

of the  
Celtic music  
range of Celtic music and  
YouTube, including substantial fan compilations.

See diaspora; world music

Further reading:

McLaughlin, N. and McLoone, M. (2000) 'Hybridity and National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music', *Popular Music*, 19, 2: 181-99.

Sawyers, J. (2000) *The Complete Guide to Celtic Music*, London: Arum Press.

Listening: Horslips, *Dance Hall Sweethearts*, RCA, 1974; Sarah McLachlan, *Solace*, Arista, 1991; The Pogues, *Rum, Sodomy & the Lash*, MCA, 1995; Enya, *Watermark*, Reprise, 1988.

## CENSORSHIP

Censorship occurs whenever particular words, images, sounds, and ideas are suppressed or muted. This usually occurs through legislation at the



national or local level, but can also take place through self-regulation and codes of practice within the media and communication industries. In a major study of the operation of popular music censorship in Britain, Cloonan (1996: 75) initially defines it as 'an attempt to interfere, either pre- or post-publication with the artistic expressions of popular music artists with a view to stifling, or significantly altering, that expression. This puts the emphasis on censorship as a *deliberate act*'.

Censorship operates at a number of levels in popular music. There is a long history of record companies refusing to distribute potentially controversial records or videos, of recordings subject to bans by radio, and recordings being subject to court action. Much of the associated debate is between supporters of the basic right of free speech, and those calling for the regulation of obscenity. A further dimension is a more covert one, where the market effectively acts as a censor. This includes record companies' decisions not to sign artists, or to fully support releases, because of their perceived lack of commercial potential; decisions by large retail outlets not to stock less commercial or controversial artists/genres; and decisions by radio stations not to play records which do not fit their general format. While these decisions are based on commercial rather than moral considerations, their net effect may be censorial. The licencing and regulation of live venues by local authorities also operates as a form of censorship (see **policy**).

In Britain and the United States, calls for stricter censorship of popular media culture have been strongly associated with the political activism and influence of the New Right, a loose amalgam of religious and conservative groups. Cloonan (1996) details a number of themes in the censorship of popular music in the United Kingdom: the ebb and flow of censorship in relation to contemporary events, with often high-profile crimes causally linked to viewing violent media; the tendency of proponents of censorship to portray the popular music audience as passive dupes of the industry, accompanied by an aesthetic critique of pop; a concern for the welfare of children and adolescents; and xenophobia, as with the early British attacks on rock'n'roll which emphasized its American roots. Variants of these are present internationally, particularly in the views of the Parents' Music Resource Center (PMRC) in the United States, formed in 1985.

A historical succession of moral panics/censorship episodes around particular genres and performers have been identified and examined (see Shuker, 2016: Chapter 14).

See: **gangsta rap; moral panic**