Music and interpersonal communication: An in-depth view of Ani DiFranco and her lyrics

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UMI
MUSIC AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
AN IN-DEPTH VIEW OF ANI DIFRANCO
AND HER LYRICS

by

Robyn Jana Ginsburg

Bachelor of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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ABSTRACT

Music and Interpersonal Communication: An In-depth View of Ani DiFranco and Her Lyrics

by

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This study provides an analysis of music as a form of interpersonal communication by examining how independent singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco's music lyrics provide her listeners with a foundation for relationship formation based on empathy and self-disclosure. This study divides DiFranco's song lyrics into three categories of folk music, more specifically, message, protest, and propaganda songs which provide her audience with an ideology to which her fans can relate. Additionally, DiFranco's messages fall into the psychological categories of emotion, perception, cognition, motivation, needs, and memory as well as the sociological categories which demonstrate how her messages reach society through the folk categories of message, propaganda, and protest music.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Often, American society defines rock stars as role models to be admired and emulated. Examples include extensive media coverage of rock stars such as The Beatles, Jim Morrison, and Elvis Presley. However, Becker (1990) states, "Some musicians and lyricists stand apart from the accepted, mainstream popular music which is subjected to the implosion of the mainstream industry" (p. 5). Singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco is one example of a musician who has rejected popular mainstream status. DiFranco has not achieved mainstream success because she has refused to sign with a major record company, and instead, formed her own label in order to have total control over her music. Therefore, DiFranco represents "the freedom of self-expression," which allows women songwriters to express themselves in a way that is "strikingly different from most of the pop music that is played on commercial radio" (Becker, 1990, p. 5).

This study will provide examples of folk music which sends messages to society, offering listeners a sense of identity if music is used as a cultural form of communication. This study will address three categories of folk music starting with message music, which is further specified as protest music.
and propaganda music which includes both magnetic and rhetorical songs according to Rybacki and Rybacki (1991). This study will discuss DiFranco as a significant example of how one artist can impact a community of listeners through aspects of interpersonal communication prevalent in her folk message music. Through a lyrical analysis, her psychological emotions, needs, thoughts, memories and motivations will be demonstrated as having a personal effect on her listeners.

When music is playing, an audience's mood swings in the direction set by the song. Every artist is unique with his/her own style as he/she attempts to portray that image to an audience. Songs contain meaning that is projected by the artist concerning the interpretation of his/her message which is how the artist communicates to the audience. For example, Ani DiFranco uses self disclosure in her lyrics to send messages to society. She sings about injustices that occur in society and her own personal struggles with intimate relationships. In addition, she sends messages to her fans concerning the nature of her relationships which have affected her life, in hopes of helping other women with the issues in their life.

Ani DiFranco and Ideology

Ideology may be defined as "a part and parcel of the way certain classes of people have come to see their world and their place and activities in it" (Ballantine, 1984, p. 7). Ballantine (1994) claims that ideology is influenced by "the way society has been organized at that time, and particularly
of the way it has shared, or rather denies the sharing of its benefits" (p. 7). DiFranco's ideology can be divided into four categories which describe her philosophy from an observer's perspective: self disclosure, independence, gender, and the development of a community of listeners.

The first part of her ideology pertains to self disclosures prevalent in her music lyrics. DiFranco's empathetic lyrics invoke emotions in her receivers who identify with her self disclosures. Self disclosure may be defined as "the process of making the self known to others" (Jourard & Laskow, 1958, p. 91). DiFranco self discloses in an effort to empower women. By remaining on a societal status similar to that of her listeners, DiFranco helps facilitate understanding, empathy, and compassion for herself and her music. DiFranco's listeners know her in relation to her music and through self disclosures, know her as a human being.

DiFranco states, "I put all my personal experiences into songs and admit them to copious amounts of strangers" (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). Explaining how music gives her a way to teach herself about her own life, she claims, "I've sort of invented this job for myself where I write these little letters to me that end up as songs" (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). These songs became the basis for the rest of her ideology which defines her image as an independent artist and a woman centered performer who has created a community of listeners.

The second basis concerning her convictions has to do with her musical independence and autonomy. Her independence
brings forth skeptical questions concerning her rejection of the mainstream music scene. DiFranco refuses to compromise her music for the major record labels who want to display her as an "image" in order to sell records to the public.

The third part of DiFranco's ideology concerns her woman-centered music. This emphasis results in an uneven gender distribution of fans because the majority of her audience is female. Additionally, feminism is a characteristic inherent to DiFranco music, as well as her image and her audience. DiFranco claims, "Because I'm a young woman who sings about my life and attempts to empower or inspire myself through my music, other women get vicariously empowered or inspired by it. At my shows, there's a heavy girl vibe. There's always a feeling of strength, and hopefully, community among women" (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). This leads to the next aspect of her ideology, her community of listeners.

The final part of DiFranco's ideology concerns the community of listeners she has accumulated over the past years, mostly through word of mouth by fans. DiFranco can attribute her success to her fans who have attracted the media's attention. When a group of people respond to a particular phenomenon, it is likely that the media is not far behind.

Ani DiFranco- The Music

After the release of ten compact discs in seven years, DiFranco has gained success and notoriety as a folk artist from individuals who have listened to her music. Singing about her
world from her point of view, she sends messages to her listeners through lyrics about society and interpersonal relationships. Though unknown on the mainstream music circuit, DiFranco has become popular in the college underground circuit for her rejection of mainstream success as well as for her musical talent.

DiFranco’s music combines “folk’s intimacy and punk’s rebellion in a sound that foreshadowed the now-popular pissed-off-women genre” (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). DiFranco had released her first compact disc before the mainstream circuit ever heard of the pissed-off women sound that was made popular by the music industry image of Alanis Morisette in 1995.

Limited by her dearth of radio air time, DiFranco has remarkably created a loyal following of fans who attend her concerts. Most people have not heard of DiFranco and probably never will if they are not introduced to the artist by word of mouth or just plain luck. So how does one young artist become so semi-famous? Through honesty and self-disclosures in her song lyrics, DiFranco’s audience members not only hear her music, but they listen to her thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

Since 1990, DiFranco has been releasing compact discs from her own record label while refusing lucrative offers from major record labels. Her dedicated fans anxiously await the arrival of each new compact disc. Incorporating the personal moments of her life, the topics of her songs range from love found and love lost to societal issues as well as issues surrounding her independent status in the music industry.
DiFranco reveals personal information about her attitudes, beliefs, and emotions to her audience via her music.

DiFranco is best portrayed as a musical storyteller, as her stories are told to her audience through her music. Music forms relationships between the singer and listener as well as between listeners of a common artist. Her fans accept her stories as messages of honesty, strength, and independence. Thus, the audience identifies DiFranco as not only a musical artist, but also as an authority on a number of topics.

DiFranco’s lyrics are inspirational. Mcguire (1984) writes, “Music expresses meaning, especially lyrically, in which act it becomes rhetorical” (p.305). Lyrics are as much a part of music as the instruments. Music includes not only the sounds that come from instruments, but also the lyrical poetry in the words. “Music functions as an expression of the artist and as an invitation to the audience to identity with the themes, ideas, and emotions expressed” (Mcguire, 1984, p. 305).

“Singing, an activity which involves semantic and syntactic use of language set to music, clearly constitutes learned behavior derived from social experience” (Roth, 1991 p. 391). Creating unity in people, singing offers shared experiences or emotions with relation to an audience which identifies with the message sent by the artist. Gonzales (1984) writes, “An artist’s work becomes a recurring site of interaction and influence, a resource for ‘definition and self-identity’” (p. 318). The audience members identify with an artist whose self-identity or message is similar to their own
beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, the listener is likely to be influenced by the message the artist is sending.

Review of Literature

**Message Music, Protest Music, and Propaganda Music**

When artists send a message in their music, their songs are labeled "message" music. Message music can be further broken down into propaganda music and protest music. According to Rybacki and Rybacki (1991), message songs are folk songs or popular songs whose purpose is to create a socially shared meaning between the artist and listener: "The message song results from a combination of the rhetor's work and its reception by the audience" (p. 302). The audience is aware of the message being sent by the artist and has the choice of accepting or rejecting it. Rybacki and Rybacki (1991) claim that when music is a rhetorical act it can influence a listener's opinion and behavior. They continue by stating that the artist has an intention to invoke a response from the audience (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991). DiFranco invokes emotions in her listeners by using thought provoking lyrics that appeal to those who can identify with her experiences.

Additionally, many performers invite their audience to sing along at certain times throughout a performance. "Singing together has been used to transform singer and audience and to move them closer together" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 304). Providing lyrics in their albums, vocalists promote familiarity and comprehension of their songs by visually giving the
listeners an insight into the lyrics. Consequently, it allows the receivers to gain a better understanding of the song’s message.

DiFranco’s songs can also be songs of persuasion or "propaganda" songs that attract the listener for the “purpose of creating social cohesion and evaluating morale” (Booth, 1976, p. 246). Booth (1976) claims that the audience members have a common pattern of thought, attitude and emotions. Therefore, music can create a shared social experience for people who otherwise would not communicate with one another. In essence, music can create a culture with which people can identify.

Lull (1985) states, "Music is communication in the sense that recorded or publicly performed music speaks directly to society as a cultural form," as well as affecting communication (p. 365). For example, the legendary music group, The Grateful Dead, is defined by its massive following which was formed in the late 1960's. The followers of this band are identified by their clothing, jewelry, and their drugs. This identification of a specific lifestyle makes these aspects a social, as well as cultural norm. Fans have traveled long distances for lengthy periods of time to see The Grateful Dead, and have adopted the term, "dead heads" to describe the culture that they have chosen to join. Although the band is not together anymore due to the death of their front man, Jerry Garcia, the loyal following and the culture formed by their fans have illustrated how one band can impact society so strongly. In
addition, the band has provided many fans with the identity of being a "dead head", which defines their musical preference as well as being able to search for other "dead heads".

Additionally, protest songs are incorporated into DiFranco's music. These songs are used when artists try to send a message of protest to society. Stewart proposed that "Protest music emerges from a felt need, social anxiety or a perceived state of relative deprivation", and that "protest songs frequently focus on the identification of a problem situation that requires the movement as a solution, thus legitimizing the movement" (Stewart, 1991, p. 245). Protest songs are a way to vent frustrations with society. "Protest rhetoric must create a 'perception of being able to control at least a portion of the situations in which one finds oneself'" (Stewart, 1991, p. 245).

In the 1960's protest music became commercialized by the record industry. Folk artists were suddenly receiving recognition in the music industry as a commodity to be sold. They were being marketed for their images and their music because the record industry saw it a product that would sell to the public. Early representatives of this music include Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Crosby Stills and Nash.

Bloodworth (1975) claims that, "Many new and struggling artists cannot resist the notoriety, fast money and status that a large record company can give them" (p. 306). Many artists sign on with record labels, sometimes waving their own copyrights and altering their images to fit the image that the
record company wants them to have. DiFranco refuses to sign with a major record label because she is unwilling to make sacrifices concerning her art. When an artist gives into the changes that a record label demands, the artist is often being marketed for their image, not their music.

Whether a song is labeled “message” music, “propaganda” music, or “protest” music, singing is a communicative act in which artists send messages to their audience. Like a speech, a song with lyrics contains a purpose and a meaning that becomes a suggestion to the audience. The audience has the option of rejecting or accepting music and its messages. The acceptance of messages is the support offered to musicians. Fans buy and listen to recordings, collect paraphernalia, and attend concerts.

