"Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I'm Yours": How Music and Musicians Propelled Barack Obama to the Presidency in 2008

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“Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I’m Yours”: How Music and Musicians Propelled Barack Obama to the Presidency in 2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Music from The College of William and Mary

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“SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED, I’M YOURS”: HOW MUSIC AND MUSICIANS PROPELLED BARACK OBAMA TO THE PRESIDENCY IN 2008

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April 2009

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Introduction:

Over the course of the last century, the nature of American Presidential campaigns has changed drastically. Technological innovations like radio, television, and the internet have vastly affected the way that national campaigns are run. One of the few constants in the evolution of campaigns, though, has been music. Since the very first presidential election in 1789, campaigns have employed music and musicians as a means to spread messages or to present facts about a candidate and his or her policies. Music was an especially powerful force in elections through the early twentieth century. Since then, however, there has been a significant decline in the amount of original music created to endorse political candidates. At the end of the twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first, there was a dearth of such original compositions. In most elections since the 1970s, candidates, instead of using original songs, only used pre-existing popular music selections along the campaign trail. The official song of both Clinton-Gore campaigns, for example, was Fleetwood Mac’s “Don’t Stop Thinking about Tomorrow,” and the official song of Hillary Clinton’s 2008 campaign was, for a short time, Celine Dion’s “You and I.” For the last thirty years, new music was very seldom heard in the context of a political campaign.

In 2008, this trend was completely reversed and Senator Barack Obama’s successful presidential campaign led the way. Obama’s campaign relied heavily on the support of musicians and inspired a resurgence of music and musicians within the American political arena. I argue that this resurgence of campaign-related music was a result of several factors, from Obama’s personal popularity to the vastly expanding
technologies that the internet provided to both the Obama campaign and the musicians that came to be associated with it.

Obama often discussed music in public and with the media, associating himself with many popular musicians in an effort to present himself as a “regular guy.” He managed to do so without making extremely radical or controversial selections, which has been one of the most important aspects of successful campaigns in America since September 11, 2001. After the attacks of September 11, politicians, news media, and the music industry all went to extreme measures to ensure that no content was broadcasted that could be construed as offensive or insensitive. Clear Channel Communications, a corporation which owned about 1,170 radio stations nationwide in the aftermath of September 11, released a memo that contained a list of songs that were to be avoided by DJ’s because of their potentially offensive content. The memo was circulated among all Clear Channel stations (Strauss 2001). These practices led to the creation of a musical culture that was bound by many types of censorship and self-censorship. Naturally, then, politicians also had to be very careful about the music and musicians with which they aligned themselves. Barack Obama’s campaign handled their relationship with various musical subcultures very carefully and effectively. Obama managed to develop an unprecedented public dialogue with a range of American musicians, and his campaign prompted cooperation between the musicians themselves, which undoubtedly helped him secure the support of many. Most notable was the way his campaign negotiated with the often controversial hip-hop community in a way that turned out to be beneficial for both Obama and that community.
In this paper, I will show how the sheer magnitude of Obama’s popularity was so powerful that he and many musicians effectively traded endorsements throughout the campaign. Not only did Obama benefit from the support of musicians, but musicians saw an opportunity to gain some widespread recognition by associating themselves with Obama. Obama, by the time the 2008 campaign was in full swing, had undeniably achieved celebrity status, and his seal of approval became highly valued and coveted within the arts community. Not only did he lend credence to big stars, he legitimized the work of many amateurs or unknown musicians by offering his website as a forum for the sharing of musical and artistic products. This may be an explanation for why so many small-scale Obama benefit concerts were held, throughout the country, by independent and local artists.

Another issue I investigate is how advancements in internet technology have made it possible for both professional and amateur musicians to release material to a limitless audience. Throughout the 2008 campaign, for the first time ever, artists began releasing election-related content through social networking sites, like Facebook or Myspace, and video-sharing sites like Youtube. Through these often musical political endorsements, unknown artists rose to fame almost overnight. Previously established artists also made use of these websites to put forth a political message without having to negotiate with their major record labels, which are always hesitant to release material that endorses specific political candidates or causes.

Since the election of 2004, the internet has become a place where a steadily increasing percentage of Americans access the news. It is a venue through which campaigns can collect donations, and it is most importantly a place where individuals can
have their voices heard throughout the world. Because of the way the Obama campaign embraced internet technology, a participatory community of grassroots support was created, ultimately propelling him to victory in November 2008.

Erving Goffman’s notion of the unpredictable quality of performance is a particularly compelling model for the spontaneity with which even the most well rehearsed performance transpires (Goffman 1959). This model also characterizes the process of my research. Because I was conducting this research throughout 2008 and into 2009, data was unfolding every day and unexpected developments constantly took me by surprise. What started as a thesis on liberal rock stars’ roles in American politics became an ethnography of the emergent rebirth of spontaneous involvement of music and musicians in the American political process. In the election of 2008, Barack Obama’s campaign sparked a significant resurgence in the prevalence of campaign-related music, and music reclaimed a role in American politics that it had not occupied for nearly a century.
Section I: The History of American Political Campaign Music

The Rebs call Uncle Abe an abolition Babe,
But I think they had better heed his warning,
For he has got more land than any other man,
And he’ll have all their niggers in the morning.1

American campaign music has come a long way from this text, a verse from T. Brigham Bishop’s 1864 song entitled “Abraham the Great and General Grant his Mate” (Bishop 1864). Since the first presidential election in 1789, music has played a significant role in campaigns, from the nineteenth-century prevalence of campaign song sheet music and songsters to Bill Clinton’s saxophone performance on The Arsenio Hall Show in 1992. While its importance has varied from election to election, music has always been a factor. Especially between about 1840 and 1920, campaign songs were significant aspects of most presidential campaigns. Early twentieth-century labor activist and songwriter Joe Hill described the benefits of a campaign song, “A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over again” (Seeger 1999). In the age of mass media, though, the importance and prevalence of topical campaign songs have diminished drastically.

Despite the fact that George Washington ran virtually unopposed for the presidency, songs were still written in his praise. “Follow Washington” and “God Save Great Washington” are examples of these songs. As was the case with many campaign songs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, “God Save Great Washington” was sung to the tune of a well known song, “God Save the King” (Silber 1971). The first true public presidential campaign rivalry came in 1800, between incumbent John Adams and

---

Thomas Jefferson. It was almost immediately after this election that campaign songster Robert Treat Paine, Jr. became one of the first blatant “flip-floppers” in American politics. Prior to the election, he penned several songs in support of John Adams, including “Adams and Liberty.” Shortly after Jefferson won the election and took office, though, Paine wrote “Jefferson and Liberty” in support of Jefferson. The song contained many negative appraisals of Adams, referring to his presidency as “the Reign of Terror” (Silber 1971).

Most political songwriters of this era were commissioned by campaigns. The songs tended to be sung to the tune of another well-known song, while lyrics were often somewhat complex and focused on issues in the campaign. Taking different words and putting them to the melody of a pre-existing song is known as contrafacta. Classical music historian Robert Greenberg points out that “the advantage of using contrafactas for things like campaign songs is that people already know the melodies” (“Songs Along the Campaign Trail” 2008). In 1798, Robert Treat Paine, Jr. composed the words of “Adams and Liberty” to the tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven,” which is more commonly known for its use in “The Star-Spangled Banner” (Silber 1971). So, even the United States National Anthem is an example of contrafacta. Typical subjects covered in campaign songs included praise of a candidate’s character or accomplishments, themes of fairness or freedom, or even the idea that terrible things will happen if the opponent is elected (Seeger 1999).

Before radio and television, campaign songs basically served the same purpose that television ads do in today’s campaigns. In the same way that television ads display familiar images and sounds to complement a political message, nineteenth-century
campaign songs raised election issues through use of familiar tunes with newly composed lyrics. In today’s television and radio ads, and at today’s campaign events, candidates are accompanied or introduced with popular songs that are familiar to most people in the audience.

Kevin Madden, the senior communications strategist for Mitt Romney’s 2008 campaign, described music as something that “helps set a mood for the media images people see on TV that night…It’s part of the pageantry of a campaign in a 24-7 news cycle” (Dominello 2008). In an interview with the Media General News Service, Sam Craig, a marketing professor at New York University noted that the young vote is becoming increasingly important in presidential elections and that candidates “need to build a bond, and one of the quickest, easiest ways to do it is using music that younger voters resonate with” (Ross 2004).

By mixing a political message with sounds from popular culture, then, candidates increase their appeal to different groups of voters. In this sense, the same tactics are being employed in the use of popular music in campaign ads as were used in the distribution of campaign songs sung to familiar tunes. The Obama campaign provided an excellent piece of evidence for Sam Craig’s argument when, prior to the Democratic National Convention in 2008, it aired television spots that featured background music by the popular indie-rock band The National. The ad ends with the phrase “You can change the world” on the screen, which seems to call out to not only young voters, but anyone else who feels their voice is not heard in society (“Signs of Hope and Change” Video 2008). While this is not an example of contrafacta, it essentially serves the same purpose as Robert Treat Paine putting the words of “Adams and Liberty” to the popular tune of
“To Anacreon in Heaven.” By embedding a political message within the framework of a popular tune, those who enjoy that tune will immediately be more inclined to listen.

In 1840, Alexander Coffman Ross wrote what may be the most easily recognized presidential campaign song in American history. “Tip and Ty” was written in support of William Henry Harrison, and premiered at a Whig meeting in Zanesville, Ohio. Ross then traveled to a Whig rally in New York, where he introduced the song again. From here, the song’s popularity increased drastically. In his very thorough annotated compilation of presidential campaign songs, Irwin Silber wrote,

1840 is a tidewater mark in American politics for a variety of reasons, and the development of mass campaign techniques, of which singing may have been the most flamboyant, reflected more deep-going changes in the American electoral pattern – namely, the institutionalization of the party system and the popular selection of presidential electors. (Silber 1971; 33).

The Harrison campaign produced and printed hundreds of songs during the election, but Van Buren’s campaign offered several musical counter-attacks. One example, entitled “Rock-A-Bye Baby,” is representative of the intense mudslinging that was exchanged through song during this campaign. The song’s first verse is

Rock-a-bye baby, daddy’s a Whig,
When he comes home, hard cider he’ll swig.
When he has swug, he’ll fall in a stew,
And down will come Tyler and Tippecanoe (Brand 1999). 2

Campaign songwriters tended to parody and poke fun at each other, too, as is indicated in this example. In the election of 1840, though, Van Buren’s songsters were no match for the prolific and clever songwriters of the Whig Party. One Democratic newspaper editor wrote this of the election of 1840:

Some of the songs I shall never forget. They rang in my ears wherever I went, morning, noon and night…Men, women and children did nothing

2 For recording see accompanying CD.
but sing. It worried, annoyed, dumbfounded, crushed the Democrats, but there was no use trying to escape. It was a ceaseless torrent of music, still beginning, never ending. If a Democrat tried to speak, argue, or answer anything that was said or done, he was only saluted with a fresh deluge of music. (Silber 1971; 41)

This was not the only time in American history when it seemed that almost all musicians were supporters of just one political party. In fact, in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the first three elections of the twenty-first century, the Democratic Party seemed to have the full support of most professional musicians and artists, while Republicans had trouble ever finding music or musicians to support their cause. In 2008, many songwriters and musicians took issue with Republican candidate John McCain’s use of their songs on the campaign trail. Jackson Browne filed a lawsuit against McCain for using his song “Running on Empty,” John Mellencamp sent a cease and desist letter to McCain for using two of his songs, and Foo Fighters released a statement expressing their disapproval of McCain’s use of their song “My Hero” (“Stop Using my Song…” 2008). While Whig Party music is a topic beyond the scope of this paper, the reasons and causes for the unevenness of musicians’ representation in the political parties of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are discussed at greater length in Section IV.

Between 1840 and about 1920, political campaign songwriting practices remained generally the same, with a few exceptions: songs with lyrics were written to be heard and sung. Around the turn of the century, new styles of music came to be used in campaigns. Theodore Roosevelt commissioned ragtime pieces and marches, as did Woodrow Wilson and William Howard Taft. Also, the establishment of Tin Pan Alley songwriting created an outlet through which sheet music copies of campaign songs could be sold, and popularity of these songs could be gauged by sales numbers. In the late 1800s and early
1900s, third party candidates began running fairly successful campaigns, and they too had songs created for them. Many songs were written not necessarily in direct support of third party candidates, but certainly in support of third party causes. Songs like “Hail the Social Revolution” in 1900 and “Voting for Labor” in 1912 became very popular among third party sympathizers (Silber 1971).

A very famous example from 1908 and 1912 is the tune “Get On the Raft with Taft” by Harry D. Kerr. This is an instance in which the music was actually written specifically for this song. While this was rare, it was not entirely unheard of either. Many of the song’s characteristics are similar to most campaign songs from the time between 1840 and 1920. The lyrics praise Taft for his background, his patriotism, and his determination. They also mention Taft’s running mate Jim Sherman, and his opponent William Jennings Bryan. The first line of the final verse reads, “Of Bryan’s bluff we’ve had enough” (Silber 1971; 196). This song shows that, even though nearly seventy-five years had passed since the election of 1840, the general lyrical style of campaign songs had not shifted very much. The rise of radio and television was imminent, though, and would drastically change American politics and political songwriting.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the usefulness of campaign songs dwindled, and eventually the song was no longer a way to spread a candidate’s message. Rather, music served as a soundtrack to campaigns. Many songs were still written for candidates, but many candidates began using pre-existing songs or simply tweaking pre-existing songs to promote their candidacy. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first candidate to adopt a popular song as his campaign theme song. He chose the popular Broadway hit “Happy Days are Here Again” as his campaign theme. In the midst of the Great
Depression, this was a very interesting choice that conveyed the utmost optimism. Since this song was already very popular at the time, people were already hearing it on a regular basis. By making it his campaign theme, Roosevelt ensured that when people listened to the song, it was then associated with Roosevelt. In her article “A Brief History of Political Campaign Songs,” Claire Suddath asserts that “Ever since he turned the non-political “Happy Days Are Here Again” into the Democratic Party's unofficial theme song, candidates have looked to popular culture when searching for that special tune” (Suddath 2008). Since 1992, that has certainly been the dominant trend in presidential campaign music selections. Bill Clinton’s official campaign song, in 1992 and 1996, was Fleetwood Mac’s “Don’t Stop (Thinking About Tomorrow),” which is a very non-political, safe, popular song that presents an optimistic message and can resonate with many voters. Since then, candidates only tend to use songs that are past or present popular hits.

In 1948, when Henry Wallace was running for the Progressive Party against incumbent Harry Truman and Republican challenger Thomas Dewey, many singers in the growing folk music community came out in support of Henry Wallace. Woody Guthrie, Paul Robeson, and Pete Seeger all composed and performed songs that praised either the Progressive cause or Wallace himself. In these cases, they were not writing these songs at the request of the campaign. Rather, they were writing them and hoping that they would be effective for the campaign that they supported. Several musicians compiled a book entitled Songs for Wallace, which included this introduction,

Songs can move mountains, believe it or not; they can make people laugh or cry; and more important, they can help us fight. The songs given here, by describing the issues of today in simple human terms, can be great
weapons in our fight to save America. Let us put these tunes on the lips of millions of citizens! (Lieberman 1995; 133)

The group of singers who came together to support Wallace were known as the People’s Songsters, and although they were technically independent from the Wallace campaign, they ended up donating most of their time and resources to it in 1948. Many People’s Songsters traveled with Henry Wallace on the campaign trail, and sang at the beginning and end of rallies. Paul Robeson and Pete Seeger were two of these traveling musicians. Robeson’s popularity, especially, drew huge crowds to the political rallies (Lieberman 1995). When musicians in the 1800s traveled with candidates and performed songs, their songs were often one of the only sources of information about a candidate. In 1948, however, radio and mass media had taken over the duties of exposing candidates to the public, so the People’s Singers were a significant presence on the campaign trail, but presumably had little to no direct effect on the outcome of the election.

