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'A Hidden Art Form'
The Value of Sound in UK Television Idents
(1982-2022)

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Abstract

Television idents are hidden in plain sight. Their creativity is often undervalued by industry practitioners and viewers alike, designated a 'hidden art form' by creative executive Charlie Mawer (2020). The sound worlds of idents are doubly overlooked, often ignored in visually-centric discourse on idents in industry journals and in media and cultural studies. In the production process, composers are often peripheral to the project, involved only towards the end. This thesis inverts such hierarchies and adopts a sound-oriented perspective towards idents. The approach brings together previously disparate strands across musicology, art and design history, and media studies, aiming to highlight the value of sound in idents as well as the hitherto-neglected creative labour of composers in the promotion of television channels. The scope is confined mainly to the UK, examining idents produced for broadcasters and streaming platforms between 1982 and 2022.

This thesis addresses a central question: What is the value of music and sound in television idents? To answer this question, it combines textual analyses of idents with evidence from practitioner interviews. Musicological concepts and theories are employed in the analysis of idents, highlighting the aesthetic character and functions of the music and sounds. The method of reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) applied to the interviews produced new insights into the working environments of the composers and their creative colleagues, exploring themes of identity, collaboration, creative process, and artistic value.

The first three chapters set out the aim of this thesis, academic contexts, and methodological approach respectively. Chapter 4 contains a musicological analysis of idents, tracing transformations in the aesthetic character and roles of sound in connection with the changing experience of watching television between 1982 and 2022. Chapter 5 expands on the arguments set out in Chapter 4 by focussing on production contexts, unpacking themes derived from the qualitative analysis of the interviews. Chapter 6 synthesises the conclusions and findings from Chapters 4 and 5 and discusses the commercial, artistic, and cultural value of the music and sound of idents. This thesis culminates with an exploration of future avenues of research and the implications of this research for practitioners and educators. In sum, this thesis argues that the artistic labour of ident production and the valuable role of musical creativity within this commercial and temporally constraining context deserve greater recognition and attention.

Lay Summary

The word 'ident' is short for 'station identification' and refers to the brief logos that appear between the programmes on television. Idents can be seen on linear terrestrial channels, such as BBC One and Channel 4, as well as online streaming platforms, including Netflix and Amazon Prime. They are typically between ten and thirty seconds in duration, and feature the channel's logo, music, and sound design, as well as a continuity announcer who informs the audience of the forthcoming programme. Rather than simply serving as navigational signposts for the audience, idents have evolved to become engaging pieces of entertainment that express the channel's unique identity and personality.

The music and sound of idents play many crucial roles. An engaging or interesting sound track can draw the viewer's eyes to the screen when they are distracted; help the viewer remember the channel in a positive light; and assist in creating a clear and cohesive brand identity that ties the programmes together. Despite this, the music and sound of idents is often side-lined by academics, practitioners, and viewers. This thesis aims to combat this neglect by highlighting the value of music and sound in idents. The research involved analysing the images and sounds of specific idents, noting the musical and visual features and how they relate to each other. Interviews were conducted with graphic designers and composers to learn more about the production process. Whereas the first three chapters introduce relevant literature and the methods used, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the outcomes of the research. The final chapter, Chapter 7, includes recommendations for industry processes and suggestions for future research. Overall, this thesis argues that the work of composers in the production of idents deserves greater recognition and attention.

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Musical Examples

Note on use of musical examples:

I have included a number of musical transcriptions; all transcriptions are my own. Where I have referred to musical pitches in the main text, I have used International Pitch Notation (IPN) to refer to identify the pitch's octave. Video links to the idents discussed are included as footnotes.

Accompanying playlist:

The video links listed in the footnotes can also be viewed via the playlist below:
https://media.ed.ac.uk/playlist/dedicated/1_da11k7hc/

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Around and back

The UK's fourth television channel, Channel 4, launched in the UK in November 1982, finally expanding the choice for viewers beyond the three channels provided by the BBC and ITV. In anticipation of the launch, Channel 4 needed to create a new on-screen logo—known in the industry as an ident—that would appear in the breaks between the programmes and the advertisements. Whereas the BBC and ITV employed their in-house designers to create idents, Channel 4 executive Pam Masters hired an external design consultant, Martin Lambie-Nairn. Applying a strategic approach, Lambie-Nairn asserted that the ident should reflect the 'identity of the channel as a whole' (1997: 71). He designed an animation in which a serif '4' is constructed from nine brightly coloured three-dimensional blocks that move in virtual space. The concept of diverse elements joining to form a whole was intended to reflect the channel's unique status as a publisher-broadcaster, meaning that it commissioned its programmes from a range of independent production companies (Fanthome 2007: 257). The animation utilised ground-breaking computer technology that had necessitated a trip to the Los Angeles-based animation studio, Bo Gehring Aviation. After the creation of the first animation, named 'Around and Back', five more variations were created, the blocks exploding out towards the viewer or flying in from the corner of the screen.[1]
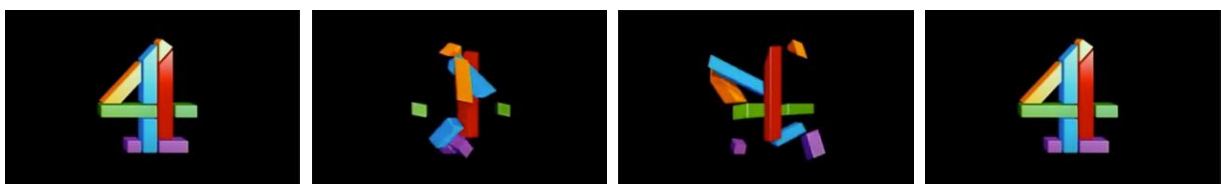
Figure 1: Channel 4, Around and Back (1982)

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[1] Channel 4, 1982. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rQCM_S4Xq0. (Accessed Sept 29, 2022).

Only when the visual elements were complete did Lambie-Nairn turn his attention to the music. As creative director for the project, he envisioned a flexible sonic identity:

> I wanted a simple theme that could be interpreted in a variety of ways—a cluster of notes that could be played in the style of anything from Chopin to Chuck Berry, depending on the time of day or the type of programme coming up. We needed a distinctive personality to be expressed in different ways, both visually and musically. (1997: 77)

After listening to a selection of pitches from various composers, he decided to hire composer David Dundas and visited his studio to explore the musical ideas. They sat down at the piano and Dundas played a sequence of four notes. Lambie-Nairn was disappointed and asked Dundas, 'Can you at least make one of the notes shorter than the others?' (1997: 77). The channel's four-note figure was born (Example 1). As was common in the production of music for TV and film, an orchestrator was then hired to arrange the figure for full orchestra, heavily featuring timpani, electric bass, trumpets, and horns. The resulting ident functioned as an emphatic punctuation point, announcing the entry of the UK's fourth television channel with a fanfare. It is framed by two 'hit points', in which the music aligns with the visual movement, as the first and last notes of the four-note pattern coincide with the appearance of the completed logo at the beginning and end of the animation. Although each of its six variations featured slightly different music, they all remained in the same orchestral fanfare style, and Lambie-Nairn recalled that the music was a 'step back from' the stylistic eclecticism that he had initially envisaged (1997: 77). Whereas the high-tech animation looked to the future, the music looked to the past, sonically reminiscent of traditional film studio logos such as Alfred Newman's music for 20th Century Fox, recorded in 1933 (Brownrigg and Meech 2002: 346).[2] Nonetheless, the four-note figure composed by Dundas, with the rhythmic tweak added by Lambie-Nairn, proved to be a flexible sonic mnemonic. The figure remains a core part of the channel's brand identity today, forty years later.

Example 1: Channel 4 four-note figure.

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[2] 20th Century Fox theme, 1933. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve1x3Q9o_Us. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022). The extended version used today was composed in 1953.

In 1982, UK viewers had access to only four television channels. Today, viewers can access thousands of television channels via broadcast, cable, satellite, or streaming technologies (Johnson 2019). Channel 4 now consists of a network of twelve channels as well as an online streaming service, All4. Long familiar to UK audiences, the three-dimensional blocks of the '4' logo have been broken apart and reassembled in various iterations of the brand's identity. The idents on Channel 4's flagship broadcast channel currently feature the blocks arranged in the anthropomorphic form of a giant. In one variation, the giant climbs a hill in the Peak District and opens its mouth to blast out Dundas' original four-note figure to the residents of the town below, causing bicycles to fall over and windows to break (Figure 2 below).[3] Channel 4-originated programmes featured within third-party platforms such as Netflix are preceded by a version of the four-note mnemonic played on a marimba, accompanying an animation of the same three-dimensional logo (Figure 3 below).[4] On Channel 4's streaming service, All4, a two-dimensional version of the logo features a subtle whisper of the mnemonic, truncated to the last two notes (Figure 4 below).[5] The persistence of the visual and sonic elements of the original Channel 4 ident encapsulate the initial premise of this thesis: that the images and sounds of idents can occupy a meaningful and lasting place in culture.

Figure 2: Channel 4, Giant (2016)

Figure 3: Channel 4 ident for third-party VOD (2019)

Figure 4: All4 ident (2019)

1.2 Prehistory

The creation of the Channel 4 ident signalled the beginning of the development of ident production as a strategic and professionalised discipline. However, the use of sound to identify and brand a channel or service can be traced back much further to practices developed in early radio and cinema.

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[3] Channel 4 'Giant' Ident, 2017: https://theident.gallery/c4-2017.php. (Accessed July 14, 2022).
[4] Channel 4 Third Party VOD, https://vimeo.com/439271979. (Accessed July 14, 2022).
[5] All4 ident, 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VDDA9JMjPI. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

Radio stations in the 1920s and 1930s used call signs that periodically informed the listener which station they were tuned into. The call signs often consisted of the spoken name of the station, for example '2-L-O', but they also sometimes used Morse code or musical mnemonics (Briggs 1995: 66). One of the earliest call signs was created by the USA's first major radio network, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), founded in 1926. Almost since its inception, the company has used a station identification signal, the NBC chimes, which consists of three notes, G3, E4 and C4 (Rodman 2009: 8). The chimes were originally introduced to fix a technical problem—to cover the pops and clicks of engineers switching between parts of the network live on air, but they soon became an integral part of the network's brand identity (Greenhut 2016: n.p.). The NBC chimes were trademarked in 1950, the first audio trademark to be accepted by the US Patent and Trademark Office, and the chimes are still heard today in the idents for the NBC television network. The national radio services broadcast by the BBC from 1923 also used call signs to construct a coherent and distinctive sonic identity. The BBC's radio services often used the chiming of Big Ben or the pips, also known as the Greenwich Time Signal, which mark the precise start of an hour with six short tones at intervals of a second (Briggs 1995: 246). The pips are still used on BBC Radio 4 as a station call sign today and can be heard in the current music theme for the BBC News, composed in 1991. For NBC and the BBC, radio call signs which originally provided a technical function became invaluable brand assets that are still recognisable today.

With the advent of television, memorable music and sound effects were combined with graphics to identify a channel.[6] Intervals between programmes on the BBC Television Service initially featured a silent test card or short scenes called 'interval films'—tranquil interludes that featured settings such as a waterfall or a woman at a spinning wheel, accompanied by light orchestral music.[7] The BBC's first television ident was created in 1953, when the corporation faced the prospect of competition, with a second public broadcaster, Independent Television (ITV), to launch in 1955. The ident,

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[6] In November 1936, the BBC began the UK's first regular television service, at first available only to a small audience of wealthy viewers who could afford to buy a television set. The service abruptly ended at the outbreak of World War Two in 1939, re-established in 1946 (Crisell 1997: 76-79).
[7] To view the BBC's interval films, see: https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/interludes/zjkk382. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

designed by poster designer Abram Games, consisted of a spinning contraption of piano wire and brass, with a light shone on the wire to create the effect of radio waves (Figure 5 below). The BBC's official description of the ident explains:

> The abstract pattern consists of two intersecting eyes, which scan the globe from north to south and east to west, symbolising vision and the power of vision. Flashes of lightning on either side represent electrical forces and the whole form takes the shape of wings which suggest the creative possibilities of television broadcasting. (BBC 2013)

The ident symbolised the BBC's authoritative and pioneering role in broadcasting information about the world, to the world. The music of this ident contrasted with the short and simple call signs used by radio stations, instead featuring a series of harp arpeggios improvised by the harpist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sidonie Goossens.[8] The soft and gentle music served to counteract the harshness of the visuals and reflected the sedate pace of early television. This ident was used until 1961, when it was replaced by a silent rotating globe.
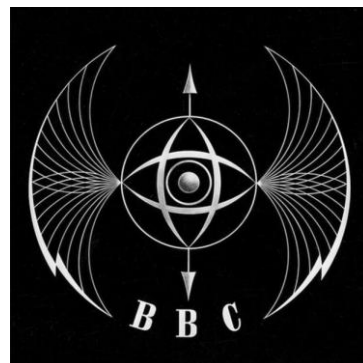
Figure 5: BBC Television (1953 - 1961)

By the 1960s, television idents were handled by a specific section of the BBC's Graphic Design department, named Presentation, which was responsible for the segments of broadcasting between the programmes including all on-air interstitial graphics such as slides, programme menus, weather maps, and clocks (Johnson 2012: 196). Idents were used as a 'home-base' between programmes to 'inform the viewer which station' they are tuned to whilst providing 'the Presentation department with a natural break over which announcements can be made or time can be checked'

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[8] BBC Television, 1953-1961: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUI-FsvggSs. (Accessed Oct 31, 2022).

(Laughton 1966: 44). The majority of the BBC's idents between 1953 and 1985 were broadcast using a device known as NODD (Nexus Orthicon Display Device), which was a system in which a video camera was pointed at a set of pre-arranged physical models or captions. For BBC1,[9] these models took the form of various rotating globes, which were usually broadcast without music.[10] From 1968, a musical call sign was sometimes added to the otherwise-silent ident on BBC1 (see Example 2 below).[11] This recalled a practice from the BBC's radio services in the 1940s, which had used the notes B-B-C as an identification signal.[12] The ident also features a descending scale on the harp, possibly a subtle nod to Goossens' improvisations in the 1953 ident.

Figure 6: BBC1 (1968)

Example 2: Chimes and harp in BBC1 (1968)

Unlike the BBC, the UK's second broadcaster, ITV (Independent Television), originally comprised a network of local franchises, each with their own branding and identity (Johnson and Turnock 2013: 6). The idents for the ITV franchises generally consisted of moving graphics, created either using cardboard animations or physical models. ABC (Associated British Cinemas Ltd), one of ITV's original four franchises, featured an ident with a simple animation of the letters A, B, and C, as well as a moving triangle, accompanied by an ascending musical mnemonic, A4, B4, and C5.[13] The other ITV franchises similarly utilised practices from radio call signs; for example, Associated Rediffusion used a five-note Morse code pattern that signifies 'A-R', harmonised by

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[9] In 1997, BBC1 and BBC2 were renamed BBC One and BBC Two. When referring to examples before 1997, I use the names consistent with the name of the channel at the time.
[10] For example: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1963-bbc-tv-globe. (Accessed Aug 10, 2022).
[11] The BBC Television Service was renamed BBC1 with the arrival of BBC2 in 1964.
[12] See: http://www.intervalsignals.net. (Accessed July 11, 2022).
[13] Associated British Cinemas (Television) Ltd. Ident, 1960 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NipV_dHigwg. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

brass instruments.[14] Following the example of the ITV franchises, an ident created in 1964 for BBC2 used a chordal trumpet fanfare based on the Morse code translation of 'BBC TWO'.[15] The use of brass instruments and fanfares in early idents relates to another musical influence on early idents—film studio logos.

Alfred Newman's orchestral fanfare for film studio 20th Century Fox, composed in 1933, served as a model for many later logos, idents, and title sequences.[16] The theme, still used today, holds a steady yet energetic compound time (12/8) and makes heavy use of timpani, brass, and woodwind. As media scholars Mark Brownrigg and Peter Meech note, the fanfare 'seems to stand not just for 20th Century Fox, but for the pizzazz of Hollywood itself' (1999: 346). Title sequences for cinema newsreels in the 1920s and 1930s also commonly featured march-like musical fanfares in compound time with prominent brass and woodwind, well-known examples including *British Pathé* (1910-70), *British Movietone News* (1929-79), and *Gaumont British News* (1934-59).[17] In these title sequences, strident and insistent fanfares function as appellations to the audio-viewer, as if to say: 'Listen! Something important is about to happen'. In the case of *Pathé*, the end of the sequence is punctuated by its signature crowing rooster. In the title for *Gaumont British News,* the sequence begins with an image and the sound of a man ringing a bell, heard over the fanfare music. Besides hailing the audience, the music and sounds were memorable and recognisable, with easily singable melodies. Several idents for ITV and the BBC in the 1960s and 1970s similarly used bright, major-key fanfares featuring trumpets and horns. For example, in the 1970s, the ITV franchise London Weekend Television also introduced a fanfare—a winding trumpet and vibraphone melody which accompanied the curving graphics representing the river Thames (see Figure 7 and Example 3 below).[18]

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[14] Associated Rediffusion ident, 1955. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VenG27kCOvI. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

[15] BBC2, launch ident, 1964. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1964-bbc2-first-ident. (Accessed July 11, 2022).

[16] 20th Century Fox theme, 1933. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve1x3Q9o_Us. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022). The extended version we hear today was composed in 1953.

[17] British Pathé News title sequence, 1928. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQ2pOh-kHGU. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022);
British Movietone News, 1941. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7nfTKHcczI. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022);
Gaumont British News title sequence, 1940. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWgWPTKiJYE. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022);

[18] London Weekend Television ident, 1970. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrIH_EYhfHk. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

Figure 7: London Weekend Television (1970-1978)

Example 3: London Weekend Television (1970-1979), see footnote 18 for recording.

As identified above, the sounds of early television idents were influenced by both radio call signs and cinema logos. The Channel 4 ident created in 1982, discussed above, shares similarities with these earlier interstitial forms, using a four-note mnemonic to indicate the fourth channel and an arresting orchestral fanfare that evokes the quality and opulence of film studio logos.

Although early idents served as memorable mnemonics that identified the channel, they were not explicitly linked with marketing or branding until the 1980s and 1990s. With the launch of Channel 4, the media industry was becoming increasingly marketised and competitive. Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government was urging industries towards deregulation and privatisation, with the aim of participating in a 'new global cultural industries sector' (Hesmondhalgh 2019: 134). Although Channel 4 retains some public service programming requirements and operates as a not-for-profit organisation, it was created to stimulate competition in the production sector by being required to commission its programmes from independent production companies. The Channel 4 launch ident helped raise the status of channel branding, and Lambie-Nairn was later hired to design idents for channels across the BBC, ITV, as well as other cable, satellite, and digital channels in the UK and internationally.

Through his design agency, M-LN, he hired and trained promising young designers who would follow in his footsteps, several later founding their own agencies that specialise in broadcast design.[19] From the late 1980s onwards, the production of television idents thus became established as a professionalised sub-industry that brought together practices of branding, motion graphic design, and music.

1.3 Scope of the thesis

Today, idents are one of the many types of interstitial texts used by television channels and streaming services. Besides idents, promotional interstitials can include bumpers (brief lead-ins to shows which are often sponsored), teasers (a longer promotion for a specific programme, usually using music from the 'world' of the show), and programme listings (stillshots of the times and names of programmes to be broadcast) (Graakjær 2015: 62). Idents are used for several years with a 'shelf-life' of around 3,600 viewings (Mawer 2011: 94). Since the early 1980s, they have evolved into 'sophisticated, brief, and often enigmatic commercials which somehow incarnate the channel's brand' (Ellis in Grainge 2011: 61). Besides branding the channel, idents fulfil many other overlapping functions, as noted by creative executive Brett Foraker.[20]

> I think idents are the connective tissue of any channel. They are the greatest distillation of the spirit of the channel at a given time, and maybe the aspirations of a channel at a given time. They're a tone setter, they're like a title sequence in a film or the logo of a movie studio. They are meant to stand for something and to give a more concrete face to your abstract conception of a certain channel. So, they're this connection that binds all the shows and all the personalities on the channel together, and hopefully enhances them as they're doing it. For us it was always a question of: could we come up with something that bears multiple viewings without getting boring, could it stand on its own qualitatively with any programme that was on the show, and, in fact, could it be better than some of the shows that were on the channel? (2021)

Creating texts that fulfil all these functions is a difficult creative challenge. The observation of Eastman, Ferguson, and Klein (1999: 20)—that an ident 'is one of the most demanding elements of promotion'—is affirmed by Mawer's view that idents can be 'the single hardest bit of creative work you'll ever be asked to do' (2011: 91). Idents

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[19] For example, Heavenly, founded in 2003 by Nick Sunderland and Richard Sunderland. https://heavenly.co.uk (Accessed May 17, 2022).

[20] Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted between April 2020 and December 2021. When a reference is made to an interview in this thesis, I include the speaker's surname and the year of the interview. An alphabetised list of interview participants is included in Appendix 4.

are highly temporally constrained yet complex and often-entertaining texts that fulfil many functions simultaneously and require careful and skilled work to produce.

The scope of this thesis is limited to UK-based channels and services from 1982 to the present, taking the ground-breaking Channel 4 ident as a starting point. A UK-specific context was chosen, partly for ease of access to resources. The other reason is that idents have held a greater role in UK broadcasting, particularly when compared to North America. As Catherine Johnson notes, in the US, brand identities for individual programmes are more important than a consistent authorial identity for the channel or network; networks historically prioritised the sale of airtime to advertisers and were reluctant to fill this valuable time with self-promotion (2013: 286). In contrast, television in the UK has been associated with public service principles and has thus been less commercially motivated. Public service channels in the UK were often required to air a wider range of programmes and genres, to cater for a range of needs and tastes, and thus faced a stronger need to create an overarching authorial identity (Johnson 2013a: 275). The UK, according to Grainge and Johnson, is thus still perceived 'as an international leader in the field of television marketing, especially in areas such as motion graphic design' (2014: 128). For these reasons, I decided to conduct a UK-focussed study of the role of music and sound in idents.

1.4 Thesis aim

As neither programmes nor commercials, idents tend to be hidden in plain sight, their creativity often undervalued by industry practitioners and viewers alike. Idents are examples of what Paul Grainge calls 'ephemeral media', brief and evanescent texts that border and frame the programmes (2011). The work of creative practitioners constitutes a 'hidden' form of artistic labour, often dismissed as less creative and valuable than the labour that goes into producing films and television programmes— the 'primary' content (Grainge and Johnson 2015). The sonic aspects of idents are particularly neglected, often underemphasised in the visually-centric discourse on idents in industry journals and in media and cultural studies. In the production process, composers are often peripheral to the production process, involved only towards the end.

This thesis inverts such hierarchies, adopting a sound-oriented focus and examining idents from a musicological perspective. Accordingly, I aimed to address an overarching question, 'what is the value of music and sound in UK television idents?' From this overarching aim, I developed two specific research questions that consider both textual and production approaches: 1) What is the aesthetic character and role of the sound in idents? and 2) What is the nature of the production process and what is the role and position of composers in the industry? These research questions are discussed in more detail in section 2.4 below.

1.5 Thesis outline

In the next chapter (Chapter 2) I outline the contribution of the thesis to three fields of research: music, art and design history, and media studies. My research primarily contributes to musicology, building on existing studies of music in television programmes, title sequences, and advertisements (Tagg 1979, Rodman 2013, Cook 1998, Huron 1989, Graakjær and Jantzen 2009, Davison 2013a, 2013b, Graakjær 2014). In art and design history, a strand of scholarship has explored the development of motion graphics in ident production (Levin 1961, Laughton 1966, Crook 1986, Merritt 1987, Lambie-Nairn 1997, Betancourt 2013, Macdonald 2014, 2015, 2016, Brownie 2014, 2015). My research complements this literature by exploring parallel developments in music and sound. This thesis also contributes to media studies, a field in which media promotion has been an important topic (e.g., Gray 1992, Grainge and Johnson 2015), but where the sonic aspects of idents have received little attention outside the publications of Brownrigg and Meech (1999, 2002, 2011). Moreover, the production process of individual creatives is a neglected area across musicology and media studies, and the role of composers in producing idents has not been investigated at all. At the end of Chapter 2, I set out my research questions and sub-questions in full, whilst explaining how my thesis addresses the gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the thesis methodology and provides the rationale for my decision to combine audiovisual analysis and qualitative interviews in a single study. I argue that these two methods are complementary and allowed me to explore idents from multiple perspectives. The results of the textual analysis and qualitative interview analysis are presented and explored in the following two chapters.

In Chapter 4, I trace transformations in the aesthetic character and role of music and sound in idents across three distinct eras of television in the UK between 1982 and 2022, combining in-depth audiovisual analysis with insights from practitioner interviews. Chapter 4 divides the period from 1982 to the present into three sections characterised as follows: Availability (1982-2002), Plenty (2002-2014), and Overflow (2014-present). This periodisation adopts terms that have been proposed by media scholars to illustrate the increasing number of channels and the distinctive characteristics of television throughout this development (Ellis 2002; De Meulenaere, Van Den Broek, and Lievens 2012; Johnson 2019). Since my aim is to explore the aesthetic changes within the increasingly competitive industry context, these terms provided a useful framework within which to position my analysis. Each section begins with an overview of aesthetic changes in the visual and sonic character of idents in each period before examining selected case studies in detail.

Chapter 5 explores themes derived from qualitative analysis of interviews with composers and graphic designers. The findings explored in this chapter complement and enrich those set out in Chapter 4, by shining a light on the processes, negotiations, and collaborations that lead to the final product that seen and heard on television screens. In Chapter 6 I synthesise the conclusions and findings from Chapters 4 and 5 and discuss the different types of economic, artistic, and cultural value attributed to the music and sound of idents. In Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, I explore the implications of this research for practitioners and educators and point to future avenues of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I survey the relevant existing literature across three disciplines: musicology; art and design history; and media studies, thus establishing the scholarly context for the original contributions of my own research.