Music has many purposes and many agendas. For the music industry executives and for musicians, it is a viable means to make money. For some artists, music is a way to positively influence society if they so chose. For others, it can be a means to achieve fame and fortune. The artists who are honest with their image and music can influence society in a positive manner. DiFranco is an example of a talented musician who does not capitalized on her success. She shares personal experiences with her audience, hoping to call attention to many social issues that she has dealt with in her life. DiFranco’s self disclosure in her lyrics reveals her motives in singing to her audience.
Music and Interpersonal Communication

This section will introduce propositions created by Small, Bloomfield, and Fornas. These propositions will be expanded in chapter four. The purpose of these propositions is to demonstrate how music contains properties inherent in interpersonal communication.

Lull (1985) states, "Music is communication in the sense that recorded or publicly performed music speaks directly to society as a cultural form," as well as affecting communication (p. 365). He also states that music "facilitates dyadic and small group interaction" and that music can alter moods and "intensify or reduce the rate of personal or social activity" (Lull, 1985, p. 365). Lull (1985) further explains the appeal of music as it can facilitate "basic desires to socialize, dance, speak in contemporary codes, and to have a constant audio backdrop for other activities" (p. 369).

In relation to music, interpersonal communication may be defined as a relationship between a sender (musician) and a receiver (listener) which is built on empathy and self-disclosure where the receiver feels a spiritual link towards the sender which may invoke emotions in the receiver. When lyrics written by the musician are based on personal experiences, the lyrics become personal self-disclosures that the artist intentionally sends an audience. Bloomfield (1993) discusses four reasons why music lyrics are a form of communication. Bloomfield (1993) proposes that first, "the singer reflects on personal experience that resonates with
emotion" (p. 17). DiFranco writes her lyrics based on her personal experiences which releases her emotions.

Bloomfield's (1993) second proposition states that music "embodies the results of that reflection in a musico-narrative form" (p. 17). He suggests that music reflects the feelings and emotions of an artist with words and the musical score set to those words.

In the third proposition, this process blends together when the artist "delivers a performance which serves to bring out full its [inner] meaning" (Bloomfield, 1993, p. 17). Live performances given by DiFranco compliment the intensity displayed in her compact discs. This process is completed in the fourth proposal which states that "the listener reads this emotional meaning by bringing his or her personal experience to bear on the performance" (Bloomfield, 1993, p. 17). DiFranco's listeners can relate to her through empathy or similar life experiences. When listeners correctly interpret the experience of the musician, they empathize with the artist. When a listener can relate to the same experiences as the artist, it can increase that artist's credibility.

Small (1985) claims that music has four components that relate music to interpersonal communication in relation to society. The four propositions include the act, the identity, the gift, and the creative act. The first proposal is that music is an act which concerns the action of writing songs, as well as performing them. The second proposal concerns identity as a way to "affirm, explore, and celebrate their [the fans]
sense of who they are; it is a matter of identity and identity is a matter of relationships" (Small, 1985, p. 6). The third proposition concerns the "gift" of music which includes the "power of creation". Finally, the fourth proposition is a claim which posits that "what is to be treasured is not the creative thing, but the creative act" (Small, 1985, p. 8).

In addition to Small's proposition, Fornas (1990) devised four levels of music relating to society that contain aspects of interpersonal communication. The first level states that music "concerns the external world of material facts and objective life conditions" (p. 294). People can learn about the external world through music and musicians. Music is an escape for some individuals to learn about a world they might never experience and live in that world vicariously through the music. Lull (1985) states that people can use music to "learn about the world outside the home, neighborhood or school," as well as forming identities (p. 365).

Fornas' (1990) second level states that "music has to do with our social world of inter-subjective relations and norms" (p. 294). Music justifies particular lifestyles that can violate certain norms and ideals. Specific cultures are perpetuated by music genres. For example, music can advocate lifestyles that might otherwise be rejected by parts of society. A culture can be based on musical preference which can be therapeutic and supporting for individuals, as well as forming an ideology for them.
The third level states that "music relates to each individual’s internal world of subjective identities, needs, structures and ideals" (Fornas, 1990, p. 294). Music can help form and sustain the identity of an individual through advocacy. It is comforting to individuals to know that "you are not alone." Listening to a musician who sings about problems that a person can relate to advocates or justifies certain behavior and ideologies.

The final level of music is a cultural level where music is "communicative interaction through the material and tools of a certain type of symbol: sounds" (Fornas, 1990, p. 294). The sounds of music make up the background for the meaning of a song. The sounds are significant because the tune of a song can remain in the listener’s memory, as well as triggering a feeling of "deja vu". The melody or beat is also important for recognizing a song, as well as enjoying it. DiFranco’s music is complimentary to her lyrics. When she is energetic, she plays her guitar fiercely. When she is mellow, DiFranco’s guitar playing reflects it.

DiFranco facilitates relationship formation with her audience by telling them personal stories during her concerts in addition to disclosing personal information in her songs. She acts as a socially significant messenger for social faults that she has encountered and observed. Her lyrics can be considered diaries of her life that allow her to expose her messages honestly to society. DiFranco’s messages are valuable because they have not been obstructed by the controlling music.
industry. Her messages are her reality and she hopes to make a
difference in the world with her sincere approach to music
creation.

Methodology

The methodology used in this thesis is taken from
Metallinos’ approaches to art criticism. There is no evidence
that previous studies have applied this approach to music
criticism, especially DiFranco and her music. By taking a
sociological approach to music criticism, DiFranco’s lyrics
will be analyzed according to how society consumes her messages
and the effect her music can have on her listeners as a unit.
The sociological approach has been “the most widely used and
well established approach that examines the arts through a
framework of social relations and functions” (Metallinos, 1996,
p. 172). DiFranco’s lyrics form social and interpersonal
relationships, points out changes and assimilations that occur
in society, as well as demonstrating how certain institutions
are affected by her music. In addition, DiFranco’s lyrics aim
at societal stereotypes and taboo lifestyles and justify those
issues to form her own societal ideology. These issues will be
expanded upon when analyzing her lyrics. This study will
attempt to discover how her self-disclosive lyrics gratify the
needs of her listeners in an honest overview of her life as she
lends support to those who can identify with her through her
music. The lyrics were chosen to demonstrate the dominant
societal issues prevalent in her music.
DiFranco's lyrics will be divided into the three types of folk music discussed: message music, propaganda music, and protest music to demonstrate the sociological approach. By categorizing lyrics with each topic of folk music, it will be shown how her folk ideology could have a positive effect on society if given the chance. The text provides reason to separate lyrics according to these factors. DiFranco is a competent communicator who has a bone to pick with the universe. The study will try to discover how DiFranco's honesty communicates dissatisfaction with society through protest music, propaganda music, and message music.

By taking a psychological approach to music criticism as well, it will be seen how DiFranco's personal lyrics fall into the psychological categories of emotions, perception, cognition, motivation, needs, and memory. Emotion is defined as "any specific feeling" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, p. 195). Perception is defined as "insight or intuition" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, p. 436). Cognition is defined as "the process of knowing; an idea" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, p. 117). Motivation is defined as "an inner drive that causes one to act" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, 385). Need is defined as "something required or desired that is lacking" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, p. 393). Memory is defined as "all that one remembers" (Hackett & Burke, 1990, p. 368). These psychological categories reflect her own thoughts, feelings, and basic human needs.

The psychological approach to music criticism stems "from the behavioral sciences" (Metallinos, 1996, p. 173) as well as
taking on many different forms. Such forms include psychoanalysis which is “referring to the emotional states of the individual” (Metallinos, 1996, p. 173). Social psychology is another form which concerns “the relationships of the individual and society” (Metallinos, 1996, p. 173). The Maslowean or motivational psychology is an approach which refers “to the basic human needs, wants and desires the arts fulfill” (Metallinos, 1996, p. 173). Finally, the perceptual and cognitive psychology’s are the “feelings, emotions, learning, perception cognition, motivation, needs, memory and thinking” (Metallinos, 1996, p. 173).

By showing how DiFranco’s lyrics fall into the folk categories of protest, message, and propaganda music, it will be demonstrated how her music can affect society as she sings about sensitive issues. The sociological approach will justify issues relevant in DiFranco’s songs by defying societal stereotypes which coincide with her image as a woman who has fought for her individuality, her rights of expression, and independence as a musician.

Because DiFranco is still “unknown” by most people, she has only made an impact on those who listen to her and those who have adopted her ideology and have accepted her messages. Through the psychological approach, it will be shown how DiFranco’s lyrics can relate to specific individuals and how they adapt her ideology by relating with her as a dominant figure in music. DiFranco’s songs are a reflection of herself and therefore could be a reflection of her audience.
Psychologically, DiFranco’s emotions, thoughts, memories, and needs are displayed in her music as she motivates her audience as well. She communicates these elements to her audience via her lyrics.

Preview of Thesis

Chapter one contains an introduction of DiFranco and her music, including her ideology. The literature review introduces message, protest and propaganda music as well as music in relation to interpersonal communication. The chapter concludes with a methodology containing a sociological and psychological approach to music criticism which will be used to analyze DiFranco’s song lyrics.

Chapter two will describe DiFranco’s background which includes her independence in the music industry. This chapter will also discuss DiFranco’s fans, as they have contributed to her success as well as the media’s response to her growing popularity.

Chapter three will discuss folk music as it is broken down into the three categories of message music, propaganda music, and protest music. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on music and society.

Chapter four will discuss the links between music and interpersonal communication. This chapter will include attributions by Collins and Miller concerning self disclosure and affinity. Propositions by Small, Bloomfield, and Fornas concerning music, society, and interpersonal communication will also be addressed. The chapter will conclude with a discussion.
of Sellnow's "Illusion of Life" rhetorical perspective concerning music and emotions.

Chapter five will contain a psychological and sociological analysis of DiFranco's lyrics. Psychologically, her lyrics will be analyzed according to her emotions, needs, memories, motivations, cognition's and perceptions. Sociologically, her lyrics will be categorized by the three categories of music discussed in chapter three concerning how her messages are reached to her audience through song: through message music, propaganda music, and protest music.

Chapter six will be the conclusion, containing the findings of this study, implications, and future research. DiFranco's impact on society will be summarized according to how her audience reacts to the artist.
CHAPTER 2

ANI DIFRANCO

Background

Independent folk-artist Ani (pronounced ah-nee) DiFranco expresses herself through songs while self-disclosing her attitudes and emotions to her audience. Her personal and honest approach towards music is beginning to receive recognition in national publications such as the New York Times and Spin magazine. DiFranco has made a breakthrough in the music industry with her current recognition. She is being recognized by the entertainment industry as an "independent spirit", although she has been a part of the music industry for many years. A writer in Tampa explained, "If folk music has a future, it's Ani DiFranco" (http://web.egrg.ohiostate.edu/ folkbookartist/biographies/anidifranco).

DiFranco began her career at the age of nine, playing Beatles' songs in local bars in her home town of Buffalo, New York. At sixteen, she graduated from a Visual and Performing Arts high school. DiFranco's concentration was on music, while most other teenagers were worrying about normal teenage problems. By age sixteen, she had moved out of her family home to be on her own. "On Her Own" became the motto for her independent record label, "Righteous Babe Records".

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Instead of "selling out" and becoming another "pop star", DiFranco started her own record company, "Righteous Babe Records", at the age of eighteen. To start her company, she emptied her bank account and borrowed money from friends. DiFranco started "Righteous Babe Records" because she was inspired by people asking her to make an album. She states, "After a while, it [the album] sort of became a mission" (120 Minutes, 1997).