The presence of songsters on the campaign trail was neither unprecedented nor uncommon after 1948. In 2004, a large-scale concert tour called the Vote for Change tour was, like the People’s Singers, technically independent from the John Kerry campaign, but all proceeds from the tour went to MoveOn.org, a political action committee that endorsed Senator Kerry. The Vote for Change tour featured high profile acts such as Bruce Springsteen, The Dixie Chicks, Dave Matthews Band, and Pearl Jam. In 2008, artists such as Bruce Springsteen and rapper Will.I.Am performed at Barack Obama’s campaign events. On a weekday afternoon in October 2008, approximately 50,000 people showed up to see Bruce Springsteen perform at a Barack Obama rally in Philadelphia (Hartnett 2008). In the same way that Paul Robeson and Pete Seeger drew crowds to Henry Wallace events, it is safe to assume, since attendance was so
extraordinary, that many of the audience members in this case were attracted to the event, at least in part, by Springsteen.³

In the latter half of the twentieth century, and the beginning of the twenty-first, campaign music has undergone what I will refer to as a “blanding out” process. Issues are very seldom addressed in campaign songs anymore, and candidates’ choices are typically songs that were previously popular. In 1960, John F. Kennedy adopted the Frank Sinatra hit “High Hopes” as his campaign song, but Sinatra re-recorded the track with new lyrics about the Democratic nominee.

\[
\textit{Everyone wants to back – Jack} \\
\textit{Jack is on the right track.} \\
\textit{‘Cause he’s got high hopes. (“High Hopes” 1960)⁴}
\]

Two trends are demonstrated here. First, there is direct endorsement by a celebrity, with Frank Sinatra lending his voice to the campaign. Second, a popular song has been tweaked in order to promote a candidate. This is not an example of contrafacta but of parody, since the lyrical pattern of the original is still present. In 1996, Bob Dole’s campaign infamously altered the lyrics to Sam and Dave’s “Soul Man” and created “Dole Man.” This resulted in a lawsuit being filed against the campaign by the song’s creators.

Aside from the previous few examples, modern campaigns tend to choose songs that are popular with a mainstream audience and that avoid any offensive material. In today’s campaigns, many candidates actually end up using the same songs. There seems to be a short list of mega hits that campaigns choose from, none of which indicate the differences between candidates or point out any policy plans or opinions. In a 2004 column about campaign music in the \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, Peter Hartlaub wrote that,

³ For a more thorough discussion of benefit concerts and the power of celebrity, see Section III of this paper.
⁴ For complete lyrics to “High Hopes,” refer to Appendix A.
in the past, “Democrats could adopt catchy little tunes such as “Happy Days Are Here Again” or “High Hopes” and be assured that nothing in the impossibly peppy lyrics would inspire impressionable youth to burn down their school or have unprotected sex on a Ferris wheel” (Hartlaub 2004). He goes on to say that popular music has changed so much since then, that there are no guarantees for a safe, but recognizable, campaign song. Perhaps this is why, that in 2008, although Barack Obama talked about how much he liked hip-hop music, hip-hop was not a significant part of the campaign trail soundscape. Very seldom on the campaign trail did Obama’s campaign actually play a hip-hop record. Like most candidates’, Obama’s rallies featured mainstream popular songs, and campaign ads produced by all candidates tended to include instrumental tracks that tend to share many of the same basic characteristics.

Typical selections for campaign trail music are pop songs with easily recognizable, sing-able choruses, with upbeat tempo. Some songs that have been used by multiple campaigns in twenty-first-century elections are Bachman Turner Overdrive’s “Takin’ Care of Business,” U2’s “Beautiful Day,” John Mellencamp’s “Our Country,” and Kool and the Gang’s “Celebration.” All of these songs have become standard pop songs, in verse-chorus form. In each song, the lyrics are largely unconcerned with politics. Music at campaign events, it seems, is used in the same way as music is used at sporting events in America. It is a means of getting the crowd excited through up-tempo, danceable songs that can create a celebratory atmosphere among all of the participants. This scene is certainly a microcosm for the entire campaign, in that candidates seek to energize their supporters so that they will actually go to the polls to vote on Election Day. For much of the twentieth century, musicians did not play a direct role in this energizing

5 Refer to Appendix A and accompanying CD for lyrics and recordings of these songs.
process, but in 2008, as I discuss in the following sections, music and musicians became a transformative force for several candidates, especially Barack Obama.
Section II: Musical Censorship and its Prevalence in Post-9/11 Campaigns

September 11, 2001 and Censorship

The events of September 11, 2001 had an immediate and profound effect on the popular music industry in the United States. It seemed that, in an instant, nobody could be too careful about what they said, sang, or broadcasted. Radio disc jockeys stopped playing music that was politically subversive in any way, and many artists and songs were censored for similar reasons. When anyone suggested that United States policy may need to be changed, they were often silenced by the media. I assert that a ripple effect was created, extending to the relationship between music and politics and the role of music in political campaigns. Two days after the attacks, radio conglomerate Clear Channel circulated a list of about 200 songs that were to be avoided out of respect to the victims’ families. Clear Channel is a corporation that, at the time, owned about 1,170 radio stations throughout the United States. By 2001, Clear Channel had established a dominant role in the music industry. This became possible after the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which lifted regulations on station ownership. In other words, single companies could now own as many radio stations as they could afford. The Federal Communications Commission explains that the goal of this legislation was “to let anyone enter any communications business -- to let any communications business compete in any market against any other” (Federal Communications Commission 1996). In reality, though, this bill ultimately prevented competition from entering the communications industry. By 2000, Clear Channel Communications owned stations in 247 of the nation’s top 250 markets. Clear Channel soon controlled promotion firms, too, which historically have acted as “middle men” between record companies and radio
stations. Record companies would pay the promotion firms to get their music played by different radio companies. If record companies did not operate through promotion firms, they would be breaking payola laws for giving money directly to radio stations. (Boehlert 2001). Because Clear Channel owned such a large percentage of large-market stations and now powerful promotion firms, they had plenty of leverage when it came to setting promotion prices for record labels. This brought about significant apprehension among record company and promotion firm employees and executives. One radio veteran remarked, “They're starting to rain all over everybody's parade and take food off people's tables, and that's when you get in trouble” (Boehlert 2001: 3). Many people in the industry felt that it was going in the wrong direction, and were becoming unhappy with their jobs.

However, Clear Channel expanded their influence by buying concert venues and promotion companies and thus exerted firm control over the music industry until 2006, when low listenership totals caused Clear Channel to sell many of their radio stations (Ahrens 2008). Immediately following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Clear Channel found itself stuck in a controversy about a list of songs that had been distributed to all DJs from the corporate office. The list supposedly included songs that were to be banned because they could be construed as offensive or insensitive in the immediate aftermath of a national tragedy. Although Clear Channel continually denied the existence of such a list, it soon became known that a list did indeed exist. However, what actually originated from the corporate office was a very short list, with only a few songs. Then, according to *New York Times* columnist Neil Strauss, “an overzealous regional executive began
contributing suggestions and circulating the list via e-mail, where it continued to grow” (Strauss 2001).

The list included songs that mentioned skyscrapers, airplanes, or fire in any capacity. It also included songs like John Lennon’s “Imagine” and the entire Rage Against the Machine catalogue, suggesting that any song by artists who had been critical of United States policy was off limits. While DJs were not contractually required to steer clear of these songs, musicologist Rebee Garofalo suggests that “for anyone who knows how Clear Channel operates, and this certainly includes their on-air staff, anything coming out of corporate headquarters that has a list of songs to be avoided is going to be read as much more than a suggestion” (Garofalo and Levine 2006: 9). Because of the dominance of Clear Channel Communications, this is the way the music industry operated at the time. It may not be appropriate to call Clear Channel’s suggestions “censorship,” since there was technically no legal authority forbidding DJs to play the songs on the list. Rather, the suggestions encouraged self-censorship practices in popular music.

What was happening at Clear Channel was only a microcosm of what was going on in all facets of the music industry. In the same sense that Clear Channel employees should have been worried about punishment for not taking the company’s “suggestions” seriously, musicians that relied on conglomerates like Clear Channel for promotion of recordings and concerts also had to be careful about what they said. In his article entitled “Double Voices of Musical Censorship after 9/11,” music theorist and musicologist Martin Scherzinger writes that, in these cases, “the artist exhibits a kind of pathological watchfulness, involuntarily incorporating a censor-figure into his/her interior, acting out
an imagined quiescence” (Scherzinger 2007: 92). Since terrestrial radio had basically become an oligopoly, large corporations had significant control over what was played on their stations. Garofalo suggests that the reason for so little government intervention was that “the marketplace often tends to accomplish the same goals without the heavy hand of government” (Garofalo & Levine 2006: 8). Scherzinger’s notion that artists then felt the need to censor their own creative process is a strong example of this phenomenon.

While Clear Channel dissuaded DJs from playing specific songs, many political organizations have called for the banning or censorship of certain artists. The famous singer Linda Rondstadt – who has never been perceived as a political figure - encountered significant backlash after dedicating a performance to the well-known liberal filmmaker Michael Moore at a concert in Las Vegas. Groups like Citizens Against Celebrity Pundits and Boycott Hollywood began campaigns calling for the boycotting of Linda Rondstadt (Nuzum 2005).

The art music world was not immune to the trends of self-censorship. American composer John Adams, who wrote the controversial opera *The Death of Klinghoffer*, said, “You know, I’m on a homeland security list, probably because of having written *The Death of Klinghoffer*, so I’m perfectly aware that I, like many artists and many thoughtful people in the country, am being followed” (FreeMuse 2008: 1). *The Death of Klinghoffer* offers an account of a 1985 hijacking of an Italian cruise ship by a group of Palestinians who were attempting to enter Israel to free about fifty fellow Palestinians from Israeli prisons. After intense international negotiations, the Palestinian hijackers surrendered. It was discovered, shortly after, that they had actually killed a Jewish-American tourist named Leon Klinghoffer, a retired handicapped man. He had been shot in the head and
thrown overboard in his wheelchair (Adams 2008). The opera, essentially a suite of choral pieces that was finished in 1991, was scheduled to be performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra shortly after September 11, 2001. However, the performance was cancelled by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO). Adams explains the BSO’s reasoning for canceling the performance is that, “given the nearness of the terrorist attacks both in time and in geography – the planes had taken off from Logan Airport in Boston – they felt it inappropriate to present the choruses during a period when what audiences needed from music was ‘comfort and solace’” (Adams 2008: 167). An intense debate ensued about whether or not the BSO had properly handled the cancellation. It was the same debate that took place in regard to the Clear Channel list: Who is to decide, and when should they decide, what American audiences will consider offensive? When a corporation or authoritative organization effectively strips an audience of its ability to hear a piece of music, is that an example of censorship, and is it fair?

The examples mentioned above, and many more, demonstrate the intense caution and political polarization that engulfed America in the years after 2001. There were many groups of people who were overly cautious about potentially offensive material, and there were many artists who lived in fear because they felt they may have offended these often powerful groups. Another thing these examples demonstrate is the fact that a lot of this censorship was not necessarily because of the music itself. Rather, in many cases censors were objecting to the beliefs, values, and actions of musicians. Linda Rondstadt was boycotted for a statement she had made. None of her music actually represents her politics. The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s notion that music, following September 11, 2001, was only supposed to provide “comfort and solace” suggests that
people and organizations were extremely cautious about what kind of music they associated themselves with. The Clear Channel list that was released after September 11, 2001 included the entire Rage Against the Machine catalog. This is a direct censorship of the band, rather than its music. In music scholar Simon Frith’s article “What is Bad Music?” he suggests that music is often deemed bad not because of its content, but because of its origins (Frith 2004). For example, Rage Against the Machine is known as a radically liberal band, so all of its songs are automatically viewed as radically liberal. In a time when any critique of U.S. policy could be construed as unpatriotic, then, it is no surprise that Rage Against the Machine’s music was avoided.


censorship and presidential politics

Presidential candidates were certainly affected in the era of censorship that followed September 11, 2001. Trends in presidential campaign music had already shown a turn towards the adoption of very safe songs. The Clinton-Gore campaign song, in 1992, was Fleetwood Mac’s “Don’t Stop Thinking About Tomorrow,” a song with a very simple, universal message that encourages looking to the future. Republican candidates have continually used Lee Greenwood’s blatantly patriotic “God Bless the U.S.A.” since 1984. Even though candidates adopted songs that contained some sort of political message, they were usually songs that had achieved such vast popularity that the public was desensitized to their political message. For example, it was not considered bold for John Kerry to repeatedly play Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Fortunate Son,” a vehement critique of United States policy during the Vietnam War, during the 2004 campaign. This song achieved great success upon its release in the late 1960s, and since
then, it has become part of the American popular music canon. Because of its extreme popularity, mainstream audiences have become somewhat desensitized to its overtly political stance.⁶

In the wake of September 11, American society became consumed by overcautious attitudes when it came to deciding what was offensive or unpatriotic. For political candidates, this is still an important quality. Although the culture has certainly changed since the post-9/11 era of censorship, candidates still have to police themselves when it comes to musical selections and their relationships with musicians or musical cultures. Presidential candidates, especially, are constantly performing a balancing act to stand true to their values, but still appease their often circumspect mainstream audience. Barack Obama, for example, said on many occasions that he is a fan of Jay-Z and Kanye West. In a list of his top ten songs that he submitted to Blender magazine, he included Kanye West’s “Touch the Sky” as his sixth favorite song (“Music Picks From…” 2008). However, on the campaign trail, no hip-hop tracks were played. Instead, in a quite clever move, Obama often played Curtis Mayfield’s “Move On Up,” which is sampled in West’s “Touch the Sky.” This way, he did not upset older generations of his mainstream audience, but he was still playing something that younger generations would immediately recognize.

Many times, artists will create songs about a certain candidate that are not directly solicited by that candidate’s campaign. Conversely, campaigns often use songs that were created by artists who do not support the campaign. In each case, decisions need to be made through a process of self-censoring, with politicians choosing what art they wish to be associated with and artists choosing what politics they want to be associated with.

⁶ For full lyrics and recording, refer to Appendix B and accompanying CD.
Every decision in these processes is a political one. During the 2000 election, several musicians asked that George W. Bush stop using their songs on the campaign trail. Sting, for example, requested that Bush stop using his song “Brand New Day,” but the Gore campaign continued to use it without any problem (Farhi 2008). In the 2008 election, many artists of varying degrees of fame created songs and videos in support of candidates and posted them online. For the more popular examples, campaigns were forced to publicly approve or disapprove.

In reference to Barack Obama’s overwhelming support from musicians, Republican pollster Frank Luntz told *Rolling Stone*, “The danger for Obama is if one of these musicians says something stupid” (Hiatt 2008: 1). The Obama campaign was forced to denounce a song by rapper Ludacris entitled “Politics: Obama is Here” for its harsh attacks of Hillary Clinton and George W. Bush. In the song, Ludacris raps, “Hillary hated on you, so that bitch is irrelevant” and also dishes insults out to Rev. Jesse Jackson for offensive comments he made about Barack Obama. Despite the obvious support the song offers to Obama, his campaign was forced to express disapproval because of these harsh lyrics (Merrida 2008). This is just one instance of the complicated relationship between Obama and the hip-hop community. On previous occasions, Obama had claimed to be a fan of Ludacris and many other hip-hop artists. Beyond the blatantly offensive lyrical content of “Politics: Obama is Here” lie other lyrics that may have alarmed the Obama campaign. Ludacris’s call to black people to “paint the White House black” presents an idea with which many mainstream Americans may not be comfortable. The Obama campaign made every effort to present its candidate as a candidate for all Americans, not just for black people. Lyrics like these negate this claim and the
campaign was not comfortable with that. Obama’s reluctance to play hip-hop music on the campaign trail despite his supposed interest in the genre also indicates a reluctance to pander too much to the black community. Black Studies scholar Mark Antony Neal suggests, “The challenge that Barack Obama had was really to be able to wink to the hip-hop community and say, ‘I really can’t acknowledge you in the mainstream, but understand that I’m hearing what your critique is, I’m hearing what your concerns are, and you now have a wide-open space in the so-called underground…to talk about why my candidacy is important” (Neal 2008).