2.1 Music on screen(s)

Much of the work in musicology examining film and television music has focussed on textual analysis, but in recent years issues of industry contexts, production and reception have begun to attract greater attention (Davison 2013a, Mera, Sadoff, and Winters 2017: 5). I explore this literature below, beginning with a discussion of approaches towards textual analysis of music in film and television, before focussing on the functions of music within short-form audiovisual texts. I then go on to discuss research in the production contexts of music in audiovisual media.

The study of music in trailers, television commercials, title sequences and other promotional media has developed significantly, with early work beginning in the 1980s and many new publications emerging since 2010 (Tagg 1979, Huron 1989, Cook 1998, Graakjær and Jantzen 2009, Rodman 2013, Davison 2013a, 2013b, Graakjær 2015). These relatively recent investigations built upon earlier studies of film music, in which scholars have sought to highlight the important role of sound and music in relation to the film's narrative (Gorbman 1987, Kalinak 1992, Chion 1994). In film music studies, however, analyses often focus on long-form narratives, character development, and the use of recurring themes or *leitmotifs*—the latter, a term first associated with Richard Wagner's operatic works, in which repeated motifs are connected to a particular character, situation or emotion (Bribitzer-Stull 2015). Music scholars who turned to focus on trailers, commercials, and title sequences realised that short-form promotional texts require a different approach compared to film music. For example, the topic of film trailers has been one area of recent inquiry for musicologists (Deaville and Malkinson 2014, Deaville 2017). James Deaville notes that film trailers have specific characteristics that rely upon 'different sonic practices than feature film', including 'heightened levels of density and volume, the compression of traditional thematic/structural devices, the emphasis upon synchresis between

sound and image, and the elevation of sound to a formal element' (2017: 240-241). As explored below, idents rely upon yet other sonic practices and aesthetic characteristics, tied to their specific functions.

Early scholarship on film music in the 1940s and 1950s that focussed on textual analysis often described the music as being in 'counterpoint' or 'parallel' to the images, borrowing terms from music theory that describe the relationship between two or more melodic voices (Eisler and Adorno 1947, Eisenstein 1942). Claudia Gorbman (1978) and Michel Chion (1994) argued that these concepts, whilst useful for describing musical textures, are less suitable in relation to film as they generalise the complex relationship between the two different sensory categories whilst inevitably prioritising the images as the locus of meaning making. Gorbman instead suggested the notion of 'mutual implication' between the images and sounds and encouraged an understanding of the image-sound relationship as fluid and evolving, rather than fixed or static (Gorbman 1987: 15). In a similar vein, Chion (1993) offered the concept of 'added value' to describe the often-overlooked contribution of sound to the construction of meaning:

> By added value I mean the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given image so as to create the definite impression, in the immediate or remembered experience one has of it, that this information or expression 'naturally' comes from what is seen and is already contained in the image itself. Added value is what gives the (eminently incorrect) impression that sound is unnecessary, that sound merely duplicates a meaning that in reality it brings about, either all on its own or by discrepancies between it and the image. (1994: 5)

Chion's concept draws attention to a paradox: music and sound 'enrich' the images, but in doing so they create the impression that the sounds somehow come from the images themselves, an illusion that seems to pronounce the sound 'unnecessary'. Thus, sound often goes 'unheard'. Nonetheless, music in film and television does not merely reflect meaning 'inherent' in the images but contributes to the construction of an emergent meaning (Cook 1998).[21]

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[21] For a more in-depth discussion on the theory of musical meaning adopted in this thesis, see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1 below.

This raises the question of *how* music might be considered to contribute towards the construction of meaning. To provide answers to this question, many musicologists have turned to the linguistic theory of semiotics, as developed by Ferdinand Saussure (1974) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1956). In semiotic theory, words, images, and sounds generate meaning by functioning as signs or 'codes' that consist of the signifier and the signified. Musicologists Raymond Monelle (2000), Kofi Agawu (1991), and Robert Hatten (2004) adapted semiotic theory to develop 'topic theory', in which a certain type of musical figure or style is described as a signifier that carries conventional associations recognisable to a contemporary audience. This theory was initially applied to music from the classical era, roughly 1770-1830, but as Monelle demonstrates, topics continue to evolve throughout the history of music. For example, Monelle traces the social history of the fanfare topic, beginning with trumpet signals used by the French cavalry, to its use in 18th century music to signify medieval heroism, and finally through to its appearance in late 19th century symphonies such as the 'dashing fanfares' of Rachmaninov's First Symphony or the 'spectral calls of Mahler's Third' (Monelle 2000: 30). The fanfare topic can be extended yet further to the film studio logos and Channel 4 idents discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

Scholars examining television music have found semiotic theory to be particularly valuable; according to Ron Rodman this is because television as a mass medium relies on visual and sonic 'codes' that are 'common to the widest audience possible' (2010: 22). Philip Tagg's 1979 PhD thesis on the title sequence for the American crime drama series *Kojak* (1973-1978) pioneered an analytical method for audiovisual media based on semiotics, that was later adapted by Rodman in the first significant monograph solely focused on music in television (2010). Tagg divided the music in the *Kojak* title theme into individual cells, called 'musemes', and conducted a semiotic analysis by means of 'hypothetical substitution'. This involved hypothetically substituting each museme for a different instrument, melodic sequence, or harmony, and considering whether the same extra-musical associations can be drawn. For example, a slurred octave leap played loudly by the French horn might be interpreted to convey action and heroism, but this interpretation is perhaps less likely if the gesture was played quietly, played by a violin, or if the octave was substituted for a major second (1979: 113). Tagg also identified visual codes in the title sequence including the character's dress, physical gestures, as well as the character's environment.

Finally, the temporal structures of the music and the visuals were analysed concurrently, to note any contrasts or common patterns. Tagg's in-depth analysis illustrates the insights that can be drawn from a parallel semiotic analysis of music and images and highlights the role of music in the construction of meaning.

Davison notes that viewers of title sequences may construct information about the programmes based on a wide range of semiotic codes within the text and visual imagery, as well as

> cultural and other types of semiotic coding in the show's theme music and lyrics (if there are any), the design of textual display in terms of the choice, size and colour of the font used, and the mixing of such elements via design and editing. (2013b: 8)

In audiovisual media, visual and musical codes interact to produce a range of potential meanings that are greater than the sum of their parts (Rodman 2010, Cook 1989). As Rodman notes, however, these meanings are polysemic, and 'at least some segment of the viewing audience will interpret texts differently from the preferred or intended meaning of television producers' (2010: 25). In other words, codes contribute to both the construction and negotiation of the meanings of an audiovisual text.

Cook (1998) proposes a model for analysis that begins with a semiotic analysis of the images and sounds, and then examines the similarities and differences between the images and the music. Most of his examples are short-form promotional texts such as commercials and music videos. His model of music-image relationships includes three categories: *conformance, complementation,* and *contest* (see Figure 8 below).
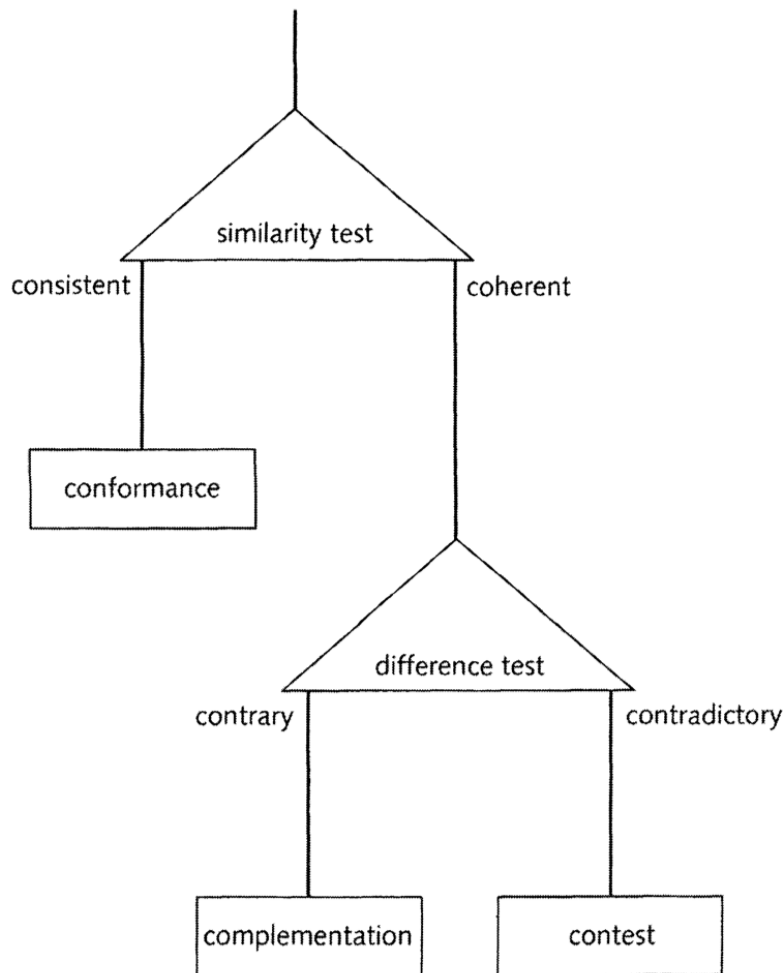
Figure 8: Nicholas Cook's Three Models of Multimedia (1998: 99)

The framework is inspired by the approach taken by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their study of linguistic metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors are 'coherent' if they interpret the same concept. For example, the metaphors 'this relationship is a dead-end street', 'our marriage is on the rocks' and 'we've gotten off the tracks' are coherent because they all interpret the concept 'love is a journey' (Cook 1998: 99). However, they are not 'consistent' because they each interpret 'love is a journey' in a different manner: as a car journey, a sea voyage, or a train journey. In contrast, 'our marriage is on the rocks' and 'our relationship is foundering' are deemed 'consistent' because they both refer to sea voyages (Ibid.: 99). Similarly, Cook argues, the same concept may be interpreted by the music and images in a 'consistent' or 'coherent' manner. If the relationship between the music and images are deemed coherent, a difference test must also be applied: 'a search for evidence of contradiction between media that is marked by unresolved collision or confrontation' (Davison 2003:

347). In instances of 'conformance', the music and images either seem to correspond directly to one another, or either the music or images dominate the text. At the other end of the spectrum, the music and images are in 'contest' when one seems to directly contradict the other. For example, Cook describes a commercial for the insurance company, Prudential, in which the images of rock guitarists conflict with the soundtrack, which consists of classical strings. Between these extremes, 'complementarity' between music or sounds and images occurs when both seem aligned with certain concepts but interpret them in different ways. Here, Cook refers to the use of classical music in a Citroën advert, in which the underlying structure created by the image cuts is sonically elaborated by the musical phrases (1989: 105). With 'complementation', therefore, the sounds and images do not contradict each other: 'different media are seen as occupying the same terrain, but conflict is avoided through the existence of what might be called mutual gaps' (1998: 105).

As Davison has indicated, conformance is the most problematic category of Cook's model (2003). Notably, Cook admits that conformance is 'rare'; his examples of conformance are works which were intended by the artists or composers as blended art forms, for example, Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) created an experimental theatre piece *Der gelbe Klang* (*The Yellow Sound*, 1912) and Alexander Scriabin's *Prometheus* (1915), composed for *clavier à lumières* (colour organ), a keyboard that 'allows projection of a burst of colour onto a screen or curtain' (Betancourt 2013: 17). In *Prometheus,* the visual component of the symphony was conceived by the composer to be subordinate to music and Cook concludes that the visual projections add very little to the overall effect, as they duplicate what is heard in the music (1998: 101). However, as Davison points out, surely the visuals add *something* to the performance of this piece. She notes that

> [t]he underlying problem would thus appear to be that, for the present at least, we have no exhaustive common sense understanding of the potential for translation between different media. (2003: 345)

Acknowledging this problem, Cook concedes that conformance may occur when there is a perceived 'minimal differentiation' between the sounds and the images (1998: 101). In other words, although the music and images fundamentally differ due to the characteristics of the media, the analyst will perceive only small discrepancies.

As discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.1), I use Cook's terms in my analysis of idents, in combination with concepts developed by Chion and Tagg. I consider Cook's three categories of conformance, complementation, and contest as a spectrum, where 'conformance' describes a music-image relationship in which there is a relatively close relationship between the different media. By searching for differences between the sound and the graphics, as Cook encourages, this thesis also highlights the value and contribution of the sound to the construction of meaning.

2.1.1 The functions of music in short-form audiovisual media

Musicologists have explored various functions or 'uses' of music in audiovisual media including trailers, title sequences and commercials (Tagg 1979, Huron 1989, Davison 2013a; Graakjær 2015: 132). In the discipline of media studies, Brownrigg and Meech argue that the sound of an ident carries out four main functions:

- First, sound helps compete for the attention of audience members (2011: 71; 2002, 1999).

- Second, sound ensures that idents 'linger in the mind as an aural mnemonic triggering familiarity and, it is hoped, positive emotional associations with a channel' (2011: 71).

- This provides a bridge to the third function, that of 'corporate "sonic branding"' that expresses 'what are hoped to be shared values between the larger entity, the broadcaster itself, and audiences' (2011: 71).

- Fourth, idents also play a role in facilitating televisual 'flow' between programmes (Williams 1974; see also section 2.3 below). Brownrigg and Meech suggest that the sound of idents 'cushion the impact of an abrupt change of mood, thereby enhancing television's "flow" and the aesthetic pleasure it affords' (2011: 71).

The four functions of sound in idents as outlined by Brownrigg and Meech correspond with the functions of music in commercials and title sequences described in music studies (Tagg 1979, Davison 2013a, 2013b, and Graakjær 2015). Tagg outlines three functions of music in title sequences (1979). First, the 'reveille' function describes the use of sound to attract the attention of potential listeners, as with the 'oyez' of street

criers, and the battle and chase signals of brass instruments (Ibid.: 97). Similarly, Davison and Nicolai Graakjær note that music functions in television as an 'auditory cue' or 'umbilical cord', as familiar sounds bring inattentive viewers back to the screen (Davison 2013a: 148; Graakjær 2015: 4). In his work on music in advertising, media and communications scholar Graakjær briefly mentions channel idents and connects them to this 'cueing' function:

> Because all viewers potentially are 'listening' even when they are not looking at the screen—for instance, they may attend to other tasks while the television remains on—music can cause viewers to return their attention to the screen (2015: 62).

Tagg's second function, 'mnemonic identification', refers to the role of music in constructing memorable associations with certain characters, environments, or moods, and parallels the form of 'aural familiarity' triggered by the sounds of idents (Brownrigg and Meech 2011: 71). Davison suggests that the 'familiarity' engendered by the music in title sequences may lead viewers to develop 'ritualized' responses 'born of anticipation for a planned period of escapism and/or engagement' (2013a: 148). Similarly, Graakjær notes that the return of familiar sounds in interstitial material such as idents and bumpers contributes to the 'routinisation and perhaps even the ritualisation of watching television', thus easing viewers' decision-making regrading which channel to watch, 'or simply "where to feel at home"' (2015: 60). Today, the potential for music and sound to provide a 'mnemonic identification' is central to the practice of sonic branding.

Third, Tagg states that music performs a 'preparatory' function, preparing the viewer or listener by musically indicating 'things to come' through an 'affective musical description of the kind of general mood found in the subsequent presentation' (1978: 97). Graakjær identifies an example of the 'preparatory' function of music in news programmes, where rapid staccato notes on the kettledrum, a technique he calls musical 'Morse-coding', 'appear to have been a defining trait of news music for quite some time', and 'are associated with speed, excitement, and urgency' (2015: 72). In other words, this style of music has become a musical 'topic' coded as 'news music'. Music can play a similar 'preparatory' function in idents, helping the viewer form an impression of the type of programmes to follow.

In a study of title sequences for HBO serials, *The Sopranos* (1997-2007) and *Six Feet Under* (2001-2005), Davison highlights an additional 'branding' function of music in title sequences. She argues that title sequences 'enable these shows—and by extension HBO—to present brand identity with intensity in a highly compressed time frame' (2013a: 152). In idents, the branding function is even more salient. For creative executive Charlie Mawer, branding is the core function of an ident: 'It's about defining yourself as clearly as Nike do with the Swoosh and "just do it"' (2011: 91-92).

In short, there are many similarities between the role of music and sound across idents, title sequences, and commercials. All three types of text share the common goal of promoting a future experience, whether this is a film, television programme, product, or service. However, idents also differ significantly from these other promotional forms. Whereas title sequences are associated with specific programmes, characters, and events, idents function as more general promotional texts that aim to construct a brand identity 'over and above' that of the individual programmes (Johnson 2012: 200). Unlike title sequences and most commercials, idents are highly flexible in length and tone, designed to be used as a 'bed' by a live continuity team for announcements regarding a range of programmes. Idents are also subject to a greater degree of repetition than most title sequences and commercials. As Mawer puts it,

> [t]rying to do something that you can watch 3,600 times without getting irritated by it is a particular challenge and it necessitates a particular type of storytelling and a particular type of engagement that is possibly less about grabbing you by the front of your jumper and shaking you and is much more about giving you something you can sit back and be immersed in, that you can take stuff from. It's a different level of engagement. (2011: 94)

As more television channels became available in the 1980s and 1990s, this notion of 'engaging' viewers during the idents became increasingly important. As media scholar Catherine Johnson notes, 'with more calls on viewer attention, the junctions themselves are constructed not just as informational texts, but as pieces of entertainment in their own right' (2013: 39). Indeed, in an article on music in advertising, David Huron points out that the etymology of the word 'entertain' means 'to engage the attention', an experience that goes beyond 'naïve or simple hedonistic enjoyment' (1989: 560). The producers of idents began to realise that interstitials that are engaging are likely to attract and to keep the viewers' attention.

There are many overlaps amongst the functions of idents. For example, we are more likely to pay attention to something that is memorable and thus familiar, and we are more likely to think favourably of brand communications that entertain us (see Krishnan and Kellaris 2021). Conversely, an entertaining ident is likely to be more memorable. As Richard Middleton notes, 'all communicational activities […] are polyfunctional, so "aesthetic" and "practical" functions coexist in them all'; the 'balance of functions varies, and the aesthetic function can be dominant, subordinate, or even latent' (Middleton 1990: 257). Moreover, the aesthetic 'function' of idents can be considered as reinforcing and supporting the 'branding function'.

2.1.2 Sonic branding

Sonic branding is defined by Clara Gustafsson as 'a description of how sound is made to interact with brands to create meaning' (2015: 22) and bridges a range of related practices and disciplines including audiovisual logos (Graakjær 2015, 2013), retail environment design (Fulberg 2003; Hargreaves, McKendrick, and North 1999), and background or 'elevator' music (Kassabian 2016).[22] Sonic branding involves 'very short periods of music' which are consistently used 'whenever customers come into contact with a company (e.g., in advertising, on their web site, in the premises, while waiting on hold on the phone)' (Hargreaves and North 2008: 265). Sonic branding is therefore different to the uses of music in advertising more broadly, such as jingles or synced popular music tracks, since it is considered part of a longer-term strategy that helps build the brand's identity.

The advent of sonic branding coincided with the development of corporate branding in the 1980s and 1990s. Corporate identity projects tended to focus on the visual logo (see Olins 1978, 1995, Julier 2014); however, some organisations also began to establish sonic identities. In the late 1980s, British Airways adopted the Flower Duet from Delibes' opera *Lakmé* (1883), which became a core element of its brand identity. The famous five-note Intel sonic logo was composed by Walter Werzowa in 1994, followed the year after by Brian Eno's Windows 95 start-up sound. In 1999, Daniel Jackson founded Sonicbrand, which claimed to be the first sonic branding agency. In

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[22] Like Gustafsson, I use 'sonic' and 'sound' to refer to music as well as other sounds (2015: 22).

2000, another agency, MassiveMusic, was founded in Amsterdam. In 2003, McDonald's adopted Justin Timberlake's song 'I'm loving it' as a jingle, which was progressively truncated in advertisements until it became a sonic logo in the form of a whistle ('da-da-da-daa-da') (see Graakjear 2015: 118). In these examples, sound was used as a long-lasting 'brand asset' in its own right.

In the field of music psychology, scholars have conducted empirical research on the connections between brand identity and sound. For example, psychology scholar Daniel Mullensiefen and sonic branding agency SoundOut recently conducted a study measuring consumers' associations of various 'brand attributes' with 136 sonic logos across the UK and USA (SoundOut 2021). Their research showed that once consumers begin to associate a sound with a particular brand, they then imprint their perception of the brand's personality onto the sonic logo. Figure 9 below depicts the results of the researchers' testing of the Netflix sonic logo. The researchers played the sound (without image) to 500,000 participants, some of whom recognised the sound as Netflix's logo, and some of whom did not. In the figure below, the dark blue line represents consumers' perceptions of the overall Netflix brand, and the orange line shows perceptions of the sonic logo, only in instances consumers already recognised the sound as Netflix's sonic brand. The pale blue line, representing consumers who are not already familiar with Netflix's sonic logo, follows a completely different pattern. This suggests that participants' perception of the sonic logo is impacted when they know that it is associated with the Netflix brand.
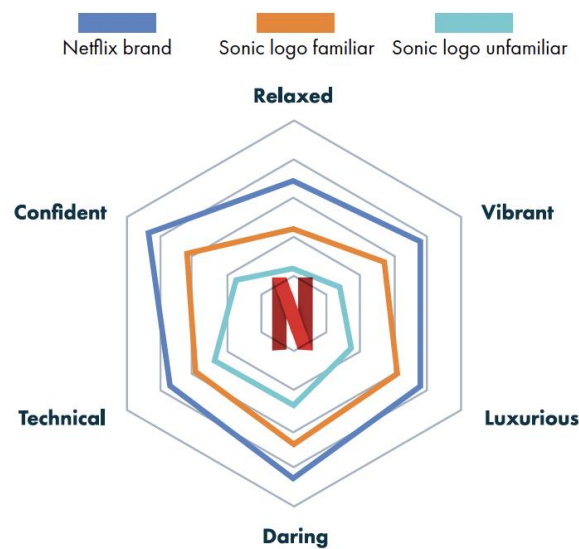
Figure 9: Perceptions of the Netflix sonic logo (SoundOut, 2021)

To apply Gorbman's term, this research reflects a relationship of 'mutual implication' between the perceptions of the sound and of the brand (1987: 15).

In his textual analysis of audiovisual logos, Graakjær argues that music and sound play a complex and varied role in the mediation of meaning. He has conducted a semiotic analysis of over 200 'logo shots' in Danish television, highlighting the 'signifying potential' of music and sound within these brief and simple logos. Logo shots typically occur towards the end of a commercial, and the logo may appear for one to five seconds, often in combination with speech, music, or sound effects (referred to as 'object sounds') (2013). For example, in an analysis of a commercial for the car brand SEAT, Graakjær argues that the whispered voice-over of the brand name 'helps induce the brand of SEAT with passion and emotion', supplementing other symbols of passion such as the 'red colour of the visualised brand name' (2013: 88). Graakjær goes on to explain:

> The voice-over is accompanied by a low-pitched swaying sound, resembling the sound of a heavy sheet which is suddenly shaken. The sound is synchronised with the visual presentation of flames licking around the logo, and the object sound, apparently from flames, here adds significantly to the allusion of emotion and passion associated with the presentation of the logo. (2013: 91)

Here, the combination of voiceover and sound effects relate to the visuals whilst contributing to the 'signifying potential' of the commercial. Graakjær's nuanced analyses of 'logo shots' such as the one quoted above highlight the complexity of the relationship between music and images in this context.

Scholars have argued that music and sound play a crucial role in branding. This connection has been explored using empirical psychological approaches, as exemplified by Mullensiefien and SoundOut, and through textual semiotic methods, as demonstrated by Graakjær. In this thesis, the branding function of sound is considered alongside its aesthetic, mnemonic identification, preparatory, and attention-engaging functions. Textual analysis provides only part of the picture, however; to comprehend the functions of a text, it is also crucial to consider the production process.

2.1.3 Production

Musical texts and musical production processes are closely linked, although these links have only recently been studied. Robert Faulkner provided an early contribution in the form of a sociological account of the working conditions of composers in the Hollywood film industry (1997, 1983). Musicologists have since published several accounts of the production processes for individual films. In 2007, Miguel Mera wrote an account of composer Mychael Danna's process for *The Ice Storm* (1997, Ang Lee), in 2007 Ben Winters produced a study of Eric Korngold's score for *Robin Hood* (1938, Michael Curtiz), and in 2009 Davison explored Alex North's work for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951, Elia Kazan). These studies are detailed accounts of the work of a single composer, and consider production technology, issues of collaboration and hierarchies, as well as musical analysis of the scores. More recently, Ian Sapiro (2016) provided an in-depth study of the 'hidden' role of orchestrators in the production of film soundtracks, and Bethany Klein (2020) and Peter Kupfer (2020) have explored the licensing of music for television commercials.

However, the production contexts of music in promotional texts on television has been a neglected area in the field. As Graakjær and Jantzen note:

> Research on how music for commercials is produced is still sparse … Is music first added at the final stage or is it an integral part of the concept from the

beginning? How do the people involved in producing commercial music view their own role? How do they go about producing the music? How are they educated? And how do they collaborate with other professional groups? (2009: 39)

My research, which involved interviews with practitioners, addresses these types of questions within the specific context of idents.