DiFranco has rejected many offers from major record labels trying to sign her. Her rejection of the corporate music industry enabled DiFranco to guide her own career without being molded by the industry as an "image". This rejection also allows DiFranco complete autonomy over her work. DiFranco states, "I really feel that the major labels, the corporate control of the music industry, just makes for bland [music] video. It just reduces all of our lives" (120 Minutes, 1997). DiFranco takes pride in her original work.

Because she never signed with a major record label, DiFranco has had limited exposure to the public. She began her career by selling tapes out of the trunk of her car and was able to gain an audience mostly through word of mouth. Now that she is a success, DiFranco has a "long history of confounding audience expectations, challenging gender stereotypes, and defying categorizations of every kind" (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani).

DiFranco writes her own songs, publishes her own recordings, creates her own art work for her albums and
releases them. She has successfully released ten compact discs in seven years. DiFranco says that the reason she keeps the "Righteous Babe Record" label in Buffalo is so she can "put something back into the community" (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani/).

Each DiFranco album covers a time period of about eight months in her life. Her songs are narratives of love found, love lost, and societal issues, all based on her musical independence. She also discusses issues such as abortion, prostitution, and bisexuality while communicating her own views to her audience. Most of DiFranco's fans enjoy her music because they can relate to her in some way. "Somewhere between her fiery acoustic guitar and her at times brutal honest lyrics, Ani pulls her audience in and makes them wonder whether she's been secretly reading their diary" (http://members.aol.com/cynthiafta/ad.htm). This feeling of connection with her fans has led her loyal audience on the internet to nickname her their "goddess". Matt Pinfield, video disc jockey for "120 Minutes" on MTV, describes DiFranco as having an "incredibly passionate following" (120 Minutes, 1997).

DiFranco claims she does not like to talk about herself. She states, "When I'm on-stage, I make a living by telling my story and rubbing it in people's faces, trying to elicit a dialogue, so offstage, I really don't want to work at it" (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/articles/pulse-9-96/index.html). Pinfield describes DiFranco as being "soul bearing" since she tells her life's story through her songs.
DiFranco replies by saying, "I give it [her soul] to other people- here, take this" (120 Minutes, 1997).

DiFranco is powerful as a performer: "When she sings, the voice comes from some deep and primal place, tapping into the spirit of every woman that's ever been in love, in pain, or insane" (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/articles/pulse-9-96/index.html).

DiFranco has been described as having "the careful diction and playful rhythmic sensibilities of a jazz singer, a poet's attention to nuance and detail, and the goofy energy of an indestructible cartoon character" (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/artist/pulse-9-96/index.html). However, it's "the voice, an instrument that sounds like a chain saw that's been marinated in nitroglycerin and honey that makes DiFranco's scathing observations about the pleasures and pains of the human condition so intense" (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/artist/9-96/index.html). DiFranco states, "When I'm on stage, I wanna start a fire or die" (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/article/pulse-9-96/index.html).

Independence

DiFranco would rather be able to face herself in the bathroom mirror than be rich and famous (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/articles/indie_eye.html). She explains why she did not sign with a big name record label: "I would have to make sacrifices politically and artistically speaking, and I'm not interested in being rich and famous if it means I have to answer to big business people in terms of telling me
what my image should be" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html). DiFranco refuses to take orders from anyone concerning her music: "If a company is going to shell out money, they are going to want a certain amount of control and I'm not willing to give anybody control over anything when it comes to my music. I want to prove to the world it can be done" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html).

DiFranco claims, "I have no interest in fame or fortune. I'm more into social movements and making noise, stirring people up" (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani). To illustrate her rejection of the mainstream, DiFranco chooses the most unflattering portraits of herself to be displayed as well as omitting her name on her tee-shirts. This is how DiFranco portrays herself contrary to how the record labels would portray her, as well as defying gender stereotypes.

Because of her rejection of the mainstream, she has sacrificed her opportunity to reach a large audience (Bauder, 1997). DiFranco feels she should apologize to her songs because they only reach a limited audience: "Sorry, because of my political convictions nobody will ever pay attention to you, nobody will ever know you exist" (Bauder, 1997, p. 26). She further states "It's like holding your children back. I'm sorry I haven't afforded you every opportunity, but you've got a screwed up parent" (Bauder, 1997, p. 26).

DiFranco elaborates on being independent, "Another thing about record companies I find dehumanizing is that they break artists up into categories" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html).
She explains how record companies construct demographic studies to market musicians among certain age groups and races. "They divide and separate populations and try to capitalize on the stereotype of each of these groups rather than bring people together" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html). DiFranco concludes, "I won't fool myself for a second into thinking that people in the [music] industry even give a sh** about music, let alone society; that's totally not the point for them" (http://www.isc.rit.edu/%7eaps0104/ani/anifq.html).

DiFranco has been described by music critics as "celebrating the independent spirit" (120 Minutes, 1997). She says her independent spirit is because she has "no corporate involvement whatsoever" (120 Minutes, 1997). She further explains, "It's not about marketing or publicity- it's about driving around, touring, [and] playing. To me, that's real" (120 Minutes, 1997). DiFranco explains how other artists who are perceived as independent are not really celebrating the "independent spirit". She states, "The music industry has a lot of pseudo-independent entities because we want our alternative rock-n-roll to be on cool indie [independent] labels, which are mostly owned or distributed, or partially owned by majors [major record labels]" (120 Minutes, 1997). DiFranco continues by saying that the "independent spirit thing can be very deceiving and that creeps me out" (120 Minutes, 1997).
DiFranco has been creating a path for herself to be "truly independent" (120 Minutes, 1997). DiFranco is concerned that her fans are going to believe she is "selling out" to the music industry due to her many recent appearances on television and in magazines. DiFranco has appeared on the cover of Spin magazine, in the pages of People and Entertainment Weekly, on tour with Bob Dylan, and on television shows such as MTV's "120 Minutes", "Late Night with Conan O'Brien", and PBS's "Sessions at West 54th", in addition to other recent publications and interviews. She states, "It's weird because people tend to equate independence with obscurity ... when they [entertainment industry] write about me in the New York Times or I'm sitting here with you [Matt Pinfield of "120 Minutes"], people think I 'sell out' but I'm trying to investigate what is really independence" (120 Minutes, 1997).

Accomplishments

DiFranco's accomplishments have received recognition from organizations which have noticed her talent. She was asked this past spring (1997) to deliver the keynote address at a convention in New Orleans for the National Association of Independent Record Distributors and Manufacturers. Other projects have included a benefit compilation called "Sing, Don't Sign" (on Rounder), "Women's Work" (on Putumayo), "Vin Scelsa's Grooves Vol. II" (on Sony), the "Silverwolf Homeless Project" (on Silverwolf) and the "She's the One" soundtrack, among others. DiFranco "continues to explore the possibilities..."
for true creative autonomy on an even larger scale” (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani).

DiFranco agreed to various projects out of her own personal interests. Being a movie "junkie", she agreed to participate in movie projects "only after she was assured artistic control over the recording and ownership of the master tape and its copyright" (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani). Under this uncommon arrangement, "DiFranco alone can determine how and when the song can be used" (http://www.cyberfetish.com/pressnetwork/ani).

On the soundtrack for the movie "My Best Friend's Wedding", DiFranco covered a Dusty Springfield classic called "Wishin' and Hopin'". She became interested in the project because she is a fan/friend of the director, P.J. Hogan. Again, DiFranco insisted on total autonomy for the song. When the opportunity arose to release it as a single, she refused.

DiFranco has also added two videos to her list of accomplishments, "Joyful Girl" and "In or Out". DiFranco states, "The only reason for me to do a video is because it's something new for me to learn about" (120 Minutes, 1997). DiFranco discusses how her video is unlike other videos on MTV: "I really like that video ["In or Out"] because most of my loved ones are in it. Everyone who's really important to me is in there, somewhere, because it's just footage of my life" (120 Minutes, 1997). Her video sends a similar message as her songs. Everything about DiFranco, from her music to her
marketing is an honest approach in a music industry controlled by image and manipulation of the American public.

Contribution From Fans

DiFranco relates to folk music because she feels it "has the effect of bringing people together rather than dividing them" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html). DiFranco states that she wishes more people would join her in her independence and protest of the "system" because she feels that the "more voices outside the sacred circle we have making noise, the more useful it is" (http://www.futuris.net/linen/feature/54ani.html).

DiFranco feels that if people are not passionate about something, it means they don't care. Music News of the World says of DiFranco, "She may not think she's a heroine but to a group of fans hungry [for someone to say the things that the fans want to, but don't have the power], DiFranco is a miracle" (http://www.addict.com/mnotw/96-05-29.html#Difranco). Instead of spreading messages through speeches, DiFranco sends messages through songs that deal with political issues, social issues, and relationships as well as her own thoughts, beliefs and emotions. DiFranco feels she can help women by informing them of her personal struggles.

DiFranco's team at "Righteous Babe Records" sent out a pamphlet to her fans on her mailing list who want information about DiFranco's touring schedule, her paraphernalia, and compact discs for sale. In the pamphlet, DiFranco's team
assuages any doubts about her "selling out". They state acrimoniously, "Anytime you [fans] see Ani's face plastered on the pages of some glossy magazine, keep in mind that the forces which helped to bring her there are not the greased palms and payola of some faceless multinational conglomerate but the direct effort of one handful of people in a teeny office in Buffalo and another handful scattered throughout the Northeast" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997).

The pamphlet explains to DiFranco’s fans how they have contributed to her success: "Ani's success is the success of all the people who have responded to and supported her work over the years. For once, the major media outlets aren't manufacturing a phenomenon, they're catching up with one which occurred spontaneously" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997). DiFranco’s team extends credit to the "tens of thousands of people coming to the shows, buying albums, spreading the word in every way imaginable (in self-published zines [magazines], on college radio, on the internet, and in day-to-day life, spreading the tapes and CD's from person to person)" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997). DiFranco’s label claims that it is her fans the media is responding to, not necessarily her music.

Her crew continues to thank the fans for "your cheers, your concerns, your passion, and your presence" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997). They state, "We're in this together; every time you tell a friend about Ani, you're helping to build a community of listeners" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997). They claim, "Together, we are breaking down barriers, proving that
there really is an alternative to a system where six mammoth corporations control the production and distribution of eighty percent of the country's music. We are finding out that independence doesn't always equal obscurity and that reaching people doesn't necessitate 'selling out'" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997). Again, credit is extended to DiFranco's fans. "At the risk of sounding pompous, Ani wouldn't be where she is today (and she wouldn't get wherever she's going next) without your support" (Righteous Babe Records, 1997).

DiFranco is attempting to reach audiences without the interference of big name record labels. Independence has limited the exposure of her songs to society, however she has accomplished her goal of making music on her own terms. DiFranco's songs are completely her own creations. They have not been tainted by corporate executives who think they know what kind of music people want to listen to. DiFranco is proud to have no interference from corporate America.