Martin Scherzinger discusses the effects of, and the differences between, introverted and overt censorship. Introverted censorship is self-censorship that occurs during the creative process by artists whose political inhibitions affect the final product. An example of overt censorship, on the other hand, would be a condemnation of a work by an external authority. Scherzinger references a 1999 New York City art show that exhibited Chris Ofili’s The Virgin Mary, which portrays the Virgin Mary through images of elephant feces and pornography. The mayor of New York threatened to remove funding for the museum due to the offensiveness of this exhibit. Scherzinger writes, “In sync with the paradoxical logic of censorship, however, the mayor’s threats quickly spawned massive attendance and protests” (Scherzinger 2007: 107). The fact that overt censorship can, and often does, act as free publicity for an artist complicates the musical decisions made by a presidential campaign. Before Obama’s denunciation of “Politics: Obama is Here,” the song was only known by those who had found it on the internet through Ludacris’s website, MySpace, Youtube, or other websites. When Obama denounced the song, it was covered by CNN, NPR, and many other mainstream news
sources. It is safe to assume that a significant number of the song’s listeners would have
never heard it were it not for the formal condemnation by Obama’s campaign. Here, a
parallel can be drawn to the much more highly-publicized relationship between Barack
Obama and the Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Obama’s relationship with Rev. Wright had
spanned nearly twenty years before the 2008 election. As some of the more radical
political remarks made by Wright gained notoriety nationwide, Obama faced pressure to
distance himself from such a radical figure. In this case, and in the Ludacris case, Obama
was confronted with controversial remarks from high-profile figures that he was almost
forced to address. Had Obama not denounced Ludacris or Reverend Wright, it would
have been political fuel for his opponents. So, in many ways, by attempting to support
Obama in his own style without consulting the campaign, Ludacris brought negative
attention to his candidate. For the Obama campaign, the Rev. Wright controversy was
viewed as a “distraction to the purpose of the campaign” (“Obama denounces former
pastor…” 2008). The same is true for the Ludacris song. Every campaign has a very
strict idea of how it wants to present its candidate, and any external endorsement can turn
into a major distraction if it ventures away from the strict image that the campaign is
trying to promote. It is clear, then, that campaigns certainly carry out both introverted
and overt censorship when dealing with musical selections.

This is not to say campaigns do not embrace the support from musicians or any
other high-profile figure. Obama has often discussed his appreciation for artists like Jay-
Z, Kanye West, and even Ludacris, all of whom he has met with personally. Jay-Z
showed many images of Obama at his live performances, but made sure to distance his
endorsement from the campaign. He reminded listeners that he was not officially
endorsed by Obama’s campaign, and that he “didn't want to harm Obama's campaign the way the candidate's former preacher, Jeremiah Wright, has.” Had Ludacris been careful to do the same, the Obama campaign may not have had to address his song. The Obama campaign also supplied the rock band Wilco with Obama pins to wear during their performance on Saturday Night Live, on an episode which incidentally featured an appearance by Hillary Clinton, too (Hiatt 2008). Obama has also adopted hip-hop artist Will.I.Am’s track entitled “Yes We Can” by playing the video at rallies and posting it to his website. The video, which is analyzed at length later in this paper, has gained significant popularity, with over twenty-five million views on the internet by November 2008 (McKeever 2008).

While campaigns have to keep tabs on what popular artists are saying in support of them, artists also have to watch the ways campaigns are using their songs. During the 2008 primary season, John Mellencamp asked the John McCain campaign to stop using a few of his songs. Mellencamp was an ardent supporter of Senator John Edwards, a Democrat, at the time (“Mellencamp Asks…” 2008). Jackson Browne went so far as to file a lawsuit against the McCain campaign for using his song “Running on Empty” in a television ad that criticized Barack Obama’s stance on gas conservation (“Stop Using My Song…” 2008). Several more examples of this exist, and most involve artists requesting that Republican candidates cease using their songs. This adds another dimension to the music selection process for presidential candidates. When choosing songs, the campaigns need to be aware of the politics of the artist, and whether or not that artist will want his or her song used by that candidate. This element of the process generally has put Republicans at a disadvantage, at least in recent elections. Historically, musicians
and artists have tended to support the politics of the Democratic Party. Contemporary
country music may be the only Republican stronghold. The political associations of
musicians and genres will be discussed at length later in this paper. It is interesting to
note that the song “Only in America” by Brooks and Dunn, which George W. Bush
campaigned with in 2004, was also used by Barack Obama in 2008 after his acceptance
speech at the Democratic National Convention. Brooks and Dunn had been supporters of
Bush, playing at many of his campaign and inauguration events. However, when Kix
Brooks was asked about Obama’s use of the song, he said, “Very flattering to know our
song crossed parties and potentially inspires all Americans” (“Brooks and Dunn
Comment…” 2008). Brooks’ response seems to indicate that he was not consulted by the
Obama campaign before they used the song. This seems to be the way that most
campaigns go about playing music, based on the significant number of artists who request
that their songs stop being used. They play the songs as long as they can get away with
it, and if they are asked to stop, they stop. Still, much thought must go in to the selection
of a campaign song. The politics of the artist, the popularity of the song, the message of
the song, and even the musical characteristics of the song must all be taken into account.

In the last three decades, musical censorship on the part of political campaigns has
become a significant issue, since selections are now typically made from previously
recorded popular music. Ever since Bruce Springsteen suggested that Ronald Reagan
misinterpreted his song “Born in the U.S.A.” in 1984, these issues have constantly arisen.
When campaigns hired songwriters to create specific songs for the candidates, these
censorship issues did not exist. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, American
popular culture in general has been watered down, with labels, radio stations, and artists
hesitating to fully disclose their political opinions through music. Presidential candidates face extreme pressure to appease many facets of society, and this is certainly taken into account when selecting campaign music. That Barack Obama can claim to be such a big hip-hop fan while very seldom playing hip-hop music at his rallies or in his ads suggests that mainstream America may not be ready to accept hip-hop. Every song choice is made carefully, and there is often some motive behind the choices. Sarah Palin often entered the stage, throughout the McCain-Palin campaign, to the Shania Twain song “She’s Not Just a Pretty Face,” which obviously exemplifies the attempts by the McCain campaign to present Palin as not just physically attractive, but politically intelligent. When campaigns make selections like these, they need to be confident that they will not upset the artists, like Reagan did with Bruce Springsteen. This process exemplifies the introverted self-policing that candidates and campaigns have to constantly carry out.

While politics have become even more polarized and heated in America, musicians have struggled to have their political opinions heard through song. American society has settled in to a state where nobody wants to hear about problems within that society. Sociologists Robert Perrucci and Earl Wysong suggest,

The reality is that few contemporary and popular, youth-oriented songwriters/bands offer emancipatory visions or alternatives to youthful working-class audiences regarding how they can counter, in meaningful ways, the sense that their future life chances are compromised by an increasingly unequal social order they neither control nor understand. (Perrucci and Wysong 2008: 70)

While there are certainly musicians trying to have their political voices heard, the emphasis on popular here is important. Presidential candidates want to play something that is popular, recognizable, completely inoffensive, yet still
somewhat pertinent to his or her campaign. Only by blanding out their selections, to some extent, can campaigns successfully achieve this.
Section III: Benefit Concerts, Tours, and Compilations

2004 - Benefit Concerts and Tours

The benefit concert is a fairly young phenomenon. The first widely-recognized benefit concert was The Monterey International Pop Festival, held in 1967. At this multiple day festival, artists played for free and donations from attendees benefited the Monterey Pop Festival Foundation, which benefited counter-culture arts-related projects (“The Monterey International…” 1997). Following that was The Concert for Bangladesh, which was put on by George Harrison and others in 1971. Since, Live Aid, Farm Aid, and many other massive concerts have been put on to raise money for various causes. In 1969, Woodstock - although it was not technically a benefit concert – set a major precedent for the style of concert festivals. For three days straight, hundreds of thousands converged to experience and promote love, music, and the Bohemian counterculture that was sweeping the nation at the time. Until 2004, though, no concert or string of concerts had been explicitly carried out to raise money for an American presidential election. That year, the Vote for Change tour was launched in an effort to raise money and increase voter turnout to remove George W. Bush from office.

In early 2004, Kelly Curtis, manager of the rock band Pearl Jam, organized a meeting of more than fifty high-profile band managers in Washington D.C. At the meeting he discussed the upcoming election, and talked about ways that the musicians that these managers represented could make a difference. In planning the tour, Bruce Springsteen’s manager John Landau protested, “The Live Aid model – get Giants Stadium, get the artists, stack ‘em up, let them perform 20 minutes each as a fundraiser – we knew we didn’t want that” (Waddell 2004). Instead, they plotted out what came to be
informally known as the “swing states tour,” since it stopped only in states that were considered to be toss-ups in the election. The tour organizers truly made an effort to design an untraditional tour route, stopping in cities like Toledo, Ohio and Kalamazoo, Michigan, while bypassing major cities like Los Angeles and New York (Waddell 2004). The line-up varied from show to show, but included big name performers like Bruce Springsteen, The Dixie Chicks, Pearl Jam, R.E.M., John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews Band, Jackson Browne, and many more. Between October 1 and 11, 2004, more than 20 artists played 37 concerts in 33 different cities (Waddell Oct. 2004). It was an unprecedented and unorthodox tour for such a group of musicians, in that it unofficially aligned itself with not just one political cause, but a political party and presidential candidate. Although the tour did not explicitly endorse John Kerry for president in its marketing campaign, people could infer what they wanted from the tour’s title. The Vote for Change tour was, without a doubt, a collection of musicians who supported the Kerry/Edwards ticket in 2004, and although the tour was technically presented as a “get out the vote” venture, in actuality it was a clear attempt to attract voters to the Democratic ticket.

A thorough examination of the Vote For Change tour website shows that specific names of political candidates are only mentioned two times. The first is in a small promotional video that plays on the home page, in which Bruce Springsteen tells an audience that he thinks “Senator Kerry and Senator Edwards…are prepared to help our country move forward.” The second instance is in the “Artists’ Quotes” section, in which Dave Matthews says, “A vote for Bush is a vote for a divided, unstable, paranoid
America” (“Vote for Change” Online 2004). Beyond this, there is no mention of particular candidates, and there is never any mention of political parties.

The tour did not actually contribute directly to the Kerry campaign. Rather, it was put on by the Political Action Committee (PAC) Moveon.org, and proceeds went to the PAC America Coming Together (ACT). It was reported, soon after the tour, that nearly fifteen million dollars had been raised for ACT. ACT spent money on many things, including paying people to make phone calls and stand outside polling places. They also created television spots to be played in battleground states like Ohio, when the Kerry campaign could not necessarily afford them. Interestingly, like the Vote for Change tour, these ads managed to circumvent direct endorsement of a candidate. Rather, the commercials attacked George W. Bush. Every ACT ad that ran in Ohio ended with the claim that contributions would be used “to help elect progressive candidates from the White House to city hall” (Federal Elections Commission 2007). Moveon.org uses similar language, claiming to “provide financial support to congressional candidates who embrace moderate to progressive principles of national government” (Moveon.org 2009). Though they did not explicitly state it, both MoveOn.org and America Coming Together were supportive of the Democratic Party.

One criticism the Vote for Change tour received was that they were only appealing to Democrats. At one Vote for Change tour stop, Bruce Springsteen invited an actor on to the stage. This actor was dressed in a tuxedo, and was clearly supposed to represent a stereotypical Republican. Springsteen beckoned the crowd to chant “Haliburton, Haliburton,” and then the actor exclaimed, “I’m switching!” Variety magazine’s Zachary Pincus-Roth described this as a “deft, satirical answer to the charge
that the concert is preaching to the choir” (Pincus-Roth 2004). So, despite its claims of only being a “get out the vote” campaign, there is no question that Vote for Change had a more specific goal in mind. That goal was to campaign relentlessly for Democrat John Kerry, and try to influence as many voters as possible to do so.

While musicians supported specific candidates, and benefit concerts were held, long before 2004, the Vote for Change tour was unprecedented, and revolutionized the role of musicians in presidential elections. Prior to 2004, organizations like Rock the Vote, which formed in the early 1990s, used musicians and other celebrities to assist in a campaign to convince young people to vote. It still exists today, but it focuses its attention solely on youth voters. It is not known for planning concerts, but rather for its television programming, which is often affiliated with MTV. In 1992, and prior to the 1996 election, Rock the Vote launched nationwide campaigns to get young adults to register to vote. The organization held voter registration drives not only at colleges, but in other communities as well. They set up voter registration booths in many places, including concerts (Burgess 2000). While these efforts were considered fairly successful, Rock the Vote took no political stance like the Vote for Change tour did. In the summer of 2004, before the Vote for Change concerts got started, there was a pair of shows, one in New York and one in Los Angeles called “A Change is Going to Come.” The concerts featured Dave Matthews, Barbra Streisand, and John Mellencamp. These two concerts raised almost twelve million dollars for the Kerry campaign (Fricke 2004). These concerts, contrary to Vote for Change, benefited the Kerry campaign directly, and Kerry actually appeared at the New York show (Sanneh 2004).
The Vote for Change tour is a perfect example of unsolicited musical support for a candidate. In other words, the artists are using their celebrity status and their music to publicly promote a certain candidate, and that candidate may not even be aware. Usually, after the release of unsolicited recordings or performances, candidates are forced to make a decision as to whether or not they will publicly embrace or denounce the music. The Vote for Change tour was not technically affiliated with the Kerry campaign, so whether Senator Kerry liked it or not, he was almost forced to embrace the idea. The 2004 election and the Vote for Change tour paved the way for music and celebrity to be major factors in the 2008 presidential election.

At the forefront of this new trend of musicians getting heavily involved in presidential politics is Bruce Springsteen. Although he has always been perceived as somewhat progressive, representative of the working middle-class, and as someone who sympathizes with Democratic politics, Springsteen had never publicly endorsed a candidate until 2004. It was in 2004 that he decided to let his opinions be heard. He started by having an editorial, entitled “Chords for Change,” published in the August 5, 2004 issue of the New York Times. In the piece, Springsteen explicitly endorsed John Kerry and his running-mate Senator John Edwards for President and Vice President. Springsteen wrote,

I don't think John Kerry and John Edwards have all the answers. I do believe they are sincerely interested in asking the right questions and working their way toward honest solutions. (Springsteen 2004)

In 2004, Springsteen published this editorial, headlined the Vote for Change tour, performed at John Kerry rallies, and released an album, Devils and Dust, which was, in many ways, an anti-war album. By immersing himself so fully in the political arena in
2004, he quickly established himself as a widely-known member of the Democratic
Party. This was demonstrated by the expectations of many Democrats in the days leading
up to the 2008 Democratic National Convention. Online blogs and message boards were
teeming with comments from people who were excited because they believed Bruce
Springsteen was going to show up at the Democratic National Convention. In fact, on the
Sunday before the convention, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported, “Bruce
Springsteen will follow Obama with a solo acoustic performance on Thursday after
Obama's acceptance speech at Invesco Field.” Over the course of the next few days,
newspapers nationwide were picking up on the story, also confirming that Springsteen
would appear. However, a spokesman for Springsteen then released a statement that
read, “He's definitely not performing nor attending and has never planned to do so” (du
Lac 2008).

Bruce Springsteen, throughout his career, has typically been perceived as a
symbol of core American values. His popularity transcends political and generational
divides. He achieved superstar status through his music, and now his fans are interested
in any messages he may have. After he released the album The Rising following the
September 11 attacks, many criticized Springsteen’s latest record for being an
endorsement of Bush administration politics. A statement of approval concerning
President Bush’s handling of the invasion of Afghanistan that Springsteen offered in a
Time magazine interview further complicated this issue. The fact that Springsteen
received significant criticism for this is proof that many people are invested in what their
favorite musicians or celebrities are thinking. He must have viewed 2004 as a great year
to clarify his politics. He realized that his celebrity had reached such a level that people

7 For lyrics and recording, refer to Appendix C and accompanying CD.
just wanted to hear what he was thinking. When asked about whether or not musicians should be able to answer questions about tough issues, Springsteen replied, 

You can turn on the idiots rambling on, on cable television, every night of the week -- and they say musicians shouldn't speak up? It's insane, it's funny, [politics are] an organic part of what I'm doing. . . . It's called common sense. I don't even see it as politics at this point. (Mitchell 2008)

In Spring 2008, before the primary season had even finished, Springsteen again published an endorsement of a presidential candidate. This time he supported Democrat Barack Obama. This endorsement was far more enthusiastic and laudatory than his endorsement of John Kerry. Whereas the Kerry endorsement seemed like it was urging readers to pick the lesser of two evils, the Obama endorsement is teeming with compliments and reasons that Springsteen is excited about Obama. Springsteen closes his message by saying, “Over here on E Street, we’re proud to support Obama for President” (Springsteen 2008). This cool, confident endorsement from such a star is a testament to how important Springsteen’s endorsement may be. “E Street” is just a street in Belmar, New Jersey, but its association with Springsteen has made it iconic. What Springsteen is essentially telling many people is something like, “Hey, you’re favorite band really likes Barack Obama. You should think about voting for him too.”

