the footage of music making or protest activity was likely taken on a phone, it could have been done more surreptitiously, and so protesters might not know they were being filmed at any given time. This would change their perception of their activities, at the very least, to focus more on the people around them, which also could affect their behavior. Alternatively, because the use of social media to share videos, images, and words quickly with a large number of people had become so ubiquitous by 2011, many protesters might instead think of themselves as always being on camera at some level, or to constantly have the potential to be on camera, so they always had to keep not only the audiences on wall street in mind, but also audiences around the world who were taking inspiration from this movement. Beyond these considerations, because the protesters themselves controlled a significant amount of the social media released that would become associated with the strike, they could ensure the message sent and image presented was a positive one. Unlike the Pittston strikers,

who had to be opportunistic about their interactions with media, the Occupy movement protesters could have a more relaxed attitude toward the mainstream media.

Occupy and Anti-Mountaintop: A Tale of Two Protests

Part of my reasoning in juxtaposing these very different protests is to illustrate how certain elements I have presented in this thesis are more or less important in different case studies, and there are undoubtedly other audience, function, and musical considerations to be made when dealing with other protest music. Because anti-mountaintop removal protest is focused on a particular region, insiders and outsiders become a major component of how musicians and activists relate to those new to the cause or who are still uninformed about it. Because climate change has received ample media attention, interactions with media are not as vital to the protest. Conversely, we have the Occupy movement, which is an international protest movement claiming to represent 99% of the occupants in any given country, and thus the idea of insiders and outsiders was not as crucial to the music-making of Occupy. What was in fact crucial was the use of the media, without which they would not have been able to establish such an international movement. Music was made not only at the site of protest but in studios to support the protest, and ensure that others saw what was happening in New York. These protest, like many others, use and used music to further their cause, and each individual case approaches music, protest, and their audience in unique ways. Even so, there are unifying features present that help us to understand how different protest movements have indirectly or directly affected one another, as Pittston has done in these cases.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Would the Pittston strike have been successful without the use of protest music? This is a question many people asked me throughout my research: ethnomusicologist colleagues, friends in Appalachia, and interlocutors would even question this themselves. In hindsight, this is a tricky question to answer. Music helped the strike in many little ways: it helped fundraise for families who were out of work for almost a year, it kept up morale on the picket line, it reduced boredom, it sent messages, it helped foster a community. All of these things were useful for the UMWA and striking miners, and so the questions become more specific: Would the UMWA have had enough money to support the strike without music at their rallies? Would picket line protesters have found other activities to occupy their time? Did the messages sent to replacement workers and company officials have an impact? Was the singing on the television enough to convince people to support or join the UMWA's cause? How much can music affect people? While many of these questions will remain unanswerable, I would argue that music had some effect at each of these levels. While it is possible that the union may have had the same outcome without music, it seems possible and perhaps likely that the money and support for the protest would have dwindled at an earlier stage, forcing the UMWA to make a more conciliatory deal.

These questions, practical for any protest organizer, are about whether or not music can make a difference in a strike. I have argued that the theoretical models used in this thesis—the participatory/presentational continuum and inherent audiences—help scholars better understand protest music, particularly how it works within its context to support protest activity. While I have focused my attention primarily on the music of the

Pittston strike, many of the considerations here might be applied to the research on other protests, including those that have seen a great amount of research already. By considering the ways in which protest music is made and received, rather than focusing on its construction, scholars can learn more about the ways music can be used, and beyond that, how effective it is in those uses. The same songs, performed in different styles, different protests, and with different audiences (inherent or not) in mind produce very different results, and these are things that need to be considered moving forward in scholarship on protest music.

Part of what makes these models interesting, and also useful for understanding the effectiveness of music in a strike, is how they connect protests. While I do not mean to suggest that all protests are connected, there are many cases in which direct links can be seen and examined. In the Pittston case, borrowings from early twentieth-century union protests and Civil Rights protests indicate that organizers were aware of past musical successes and failures. Organizers used some of the same songs, but also some of the same tactics as well: music during sit-ins, religious music for morale boosting, and rallies with presentational performances all were a part of the Civil Rights movement. Rally musicians, on the other hand, were frequently singing Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger songs, indicating their knowledge of past labor protests. The combination of stated considerations being made by organizers and similarities in tactics draws a direct connection between Pittston and the earlier strikes.

Even when two protests cannot be directly linked, noting similarities and differences can highlight how each protest has unique considerations and circumstances that change how music can be effectively used. As noted in the introduction to this thesis,

much of the research that has been conducted on protest music focuses on a few eras, particularly the 1960s with anti-Vietnam music and the Civil Rights movement. While other protests such as the Pittston strike might not have had such widespread effects, by studying them we highlight what is being taken from earlier protests, and what is being left behind. This is particularly true in the case of the Pittston strike, where the UMWA was strategically planning how best to begin and proceed with the strike months before it began. They were able to print songbooks for this specific strike, and were clearly influenced by the protests that had occurred decades before. More recent strikes have had more spontaneous musical moments, which are potentially still informed by the strategies of the past, depending on who began each individual musical moment.

While I have focused a great deal on strategy here, I do not want to suggest that all music made during a protest needs to be strategic to be useful or “good protest.” During my stay in Appalachia, I was with a few activist friends, watching a video of a protest. I commented that the protesters were not acting in the most strategic way; they could get their point across to their targets more effectively if they behaved in a more organized manner. My friend replied that protests do not always have to be strategic; sometimes protests need to be an outlet for expressing the frustrations of an oppressed people. Occasionally, targets and audiences are not being considered, and to protest becomes its most basic definition, to object and state disapproval. While it seems that most of the music made during the Pittston strike was made with more strategic goals in mind, the emotional musical responses of protesters throughout history are worth documenting, understanding, and appreciating in whatever form they take.