The production of music for idents, commercials, films, and television programmes is inseparable from developments in technology. In the 1980s and 1990s, music production underwent a revolution, as the development of affordable technology 'significantly lowered thresholds for making professional-sounding music' (Prior 2010: 402). Nick Prior notes:

> As the prices of four-track recording devices, drum machines, effects boxes, and synthesisers dropped, they migrated from high-end studios to the bedrooms of non-professional producers. (Ibid.: 402)

In 1983, manufacturers of electronic music instruments cooperated to create a standardised digital language that allowed synthesisers to communicate with one another—known as MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface). Subsequently, the ubiquity of the personal computer facilitated the creation of 'all-in-one' software packages such as *Cubase, Logic, Acid, Ableton Live,* and *Reason***,** that combine 'the functions of a range of hardware separates such as mixers, compressors, sequences, and samplers into a single virtual unit' (Prior 2010: 402). Moreover, new technologies, including the use of synthesisers and samplers, resulted in a disintegration of the 'ontological distinction' between sound design and music (Spring 2016: 279). As discussed in the following section, within the field of motion graphic design, the creation of software packages by companies like Adobe facilitated a similar convergence of skills and techniques.

As Sapiro notes, these developments transformed the process of producing music for films and television. Historically, 'composers would play through piano versions of cues for directorial approval', much like the situation between Martin Lambie-Nairn and David Dundas described in Chapter 1 above (2016: 106). However, the introduction of digital technologies in the 1990s has 'led to the widespread production of compositional demo recordings using sampled sounds that have made piano performances of cues largely obsolete' (Ibid.: 107). As explored in Chapters 4 and 5

below, a similar transformation occurred in the production of idents, impacting the power dynamics between the composers, designers, and their clients.

In sum, in the first section of this literature review, I positioned my thesis in relation to existing research on music in audiovisual media. In section 2.1.1. above, I discussed approaches towards analysing meaning and functions in musical multimedia, with a focus on Tagg's semiotic approach and Cook's tripartite analytic framework. In this PhD, I contribute towards these text analytic approaches by conducting a close musicological analysis of the sound in idents—a type of promotional text that has been hitherto neglected in musicology. In this way, my research also relates to emerging research on the topic of sonic branding (section 2.1.2), for example Graakjær's study of logo shots (2013). My research also goes further by exploring links between text and production processes, an area that has recently begun to develop in studies of music in audiovisual media (section 2.1.3). In short, my thesis contributes to musicology in two ways: by focusing on a new type of text, and by adopting an innovative methodological approach. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to two additional disciplinary fields: motion graphic design and media studies, the first of which I discuss below.

2.2 Motion graphic design

The production of idents involves the creative labour of composers and graphic designers. In this section, I first outline existing research in television graphic design and then explore points of connection between the academic fields of graphic design and musicology.

Motion graphic design is defined by Lev Manovich as 'animated visuals that surround us every day' including 'film and television titles, TV graphics, the graphics for mobile media content, and non-narrative parts of commercials and music videos' (2013: 163). In the UK, the field of television graphic design originated in the early 1950s, when the BBC hired the corporation's first graphic designers Richard Levin and John Sewell. The BBC Graphic Design department was established in 1954, and by the 1960s it became a 'world-leader' in television design (MacDonald 2014: 19; Lambie-Nairn 1997: 43).

At first, graphic design in television adapted techniques from print design, and designers created physical cards for captions and maps using traditional hand lettering techniques (Merrit 1967; Ellis 2002: 93). Indeed, Abram Games, who designed the BBC's first ident in 1953, was a poster designer (see section 1.2 above). In the 1960s, new tools and technologies made designers' work faster, beginning with the use of Letraset, where letters could be cut and dry-transferred from a sheet. In 1964, BBC2 introduced colour television, the first television channel to do so in Europe. According to Iain Macdonald, the advent of colour television significantly 'improved quality and increased aesthetic range' in television graphics (2014: 39). With the introduction of computer graphics technology from the mid-1980s, graphic designers had new creative tools at their disposal. As Macdonald notes, the BBC's first generation of designers such as Alan Jeapes, Graham McCallum and Bernard Lodge, 'all readily welcomed new technology and exploited it to push their ideas and designs further than would have been possible before' (Macdonald 2016: 34). By 1966, designer Roy Laughton noted that sound and music had become a core part of 'the designer's tools of the trade' (1966: 11). When making title sequences and programmes, graphic designers often recruited composers at the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop, which operated between 1958 and 1998. One of the most famous collaborations between the Workshop and the BBC's Graphic Design Department was the ground-breaking title sequence for *Doctor Who* (1963-present), designed by Bernard Lodge with music composed by Ron Grainer, and realised in the BBC Radiophonic Workshop by Delia Derbyshire. According to Jeremy Myerson and Graham Vickers, the 'animated Rorschach blots' of the title sequence, combined with the futuristic electronic score together gave 'a long-running TV series its most unforgettable identity' (2002: 66).

Idents and the on-screen presentation of the channels did not develop into a significant area of work for designers until the establishment of competition in the industry in the 1980s. In his interview for this project, Michael Graham-Smith, graphic designer at the BBC between 1972 and 1994, noted that the Presentation section of the Graphic Design department was 'a bit of an outpost in the 1970s and early 1980s' (2021). As the BBC became more preoccupied with branding in the late 1980s and 1990s, Presentation acquired a higher profile, becoming '*the* place to work' (Ibid.). Meanwhile broadcast design was developing into a professionalised sub-industry more widely,

with the establishment of independent design agencies specialising in the production of graphics for television. Macdonald highlights Lambie-Nairn's 1988 title sequence for the BBC's Nine O'Clock News as a key 'watershed moment' in which the BBC's in-house designers came to terms with 'outside' competition from commercial design agencies (2016: 6).[23]

This transition coincided with a major technological development: the introduction of computers into graphic design. In 1979, the BBC bought a graphics generator from the British firm Logica, which designer Oliver Elmes used to create an ident for BBC2, the first ident to use computer animation.[24] In 1982, the BBC bought a Quantel Paintbox, a machine which enabled designers to use computing as a tool. By 1984, the BBC employed nine full time computer programmers, and in 1985 BBC1 had its first computer-generated ident, a blue and gold rotating globe known as the 'Computer Originated World'.[25] In 1986, the new version of the Quantel Paintbox, named Harry, was the first graphics system to enable non-linear-editing and 'allowed for digital compositing of multiple layers of video and special effects' (Manovich 2007: 67). By the early 1990s, the widespread adoption of computer technology in television graphics had begun to produce visual clichés, common techniques including 'page turns, green grids, flying chrome letters, and pictures within pictures' (Macdonald 2015a: 11).

Following these developments, Manovich argues that between 1993 and 1998 the field of motion graphics underwent a further technological transformation that resulted in an entirely new 'visual language' (Manovich 2007, 2013). Within this new aesthetic, 'media from different sources can be overlaid and combined in the same frame in endless variations without loss of quality' (2013: 244). This new form of working was made possible via numerous technological developments in the 1990s. In 1993 CERN put the World Wide Web into the public domain, and 'vast amounts of digital information were able to be transferred instantly', transforming working practices within

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[23] BBC 'Nine O'Clock News', 1988.
https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-nine-oclock-news-1988. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).
[24] The 1979 BBC2 ident can be viewed at: https://theident.gallery/player.php?id=BBC2-1979-SYMBOL-1.
[25] BBC1 Computer Originated World. 1985. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1985-bbc1-globe-computer-originated-world. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).

the creative industries (Vickers and Meyerson 2002: 310). The advent of personal computers triggered a move towards technological convergence, since they provided tools that perform several, previously unrelated tasks. Michael Betancourt argues that this 'digital convergence' facilitated 'a hybridity of formerly distinct media united through common technology' (2013: 197).

Manovich highlights parallels between the impact of non-linear editing on graphic design and music production, noting that 'both a music artist and a designer can at any time substitute one element of a composition for another, delete any elements, and add new ones' (2007: 72). The year 1993 heralded another key development for motion graphics: the creation of Adobe AfterEffects, the 'first software designed to do animation, compositing, and special effects on the personal computer' (Manovich 2007: 67). Manovich argues that the affordability and popularity of this software package precipitated what he calls the 'Velvet Revolution' in graphic design (2007).[26] By 1996, Adobe AfterEffects was fully in use in the making of broadcast motion graphics.

The new 'hybrid visual language' of moving images paralleled the merging of sound design and composition described above. Indeed, musicologist Aimee Mollaghan has analysed the contemporary use of music and motion graphics in logos for Sky and Vue and describes a new 'hyperreal audiovisual aesthetic' premised on 'the ability of technological advances and intersensory correspondence' (2019: 299). Mollaghan suggests that this aesthetic involves a focus on textures and fine details, with audiences invited to 'feel the image through their eyes and ears' (Ibid.: 299). This is comparable to Lev Manovich's visual 'hybrid aesthetic'. Here, the aesthetic involves hybridity not just between different techniques within the same media, but a perceived merging between sound and image. This is a concept that I return to throughout my analysis of idents, particularly in the more recent idents discussed in section 4.3 below.

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[26] Manovich named this technological transformation after the Velvet Revolution that occurred when Czechoslovakia peacefully liberated itself from Soviet rule in 1989. This was named the Velvet Revolution 'to contrast it with typical revolutions in modern history that were always accompanied by bloodshed' (Manovich 2007: 67). Manovich uses this label to indicate the 'gradual, almost invisible impact of the transformations that occurred in moving image aesthetics between approximately 1993 and 1998' (Ibid.: 67).

2.2.1 Music and graphics together

Nicholas Cook suggests that the theoretical foundations of musical multimedia originated with the concept of synaesthesia, which emerged in the early 20th century when artists, poets, and composers began to explore correlations between colour and sound (Cook 1998:25). The word synaesthesia was coined in the French form *synesthésie* in 1892 and refers to both psychological and cultural phenomena. In psychology, synaesthesia refers to an experience in which one sense produces two sensations, 'most famously as seeing colours when one hears sound' (Betancourt 2013: 12).[27] In art and music, 'the use is often metaphoric, identifying works that attempt to present analogues for one sense, typically sound or music, within another art, most commonly visual art' (Ibid.: 12). For example, as mentioned above, Kandinsky created paintings intended to depict the 'inner sound' of visual forms, and Scriabin's orchestral work *Prometheus* (1915), included a part for the *clavier à lumières* (colour organ) (Betancourt 2013: 17). As mentioned above, Cook classifies these works as 'conformant'—a rare situation in which the visual and musical media can be regarded as very closely aligned. Some of these artists and composers, such as Kandinsky and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) themselves experienced the psychological phenomenon of synaesthesia. Kandinsky's paintings represented types of visual forms seen in his synaesthetic hallucinations and Messiaen assigned colours to certain instruments and tonalities in his composition *Couleurs de la Cité celeste* (Cook 1998: 30). It is in works such as these that Cook believes 'thinking on multimedia' originally began (1998: viii).

Michael Betancourt (2013) traces the origins of motion graphic design to the very same concept—synaesthesia. Betancourt argues that the works of artists such as Kandinsky constituted precursors to the field of motion graphics. He states that these works, as well as early experiments in animation by artists such as Oskar Fischinger (1900-1967), constituted a 'cultural aspiration to create a visual art comparable to music: literally a "visual music"' (2013: 11).[28] Betancourt concludes that

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[27] Each synesthete may experience different combinations of colours and sounds, as sensations are not based on physical links between words or colours and sounds (Cook 1998: 28).
[28] In her book-length study of 'visual music films', Mollaghan defines the term as a film 'in which visual presentations are given musical attributes such as rhythmical form, structure and harmony' (2015: 1).

> The invention of motion graphics began not as a commercial need, but from the desire of artists working at the start of the twentieth century to engage with their interests in synaesthesia. (2013: 10)

The experimentation of 20th century artists in drawing correlations between sound and colour provided the starting point for audiovisual media as experienced today in films and television. Here, synaesthesia is understood as a metaphorical concept rather than a psychological phenomenon. In constructing correlations between colour and sound, these art works established the concept of synaesthesia as 'one of the definitional properties of multimedia', the foundational idea that makes possible correspondence and interactions between media (Cook 1998: 263).

Synaesthesia is just the starting point of the relationship between music and motion graphics, however. Whereas synaesthesia is based on sameness—roughly described as 'a kind of short-circuiting between different sensory modes'—Cook argues that multimedia is based on difference (1998: viii). Cook states that 'it is the *interaction* of different media that defines multimedia' (Ibid.: viii). As Walter Murch puts it, 'we never see the same thing when we also hear, and we don't hear the same thing when we also see' (1994: xxvi). In the context of idents, music and motion graphics come together to form a creative and cohesive whole, each discipline contributing something unique. However, the contributions of music and sound to idents and other types of audiovisual media has been relatively unexplored by academics researching motion graphic design.

This thesis complements existing research in motion graphic design by highlighting the important work of composers in the production of TV idents. In this section, I highlighted points of complementarity between the two disciplines and argue that they are closely related through their joint histories. I aim to reflect this close relationship throughout this thesis, by considering the sonic and visual elements in my textual analysis, and through interviewing graphic designers in addition to composers.

2.3 Media and communication studies

The third and final section of this literature review positions my research in relation to the field of media and communication studies, where idents have been discussed in

media studies in relation to the development of branding in the UK television industry. First, it is necessary to define branding, and explain how it relates to television.

2.3.1 Branding television

A brand can be defined as 'a name, term, sign, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers' (American Marketing Association 2022). Today, a brand's distinctive features or 'assets' can range from a logo, a colour, a tagline, a written style (or 'tone of voice'), a sonic logo, or even an entire musical style. From a brand management perspective, the brand's assets contribute collectively to its 'equity'—the value that a brand provides to the organisation and its customers or beneficiaries. According to David Aaker, brand equity consists of: brand name awareness (how often and easily is the brand evoked); brand loyalty; perceived quality; and brand associations (1991: 28). Brand management theorists believe that consumers can be influenced to form a favourable impression of the brand through careful management and planning (Keller 2012, David Aaker 1992, Jennifer Aaker 2001).[29] However, as Chris and Rungpaka Hackley note, 'a brand is nothing until it is recognised as such by a meaningful number of consumers' (2021: 77; see also Keller 2012). Advocating a social constructionist approach, they point out that 'brands cannot simply inject a desired brand identity or personality into the consumer's mind as if advertising and promotion were a hypodermic syringe' (2021: 82). As Adam Arvidsson puts it, brands can hold a plurality of social and cultural meanings for consumers and are thus 'woven' into the 'social fabric of everyday life' (Arvidsson 2005: 14).

Celia Lury's definition of a brand considers the plurality and variability of meaning-making, stating that 'a brand is a set of relations between products or services in time' (2004: 2). In Lury's terms, brands are 'open objects', since 'they are not simply either here or somewhere else' but rather 'emerge in parts' (2004: 2). This thesis similarly

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[29] Clients and agencies have been increasingly interested in empirical methods to measure brand equity. Various tools and frameworks are used by research agencies and clients to measure and track elements of brand equity such as salience, 'brand love', and perceived differences to competitions. For example, market research agencies Kantar and IPSOS have developed frameworks to assess different elements of brand equity. (https://www.kantar.com/expertise/brand-growth/brand-tracking/brand-equity). Marketers and branding agencies use this type of research to help 'eliminate risk, justify causes of action, and to reassure clients and senior decision-makers in the organisation' (see Hackley and Hackley 2021: 341).

posits that brands are more than just collections of logos, brand names, designs, or musical mnemonics, but exist as fluid cultural constructs that are co-created by producers and consumers. While it is not possible to determine the specific meaning of a brand, we can begin to understand the ways in which it is constructed by organisations and individuals through practices of branding and promotion.

Lury stresses that a brand is a set of relations between products and services '*in time*' because brands are subject to a dynamic feedback process by which 'information about competitors and the consumer is fed back into production' (2004: 2). Brands play a crucial connecting role during the 'interval' of time between the release of new products, marking 'relations between products'. For example, the chocolate brand Twix may temporarily release a 'limited edition flavour' alongside its original version (Ibid.: 2). In this way, a brand coordinates relationships of sameness and difference: the new Twix flavour possesses a link to similarly branded products 'as a guarantee of consistent quality' whilst it is marked as different, authentic, and new (Ibid.: 10). The role of a brand can thus be compared to the role of a television ident, which fills time between programmes whilst marking the relations between them—'relating what it also separates' (Ibid.: 2). Idents, like brands, also exploit similarity and difference. They mark out the differences between the channel and its competitors visually and sonically, and between different versions of the ident amongst a series of variations. The use of consistent mnemonics, timbres, logos, or other visual symbols meanwhile reinforces familiarity, and thus conveys a coherent and consistent brand identity.

The role of idents in 'relating what they separate' is tied to the notion of televisual 'flow'. Raymond Williams coined the term 'flow' in relation to TV in 1974 and argued that the advent of broadcasting introduced a new way of consuming texts. Unlike previously discrete texts, such as plays or books, radio and television broadcasting constituted an 'always-on' sequence, or flow, of continuous texts. Idents provide junctions within the 'flow' of continuous texts that aim to encourage the viewer to 'stay tuned' for the next programme. In 1986, musicologist Rick Altman considered the role of sound in relation to flow, arguing that 'televisual flow' needs to be understood with reference to 'the parallel notion of household flow' and argued that the 'sound track is specifically charged with mediating the relationship between these two flows' (1986: 40). In other

words, one function of music in television is to bring inattentive viewers back to the screen.

Today, consumers have many more tools for interrupting or changing the direction of the 'flow', including remote controls and Smart TVs, which can be used to programme an individualised 'flow' of entertainment by selecting programmes to watch across various applications and channels. Williams' concept of flow is still highly relevant to our experiences of watching television today, however. In 1989, Williams stated:

> Even when we have switched on for a particular 'programme', we find ourselves watching the one after it and the one after that. The way in which the flow is now organised, without definite intervals, in any case encourages this. We can be 'into' something else before we have summoned the energy to get out of the chair'. (Williams, 1989: 94–95)

Media scholars have recently argued that this description can usefully be applied to online TV (Johnson 2019, Cox 2019). Derek Johnson argues that Netflix helps us to shape linear flows from the non-linear possibilities of its program offerings' (2019: 10). Similarly, Christopher Cox suggests that by enabling us to actively select the programmes we watch, in combination with suggestion algorithms and autoplay features at the end of episodes, online platforms may induce us to 'remain within [a] personalised flow' (2018: 44).[30] The changing nature of flow is closely tied to the development of branding in the industry. With more channels available, broadcasters and streaming platforms face increasing competition for viewers' time and attention. Branding is thus an important strategy used to attempt to lure viewers into the 'flow'.

The development of branding within the UK broadcasting industry has been of particular interest to media scholars, with most accounts focussing on public service broadcasters, especially the BBC and Channel 4 (Johnson 2012, 2013, 2019, Grainge 2011, Grainge and Johnson 2015, 2018, Bryant and Mawer 2016, Light 2004, Fanthome 2007, 2002). Corporate branding became a widespread practice in the UK

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[30] A sense of 'flow' dominates our experiences of social media and entertainment. Since social media apps like TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter depend on advertising for their revenue, a key business goal of these sites is to keep our eyeballs and attention within the app for as long as possible, to maximise the number of adverts we are shown. Flow characterises the way we scroll through never-ending newsfeeds, which contains a constant stream of posts or videos. Therefore, social media, and streaming apps, can be seen as a continuation of the 'always-on' nature of televisual flow, albeit with many obvious differences in organisation, hardware, and user agency.

from the 1980s, when neo-liberal economic policies advanced by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government prompted a new raft of privatised companies (Jones 2017: 38). It quickly became the norm for organisations to write vision statements, expressed through visual design (Ibid.). Concurrently, the 1980s saw a design consultancy boom, as corporate identity evolved from its origins in graphic design into a 'significant management resource' (Olins 1978: xi). Moreover, public services began to be viewed in terms of market principles: national and local governments were reconfigured as paymasters and taxpayers as consumers (Julier 2014: 35, Born and Prosser 2001: 687). This change occurred in areas beyond broadcasting; for example, the Metropolitan Police commissioned an audit of 'corporate identity' from Wolff Olins in 1988 (Olins 1978: 35).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the BBC underwent major restructuring with the aim of introducing market principles in response to governmental pressures towards privatisation as well as the 1990 Broadcasting Act which stipulated that the BBC must commission 25% of its programming from the independent sector.[31] In this context of increased marketisation, competition, and uncertainty, the BBC adopted channel branding as a way of demonstrating the value of its services to the public and to its government stakeholders. In 1991, it began a large-scale corporate rebranding project, spearheaded by Lambie-Nairn and the BBC's Head of Presentation, Pam Masters. Lambie-Nairn and Masters had already received acclaim for their success in devising the branding for Channel 4's launch in 1982.[32] By 1997, the BBC had been voted 'Corporate Brand of the Year' by the Marketing Society (Light 2004: 141). This was predominately on account of the successful advertising campaign 'Perfect Day' (1997)—the most overt form of advertising the BBC had participated in so far. 'Perfect Day' was a music video created to promote the diversity of the BBC's music

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[31] In response to political pressures, the BBC's Director-General John Birt subsequently introduced his infamous policy of 'Producer Choice', by which departments within the BBC had to compete with external companies. This scheme provoked much opposition amongst BBC creative personnel for introducing restrictive bureaucratic measures that even resulted in TV researchers resorting to purchasing music CDs on Oxford Street as 'a cheaper alternative to borrowing them from the BBC's own library' (Plunkett 2006, n.p.). The system was discarded in 2006 by Birt's successor John Dyke in favour of a 'common sense' system; see Born 2004 for a detailed critique of Producer Choice and Birt's management approach.

[32] Lambie-Nairn also oversaw the creation of new idents for BBC Two in 1991 and BBC One in 1991 and 1997, which were conceptualised as expressions of an overall channel brand identity, corresponding to written positioning statements devised by marketing strategists.

programming. The song was originally composed by Lou Reed and the recording featured a pantheon of guest stars, including David Bowie, Laurie Anderson, and Bono. It became a chart single and as Julie Light points out thus succeeded in commodifying a public service message (Ibid.: 141).

By this time, the internal structure of the BBC, including its Graphic Design department, began to shift towards emulating practices and structures of the advertising industry. In 1997, the corporation developed its first marketing department, and hired new marketing personnel such as Sue Farr as the new Director of Marketing and Communications and Jane Frost as the Head of Corporate Marketing. In December 2000, the BBC's design departments were brought together to form a new commercial subsidiary, BBC MediaArc, which began to sell services to organisations including HSBC and Wessex Water (Johnson 2014). At the same time, Channel 4 was expanding its in-house design department, which was relaunched in 2002 as 4Creative. In 2002, MediaArc was incorporated as part of BBC Broadcast Ltd, and ex-advertising account director Andy Bryant was hired as its Executive Creative Director. According to Grainge and Johnson, Bryant 'introduced the ad agency discipline of strategic planning into BBC Broadcast's operations and structured the creative division around the typical ad industry roles of account managers, strategic planners, and creatives' (2016: 48). Three years later, BBC Broadcast was sold to Macquarie group and renamed Red Bee Media. The deal was underpinned by contracts requiring Red Bee to produce promotional interstitial material for the BBC until 2015.

The increased promotional activity of the BBC through the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s reflected that of the rest of the UK's broadcasting industry. When the fourth broadcaster, Channel 5, launched in 1997, it invested heavily in promotion and market research, being the 'the first UK television channel to be developed as a brand' from the outset (Johnson 2012: 63). Channel 5's vibrant and colourful brand identity was designed by corporate design agency Wolf Olins, and promotional videos and idents featured the Spice Girls singing a reworked version of Manfred Mann's '5-4-3-2-1'. The channel thus positioned itself in alignment with the modern mainstream and the contemporary Cool Britannia and Brit Pop cultural movements. In the same year, responding to this new and vibrant competition, ITV consolidated its regional franchises, forming a united corporate identity that was promoted in a campaign called

'From the Heart', which repositioned the broadcaster as the 'Heart of the Nation', emphasising key programmes such *Inspector Morse* (1987-2000) and *Coronation Street* (1960-) (see Johnson 2012: 64; Garner 2015).

2.3.2 Creative labour and the promotional screen industries

Many academics and commentators considered such commercial practices to be antithetical to the public service ethos of British broadcasting as a 'social good', particularly in the case of the BBC which is funded by a licence fee paid by UK households (Johnson 2012).[33] Moreover, many of the programme makers within the corporation viewed marketing techniques as contradictory to their creativity and artistic freedom (Ibid.). This view was echoed by several academics who adopted a critical attitude towards introduction of marketisation into British broadcasting (Born 2004, Davis 2013). More broadly, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker have argued that marketing erodes the autonomy of cultural producers, such as music artists, documentary makers and programme producers, as they lose control over the framing and dissemination of their products (2011: 104, 77). Georgina Born described marketing as a threat to creativity within the BBC, particularly when 'used to batten down and curtail the particular and expansive imaginative engagement required by good programme making' (2004: 301).

In response to such criticisms, some scholars in media studies, cultural studies, and communication and advertising theory have sought to understand promotion as a creative and discursive practice that has complex functions and meanings (e.g. Gray 1992, Ellis 2011, Davis 2013, Grainge and Johnson 2015, McAllister and West 2013, Wang 2008, McStay 2013, Kilgour 2020). These scholars have argued that promotional activity can be a source of creativity, rather than constraining it. Regarding broadcasting, Grainge and Johnson make two crucial rebuttals to the scholars and

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[33] The BBC is publicly funded by way of the television licence fee that currently costs £159 per household per year (although people aged 75 or over and also receive Pension Credit are entitled to a free TV Licence). The other public service broadcasters ITV, Channel 4, and Channel 5 do not receive any funding from the licence fee as they are commercially funded, with most of their income deriving from selling airtime to advertisers. Channel 4 is publicly owned (but commercially funded) and operates as a non-profit, whereas ITV and Channel 5 are privately owned. All four organisations are defined as public service broadcasters as they all carry certain requirements regarding their content, for example to produce a certain amount of religion and arts programming. (Ofcom 2022)

commentators that 'pit marketing against creativity' (2015:1). First, in relation to the BBC, Johnson has argued that promotional activity, as well as the activity of its commercial subsidiaries such as BBC Worldwide, can complement its public service ethos. She contends that 'branding is invaluable in developing and maintaining public support and loyalty for public service broadcasting … which has become increasingly necessary for [its] continual survival' (2013: 315). The second, broader argument made by Grainge and Johnson is that promotional activity can be a source and locus of creativity and should be recognised as valuable work in its own right (2015). Here, Grainge and Johnson argue that

> [a]lthough promotional screen forms are sometimes crudely conceived and badly produced, they can also, just as often, be a site of originality, entertainment, and poetic invention. Indeed, rather than stand in opposition to creative thinking, the discourse of creativity is central across the promotional screen industries (Ibid.: 77).