Summary

DiFranco is the epitome of a strong woman who fights for what she believes in and won't stand for injustice. She sings about "what she could've done" and "what she wishes she could say". Her songs are her instruments for venting her frustrations with society and interpersonal relationships in her life. By sending messages through her music, DiFranco hopes that others will join her in the struggle for an improved society.
Listeners of DiFranco's music take with them her knowledge, her ideology, and her goal of independence. She portrays herself in her music to be the person fans would encounter if they met her on the street. She is honest, uncompromising, and has complete autonomy over her music. She wishes all women could be internally stronger and sings about how women should fight for what they believe in. DiFranco admits in her music that she is not as strong a person as her audience believes her to be, yet the struggle to be a strong, independent woman is a movement that her female listeners can do with her.
CHAPTER 3

FOLK MUSIC

Preview

DiFranco’s music falls into the general category of folk music. Folk music can be grouped into the general category of message music, and more specifically, propaganda music and protest music. DiFranco’s songs contain each of these elements.

DiFranco’s use of self-disclosure in her lyrics reflects her thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Therefore, her messages contain truth and honesty from her soul, which makes her messages valid to herself and therefore to her audience. By examining the elements which determine what a folk song is, DiFranco’s messages will be categorized according to these factors in order to demonstrate how her messages could affect society as a whole. In addition, the use of personal experiences to write music is an aspect of folk music.

The use of personal experiences to write music creates “a unique folk perspective that draws on the obstacles and difficulties encountered by people as they go through life” and has been recognized and been worthy of rhetorical study (Meister, 1996, p. 62). This perspective is considered to be “less optimistic and more personal” than traditional folk music.
Meister (1996, p. 62) states, "Representatives of this tragic folk perspective provide a critical yet stoic commentary based on lived experiences" (p. 62). Meister (1996) states that songs which describe "social injustice on a personal level evaluates the injustice and critically comments on it" (p. 62). In addition, the songs have generally "received little scholarly attention" (Meister, 1996, p. 62).

**Message Music and Interpersonal Communication**

When artists send a message in their music, their songs are labeled "message" music. Message songs are folk or popular songs where the purpose is to create a socially shared meaning between the artist and listener (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991). "The message song results from a combination of the rhetor's work and its reception by the audience" (Rybacki & Rybacki, p. 301). The audience becomes aware of a message sent by the artist and has a choice to accept it or reject it.

DiFranco invokes listeners’ emotions by using thought provoking lyrics which appeal to those who empathize with her experiences. Empathy may be defined as "the ability to project oneself into another person's point of view in an attempt to experience the other's thoughts and feelings" (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1995, p. 411). Because the listener can put his/herself in the artist's shoes when the lyrics are sincere, the response invoked in the listener is similar to the real emotions of the artist. Because the emotions are similar, there is more of a chance that the listener might participate in a social movement if one is started or have an attitudinal
change towards an issue than if the lyrics were not sincere. Therefore, the message has a deeper meaning to the receiver. The relationship formed between the artist and the listener is a more honest relationship because the songs are reflecting personal experiences. If songs are not from the personal experiences of the artist, then the artist is communicating messages that have no indication of being fabricated. Messages that are not from the heart of the artist can be misleading to the interpreter of the message- the receiver. The receivers can learn about life from sources who share personal experiences with them.

Many artists provide lyrics in their albums to promote familiarity and comprehension of their songs. This allows the audience to gain a thorough understanding of the message being sent. Lyrics are poetic, and are a main factor concerning comprehension of a song. When they are provided in the album, they facilitate singing together as well as an analysis of the song from the perspective of the outsider- the listener. The listener can read the lyrics without even hearing the song and interpret the lyrics from his/her perspective.

Lyrics are also important because they help the audience differentiate between the content level and the relational level attached to a song and the message. The content of the message is what is actually being said, while the relational level is the interpretation of the content by attaching meaning. (Adler, Rosenfeld and Towne, 1995, p. 19). In some songs, DiFranco’s lyrics address an issue in a lower, toned
down voice than if she screams in a song. Screaming would be obvious to the receiver that the interpretation of the song is different than if the lyrics were only read.

The perspective of the listener has an effect on the interpretation of the song. Each individual has unique past experiences that guide his/her life. Depending on the receivers' perception of life, a listener can interpret a message similar to or different from the intended message sent by the artist. When the interpretation of the listener is comparable to the artist's intention, a relationship built on empathy is formed.

When the interpretation of a song is similar to the intended message from the artist, a following of listeners who see the world in a manner similar to those pronounced by the artist can emerge. The artist is the audience's guide toward an understanding of life and a way to improve it. By singing songs that have thought-provoking lyrics that refute society's ideas, the artist has opened the listeners' minds through empathy. Becoming aware of a problem is the first step in solving it. If the messages sent by the artist are geared towards improvement and if people in society become aware of problems because of the music, then it is possible that a musical artist sending messages in his/her songs can make a difference in the world.

For example, every Christmas a song is aired on the radio called "Feed The World" by Live Aid, a band formed by the music stars of the mid-1980's. Their message to society is that
there are children starving in the world and the people
listening to the song should do something about the condition.
The song is for charity, and it is aired every year on radio
stations and music television channels to promote the cause.
This message is considered to be a form of persuasion because
it is begging for a call of action. Message songs can take on
a form of persuasion also called propaganda music.

Propaganda Music/Songs of Persuasion

A propaganda song or "song of persuasion" in folk idiom
can be defined as a song which functions to communicate an
idea, a concept, or a total ideology to the listener employing
the structure of a folk song" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59).
DiFranco sings propaganda songs about her independence and the
hassles she's had to endure to maintain her status as an
independent artist. These propaganda songs function to
accomplish six goals.

The first goal is that the song "solicits and arouses
outside support or sympathy for a social movement or
attitudinal orientation" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59). DiFranco's
attitudinal orientation is centered around her independence as
well as her cynical attitude concerning the nature of American
society. DiFranco is receiving recognition for the first time
by the media as being an "independent spirit". Being
independent is a difficult thing to do in the music industry
because it is dominated by corporations which have the final
say in an artist's performance and work. DiFranco has
accomplished her status as an "independent spirit" because she
is truly independent and her fans admire and respect her for it.

The second goal is that "the song reinforces the value system of individuals who are a priori supporters of a social movement or ideology" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59). DiFranco’s fans might be receiving approval for their personal attitudes about DiFranco’s independence, society in general, and relationships. Justification of attitude and action is important to the fans because they might not have a medium to express their attitudes to other people who might or might not understand them.

The third goal is that "the song creates and promotes cohesion and solidarity in an organization or movement supporting the singer's and/or composer's ideological position" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59). DiFranco’s fans support her independence and join together to support her ideology by encouraging other people to listen to her music.

The fourth goal is that "the song attempts to recruit individuals to join a specific social movement" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59). DiFranco’s independence, honesty, and strength, invites all her fans to join in and help her receive recognition in the music industry by the support she receives from her fans. The media is responding to the large number of fans DiFranco has attracted over the past seven years, since the release of her first compact disc. DiFranco’s fans have become interested in her music mostly through word of mouth because she has received such limited access to the public. Fans help DiFranco spread her messages and expose her music to
others because it is a way to support her talent, messages, and independence.

The fifth goal is that "the song invokes solutions to real or imagined social phenomena in terms of action to achieve a desired goal" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 59). DiFranco offers an alternative solution in the music scene. She gears herself towards female strength in a world dominated by men and corporations. Her perceived strength, which comes out in her music, is a part of herself that she shares with her audience.

The sixth and final goal of propaganda songs is that "the song directs attention to some problem situation or discontent generally in emotional laden terminology" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 60). DiFranco's discontent is centered around her disdain for the music industry and the people who run it, as well as her thoughts on a number of issues. She has successfully avoided commitment to the music industry so she can guide her career the way she wants it, in addition to being able to sing about any topic she chooses to. However, she has made sacrifices concerning the lack of air time she receives on the radio, on music television, and on advertisements.

These six elements of the propaganda song (Denisoff, 1983) are shown by two categories of the propaganda song (or song of persuasion)- the magnetic song and the rhetorical song.

**Magnetic Music**

Specific songs of DiFranco's can be classified as magnetic music. Magnetic songs are a form of propaganda music. They
"appeal to the listener for purposes of attracting the non-participant to a movement or ideology or, within the ranks of participation, for the purpose of creating social cohesion and evaluating morale" (Booth, 1976, p. 246). When artists communicate messages in their music about society and the changes they would like to see occur, they may collect a following of people who understand their message. The fans, depending on the invested interest they have in the artist, will take part in trying to communicate the artist's messages to others and therefore spread the message along with the artist: "The song persuades, both emotionally and intellectually, individuals into supporting and/or joining the movement or goals of the writer and or the organization for which the song is written; and, the ballad creates social cohesion or a feeling of solidarity among the membership or supporters of a given movement or ideological set" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 60). The artist is attempting to draw people into a social movement of some kind and the fans who accept the artist's message can join a movement or share the ideology of the artist. Often, fans imitate an artist's views and actions. If the artist starts a social movement, then the fans might follow. If no social movement is started, then the song is more rhetorical than magnetic.

Rhetorical Music

Rhetorical songs are "designed to point to some social condition, describe the condition, but offers no ideological or
organizational solution such as affiliating with a social movement; the rhetorical song poses a question or a dissent in relation to the institutions of the social system" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 61). Rhetorical songs are defined as "outbursts of desperation rather than mobilizing factors or problem solving devices" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 61). The artist who sings a rhetorical song as opposed to a magnetic song, would not be calling for action, instead the artist wants to vent frustrations without creating a social movement.

"Most rhetorical songs indicate the ethos of the protester, that is, individual dissatisfaction or alienation in relation to the social structure, while lacking ideology or organizational alternatives" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 109). While she sings about her dissatisfaction with society, DiFranco does not lack ideology. DiFranco has formed her own ideology built on her independence and her witty cynicism. People who understand her lyrics, share the same ideology which creates a common goal between the artist and listener and also among fans.

Booth (1976) claims that the audience members have a common pattern of thought, attitude and emotions. Therefore, music can create a shared meaning for people who might otherwise not communicate with one another.

Protest Music

DiFranco’s songs often protest specific issues and the status quo of society. Denisoff (1983) claims that "protest songs provide an alternative to what exists" (p. 27). Denisoff
proposes that when a musician sings songs that protest an issue, they are providing alternative views for existing problems. In some cases, a solution may be offered. Protest songs generally involve more than just a verbal communication, that is, "protest songs were performed in a social gathering such as a political rally, church service, protest march, and other self supportive social environments" (Denisoff, 1983, p. 27). In DiFranco's case, the environment where her fans can gather in a social setting would be her concerts.

Protest songs became popular during the sixties when artists were trying to send a message of protest to society. Knupp (1981) criticizes protest music as lacking depth: "Protest songs are simplistic appeals to the immediate experiences and existential concerns of their performers and auditors, rather than sophisticated historical or ideological formulations" (p. 386). Knupp assumes that because protest songs focus on the present, they do not contain any knowledge of history which complicates interpretation of the present. He also states that "protest songs provide a forum in which a movement can talk about itself at its best and its opponents at their worst, without accountability to provide reason" (Knupp, 1981, p. 387). The fact that the protest song is sending a message of injustice and general dissatisfaction is a legitimate explanation of how an artist can send a message through a protest song. An example of DiFranco's protest music is her issue of how the music industry treats artists unfairly.
She also believes that society needs to become more aware of societal injustices.

Denisoff (1969) claims that part of the commercial success of folk-protest music was linked to the desire of college students to forge new identities when they left the reference groups and values of high school (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 291). This search for self identity is how protest songs gained mainstream success and popularity through the mass media during the 1960’s and 1970’s.

