

...numerous possible 'pasts' have been made in quite specific ways...New music and new cultural dialogues are made within the context of the possibilities provided by existing social relations... technological means...and aesthetic conventions...Such musical history making cannot be known in any innocent sense. Arranging a vast number of sounds, words and images into musical 'eras' is not a neutral activity...history is produced.

—Negus, p.138

- **Do you agree with Negus's assessment of music history? Are there objective truths and facts in music history?**
- **Can you think of an example of a period in music history that could be interpreted from multiple perspectives?**

Van Der Merwe has produced a history in quite a specific way. To trace back the 12-bar blues to Europe in the sixteenth century is clearly different to following it back to Africa in the eighteenth century. The quest for beginnings, and the decision to stop at a particular moment of 'origins', has clear political implications for how identities are understood in the present.

—Negus, p.145

- **How should one go about seeking origins in a musical context? Is such a thing as impossible as Negus claims?**
- **How *do* we decide when we have looked back 'far enough'?**