Overall, Grainge and Johnson have encouraged academics and practitioners alike to celebrate the creative and artistic value of promotional work. They focussed their study on what they term the 'promotional screen industries', defined as a 'fertile space between the worlds of marketing and media' that encompasses advertising, marketing, branding, and public relations (2015: 3). They view it as a 'professional and creative discipline' that spans the 'commercial' and the 'creative' in which the lines between 'promotion' and 'content' are increasingly blurred (2015: 4). Their focus on industry awards ceremonies such as PROMAX UK highlights growing industry recognition for promotion as creative content.[34] In this thesis, I explore the close and often mutually beneficial relationship between commerce and creativity in the production of idents. In doing so, I have built on Grainge and Johnson's call to consider promotional screen work as 'a discipline with its own creative vitality, with practitioners often required to be multidisciplinary and highly collaborative in their working practices' (Grainge 2022: 434).

The approach taken by Grainge and Johnson focusses on an institutional level: the 'meso' level of media work, based on the level of individual companies or agencies, with a focus on 'organisational management techniques incorporated by professionals

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[34] PROMAX is the awards body for television promotion, established in the USA in 1956.

working in or for media companies' (2015: 9; Deuze and Steward 2011: 6). Grainge and Johnson are 'concerned with the management and organization of media work rather than below-the-line labour' (2015: 9). Consequently, they focus their interviews on producers and managers, rather than investigating the contribution of creative work, for example, the perspectives of directors, graphic designers, composers, and sound designers. Their book established the promotional screen industries in the UK as a distinct area of study and pointed to future avenues of research:

> From a production studies perspective, there is scope for further research on the life and conditions of workers in the promotional screen industries. While such an account is beyond the purview of this book, we do wish to situate promotion as a form of creative labour. (2015: 76)

As mentioned above, in graphic design research Macdonald (2014, 2015, 2016) has provided insight into the production contexts of idents from graphic designers' perspectives, with particular focus on changes to the BBC's in-house design departments between 1990 and 2011 (2014). This thesis contributes to these strands of research by providing a novel analysis of the working practices of composers and exploring how composers and designers work together in the production of idents.

This thesis extends the emerging field of research within media studies on the promotional screen industries. Specifically, my research complements the foundational work done by Grainge and Johnson to map the promotional screen industries and supports their argument that promotion consists of a form of creative labour.

2.4 Research Questions

In this chapter, I have explored existing research relating to the topic of sound in idents from three perspectives—musicology, motion graphic design, and media studies. The sonic aspects of idents has only begun to be explored throughout these three disciplines. Outside of this thesis, Brownrigg and Meech (1999, 2002, 2011) have made the greatest contribution to this topic, having mapped the use of different music genres in UK television idents, from fanfares in the 1980s to an eclectic 'funfare' of approaches in the early 2000s. Prior to this thesis, however, little or no research had been conducted into the specific ways in which the sounds and images work together

to fulfil idents' range of functions, and idents had not yet been examined from a musicological perspective. I address this gap in this thesis, and update Brownrigg and Meech's aesthetic categorisations to include idents created since 2011. This aim led to the development of my first research question and sub-questions:

1. What is the aesthetic character and role of sound in idents?
   a) How do the sounds and images relate to each other?
   b) How do the sounds and images collectively contribute to the functions of idents?
   c) How does the sonic aspect of idents relate to industry context, and how has the aesthetic character of idents changed since 1982?

An exclusively textual approach focussing on the aesthetic character of the finished product leaves some questions unanswered, however: How are compositional decisions made? What is the position and value of composers within the production process? How do creative individuals work together in this context? What hierarchies exist within this sub-industry? As Paul Grainge and Catherine Johnson note, little has been known about the 'life and conditions of workers in the promotional screen industries', particularly at the 'micro-level' of interactions between individual creatives (Grainge and Johnson 2015: 76). In particular, there has been little or no exploration of the industry ecosystems in which idents are produced, and the role of composers within this commercial and temporally compressed context. Addressing this second research gap, I devised my second research question and sub-questions:

2. What is the nature of the production process and what is the role and position of composers in the industry?
   a) What skills and techniques are used by composers in this industry?
   b) What kind of educational or musical background do composers have?
   c) What is the relative status and position of graphic design and music and sound design within the production process?
   d) To what extent are idents the product of collaboration?

To answer both sets of questions, I conducted an audiovisual analysis of selected idents, applying several of the musicological concepts set out in this chapter. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the composers and graphic designers who worked on these idents. In the following chapter, I set out the development of my methodology, before presenting my analysis and findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the methodology of this thesis, beginning with a reflection on the philosophical assumptions informing the research approach. I then describe the interdisciplinary choice of methods: textual analysis of idents and thematic analysis of practitioner interviews, highlighting their appropriateness for exploring my research questions.

3.1 Epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodological approach

According to psychology researchers Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, the choice and application of research methods are 'inescapably' informed by the researcher's own beliefs, and accordingly researchers 'should always reflect on and specify the philosophical and theoretical assumptions informing' the choice of methods and resulting analysis (2021: n.p.). Below, I trace a path through what social scientist Michael Crotty calls the 'four basic elements of the research project': epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. I begin by outlining the overall philosophical assumptions and approach as determined by the epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology employed. The remainder of the chapter outlines the main methods that I used, audiovisual analysis and practitioner interviews, and reflects on their complementarity.

3.1.1 Epistemology: Constructionism

Epistemology refers to a 'theory of knowledge' that explains 'how we know what we know' (Crotty 1998: 58). Certain projects and research questions invite different epistemological theories. For example, *objectivist* epistemologies assume that truth and meaning reside within an object, independent of human subjectivity, and are often associated with positivist theoretical approaches in the natural sciences. Projects underpinned by objectivist epistemologies tend to be quantitative in nature and aim to 'prove' or 'disprove' hypotheses. Alternatively, *subjectivism* takes an individualistic and relativist view of reality, and assumes that meaning is imposed on objects by an individual subject (Crotty 1998: 58). *Constructionism*, the epistemological theory broadly underpinning this thesis, offers a third approach, by which meaning is

constructed in the interactions between subjects and objects, within a given social and cultural context. Crotty states,

> According to constructionism, we do not create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world. (1998: 43-44)

A constructionist epistemology asserts that although objects do not contain meaning or truth in themselves, they play an important role as our partners in the generation of meaning. Unlike subjectivists, constructionists believe that interpretation does not take place as an entirely individual process but is filtered through social and cultural contexts.[35] As the anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues,

> [t]hinking consists not of 'happenings in the head' (though happenings there and elsewhere are necessary for it to occur) but of a traffic in what have been called, by G.H. Mead and others, significant symbols—words for the most part but also gestures, drawings, musical sounds, mechanical devices like clocks, or natural objects like jewels—anything, in fact, that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience. (1973: 45)

In this thesis, the meaning of music in idents and of the qualitative interview data are both considered through a constructionist lens. The relationship between the methods and the constructionist epistemology is explored in more detail in section 3.2 below.

3.1.2 Theoretical perspective: Interpretivism

> Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (Geertz 1973: 5)

A theoretical perspective indicates a basic world view (Guba and Lincoln 1994). There are two main conflicting theoretical perspectives: *positivism* and *interpretivism*. As mentioned above, positivist paradigms are typically associated with objectivist epistemologies and assume that the world can be measured impartially by a researcher, framed as a neutral 'observer'.[36] In contrast, an interpretivist approach

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[35] This is the basis of the conflict between constructivism and constructionism: whereas constructivism emphasises the individual: the 'meaning-making of the individual mind' (Crotty 1998: 58), constructionism focusses on 'the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning' (Ibid.: 58).

[36] Neo-positivists (eg. Glaser and Strauss 2017) acknowledge that 'knowledge is fallible because it is shaped by contextual influences' (Levers 2013) but nonetheless believe that their observations are grounded in a 'real' reality that they must strive to represent as 'accurately' as possible (Ibid.: 1).

views social reality as 'a network of assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings' and aims to examine 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty 1998: 31, 67).

Interpretivist approaches are adopted in musicology in the analysis of musical texts, as well as in the social sciences. Indeed, most analysis of music in film studies and musicology is conducted through an interpretivist lens, although scholars only occasionally acknowledge this explicitly. Tagg admits that analysis involves a degree of 'hermeneutic intuition' and introspection, in which 'the analyst takes into account a subjective relationship to the music under analysis' including 'what it means to him/her personally' (1979: 111). Cook also notes, 'writers give the impression of simply describing how the music is, when in reality they are in the business of proposing interpretations' (1998: 20). In the social sciences, when the analyst conducts interviews, or adopts ethnographic or life history approaches, they are similarly implicated in the process. Geertz states, accordingly, '[w]hat we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (1973: 9). I approached both of my methods, discussed in section 3.2 below, from an interpretive perspective.

3.1.3 Methodology: Qualitative research

In *quantitative* research, measurable structures are used to assess quantifiable relationships between different aspects of the data, which can be represented in numerical form. The researcher is usually framed as an 'objective' observer external to the research process; accordingly, quantitative methodologies are typically associated with positivist theoretical approaches and an objectivist epistemology (Levers 2013: 510). In contrast, *qualitative* research is 'about meaning and meaning-making, and viewing these as always context-bound, positioned and situated' (Braun and Clarke 2019). Rather than positioning the researcher as a neutral observer, qualitative research often emphasises researcher subjectivity, in alignment with the interpretivist theoretical perspective. In musicology, the analysis of musical 'texts' tends to be qualitative, rather than quantitative, as analysts aim to examine the textual structure of music and the relations between the elements of the music (Graakjær 2015: 1, Cook 1998). In the social sciences, qualitative research involving people,

such as interviews or focus groups, similarly emphasises meaning and meaning-making. According to psychologists Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman,

> [q]ualitative data, with their emphasis on people's lived experiences, are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them (1994: 71.4).

The two methods used in this thesis, audiovisual analysis and practitioner interviews, were both conducted from an interpretivist perspective and a constructivist epistemological stance. Moreover, both can be described as qualitative methods as they seek to explore processes of meaning-making, albeit in different ways. There are obvious differences between the two methods, one involving the analysis of audiovisual texts and the other involving people. In this PhD, this two-fold approach maximises the type and number of resources available and also means that the research questions can be interrogated from two different angles, constructing different types of knowledge about the role and contribution of sound in idents. This also enables links to be drawn between the aesthetic character of idents, their industrial contexts, and their production processes.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Method 1: Audiovisual analysis of idents

As discussed in Chapter 2 above, the music of films and of short-form promotional media require distinct analytical approaches. Feature films tend to be at least two hours in duration and often involve complex narratives, characters, and emotions. Idents, in contrast, are temporally compressed and do not usually include narratives or characters, instead focussing on the channel's logo and a memorable yet inobtrusive sonic motto. Idents carry out specific functions, have unique aesthetic characteristics, and thus require an approach different from those adopted by film music scholars.

Cook (1998), Tagg (1978), and Graakjær (2015) have developed analytical processes for the study of commercials, title sequences and logo shots (see section 2.1 above). These types of texts share similarities with idents: they are compressed and rely on visual and sonic codes to attempt to convey their message to viewers in a short

amount of time. I accordingly have taken the approaches of these three scholars as the starting point of my audiovisual analysis of idents. Like Graakjær and Cook, my aim in analysis was to conduct a 'qualitative examination' of the textual structure of idents: the music, sound and images, and the relationship between these elements (Graakjær 2015: 1). I also found that some concepts in film music studies are also applicable to idents and other more compressed forms of audiovisual media. For example, I found Chion's (1993) notion of 'added value', and Gorbman's (1987) of 'mutual implication', to be useful when considering the contributions of music and sound towards meaning making in idents (see section 2.1 above).

To identify salient visual or sonic semiotic codes, I watched and listened to the selected idents many times in succession, often either muting the music or looking away from the visuals to focus on the respective media. Chion labels this the 'masking method', a technique that gives the analyst an 'opportunity to hear the sound as it is and not as the image transforms and disguises it' and to 'see the image as it is and not as sound recreates it' (2000: 187). This method entails 'discovering the sonic elements and the visual elements separately, before putting them back together again' and, Chion argues, 'will dispose us most favorably to keep our listening and looking fresh, open to the surprises of audiovisual encounters.' (Ibid.: 177)

Using this method, I observed visual and sonic elements such as colour palettes, objects, materials, visual movement, harmonic structure, musical instrumentation, and music genre references. I then examined the relationship between the visuals and the music closely, as Cook suggests, searching for similarities and differences (1998). This can include 'synch points' or 'hit points'—moments where the music or sound seems to align with the visual movement on screen (Chion 1990, Cook 2001, Davison 2013a). Cook's terminology regarding conformance, complementation, or contest, amongst the images and music were also helpful analytical tools.

Given the constructionist and interpretivist approach outlined above, the point of interest here was not to attempt to uncover what idents mean, but how the music, sound, and images might contribute to potential meanings. Here, the notion of affordances is helpful—an idea that musicologist Eric Clarke has applied to musical analysis. The notion of affordances is credited to the psychologist James Gibson, who

adopted the term in his ecological theory to describe 'the uses, functions, or values of an object—the opportunities it offers to a perceiver' (Gibson 1966: 285, Clarke 2003: 338). The affordances of an object depend upon the properties of the object itself, as well as the perceiver's motivations. Clarke explains,

> To a human being, a wooden chair affords sitting on, while to a termite it affords eating. Equally, the same chair affords use as a weapon to a human being who needs one ... as in the archetypal barroom brawl. (2003: 338)

Applying this concept to musical analysis, Clarke suggests that 'musical material can be conceived as *affording* certain kinds of interpretations and not others' (Ibid.: 338). The application of the ecological notion of affordances to musical analysis thus helps explain why 'interpretations do not just spread unchecked in every possible direction' (Clarke 2018: 10). In interpretive textual analysis, then, meaning is constructed from interactions between the analyst and the 'affordances' offered by the text.

I therefore intend my analyses of the idents in Chapter 4 to be read as proposed interpretations, not definitive descriptions. In Chapter 4, I indicate when I am offering an interpretation, and I also demonstrate how I arrived at certain interpretations, providing musical transcriptions and explanations.

3.2.2 Method 2: Practitioner interviews

Because I wanted to provide an analysis of the production process and role and position of composers, I complemented my first method of audiovisual analysis by also conducting interviews with composers and graphic designers.

Semi-structured interviews

Interview sample and recruitment strategies

A total of 30 interviews were conducted. Interviewees are UK-based, except four interviewees who live in the US, and have worked in the industry from 5 to 40+ years. Most interviews were with graphic designers and composers but in the early stages of data collection I also interviewed a strategist and a producer, which provided further insight into the industry structure and roles. The interview sample therefore consisted of 'elite' or 'expert' respondents, since they were recruited based on their specialist knowledge of the field (Dexter 2006).

According to Lewis Dexter, 'exploratory or trial' interviews may be helpful to 'check whether we have enough background knowledge to make sense out of the interviews' (2006: 22). An initial pilot interview was conducted in April 2020 with graphic designer James Mobbs, who was recruited through networking on Twitter. Mobbs was an ideal pilot interviewee as he has worked in-house at the BBC, as a freelancer, and has extensive experience of working with composers. Although his work predominately focusses on graphics for programmes and news channels rather than idents, our open-ended discussion provided a valuable introduction to the field, roles, and working processes in promotion and design for television.

Following the pilot interview, a semi-structured format was selected for the rest of the interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer leads the discussion based on a list of questions and topics, whilst ensuring the conversation provides flexibility for both the interviewer and participants to follow new themes (Bernard 1994: 158). A sample topic guide for the interviews can be found in Appendix 1. The first question of the interviews revolved around the participants' education and career background. The next section of the interview turned to process and the industry. I asked questions about pitching, interpreting briefs, and interactions with other creatives, in order to

explore interviewees perceptions of the production process and the role and position of composers in the industry. I also asked participants to elaborate on the process for specific idents, which informed the analysis in Chapter 4. The conversation sometimes departed from the topic guide as interviewees were prompted to elaborate on something they said, or when interviewees wanted to make a particular point, which often led to new and unanticipated insights, many of which are explored in Chapter 5 below.

Interviewees were primarily recruited through 'cold-emailing', via their email address on their agency website or individual professional websites. Practitioners who did not include an email address on their websites were contacted through a private message on Twitter or LinkedIn. Thirteen participants were recruited in this way, and a sample recruitment message is included in Appendix 2. Sixteen further individuals were accessed through asking interviewees for further contacts. Consequently, many of my interviewees have worked together, and my interview sample represents a network of designers and composers who worked on a range of ident projects, predominately BBC and Channel 4, between 1982 and the present. Eventually, most names that the interviewees mentioned were people I had already contacted and spoken to, thus I began approaching a point of 'saturation' in terms of the participant sample (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). This is perhaps unsurprising, since the industry began in the 1980s and 1990s as a small network of individuals, primarily coalescing around Martin Lambie-Nairn's design consultancy—the first external agency to focus on broadcast design. Similarly, when recruiting a freelance composer, designers often depended on the composer's reputation or informal referrals from other designers who had employed them in the past. Thus, several of the composers had worked with many designers in the sample.

There is a wide gender disparity in the sample of practitioners, with six women and 23 men. This included only one female composer. Though I do not claim that my sample is representative, the gender disparity does seem to be reflected in industry research. For example, a study in 2018 revealed that the UK's design workforce is mostly male (78%), compared to the wider workforce which is 53% male (Design Council 2018). In the music industry, 'just 14% of composers […] in the UK are women' (Musicians Union 2019). Another issue that I noticed, and that was raised by several interviewees, was

the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the branding and design industries. This too is reflected in industry data. For example, a 2019 design industry survey found that 'two thirds of respondents were white British and the majority of the rest were white non-British' (DesignWeek 2019b).

The table below provides a summary of the interview sample, whilst biographies of each of the interviewees can be found in Appendix 4.

Name	Role	Agency, freelance, or in-house (at time of project)	Name of design agency/ music agency/ broadcaster	Projects discussed
David Lowe	Composer	Freelance	N/A	BBC News (1999, 2007)
Tony Sadler and Gaynor Sadler	Composers	Music agency (partnership)	Logorhythm Music (owners)	BBC Two (1991-2002)
Peter Lawlor	Composer	Freelance	N/A	BBC One (2002)
Joe Glasman	Composer	Music agency	Hum Music (owner)	BBC Four (2002)
Alex Baranowski	Composer	Freelance	N/A	BBC Two (2018)
David Arnold	Composer	Freelance	N/A	BBC One (2002)
Simone Benyacar	Composer	Freelance	N/A	Amazon Prime Studios (2018)
Imran Hanif	Composer	Freelance	N/A	BBC One (2002)
Mark Sayer-Wade	Composer	Music agency (partnership)	Music Sculptors (owner)	BBC One (1991-1997)
Rich Martin	Composer	Freelance	N/A	Channel 4 (2004)
Jason Keeley	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Lambie-Nairn & Co	BBC One (1997), BBC Four (2002), BBC News (2007)
Martin Lambie Nairn	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Lambie-Nairn & Co (owner)	BBC News (1989), Channel 4 (1982), BBC One (1991-2005), BBC Two (1991-2005), BBC News (1999), Sky Atlantic (2011)
Paul Franklin	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Heavenly	Sky Atlantic (2011)

Charlie Mawer	Creative Director	In-house, external agency	BBC, Red Bee Creative	BBC One (2005)
Chris Bovill	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	In-house	Channel 4	Channel 4 (2015, 2017).
Erik Brattestad	Graphic Designer	Design agency	Superunion	BBC Two (2018)
Kath Tudball	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Superunion	BBC Two (2018)
Lucas Christman	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Antenna Creative	Amazon Prime Studios (2018)
Christoph Gabathuler	Animator	Design agency	Imaginary Forces	Netflix (2019)
Aaron Becker	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	Design agency	Filmography (owner)	Various film companies
Grant Gilbert	Graphic Designer/ Creative Director	In-house, Design agency	Channel 4, DBLG (owner)	Channel 4, ITV, BBC
Paula Williams	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC One (1991-1997)
Michael Graham-Smith	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC Two
Christine Green	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC
Liz Freidman	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC
Rob Hifle	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC One (1991-1997), BBC Two (1991-2005)
Tim Platt	Graphic Designer	In-house	BBC	BBC One (1991-1997), BBC Two (1991-2005)
Nick Sunderland	Brand Strategist	Design agency	Heavenly	Sky Atlantic (2002)
Celia Chapman	Producer	Design agency	Lambie-Nairn & Co.	Channel 4 (1982), BBC One (1991-2005), BBC Two (1991-2005)

Table 1: List of interviewees, role, agency, and projects discussed.

Interview logistics and setting

Interviews were conducted between May 2020 and August 2021, mostly during UK COVID-19 lockdowns. Accordingly, all interviews took place remotely; twenty-five participants were interviewed online, whereas four felt more comfortable using the telephone. Zoom was selected as the preferred option for its easy interface and for its ability to securely record and store sessions without recourse to third-party software, unlike Skype (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey and Lawless 2019). Online interviews present many advantages over in-person interviews. They are more cost- and time-effective than in-person interviews for the participants and the researcher. This enabled access to a potentially larger number of participants, including several participants who are based in the USA. Moreover, online interviews can feel more comfortable since they occur on the participants' own 'turf', either at their home or their office. However, online interviews can also present challenges in building rapport with the interviewee, since it is impossible to make eye contact with the participant and body language is more difficult to detect. To combat this, I aimed to look into the camera as much as possible, appear engaged, and provide encouragement when the interviewee has finished speaking. Interviewees seemed to welcome the opportunity to speak to me about their work and many interviews were longer than I expected, several lasting almost two hours.

At the start of each interview, interviewees were provided with a brief introduction to the background and context of the research. Interviewees were asked whether they consented for me to record the interview and to use the transcript in the PhD thesis and other publications. The Edinburgh College of Art Ethical Guidelines note that 'verbal consent at the start of the interview' can be an appropriate method of obtaining consent.[37] This is in keeping with Recital 32 of the GDPR which states that oral consent can be used rather than a written statement. For this project, it was deemed that oral consent was more appropriate than a written consent form, since many of the participants have busy work schedules, and a formal written form would have been likely to put off potential interviewees. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the interview,

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[37] ECA Ethical Guidelines. 2020. Accessible at:<https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/hss/eca/research-ke impact/SiteAssets/SitePages/Ethics%20Resources,%20Training%20and%20Policy%20Information/R ethinking%20research%20projects%20in%20light%20of%20covid-19%20situation%20ethical%20considerations_FINAL_30March.pdf>. (p.6).

participants were reassured that they could stop the interview, or the recording, at any time, and that the recording was for note-taking purpose only, would be stored securely, and not shared with anyone else. At the end of each interview, the participant was asked to confirm whether they were happy to be quoted in the thesis or other output. The interviews posed a minimal risk to the interviewer and interviewees since the questions revolved around work processes and careers rather than potentially sensitive or personal subjects. Participants raised no issues of commercial sensitivity, since the projects we discussed occurred in the past. A completed ethics form approved by the University of Edinburgh is included in Appendix 2.

Anticipating response effects

During the interviews, I paid close attention to the dynamics created between myself and the interviewee, looking out for response effects. H. Russel Bernard defines response effects as the 'differences in the responses of people being interviewed that are predictable from characteristics of the interviewers and those being interviewed' (Bernard 1998: 176). Response effects can include social desirability and impression management, where the interviewee aims to provide answers that they think will be helpful to the researcher, or that will present them in a positive light. To minimise the impact of these effects, I strove to establish a rapport with interviewees through active listening. I also aimed to set the participant at ease by beginning the interview with an introductory question about their background and career path.

Grant McCracken warns that respondents who are provided with 'the terms and objectives of research' may 'prove overhelpful and try to "serve up" what he or she thinks is wanted', rather than providing more spontaneous and instinctive responses (McCracken 2011: 27). Accordingly, I provided interviewees with minimal information about the specific aims of the project. For the first interviews, I informed interviewees about my academic background in music, but I soon stopped doing this, merely explaining that I was interested in the history of idents. I realised that interviewees who are aware of my focus on music may be tempted to over-emphasise

the importance and position of composers and music in the process.[38] This change proved an effective way of anticipating 'response effects' from interviewees.

Analysing the interviews: Reflexive thematic analysis

The method chosen to analyse the interviews was reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), a particular type of thematic analysis devised and refined by Braun and Clarke (2004, 2019, 2021). Broadly speaking, thematic analysis refers to methods of 'identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns' within qualitative data, such as interview transcripts or field notes (Braun and Clarke 2006: 6). Thematic analysis involves creating and assigning codes and themes to describe or interpret the data. A 'code' is defined by Johnny Saldaña as

> [m]ost often a researcher-generated word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. (2015: 33)

The goal of thematic analysis is to create themes, typically developed by the researcher from categories of, or relationships between, codes. Braun and Clarke conceptualise 'themes as patterns of shared meaning underpinned or united by a core concept' and argue that '[t]hemes are analytic outputs developed through and from the creative labour of our coding' (2019). In short, thematic analysis can be used as a tool to categorise and interpret a large amount of data.