2008 – Celebrity Endorsements

In a study carried out by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in 2007, the effect of celebrity endorsements – particularly that of Barack Obama by television personality Oprah Winfrey – was the topic being investigated. The survey showed that fifteen percent of potential voters would be more likely to support Obama because of Winfrey’s endorsement, and that sixty percent of those polled felt that her
endorsement would help Obama (Pew Research Center 2007). The poll also addressed the effectiveness of other celebrities’ endorsements, and yielded similar results. So, while the majority of people will not be swayed by celebrity endorsements, fifteen percent is far beyond the margin of victory in a typical presidential election. For this reason, we have to take the role of celebrities in elections very seriously. Oprah’s endorsement is a striking example in that her opinions carry significant weight with her viewers. Evidence of this is the popularity of the books she has endorsed through “Oprah’s Book Club.” Between 1996 and 2002, every book she selected immediately jumped into the USA Today top-150 best sellers list, and remained there for at least a few months (Butler 2005). When celebrities endorse certain people or things, their endorsements are taken seriously by their fans, and while presidential elections are widely considered to be more important than books, people will still hear out a celebrity who inspires them.

Another testament to the importance of Springsteen’s support for Obama is the “Change Rocks” concert he held in conjunction with an Obama campaign event in Philadelphia on October 4, 2008. On this weekday morning, more than 50,000 people staked out a spot on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway to see Springsteen and Obama. He performed several songs with only an acoustic guitar and harmonica, and delivered a strong, allegorical message referring to America as a “house of dreams.” He introduced his song “The Rising” by saying, “I say now’s the time to stand with Barack Obama and Joe Biden, roll up our sleeves, and come on up for the rising” (“Bruce Springsteen in Philadelphia” Video 2008). Springsteen has, throughout his career, been an unofficial spokesman, an inspirational voice, for blue collar America. By using rhetoric like “roll
up our sleeves,” Springsteen is appealing directly to those who believe that America was built on the ideal that with hard work comes success, and he is suggesting that the election of Barack Obama will take hard work, but that it can happen if everyone does their part. This is not a statement that would be well received from most popular culture figures, but Springsteen has established credibility with so many facets of American society, he has become a significant source of power in American politics.

Springsteen’s ability to campaign for Obama on such a large scale is a result of the vast fan base he has gathered in his four-decade career. However, since many of Springsteen’s fans take his politics so seriously, there is no reason to believe that fans of other musicians might view the politics of those artists in the same way. Throughout the campaign of 2008, there were an unprecedented number of small concerts and tours that were designed to raise money for campaigns, especially the Obama campaign. Barack Rock, for example, was held in Brooklyn, New York on October 7, 2008. It brought together several lower-profile musicians like Andrew Bird, Guster, The Fiery Furnaces, and many more. The concert cost forty dollars, and advertisements explicitly stated that all proceeds would go to the Obama/Biden campaign (Maher 2009). On October 8, 2008, the front man of the popular band My Morning Jacket, Jim James, played an acoustic show in Chicago that benefited the Obama campaign. Tickets cost one-hundred dollars each, and Obama’s campaign Chief of Staff Jim Messina attended a reception prior to the performance (Maher 2009). While these shows were clearly designed to raise money for the Obama campaign, many other musicians performed for free in efforts to simply spread awareness and register voters. The rapper Jay-Z, who has achieved significant mainstream success, performed in early October at concerts in Detroit and Miami where
admission was free (Thompson 2008). At the concerts, attendees were able to register to vote. On October 16, 2008, independent bands The National and The Breeders hosted a free event entitled Vote Early Rock Late in Cincinnati, Ohio, at which concertgoers could board buses during the performances and be taken to a nearby election center to cast an early ballot (Thompson 2008). All of these concerts were arranged in very short periods of time. Barack Rock tickets, for example, went on sale September 27 and the concert took place October 7. These events relied on word of mouth, the internet, and publicity from the Obama campaign, and while these artists may not have the same widespread appeal that Springsteen does, they have loyal fan bases and they are probably a big reason why the donations page on the Obama campaign website, after the election, read,

Thank you! You proved that change can happen. You built an unprecedented grassroots organization in all 50 states that brought a record number of people into the political process -- many for the first time, many for the first time in a long time. (“Contribute” 2008)

In the scope of recent presidential elections, Obama’s campaign was certainly the most successful on the grassroots level. People from all backgrounds, and varying levels of fame all used whatever resources they had access to in order to spread the campaign’s message. It may not have been enough for Bruce Springsteen to play a handful of massive rallies, and it probably would not have been enough for bands like The National or Andrew Bird to simply play a few small-scale benefit concerts. The combination of all of these things, though, led to success, and it is safe to say that music and musicians played a significant role in that success.8

That musicians would play concerts in support of a presidential candidate is certainly not unprecedented. In the 1948 presidential election, many folk musicians like

8 Refer to Appendix C for images of posters promoting these concerts.
Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Paul Robeson, and many more played concerts along the campaign trail with Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace. The difference between the musicians supporting Wallace and something like the Vote for Change tour is that Seeger, Guthrie, and Robeson were directly affiliated with the candidate’s campaign (Lieberman 1995). What these singers were doing for Wallace is more similar to what Bruce Springsteen did when he performed at the October 2008 Barack Obama rally in Philadelphia.

Reciprocal Endorsements

In unparalleled fashion, Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign embraced the support of countless high-profile celebrities, especially musicians, to quite effectively bolster its image. In early April, 2008, during his close primary battle with Senator Hillary Clinton, Obama made a comment at a campaign event that would loom large throughout the rest of the election process. While discussing a sense of hopelessness among those who had lost jobs in Pennsylvania, he said, "they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.” Almost immediately, the Clinton campaign jumped on these comments and presented them as evidence that Obama was “elitist” or “out of touch” (Pallasch 2008). Throughout the rest of the campaign, Obama had to stave off these charges.

In order to present himself as a regular, non-elitist guy, Obama began presenting himself very differently in the media. Aside from playing basketball, bowling, milking cows, and having drinks at local bars, Obama also presented himself as a music fan with
very eclectic tastes. Obama has publicly claimed to have selections by “everything from Howlin’ Wolf to Yo-Yo Ma to Sheryl Crow” on his iPod ( “Inside Obama’s iPod” 2008). He also included songs by Kanye West, Bruce Springsteen, and Frank Sinatra in his top-ten songs list that he submitted to Blender magazine in August of 2008 (“Music Picks from Obama, McCain” Radio 2008). Whether or not Obama’s lists are completely honest, by giving this information to the press, he is making it known that he shares common interests with many different groups of people. There is something to be said for celebrities’ endorsements of a candidate, but a candidate’s endorsement of celebrities can be far more important, since it is a direct reflection on his or her personality. The music one listens to can certainly be perceived as indicative of that person’s lifestyle. In a 2003 article in U.S. News and World Report concerning the likability of presidential candidates, Roger Simon wrote, “Americans have demonstrated that they don't dislike electing rich people to the presidency as long as the rich people appear to be nice, concerned, and in touch with nonrich people” (Simon 2003). By making it clear that he does not listen only to art music and jazz, Obama is contributing to a non-elitist depiction of himself that is being presented to Americans through the media. Even President Bill Clinton, who is often commended for his vast musical knowledge, is mainly interested in American jazz music, which has, by no means, been a form of mainstream entertainment since the first half of the twentieth century.

Yes We Can!

As a testament to his eclectic hip, mainstream, and multigenerational musical taste, and to capitalize on the potential of music to generate community, Barack Obama’s
campaign used music in a completely new way by releasing “Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement” at the end of September 2008. The compact disc was released byHidden Beach Recordings, and it is a compilation of songs by various artists who supported Obama’s campaign. The record company describes the album as

A first-of-its-kind music compilation featuring an array of artists and material that reflects America’s diversity and taps into the creative community’s overwhelming response to the campaign’s universal themes of hope, unity, and change. (Hidden Beach 2008)

The CD is fascinating because of the many purposes it serves for both the Obama campaign and the musicians involved. It is a case in which Obama and the musicians are trading endorsements, and both are benefiting, ideally. By October, Obama had clearly gained the support of several demographics, but the CD was part of a final effort to attract some undecided or apathetic people. Conversely, for those who were detached from the political process but were fully engaged music fans, this CD, which contains several previously unreleased tracks, could have potentially served as an introduction to Barack Obama. In fact, while there is no way to actually gauge either, the latter may be the more prominent phenomenon. Barack Obama, himself, had unarguably achieved celebrity status – his television ratings surpassed American Idol’s in 2008 – and his endorsement could be as valuable as any (Svetkey 2008).

For Obama’s campaign, “Yes We Can” served as a method of legitimizing him as an individual with whom many different people can associate. Obama’s website offered a description of the compilation,

The project features current and classic material as well as new music heard here for the first time and speech excerpts from the Democratic nominee, which are embedded throughout the project, all elements highlight, “Yes We Can.” (BarackObama.com 2008).
The artists featured on the CD span many genres and generations, from Stevie Wonder to John Legend, Jackson Browne, John Mayer, and Kanye West. The track list has been compiled in such a way that it seems there is actually something for everyone on the disc. Prior to the election, “Yes We Can” was only available for purchase from the Obama campaign. It was offered in CD format, or via digital download. After the election, though, it was given a wide release. Upon its release in late November, 2008, it debuted at #38 on Billboard’s Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart, and remained in the top 100 until mid-March, 2009. The album also spent a few weeks in the Billboard Top 100 Compilation Albums chart, peaking at #14 during the first week of February, 2009 (Billboard.com 2009). There are currently no numbers to suggest how much money the album raised for the Obama campaign prior to the election, but its success after the election suggests that it may have achieved moderate success prior to its wide release.

While musicians and celebrities have always been vocal about their support of presidential candidates, the election of 2008 saw this relationship evolve drastically. Barack Obama’s campaign won an election handily with much of the music world behind them, and the victory was seen as beneficial to both sides. In his article entitled “Barack Obama: Celebrity in Chief,” Benjamin Svetkey pondered Obama’s potential effect on the entertainment industry, and concluded, “We obviously can't predict everything that's going to happen to pop culture once the new president-elect takes office, but you don't have to be Doris Kearns Goodwin to see that some sort of change is coming” (Svetkey 2008). So, many entertainers are in the mindset that Obama’s election will somehow revolutionize their industry, but their vast support of Obama revolutionized his field as
well. The elements of a successful campaign shifted drastically in 2008, and it seems that music and musicians are beginning to reclaim a role at the forefront of such campaigns.
Section IV: Popular Music and Party Politics

I see a little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him…I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft.

-President John F. Kennedy, October 26, 1963

The Republican Party and Country Music

After decades of sporadic attempts to pass legislation that provided funding for a national organization for support of the arts, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed P.L. 89-209, the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, into law on September 29, 1965. This was the culmination of efforts put forth by President John F. Kennedy and many Democratic congressmen, and it established the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. Ever since, and especially in recent years, musicians and artists tend to sway towards the Democratic Party in elections and, in many cases, vehemently oppose Republican candidates. There is no way to completely explain this trend, but it is surely something that warrants discussion.

As the United States war in Iraq was beginning in March of 2003, the very popular country trio The Dixie Chicks was touring in the United Kingdom. At a show in London, lead singer Natalie Maines proclaimed, “Just so you know, we’re ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas” (Clarke 2003). The backlash from this comment was severe. Radio stations banned their music, conservative organizations

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began protesting at their concerts, and the band was practically put out of work for more than a year (Dixie Chicks 2007). Many other musicians, including Bruce Springsteen, were voicing concerns about the Iraq war at the same time, but not facing nearly as many adverse reactions. Springsteen said that some “former fans” had mailed records back to him, but that was about it (Mitchell 2008). In the documentary film *Shut Up and Sing*, Maines speculated that much of the reaction they were getting was because they were country artists (Dixie Chicks 2007). In a time when many other country musicians were releasing patriotic, pro-war songs that approached jingoism, The Dixie Chicks had made their opposition to American policy very clear. Toby Keith had released the song “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue,” which includes the lyric

> You’ll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A  
> ‘Cuz we’ll put a boot in your ass  
> It’s the American way.\(^\text{10}\)

Also, country singer Darryl Worley released the song “Have You Forgotten,” in which he proclaims,

> Some say this country’s just out looking for a fight  
> Well, after 9/11 man, I’d have to say that’s right.\(^\text{11}\)

These types of songs were gaining massive popularity and getting significant radio play at the same time that The Dixie Chicks were being boycotted. The Dixie Chicks had been categorized as a country act, but with this one simple remark they had stepped outside of the mold. Country music has been associated with the Republican Party since the late 1960s, and by stepping outside of that brand, The Dixie Chicks outraged many loyal fans who expected them to stay within the political confines of country music.

Contrarily, when artists like rapper Kanye West or Bruce Springsteen endorsed Democratic candidates, they were essentially doing what is expected of them. Most of the popular music community is associated with Democratic Politics. If a high-profile hip-hop artist, like Jay-Z or Nas, voiced their support of George W. Bush or John McCain, they would probably become an outcast in their genre of music too.

The Republican Party is politically aligned with one category of music, and that is country. This is a relationship that developed somewhat recently, during the administration of Richard Nixon. Prior to the late 1960s, country music did not have such a strong political affiliation. Since country music is a Southern performance style, it followed many Southerners and lower class whites in the 1960s in a massive shift towards the political right that stemmed from objections to the Civil Rights Movement and other Democratic policies. When Alabama’s George Wallace ran for president, he brought country musicians with him on the campaign trail and used country music extensively, claiming that the people who like country music were going to get him elected (Feder 2007). In 1969, Merle Haggard released the track “Okie from Muskogee,” which spoke out vehemently against the hippie counterculture of the 1960s. This was one of the first songs to really politicize country music, and President Richard Nixon began courting the country music community, in fear that it would win George Wallace the 1972 election if he were to run again. Nixon eventually received the full support of the country music community and the Country Music Association even sent him an exclusive compilation entitled *Thank You, Mr. President* (Feder 2007). Historian Lester Feder, in a discussion of The Dixie Chicks controversy, points out that today, there are two different definitions of country music. One is the style of music, and the other is the
marketing category. He says that the country music that falls within this marketing
category is still vastly conservative (Feder 2007). Prior to Natalie Maines’ anti-Bush
remarks, The Dixie Chicks were very much a part of this category, but the infamous
statement immediately rendered them country musicians only in terms of musical style.

Barack Obama’s Support from Musicians

Outside of the country music marketing category, the Republican Party seems to
have a lot of trouble gathering support from musicians. On August 1, 2008, Rolling Stone
writer Daniel Kreps wrote, “While Barack Obama has the support of Bruce Springsteen,
Wilco, John Mellencamp, Tom Morello and pretty much every rapper, Republican
candidate John McCain has managed to lure at least one musician: Big & Rich’s John
Rich” (Kreps 2008). John Rich is a very well-known successful singer, songwriter, and
producer in the country music industry. While his song, “Raising McCain,” was one of
the only songs written in support of McCain’s candidacy, it was not made available via
anything but streaming video on the internet or live performance. When he debuted the
song in Florida, Senator McCain was in attendance (Kreps 2008). Even musicians who
fall under Feder’s country music style category are often staunchly Democratic in their
politics. In today’s music market, these musicians are often referred to as “Alternative
Country” or “Folk-Rock” artists, but their music is stylistically quite similar to traditional
country music. Steve Earle, for example, is a singer-songwriter whose music contains
many country elements, but his lyrics blatantly reflect his liberal political orientation.
The 2004 song “Rich Man’s War” contains the lyric,

\begin{quote}
Bobby had an eagle and a flag tattooed on his arm
Red white and blue to the bone when he landed in Kandahar
\end{quote}
Left behind a pretty young wife and a baby girl
A stack of overdue bills and went off to save the world
Been a year now and he’s still there
Chasin’ ghosts in the thin dry air
Meanwhile back at home the finance company took his car
Just another poor boy off to fight a rich man’s war

Many other well-recognized artists, like John Prine and Willie Nelson also championed liberal causes. In 2008, even the notoriously Republican writer of the anti-hippie anthem “Okie from Muskogee,” Merle Haggard, began performing a new song entitled “Hillary,” which indicated his support for Democratic nominee Senator Hillary Clinton. The song includes the lyric,

Changes need to be large
Something like a big switch of gender
Let’s put a woman in charge.