When an artist gives into the changes that a record label demands, they are being marketed for their image and not their music. When this occurs, the major record labels are convincing society to purchase certain types of music because it is popular, not because it holds a lasting value to the individual. According to DiFranco’s ideology, the big record labels in the music industry have one goal in mind, and that goal is to make money.

Music and Society

Ballantine (1984) states that "the consciousness of people today is dominated and administered to an alarming extent" (p. 8). Often, when marketing certain merchandise, the mass media hypes one commodity more than another, which tells the public what to purchase. The corporate music industry and the media influence the public on what is considered popular. In relation to music, what knowledge does the media have to persuade society to purchase specific music? However, the
media has explosive power to decide which musicians deserve positive or negative media attention.

For example, the pop "sensation" "Milli Vanilli" became a notorious prank on society played by the music industry. The members of "Milli Vanilli", Rob and Fab, had been promised a record deal with only one condition; they would have to lip sync their first album, which ironically won a Grammy Award for the category of Best New Artist. Rob and Fab's request to make an album using their own voices was denied by their record label which then exposed them as prevaricators in order to conceal their actions. The purpose of this deception was to sell records and therefore make money.

"Mass produced, and turned into a commodity like everything else, music now serves a very special function: it is the perfumed balm to tranquilize and lubricate a system geared to profits" (Ballantine, 1984, p. 9). DiFranco's ideology refutes this theory. She does not mislead society with false images in order to sell records and make money. Ballantine (1984) found that, "music should have a 'social aim': namely to enlarge man's knowledge of himself and of his social development" (p. 15).

DiFranco discusses the attention she has recently received from the media. "Probably what hurts the most is the lack of attention to the music" (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). She continues to state, "Mostly what people write about is my independence- the 'phenomenon' of little me and my audience, and the scene that I'm supposed to have inspired" (Hamilton,
1997, p. 150). DiFranco is not blinded by the attention the press has given her. She states, "Oddly enough, the discussion rarely gets to music or the song writing. According to the perception of the press, the actual work that I do is incidental" (Hamilton, 1997, p. 150). The media is a controlling factor in the music industry and often helps form the images of the artists. Their approval of DiFranco is based on her self-created image and her fans, not her music.

Through observation, people try to define themselves according to societal norms and mainstream trends. When record labels force certain representations on musicians as presumably the "hot new artist", the general public is usually unaware of alternatives. This results with the public listening to bands who are consistently overplayed on the radio, such as "Hootie and the Blowfish" which demonstrates how the radio air waves influence the American public.

"The Spice Girls" is one prime example of how the music industry is currently marketing an image to sell records. Originally from England, "The Spice Girls" have accumulated a young following of fans whose musical tastes might not have yet matured. What is alarming about the success of "The Spice Girls" is that the group members cannot sing very well. This has been stated from video disc jockeys on MTV (music television) who have commented on the success of "The Spice Girls" and attribute that success to the image of the group more than the songs they sing.
Because people have such a restricted choice of music to listen to on the radio, it is important to spread messages about "unrevealed" artists to people who may applaud them. Notwithstanding the seven years since the release of DiFranco's first compact disc, it is conceivable that DiFranco could eventually win a Grammy Award for the category of "Best New Artist".

Summary

Message music allows musicians to voice personal opinions through song in order to pursue societal issues or reveal personal experiences to the audience. More specifically, message music can be broken down into the categories of protest music or propaganda music which can be either magnetic or rhetorical.

Music affects society as the American public's variety of music is alarmingly controlled by the music industry and the mass media. The music industry has one goal which is to make money through marketing musicians as images. With this goal in mind, the media therefore responds to the music industry images and promotes them to the American public as "artists".
CHAPTER 4

MUSIC AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Preview

When messages in music are created by lyrics which are written as self disclosures, they become a form of interpersonal communication. DiFranco's "soul bearing" songs are written from her personal experiences, emotions, and attitudes. Her audience receives her personal messages and often can relate to the experiences, emotions, and attitudes which is a form of empathy. Audience identification with certain messages can increase the receiver's accuracy in interpreting the meaning behind the perceived messages sent by the artist. Empathy can be formed as a result of correct interpretation of lyrical messages which demonstrates similar perceptions, shared experiences, feelings and attitudes between the listener and the artist.

Researchers have combined music and communication from an interpersonal perspective. This chapter will consider self-disclosure as a prominent aspect of interpersonal communication with a discussion of Collins and Miller's links between self-disclosure and liking. In addition, three attributions concerning the disclosure of personal information will be discussed. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss propositions
concerning the nature of music and interpersonal communication according to Small, Bloomfield, and Fornas. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of Sellnow's "Illusion of Life" rhetorical perspective concerning music and emotions.

Interpersonal Communication Defined

Lull (1985) states that music "facilitates dyadic and small group interaction" and that music can alter moods and "intensify or reduce the rate of personal or social activity" (p. 365). Interpersonal communication, in association with music, is the relationship created between the listener and the artist. It is built on empathy and self disclosure where the receiver feels a spiritual link with the sender as the music may invoke emotions in the receiver. When an artist is sharing self-disclosive messages with the listener (receiver) and the listener feels an emotional (and spiritual) connection with the artist, a relationship built on self disclosure and empathy is formed.

In a relationship such as this one, the opportunity for feedback exists, although it is limited. Feedback is defined as "the discernible response of a receiver to a sender's message" (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1995, p. 412). Although the feedback is not immediate, there is the opportunity, no matter how difficult, to meet an artist or send a message to them.

The receivers can also send a message to society concerning their admiration and respect for an artist. This communication sends a message about the receivers. Receivers
can attend concerts, write letters, buy compact discs, and wear specific clothing and jewelry that represents a certain image that coincides with the music. Feedback is necessary to complete the interpersonal process. Buying music, listening to it, and responding to it in these ways is a form of feedback.

Self Disclosure

When lyrics are written by the artist and are based on personal experiences, the lyrics become intimate self disclosures which the artist intentionally sends to others. Self disclosure has been defined as "the process of making the self known to others" (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958 p. 91). Through self disclosure, DiFranco reveals personal information about herself to her audience. Prisbell and Dallinger (1991) state, "self-disclosure plays an integral role in the development of interpersonal relationships" (p. 211). DiFranco facilitates an interpersonal relationship with her listeners by self disclosing personal information to her audience through her lyrics. Accordingly, "Research has shown that individuals regulate development of relationships through selective self-disclosure" (Prisbell & Dallinger, 1991, p. 211).

Self disclosure includes "both descriptive information (such as one's political affiliation) and evaluative information (such as how one feels about starting college)" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 458). DiFranco often combines both descriptive and evaluative information by disclosing her ideas and emotions.
Collins and Miller discuss Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration Theory. They state, the "degree of disclosure is typically evaluated along the dimensions of depth (quality) and breadth (quantity)" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 458). The depth of a disclosure "refers to the intimacy level of the disclosure" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 458). DiFranco describes her life in intimate details and therefore has great depth in her music. The breadth "refers to the amount of information exchanged" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 458). DiFranco demonstrates her range of information (breadth) by discussing a plethora of topics over the years in her 10 compact discs. The topics range from bisexuality to abortion, and from how she is feeling on a ride on the subway to being pulled over in her car and hassled by a Texas police officer.

Collins and Miller (1994) have discussed the links between self disclosure and liking. According to these researchers, there are three distinct disclosure-liking effects. The first effect states, "People who engage in intimate disclosures tend to be liked more than people who disclose at lower levels" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 457). Self disclosure is what distinguishes DiFranco from many mainstream artists whose music is being controlled by the dominating music industry. DiFranco has created a large following of fans who might be attracted to her specifically for her intimate disclosures. The second effect is that "People disclose more to those whom they initially like" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 457). DiFranco appreciates her
fans and shares her life stories with them in hopes of helping women who might benefit from her wisdom. DiFranco uses empathy to inform her audience that she has "been there".

The third effect is that "People like others as a result of having disclosed to them" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 457). DiFranco's fans are recipients of her personal disclosures which sends messages to fans displaying that they are a significant part of her music. Receiving the messages forms a connection between DiFranco and her listeners.

Collins and Miller (1994) state that "the link between self-disclosure and liking is mediated by the formation of positive beliefs about the disclosure" (p. 459). If a disclosure is inappropriate for a situation, the liking level might decrease as opposed to an appropriate disclosure where the liking level increases due to the disclosure-liking effects. If too much information is revealed too soon, the person revealing the information "may be viewed as maladjusted and less likable" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). DiFranco has spread her self-disclosures over seven years to her audience through compact discs as well as to live audiences since she was nine years old. However, her disclosures could be a reason why she is rejected by some people. In many situations disclosure is viewed as a sign of weakness that could taint the credibility of a messenger.

Gender differences also influence the relationship between liking and self disclosure. "Traditional sex-role stereotypes suggest that women are more skillful communicators
and are more concerned with issues of intimacy than are men" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). This explanation could explain why "women might be viewed as maladjusted if they do not disclose" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). Therefore, this validates DiFranco's disclosures as appropriate since she is a female. If a man was to self disclose as DiFranco does, would it be as acceptable? Baird (1976) states that females are taught to express more emotions and be more aware of others' emotional states. Collins and Miller (1994) expect that "the disclosure-liking relation would be stronger for same-sex pairs than for opposite-sex pairs" and they expect that "the disclosure and liking may be stronger for female recipients than for male recipients" (p. 459). This could also explain why out of the many fans DiFranco has accumulated, the majority are female.

Three Attributions By Collins and Miller

Collins and Miller (1994) state that "there are at least three attributions one can make when a person discloses intimate information" (p. 459). The first attribution is the dispositional attribution which "is made when the behavior is seen as the result of a person's normal tendency to disclose at a particular level" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). DiFranco might disclose on an intimate level with a stranger on a bus. Disclosing intimate information just might be a major part of her personality.

A situational attribution is made when "the behavior is viewed as the result of an environmental cue specifying what is
expected" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). DiFranco currently spends most of her time on the road and writes her songs as if they were part of a journal. It might be difficult to form intimate relationships with people if one is traveling so often. DiFranco might disclose so intimately in her music because she can trust a song, but not a human being.

A final attribution is a personalistic attribution and that is made "when the disclosure is seen as the result of some special quality of oneself, the recipient" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 459). DiFranco puts her audience on the receiving end of her disclosures which allows them to feel trusted and liked. The audience members who evaluate DiFranco’s messages on a personal level may feel as if DiFranco trusts and likes them as well.

Bloomfield (1993) argues that music is communication from the artist to the listener and back between the listener and the artist. In this scenario, music is the link between an individual and an artist. The listener can relate to the artist on a personal level. This form of bonding enhances the meaning of the music to the individual.

Small’s Four Propositions

Small (1985) devised a system in which music is divided into four propositions concerning the nature of music in American society, as well as including aspects of interpersonal communication. The four propositions are the act, identity, the gift, and the creative act. The first proposition, the act, is concerned with music being "primarily an action" --
something that is done (Small, 1985, p. 6). The artist demonstrates the action of creating and performing songs which sends music as messages to society. Specific individuals listen to songs and attach significance accordingly, therefore interpreting the song as meaningful to them. The communication flow from the artist to the individual has started the interpersonal process.

The second proposition, the identity, claims that music is a way to "affirm, explore, and celebrate their sense of who they [the listeners] are; it is a matter of identity and identity is a matter of relationships" (Small, 1985, p. 6). The example of the band “The Grateful Dead” exemplifies how one band can offer many fans an identity. The concerts became the fans' spiritual celebrations of their identity in relation to the music. Concerts became a place to meet other “dead heads” and to form relationships with them, as well as traveling together to “dead” shows. People often form their identity through relationships and when that relationship is built around music, their identity is also due to the music.