As Braun and Clarke (2019) highlight, thematic analysis can consist of at least three different approaches. First, 'coding reliability' thematic analysis is aligned with neo-positivist approaches, concerned with 'objective' and 'unbiased' coding. In this method, multiple researchers code the data and agreement between the researchers is used as a key measure of coding quality. Second, 'codebook' thematic analysis uses a structured coding framework, and themes are 'usually developed early on in, or even prior to, analysis' (Ibid., n,p.). Thirdly, 'reflexive' thematic analysis, the method employed in this thesis, is an 'interpretative reflexive process' that embraces the subjectivity of the researcher as an asset in meaning construction (Ibid., n.p.). In reflexive thematic analysis, a 'research team is not required or even desirable for quality', and the researcher does not work with a pre-existing framework or list of

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[38] Several designers and/or directors did not mention music and sound until prompted, or until after halfway through the interview.

codes. Instead, codes and themes are understood as 'interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves' (Ibid.). In highlighting the active and subjective role of the researcher in constructing 'stories' about the data, reflexive thematic analysis is concordant with the interpretivist theoretical perspective and constructionist epistemology outlined above.

As sociologist David Byrne (2021) notes, coding involves a choice between 'inductive' and 'deductive' analysis. Deductive coding necessitates a pre-determined list of codes, and the researcher analyses the data with the aim of populating these pre-existing categories. In contrast, inductive coding is 'data-driven', and the researcher aims to produce codes free from pre-conceived theories or conceptual frameworks. In line with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2019), the analysis here was primarily inductive, and the categories and themes were based on patterns perceived within the data. However, as Byrne stresses, 'it is not possible to conduct an exclusively inductive analysis, as the researcher requires some form of criteria to identify whether or not a piece of information may be conducive to addressing the research question(s), and therefore worth coding' (2021). Accordingly, I focussed on coding the data extracts that I felt were meaningful in the context of the research questions.

Thematic analysis also involves a choice between semantic or latent codes. Semantic codes focus on the explicit or 'surface meanings' of the data and constitute a descriptive form of analysis. In contrast, latent codes are more interpretive and aim to go 'beyond the descriptive level of the data and attempt to identify hidden meanings or underlying assumptions, ideas, or ideologies' (Byrne 2021, n.p.). In this thesis, many of the codes and subsequent themes aim to draw attention to 'latent' meanings. For example, codes regarding the identity of graphic designers or composers (i.e, 'Artist', 'Outsider'), are predominately based on interpretations of latent meanings within interviewees discussion of their work. However, descriptive codes and themes were also helpful, especially in discussing aspects of the creative process (e.g. 'Pitching' or 'Idea generation').

After selecting the method of reflexive thematic analysis, I used the six phases suggested by Braun and Clarke as a guideline (2006, updated in 2019). I first listened to each of the 30 interview recordings and manually produced full verbatim transcripts that were stored securely in a password protected Microsoft Word file. In total, I had around 300,000 words of interview data. After reading and re-reading the transcripts, I began to label small sections of the transcripts with initial codes. I then combined and refined the code names and worked to develop overarching themes. A detailed explanation of this process can be found at the beginning of Chapter 5.

Reflections on interview method

As Mera notes, there are inherent challenges with relying on interviews as a methodological approach:

> Artists may not fully understand the psychological process by which ideas occur to them. They may be unable to objectify their own instinctive methods and intentions, nor remember afterwards exactly how they constructed their work. They may even choose to revise their memory in order to make their process seem more rational and coherent than it actually was, or they may reproduce the 'banalities of publicity interviews' and fail to provide genuine detail or critical insight. (2007: 78)

Whilst bearing Mera's warning in mind, I aimed to use the interviews as an insight into the creative process, accepting that the participants' accounts are subjective reconstructions of events. In this particular project there was only a small risk of participants reproducing the 'banalities of publicity interviews', however (Ibid.: 78). Several graphic designers and creative executives had previously been interviewed by academics, some even having written books on the subject (Mawer and Bryant 2016, Lambie-Nairn 1997). Additionally, some participants had given talks and presentations about ident design.[39] However, for many participants, our conversation was the first time they had been approached to contribute to an academic study. My interviews allowed participants to reflect on the cultural and historical significance of

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[39] Martin Lambie-Nairn, Charlie Mawer, Katherina Tudball have given industry seminars and educational lectures about branding projects for the BBC. For example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzevyQqOaJg; https://www.redbeecreative.com/insights/talks/the-future-of-tv-branding-by-charlie-mawer-at-promax-usa-2019; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TayMn5jv2KY. (All accessed Aug 23, 2022). Moreover, several of the graphic designers interviewed had taught graphic design courses at colleges and universities, including the University of Ravensbourne and Central Saint Martin's UAL (see Appendix 4 for full interviewee biographies).

their work, perhaps for the first time. As Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison note, interviews are ideally a 'positive and enriching' experience for all involved and can often 'provoke new insights in the participants themselves' (2013: 414). Several participants mentioned to me that they felt 'flattered' and 'pleased to be part of' the PhD project, thanking me for including them. Many participants also had particular points or pet theories they wished to share. For example, one designer, Christoph Gabathuler noted, 'it's nice that somebody is writing about it because I feel like graphic designers and sound designers work in complete anonymity' (2021).

As Grainge (2011), among others, has argued, idents are promotional paratexts that are routinely ignored or undervalued by industry and viewers alike; often dismissed as 'ephemeral' due to their peripheral status in the 'flow' of broadcast television or within the interfaces of online platforms. Many participants seemed keen to help provide a place in academia for the creative work undertaken in producing idents—labour that is not often celebrated or even acknowledged. In describing idents as a 'hidden art form', Mawer then added, 'you're right to be studying them, because they're fascinating things' (2020). For others, being approached by an academic led them to reflect on the cultural and historical significance of their work. For example, composer Joe Glasman reflected:

> I think, like you, it's as interesting as any other period of musical history. I'm not saying that we will be regarded as the great artists of the future, but you don't know, in future generations, what aspects of musical culture historians are going to be interested in. […] And I'm interested in providing an academic like yourself with the tools to do that. (2020)

The emphasis many interviewees placed on the value of the creative work involved in producing idents was particularly striking, and I return to this topic in depth in the discussion chapter (Chapter 6).

3.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has set out the philosophical assumptions motivating the choice of methods and has rationalised the decision to combine audiovisual analysis and qualitative interviews. My choice of methods was interdisciplinary; the textual analysis of idents was based on concepts in musicology, whereas my approach towards the interviews employed methods originating in the social sciences. Despite their diverse

origins, in this chapter I highlight parallels between the two. In outlining my interpretative approach, I have emphasised that 'meaning' is not considered in this thesis to be an essence that resides in either the music or in the data but is instead a construction. Meaning and interpretations in this thesis thus arise from the relationship between 'the interpreting subject [and] the construction of the object of study' (Cook 1989: 271).

Moreover, the analysis of the idents and of the interviews are both based on various types of 'codes'. In audiovisual analysis, these codes take the form of visual or musical semiotic codes, and I consider the relationship between them. In the reflexive thematic analysis of the interviews, language-based codes are constructed and combined to form categories and themes. I have not aimed to 'mine' the music or the interview data for any inherent 'truth', but instead endeavoured to construct interpretations of the idents and interview data based on the affordances they offer for potential meanings. Overall, this combination of methods provided novel insights into the industry as a site of creative labour, what this creative labour entails, what its products are, and what they mean to those who create them.

Chapter 4: Music and Sound in Idents (1982-2022)

In this chapter, I explore idents across three eras of UK television, relating the technological and industrial changes of each era to the aesthetic character and role of sound in idents. Accordingly, this chapter focusses on answering my first research question and sub-questions, relating to the aesthetic character and role of sound in idents (see section 2.4). This chapter is divided into three sections (Availability, Plenty, and Overflow), each beginning with an overview of technological, industrial, and aesthetic contexts, followed by a close analysis of the music, sounds, and images of case studies. The case studies were selected based on their perceived influence, as well as access to composers and graphic designers who worked on specific projects. This chapter is focused on particularly notable and illustrative examples, and therefore does not intend to present a comprehensive account of the aesthetic character of idents in general.

In analysing the individual case studies, I aimed to provide a 'thick description' of idents and their cultural and industrial contexts (Geertz 1973: 6). The term 'thick description' was originally coined by anthropologist Gilbert Ryle, who gave the example of a boy winking. A thin description of this event or 'text' would note the boy's 'rapidly contracting right eyelid', whereas a 'thick' description considers the social context and may interpret the action in various ways, for example as a 'fake wink to deceive a friend into thinking a conspiracy is in motion' (Geertz 1973: 6). According to Geertz, culture consists of a range of such cultural texts which are best apprehended and interpreted through 'thick description' that takes social contexts into account.

Much recent work in film music studies has explored the production contexts of film scores, providing a form of 'thick description' of a film text by incorporating information about the intentions of the composer and director. For example, in a study of *The Ice Storm* (1997, Ang Lee), Mera analysed a wide range of sources including, 'interviews, e-mails, faxes, handwritten notes, post-production schedules, sketches, and audio and computer sequencer files' (2007: 5). Mera claims that such contextual material can valuably inform researchers 'how a work might be interpreted' and points out that

it would be 'irresponsible to disregard potential source materials that might illuminate' interpretations of the text (Ibid.: 56). In my own analysis of the case studies in this chapter, I therefore supplement my interpretation of the idents with quotations from interviews with the composers and graphic designers who created them.

4.1 Availability (1982-2002)

Between 1955 and 1982, UK broadcasting had consisted of a duopoly shared by the two broadcasters, the BBC and ITV. John Ellis labels this period the era of scarcity, due to the small number of available channels (Ellis 2002: 40). As discussed in Chapter 1, the launch of a third public service broadcaster, Channel 4, in 1982 signalled the arrival of competition in the industry and thus the beginning of the era of 'availability' (Ellis 2002: 40). A fifth public service broadcaster, Channel 5, was added in 1997, and by the early 2000s, the development and adoption of cable, satellite, and digital technology had enabled the formation of hundreds of new channels. By 2001, the UK's Independent Television Commission (ITC) had issued licences for 'well over 500 television programme services' (Light 2004: 64). The era of availability therefore saw a transition towards an increasingly competitive, pluralist, and marketised industry modelled on the concept of consumer choice (Born and Prosser 2001).

Several broadcasters in the early years of the era of availability were inspired by the success of Channel 4's launch ident and took advantage of the increased availability of computer graphics technology. For example, in 1985 BBC1 introduced a new computer-generated ident, known as the 'Computer Originated World' (see also section 2.2 above).[40] According to an article in the graphic design magazine, *Eye,* however, the first 'real attempt to create a brand to rival Channel 4's came in 1989' when the ITA decided to unite ITV's regional franchises under a unified corporate brand (McClellan 1990). Previously, each ITV franchise had had its own logo and ident, often accompanied by fanfares based on regional folk melodies.[41] The new generic ident was created in 1989 by design agency English Markell Pockett (see Figure 10 below). Following the model of Channel 4, the ident was created using

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[40] BBC1 Computer Originated World. 1985. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1985-bbc1-globe-computer-originated-world. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).
[41] For example, the ident for Scottish Television (ITV), 1985-88.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EbhyO0dk4c. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

computer graphics and featured music by the same composer, David Dundas. Eschewing the monolithic fanfare model, Dundas composed a 1980s-style smooth jazz track featuring saxophones and high-pitched synthesised pan pipes.[42] This ident, with its flowing scroll of images, and its contemporary, upbeat music represents the beginning of a shift towards a more flexible brand expression that was to be further developed in Lambie-Nairn's idents for the BBC channels in the 1990s.

Figure 10: ITV, Tyne Tees (1989)

In general, the idents during the era of availability underwent several transformations (Macdonald 2014, 2015). In the 1980s, UK television first became filled with a 'plethora of flying logos' (Lambie-Nairn 1997: 85). In response to the clichéd over-use of computer graphics, Lambie-Nairn subsequently led a return to a more 'concrete live action image', beginning with his work on the BBC2 rebrand in 1991, which is analysed in detail below (Macdonald 2016: 35). During this time, Macdonald notes, 'while some were becoming slave-to-the-machine ("Paintbox-jockeys"), others were freed to be live action directors' (2016: 30).

As the analyses below will demonstrate, the music and sound of idents also moved away from clichés and began to develop into a distinct approach. The sound and music of the idents in the 1990s began to constitute flexible 'soundworlds', replacing the simplistic mnemonics and fanfares of the 1980s that imitated radio call signs and film

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[42] ITV Generic Idents, 1989. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igAa9BZNLbM. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

studio logos (Brownrigg and Meech 2002). In the following three sections, shifts in the aesthetics and functions of sound in idents during the era of availability are explored through three contrasting case studies: BBC2 (1991), BBC One (1997), and BBC News 24 (1999).

4.1.1 BBC 2 (1991)

In 1991, Pam Masters, the BBC's Head of Presentation, hired Lambie-Nairn as a brand consultant to examine the corporate identity of the BBC and its services (Lambie-Nairn 1997: 113). Market research had revealed that BBC2 was struggling with unfavourable impressions of its identity, considered 'dull', 'worthy' and 'snobbish', whereas Channel 4 was seen as 'free-thinking, experimental, and trendy' (Lambie-Nairn 1997: 122). Aiming to combat this problem, Lambie-Nairn's new designs were informed by research and strategy and replaced the previous BBC2 ident, which had been designed by Alan Jeapes in 1986 (see Figure 11 below) Jeapes noted,

> My BBC2 design of the TWO was part of the last knockings of the BBC as a gentle place where you could put up a painterly idea of elegant shapes in white space. […] It didn't even say BBC. But then the BBC in those days didn't think it was in the advertising business. (Myerson and Vickers 2002: 312)

The replacement of Jeapes' design thus symbolised a transitional moment when television graphic design and brand strategy were becoming more closely aligned.

Figure 11: BBC2 (1986)

The new idents designed by Lambie-Nairn consisted of nine different variations, to express a flexible and compelling brand identity. Unlike Channel 4, the idents consisted of live-action films of a wooden model of a Gill Sans '2', shot on 35mm film. Myerson notes,

> [t]here is a certain irony in Channel 4 defining the essence of a computer-animated television identity, at a time when the technology was slow and

unreliable, and BBC2 heralding a return to live action […] at a time when computer technology had matured to the point at which it was capable of simulating almost anything. (Myerson in Lambie-Nairn 1997: 14)

The BBC2 idents featured ordinary materials that act in unusual and impossible ways: paint moves sideways in slow-motion, silk ripples like water, and water moves diagonally across the screen. In combining the familiar with the strange, these slow-moving idents invite the close attention and interpretation of viewers.

In contrast to Jeapes' ident, which did not contain music, the new idents each had bespoke music and sound design. Composers Tony and Gaynor Sadler (Logorhythm Music) created the music and sound design for almost all the BBC2 idents between 1991 and 2007. The Sadlers harnessed new music production technologies in their work, such as samplers and synthesisers, which helped blur the line between music and sound (see section 2.1.3 above). When working on a previous project for BBC Radio Scotland, they had discovered that 'it's not necessarily always dealing with notes. It's dealing with a total audio brand, which includes [a] lot of sound design' (2020). The Sadlers travelled to Scotland and created an 'audio landscape' through recording sounds like 'fish markets, the sea, a street scene in Glasgow' and consequently mixing and manipulating these recordings. Their work for BBC2 similarly combined music and sound design and contains unifying sonic elements that identify the variations as part of the same brand.

Paint

The first ident in the series, *Paint,* contains a grey model of the figure '2' that has been placed sideways, and features a moving blob of viridian green paint that splashes onto the '2' in slow-motion.[43] Sonically, the slow movement of the paint is 'rendered' as an extended or delayed gong splash (Chion 1994: 110).[44] This effect was created by manipulating the recording of a wind gong being hit with a soft mallet. A typical gong hit makes a loud, crashing sound when hit with a mallet, and the sound naturally decreases in volume, or 'decays', as the gong reverberates. In this ident, however, the

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[43] BBC2 ident, Paint, 1991. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1991-bbc2-rebrand-paint-ident. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

[44] Chion's concept of rendering refers to the 'effect whereby the spectator recognises a sound as true, fitting, and proper. The point is not to *reproduce* the sound that the source makes in reality in the same kind of situation but to *render* (express, translate) the *not specifically auditory* sensations associated with this source or with the circumstances evoked in the scene' (1994: 210).

composers reversed and delayed the recording of the gong hit, so that instead of decaying, the sound increases in volume until the point at which the mallet hits the gong. At this point, the composers inserted another sample of the gong, this time the correct way around, with the volume decreasing. The mid-point of the ident, the moment at which the mallet is heard hitting the gong, forms an audiovisual 'synch point', coinciding with the moment the paint hits the '2'. In recordings of the ident, the continuity announcers typically begin speaking after this point. The 'synch point' may therefore serve to attract the viewers' attention to the screen, corresponding to Tagg's 'reveille' function (1979: 93, see section 2.1.1 above).

Time	Image	Image description	Music and sound
0.00		- Silver model '2', initially appears to be a two-dimensional object.	- Silence.
0.02		- Green paint hits the '2' from the side of the screen, revealing it to be a three-dimensional model.	- Wind gong sample begins, getting louder. - <u>Synch point:</u> the mallet hits the gong, coinciding with the paint hitting the '2'.
0.03		- The paint splashes in all directions after hitting the two.	- Wind gong slowly fades. - Mark tree (percussion) makes high bell-like noises.
0.06-0.35		- Smaller droplets of paint continue to fall onto the two.	- Echoing repeated two-note figure (E6-F#6) played on crotales (tuned cymbals). - Repeated open fifths in the harp (C#4 and G#4).

Table 2: BBC2, Paint (1991) (see footnote 43 above)

Overall, the composers' temporal elongation of the rich and harmonically complex sound of the wind gong, and the associations of this instrument with meditation and religious ceremonies, creates a serene feeling of suspension that may lull the viewer into a reflective and calm mode of viewing, encouraging them to remain in the

televisual 'flow' (Brownrigg and Meech 1999: 389). After the paint splash, we enter the 'living hold' section of the ident, which is flexibly designed so that the continuity team can trim the end of the ident to the desired length depending on the duration of the continuity announcement (Mawer and Bryant 2016: 105). Here, the 'living hold' includes subtle tinkling bells—the sound of a mark tree (also known as a bar chime) and crotales (a collection of small, tuned cymbals), intended to represent the smaller droplets of paint (Sadler 2020). A sampled harp with added watery reverb begins playing a repeated open fifth (C#4 and G#4), clashing with a higher-pitched two-note pattern in the crotales (E6-F#6), creating a sense of harmonic incompleteness that creates forward momentum during the 'living hold' section.

In terms of branding, this ident adopts a more flexible approach, contrasting with the monolithic and unambiguous call signs or fanfares of the early idents. As Brownrigg and Meech state, the overall tone is 'reflective and tranquil rather than being blaring and self-important' (1999: 31). The function of music in television that Tagg calls 'mnemonic identification' is thus carried out in a more subtle manner (1979: 97). Whereas the Channel 4 ident used four notes to indicate the fourth channel, the composers incorporated only a very subtle reference to the number 2—the rising E6-F#6 in the crotales (a musical interval of a major 2nd), likely not to have occurred to the audience as a mnemonic.

The mesmeric and soothing style of the music, as well as the use of unusual percussion instruments was considered complementary to BBC Two's channel identity and the thought-provoking nature of its programmes. As Tony Sadler noted:

> It was like a mantra, like a really, really calming mantra that worked incredibly well with the images and actually was very esoteric, was minimalist, it was classical but it was contemporary and I thought this is BBC2. This is definitely BBC2.

In this way, the style of the music also fulfils what Tagg calls the 'preparatory' function, helping viewers prepare for the type of 'things to come' (1979: 93).

My discussion with the Sadlers revealed that the brief from Lambie-Nairn was informal and slightly enigmatic:

> We had a direction from Martin, which was just give us a sense of two-ness. (Tony Sadler)

> How about that for a brief? A sense of two-ness. (Gaynor Sadler)

> What does that mean? (Interviewer)

> Well, I found out what it meant because I looked at it and I thought […] I particularly like the big splashes: there were two big splashes as the paint hit the '2', two big ones, 'tik-dum'. And I thought, okay, well, there's my sense of two-ness, of course, that's what Martin meant from that. (Tony Sadler, 2020)

Lambie-Nairn's cryptic brief thus led the composers to form a creative interpretation of the images, inferring a sense of 'two-ness' from the movement of the blobs of paint.

The Sadlers explained that when composing music for audiovisual media, they first watch the moving graphics closely, to ascertain the tempo of the music. They noted that there is 'an inner rhythm to every film' that can be felt by experienced film and media composers instinctively (2020). In the case of the BBC2 ident, Tony Sadler recalled, 'I had understood from the way the film moved that the piece was going to be in 5/4, so that started to inform everything else that happened' (2020). Tony Sadler's description of the way he interpreted the brief and the visual details points to an almost synaesthetic correspondence between seeing and hearing, as he vocalised the splashes of paint ('tik-dum'). He went on to explain, 'I really liked the way the paint came on and trickled and splashed on the two, and I thought, okay, I'm getting wind chimes' (2020) In this way, the compositional process for the ident shares similarities with the concept of 'visual music' (see section 2.2.1 above). The composers concluded:

> In essence, the paint coming on to that figure '2' was like an action painting, wasn't it? It was actually a moving action painting. And our reaction to that was to do the same kind of thing, to kind of throw these percussion sounds at the image and let that work for itself. So it was it was a natural kind of partnership, really. (Sadler 2020)

In *Paint*, then, the close relationship between the sounds and images can be considered to lie towards the 'conformant' end of the spectrum between Cook's terms of conformance, complementation, and contest (Cook 1989, see section 2.1 above).

After composing the music and sound for *Paint,* the Sadlers adapted their work for the rest of the variations. The composers viewed the ident series as a 'family' that encapsulated variety within unity:

> Because we'd got a really good, solid structure from the original one, it was very liberating for our imaginations on all the other ones. So, we could look for variety within the family of the twos. (Sadler 2020)

All variations for this initial series are based in a similar sound-world: they are all in the key of C# minor and use the mesmeric sounds of bells and harp. Whereas I have described *Paint* as mostly conformant, the other ident variations exhibit different types of relationships between the sound and the image.

Silk

Figure 12: BBC Two, Silk (1991).

Another ident in the 1991 series, *Silk,* begins with a repeating harp motif, oscillating between two perfect fifths a diatonic third apart (see Example 4 below).[45] The buoyant rhythm of the harp motif seems to complement the rapidly rippling silk 'waves', whilst also recalling the rhythm of the crotales in *Paint,* creating a musical link amongst the ident variations*.* The harmony is based on a single C# minor seventh chord, the highest note of the chord (B), clashing with the root of the chord (C#). The use of added-note chords and non-resolving dissonant harmonies creates a dream-like and evocative sound-world redolent of the work of Impressionist compositions in early 20th century France such as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, who often used music to describe the natural world (Pasler 2001).

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[45] BBC2 ident, Silk, 1991. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1991-bbc2-rebrand-silk-ident. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

Example 4: Harp motif for Silk (1991), see footnote 45 above.

Since the visuals were created first, they provided a 'strong diktat' for the music and sound, requiring the composers to form their own interpretation of the images (Gaynor Sadler 2020). The composers noted that the visuals for *Silk*

> looked to us like a sunken ship or a sunken submarine and the silk to us was a billowing sea. And so we created a kind of sunken wreck complete with ship's bells. The 'diddly-dee-da-da-da' that we did on the mark tree [in *Paint*], we put that on a ship's pipe [in *Silk*]. Very, very ghostly—that was the ghost captain being piped aboard the ghost ship. (Sadler 2020)

The choice of instruments and recording techniques reinforce the interpretation of the images as a seascape. The harp motif mentioned above was recorded by submerging the microphone in a bucket of water, sonically evoking the image of a sunken shipwreck. Additional percussion instruments were layered on top of the harp pattern: a tin whistle, a ship's bell, and a rare percussion instrument called a waterphone, which combine to create a rich and ethereal soundscape. The use of the waterphone adds to the watery texture: this instrument consists of a central resonator filled with water surrounded by bronze rods that are played with a bow.[46] The eerie sound of the waterphone has been employed in soundtracks for several horror films including *Poltergeist* (Hooper, 1982) and *Let The Right One In* (Alfredson, 2008); for viewers familiar with horror films, these associations may contribute to the Sadlers' ghost ship narrative. Moreover, the harmonically rich wailing sound of the waterphone is reminiscent of a whale call and the instrument has reportedly been used to call orcas off the coast of Canada (Hooton 2015). Lastly, the use of a ship's bell conjures the image of 'a ship beneath the ocean' (Sadler 1995). A ship's bell is usually made of bronze and is often used on ships and sailboats to announce the time, such as at the hour and half-hour. Besides contributing to the ident's aquatic narrative, the bell also arguably functions as a commentary on the temporal role of an ident in marking the intervals between programmes. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the interludes

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[46] For a demonstration of this instrument, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pnbuv5MnN3E. (Accessed June 7, 2022).

between programmes for the BBC and the ITV franchises would often display a physical or animated clock. In *Silk*, however, the sound of the ship's bell does not fulfil a functional role, but can instead be interpreted as a sense of timelessness and suspension.