Haggard later told USA Today that he was “fed up with the war, with American jobs going overseas and with Wal-Mart replacing mom-and-pop shops,” and that he was ready to vote Democrat (Brooks 2007).

At the same time that John Rich was writing and performing “Raising McCain,” and Merle Haggard was performing “Hillary,” many more high-profile musicians were recording and performing songs in praise of Democratic nominee Barack Obama. Even in 2006, Neil Young’s intensely political album Living With War featured a song entitled “Looking for a Leader,” in which he makes a few specific suggestions for who would be a good replacement for George W. Bush

Maybe it’s Obama,
But he thinks that he’s too young.
Maybe it’s Colin Powell,
To right what he’s done wrong.

13 Lyric from Merle Haggard – “Hillary,” Available: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePVDX1xUP7I
Since then, many more musicians from all over the world have contributed songs that praise Barack Obama. The Kenyan band Extra Golden, in 2007, released the track “Obama,” which has gained significant popularity in America, where the band has been playing music festivals and has often been featured in music press. On inauguration day, 2009, Paste magazine made available a free song from the band Clare and the Reasons entitled “Obama Over the Rainbow,” in which the word “Obama” is repeated to the tune of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” (Medina 2008). In January of 2009, it was announced that a musical written by Teddy Hayes, entitled “Obama on my Mind,” would premiere in March (Itzkoff 2009). So, all genres of music are producing work about Obama, but no artists have been as supportive as those in the hip-hop community.

Barack Obama and the Hip-Hop Community

As far back as 2004, some rappers were mentioning the possibility of a Barack Obama presidency in their lyrics. That year, rapper Jadakiss released “Why Remix (featuring Nas and Common)” in which Common says,

Why’s Bush actin’ like he tryin’ to get Osama
Why don’t we impeach him, and elect Obama?¹⁵

In 2006, Common again released a track with laudatory remarks about Obama. “The People” includes the lyric

Standing in front of the judge with no honor,
My raps unite the people like Obama.¹⁶

Other notable tracks include Young Jeezy’s 2008 release, “My President,” Joel Ortiz’s “Letter to Obama” and Nas’ “Black President,” which begins with a sample of Tupac Shakur’s lyric, “Although it seems heaven sent, we ain’t ready to have a black president.”

Then Nas’ lyrics hesitantly suggest that we are ready to have a black president,

\[
\begin{align*}
I &\text{ think Obama provides Hope - and challenges minds} \\
O &\text{f all races and colors to erase the hate} \\
A &\text{nd try and love one another, so many political snakes} \\
W &\text{e in need of a break} \\
I &\text{m thinkin’ I can trust this brotha} \\
B &\text{ut will he keep it way real?} \\
E &\text{very innocent n’gga in jail - gets out on appeal} \\
W &\text{hen he wins - will he really care still?}
\end{align*}
\]

These examples are all from mainstream hip-hop artists. There are countless more examples of hip-hop tracks that praise Obama that have been released independently or over the internet, and there is no doubt that the hip-hop community, for the most part, was on Obama’s side in the election of 2008. Obama has reached out directly to the hip-hop community by arranging high profile meetings with rappers Ludacris, Jay-Z, and Kanye West. In January of 2008, Obama spoke on a Black Entertainment Television special entitled “What’s In It For Us?” and said,

\[
\begin{align*}
I &\text{ve met with Jay-Z; I’ve met with Kanye. And I’ve talked to other artists} \\
&\text{about how potentially to bridge that gap. I think the potential for them to} \\
&\text{deliver a message of extraordinary power that gets people thinking (is} \\
&\text{massive). (Ewing 2008).}
\end{align*}
\]

Rapper Common told CNN that he believes the rap community feels the same optimism when it comes to Obama: “As far as people in my age group and people that love hip-hop, there’s a love for Obama. He represents progress. He represents what hip-hop is about. Hip-hop is about progress, the struggle” (Hamby 2007).

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While rappers continually praised Obama for what he could do for hip-hop and for the country, they also made Obama’s job a little bit easier in his attempts to secure votes from African-Americans. Obama tried to sidestep the issue of his own race throughout the campaign. He never presented himself as the black candidate. However, many hip-hop artists legitimized his blackness through their lyrics, which may have been important to African-American voters. Nas’s line, “I think I can trust this brotha,” and even Ludacris’ call to “paint the White House black” make it clear that Obama is viewed as a black man, which can certainly bolster his image within the black community.

However, Obama has also been involved in some fairly uncomfortable exchanges with the hip-hop community. After Obama had claimed that rappers are, to some extent, at fault for the prominence of racially degrading language in society, Def Jam Records executive Russell Simmons replied by calling Obama a “mouse” and saying, “What we need to reform is the conditions that create these lyrics. Obama needs to reform the conditions of poverty” (Hamby 2007). Obama, in an interview with Vibe magazine, then replied, “So yes, my job is to focus on poverty, education, health care, but I think we have to acknowledge the power of culture in affecting how our kids see themselves and the decisions they make” (Hamby 2007). Despite the slight rift displayed in this exchange, it still shows that Barack Obama was engaged in the hip-hop community, and for the most part, he was supported. Rapper Talib Kweli, who also praises Obama’s ability to unite people in some of his lyrics, released a letter expressing his reasons for supporting Barack Obama, after having not voted for several election cycles. He says he had lost faith in the political system, but he explains, “This was all before Barack Obama threw his hat in the ring… Now I have two beautiful children, and Barack Obama is an
incredibly positive influence on them. I want them to know they can be anything they want” (Adaso 2008). Obama inspired the hip-hop community for many reasons, and they staunchly supported him in the 2008 election.

Republican Campaign Music Woes

Aside from country artists, musicians from most other genres have extended their support mostly to the Democratic Party, and have often taken issue with the Republican Party’s use of their songs. Beginning in 1984, when President Ronald Reagan referenced Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” as a patriotic anthem, saying, “America's future rests in a thousand dreams inside our hearts. It rests in the message of hope so many young people admire: New Jersey's own Bruce Springsteen” (Hornby 2005). Springsteen asked that Reagan no longer use him or his song throughout the campaign, since the song was actually quite critical of the United States involvement in the Vietnam War (Mitchell 2008). Then, in 1996, songwriter Isaac Hayes and the owners of the rights to the Sam and Dave hit “Soul Man” filed suit against Republican candidate Bob Dole’s campaign for changing the lyrics to “Dole Man” and using the song on the campaign trail (“Dole Campaign…” 1996).

Unhappiness with Republican use of songs has really become prevalent since the year 2000, though, when rocker Tom Petty’s representative sent a cease and desist letter to George W. Bush’s campaign, asking him to stop using the song “I Won’t Back Down,” claiming that its use implies an endorsement by Petty that did not actually exist. Bush’s campaign released a statement explaining that they did not believe the song’s use implied an endorsement, but they agreed to stop using it (Vineyard 2000). In the 2004 and 2008
elections, this happened very frequently. In 2008, John Mellencamp, Jackson Browne, members of Boston, Heart, The Foo Fighters, and Van Halen all asked Republican candidates’ campaigns to stop using their songs ( “Stop Using My Songs…” 2008).

While most television campaign ads feature fairly generic, unrecognizable instrumental tracks that approach muzak in terms of style, sometimes candidates have attempted to use popular music selections. While Barack Obama’s campaign successfully used rock band The National’s song “Fake Empire” in an ad entitled “Signs of Hope and Change,” the McCain campaign has encountered problems when trying to use popular songs in their ads. When the Ohio Republican Party used Jackson Browne’s “Running On Empty” in an ad criticizing Barack Obama’s position on gas conservation, Browne filed suit against John McCain and the Republican Party (Stein 2008). Even when McCain tried to use a song from a popular video game soundtrack, he encountered backlash from the composer. Composer Christopher Lennertz, after hearing that McCain was using his composition “Casualties of War,” from the game Medal of Honor: European Assault, released a statement expressing disappointment that Senator McCain would use the artistic property of someone who does not support his politics. Because EA Games owned the rights to the recording, though, McCain was not legally obliged to honor Lennertz’s request to stop using the track (McVay 2008).

While many musicians have historically supported liberal politicians, the polarity of country musicians supporting Republicans and other musicians supporting Democrats has only existed for about a half century. As the country has become politically polarized, the Republican Party has encountered more difficulty in trying to gain the support of professional musicians, artists, and filmmakers. There is no way to tell exactly
why this is the case, or how accurate it truly is. In the mainstream media, though, it is made clear that most high-profile musicians and artists typically lend their support to the Democratic Party. In 2008, Barack Obama’s support from the music community was unprecedented, and was another way in which Obama may have revolutionized American presidential campaigns.
Section V: The Internet

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the internet’s role in American elections has steadily increased, and it was a major factor in the presidential election of 2008. The internet’s role in politics is a complex topic, for which a proper analysis would extend well beyond the scope of my project. However, the internet has also affected the use of music by campaigns, and inclusion of a brief discussion and a few examples is worthwhile. The internet has become a place where donations can be made to campaigns and where news regarding the election can be instantly reported. The internet has also facilitated discussion among voters through blogs, email, and message boards. Social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace have provided a simple way for hundreds of thousands to receive constant updates regarding individual candidates. The internet has not only been revolutionary in terms of campaign financing and coverage, it has also been a major factor in the resurgence of music as an important aspect of political campaigns.

Online Fundraising and Publicity for Campaigns

In January 2008, the Pew Research Center reported that 24 percent of Americans say that they regularly learned something about the presidential election campaign from the internet. This compares with the 13 percent of Americans who claimed the same thing in 2004, the 9 percent in 2000 (Pew Research Center 2008). The first campaign to take significant advantage of the internet was Democrat Howard Dean’s campaign in 2004. In a December 2004 forum featuring many campaign managers, Tad Devine, a media consultant for the Kerry-Edwards campaign, talked about the revolutionary steps
taken by the Howard Dean campaign, and how they influenced the Kerry-Edwards campaign,

I think Howard Dean’s candidacy was remarkable and, in many ways, it was a harbinger that we took advantage of, particularly in the pioneering use of the Internet. We raised, I think, $80 million on the Internet in the primary campaign and another $40 million in the general election…That can be the beginning of the reform of American politics. I credit Governor Dean’s campaign for showing the way and I credit Senator Kerry for talking about it before, really, the time Governor Dean was doing it. (Institute of Politics 2006: 58)

At the end of June 2003, at a Federal Elections Commission deadline for donations, Howard Dean’s campaign brought in $819,531 in one day, just from internet contributions. Howard Dean, despite this early success with internet fundraising, ended up losing the nomination to Senator John Kerry. Professor of political science Matthew Robert Kerbel attempted to explain, in 2004, by suggesting that “the Internet remains a work in progress, more functional than it was four years ago but far from a decisive political force. The fate of the Dean candidacy is well known. The legacy of its digital exploits has yet to be written” (Kerbel 2005: 89).

The legacy that Kerbel mentions was made apparent in 2008 by Barack Obama, who raised unprecedented amounts of money online, and used the internet in ways that no other candidate ever had. Immediately following the 2008 election, the New York Times’ Claire Cain Miller wrote, “One of the many ways that the election of Barack Obama as president has echoed that of John F. Kennedy is his use of a new medium that will forever change politics. For Mr. Kennedy, it was television. For Mr. Obama, it is the Internet” (Miller 2008). This was not just a reflection of Obama’s technological savvy, but of the technological advancement of the internet since 2004. Two weeks after he declared his candidacy, an Obama page on the social networking site Facebook had over
200,000 supporters. Joe Trippi, Howard Dean’s 2004 campaign manager, commented, “It took our campaign six months to get 139,000 people on an e-mail list. It took one Facebook group, what, barely a month to get 200,000?” (Wilson 2008: 15). Obama’s own website, BarackObama.com, became a hub for all different kinds of internet activity. Through the website, Obama’s campaign collected donations, announced events, facilitated discussion, and posted media. There was even a facet of the website, My.BarackObama.com, which served as a sort of social networking site, like a Facebook or MySpace, but was for people and organizations who supported the campaign. “By March 1, 2007,” writes political journalist John K. Wilson, “My.BarackObama.com had attracted 3,306 grassroots volunteer groups, 4,416 personal fundraising pages, 6,706 personal blogs, and 38,799 people with individual profiles building networks to support Obama” (Wilson 2008: 15).

**Viral Music Videos**

Obama actually used his website to promote videos that were made by groups and individuals outside of the campaign. The creation of these videos, which usually lauded Obama, was not officially supported by any campaign, but eventually they were discovered and adopted by the campaign. The most popular example is hip-hop artist Will.I.Am’s collaboration with several actors and musicians called “Yes We Can,” which is a music video that puts the words of Obama’s January 8, 2008 speech, following his loss to Hillary Clinton in the New Hampshire Democratic primary, to music. The recording of Obama’s words is accompanied by vocalists and light acoustic guitar strumming. The video is understated, showing black and white images of musicians and
other celebrities singing or speaking along with the speech. Because the song endorsed a political candidate, no record label would release it. Instead, Will.I.Am gathered several performers, recorded the song and video independently, and released it on YouTube. By August 2008, the video had been viewed more than 25 million times (McKeever 2008). Although it was not commissioned by the Obama campaign, the song earned Obama’s seal of approval, and Will.I.Am and others involved in the video were asked to perform at several Barack Obama events throughout the election. In his introduction to the compilation *Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement*, described earlier in this paper, Hidden Beach Recordings founder Steve McKeever writes this of Will.I.Am and others involved in the creation of the “Yes We Can” video,

Indeed, the enormous impact of this simple 4 minute 25 second piece actually has been credited as the inspiration for many more to follow suit driving a tremendous awareness to the core messages of the campaign. To say this team was successful is the epitome of an understatement. (McKeever 2008: 5)

Will.I.Am told *Rolling Stone* magazine that he thinks, in order for music to make a difference in Obama’s campaign, that all artists, famous or not, needed to contribute their material by making it available on the internet. He proposed that it was important for “regular people” to make music as well as “celebrities” (Hiatt 2008). Many of these “regular people” did end up making a difference. The most famous example was a video by Amber Lee Ettinger, who took on the character of Obama Girl to create a music video for a song called “I Got a Crush…On Obama.” The song, clearly designed to be humorous, contains sexually charged lines in reference to the narrator’s feelings for Barack Obama, such as “You can Barack me tonight,” or

*You’re into border security*  
*Let’s break this border between you and me*
This video became a massive hit, and while it may not have directly resulted in many votes for Obama, it certainly brought attention to his candidacy. In July 2007, just one month after the video was posted, it had received 2.5 million views (Reichgott 2007). As of April 2009, it had more than 13,500,000 views (Obama Girl 2007). Ettinger became a quite popular figure, and was interviewed by all kinds of media, including national news networks. The video has certainly become an icon of the 2008 election, and will probably be remembered for years to come.

Many home-made video clips were made in response to Obama Girl’s “Crush On Obama” that demonstrated support for other candidates in similar ways. Actress Taryn Southern released the video “Hot 4 Hill,” a music video that lauded Hillary Clinton in the same way that Obama Girl praised Barack Obama. Barelypolitical.com, the site that originally promoted Obama Girl, also began presenting videos starring a “McCain Girl,” who also appeared in videos with Obama Girl. Countless imitation videos were made for all political candidates by their supporters. Videos like these, whose popularity is mostly gained on the internet through email, social networking sites, or video posting sites like YouTube, are commonly referred to as “viral videos.” Many of the popular viral videos that surfaced throughout the 2008 election were taken quite seriously by the media – amateur video-makers were regularly invited to political talk shows, and national or local news programs – and were therefore deemed at least somewhat influential in the election process.

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Benefits of the Internet for Established Celebrities

Many political writers have explicitly expressed their belief that entertainers can make a difference in a close election. Suzy Shuster, of the Huffington Post, wrote the following about comedian Tina Fey’s recurring impersonation of Alaskan Governor and Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin on Saturday Night Live,

From the Friday before the skit on SNL aired to the following Tuesday, Palin's approval rating dropped ten points. Coincidence? I think not. After all, people in this country are tending to be more influenced by who or what they see on entertainment television, more so than on broadcast news or in print. Americans tune into Jon Stewart for their political appetites more than ever (and why not). So when you, Ms. Fey, don your Palin wig, you influence millions of voters more than Charles ("Charlie") Gibson or Brian Williams, Paul Begala or that anorexic blond McCain spokeswoman ever could. (Shuster 2008).