The third proposition is the gift of music. Small (1985) claims that "everyone is born with the gift of music" (p. 8). The gift includes the "power of creation" (Small, 1985, p. 8). DiFranco has taken her gift and shared it with her fans who appreciate her talent. Her messages are sent to society because she used her gift to create music and lyrics which are so powerful that her receivers can't help but listen to what she is saying and become inspired. DiFranco's "power of
creation" (Small, 1985, p. 8) has the power to persuade, protest, and empathize.

The final proposition is the creative act which posits that "what is to be treasured is not the created thing, but the creative act" (Small, 1985, p. 8). The inspiration to create and produce music comes from within an artist's emotions and thought process. The artist releases emotions which are interpreted by the listener. This process of releasing emotions through music is an aspect of interpersonal communication which is displayed in song lyrics.

Bloomfield's Four Propositions Concerning Song Lyrics

Bloomfield (1993) discusses four reasons why the lyrics of a song are a form of communication. Bloomfield (1993) proposes that first, "the singer reflects on personal experience that resonates with emotion" (p. 17). DiFranco has put her emotional feelings and personal experiences in her music. By listening to one of her songs, an individual can detect DiFranco's emotional state which prompted her to create a specific song.

Bloomfield's (1993) second proposition states that music "embodies the results of that reflection in a musico-narrative form" (p. 17). He suggests that music reflects the feelings and emotions of an artist with words as well as the music score set to those words. DiFranco writes her own music score in addition to her lyrics. It is her choice to make her guitar sound fast or slow, and harsh or soft, depending on the messages prevalent in her music.
In the third proposition, this process comes together when the artist "delivers a performance which serves to bring out full its [inner] meaning" (Bloomfield, 1993, p. 17). DiFranco's concerts are the meeting place for her fans to see her perform live.

This process is completed in the fourth proposal which states that "the listener reads this emotional meaning by bringing his or her personal experience to bear on the performance" (Bloomfield, 1993, p. 17). DiFranco's listeners can relate to her through empathy or simply having gone through similar experiences. By sharing similar experiences with a singer/songwriter, the listener may interpret music with a greater depth of meaning.

**Fornas’ Four Levels of Music**

Fornas (1990) devised four levels of music which relate interpersonal communication to society. The first level states that music "concerns the external world of material facts and objective life conditions" (p. 294). People learn about the external world because of the mass media exposure of music and musicians. DiFranco shares her concerns about the external world with her listeners which facilitates an escape for fans as they are able to learn about a world they might never experience as the artist invites them to live in that world vicariously through the music. Because she is not mainstream and has not suffered extensive exposure on the radio air waves, many people are unaware of DiFranco's existence. Fans of
DiFranco are a small group compared to fans of mainstream artists because not many people have been made aware of the singer/songwriter. Because of her selective exposure, it is possible that DiFranco’s messages have more meaning to her receivers than the mainstream artists on the radio. An explanation for this reasoning could be that the corporate music industry’s image of a “musician” does not meet the receivers’ expectations of depth in music. Lull (1985) states that "...people use music to achieve their personal and interpersonal goals, to resist authority (protest), to establish their identities (intrapersonal communication), to develop peer relationships (interpersonal communication), and to learn about the world outside the home, neighborhood or school" (p. 365).

The second level states that "music has to do with our social world of inter-subjective relations and norms" (Fornas, 1990, p. 294). Music can justify certain lifestyles and in doing so can violate certain norms and ideals. Music might advocate a certain lifestyle that could be considered taboo by societal norms. The music can be affirming, therapeutic, and supporting for individuals. If a societal norm is violated by the artist, and the listener violates the norm as well, a bond between them is formed. This shared experience can be interpreted as a form of empathy as both the listener and the artist understand what the other is going through. Empathy forms a relationship between the artist and listener.
The third level states that "music relates to each individual's internal world of subjective identities, needs, structures and ideals" (Fornas, 1990, p. 294). Music can help form and sustain the identity of an individual through advocacy. For example, many of DiFranco’s songs are about terminated relationships. When a relationship ends, it is normal to feel lonely and out of place in the world because the identity of partnership with a significant other is thwarted. DiFranco consoles her listeners by singing about being strong, not accepting the feeling of loneliness that often accompanies a breakup. This consolation that DiFranco offers her listeners is a need that the listeners have filled by her. She offers structure by giving advice in her music and forms ideals for women to be strong.

The final level of music is a cultural level where music is "communicative interaction through the material and tools of a certain type of symbol: sounds" (Fornas, 1990, p. 294). The sounds of music make up the background for the inherent meaning of a song. This is important because of people's ability to replay tunes in their minds. The melody or beat is important for recognizing a song as well as enjoying it. The musical score that DiFranco chooses to accompany her lyrics also sends a message concerning the emotional tone of a song. Music can be calm and soothing or energetic, depending on the message. Sellnow discusses how the musical score can impact the emotional and lyrical message in a song.
Sellnow’s "Illusion of Life" Rhetorical Perspective

In a discussion about emotions in relation to music, Sellnow (1996) states, the "musical score strongly impacts the ultimate message conveyed depending on whether it emotionally reinforces or contradicts the lyrical message" (p. 46). The sounds that accompany the lyrics in a song can set a tone along with the emotional impact of the lyrics. The score can reinforce the lyrical message if it is consistent with the rhetorical message sent by the singer.

A rhetorical approach that combines both the lyrics and the musical score in relation to emotions invoked by music is Sellnow’s "illusion of life" rhetorical perspective which "enriches our understanding of music as a rhetorical form by examining the interactive relationship between music and lyrics," as well as enriching "our ability to understand how music functions rhetorically to communicate emotion" (Sellnow, 1996, p. 46). According to Sellnow (1996), only a few studies have devised a system where a combined examination of lyrics and music is allowed.

Sellnow (1996) states, "music, as an artistic form, communicates emotion" (p. 47). These emotions can be invoked by intensity and release patterns in songs. These musical patterns "function to represent human emotion" (Sellnow, 1996, p. 48). Sellnow (1996) states, "intensity patterns in music... are those patterns that suggest tensions, the 'shocks' and 'conflicts' experienced in daily living, whereas release
patterns are those patterns that suggest the 'resolution' of tensions" (p. 48).

Sellnow explains how the "illusion of life" rhetorical perspective of music can increase the meaning of a musical score. The first explanation is how "the score's intensity and release patterns might convey an emotional message that reinforces the mood and meaning of the lyrics, making them more poignant for listeners" (Sellnow, 1996, p. 49). In addition, "the score's intensity and release patterns might convey an emotional message that contradicts the mood and meaning of the lyrics" (Sellnow, 1996, p. 49).

An important message about the "illusion of life" rhetorical perspective is that it "elucidates why there may be multiple interpretations of the same musical work", depending on if the musical score plays a primary or secondary role in the interpretation by the audience. In other words, the "illusion of life" rhetorical perspective "illuminates the potential of music to convey multiple meanings based on the relative degree of emphasis placed on music and lyrics" (Sellnow, 1996, p. 50).

A final note on the "illusion of life" rhetorical perspective is aimed towards performers concerning the interpretation of their music. Sellnow (1996) states that performers "would be wise to consider carefully whether to use intensity and release patterns that reinforce or contradict their discursive meaning" (p. 59). When the sound of a song coincides with the rhetorical meaning, the nonverbal tone of
the message is conveyed to the receiver along with message in the lyrics.

Summary

Music as interpersonal communication can take on many forms. It can reaffirm or deny the identity of an individual. Music can bring forth emotions of individuals listening to songs that relate to the individual personally. Self disclosure by the artist is important for the relationship to be formed between the artist and listener. When a musician reveals personal information to an audience, they become aware of the musician’s personal life which can help the audience relate to the music and the artist on a more personal level.

The propositions by Small, Bloomfield, and Fornas attempt to offer explanations of music as interpersonal communication. The aspects of interpersonal communication previously discussed offer a rationale for combining interpersonal communication and music. However, the propositions discussed are always going to be specific to the individual who listens to the music because it is their responsibility to accept or reject the idea of receiving messages in a musical form.

Empathy plays a major role in the development of a relationship between a musician and a listener. In addition, if musicians allow their music to affect perceptions and interpretations of their listeners, it can aid in forming a relationship with an audience. Listening to music contains many aspects of interpersonal communication despite whether or not it is acknowledged by society.
CHAPTER 5
THE ANALYSIS

As discussed earlier, DiFranco's songs are a reflection of her life as she sings her music based on personal experiences. Every aspect of her music is DiFranco's creation and not edited by any controlling factors. Her personable nature comes out through her music which reflects her needs, motivations, memories, thoughts, and emotions. She sings about these aspects through songs of protest, songs of persuasion, and messages songs.

This chapter will divide the lyrics into the general category of message music, and more specifically, the categories of protest music and propaganda music to show how DiFranco's lyrics affect society. Psychologically, her lyrics will reflect her needs, motivations, memories, thoughts, and emotions as DiFranco allows her audience an opportunity to gain insight into her perspectives on life.

This chapter will focus on DiFranco as a communicator for social issues such as abortion, bisexuality, prostitution, gender issues, and corporate America. The lyrics chosen to be analyzed demonstrate these topics. She sends messages in her music which encourages her fans to participate with her, trying to make this world a better place. This chapter will
demonstrate how DiFranco’s music can convey messages to audience members who might benefit from her ideology. She is a strong woman and role model for many young women who are encouraged by her “take no nonsense” attitude.

The first example of DiFranco’s impact on women is from her fifth album “Imperfectly”. The song “I’m No Heroine” describes her image as a role model to her fans as she informs her audience through the song that she doesn’t consider herself someone who is admired by others. In this song of persuasion, she expresses her motives as she takes herself off the pedestal her fans have put her on. DiFranco sings,

I just write about what I should have done
I just sing about what I wish I could say
And I hope somewhere
Some woman hears my music
And it helps her through her day

DiFranco relates to her audience by exposing her own emotions. Her modest attitude is displayed in this song as she humbly claims that she “just” writes about what she “should’ve done” and what she “wishes she could say”. Using the word “just” demonstrates her modest attitude, claiming she isn’t as perfect as her audience would like her to be. She’s “just” teaching her audience from her past mistakes in life. She speaks directly to the female listener with an empathetic tone which reaches her audience members, giving them a validation which results in consolation and encouragement.
She continues to discuss how she feels certain issues of life are often unfair and unjustified. In another verse from “I’m No Heroine”, DiFranco elaborates on gender issues.

Some guy designed
These shoes I use to walk around
Some big man’s business
Turns a profit every time
I lay my money down
Some guy designed this room
I’m standing in
Another one built it
With his own tools
Who says I like right angles
These are not my laws
These are not my rules

In most of DiFranco’s songs about gender issues and corporate America, she refers to the men in charge as “big boys”. DiFranco’s condescending approach towards them illustrates how these men have negatively affected her career. Using the term “some guy” illustrates the shift of power to any male, not just a specific one. DiFranco is saying that men are making her laws, designing her style of shoes, and making a profit off of her. She is demonstrating that men have this unjustified power to design our rooms, even if we don’t like right angles.

DiFranco’s ironic approach to something as basic as right angles demonstrates that men have unjustified power over issues
that people don’t normally think about on an everyday basis. By saying that right angles are not her “laws” and not her “rules” shows her protest of the “system” we live in.