The visual and musical elements both possess interpretive 'gaps' (Cook 1998); the silk moves in a way that mimics water, and the sound hints at activity that the viewer cannot see: shipwrecks, bells, and whales. The ambiguity of the image-music relationship therefore invites the viewer to form their own interpretations by seeking out correlations between the images and music. Thus, whereas *Paint* can be described as broadly conformant, the sound-image relationship in *Silk* is more akin to a state of complementation (Cook 1989). When analysing *Silk,* Brownrigg and Meech declared the music to have a 'faintly industrial feel' and perceived 'no obvious link between the music and the image, beyond the richness of silk as a fabric and the richness of the musical texture deployed' (1999: 31). Perhaps upon hearing the ident, Brownrigg and Meech focussed on the metallic scraping sounds of bronze rods of the waterphone and the ship's bell, thus leading to an interpretation of the music as 'industrial'. However, as the analysis here has shown, listening to other aspects of the music can offer an interpretation that aligns more closely with that of the composers: the watery harp sample, the use of a waterphone, and the aquatic associations of the ship's bell. This ident evidently encourages repeated listening as more details may be noticed and associations made each time it is heard.
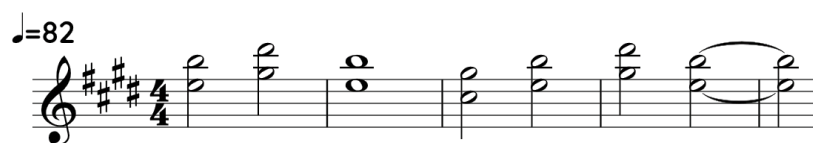
Water

Even more ambiguous than *Silk,* the music and sound created for *Water* seems to both complement and contest the image. [47]

Figure 13: BBC Two, Water (1991)

Here, a diagonal line of water hovers across the screen and a translucent figure '2'. The music echoes that of *Silk*; the harp is recorded using the same technique of submerging the microphone in water, but this time the tempo is almost twice as slow, leading to a feeling of desolation and emptiness (see Example 5 below). As in *Silk,* the harp pattern oscillates between perfect fifths a diatonic third apart. The waterphone is also used, but is bowed much more slowly than in *Silk*, creating a smoother, whistle-like timbre*.* When the waterphone enters, we also hear a gentle sandy percussion noise, created by a rain-maker or shaker, which evokes the sound of waves breaking on the shore. Towards the end of the ident, livelier rhythmic patterns are played on Moroccan pots. Also known as *tbilat*, the pots are a percussion instrument consisting of a pair of decorated pottery drums. Here, the dry, hollow sound of the drums contrast with the echoing reverberations of the harp, the disparity of timbres creating an intriguing soundscape.

Example 5: Harp motif for Water (1991)

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[47] BBC2 ident, Water. 1991. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEqUYhpCeR0. (Accessed Jun 17, 2022).

Water is more tonally ambiguous than *Silk* and *Paint.* Whereas the other two variants have a tonal centre of C# minor, in *Water* the harp motif oscillates around a C# minor /E major axis (as demonstrated in Example 5 above). Whereas the harp part in *Silk* begins the ident by emphasising the root note C#, in *Water* the tonality is less clear, beginning on an E-B dyad. Perhaps the increased uncertainty in the tonality of *Water* reflects the especially ambiguous nature of the relationship between images and sounds*.*

The Sadlers stated that in creating the music for *Water,* they decided to form what Cook would describe as a 'contest' between the images and music. Rather than creating an interpretation based on water, they instead perceived the diagonal line as a 'tattered flag' and created the 'dry' environment of a 'desert outpost':

> The water one, we looked at it and actually, it looks a bit like, if you are in a desert outpost and it had been deserted. This is just the remnants of your flag— this line of water is a flag—and it's tattered. So we made it very dry, we put some Moroccan pots on it, we still had this little mesmeric two note mantra. (2020)

The emptiness of the texture, the ambiguous tonality, the use of stark-sounding parallel 5ths, and the hollow sound of the Moroccan pots all afford an interpretation of an empty 'desert' scene. However, some elements of the music could be interpreted as complementing the watery image through its associations with the seascape music of *Silk*, such as the watery treatment of the harp motif.

The three examples analysed above, *Paint, Silk,* and *Water*, present different types of relationship between graphics and image, ranging from the close alignment in *Paint* to the more conflicting *Water* ident. Although the composers interpreted each ident in a different way, as a series, they are united by their shared structure, use of unusual percussion instruments, and the rising two-note 'mantra'. The composers brought a rigorous and creative approach to composition for channel idents, described in their interview as a balance between 'science' and 'art' (2020).

This initial set of idents provided the basis for several more variations. In 2002, Jane Root replaced Alan Yentob as the Channel Controller, and commissioned a series of idents designed to appeal a younger audience. Lambie-Nairn subsequently devised a

new vibrant yellow look, retaining the iconic Gill Sans '2' logo. These idents emphasised the 'playful' aspect of the channel's identity, conceptualising the logo as an anthropomorphic character that got up to antics: cartwheeling, bouncing, even Morris Dancing and snowball fighting. Composers Tony and Gaynor Sadler adapted their original two-note mnemonic, incorporating new sound effects that underscored the figure 2's lively movements.[48]

4.1.2 BBC 1 (1997)

In 1991, the same year that the BBC2 idents were created, Lambie-Nairn and assistant designer Daniel Barber designed a new ident for BBC1. The ident was a globe based on a colour palette of blues and purples, featuring smoky, swirling CGI effects. Like the majority of the channel's previous idents, the 1991 globe did not include music.[49] This ident was not received as well as the BBC2 idents and did not seem to clearly convey a distinct brand personality for the channel. As Mawer stated: 'it didn't have much science or strategy around it really. It was, "how can you create numbers in a beautiful, memorable way?"' (2020) Lambie-Nairn suggested: 'We made the mistake, I think, of making a BBC One ident which was […] very ethereal and arty' (2020).

By 1997, the BBC had begun to embrace marketing, and, for the first time, formal positioning statements were written for each of the BBC's services. BBC1 was renamed BBC One to appear more 'accessible', and was described as '*Our* BBC One', a channel with 'broad appeal' (Born 2004: 259). In response to this new positioning, Lambie-Nairn devised an updated concept for BBC One idents, replacing the rotating globe he had introduced six years previously. The channel's globe motif was reimagined as a hot air balloon that floats above recognisable locations, ranging from St Michael's Mount in Cornwall to the 'Angel of the North' statue in Tyne and Wear. The new idents signalled an attempt to emotionally engage the viewers by providing reference points they could connect with ('our BBC One'), whilst also highlighting the

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[48] The BBC2 'Personality' Idents can be viewed at: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-archive-search?querybbc=BBC2+personality. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).
[49] BBC1 ident, virtual globe. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/1991-bbc1-virtual-globe-0. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

BBC's remit to reach and reflect all parts of the UK. Eleven locations were filmed for the first series, and a total of 59 variations were filmed over two years.

These were the first BBC One idents to regularly use music since the 'Batwings' ident created by Abram Games in 1953 which, as mentioned in Chapter 1 above, featured harp music by Sidonie Goossens. The music and sound were created by Phil Sawyer, who produced a variety of arrangements, and the different variations are united by certain musical elements. As Brownrigg and Meech note, each begins with a 'reasonably loud, attention-grabbing sound' (2002: 349). The opening consists of an angular arpeggio-based figure, played on the piano, harp or marimba (see Example 6, below, for two variations of the opening figure that are used).[50] As explained below, the harp is used for natural landscapes, whereas the staccato, wooden sound of the marimba is used for more industrial or urban settings.

Example 6: Variations of the opening figure in the BBC1 idents, Needles and Canary Wharf (1997). See footnote 50 for recordings.

Whilst the rhythm tends to stay the same, the pitch values of the opening figure vary between idents. However, due to its relative consistency and repetition, it still functions as a memorable and distinctive sound. The first note of this opening figure is usually accompanied by a low and resonant bass drum, a visceral and engaging sound, almost like a heartbeat, that offsets the ethereal quality of the floating balloon and the gentle music that follows.

After the opening figure, the music then leads to the living hold section, tending to 'tail off to a quieter section, which the continuity announcer can talk over' (Brownrigg and

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[50] The first variation can be heard at the start of the Needles ident, 1997.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZWQGu00aHA&list=PL2DBE6BC1FCC68667&index=6.
(Accessed Aug 16, 2022). The second variation is heard in the Canary Wharf ident, 1997.
https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/balloon-above-canary-wharf-ident-1997. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

Meech 2002: 349). Lambie-Nairn explains that this structure was included in the brief to the composer:

> There would be a signature, which would announce the ident, and then it would go into what we call a bed of music, because the announcer is going to talk over it. It could just maintain that bed and be cut off at the end. (2020)

The subsequent 'bed' consists of ethereal synthesised strings and rippling ostinato figures in the piano and harp, continuing the trend of ambient-sounding music established in the BBC2 idents in 1991. The harmonic ambiguity and repetitive, undulating melodic patterns give the music a sense of never quite coming to an end; the musical structure is inherently flexible so that the ident can last as long as required by the continuity announcer. The continuous and flowing feel of the music also serves the 'future facing' function of an ident, maintaining the viewer's attention for the forthcoming programme (Ellis 2011: 65).

The composer created different variations of the music to pair with different types of locations. One of the musical variations accompanies films of natural landscapes and water, including the Needles in the Isle of Wight, Snowdonia in Wales, Eilean Donan Castle in Scotland, and Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland.[51]

Figure 14: BBC One Needles, Isle of Wight (1997)

Figure 15: BBC One Snowdonia, Wales (1997)

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[51] The Needles, BBC One ident, 1997.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZWQGu00aHA&list=PL2DBE6BC1FCC68667&index=6.
Eilean Donan Castle, BBC One ident, 1997.
https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/balloon-above-eilean-donan-castle-ident-1997.
Eiliean Donan Castle, BBC One ident, 1997. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/balloon-above-eilean-donan-castle-ident-1997.
Stanford Lough, County Down 1997. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9yXBnRR1fk&t=193s.
(All accessed Aug 16, 2022).

Figure 16: BBC One Eilean Donan Castle, Loch Duich, Scottish Highlands (1997)

Figure 17: BBC One Strangford Lough, County Down, Northern Ireland (1997)

In Needles (Figure 14, footnote 51), the first of the two variations in Example 6 above is used—here, played by a harp. The harp continues to elaborate the opening figure. The appearance of the BBC One logo at the bottom of the screen is sonically highlighted by the entry of a new, syncopated melody in the piano (see Example 7 below). The piano figure has an improvisational feel as the florid pattern produces an answer to the arresting harp figure at the start.

Example 7: Syncopated piano melody in BBC One Balloon idents, Needles (1997), see footnote 51 above.

The modal tonality, the sustained drone (on the note E4), the use of syncopated rhythms, and the improvisational embleshments all recall folk music. As Brownrigg and Meech state, the instrumentation 'displays a cultural eclecticism with a pot pourri of marimbas, clársachs and bodhráns' (2002: 349). The music thus conveys a flexible and generic style that can be paired with rural images from around the UK.

The use of musical 'cultural eclecticism' relates to the use of music genres to target specific demographics, a practice that emerged in advertising in the 1990s (Cook 1994: 35; Huron 1989: 566). As Timothy Taylor has discussed, advertisements in the 1990s reduced 'vast amounts of music to manageably knowable "style" or "genres"' (2000: 170). In particular, advertising helped construct and popularise a diffuse and 'universal' genre of 'world music' that became associated with prestige and public

discourses of 'globalisation, transnationalism, the information age, and the information economy' (Ibid.: 174). In the 1990s world music was used in advertisements for brands including Delta Air and Chrysler, soundtracks often including choirs, 'primitive' drums, wooden flutes, and modal pitch organisation. Taylor stresses that these advertisements do not actually feature 'world music' but 'music that signifies world music' (Ibid.: 174). In the BBC One idents, the use of a generic 'folk' style is another example of this phenomenon. Here, the balloon symbolises the role of the channel in facilitating an escapist 'voyage' that provides the viewer with knowledge of the globe. In this way, the music of the ident aligns BBC One's traditional globe motif with contemporary forms of cultural capital—prestige, quality, and authority, and 'the ability to travel, learn, and discriminate' (Taylor 2000: 174).

A second variation is used in urban or industrial contexts, such as footage above Canary Wharf and the port of Felixstowe in Suffolk (see Figures 18 and 19 below).[52]

Figure 18: BBC One, Canary Wharf (1997)

Figure 19: BBC One, Port of Felixstowe, Suffolk (1997)

These idents use the second variation of the opening figure (Example 6 above, p.73). This version features piano, high synthesised strings, and breathy, shimmering, synthesisers that in the Canary Wharf version seem to mirror the shining surfaces of the skyscrapers. Replacing the syncopated, dance-like melody in the idents described above, the piano here plays a more fluid semiquaver scale pattern, oscillating around the notes A and C (Example 8 below).

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[52] Canary Wharf, BBC One ident, 1997. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/balloon-above-canary-wharf-ident-1997. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).
Port of Felixstowe, Suffolk, BBC One ident, 1997. (at 00.03.13)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwNBDbMqOA8. (Accessed Aug 15, 2022).

Example 8: Piano pattern in Canary Wharf, BBC One (1997), see footnote 52 above.

Overall, these idents construct a fluid and liminal space between programmes, at odds with the simple graphic logos and bold fanfares that characterised idents in the 1970s and 1980s. After some time, however, market research showed that audiences had begun to perceive the balloon as 'aloof' and 'distant' (Mawer 2020), perhaps exacerbated by the then-outdated, generic 'world music' feel. In 2002, a new set of idents were commissioned. This series of idents was entitled 'Rhythm and Movement' with each variation depicting a different genre of dance.[53] The music, composed by Peter Lawlor, is based on variations of a seven-note tune, rendered almost unrecognisable in different rhythms and instrumentations, ranging from a Brazilian berimbau to accompany capoeira dancing to a string section underscoring ballet dancers. In contrast to the rather abstract balloon idents, these focussed on diverse groups of 'real people'—an approach echoed later in the 2017 'Oneness' idents.[54]

4.1.3 BBC News 24 (1999)

BBC News 24 was established in 1997, available via cable or satellite technology. According to Julie Light, the channel marked 'the BBC's first real step away from the traditional public service television model', by focussing on a single genre of content (2004: 84). In this way, the launch of the channel can be considered emblematic of the transition between the eras of availability and plenty in UK broadcasting.

For the first two years of the channel's life, however, BBC News 24 suffered from low numbers of viewers and a muddled and incoherent brand identity across each of its programmes (Lambie-Nairn 2020). Accordingly, in 1999, the channel hired Lambie-Nairn's company to create an overarching brand identity for the news channel. Jason Keeley, who had assisted Lambie-Nairn with the BBC One 'Balloon' idents, designed

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[53] BBC One, 2002, Rhythm and Movement. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-archive-search?querybbc=BBC+One+rhythm+and+movement+. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

[54] BBC Oneness idents, 2017. https://theident.gallery/menu_channel_bbcone_subsection_2017.php. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

the graphics for the BBC News, and centred the idea on the image of the globe with circular outlines radiating outwards, adapting visual codes that had been associated with the BBC since the 1950s.[55] The cream and red colour palette signified a more modern approach, contrasting with the black and white graphics that had tended to characterise idents in the past.[56] The flat, two-dimensional look further distinguished the design from the visual clichés that had emerged after the development of computer graphics technology, such as chrome three-dimensional, flying logos (MacDonald 2014, Caldwell 1995).

Figure 20: BBC News 24 (1999)

The music also departed from convention and cliché. By 1999, 'news music' had been established as a musical 'topic', often characterised by fanfares or marches with heavy use of French horns and kettledrums, epitomised by John Williams' theme music for NBC (1985).[57] Writing about North American news channels, Deaville observes 'fanfare-like, wide-ranging, quick, syncopated themes in brass and strings' that 'create the impression of a dynamic newsroom, while at the same time establishing an authority in the eyes and ears of the viewer' (2012: 2). In discussions between Lambie-

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[55] See, for example, the 1948 title sequence for the BBC Television Newsreel
https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-news-and-newsreel-titles-1954-1955. (Accessed Aug 16, 2022).
[56] BBC News 24 ident, 1999.
https://player.vimeo.com/video/257443493?autoplay=1&hd=1&show_title=1&show_byline=1&show_portrait=0&fullscreen=1 (Accessed Aug 16, 2022).
[57] See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAzc-P9uMpI. (Accessed Aug, 16, 2022). As mentioned in Chapter 1 above, the use of orchestral fanfares and marches dates back to newsreels including: *British Pathé* (1910-70), *British Movietone News* (1929-79), and *Gaumont British News* (1934-59). The march-like theme for the *BBC Television Newsreel* (1948) is based on these musical models. Like the 1999 BBC News 24 ident, the title sequence for *BBC Television Newsreel* (1948) also features radiating lines to convey broadcast transmissions.

Nairn and the composer David Lowe, it was agreed that these musical clichés would be avoided:

> My brief was simple: I said I do not want to hear anything with bloody pompous strings, French horns, and brass sections, all that kind of thing that everybody else does. I said, I do not want to hear anything like that. I want to hear something you might go and buy, or you might hear on the street, you might hear on Radio 2 or Radio 1. (Lambie-Nairn 2020)

> All news themes before that had been 'dan dan dan da—ch ch ch'. It became a bit clichéd, and it had almost become a bit of a parody of itself. So [Lambie-Nairn] said, we want to get away from that and have something totally, radically new that nobody else had ever done. (Lowe 2020)

This music was also to contrast with the infamously harsh sequence that Lambie-Nairn had designed in 1988 for the Nine O'Clock News—a graphic design featuring lightning bolts and a brass and percussion-heavy musical accompaniment that has been described as 'aggressive' and 'strident' (Lambie-Nairn 1997: 120, Macdonald 2015a: 33). They had a collaborative discussion, in which Lambie-Nairn played a pre-existing piece of music that he had paired to the graphics, an approach redolent of the use of a 'temp track' in film production (Sadoff 2006). Lowe recalled:

> He played a dance track that they'd cut some of those graphics to just to demonstrate how it would fit, 'dun-ch dun-ch dun-ch'. He said, 'I like the pace of this music'. He didn't know it was dance music. For him it was just a sound that worked really well with the images. So, I clocked that four-to-the-floor dance feel. (2020)

Lambie-Nairn also directed the composer to include the 'pips', also known as the Greenwich Time Signal, that mark the precise start of an hour. Lambie-Nairn suggested:

> The pips are to be the signature of the idea. The pips are the idea. And that is because ever since I've been a child and most people during the war and after the war, on the run up to the news on the BBC, the pips would go. And you would hear 'The BBC Home Service. Here is the News'. That would be the next thing. So like Pavlov's dogs, we all knew what was going to come next after the pips. (2020)

Lowe recalled the moment Lambie-Nairn suggested he use this pips:

> The ideas started to pop into my head as he was talking. I started to come up with the idea of using the pips as the sound to a beat, and it all started to make sense. Because the other part of the brief was accuracy and reliability. And it's

all about time, the time of the day that the news is on. And I was thinking time, reliability, accuracy—the pips! It works really well. It was an iconic sound of the BBC anyway, that they'd used since the BBC started. It was already a sort of audio brand of the BBC without them even knowing it. (2020)

The 'pips' therefore carry a resilient historical association with the BBC and contribute to the ident's 'mnemonic identification' and 'preparatory' functions (Tagg 1978). In the use of this sound, Lambie-Nairn had aimed to create a sonic brand that would provoke an almost Pavlovian conditioned response. The high-pitched 'pips' are the most prominent sound in the final track, heard on every other beat (exactly a second apart), signalling urgency and the transmission of information, emphasising the radiating red lines in the graphics.

Accompanying the pips, Lowe included a springy, percussive bassline, as well as a hi-hat rhythm that recalls electronic dance music (EDM). The texture is punctuated by echoing bass drums or cymbal crashes at climactic moments, such as the appearance of the number '6' for the Six O'Clock News as illustrated in Example 9 below:

Example 9: BBC News 24 (1999)[58]

[58] BBC News 24 ident, 1999.
https://player.vimeo.com/video/257443493?autoplay=1&hd=1&show_title=1&show_byline=1&show_portrait=0&fullscreen=1 (Accessed Aug 16, 2022).

To sonically signal 'authority', Lowe included sweeping synthesised string chords. The use of orchestral instruments additionally creates distance between the dance beat and club culture's connotations of hedonism, risk-taking and drugs. Lowe suggested that the string chords thus 'add that integrity of the BBC to this new, modern sound' (2018). This correlates with long-standing associations of the sound of a classical orchestra with authority and prestige. The harmony in the synthesised strings moves from a minor chord (B flat minor) to a major chord (E flat major), creating an uplifting sense of wonder. The composer explains that to him, the shift from major to minor reflects the character of the BBC News:

> The minor chord gives a feeling of slight anxiety and the major chord has a calming effect. It's the idea of the news coming in and the BBC dealing with it in a very calm and solid way. (2018)

Both chords contain the note Bb—the pitch of the 'pips'—and thus create a sense of constancy through change. As the composer noted:

> The note sounds slightly different depending on which chord you play underneath it. I thought, that's great—a single note—that's the news, the BBC carrying on in a single-minded direction, with everything else changing around it. It stays constant and unchanging. (2020)

In this way, the chord progression in the BBC News sequence can be interpreted as a metaphor for the role of the corporation in the life of the UK's citizens.

The syncopated bassline was included to establish what Lowe described as a 'world music feel', explaining: 'I like that beat. It's almost Indian. There's lots of tabla rhythms like that. But it's also like reggaeton as well. It spans all the continents really. It's just an interesting rhythm' (2020). Lowe's application of a reified and simplistic notion of 'world music' supports a sonic presentation of the BBC's purported 'universality' and cosmopolitanism, continuing a practice established in Sawyer's music for the BBC One Balloon idents, discussed above. Lowe's decision to compose a bassline that to him sounded 'world-y' resonates with contemporary discussions surrounding Britishness and multiculturalism. As Born suggests, the BBC needed to address such questions:

> What should the role of Britain's public service broadcaster be … when Britain no longer contains a single political public and has become a multinational state? When "Britishness" is being reconciled along new lines by those many

citizens—the British-Asian, British-Welsh, British-Jamaican, British-Muslim—who live daily the condition of dual or multiple identity? (2004: 507)

Unlike the process for the BBC2 idents discussed above, where the composers crafted the music and sound design whilst watching the already-made graphics, Lowe was provided only with still images of the storyboard. Consequently, unlike the BBC2 idents, there is little direct interaction between the music and images. However, the radiating lines and the high-pitched pips on every beat together give a sense of urgency, their rhythmic regularity arguably conveying consistency and stability. The music features only one 'hit point': a satisfying cymbal crash that occurs when the large number appears on the screen, denoting the hour of the news programme. In the example above, this is the number 6 (see Example 9 above). The composer noted,

I think the only thing that really matches is the cymbal crash, and I put that in quite far down the line once I got the pictures. […] It's the point in the music where it needs a bit of an identity. (Lowe 2020)

Lowe described the process of composition as 'layers' of 'building blocks':

It started with the beeps, and I added the bass line and then hi hat [...] And then of course the string layers [...] it's those building blocks as the essential thing and everything else just built up from those. (Ibid.)

Unlike composers for previous projects, Lowe had access to a digital audio workstation, which enabled non-linear editing. In this method, images or individual instrumental sounds or 'tracks' are saved in the computer system as original files and accordingly, edits 'are never physically "made"—all the material remains in the system unaltered' and '[s]ound and picture edits consist only of an edit decision list which the computer updates each time an edit is created' (Tim Amyes 2001: 92-3). Non-linear editing evidently introduced more flexibility into the composition process, including the insertion of the 'hit point'.

Later variations of this ident include the famous top-of-the-hour 'count-down' sequence, which features numbers in the corner of the screen that count down the seconds to the top of the hour. In 2008, Lowe was also commissioned to create variations for the BBC News programmes in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and England.[59]

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[59] National variations can be seen at: https://theident.gallery/bbcn-2008-nations.php. (Accessed Jun 7, 2022). Each variation for Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England include a different melodic figure in the synthesised violins.

This was likely undertaken in response to the recent criticism that the BBC network was failing to 'adequately represent the post-devolution realities of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on UK-wide television' (Blandford and McElroy 2011: 394). In each new development Lowe added a new element. For example, for the 'count-down' sequence, he decided to use 'rave-inspired' samples, which included fast, high pitched repeated synthesiser notes.[60] The musical idea was inspired by a track by British electronic band, Faithless, called 'Take the Long Way Home': 'I heard it, and I was like oh my god that's what the news should sound like.' (2020)[61] Lowe stated that this came from the particular visual imagery that the track inspired for him: 'For me it was that idea of the BBC being far away and transmitting, and this monolith, the aerial masts beaming out. It was quite inspiring that track' (2020). Like the BBC News theme, the Faithless track also uses a hi-hat dance beat and synthesised strings, with echoing and crashing sirens and sound effects creating a spacious effect. Over the past 23 years, David Lowe's composition has proved resilient and adaptable, even tailored to create a 5-second-long mobile phone notification for 'breaking news'.[62]

Brownrigg and Meech observe a brief trend in the early 2000s towards the use of dance music in idents, likely inspired by the BBC News ident. Channel 5, BBC Choice, ITV2, and Sky One all adopt 'upbeat dance music', as idents are imagined as liminal spaces that provide an 'escape from the dull and humdrum activities of the everyday grind' (2002: 353). This genre-based approach paved the way for an aesthetic shift in next era of 'plenty', in which idents were increasingly considered to be a condensed form of engaging, immersive entertainment, possessing production qualities that rivalled that of the programmes.

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[60] 'Top of the hour' sequence from 2003 (including 'rave-y sound effects') can be viewed at: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-news-countdown-trail-2003-0. (Accessed Jun 7, 2022).
[61] Comedian Bill Bailey later parodied the 'rave' style of this version of the news theme: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vc9xLvrV_Zw. (Accessed Jun 7, 2022).
[62] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xavWxTsclDQ. (Accessed Jun 7, 2022).

4.1.4 Summary of Availability (1982-2002)

In this section I have analysed the aesthetic character and role of sound in the idents for three BBC channels from the 1990s. In doing so, I have addressed my first set of research questions, in the context of the era of availability (see section 2.4 above).