While Shuster makes her liberal bias clear in this passage, she also demonstrates faith in the idea that an entertainer like Fey, or comedian Jon Stewart, can be as influential as or more influential than any well-known political pundit or news anchor. The internet has become a venue through which entertainers’ products can find an audience. Of those who saw Fey’s impersonation of Governor Palin, two-thirds saw it after its original airtime, via either the internet or a digital video recording device (Paczkowski 2008). Likewise, when a television news channel does a piece on someone like Obama Girl, then, anyone can promptly go to a computer and view the “Crush on Obama” video. This is the most important phenomenon associated with the growth of the internet. Media that is potentially influential is now available at all times. If someone missed Fey’s Palin impression on the original airing of Saturday Night Live (11:30 pm Eastern Time), he or she can now view it any time online. On a Monday morning, a co-worker, instead of just describing the skit to someone, will send a link to the video so that person can see it on
his or her own. In 1992, Bill Clinton surprised many viewers by appearing on the Arsenio Hall Show playing the saxophone with sunglasses on. This has become an iconic television clip, but if the internet were a force in 1992 like it was in 2008, then it is safe to suppose that millions more might have seen the clip. Unlike radio and television, the internet has the power to reinforce images and ideas. Contrary to radio and television, the internet offers the viewer complete control over what he or she is viewing. Television channels did not show Will.I.Am’s “Yes We Can” video, but it was available to view at all times on the internet. With people able to access the internet at any hour, they naturally become more likely to view content which they may have missed had it only been on television or radio.

Trading Files for Votes

The internet has also provided a place, other than in recordings or at live performances, for musicians to exhort their fans to get involved in the electoral process. Singer-songwriter Sheryl Crow used the website for the Rock the Vote organization as a venue to offer free downloads of her song “Gasoline” to anyone who registered to vote. If a newly registered voter convinced three others to register, that person could download Crow’s entire new album free of charge (Graham 2008). The Rock the Vote website also presented streamable songs from countless other musicians that sought to get out the vote. The popular rock band Wilco made a similar offer, through their website, in October 2008. In exchange for clicking a button that acknowledged a pledge to vote on Election Day, anybody could receive a free downloadable recording of Wilco performing Bob Dylan’s “I Shall Be Released” along with the band Fleet Foxes. By the end of
October 2008, about 50,000 people had taken advantage of the offer (“Wilco offers…” 2008).

At the time they offered the free download on their website, Wilco had made it quite clear, to those that followed them, that they were supporters of Barack Obama. They had played at several benefit concerts for Obama’s campaign, and they had performed on the very popular *The Colbert Report* news/comedy show. On their performance at *The Colbert Report*, images of Obama were visible on the band’s equipment, and lead singer Jeff Tweedy offered host Stephen Colbert an official Obama campaign t-shirt.† The free download offer only sought to get out the vote, though. Nothing on the band’s website indicated its politics. If a group that is a well-established supporter of one politician makes an attempt to register voters or to encourage voting, are they in turn advertising for that candidate? To some extent, they probably are, and that is another example of how a grassroots campaign’s effectiveness can expand exponentially when it manifests itself online.

**Internet Radio**

The internet has also become a viable alternative to terrestrial radio for music listeners. While radio conglomerates like Clear Channel had a firm grasp on terrestrial radio in 2004, many of them had begun to crumble by 2008. One thing to which this decline can be attributed is the rising popularity of internet radio. While radio stations that were owned by large communications corporations often had trouble broadcasting music that was politically subversive in any way, internet radio provided a forum in

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which these songs could be heard. Prior to internet radio and podcasts, which are recordings of audio programs that are always available for download, National Public Radio was a popular alternative for people who sought programming that was not controlled by companies like Clear Channel. Just as it was with television, the problem was that people sometimes missed their favorite programs. Now, NPR is a force to be reckoned with in the world of internet radio, and its music page was referred to, by The Washington Times, as “an online warehouse of sounds, video and knowledge for the discerning music fan” (Szadkowski 2007). Internet radio has begun to loosen the corporate stronghold on the music industry, and the prevalence of music in the 2008 campaign may be an outcome of this gradual liberation.  

Much has been written about the internet’s effect on political campaigns, and there is still much more to be written about how Barack Obama effectively used the internet in 2008 to ensure a landslide victory on Election Day. The internet also made a resurgence of music in political campaigns possible. In 2008, especially, the internet was a place where benefit concerts could be publicized, tickets could be sold, songs could be heard, and music could be sold or distributed in various forms. This empowered the music community throughout the election, and this phenomenon will only expand in future elections.

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20 The analysis in this paragraph is based on a previous paper entitled, “Internet Radio: A Forceful Alternative” which I wrote for an American Studies junior seminar at the College of William and Mary in the Fall of 2007. The piece is available at http://web.wm.edu/americanstudies/370/2007/sp6/NPRProgrammingASCInternetRadio.htm
Conclusion:

When I began this research, early in 2008, one of my first questions was, “Why is music of political campaigns in America so insignificant?” The United States takes much pride in its musical traditions and several generations of Americans have been defined by their musics of political protest. For a country with such a rich history of political music, I was curious to find out why it had all but disappeared. I began looking at censorship practices and corporate control of Top 40 radio, but soon I noticed something remarkable happening in the election of 2008. Hillary Clinton was encouraging supporters to vote on what her official campaign song should be, Obama Girl – the scantily-clad singer in the “Crush on Obama” video - became a superstar, several of my favorite musicians were playing Obama benefit concerts, and Barack Obama’s sixth-favorite song was supposedly by Kanye West. I simply could not ignore the emergent musical quality of the campaign. I developed a whole new set of questions, and the focus of my research shifted from, “Why is there no campaign music anymore?” to, “Why is there so much campaign music right now?” Each day, I perused music press, watched the news, and paid attention to each candidate’s campaign, always keeping my eyes and ears peeled for music. As the campaigns charged through the primary season, and later the general election, I realized that the man who would soon become our 44th President was inspiring a movement of musicians spanning all genres and generations to become engaged artistically in the political process. I began to wonder how Barack Obama was inspiring

21 Here, I reference folklorist Richard Bauman’s well-known concept of “the emergent quality of performance. According to Bauman, “the emergent quality of performance resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of a particular situation.” He continues by saying that performance offers “to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer in a way that is specific to performance as a mode of communication.” - Richard Baumann, "Verbal Art as Performance,” American Anthropologist 77, no. 2 (June 1975): 290–311.
so much creativity, why musicians were so inclined to support him, what this meant for
his chances of being elected, and what other factors might have been playing a role in this
phenomenon. These questions ultimately shaped my research, and led me to my
conclusions.

The inherent political and social power of music has made it a political mainstay,
in countries throughout the world, for centuries. Within communities, certain types of
music represent political, social, and cultural identity. In a nation as diverse as the United
States, many musical communities exist, and Barack Obama reached out to as many of
them as possible. No candidate before Obama had ever made such a conscious effort to
appeal to such a wide range of constituencies through music. Ethnomusicologist John
Blacking wrote,

Music can express social attitudes and cognitive processes, but it is useful
and effective only when it is heard by the prepared and receptive ears of
people who have shared, or can share in some way, the cultural and
individual experiences of its creators. (Blacking 1995; 32)

By appearing publicly with so many and varied musicians, releasing such eclectic top-ten
songs lists, and by releasing the exceedingly diverse Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots
Movement compilation, Obama and his campaign reached out to all groups of Americans
and tried to show them that he had the same tastes as they did, and that he therefore
understood them and their needs.

Blacking’s idea that music can create community is one that many Americans,
whether they know it or not, have subscribed to for a long time. Any benefit concert or
festival is a fine example. Woodstock was billed as “3 days of love and music,”
suggesting that all in attendance would collectively experience something beyond a
simple musical performance. The goal of 2004’s Vote for Change tour was to inspire its
attendees to form a community of voters, specifically John Kerry voters. Rather than just a public service announcement for the Obama campaign, Will.I.Am asserted that his “Yes We Can” music video “is driven by inspiration and it's creative and it's love, it isn't anything else” (AP “Obama Tops Field…” 2008). It is no surprise that the Obama campaign featured music and musicians so prominently, throughout the election process, as a means of transmitting emotion and ideology.

Long before he announced his bid for president, Obama was establishing himself as a member of the music community and as someone who was in touch with younger generations. In 2005, he appeared at the Farm Aid concert festival to introduce the Chicago band Wilco. Also, the fact that hip-hop artists were lauding Obama in their lyrics as early as 2004 helped Obama establish a firm relationship with the music community. By appearing in these contexts so early on, Obama was already very popular in the music community when he announced his campaign for president in early 2007. His appeal within the music community prompted many artists to create material that was pertinent to the Obama campaign. Obama’s popularity allowed him to create a relationship in which he and musicians exchanged highly valued endorsements.

Music also has the social power to construct and identify community. Obama’s campaign sought to establish their candidate as a member of several communities, and they did this through the implementation of new internet technologies, encouraging musical activism, and a combination of the two. Having already developed a relationship with younger generations and the music community, it is no surprise that members of both of those communities flocked together to form new communities of support for Obama online. Through Facebook alone, Obama attracted millions of supporters within
weeks of his announcement. On YouTube, songs and music videos that endorsed Obama began to surface, attracting many viewers. The most famous example from early in the campaign was certainly Obama Girl’s “Crush on Obama.” Steve Grove, head of the news and politics division at YouTube, noticed Obama Girl’s influence pretty early on. He said, “it seems that (Obama) has really garnered a lot of songs. I think the early success of the Obama girl music video probably had something to do with that” (“Obama Tops Field…” 2008).

As the campaign progressed, Obama forged more relationships with several online and musical communities. These communities were not geographically or physically defined. Rather, they were created and maintained through mass media. Benedict Anderson’s description of “imagined communities” offers a more appropriate explanation of the communities that Obama created. Anderson described trans-regional communities as “imagined” because “the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1999: 6). The Obama campaign’s official website offered people the opportunity to join one such community by creating their own personal profile, on which they could post general thoughts, event advertisements, or even video and audio files. My.BarackObama.com became a vast community, within which musicians from all corners of the globe could submit their own material and have it be presented in a forum that was officially sponsored by the Obama campaign.

On November 4, 2008, all of the communities that the Obama campaign worked so hard to attract merged into one community of people who voted for Barack Obama.
Obama needed the support of all of these constituencies to secure a victory, and music and musicians played a major role in developing Obama’s appeal among many different communities. To suggest that Obama’s community of supporters is more musical than any other candidate’s in recent history is a severe understatement. The scene at the Lincoln Memorial on January 18, 2009 – two days before Obama’s inauguration – is a clear indication of the role that music played in Obama’s election to the presidency. With a crowd of about 500,000 people looking on, Bruce Springsteen along with Pete Seeger, who just a half-century ago was blacklisted by the United States government, led a performance of Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land.” Throughout the weekend, countless musicians played at inaugural events throughout Washington D.C. Rapper Jay-Z, James Taylor, Sheryl Crow, Stevie Wonder, and Beyonce were just a few of the big-name musicians who appeared at events with the Obamas that weekend. Within a month of his being sworn in as President, Obama invited his favorite musician, Stevie Wonder, to give a concert at the White House. At the Lincoln Memorial concert, Will.I.Am told Rolling Stone about his experience of being a part of Obama’s election, “I realized the true power of music. It felt awesome being there – we were uniting all creeds, all nationalities” (“Signed, Sealed, Delivered” 2009: 29). He also attributed the ability of Obama, an African-American, to be elected to the United States Presidency to past generations of musicians, “Without Louis Armstrong, Marvin Gaye, Quincy Jones and Berry Gordy, there would be no Obama” (“Signed, Sealed, Delivered” 2009: 30).

The success of Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign shows that popular culture and popular music can inspire American politics in positive ways. As the country becomes more reliant on the internet to facilitate interaction and create community, so will
political campaigns, and so will musicians who have strong political opinions to transmit through music. Whether or not Obama maintains his popularity, he has set a precedent for the next generation of politicians. He showed that having the support of as many people as possible, regardless of their profession or celebrity status, always benefits a campaign. The overwhelming effect that musicians had throughout the 2008 campaign is proof that politics can still inspire art, and that art can still influence politics. Until Barack Obama’s campaign, it seemed that mainstream America was moving towards the establishment of a political system in which the arts had no role. Obama ran for president on the themes of “Hope,” “Change,” and “Yes We Can.” The music community took these themes to heart, and responded by collectively launching a movement to reclaim their role in American politics. The 2008 election ignited a new era in which music is a positive political force that will affect American elections and American music for an indefinite future.
Appendix A

Library of Congress
ABRAHAM THE GREAT

AND

GENE., GRANT HIS MATE.

Composed by T. Brigham Bishop.

Allegro Vivace.

Library of Congress
Oh the Politician crew, They don't know what to do, Since freedom in the South is plainly dawning, They may not know, but they will soon find out, For this short night of life, will bring us all out tight in the morning.

CHORUS.

Then let us work away, And care not what they say, For freedom in the South is plainly dawning, With the sun rising, we shall see the day, And the world shall know that we are free.

(Notation for the music is present on the page.)
Abraham the Great, and General Grant his man, They'll bring us all out right in the morning.

ritard. a tempo.

Abraham the Great, and General Grant his man, They'll bring us all out right in the morning.

2
I think Uncle Abe the man who mother term can stand,
The Rebs and Copperheads with their snarling,
And in eighteen sixty five we'll elect him if alive,
For hell bring us all out right in the morning.

3
The Rebs call Uncle Abe an abolition nigger,
But I think they had better heed his warning,
For he has got more blood than any other man,
And he'll have all their niggers in the morning.

4
What a pity people can't let alone our General Grant,
While he gathers all the Rebels' wealth his mourning,
He'll give old Jeff the chance to have a swinging dance,
"And we'll all see him home in the morning."

(Sing Chorus to each verse)
Ye sons of Columbia, who bravely have fought,
For those rights, which unstained from your Sires had descended,
May you long taste the blessings your valour has brought,
And your sons reap the soil which their fathers defended.

Mid the regin of mild Peace,
May your nation increase,
With the glory of Rome, and the wisdom of Greece;
And ne’er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
In a clime, whose rich vales feed the marts of the world,
Whose shores are unshaken by Europe’s commotion,
The trident of Commerce should never be hurled,
To incense the legitimate powers of the ocean.

But should pirates invade,
Though in thunder arrayed,
Let your cannon declare the free charter of trade.
For ne’er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
The fame of our arms, of our laws the mild sway,
Had justly ennobled our nation in story,
’Till the dark clouds of faction obscured our young day,
And enveloped the sun of American glory.

But let traitors be told,
Who their country have sold,
And bartered their God for his image in gold,
That ne’er will the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
While France her huge limbs bathes recumbent in blood,
And Society’s base threats with wide dissolution;
May Peace like the dove, who returned from the flood,
Find an ark of abode in our mild constitution

But though Peace is our aim,
Yet the boon we disclaim,
If bought by our Sov’reignty, Justice or Fame.
For ne’er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
’Tis the fire of the flint, each American warms;
Let Rome’s haughty victors beware of collision,
Let them bring all the vassals of Europe in arms,
We’re a world by ourselves, and disdain a division.
With patriot pride,
To our laws we’re allied,
No foe can subdue us, no faction divide.
For ne’er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
Our mountains are crowned with imperial oak;
Whose roots, like our liberties, ages have nourished;
But lone e’er our nation submits to the yoke,
Not a tree shall be left on the field where it flourished.
Should invasion impend,
Every grove would descend,
From the hill-tops, they shaded, our shores to defend.
“Adams and Liberty” continued

For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
Let our patriots destroy Anarch's pestilent worm;
Lest our Liberty's growth should be checked by corrosion;
Then let clouds thicken round us; we heed not the storm;
Our realm fears no shock, but the earth's own explosion.
   Foes assail us in vain,
   Though their fleets bridge the main,
For our altars and laws with our lives we'll maintain.
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
Should the Tempest of War overshadow our land,
Its bolts could ne'er rend Freedom's temple asunder;
For, unmoved, at its portal, would Washington stand,
   And repulse, with his Breast, the assaults of the thunder!
   His sword, from the sleep
   Of its scabbard would leap,
And conduct, with its point, ev'ry flash to the deep!
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
Let Fame to the world sound America's voice;
   No intrigues can her sons from their government sever;
Her pride is her Adams; Her laws are his choice,
   And shall flourish, till Liberty slumbers for ever.
   Then unite heart and hand,
   Like Leonidas' band,
And swear to the God of the ocean and land;
   That ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.
Alexander Coffman Ross – “Tip and Ty” (1840)

What's the cause of this commotion, motion, motion,
Our country through?
It is the ball a-rolling on
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.
    And with them we'll beat little Van, Van, Van,
    Van is a used up man.
    And with them we'll beat little Van.