In addition to criticizing right angles, DiFranco uses her music to “speak frankly about sensitive, soul searching and occasionally disturbing subject matters” (http://www.daddario.com/ANIDIFRA.HTML). She challenges controversial issues by emphasizing the realities underlying them. Many people might be shocked at her willingness to discuss issues such as bisexuality. DiFranco takes controversial issues and turns them into thought provoking songs. “In or Out” off her album “Imperfectly” represents her views on her own bisexuality where she expresses her “whatever” attitude to the gay and lesbian community who wants to know if she is “In or Out”. In this message song demonstrating her needs, DiFranco sings,

Guess there’s something wrong with me
   Guess I don’t fit in
   No one wants to touch it
   No one know where to begin
   I’ve got more than one membership
      To more than one club
         And I owe my life
            To the people that I love

DiFranco explains why she shouldn’t have to choose between men and women just to satisfy the gay and lesbian communities. This song was written in reaction to their probing questions relating to representation. DiFranco uses
the metaphor of having “more than one membership to more than one club” to explain that she is not straight and she is not a lesbian, however, she is a combination of the two. This song demonstrates that DiFranco refuses to compromise her bisexual status just to satisfy the needs of the gay and lesbian community or the straight community.

DiFranco mocks the gay and lesbian community, stating that because people don’t understand, there must be something wrong with her. Her claim is that people don’t have to like or accept her because she has people that love and support her regardless of her sexual orientation.

Her bisexuality has interfered with her romantic relationships with men, as well. She discusses a conflict she had with a boyfriend when he found out that she cheated on him with another woman. In the message song “Light of Some Kind” from her album “Not a Pretty Girl”, DiFranco apologizes to her old boyfriend which demonstrates her motivations and needs. DiFranco sings,

    And I still think of you as my boyfriend
    I don’t think this is the end of the world
    Maybe you should follow my example
    And go meet yourself
    A really nice girl

DiFranco’s lyrics are apologetic when she states:

    At the end of this tunnel
    Of guilt and shame
    There must be a light of some kind

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Oh, there must be
A light of some kind

She repeats the last line of the song in hope of this light that will put everything into perspective. This “light of some kind” represents something worthy that must come from something hurtful. When people conclude that things happen for a reason, it is usually because they need to believe that something good will come of it. This light that DiFranco is searching for is the good that will come from this mess created in her relationship.

DiFranco’s message to her boyfriend is that their relationship should not have to end because of her infidelity. DiFranco pokes fun at the situation by ironically stating that her boyfriend should follow her example and meet a “really nice girl”. However, it is doubtful that she means it.

She hopes that her boyfriend will forgive her. She sings,

We both know
What I’ve been doing
I’ve been intentionally bad at lying
You’re the only boy I ever let see through me
And I hope you believe me when I say I’m trying

This verse shows a weakness in DiFranco. She is almost begging for her boyfriend’s forgiveness. She takes the blame for being “intentionally bad at lying”. It appears that she wanted her boyfriend to find out about her sexual orientation, or to be caught cheating. She states that he’s the only boy
she ever let "see through" her. This statement extends credit to him for knowing her in a unique way. She is appealing to his knowledge of her in order to gain his forgiveness.

In addition to romantic issues, DiFranco discusses other topics such as abortion. DiFranco’s perception is illustrated in the protest song “Lost Woman Song” from DiFranco’s first self-titled album. This song centers on a vision of a woman sitting in the abortion clinic waiting for her name to be called. DiFranco sings,

I am here to exercise my freedom of choice
I passed their hand held signs
I went through their picket lines
They gathered when they saw me coming
They shouted when they saw me cross
I said why don’t you go home
Just leave me alone
I’m just another woman lost

DiFranco’s tone in the message of a woman “being lost” is appealing to the emotions of the protesters who place an added burden on women concerning the operation. “Lost Woman Song” discusses a situation where a woman is confused and does not want to undergo the abortion process, but feels she has no other alternative. She is appealing to the protesters by claiming that they do not know her as a person, nor do they know any circumstances surrounding the pregnancy, so what right do they have to guide her destiny? The intensity of the situation is demonstrated by DiFranco as she shows other women
the heartache and struggle the process of an abortion can be like. She is illustrating a woman’s right to an abortion, as well as the right of the protesters. However, the protesters should not be able to control a woman’s right to an abortion. She clearly states that she “is here to exercise my freedom of choice”.

At the end of this thought provoking, woman-centered song, DiFranco sings about the clinic closing because of the demonstration. In this song, the protesters won the battle, as DiFranco clearly sends a message to her listeners concerning the demise of the clinic.

Another song which deals with the issue of abortion is from a different perspective. The song “Tiptoe” from “Not a Pretty Girl” is a song about a woman standing at the edge of a pier, admiring the view of New Jersey’s sunset, while waiting to have an abortion. The tone of the song harbors a twinge of regret. The song is vocalized acappella, as DiFranco speaks this message song containing her emotions, cognition, needs, and perspective.

I got sh** to do
And an appointment on Tuesday
To shed uninvited blood and tissue
I’ll miss you I say
To the river to the water
To the son or daughter
I thought better of
I could fall in love
With Jersey at sunset
But I leave the view to the rats
And tiptoe back

DiFranco poetically refers to the process of an abortion as shedding "uninvited blood and tissue". This metaphor illustrates how DiFranco's thoughts are with her unborn fetus. Stating, "I'll miss you...to the son or daughter, I thought better of" shows that DiFranco is putting the needs of the fetus before her own maternal instincts, knowing that she could not care for the child at that time. In the song she states, she is:

walking towards the water
with a fetus holding court
in my gut

She further explains how her "body is hijacked" from this fetus. This demonstrates that her body is hosting an uninvited visitor that she is not prepared to deal with. DiFranco's perceptions on this issue are thought provoking and even idyllic.

DiFranco's topics range from abortion to prostitution. Another controversial issue that DiFranco sings about is the lifestyle of a prostitute. On DiFranco's live double compact disc titled "Living in Clip", she explains to her fans that when she looked out her window while living in New York City, she witnessed women soliciting their bodies. Her visions became a message song titled "Letter to a John", originally off
her sixth album “Out of Range” DiFranco soulfully sings her perceptions:

Don’t ask me why I’m crying
I’m not gonna tell you what’s wrong
I’m just gonna sit on your lap
For five dollars a song
I want you to pay me for my beauty
I think it’s only right
‘Cause I have been paying for it
All of my life
I’m gonna take the money I make
And I’m gonna go away

The song implies solicitation for beauty, among other things. It is interesting how she states, “I want you to pay me for my beauty, I think it’s only right, ‘cause I have been paying for it all of my life”. This implies that beauty should not be equated with happiness. Sorrow is implied when she states, “Don’t ask me why I’m crying”. Obviously to the listener, this is an unhappy moment and an unfortunate situation. Melancholy is further implied when she states, “I’m gonna take the money I make and I’m gonna go away”. DiFranco continues to say in this song:

I don’t think that
I’m better than you
but I don’t think that
I’m worse

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DiFranco’s respect for sensitive issues is demonstrated in this song. Her perceptions of the women and their lifestyles is sympathetic to her listeners who might relate to this song. She sends a message that one’s occupational orientation is not a factor to be judged when she states, “I don’t think that I’m better than you, but I don’t think that I’m worse”. DiFranco opens up to a community of women who might be struggling with the issues that she addresses.

The next example of DiFranco’s power struggles is demonstrated by her conflict with the corporate industry which is made public to her fans through her music. She sings about corporate America as if it were the most appalling experience she has ever encountered. DiFranco’s disgust with the music industry dominates many of her songs. In the song “Not so Soft” from the album of the same title, DiFranco displays her opinions concerning the corporate dominated world. This protest song is based on her motivations, needs and memories, as she sings,

It is the failed America in me
   It is the fear
   That lives
   In a forest of stone
   Underneath the corporate canopy
   Where the sun
      rarely
      filters
      and the ground
is not so soft

DiFranco refers to "the failed America" to illustrate how her needs have not been met by this pseudo-world called corporate America. The statement also demonstrates that America is not up to her standards. She states that her experience in this the corporate world has left her with the knowledge that "the ground is not so soft", and that the "sun rarely filters down". These dark lyrics illustrate that in the corporate world, the journey can be torturous.

"Roll With It" is another song from "Not So Soft" where she demonstrates protest and motivation.

The mainstream
Is so polluted with lies...
We are all taught how to justify history
As it passes by
And yes, it's your world
That comes crashing down
When the big boys
Want to throw their weight around

In the protest song "Roll With It", DiFranco describes "the big boys" (the men controlling corporate America) as a paramount reason why society is tainted with deception. She discusses how "the mainstream is so polluted with lies" which confers with the manipulation of the American public who are taught to accept the status quo. This is demonstrated with the lyrics, "We are all taught how to justify history as it passes by". She is inferring that the American public is being
influenced to make excuses for the problems that occur in our society. Again, she states that people's choices in society are often dominated by the "big boys" in the corporate industry. In this song, DiFranco's motivation and thoughts are displayed as she tries to spread the message that we are all the victims of corporate America.

Perhaps DiFranco's most controversial song about her independence is from her fourth album, "Puddle Dive" and is titled, "Blood In The Boardroom". DiFranco narrates her experience of receiving her period while she is in a meeting in a boardroom with "the big boys". She uses this song as a justification that being a woman does not necessitate being stereotyped as one. She sings,

Sitting in the boardroom
The I'm so bored room
Listening to the suits talk about their world
I didn't really have much to say the whole time I was there
So I just left a big brown stain on their white chair

DiFranco's ridicule of the businessmen she was meeting with demonstrates her atypical behavior and approach towards the music industry. By mocking the boardroom meeting as "sitting in the boardroom, the I'm so bored room", DiFranco shows her rejection of the "system". By referring to the men as "suits", again, DiFranco is mocking the "big boys". She left her mark in the meeting by receiving her period, which stained the chair she was sitting on. This could be considered
a reflection on her womanhood as well as a rebellion against the corporate industry.

DiFranco is proud of herself for beating the system and frolics by rubbing it in people’s faces. She sings about her motivations and needs in the protest song “Million You Never Made” off of her seventh album, “Not a Pretty Girl”. DiFranco sings to the “big boys”,

I’m an idealistic girl
And I wouldn’t work for you
No matter what you paid
I may not be able
To change the whole fu**ing world

But I can be the million that you never made

DiFranco refers to herself as being the “million that you never made”. She is talking directly to the “big boys” and saying that she is visionary and would not succumb to their method of conducting business. DiFranco demands complete autonomy on all of her music, therefore, if she cooperates with the “big boys” then she would have to compromise her music. She refuses to change her music, no matter what they offered to pay her. By stating that she “may not be able to change the whole fu**ing world”, DiFranco is demonstrating her frustration and initiating that she is trying to change the world to some extent. Being the “million that you never made” is directed towards the offers she has turned down from record labels. DiFranco is succeeding without the major record labels and secures every opportunity to gloat about her independence.
She continues to sing about her own success in a message song about her accomplishments. In the song "Make Them Apologize" from her album "Imperfectly", DiFranco motivates her audience by discussing her success. She sings about the music industry,

I am matching the big boys
One for one
And I must admit I am
Having myself some fun

Again, DiFranco demonstrates her success which the "big boys" predicted would not happen without their help. DiFranco’s success has been with her even before the release of her first compact disc. The problem has been creating a medium to reach the American public which is what the "big boys" offered her a solution to, however, DiFranco would have to sacrifice her rights regarding her music.