My analysis explored the question of how the sounds and images in the idents relate to each other. The BBC2 idents display the most direct relationship, likely due to the close collaborative working process between the composers and designer. For these idents, the composers worked to musically 'render' specific details of the images—a drop of paint, a ripple of silk. Within the ident variations, the music either 'conforms' with, 'complements' or 'contests' the images, as the Sadlers' interpretations worked 'with' and 'against' the graphics. The BBC1 and BBC News idents involved limited interactions between the composer and graphic designer, and there is less direct correlation between the sound and images in terms of synch points, although the visuals and music still complement each other stylistically. Despite the compartmentalised process for the BBC News ident, the composer Lowe additionally managed to create a 'synch point', marking the appearance of the '6' (for the Six O' Clock News) with a cymbal crash.

I also explored how the sounds and images contribute collectively to the functions of idents. The sounds of the idents attract the attention of viewers: for example, the unusual reverberating gongs in the BBC2 idents, and the arresting, angular harp motif in the BBC1 idents. The idents also fulfilled the 'mnemonic identification' function by including familiar sounds: the duotone chords for BBC2, the harp motif for BBC1, and the 'pips' for the BBC News. Unlike the monolithic fanfares of the previous era, these sonic mottos are incorporated within a subtle soundscape, to be memorable yet unobtrusive enough to bear repetition. These more flexible idents thus assist with 'televisual flow' and contain 'living hold' sections from which the continuity team can cut away at any point.

Finally, I also explored how the sonic aspect of idents relates to the industry context, an issue that is closely tied to the functions of idents. As channels faced more competition in the 1980s and 1990s, the branding function of idents became more

important. In the BBC2 idents, the esoteric sound-world relates to its 'surprising' and 'witty' brand identity. In the BBC1 idents, the use of folk-like music conforms to the channel's aim in expressing a 'unified' and 'broad' vision of the UK. The combination of dance music and the 'pips' in the BBC News ident was intended to express a brand identity that departed from the 'pompous' clichés of 'news music' whilst retaining a sense of authority. Overall, the music and sound of these three series of idents can be described as flexible sound worlds that assist the idents' functions as facilitators of televisual 'flow' and pieces of evocative and memorable branding.

4.2 Plenty (2002-2016)

According to John Ellis, the transition to the era of plenty occurred in the early 2000s, as more television channels became available via satellite, cable, and digital technology (2002: 3). By 2002, 41.2% of UK homes already received more than the five basic channels (Light 2011: 10). The increasing number of channels, as well as the development of the world wide web, provided more outlets for media content, all of which needed to be differentiated within the marketplace through branding (Light 2004: 16). As Ellis notes, in this multi-channel environment, 'the importance of branding' quickly became obvious (2002:165).

Johnson argues that in the 2000s, the junctions between programmes began to be constructed 'not just as informational texts, but as pieces of entertainment in their own right' (2013: 39). Since junctions 'can be more easily avoided' in a multi-channel environment, a new aesthetic approach was required to 'capture and retain viewer attention' (Ibid.: 37, 28). This was part of a wider shift in advertising and promotion, which moved from a mode of interruption towards one of engagement (Grainge 2022). As former creative director of 4Creative Brett Foraker put it, 'basically, we just try to give the viewers "treats" at every turn and trust that this will keep them tuned in and listening' (Foraker in Bartholdy 2007: 52). As a result, idents increased in duration, often lasting up to a minute, and were elevated as forms of entertainment (Foraker 2021, Gilbert 2021, Mawer 2020).

During this period, channel executives began to recognise the role of idents in constructing a differentiated brand identity for the channel. Accordingly, several interviewees who produced idents during the age of plenty depicted this time as a 'golden age' (Gilbert 2021). At this time, idents were the 'holy grail of creative jobs' for graphic designers, in terms of budget, creative freedom, and resources. Designer Grant Gilbert described it as a 'turning point' when 'suddenly everyone was going crazy for idents' (2021). Similarly, Imran Hanif, composer for the BBC One 'Circles' idents in 2005, reflected, 'I was fortunate to be able to get a piece of that action when it was fruitful at that time' (2021).

To create immersive and engaging idents, designers and composers harnessed a range of tools that had become available to them. As discussed in Chapter 2 above, (section 2.2), the 'digital revolution' at the end of the 20th century had led to the proliferation of a 'hybrid' visual aesthetic that combined CGI and traditional graphics (Manovich 2007, 2013). The examples examined in this section thus feature combinations of live-action and computer graphics, rather than graphics alone. Below, I analyse three series of idents: Channel 4 (2004), Sky Atlantic (2011), and Channel 4 (2014). These idents feature intricate music and sound design that use combinations of recorded and sampled instruments and location sound. All examples examined in this section were recognised within the industry for their creativity, winning multiple awards from organisations such as D&AD, Promax UK, and Creative Circle.[63] Overall, the idents analysed here constitute a cross-section of the highly creative and innovative work created in this era.

4.2.1 Channel 4 (2004)

The rebrand of Channel 4 in 2004 was considered a turning point for the channel, which 'was coming into its own' (Foraker 2021). The broadcaster had recently purchased the rights to American shows such as *Friends* (1994-2004) and *Lost* (2004-2010)*,* and hosted many popular UK-based reality shows, including *Big Brother* (2000-present). It had also recently launched a new digital channel, E4, a sub-brand aimed at young adults, and had re-branded Film4 which launched in 1998. By 2004, Channel 4 executives had decided that the broadcaster's flagship channel needed to be repositioned and differentiated from its ancillary channels.

The team for the project included Creative Director Brett Foraker, 3D animator Russell Appleford, graphic designer Matt Rudd, CGI animators from MPC (Moving Picture Company), and composer Rich Martin. The designers decided to base the concept on Lambie-Nairn's distinctive logo; the aim was to bring the channel 'back to a place where it felt as interesting and unexpected as it had when Martin did that original work' (2021). The team thus added an innovative update to the design, bringing CGI-

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[63] D&AD (Design and Art Direction) is a British educational organisation created in 1962 to promote excellence in art and design. It hosts an annual awards ceremony, D&AD Pencils, which includes a category for channel branding. The Creative Circle Awards is a British marketing awards body, founded in 1945.

generated blocks into live-action scenes. Unlike the 1982 ident, the blocks are stationary, whilst the camera rotates around the three-dimensional arrangement of the blocks, revealing the Channel 4 logo at the ident's midpoint. Here the logo is formed via what Brownie has labelled 'construction through parallax', an effect whereby the position or direction of an object appears to differ when viewed from different positions (Brownie 2015).

In its combination of live action footage and CGI, this ident series exemplified what Lev Manovich called the 'hybrid aesthetic' in motion graphics that resulted from the widespread adoption of digital software packages such as Adobe AfterEffects—a situation where 'media from different sources can be overlaid and combined in the same frame in endless variations without loss of quality' (2013: 244). The ident also exhibits a 'hybrid' sonic quality, combining sound design and music to create hyper-realistic and immersive soundscapes. Rich Martin, who began his career as a sound engineer, focussed on integrating the music and sound design elements, using software packages such as ProTools. In his interview, he explained his approach in working on one ident variant, *Tokyo*[64]:

> Unfortunately, I didn't get to go to Tokyo, but I had them record loads of sound from the location. The shops in that area would blare out really cheesy, intense music jingles on a constant loop. I thought it sounded amazing. I was given a massive file of sound effects, and I used those to place them within the soundtrack and really embed the music within that scene. It was quite natural. […] It was a really nice, lush soundbed before I added the music and it blends really well. (2021)

In *Tokyo*, the sound of shop jingles, high pitched laughter, and bike bells blend seamlessly into the reverberating synthesised music. Martin's use of non-linear editing meant that he could move and edit elements of the music and sound design iteratively as he worked, meticulously blending the individual sound effects and instruments.

The use of non-linear editing software also facilitated a high degree of collaboration between the animators and composer, which in turn resulted in a closer relationship between the images, music, and sound design. For example, Foraker noted in his interview:

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[64] Channel 4, Tokyo, 2004. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xx8XsthXsSw. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

We could say, 'Oh, we are starting the shot early, wouldn't it be cool if we had, you know, a "ping" of a pylon or electrical cable coming through early on?' Or maybe the cable wasn't even the shot yet, so we could run the film back to MPC [the animation studio Moving Picture Company], and they could add it in and then Rich [the composer] could make his bit that much more musical. In that period, it was a very intermeshed group, small but everyone was operating at a very high level. The collaborative nature of it is what kind of made it. (2021)

The initial series had 11 variations featuring a variety of UK-based and international locations to reflect the diversity of the channel's programming. My analysis below focusses on two examples, *American Diner* and *Electricity Pylons,* which contain evocative but contrasting uses of music and sound design, with close interactions between the sound and images.

American Diner

The diner in the *American Diner* ident is located in California, on the Chatsworth route, a popular spot for Hollywood film shoots, perhaps chosen as a subtle reference to the channel's recent American imports, mentioned above. The visuals feature a 180-degree camera movement around the diner, seemingly from the perspective of a moving car, although this framing is not confirmed by shots of a car's interior. Above the diner, scaffolding appears to hold up the CGI-generated blocks of the logo that consist of fluorescent signs reading notices like 'ice cold beer' and 'parking at rear'. The music features an electric guitar, a drum kit, and synthesised percussion.[65]

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[65] American Diner, Channel 4 ident, 2004. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUP4-IZXSHM. (Accessed Aug 17, 2022).

Example 10: Electric guitar and tambourine in Channel 4, Diner (2004) (see footnote 65 above).

During the opening few seconds, the view of the diner is eclipsed by trucks that block the light, and there is silence, apart from the quiet 'sh' of car tyres on the road. Whereas the BBC One, BBC Two, and BBC News idents discussed above began with an arresting sound, in this ident it is the lack of music, sound and light that is notable. Interrupting the quiet, an electric guitar plays a C major chord that is accentuated by a tambourine hit and dies away gradually (see Example 10 above). The guitar chord has a pitch bend down and up again, creating a feeling of forward momentum and uncertainty as the camera continues to move around the scene.

After striking the C chord again, the guitar then shifts down to an Eb chord, the flat note creating a bluesy ambiguity between C major and C minor. When the Eb chord begins, syncopated metallic percussion sounds enter, creating a more stable sense of rhythm. At this point, the camera angle begins to rise as more of the three-dimensional blocks come into view. The electric guitar dominates the texture, playing two four-bar phrases (labelled sections A and A[1] in Example 10 above). The lowest note of the chord in the first phrase moves down to C4 whereas in the second, it moves up to the C an octave above. The high C major chord in bar 9 coincides with the logo's moment of alignment, which is also the visually brightest moment of the ident. To further emphasise this moment of arrival, an acoustic guitar also quietly joins in, playing C major chords in a syncopated rhythm, imitating the metallic percussion heard at the end of the previous phrase. Meanwhile, the electric guitar remains on the high C, adding virtuosic vibrato.

The tambourine and drum kit further emphasise the ident's moment of alignment. At the beginning of the ident, the tambourine plays on the first beat of every bar, but in the first two bars of the A[1] section, the tambourine is delayed by a semiquaver, misaligned with the guitar. When the logo appears however, the tambourine is heard confidently on the first beat, coinciding with the guitar chord. This rhythmic conformity is strengthened by the entry of a punchy low sample of a drum kit. After the climatic revelation of the logo, the camera continues to move to the other side of the diner and the view is once again obstructed. The guitar reiterates the Eb major chord heard at the start of the A section, as if to start the sequence again, and then fades out.

The guitar melody, percussion, and musical texture all serve to highlight the completion of the logo. However, the animators and composer also plotted an additional detail that momentarily distracts from the logo's moment of alignment. Just before the logo completes (0.23-0.25, see footnote 65 above), a tumbleweed drifts from the lower left-hand corner of the screen to the lower right-hand corner, moving in the opposite direction to the camera. Although this movement is almost unnoticeable, added rustling sound effects replicate the movement of the tumbleweed and may draw the viewer's eye to the bottom left corner of the screen, just as the blocks are beginning to merge in the top right-hand corner. Throughout the ident series, the team added similar such details to create a more engaging experience for the viewer. As Foraker explained:

> We felt that people were going to see these several times and so it would be nice for them to not necessarily see them on the first viewing – it might take them a couple of goes. (2021)

As the team worked together, they became more adventurous with such audiovisual distractions; *Electricity Pylons* is an illustrative example of this.

Electricity Pylons

In *Electricity Pylons*, the music is in the style of an acoustic ballad, featuring guitars and a tinny, compressed-sounding drumkit.[66] Visually, the ident echoes the structure established in *American Diner*. The camera moves in a continuous semicircle around CGI-generated blocks, this time camouflaged as electricity pylons. The melody is in A major and is based on a repeated three-note phrase (C#4-B3-A3).

Figure 21: Channel 4, Electricity Pylons (2004)

The music-image relationship of this ident goes further than *American Diner* in playing with the viewer's perception of space. Again, the first few seconds are devoid of music,

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[66] Electricity Pylons, Channel 4 ident, 2004. https://theident.gallery/player.php/C4-2007-ID-PYLONS-HD-1. (Accessed Aug 17, 2022).

and feature only the sound of a car engine. During these first few seconds, the outline of a car windscreen can be seen (see Figure 21 above). The complementarity of the sound and images initially anchor the scene in a real-world scenario. Throughout the rest of the ident, however, the interior of the car is lost from the frame. The music and sound design add to this sense of spatial ambiguity by featuring a sonic 'trick' at the ident's moment of alignment. Just before the blocks align, a new guitar countermelody enters, playing three ascending notes: F#4-G#4-A4. Given the structure established in *American Diner,* a viewer might expect the 'moment of alignment' to coincide with the highest point of the melody and a harmonic resolution to the home key of A major. However, in *Electricity Pylons,* the resolution is delayed by half a beat, and during the frame in which the pylons join to form the logo, the music crackles and momentarily cuts out, as if the CGI-generated pylons are causing interference.

The composer explained that they 'got a kick out of [...] messing with the reality of the music', creating confusion as to whether the music is coming from a car radio, or is simply in the background (Martin 2021). The director, Foraker, described this as a play between 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' sound (2021).[67] The terms 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' imply the presence of some form of narrative, perhaps indicating the way in the creatives for this project aimed to create idents that aspired to the quality and status of the programming itself (Foraker 2021). The ambiguity between 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' music highlights the illusionistic and fantastical character of these idents; indeed, Brownie describes them as a 'spectacle' of 'theatrical illusion' (2015: 72). Since idents do not convey a particular storyline or real-world context, the objects and sounds are freed from the principles of 'perceptual realism' (Langkjær 2010). Instead, objects can levitate mysteriously in space, and the sound and music can adopt an ambiguous relationship to the movement occurring on screen. At the moment of alignment in *Electricity Pylons*, both the visuals and music feature a 'gapped quality' (Cook 1989: 105). The visuals no longer show the interior of the car, whereas the music reminds us of the car's presence by mimicking the behaviour of a radio.

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[67] These terms originated from literary scholar Gerard Genette's work on narrative agency (1997). The term 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' are used in film music criticism to distinguish between music that is present in the narrative and that which is external to the plot (otherwise described as underscore or 'background' music). This duality has since been critiqued by music scholars (eg by Kassabian 2001, Smith 2009, Stilwell 2007).

Foraker explained the rationale behind this decision, comparing the ident's approach to sound to that in the film *Grosse Pointe Blank* (Armitage, 1997).

> Initially the question was, do we do diegetic sound: is the music coming from a source in the scene? A good example is, there's a film called *Grosse Pointe Blank* where he's listening to some rock track in his car, he gets out and goes into a corner shop and there's a Muzak, cheesy version of the same song playing. And then it's a big fight scene and it's cued to this song. That music is always accounted for in each shot. So that was one concept that we had going in. […] We thought that there is something nice about having the music feeling organic to the images. (Foraker 2021)

This ident is highly engaging and absorbing, and the puzzling play with visual and sonic perspectives invites repeated viewing and listening.

4.2.2 Sky Atlantic (2011)

The premium drama channel Sky Atlantic was launched on 1st February 2011, following Sky's acquisition of exclusive UK rights to the complete catalogue of the North American premium cable channel HBO (Home Box Office), including *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) and *The Wire* (2002-2008). Established in 1972, HBO had more recently developed a brand identity associated with high production values and cinematic programming, allotting high budgets for content, and employing production personnel from the film industry (Davison 2013a: 137). As a new channel, Sky Atlantic immediately capitalised on HBO's association with quality dramas, marketed in 2011 as 'the Home of HBO in the UK'. Whereas idents for Sky's existing channels had been created by the company's in-house designers, Sky hired brand consultancy Heavenly to create the five idents for the launch of Sky Atlantic. The creative director for the project, Paul Franklin, explained:

> This idea of this new channel, which was really smart, with cinematic and intelligent dramas—it didn't fit Sky. That's more in the realm of BBC Two and Channel Four back in the day. So they wanted it to feel very different to the normal Sky stuff. (2020)

The design agency hired for the project, Heavenly, was founded in 2003 by two brothers Nick and Richard Sunderland, who had previously worked for Lambie-Nairn. At the time of the Sky Atlantic project, Lambie-Nairn was working for Heavenly as Executive Creative Director, brought in to 'raise creative standards, boost creative

leadership, and develop strong links between the creative and strategic offers'
(DesignWeek 2011, n.p.). The agency was a logical choice for a brand that aspired to
the style and character of BBC Two and Channel 4, since the majority of the large
rebrands for those channels had been designed by Lambie-Nairn.

The Creative Director, Franklin, devised an idea that was based on a continuously
moving slow-motion shot that creates the illusion of transporting the viewer between
locations on each side of the Atlantic, representing the channel's role in bringing North
American television programmes to the UK.[68] Franklin pitched this idea to the client,
in addition to a graphic design-based solution, and the Sky executives selected the
former. Since live-action tends to be more expensive than a purely graphic solution,
this decision reflects the new brand's aspirations of quality. As Franklin recalls, 'we
hung out in LA for two weeks […] like movie stars' (2020). The sheer number of actors
involved in one of the idents, named *City,* reflects the unusual scale of the project:

> I remember walking on set, and you've got—and this is for a 30 second ident—
> but there were 100 extras. And when you've got 100 extras, you have to have
> three catering vans, and you've got to have all the other stuff that goes with
> that. So I walked on set […] and there was just this raft of people, it's massive.
> (2020)

The original series was recognised within the industry for its innovation and creativity,
and the agency was awarded a Graphite pencil from D&AD. Five idents were created:
Bridge, City, Café, City Nights, Train, with two more (*Windows* and *Backyards*) added
in 2012. Once the visuals had been filmed and edited, the designers briefed the
selected composer, Colin Towns. The decision to hire Towns was likely influenced by
his experience as a film composer, correlating to the filmic style of this ident. Initially,
only one music track was composed and was used in all five idents. Lambie-Nairn
recalled briefing the composer:

> It really was one of those occasions where the tempo of the music needs to be
> absolutely slow. And it needs to be Eric Satie, it needs to be Chopin, a very
> dark mood. It needs to be simple long notes and things like that. (2020)

In 2012, however, the music was replaced with a more upbeat version. The analysis
below considers the two music tracks accompanying one of the idents, *City.*

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[68] Sky Atlantic ident, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5oH-yHkw24. (Accessed Aug 17, 2022).

City

The original music composed in 2011 has a slow tempo of 60 beats per minute and evokes the musical romanticism of classical Hollywood film scores, featuring a gently descending melody, rich string chords, and a piano. The table below illustrates how the music builds in texture and pitch range as the images swap between the two cities.

Location	Visuals	Instruments
New York[1]	- Fairly empty street, with some pedestrians and cyclist - Camera constantly pans from right to left	- Low strings
London[1]	- Couple embracing and behind people run to hail a taxi	- Low strings - Piano - Wordless choir
New York[2]	- More people walking by. A woman drops papers which fly into the air - Paper moves to left of screen	- Low strings - Piano - Wordless choir - High violins
London[2]	- Pieces of paper enter on the right, people stop to pick them up	- Low strings - High string pedal note
New York[3]	- The taxi drives past the screen. Movement of people and taxi slows down, to give the illusion that the camera has stopped moving	- Low strings - High string pedal note

Table 3: Structure of Sky Atlantic ident, City, 2011.

The repetitive melody is based on a three-note descending figure that outlines a minor 3rd (A, G# and F#). Despite the use of a major key (A major) the sighing falling melody creates a feeling of poignancy, balanced by the rising movement (D-E) in the lower strings. The descending figure is heard three times in the ident, the texture and volume of the music increasing with each repetition. For the moments of transition between New York and London, our view of the scene is momentarily obscured: by a newspaper rack, a bin, a traffic bollard, and lastly, a telephone box (see Table 3 above). Each time the obstacle is cleared, it appears that the viewer has been magically transported a new location. The music helps create a sense of wonder at these transitional moments, through changes to the instrumentation. During the first transition (the end of bar 1 in Example 11 below) the piano enters for the first time. During the second and third transitions, a wordless synthesised choir is added. A wordless choir is often used in film soundtracks and its use here, gives the ident a cinematic and expansive feeling.[69]

Example 11: Sky Atlantic, City (2011), see footnote 69 below.

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[69] Sky Atlantic, City. 2011. https://theident.gallery/player.php/SKYATLANTIC-2011-ID-CITY-1. (Accessed Oct 10, 2022).

Further adding to the feeling of wonderment and suspense, each bar has a slight pause at the end, before restarting the melody. The harmony, revolving around chords I, iii, and IV, (A major, C# minor, and D major) is characterised by a feeling of stasis by avoiding a more definitive V–I chord progression (E major to A major). The strings play pedal notes and harmonic suspensions that never quite resolve because the music ends on a D major chord, instead of the 'home' chord A major. As Example 11 above illustrates, the violins end with a high E pedal, that clashes with the D major chord and contributes to this sense of incompleteness.

As noted above, in 2012, the music was replaced with new tracks tailored for each ident variation. [70] The overall structure of the theme remained the same, and the music retained the descending three-note figure.

Example 12: Sky Atlantic, City (2012), see footnote 70 below.

The new music, transcribed in Example 12 above, sounds more energised, re-written in a buoyant compound time. The composer added dramatic cymbal crashes on beats one and three in the drum kit, and punchy electric guitar chords to replace the serene violins in the original version. The choir is now heard on every offbeat, which maintains rhythmic interest while the guitars play long notes. Compared to the original music, the harmony here is much more stable. The music is more firmly grounded in A major than the previous version, with a new bassline alternating between A and D. Whereas the original music ended on an inconclusive D major, the new music resolves the harmony

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[70] Sky Atlantic, City. 2012 update: https://theident.gallery/player.php/SKYATLANTIC-2012-ID-CITY-2. (Accessed Oct 10, 2022).

to A major, finishing the progression. This change of music suggests that creating idens is a process of trial and error, and that various executions are subject to future amendments and variations.

4.2.3 Channel 4 (2015)

In 2012, advertising creative team Chris Bovill and John Allison took over from Foraker as joint Directors of 4Creative, having previously worked on iconic award-winning advertising campaigns such as Cadbury 'Eyebrows' (2009) and the Skoda 'Cake' (2007) at advertising agency Fallon.[71] At Channel 4, they repositioned the broadcaster under the content strategy 'Born Risky' and created several new promotional films for the channel, including a music video featuring amputee pop star Victoria Modesta.[72] The new positioning demonstrated the creative benefits of Channel 4's status as a public service broadcaster to government stakeholders and to the public. It emphasised the organisation's role as a 'creative greenhouse' that invests its revenue back into its content. As Channel 4's then-chief executive David Abraham explained:

> For the first time we addressed an issue I always felt was an important one: that if you stop someone in the street and say, 'who owns Channel 4 and what's it there to do?', I don't think we succeeded until now in explaining this link that we are publicly owned and put what would be profit back into making programmes. (2014)

In 2014, Bovill and Allison put out a brief to the design industry that simply asked, 'what next?' Designers Grant Gilbert and Steve Qua from the design agency DBLG won the pitch with their idea:

> I printed out the Channel 4 blocks in the 3D printer and we had a handful of blocks. We just threw them on the table. [...] It was just like this infinite lightbulb moment like: 'well that's the idea'. Because it could just be anything, it was constant. So we went into this pitch and said, that's the idea, we're not going to have a logo, this thing's going to be constantly evolving. (Gilbert 2021)

The decision to maintain elements from the original logo mirrors the self-reflective concept of 'Born Risky', the idea that 'riskiness' has been an inherent quality of the broadcaster since its inception. Designer Neville Brody created a new font for the broadcaster based on the shapes of the Channel 4 blocks, named Horseferry after the

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[71] Cadbury 'Eyebrows' https://www.johnandchris.org/cadburys. (Accessed Jun 9, 2022).
  Skoda 'Cake': https://www.johnandchris.org/cake. (Accessed Jun 9, 2022).
[72] Channel 4 'Born Risky' https://www.johnandchris.org/bornrisky. (Accessed Jun 9, 2022).

street where the broadcaster's head office is located. The new font and blocks were to appear across the channel's visual presentation, from billboards to on-screen programme listings.

The new positioning and design culminated in the creation of a new set of idents for the flagship channel. Whereas the graphic design and new font harked back to 1982, the idents exhibited a dramatically novel approach, created by film director Jonathan Glazer and composer Mica Levi—the team behind the arthouse science fiction film, *Under the Skin* (2013).[73] Certain visual and musical parallels can be drawn with the film, which was partly funded by Channel 4's subsidiary, Film4. Channelling the self-reflective emphasis on birth inherent in the 'Born Risky' strategy, Bovill recalled that Glazer had 'grown up watching Channel 4', implying an inherent link between Glazer's creative identity and the brand of the channel (2021). The idents thus emphasised the broadcaster's high-budget and alternative or 'risky' programming such as the science-fiction series *Humans* (2015-2018) and reality police-chase show *Hunted* (2015-present).