I leave this work still pondering one last question, the one that initially drew me to this project: could a protest, and its associated music, drastically affect the cultural landscape of a region? Did the Pittston strike have such an effect on southwestern Virginia? My initial inclination upon reaching Appalachia was that such a cultural revolution could not have taken place so recently, but after a few months I began to see some traces of a protest spirit. I saw seeds of protest in the work of Jane Branham and the work of the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards. While their goals may at times run counter to the UMWA, the people with this organization were not only interested in protest but fiercely dedicated to helping the region grow, so that businesses would come to the region, musicians could have paid work, and the community and economy could grow in strength in a sustainable way. I recall sitting on a hill surrounded by dark mountains covered in bright green trees while the sun sets, and I think I can understand why the people of Appalachia love it so dearly. I hope that the visions of these people can become reality.

Appendix A: Selected Song Lyrics from the Pittston Song Book

As printed from Pittston strike song book, 1989, United Mine Workers of America, President's Office records, HCLA 1823, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University.

Down At the Picketline

(Tune: Down by the Riverside)

1. I'm gonna stand for my union rights
Down at the picketline
Down at the picketline
Down at the picketline
Down at the picketline
I'm gonna stand for my union rights
Down at the picketline
Down at the picketline

Chorus:

I aint gonna go to work today
Unless I work for union pay
I aint gonna go to work today
I aint gonna go to work today
Unless I work for union pay
I aint gonna go to work today

2. I'm gonna win back my benefits
Down at the picketline...

3. I'm going to pick up my union card
Down at the picketline...

4. I'm going to fight for job security
Down at the picketline...

5. I'm gonna stand with my family...

Give Me that Old Time Union

(Tune: Old Time Religion)

Chorus:

Give me that old time union
Give me that old time union
Give me that old time union

It's good enough for me

1. Let me work for union wages
They've been cheating us for ages
Let me work for union wages
It's good enough for me

(Repeat chorus between each verse)

2. We won't let Paul Douglas bust us
We'll have dignity and justice...

3. We know we have no intention
Of giving back our pension...

4. We will not work on Sunday...

5. It will do when I am dying...

6. It was good for all my children...

7. It will do when I have black lung...

Which Side Are You On?

My daddy was a miner
I'm a miner's son
And I'll stick with the union
Until the battle's won

Chorus:
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

They say in Dickinson County
There are no shades of gray
You're either with Paul Douglas
Or the UMWA

CHORUS

They say that up in Greenwich
Pittston calls the tune
But we'll outfox their lawyers
And laugh at all their goons

CHORUS

Pittston you don't stand a chance
Despite the bankers' loans
For no one has the power
Of the daughters of Mother Jones

CHORUS

From Splashdam up to Moss Three
From Jewell Ridge to McClure
Our good old union will prevail
Of that you can be sure

CHORUS

Pittston has its assets
Protected well by Vance
But Farrell's goons will be exposed
For we'll pull down their pants

CHORUS

Pittston thought in Greenwich
That folks just wouldn't care
But miners look around you
And take some comfort there

We've Been Working For Pittston

(Tune: I've Been Working on the Railroad)

We've been working for Pittston
20 years or more
We've been working for Pittston
And we've been keeping score
We are fighting for our pensions
Job security and more
And we've been working in the union
And you're not gonna milk us poor

Douglas why won't you
Douglas why won't you
Douglas why won't you negotiate?
Douglas why won't you

Douglas why won't you
Negotiate today?

We want a union contract
And we're willing to take a stand
We want a union contract
It's a fair and just demand.

We Shall Not Be Moved

We shall not, we shall not be moved
We shall not, we shall not be moved
Just like a tree that's planted by the water
We shall not be moved

The union stands together...
We're fighting for our communities...
Our families are united...
We're fighting for a contract...
We're fighting for our children...
We're fighting for our pensioners...
We'll build a mighty union...
We're fighting for our disabled...

Paul Douglas owns Pittston,
And he should be removed
Paul Douglas owns Pittston,
And he should be removed
But like a tree that's rotting by the river,
He should be removed

The Picket Boogie

(Tune: The Hokey Pokey)

They keep the raises out, they put some cutbacks in
The offer that they're making is a crying sin
But we'll do the picket boogie and we'll turn it all around
And that's what it's all about!

The language the put in keeps better pensions out
We look at their proposals and we want to shout
Let's do the picket boogie and we'll turn it all around
And that's what it's all about!

The rake the profits in until their pockets bulge out
Then they say our kids and families can do without
So we'll do the picket boogie and we'll turn it all around
And that's what it's all about!

Now we're all joining in to keep concessions out
We're sticking with the union and there is no doubt
That we'll do the picket boogie and we'll turn it all around
And that's what it's all about!

We'll do the P-I-I-CKET BOOGIE
We'll do the P-I-I-CKET BOOGIE
We'll do the P-I-I-CKET BOOGIE
And that's what it's all about!

Appendix B: Interviews Conducted

Listed in Chronological Order

Note: Names of interviewees are only given for formal interviews, where the person interviewed signed a consent form, as per the IRB for this project.

People interviewed are otherwise given a number and short description.

Burl Rhea, June 7, 2013

Community Member #1 and Community Member #2, June 20, 2013

Miner #1 and Miner #2, June 22, 2013.

Jane Branham, July 5, 2013.

Miner #3 and Community Member #3, July 11, 2013.

Miner #1, July 13, 2013.

Elaine Purkey, July 22, 2013.

Burl Rhea, August 16, 2013.

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