Like the rushing of mighty waters, waters waters,
On it will go!
And in its course will clear the way
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

See the Loco standard tottering, tottering, tottering,
Down it must go!
And in its place we'll rear the flag
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

The Bay State boys turned out in thousands, thousands, thousands,
Not long ago,
And at Bunker Hill they set their seals
    For Tippecanoe, &c.

Have you heard from old Vermount, mount, mount,
All honest and true?
The Green Mountain Boys are rolling the ball
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

Don't you hear from every quarter, quarter, quarter,
Good news and true?
That swift the ball is rolling on
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

Now you hear the Vanjacks talking, talking, talking,
Things look quite blue,
For all the world seems turning round
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

Let them talk about hard cider, cider, cider,
And Log Cabins too,
It will only help to speed the ball
    For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

His latchstring hangs outside the door, door, door,
And is never pulled through,
For it never was the custom of
    Old Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

He always had his tables set, set, set,
For all honest and true,
To ask you in to take a bite
    With Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

See the spoilsman and leg-treasurers, treasurers, treasurers,
All in a stew!
For all they know they stand no chance
    With Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

Little Matty's days are numbered, numbered, numbered,
Out he must go!
And in his place we'll put the good
    Old Tippecanoe and Tyler too.
Frank Sinatra – “High Hopes” (1960 version for John F. Kennedy)

Everyone is voting for Jack
Cause he's got what all the rest lack
Everyone wants to back -- Jack
Jack is on the right track.
'Cause he's got high hopes
He's got high hopes
Nineteen Sixty's the year for his high hopes.
Come on and vote for Kennedy
Vote for Kennedy
And we'll come out on top!
Oops, there goes the opposition - ker -
Oops, there goes the opposition - ker -
Oops, there goes the opposition - KERPLOP!

K--E--DOUBLE N--E--D--Y
Jack's the nation's favorite guy
Everyone wants to back -- Jack
Jack is on the right track.
'Cause he's got high hopes
He's got high hopes
Nineteen Sixty's the year for his high hopes.
Come on and vote for Kennedy
Vote for Kennedy
Keep America strong.
Kennedy, he just keeps rollin' - a -
Kennedy, he just keeps rollin' - a -
Kennedy, he just keeps rollin' along.
Appendix B

 Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Fortunate Son” (1969)
Words and Music by John Fogerty

Some folks are born made to wave the flag,
ooh, they're red, white and blue.
And when the band plays "Hail To The Chief",
oh, they point the cannon at you, Lord,

It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no senator's son,
It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no fortunate one, no,

Some folks are born silver spoon in hand,
Lord, don't they help themselves? oh.
But when the taxman come to the door,
Lord, the house look a like a rummage sale, yes,

It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no millionaire's son, no, no.
It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no fortunate one, no.

Yeh, some folks inherit star spangled eyes,
ooh, they send you down to war, Lord,
And when you ask them, how much should we give,
oh, they only answer, more, more, more, yoh,

It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no military son, SON, NO
It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no fortunate one, NO NO

It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no fortunate one, no no no,
It ain't me, it ain't me,
I ain't no fortunate son, son son son
Ludacris – “Politics: Obama is Here” (2008)

I’m back on it like I just signed my record deal
Yeah the best is here, the Bentley Coup paint is dripping wet, it got sex appeal
Never should have hated, You never should’ve doubted him
With a slot in the president’s iPod Obama shouted ‘em

Said I handle my biz and I’m one of his favorite rappers
Well give Luda a special pardon if I’m ever in the slammer
Better yet put me in office, make me your vice president
Hillary hated on you, so that bitch is irrelevant

Jesse talking slick and apologizing for what?
If you said it then you meant it how you want it head or gut?
And all you other politicians trying to hate on my man,
watch us win majority vote in every state on my man

You can’t stop what’s bout to happen, we bout to make history
The first black president is destined and it’s meant to be
The threats ain’t fazing us, the nooses or the jokes
So get off your ass, black people, it’s time to get out and vote!

Paint the White House black and I’m sure that’s got ‘em terrified
McCain don’t belong in any chair unless he’s paralyzed
Yeah I said it cause Bush is mentally handicapped
Ball up all of his speeches and just throw ‘em like candy wrap
’cause what you talking I hear nothing even relevant
and you the worst of all 43 presidents

Get out and vote or the end’ll be near
The world is ready for change because Obama is here
’cause Obama is here
The world is ready for change because Obama is here, yeah
cuz Obama is here
Chris Ofili – “The Virgin Mary” (1996)

Brooks and Dunn – “Only in America” (2001)

Words and Music by Kix Brooks, Don Cook, and Ronnie Rogers

Sun coming up over New York City  
School bus driver in a traffic jam  
Starin’ at the faces in her rearview mirror  
Looking at the promise of the Promised Land  
One kid dreams of fame and fortune  
One kid helps pay the rent  
One could end up going to prison  
One just might be president

Only in America  
Dreaming in red, white and blue  
Only in America  
Where we dream as big as we want to  
We all get a chance  
Everybody gets to dance  
Only in America

Sun going down on an La. freeway  
Newlyweds in the back of a limousine  
A welder's son and a banker's daughter  
All they want is everything  
She came out here to be an actress  
He was the singer in a band  
They just might go back to Oklahoma  
And talk about the stars they could have been

Only in America  
Where we dream in red, white and blue  
Only in America  
Where we dream as big as we want to  
We all get a chance  
Everybody gets to dance  
Only in America

Yeah only in America  
Where we dream in red, white and blue  
Yeah we dream as big as we want to
**Bruce Springsteen – “Born in the U.S.A.” (1984)**

**Words and Music by Bruce Springsteen**

Born down in a dead man's town  
The first kick I took was when I hit the ground  
You end up like a dog that's been beat too much  
Till you spend half your life just covering up  

Born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  

Got in a little hometown jam  
So they put a rifle in my hand  
Sent me off to a foreign land  
To go and kill the yellow man  

Born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  

Come back home to the refinery  
Hiring man says "Son if it was up to me"  
Went down to see my V.A. man  
He said "Son, don't you understand"  

I had a brother at Khe Sahn fighting off the Viet Cong  
They're still there, he's all gone  

He had a woman he loved in Saigon  
I got a picture of him in her arms now  

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary  
Out by the gas fires of the refinery  
I'm ten years burning down the road  
Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go  

Born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  
I'm a long gone Daddy in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  
Born in the U.S.A.  
I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the U.S.A.
## Appendix C

### Vote for Change Artist Tour Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearl Jam / Death Cab for Cutie</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>Reading, PA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Toledo, OH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 3</td>
<td>Grand Rapids, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 5</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 6</td>
<td>Asheville, NC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Oct. 8</td>
<td>Kissimmee, FL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, Oct 11</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band with special guest John Fogerty / R.E.M. / Bright Eyes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 3</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 5</td>
<td>St. Paul, MN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dave Matthews Band / Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals / Jurassic 5 / My Morning Jacket</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>State College, PA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Dayton, OH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 3</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 5</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Oct. 6</td>
<td>Ames, IA</td>
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<td>Friday, Oct. 8*</td>
<td>Gainesville, FL</td>
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<td>Monday, Oct 11</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td><em>My Morning Jacket will not perform Oct. 8.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dixie Chicks / James Taylor</strong></td>
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<td>Friday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
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<td>Saturday, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
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<td>Sunday, Oct. 3</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Oct. 5</td>
<td>Iowa City, IA</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Oct. 6</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
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<td>Friday, Oct. 8</td>
<td>Clearwater, FL</td>
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<td>Monday, Oct 11</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td><strong>Jackson Browne / Bonnie Raitt / Keb' Mo'</strong></td>
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<td>Monday, Sept. 27</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Sept. 29**</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>John Mellencamp / Kenny &quot;Babyface&quot; Edmonds</strong></td>
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<td>Friday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>Wilkes-Barre, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
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*Bright Eyes not playing Oct. 8th. Special guest Tracy Chapman.*

**My Morning Jacket will not perform Oct. 8.
Friday, Oct. 1 [Buy] Erie, PA
Saturday, Oct. 2 Cincinnati, OH
Sunday, Oct. 3 [Buy] East Lansing, MI
Tuesday, Oct. 5 [Buy] Kansas City, MO
Wednesday, Oct. 6*** Des Moines, IA
Friday, Oct. 8*** [Buy] Jacksonville, FL
Monday, Oct 11 Washington, DC

*Jackson Browne/Bonnie Raitt/Keb’ Mo’ 9/27 - 10/5
**Special guests Jack Johnson & Crosby, Stills & Nash.
***Bonnie Raitt/Keb’ Mo’ and John Prine.
****Bonnie Raitt/Keb’ Mo’ and Sheryl Crow.

Sunday, Oct. 3 [Buy] Kalamazoo, MI
Tuesday, Oct. 5 [Buy] Milwaukee, WI
Friday, Oct. 8 [Buy] Miami, FL
Monday, Oct 11 Washington, DC

All information on this page:
Pending/updated as of September 13, 2004

Source: http://pol.moveon.org/vfc/schedule.html

A nation's artists and musicians have a particular place in its social and political life. Over the years I've tried to think long and hard about what it means to be American: about the distinctive identity and position we have in the world, and how that position is best carried. I've tried to write songs that speak to our pride and criticize our failures.

These questions are at the heart of this election: who we are, what we stand for, why we fight. Personally, for the last 25 years I have always stayed one step away from partisan politics. Instead, I have been partisan about a set of ideals: economic justice, civil rights, a humane foreign policy, freedom and a decent life for all of our citizens. This year, however, for many of us the stakes have risen too high to sit this election out.

Through my work, I've always tried to ask hard questions. Why is it that the wealthiest nation in the world finds it so hard to keep its promise and faith with its weakest citizens? Why do we continue to find it so difficult to see beyond the veil of race? How do we conduct ourselves during difficult times without killing the things we hold dear? Why does the fulfillment of our promise as a people always seem to be just within grasp yet forever out of reach?

I don't think John Kerry and John Edwards have all the answers. I do believe they are sincerely interested in asking the right questions and working their way toward honest solutions. They understand that we need an administration that places a priority on fairness, curiosity, openness, humility, concern for all America's citizens, courage and faith.

People have different notions of these values, and they live them out in different ways. I've tried to sing about some of them in my songs. But I have my own ideas about what they mean, too. That is why I plan to join with many fellow artists, including the Dave Matthews Band, Pearl Jam, R.E.M., the Dixie Chicks, Jurassic 5, James Taylor and Jackson Browne, in touring the country this October. We will be performing under the umbrella of a new group called Vote for Change. Our goal is to change the direction of the government and change the current administration come November.

Like many others, in the aftermath of 9/11, I felt the country's unity. I don't remember anything quite like it. I supported the decision to enter Afghanistan and I hoped that the seriousness of the times would bring forth strength, humility and wisdom in our leaders. Instead, we dived headlong into an unnecessary war in Iraq, offering up the lives of our young men and women under circumstances that are now discredited. We ran record deficits, while simultaneously cutting and squeezing services like afterschool programs. We granted tax cuts to the richest 1 percent (corporate bigwigs, well-to-do guitar players), increasing the division of wealth that threatens to destroy our social contract with one another and render mute the promise of "one nation indivisible."

It is through the truthful exercising of the best of human qualities -- respect for others, honesty about ourselves, faith in our ideals -- that we come to life in God's eyes. It is how our soul, as a nation and as individuals, is revealed. Our American government has strayed too far from American values. It is time to move forward. The country we carry in our hearts is waiting.
Words and Music by Bruce Springsteen

Can't see nothin' in front of me
Can't see nothin' coming up behind
I make my way through this darkness
I can't feel nothing but this chain that binds me
Lost track of how far I've gone
How far I've gone, how high I've climbed
On my back's a sixty pound stone
On my shoulder a half mile line

Come on up for the rising
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising tonight

Left the house this morning
Bells ringing filled the air
Wearin' the cross of my calling
On wheels of fire I come rollin' down here

Come on up for the rising
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising tonight

Li,li, li,li,li,li, li,li,li

Spirits above and behind me
Faces gone, black eyes burnin' bright
May their precious blood forever bind me
Lord as I stand before your fiery light

Li,li, li,li,li,li, li,li,li
ENDORSEMENT: 2008

Dear Friends and Fans:

Like most of you, I've been following the campaign and I have now seen and heard enough to know where I stand. Senator Obama, in my view, is head and shoulders above the rest.

He has the depth, the reflectiveness, and the resilience to be our next President. He speaks to the America I've envisioned in my music for the past 35 years, a generous nation with a citizenry willing to tackle nuanced and complex problems, a country that's interested in its collective destiny and in the potential of its gathered spirit. A place where "...nobody crowds you, and nobody goes it alone."

At the moment, critics have tried to diminish Senator Obama through the exaggeration of certain of his comments and relationships. While these matters are worthy of some discussion, they have been ripped out of the context and fabric of the man's life and vision, so well described in his excellent book, Dreams From My Father, often in order to distract us from discussing the real issues: war and peace, the fight for economic and racial justice, reaffirming our Constitution, and the protection and enhancement of our environment.

After the terrible damage done over the past eight years, a great American reclamation project needs to be undertaken. I believe that Senator Obama is the best candidate to lead that project and to lead us into the 21st Century with a renewed sense of moral purpose and of ourselves as Americans.

Over here on E Street, we're proud to support Obama for President.

Bruce Springsteen
Barack Rock – October 7, 2008, New York City

Source: www.pitchforkmedia.com
Vote Early Rock Late - October 16, 2008, Cincinnati

Bruce Springsteen – Change Rocks – October 4, 2008, Philadelphia

Source: http://www.barackobama.com/images/PA_Boss.jpg
Students for Obama and College Democrats Presents:

**THE BARACK AND ROLL SHOW**

*nyumburu amphitheater* @ 6PM

Oct. 24th

the new retro back to save the universe

lonely are the brave Vasudeva

Barack Obama and John McCain’s “Top Ten Songs” Lists – August 2008
Blender Magazine

John McCain's Top Ten

1. 'Dancing Queen' ABBA
2. 'Blue Bayou' Roy Orbison
3. 'Take a Chance On Me' ABBA
4. 'If We Make It Through December' Merle Haggard
5. 'As Time Goes By' Dooley Wilson
6. 'Good Vibrations' The Beach Boys
7. 'What A Wonderful World' Louis Armstrong
8. 'I've Got You Under My Skin' Frank Sinatra
9. 'Sweet Caroline' Neil Diamond
10. 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' The Platters

Barack Obama's Top Ten

1. 'Ready or Not' Fugees
2. 'What's Going On' Marvin Gaye
3. 'I'm On Fire' Bruce Springsteen
4. 'Gimme Shelter' Rolling Stones
5. 'Sinnerman' Nina Simone
6. 'Touch the Sky' Kanye West
7. 'You'd Be So Easy to Love' Frank Sinatra
8. 'Think' Aretha Franklin
9. 'City of Blinding Lights' U2
10. 'Yes We Can' Will.i.am
Yes We Can: Voices of A Grassroots Movement
Hidden Beach Recordings, 2008

Tracklist:

1. Eternity - Lionel Richie
2. Signed Sealed Delivered - Stevie Wonder
3. Waiting On The World To Change - John Mayer
4. American Prayer - Dave Stewart
5. Battle Cry - Shontelle
6. Make It Better - Los Lonely Boys
7. Pride In The Name Of Love - John Legend
8. I Have A Dream - BeBe Winans
9. Am I All Alone - Suai
10. One Is The Magic # - Jill Scott
11. Love & Hope - Ozomatli
12. Looking East - Jackson Browne
13. Out of Our heads - Sheryl Crow
14. Promised Land - Malik Yusef with Kanye West and Adam Levine of Maroon
15. Hold On - Yolanda Adams
16. America The Beautiful - Keb’ Mo’
17. America - Ken Stacey
18. Wide River - Buddy Miller
Appendix D

_Toby Keith – “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)”_  
*Unleashed. Dreamworks Nashville, 2002.*

American girls and American guys, will always stand up and salute.  
We'll always recognize, when we see ol' glory flying,  
There's a lot of men dead,  
So we can sleep in peace at night when we lay down our heads.  
My daddy served in the army where he lost his right eye,  
But he flew a flag out in our yard 'til the day that he died.  
He wanted my mother, my brother, my sister and me.  
To grow up and live happy in the land of the free.