DiFranco’s role as a motivator to her audience is demonstrated in her song "Face Up and Sing" from her album "Out of Range". DiFranco sings about a young woman who approached her after a show and thanked her for saying all the things she wished she could say. DiFranco replied with this propaganda song which is aimed at all the women who regard her as a "heroine". This song demonstrates DiFranco’s motivations, needs, and emotions.

It’s nice that you listen
It’d be nicer if you joined in
As long as you play their game girl
You’re never going to win...

Somebody do something

Anything soon

I know I can’t be the only

Whatever I am in the room

So why am I so lonely

Why am I so tired

I need backup

I need company

I need to be inspired

This verse is aimed at the female listener. She states, "as long as you play their game girl, you’re never going to win" which is a reflection of her struggle with other people wanting control of her music and as well as her life. DiFranco gives advice to her listeners from her own experiences which magnifies the effect of her song. She is begging for others to consent to her ideology. She claims, "I need backup, I need company, I need to be inspired", which demonstrates her own needs. She states, “It’s nice that you listen, It’d be nicer if you joined in” which clearly demonstrates her need for others to fight with her against the “system”.

DiFranco illustrates how her fans impact her music as she asks her fans to join her in her protests. DiFranco states, “I expect more from this world. We can do better” (http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~marg/ani/articles/globe_interview.html). She dramatizes her point in her protest song “Coming Up” which is based on her motivations and needs. This song is
originally spoken accappella on her album "Imperfectly" and is remade to music on a more recent album, "Not a Pretty Girl". DiFranco sings:

This country's too large
And whoever's in charge up there
Had better take the elevator down
And put more than
Change in our cup or else we
Are coming up

This song makes a statement of how unsatisfactory the world can be to the American public. DiFranco spiritually asks for help from a higher power by stating, "Whoever's in charge up there". In this song, DiFranco is asking for assistance concerning the way of life for the American public who might need it. She claims that if America does not receive help in the future, it could result in a rebellion. This is demonstrated through her threat, "Or else we are coming up" which is aimed at the inadequate status quo. This song illustrates how DiFranco’s unselfish nature attempts to help and motivate the people of America in addition to her own basic needs.

Summary

Thus far, this analysis has demonstrated how DiFranco reaches an audience through her music and effectively influences her listeners. She transmits messages concerning society and individuals who might empathize with her life’s
experiences and benefit from them. DiFranco influences her listeners through her ideology which can inspire her following to make an attitude change concerning the nature of society. These opportunities are limited because her exposure to the general public is restricted due to her goal of independence.

Through this analysis, it can be seen that DiFranco's mission concerning her music is awareness. She sings about societal issues hoping to attract listeners through her cynicism as she points out unjustified situations that require a reaction in order to repair existing obstacles. DiFranco has also made a commitment through her music to many women who support her ideology and respect her messages. She has offered her female audience an understanding of unity among women that could not be given to them by just any mainstream artists, thus forming a relationship with them.

DiFranco's attitude is liberating for many women. Her attitude empowers women who are in need of encouragement concerning their own issues in life. DiFranco's major themes have been analyzed to demonstrate the importance of her messages for women. DiFranco offers her female listeners an empathetic outlet for their own issues in life, as well as a supportive environment in which women can relate and improve their own inner strength.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Findings

This study has broken folk music down into the three categories of message music, protest music, and propaganda (rhetorical and magnetic) music. DiFranco’s propaganda songs can be either rhetorical or magnetic, yet it is unresolved whether she is actually starting a movement. DiFranco has created a community of listeners who respond to her messages which could be the start of a movement within specific individuals because it allows for a social gathering where a response of some sort could be invoked. As far as a bonafide social movement by society, DiFranco’s limited access to the public has decreased her chances of proclaiming a social movement. However, her propaganda songs persuade her audience in certain ways which could lead to a following of fans willing to participate in a social movement if DiFranco leads one.

The analysis of DiFranco’s songs has been broken down concerning how her songs affect society through protest, propaganda and message music and how psychologically, she uses her emotions, needs, thoughts, and motivations to communicate to her audience on a personal level. This type of communication impacts her listeners because they can relate to
her through empathy, as well as other factors which can identify an audience with a role model.

Many musicians become role models for consumers of music. Music offers receivers an insight into a new world, as listeners are provided with an opportunity to live in the musician’s world vicariously through the music. Music can also provide a setting for individuals to construct, validate or change a current mood. Music provides an opportunity to develop relationships among other people who have common taste in music.

This study is not advocating DiFranco as a role model for everyone, especially young teenagers. Her sophisticated topics might not be appropriate for some individuals. However, aside from her occasional “slips” of vulgarity, DiFranco’s messages are profound and thought provoking. These messages have impacted a wide range of individuals, according to recent publications about her as well as information on the internet. The term “Goddess” has been used by fans to describe DiFranco which represents the impact she has on her audience. Her audience respects her ideology and therefore supports DiFranco’s independence as an artist. Her fans’ support increases the dissemination of her messages, enlarging her community of listeners.

My personal awareness of DiFranco occurred in the fall of 1995 when I heard one of her songs on a special acoustic broadcast of various artist on the Las Vegas radio station 97.1, KXPT. I’ve yet to hear her again on the radio with the
exception of air time on the "Women's Voices" show which is broadcast once a week on the Las Vegas community radio station 91.5 KUNV. DiFranco has been noted as receiving air time on various college radio stations, which further increases her community of listeners. College radio stations are notorious for promoting obscurity where DiFranco's music would be appropriate.

DiFranco's lack of air play on the radio is of significant value concerning her loyal fans who purchase her compact discs despite her lack of exposure on the mainstream circuit. This can be due to her profound messages in her music which reaches into the heart of her listeners, further impacting them through song. DiFranco's topics concerning delicate issues encompasses her own bisexuality, abortion, gender issues, independence, as well as her own romantic relationships. These issues strike a sensitive chord with her audience, especially her female following, who can relate with some of these issues.

DiFranco has chosen a path for herself which rejects any interference from the corporate music industry concerning the creative process of her music. Corporate music is unfortunately mistaken for art by the general public because it is readily available to society. An important note to remember from this study is that DiFranco is not interested in fame or money, however it is the creative process of her art and its impact on her audience that motivates her to continue her journey as an independent artist.
Implications

Throughout this study, it has been seen how DiFranco self-discloses her personal experiences through her music in order to send messages to her listeners while hoping to empower women as well as society in general. DiFranco's motivations might be self-serving as well as advantageous; she sings about the issues she encounters on a daily basis. These issues are formulated into DiFranco's opinions and ideology, where she invites her audience to participate with her by advocating her ideas as well as spreading her music to potential fans who have not yet listened to her songs.

DiFranco's fans are responsible for her recent notoriety and current publications. The fans deserve credit for the media's response to DiFranco's following, who purchase her compact discs, attend her concerts, and set up web pages on the internet. She has made her mark in the music industry as an independent artist who refuses to compromise her music as well as her identity. Her fans respect her autonomy and respond to her spiritual lyrics which argues against the social "system" of this country as well as pointing out her dissatisfaction with the status quo.

DiFranco's music is categorized as folk music which has the effect of uniting people towards a common purpose. DiFranco asks her audience to participate with her by voicing their own opinions in addition to drawing her audience into her ideology through empathy. At DiFranco's concerts she talks to her audience in between songs and tells them interesting
stories that happen to her while touring and participating in folk festivals. By speaking to her audience as if they were friends of hers, she facilitates the formation of an interpersonal relationship with her fans. The fans respond to her due to Collins and Miller’s (1994) disclosure-liking effects discussed in chapter four, which claim that people who self disclose on an intimate level are predominantly liked more than individuals whose disclosures are not as intimate. Because DiFranco allows her listeners an insight of her life, attitudes, and perceptions, she gains their respect, confidence, and support. This allows her messages to be spread through word of mouth which is how DiFranco has succeeded thus far.

When research began for this study during the spring of 1997, there was limited information available concerning DiFranco. As the study progressed, more articles and interviews about DiFranco emerged which communicates the significance of this study. While still relatively unfamiliar to the general public, DiFranco has made an impact on her fans, as well as the music industry. One of the purposes of this study was to introduce DiFranco as an unknown communicator of profound messages, however the revelation of DiFranco as an “independent spirit” by the media has given her delayed recognition in the music industry.

One ramification of DiFranco’s profound music is that she is likely to be imitated by others who cannot deliver the presentation as well as the original performer. An example of
DiFranco being poorly imitated is the remake of her song “32 Flavors” currently being played on the Las Vegas radio station 94.1, KMXB. Singer Alana Davis has inadequately copied DiFranco’s classic folk song and turned it into a “pop” song by adding new lyrics in addition to creating a faster tempo and beat. The radio stations do not extend credit to DiFranco, the original artist. Instead, they congratulate Davis on her “new” song and her “hit” single. It is disturbing to DiFranco’s fans that Davis receives recognition for a song that became a defective remake of an original piece of art.

DiFranco’s music indicates that we do not live in a “happy” world. She points out disturbances concerning peoples’ behavior, issues related to gender, and everything else she contacts that will formulate a message. Her open communication style is refreshing and rewarding to her audience.

Future Research

This study has indicated that there is a confined link between music and rhetorical studies. Sellnow’s “illusion of life” perspective suggests an examination of the relationship between the sounds in music and it’s lyrics, which this study does not address in depth. In addition, Sellnow addresses the relationship between music and emotions, which is significant to this study concerning interpersonal communication as DiFranco invokes emotions in her receivers.

Since there has been no previous in-depth study of DiFranco, future research in relation to the singer/songwriter
and folk music could include a discussion of women in music, music as a culture, the relationship between sounds in the music and the lyrics, the impact music has on society, the medium through which music is available, the marketing of music, and other artists who use self disclosure as a basis for writing song lyrics such as Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, and Christine McVie of the legendary band Fleetwood Mac.

This study questions the corporate music industry’s ethos, as it postulates that the industry is only interested in images that will sell to the public as a foundation to produce money. One question concerning the nature of the music being marketed at this specific time is if the marketers of “popular” music actually listen to the music being made known to the public.

The media is another issue that interferes with the success of musicians. Radio exposure is essential to have artists introduced to the public. DiFranco does not have that exposure, however she has beaten the odds against her by reaching specific audiences, although limited. Again, this was made possible by her loyal and passionate following.

This study addresses the issue of musical independence and shows how independence, although worthwhile in the end in order to maintain autonomy over one’s art, has been a struggle for DiFranco in terms of reaching audiences and dealing with the corporate music industry trying to persuade her to sign with specific record labels. It is ironic that DiFranco is at last receiving media recognition, although meager, after the
release of 10 compact discs, whereas the artist Jewel, known by most of society, has yet to release her second compact disc.

Summary

This study has attempted to expose a significant singer/songwriter who has impacted a community of listeners with her inspiring lyrics and cynicism. Most importantly is the impact she has made on her audience without the interference of the corporate music industry. This study has put down the corporate music industry to illustrate how difficult it is to become a well-known musician without their guidance and services. However, for DiFranco, her rejection of the corporate music industry has marked her as an independent "spirit" who has impacted a range of listeners, mostly women, who have appreciated the messages in her songs and have attempted to learn from them.
AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Due to the adult content prevalent in DiFranco's song lyrics and quotes, certain words used the symbol * to alter the language for the purposes of decreasing profane language use in this thesis.
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