Now this nation that I love is fallin' under attack.  
A mighty sucker-punch came flying in from somewhere in the back.  
Soon as we could see clearly through our big black eye,  
Man, we lit up your world like the fourth of July.

Hey, Uncle Sam put your name at the top of his list,  
And the Statue of Liberty started shaking her fist.  
And the eagle will fly and it's gonna be hell,  
When you hear Mother Freedom start ringing her bell.  
And it'll feel like the whole wide world is raining down on you.  
Ah, brought to you, courtesy of the red, white and blue.

Oh, justice will be served and the battle will rage:  
This big dog will fight when you rattle his cage.  
An' you'll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A.  
'Cos we'll put a boot in your ass, it's the American way.

Hey, Uncle Sam put your name at the top of his list,  
And the Statue of Liberty started shaking her fist.  
And the eagle will fly and it's gonna be hell,  
When you hear Mother Freedom start ringing her bell.  
And it'll feel like the whole wide world is raining down on you.  
Ah, brought to you, courtesy of the red, white and blue.

Oh, oh.  
Of the red, white and blue.  
Oh, hey, oh.  
Of my Red, White and Blue.
Darryl Worley – “Have You Forgotten?”

I hear people saying we don't need this war
But, I say there's some things worth fighting for
What about our freedom and this piece of ground
We didn't get to keep 'em by backing down
They say we don't realize the mess we're getting in
Before you start your preaching let me ask you this my friend

Have you forgotten how it felt that day?
To see your homeland under fire
And her people blown away
Have you forgotten when those towers fell?
We had neighbors still inside going thru a living hell
And you say we shouldn't worry 'bout bin Laden
Have you forgotten?

They took all the footage off my T.V.
Said it's too disturbing for you and me
It'll just breed anger that's what the experts say
If it was up to me I'd show it everyday
Some say this country's just out looking for a fight
Well, after 9/11 man I'd have to say that's right

Have you forgotten how it felt that day?
To see your homeland under fire
And her people blown away
Have you forgotten when those towers fell?
We had neighbors still inside going thru a living hell
And we vowed to get the one's behind bin Laden
Have you forgotten?

I've been there with the soldiers
Who've gone away to war
And you can bet that they remember
Just what they're fighting for

Have you forgotten all the people killed?
Yeah, some went down like heroes in that Pennsylvania field
Have you forgotten about our Pentagon?
All the loved ones that we lost and those left to carry on
Don't you tell me not to worry about bin Laden
Have you forgotten?
John Rich – “Raisin’ McCain”

Well we’re all just raisin’ McCain
Everywhere across the USA
You can get on the train or get out of the way
We’re all just raisin’ McCain

And we’re all just raisin’ McCain
Everywhere across the USA
You can get on the train or get out of the way
We’re all just raisin’ McCain

Well he got shot down in a Vietnam town
Fighting for the red, white and blue
And they locked him up in the Hanoi Hilton
Thinking they could break him in two

He stayed strong, stayed extra long
‘Til they let all the other boys out
Now we’ve got a real man with an American plan
We’re going to put him in the big White House

Well we’re all just raisin’ McCain
Everywhere across the USA
You can get on the train or get out of the way
We’re all just raisin’ McCain

Play that American guitar, son
And we’re all just raisin’ McCain
Everywhere across the USA
You can get on the train or get out of the way

We’re all just raisin’ McCain
I said we’re all just raisin’ McCain
Everywhere across the USA
You can get on the train or get out of the way
We’re all just raisin’ McCain

Well you can get on the train or get out of the way
We’re all just raisin’ McCain
Neil Young – “Looking for a Leader”

Lookin' for a Leader
To bring our country home
Re-unite the red white and blue
Before it turns to stone

Lookin' for somebody
Young enough to take it on
Clean up the corruption
And make the country strong

Walkin' among our people
There's someone who's straight and strong
To lead us from desolation
And a broken world gone wrong

Someone walks among us
And I hope he hears the call
And maybe it's a woman
Or a black man after all

Yeah maybe it's Obama
But he thinks that he's too young
Maybe it's Colin Powell
To right what he's done wrong

America has a leader
But he's not in the house
He's waling here among us
And we've got to seek him out

Yeah we've got our election
But corruption has a chance
We got to have a clean win
To regain confidence

America is beautiful
But she has an ugly side
We're lookin' for a leader
In this country far and wide

We're lookin' for a leader
With the great spirit on his side

Someone walks among us
And I hope he hears the call
And maybe it's a woman
Or a black man after all
Jadakiss feat. Common and Nas – “Why (Remix)”

Anthony Hamilton: intro
all that i’ve been givin
is this pain that i been livin
that got me in the system
why they gotta do me like that

Styles p:
Why is garbage music selling a lot?
Why is the music industry state of mind real far from hip hop?
Why vote republican if u black?
Why build more jails, less schools? cuz we under attack
Why keep the 4-pound in the air?
The revolution will not be televised, get from around here
Why I keep my right fist in the sky?
I let em kno that ”We Gon Make It” don’t plan our demise
Why u gotta teach ya kids on ya own?
cuz when u get in a zone they bringin u in, u both getting cloned
Why we still gotta pray to Allah?
Cuz hip hop is a new world order n they playin us hard
Why rappers gettin protection?
Why the country aint flip when they jerked the votes the last election?
Why I die for all my beliefs?
I gotta look at my kids, id rather smile than cry when they sleep
THAT’S WHY!

Anthony Hamilton: Chorus
why, why that got me struggling
all the brothers locked behind bars
chained up in the system goin crazy
i betta leave my pistol home, why

Common:
Why do they say I changed for a girl?
Why you worried about my clothes if my flows gonna change the world?
Why u wait till ur 30 to try to be hard?
Why I gotta have religion if I believe in god?
Why is Bush actin like he trying to get Osama?
Why don’t we impeach him and elect Obama?
Why aint Rick James remembered for classic hits?
Why do we remember Rick for smacking a bitch?

Chorus

Nas:
Yo ’Kiss they wanna hide from the truth, its ya comrade Nas, right here lets go
Roll or not Blood of a panther
Why is the question, what is the answer?
Got a suggestion here’s an example
Why don’t we build our own airlines, states, and highways?
Fly to Africa do some trades with Zimbabwe?
Why did Malcom’s mission die with the man?
Why aint we pick it up where he left it and carry out his plan?
Why the merger try to exclude L.A Reid?
He brought you usher, outkast, top selling CDs.
Why do half of America got aids?
Why do schools care bout ur sons braids more then they care for his grades?
Why do they hate our white t-shirts and hats turned backwards?
And why is Jesus Christ never played by black actors?
And why aint there an MC that can touch me nor budge me?
And why is the Nas the best thing in rap since Chuck D?
And why this record aint sell 5 million (mill yet)? Jada’s as real as it get
Put my money where my mouth is and do something bout this.

Chorus

Jadakiss:
Yo by thugs im surrounded
Tell me why is it the money motivates me but
the love keeps me grounded? Why my cases aint get thrown out? Why team USA keep getting blown out? Why the democratic party aint getting with me? Why they still hanging black bodies in Mississippi? Why did governor McGreevey get caught with a lizard? And why they take away Shyne’s phone calls and visits? And why I been hot for 7 years? Why the new M-5 come with 7 gears? Please tell me why yall keep making that trash

Young Jeezy feat. Jay-Z – “My President (Remix)”

My president is black my mayback too And I'll be goddamned if my diamonds ain't blue My moneys dark green and my porche is light gray I'm headed for dc anybody feel me

[Verse: Jay-Z] My president is black in fact hes half white So even in a racist mind he's half right If you got a racist mind you'll be aight My president is black but his house is all white Rosa parks sat so martin luther could walk Martin luther walked so barack obama could run Barack obama ran so all the children could fly I'm a spread my wings you can meet me in the sky I already got my own clothes already got my own shoes I was hot before barack imagine what I'm gon do Hello miss america hey pretty lady Red white and blue flag Wave for me baby I never thought id say this shit Baby I'm good You can keep ya puss I don't want no more bush No more war no more iraq no more white lies The president is black

[Chorus:] My president is black my mayback too And I'll be goddamned if my diamonds ain't blue My moneys dark green and my porche is light gray I'm headed for dc anybody feel me

[Verse: Young Jeezy] Today was a good day, hope I have me a great night I don't know what you fishin for but catch you a great white Me, I see great white, heavy as killer whales I cannot believe this, who knew it came in bails Who knew what came with jail, who knew what came with prison Just cause you got opinions, does that make you a politician? Bush robbed all of us, would that make him a criminal? And then he cheated in Florida, would that make him a seminal? I say and I quote, "We need a miracle" And I say a miracle cause this shit is hysterical By my nephews and nieces, I will email Jesus Tell him forward to Moses and CC Allah Mr. Soul Survivor, guess that make me a Konvict Be all you be, now don't that sound like some dumb shit When you die over crude oil as black as my nigga Boo It's really a Desert Storm, that's word to my nigga Clue Catch me in Las Vegas, A.R. Arizona Rep for them real niggas, I'm winnin in California Winnin in Tennessee, hands down Atlanta Landslide Alabama, on my way to Sevana

[Chorus:] My president is black, my Lambo's blue And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too My momma ain't at home, and daddy's still in jail Tryna make a plate, anybody seen the scale? My president is black, my Lambo's blue And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too My money's light green and my Jordans light grey
And they love to see white, now how much you tryna pay?

[Verse: Young Jeezy]
I said I woke up this morning, headache this big
Pay all these damn bills, feed all these damn kids
Buy all these school shoes, buy all these school clothes
For some strange reason my son addicted to Polos
Love me some spinach dip, I'm addicted to Houston's
And if the numbers is right I take a trip out to Houston
An earthquake out in China, a hurricane in New Orleans
Street Dreams Tour, I showed my ass in New Orleans
Did it for Soulja Slim, brought out B.G.
It's all love Bun, I'm forgivin you Pimp C
You know how the Pimp be, that nigga gon' speak his mind
If he could speak down from heaven he'd tell me stay on my grind
Tell him I'm doin fine, Obama for mankind
We ready for damn change so y'all let the man shine
Stuntin on Martin Luther, feelin just like a king
Guess this is what he meant when he said that he had a dream

[Chorus:]
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My momma ain't at home, and daddy's still in jail
Tryna make a plate, anybody seen the scale?
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My money's light green and my Jordans light grey
And they love to see white, now how much you tryna pay?

[Nas:]
Yeah, our history, black history, no president ever did shit for me
Had to hit the streets, had to flip some keys so a nigga won't go broke
Then they put us in jail, now a nigga can't go vote
So I spend doe, all these hoes is trippin
She a ain't a politician, honey's a politician
My president is black, rolls golden charms
Twenty-two inch rims like Hulk Hogan's arms
When thousands of peoples is riled up to see you
That can arouse ya ego, we got mouths to feed so
Gotta stay true to who you are and where you came from
Cause at the top will be the same place you hang from
No matter how big you can ever be
For whatever fee or publicity, never lose your integrity
For years there's been surprise horses in this stable
Just two albums in, I'm the realest nigga on this label
Mr. Black President, yo Obama for real
They gotta put your face on the five-thousand dollar bill

[Chorus:]
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My momma ain't at home, and daddy's still in jail
Tryna make a plate, anybody seen the scale?
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My money's light green and my Jordans light grey
And they love to see white, now how much you tryna pay?

[Outro: Young Jeezy]
So I'm sittin right here now man
It's June 3rd haha, 2:08 AM
Nigga I won't say win, lose or draw
Man we congratulate you already homie
See I motivate the thugs right
You motivate us home, that's what it is
This a hands on policy, y'all touchin me right nigga
Yeah, first black president, win, lose or draw nigga
Haha, matter of fact, you know what it is man
Shouts out to Jackie Robinson, Booker T, Washington homie
Oh you ain't think I knew that shit?
Sydney Poitier what dey do?
Haha, my president is black
I'm important too though, my Lambo's blue
I was, I was the first nigga to ride through my hood in a Lamborghini yeah haha
Nas – “Black President”

[Hook (2x): Tupac]
Although it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to have a black President
Although it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to have a black President

Yes We Can ... Change the World (Change the World )
(They Said!)

[Verse 1: Nas]
They forgot us on the block
Got us in the box
Solitary confinement
How violent are these cops?
They need an early retirement
How many rallies will I watch?
I ain't got it in me to march
I got a semi to spark
The game's in a drought
Public housing, projects
Cooking up in the Pyrex
My set, my click
Either getting money
Or running from homicide trial
That's if they ain't died yet
Trying to be rich
Still I'm pledging allegiance
A predicate felon, a ghetto leader
Lending my poetical genius
To whoever may need it
I bleed this from Queensbridge
Now living with my feet up
Never defeated
So a president's needed
Y'know these colored folks and Negroes
Hate to see one of their own succeeding
America, surprise us
And let a black man guide us

[Hook (2x): Tupac]
Although it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to have a black President
Although it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to have a black President

Yes We Can ... Change the World (Change the World )
(They Said!)

What’s the black pres. thinkin’ on election night?
Is it how can I protect my life, protect my wife, protect my rights?
Every other president was nothin' less than white
Except Thomas Jefferson and mixed Indian blood
and Calvin Coolidge
KKK is like 'what the fuck', loadin' they guns up
loadin' mine too, Ready to ride
Cause I'm ridin' with my crew
He dies - we die too
But on a positive side,
I think Obama provides Hope - and challenges minds
Of all races and colors to erase the hate
And try and love one another, so many political snakes
We in need of a break
Im thinkin’ I can trust this brotha
But will he keep it way real?
Every innocent n!gga in jail - gets out on appeal
When he wins - will he really care still?
I feel . . .

[Hook (2x): Tupac]
And though it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to see a black President
And though it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to see a black President

Yes We Can ... Change the World (Change the World )
(They Said!)

Say a prayer for "do we have to?"
You ain't right, Jeremiah Wrong pastor
In love with a slave master
Sincerely yours:
USA most brave rapper
Jesse car-jacker
Uncle Tom-kidnapper
Ask around
Bentley Coupe off the Richter
B!tch-called-life, I pimped her
What?
Politics, politricks
Klan-shooter
Deacon for defense
Progress-producer
Nothing on the stove
A survival-booster
Gotta do what we gotta do
We ain't got no governors coming through to help
anything we need done, we gotta do for self
New-improved JFK on the way
It ain't the 60's again
N!ggas ain't hippies again
We ain't falling for the same traps
Standing on the balconies
Where they shot the King at
McCain got apologies
Ain't nobody hearing that
People need honesty

[Hook (2x): Tupac]
And though it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to see a black President
And though it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to see a black President

Yes We Can ... Change the World (Change the World )
(They Said!)

[Outro]
It is my distinct honor and privilege to introduce the next President of the United States: Barack Obama.
(Applause)
Appendix E


Barack Obama (sound clip):
I want to thank all of you for your time, your suggestions, your encouragement, and your prayers. And I look forward to continuing our conversation in the weeks and months to come.

Obama Gir (spoken):
Hey B, it’s me. If you’re there, pick up.
I was just watching you on C-SPAN. [Sigh] Anyway, call me back.

You seem to float onto the floor
Democratic Convention 2004
I never wanted anybody more
Than I want you
So I put down my Kerry sign
Knew I had to make you mine
So black and sexy, you’re so fine
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama

I cannot wait, ’til 2008
Baby you’re the best candidate
I like it when you get hard
On Hillary in debate
Why don’t you pick up your phone?
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama
I cannot wait, ’til 2008
Baby you’re the best candidate
Of the new oval office
You’ll get your head of state
I can’t leave you alone
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama

You’re into border security
Let’s break this border between you and me
Universal healthcare reform
It makes me warm
You tell the truth unlike the right
You can love but you can fight
You can Barack me tonight
I’ve got a crush on Obama

I cannot wait, ’til 2008
Baby you’re the best candidate
I like it when you get hard
On Hillary in debate
Why don’t you pick up your phone?
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama
I cannot wait, ’til 2008
Baby you’re the best candidate
Of the new oval office
You’ll get your head of state
I can’t leave you alone
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama

B to the A to the R-A-C-K-O-B-A-M-A (Barack Obama) [8x]
‘Cause I’ve got a crush on Obama

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**Filmography**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFnCc20E87g>


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKsoXHYICqU>

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**Discography, Sheet Music, and Liner Notes**