These idents prioritise an engaging narrative and ambience over recognition of the logo, the elements of which are hidden within the material textures in the scenes. Glazer devised the idents as 'episodes' of a four-part narrative that constructs an 'origin story' about the blocks of the Channel 4 logo. The first ident, *Red Crystals,* show the discovery of the blocks in the walls of a mountain by a human explorer (see Figure 22 below). In the second, *Gold Bars,* a shaman performs a ritual in worship of the blocks, here seen as small shining gold bars that line the shaman's headdress as well as the walls of the cave (see Figure 23 below). A team of excavators mine the blocks from the ground, in the third ident, *Blue Ore* (see Figure 24 below)*.* In the final ident, a single block is subject to scientific analysis and is viewed through an electron microscope (see Figure 25). Moving from expansive waterfalls and caves to the microscopic, and from scenes of nature to a science lab, the idents together make up an enigmatic yet unified narrative, pushing the creative boundaries for this type of short-form promotional text. Macdonald describes these idents as 'exquisite art pieces'

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[73] *Under the Skin* (2013) was an adaptation of the novel by Michel Faber. The film tells an unnerving story about an extra-terrestrial (played by Scarlett Johannsson) that disguises itself as a human female and lures unsuspecting men into a van, seduces them, and sends them to another dimension.

worthy of a Turner Prize (2015, n.p.), whilst Mawer and Bryant similarly note that with these idents Channel 4 'has elevated the craft of the humble ident to absorbing and thought-provoking TV content in its own right' (2016: 115).

Figure 14: Channel 4, Red Crystals (2015)

Figure 15: Channel 4, Gold Bars (2015)

Figure 17: Channel 4, Blue Ore (2015)
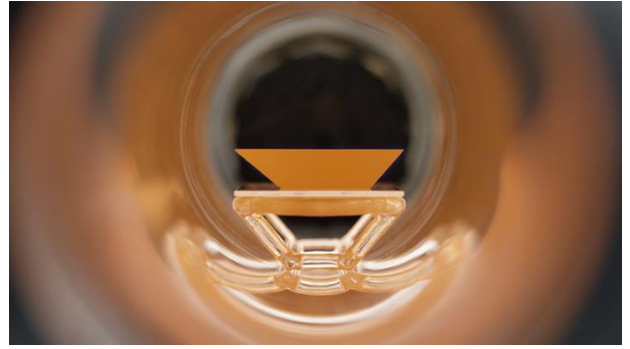
Figure 16: Channel 4, Forged Metal (2015)

The idents were restricted by economic and technical limitations, however. First, Glazer had initially planned eight idents, but the channel only commissioned four— likely for budget reasons—so Glazer's initial narrative had to be adapted, or as Bovill put it, 'folded in' (2021). Moreover, as discussed below, it was rare for the channel to air the full 48-second idents, instead cutting them into smaller 10-second segments, thus losing the sense of narrative and tension built up through the idents in order. As Macdonald points out, the idents also conflict aesthetically with the wider redesign of the channel. He notes that Glazer and Brody 'speak different visual languages', with Glazer's 'esoteric' and 'exotic' style in conflict with Brody's past-facing adaptation of Lambie-Nairn's 1982 design. Whereas Brody's visual design prioritises cohesion, order and seamlessness throughout the brand's presentation on- and off-screen,

Glazer's enigmatic films stand out from the televisual flow and invite curiosity and close attention.

Underlying this conflict is a tension between the past and present. As on-demand services began to proliferate throughout the 2010s, channel executives and designers needed to define and clarify the role of linear television and of the interstitial bits in-between. Were idents to be a marked interruption in the 'flow' of broadcasting, a creative and entertaining piece of added value that elevated the aesthetic and production values of the channel? Or were they to seamlessly blend in with other interstitial content, invisibly knitting together the junctions between programmes to encourage sustained viewing? As a highly creative approach to ident design, this series stood at the cusp of a transition between the eras of plenty and overflow. The aesthetic and structural tensions within this ident series reflect the uncertainty surrounding the industry, as well as the increasing interdisciplinarity of ident design at the time.

Red Crystals

The first ident begins with wide, static shots of the deep red trees that surround both banks of a river. Complementing the eerily empty scenery, the music begins with a bare-sounding interplay between a bass drum, echoing woodblock, and harp (see Example 13 below).[74]

Example 13: Woodblock, Bass Drum, and Harp in Red Crystals (2015)

The subsequent shots are angled downwards at the stream and a rapidly repeated harp glissando enters, complementing the visuals of the rushing water (see Table 4

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[74] Red Crystals, 2015. Channel 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHirxyAIsWM. (Accessed June 10, 2022).

below).[75] A following shot shows an explorer walking across the river before cutting to a wide shot of the waterfall. Then, a close-up shot reveals the shining red crystals embedded in the side of the cave, in which the explorer's shadow can be seen. A flowing and passionate ascending phrase played by the violins builds emotional tension as the crystals are revealed. At the end of the ident, the serenity is interrupted as people unseen, hidden in the trees, throw rocks down to the river from the cliff edge. The final part is filmed with a shaky handheld camera which swings upwards at the trees and then back down at the river as the person holding the camera runs, splashing through the water. The lush violin music from the earlier part of the ident stops, and only a single harp note and a low bass drone remain.

Image	Image description	Music and sound
	- Static shot; flies moving in the foreground.	- Woodblock and bass drum pattern begins (see Example 13 above). - Flies buzzing.
	- Static shot; running water in the stream.	- Harp joins (see Example 13 above).
	- We see a person walking across the river.	- Fast descending harp glissandos. - Sound of running water and footsteps. - Low distorted watery harp plays a falling melody.
	- Close shot of the red crystals. The person is now holding the camera and we see their shadow on the cave wall.	- Strings and harp drop out, sudden drop in volume.

[75] A harp *glissando* refers to the effect obtained 'by sliding rapidly over the […] strings with the fingernails or the fingertips' (Boyden and Stowell 2001).

	- Wide shot provides a view of the entire waterfall.	- Violins enter playing sustained notes (Bb and Db). - Harp re-enters.
	- A rock falls into the water. - Handheld shot; shaky camera movements.	- Strings and percussion drop out. - Loud splashing water.

Table 4: Structure of Red Crystals, see footnote 73 above.

Rhythmically, the music has eight quaver beats in a bar arranged in an off-kilter pattern, in groups of three, three, and two (see Example 13 above). The final two-beat group has a feeling of tripping up the listener, as the bass drum on the first beat of the bar always seems to arrive too early. The ident is visually confusing too, swapping between wide establishing shots and close-ups, as well as shots that include the explorer and those that do not. It is therefore difficult for the viewer to construct an overall sense of the space in the scene, the bewildering disorientation coming to a head at the end of the ident when the camera swings up to the sky and rocks come crashing down towards the water. The disorienting effect is exacerbated by the high degree of rhythmic conformity between the music and the images. The first three shot changes coincide with the strong bass drum hit on the first beat of the bar. As the musical texture becomes richer, and the visuals become more chaotic, the visual editing begins to occur at a different pace to the music. For the wide shot of the waterfall, however (the fifth image in Table 4 above), the shot change once again coincides with the bass drum, highlighting that this is a climactic moment in the ident: the moment the crystals are glimpsed. The disjunct manner of visual editing, as well as the rhythmic parallels between the images and music, highlight the editor's role in communicating visual information to the viewer, as well as concealing it from them, alluding to an invisible influence outside the ident's internal narrative. More broadly, these stylistic effects point towards the 'authorial function' of the channel more

generally, highlighting Channel 4's power over the origin, distribution, and scheduling of the programmes (Johnson 2013a).

Red Crystals subverts the normal 'living hold' structure of idents, instead beginning softly and ending with a dramatic surprise. Bovill explained that they strove to imbue the idents with a sense of conflict and tension, reflecting the 'Born Risky' branding:

> We always wanted a bit of a rub to it. [There's a] waterfall, which is a beautiful thing, we've even got a rainbow in it for God's sake. But then the people in that area start throwing stones. (Bovill 2020)

However, when used in the context of a live television junction, the narrative structure of this ident is often obscured, as it is cut up into shorter segments. In one instance, only the first section of the ident was used, without the moment of tension at the end. In this example, the announcer trails an upcoming episode of the American sitcom *Frasier* (1993-2004), their cheery tone jarring with the serene beauty of the music and visuals: 'Good morning. Tossed salad and scrambled eggs for breakfast! It's Frasier on 4'.[76] When these idents become embedded into the structures of live TV, the narratives of the idents are less important than the announcement of the forthcoming programme, and their emotional impact is dependent upon the length of the announcement, the extract of the ident selected by the continuity department, and the programme that follows.

Gold bars

The second ident is set in a mossy cave, and the blocks take the form of gold bars that seem to grow out of the ground (see Table 5 below).[77] The ident is centred around a shaman who wears gold bars attached to their headdress and ankles, which jingle as they shake their feet.

At first, the camera is angled upwards at the ceiling of the cave where we see sunlight streaming through, and drips of rain gently falling. The music begins with a rapid,

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[76] The *Red Crystals* ident with the *Frasier* announcement can be viewed at: https://theident.gallery/player.php/C4-2015-SCENE-RED-2. (Accessed Jun 9, 2022).
[77] Gold Bars, Channel 4, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yjJgRr4ANk. (Accessed June 10, 2022).

repeated falling figure (B5-A5-E5) played on the harp, which seems to musically imitate the raindrops. Meanwhile, violins enter playing a low, yearning portamento (or slide) from F4 to Gb4 back to F4. The remainder of the shots take the viewer further into the darkness of the cave, where the shaman is dancing. After this initial shot, the falling figure on the harp stops and the swelling violin parts take over the texture. Around the midpoint of the ident, 15 seconds in, a low and boomy bass note enters on Db2, establishing Db major as the tonal centre, marking a dramatic shift from the opening notes of B A and E on the harp. This harmonic contrast emphasises a distinction between inside and outside, light and dark. The ident has thus taken the viewer on a visual and sonic journey into the cave, and into the esoteric and hypnotic world of Channel 4.

Image	Image description	Music and Sound
	- Drips of water fall into the cave.	- Harp repeated pattern (B5-A5-E5).
	- Wide shot of the cave. - Shaman dances in the distance.	- Strings play a slow portamento (slides) (F4-Gb4-F4).
	- A static shot of the shaman dancing, followed by a shot from behind, returning to a wide shot.	- The rustling sound of the feathers and crystals grows louder.
	- After the wide shot, we briefly see a close shot of the shaman's feet, to reveal the gold crystals attached.	- Db bassline enters. - Marimba enters (see Example 14 below). - String portamento (slides) returns. (F4-Gb4-F4).

	- The shaman dances in a circle, causing dust to rise from the ground.	- The volume of the music and sound increases until the end of the ident.

Table 5: Structure of Gold Bars ident, Channel 4, 2015, see footnote 76 above.

Once the bassline enters, at the idents' midpoint, a ghostly marimba with added reverb plays a steady melodic pattern, also in the key of Db major, solidifying the sense of a home key. As Examples 14 and 15 illustrate, this marimba pattern loosely recalls Dundas' four-note figure by emphasising the intervals of a falling minor 3rd (outlined in red) and rising major 2nd (outlined in yellow). The marimba melody also inverts these intervals, featuring rising minor 3rds and rising minor 2nds, although in Example 14 I have highlighted only the descending intervals.

Example 14: Marimba melody in Gold Bars (2015)

Example 15: Four note figure by David Dundas (1982) transposed to Db major

Like extended title sequences for the programmes that follow, these idents create expectations for alternative, risky, and potentially challenging content. The music for all four idents is harmonically and rhythmically rich and complex, building up layers of electronically sampled and manipulated violins, harps and percussion that demand close attention through their ambiguous and unusual timbres. In this way, the music helps fulfil the 'preparation' function outlined by Tagg, by not only preparing the viewer for 'things to come' (1979: 93), but also helping construct an impression of the style and quality of programmes to expect.

These idents are highly unusual examples in the choice of location, narrative, imagery, music and sound. They are also resolutely representative of the Channel 4 brand. Whether or not they function effectively as idents, Macdonald notes, '[y]ou certainly can't deny that Channel 4 has been daring, signing off on a creative approach that no other UK channel would risk' (2015, n.p.). These idents epitomise a luxurious high point in the history of idents, characterised by large budgets and artistic freedom, which, some claim, has since passed (Gilbert 2021).

4.2.4 Summary of Plenty (2002-2016)

Across the three case studies from the era of plenty, the relationship between the sound and images tends to be complementary and complex. In Channel 4's 2004 idents *Diner* and *Electricity Pylons,* music, sound, and image conspire to confound the viewer by 'playing with reality', creating an otherworldly soundscape that seems to 'belong' to the scene whilst contributing to the play with perspective in the visuals. The music for the Sky Atlantic idents (2011) was composed after the visuals had been created and was subsequently replaced with an amended track. Both tracks complement the visuals, the downbeats coinciding with the change from a London scene to a New York scene, whilst the wordless choir renders this transition seamless. The Channel 4 idents from 2015 feature an eerie mix of location sound and music that evokes the soundtrack to the film *Under the Skin* (Glazer, 2013) whilst complementing the strange and mystical narrative on the screen.

The idents analysed from the era of plenty (2002-2016) are notable for their lack of distinct mnemonics. In the Sky Atlantic idents, the 'mnemonic identification' function is fulfilled only very subtly with a leisurely and sweeping three-note string figure. The Sky Atlantic idents also lack many visual codes directly indicating the channel; the logo only appears in the final seconds, more akin to a logoshot at the end of an advertisement. In the 2004 Channel 4 idents, Martin's music contains no unifying feature at all, and is instead tailored for each scene. Levi's tracks for the 2014 Channel 4 idents are rhythmically and harmonically complex; only a subtle trace of Dundas' original mnemonic can be heard in the marimba melody of *Gold Bars* (see Example 15 above).

Rather than branding the channel through 'mnemonic identification' and bold visual logos, the creators of these idents adopted a more subtle approach, aiming to engage and absorb the attention of the viewer. As former ECDs of 4Creative Bovill and Allison noted, in the era of plenty, idents had to be engaging and entertaining to stand out from the competition:

> TV branding is just a sea of dancing logos. Channel 4 is more than a big flashy number. We don't want to remind people what channel they're watching. We want to remind people *why* they're watching. (Bovill and Allison 2015)

During the era of plenty, dubbed the 'golden age of idents', in-house departments were coming into their own and broadcasters increasingly appreciated the value of investing in channel brand identity and promotion. The idents examined in this section are longer in duration and contain a stronger sense of narrative than those from the previous era of availability. Rather than employing graphics based on physical models or logos, these idents were created using combinations of live-action and VFX. Idents during this period were becoming more like the programmes, with extended narratives and durations.

4.3 Overflow (2016-2022)

In the UK, the transition towards the era of overflow, described by Johnson as the 'internet era' of television, can be traced to the period between March 2015 and February 2016 (2019: 1). During this period, each of the UK's public service broadcasters rebranded their online services (Ibid.: 1). Previously, the platforms were conceptualised as supplementary catch-up services, as exemplified by the terms 'on demand' or 'player' in the names, such as ITV Player, 4oD (standing for '4 on demand'), and Demand Five. The services were renamed ITV Hub, All4, and MyFive, whereas BBC iPlayer retained its original name. No longer simply positioned as 'catch-up' services, the broadcasters marketed these platforms as 'destinations' where viewers can view the live channels and catch up on recent episodes, as well as archived box sets and exclusive online content and previews. As Johnson notes, this was a pivotal period in which 'the UK's terrestrial broadcasters were reconceptualising their VoD players as much more than just a place to catch up on programmes already broadcast' (2017: 155). In other words, linear broadcasting and online on-demand models were beginning to merge, forming a hybrid industry. As a result, Grainge notes, promotional screen work has become an increasingly diverse area, and this is:

> evident in the creative application of traditional methods of producing idents, logos, promotional campaigns, trails, and title sequences, but also in harnessing social media to promote shows in digitally interactive ways. (2022: 431)

This transition has significantly impacted the production of idents. As noted above, in the previous era of plenty, idents were considered the 'holy grail of creative jobs' for designers, drawing large budgets (Gilbert 2021). Since 2016, however, idents have begun to be more compressed in terms of duration and budget. Interviewees speculated that idents are now often considered by television executives to be an 'unnecessary expense' or 'luxury' (Franklin 2020). Franklin suggested 'maybe the ident will be […] consigned to history—these beautiful bits of film that no one can work out what they are for' (Ibid.). Idents still play an important role for broadcasters and online services, however, and graphic designers and composers have had to adapt the form and aesthetic character of idents for this new era of television.

Like broadcast channels, online streaming services use idents to frame their content. These often take the form of brief 'stamps' that emphasise the brand's logo, such as Netflix's red 'N' and accompanying 'Ta-dum' sonic mnemonic.[78] These industry shifts might suggest that the 'hero' thirty-second broadcast television ident is no longer at the centre-stage of TV promotion, as several broadcasters instead turn their focus to presenting a unified brand across online and offline touchpoints. An example of this is BBC Three, which in 2016 stopped all linear broadcasts to become an online-only streaming service. Instead of traditional channel idents, the new BBC Three service was branded through a visual mark and a sonic mnemonic that consists of a high-pitched electronic tone followed by three quickly repeated bass notes.[79]

Figure 18: BBC Three logo (2016)

According to the website of creative agency Red Bee Creative, the idea behind the design was to imagine the 'new logo as a stamp, something that would bond to the content, then get out of the way' (2016). In his interview for this project, Mawer suggested that this rebrand of BBC Three represented a change in the aesthetics of idents: 'it's not a shiny ident with fifteen seconds and music and high production values, you've got to go down to the smallest thing you can communicate' (2021).

However, other developments suggest that there is still a place for longer-form channel idents, alongside these 'stamp-like' idents. As Paul McDonald notes, 'emergent media forms never entirely displace existing media'—the old and new coexist (2022: 27). Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic reminded audiences of the central role of linear television, facilitating a sense of companionship and co-presence, as well as reinforcing its role as a trustworthy source of news (Johnson

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[78] Netflix ident, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV3HUDMQ-F8. (Accessed Aug 21, 2022).
[79] BBC Three rebrand, Red Bee Media, 2016. https://www.redbeecreative.com/work/bbc-three-channel-rebrand. (Accessed Aug 21, 2022).

2020; Ellis 2020). Once again, this point can be illustrated by turning to BBC Three as an example. In 2020, the BBC announced plans to reinstate BBC Three as a linear broadcast channel, after the success of series such as *Normal People* (2020) and *Fleabag* (2016-2019). In February 2022, BBC Three returned as a linear channel, with idents appearing between the programmes that had been constructed using motion graphics and sound design. In these idents, three colourful computer animated hands levitate in front of a bright green background and interact with different objects, ranging from a microphone to an electronic piano keyboard.[80] They are accompanied with glitchy electronic music and Foley sound effects.
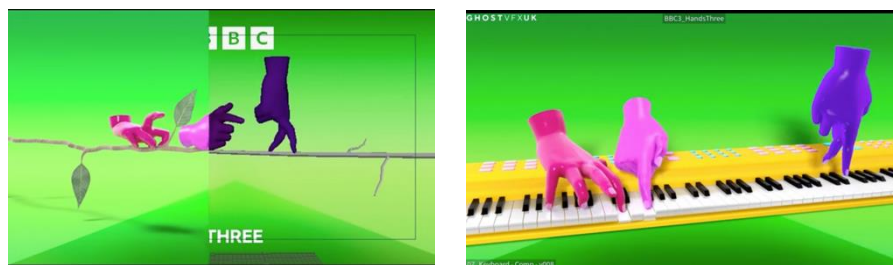
Figure 19: BBC Three (2022)

These new channel idents treat the visual code for the channel—here, the three hands—as a flexible object that can be manipulated and placed in different circumstances. This approach harks back to idents produced in the 1980s and 1990s, in which the channel logo began to be treated as a physical object that is manipulated in three-dimensional space. However, the new BBC Three idents are purely computer-generated and thus cheaper to construct than the elaborate live-action sequences such as the ones examined in the previous section, produced during the period of plenty. The BBC Three idents accordingly represent a synthesis of new and old models of designing idents.

In general, the area of ident production now consists of a plurality of different approaches. Despite shrinking budgets and the compression of the industry, channels and streaming services still provide graphic designers and composers

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[80] BBC Three, Piano ident. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoamgGOSF1c. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).

with opportunities for creative and imaginative work. In the rest of this section, I analyse three contrasting approaches to creating idents in the era of overflow. I begin by examining the ident for Amazon Prime Studios, before turning to a more traditional linear channel—BBC Two. This section ends with an exploration of how Channel 4 has adapted its brand across online spaces.

4.3.1 Amazon Prime Studios

As Johnson notes, many organisations in the technology sector have recently moved into the realm of entertainment content production and delivery (Johnson 2021: 310). Although the original focus of technology company, Amazon, was e-commerce, it introduced a streaming service, Amazon Prime Video, in 2006 as a free reward to its subscribers (Petruska 2019: 357). Entertainment has since become an increasingly important element of its offering, with a production subsidiary, Amazon Studios, created in 2010. In 2016, Amazon executives decided to model its distribution method on traditional film studios by giving their films theatrical runs in cinemas before making them available online. This contrasts with Amazon Prime Video's main competitor Netflix, which adopts a 'streaming first' strategy, by which Netflix Original content is available on the streaming platform immediately. Amazon executive Jason Ropell noted,

> We found that the customers want quality films, but also films that they've heard about and perceive as big events, because they've been reviewed in newspapers, screened at festivals, and had long-running theatrical engagements. (Lang 2017)

As part of this new strategy, a new ident was created to precede Amazon original films during their release in cinemas, as well as on the streaming service, after the theatrical run has finished. This ident thus differs from the idents previously discussed in this chapter, as it appears on television screens, mobile devices, and in cinemas. The entire ident is very compressed at only 16 seconds' duration, compared to idents on linear television, which can last up to 40 or 50 seconds. Part of the reason for this brevity is that streaming platforms do not use a continuity announcer, and the 'flow' is thus differently managed. In linear television, the 'flow' of programmes within a given channel is ordered by the broadcaster itself, and the viewer's experience is steered by

a continuity announcer who creates an impression of 'liveness' (Ellis 2002: 33). As Ellis points out, continuity announcers adopt the stance of direct address in the present tense, creating a 'shared continuity of experience' through phrases such as 'stay with us', 'coming up', and 'soon' (Ibid.: 33). In contrast, viewers of streaming platforms are free to programme their own flow from a database of available content, in part steered by the platforms algorithmic recommendation systems (Johnson 2018). Platform interfaces, media scholar Mike Van Esler argues, thus perform a more 'invisible role' than continuity in live broadcast television:

> Much like classical Hollywood editing, the goal of a quality interface is to go unnoticed by the user; however, also like classical Hollywood cinema, much care and work goes in to creating such a streamlined experience. (2020: 7)

The Amazon Prime Studios ident consists of a single virtual fluid 'camera shot' that zooms into a computer-generated environment, as illustrated in Table 6 below. A black leather-bound book, visually signalling the company's origins as an online book seller, opens to reveal a whole world inside as buildings and trees unfold and spring together like pieces of Lego. The music is based on a single gesture—the sound of an orchestra tuning. As the book begins to open, a cacophony of violins is accompanied by the clicks and clacks of the pieces of the buildings joining together. The virtual camera zooms into the book, travelling along an unfurling road. As the violins begin to solidify on a single pitch, a low boomy bass note enters on the note A, signalling a moment of arrival. Finally, the image comes to rest outside a traditional movie theatre and the bright orange 'Amazon Prime Studios' logo appears and lands on the roof of the theatre entrance with an echoing thud.[81]

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[81] Amazon Prime Studios, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x0LLfpwP6Q. (Accessed Aug 14, 2022).
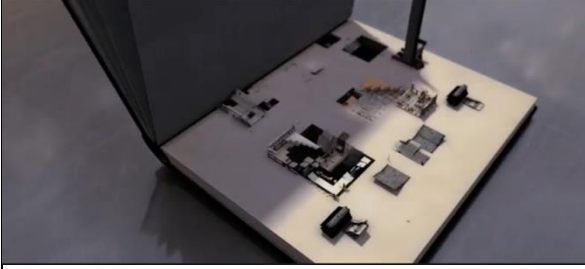
Image	Image Description	Sound and Music
	- Book begins to open.	- Sound of pages peeling apart.
	- Parts of buildings begin to appear and unfold.	- Violins begin tuning. - High pitched clicking sound of building blocks coming together.
	- An office block appears on the lower left-hand side of the screen.	- Violins increase in volume. - Quiet piano notes in the background.
	- A road unravels. - The sun gets lower in the sky, until a theatre begins to appear, taking its place.	- A loud 'whooshing' sound indicates the road being unrolled. - The music solidifies on the note 'A'.
	- The camera continues moving closer to the theatre until it finally rests at the entrance.	- A low 'A' drone begins and gets louder until it drowns out all the other sounds. - A bass drum hit coincides with the appearance of the logo.

Table 6: Amazon Prime Studio (2016) (see footnote 80 above)

The music and sound design of the ident fulfils what Tagg calls the 'reveille' function by bringing the viewers' attention to the screen. This is achieved through the tuning

orchestra, a sound already coded to signify beginnings. The composer, Simone Benyacar explained:

> When you go to see a classical concert, the orchestra tunes. This tuning moment says to us: 'Everybody pay attention: we're about to sit down and this experience is going to start'. […] When we finally arrive at the final satisfying chord when everyone's in tune, we can begin. (2021)

The sound of an orchestra tuning additionally performs the 'preparatory' and 'branding' functions, as the associations of a classical orchestra with prestige and high production values imbues the logo with a sense of quality. In this way, the ident reflects Amazon Prime's strategy of moving into 'high-end drama and documentaries' in order to compete with Netflix (Johnson 2022: 21). In fact, 2016, the year in which this ident was produced, heralded a successful year for the company, which created several highly acclaimed films, including two-time Academy Award winning *Manchester By The Sea* (Lonergan 2016).

This ident, although temporally compressed, cannot be described as a simple 'stamp', like the BBC Three logo discussed above. It took over a year to produce and entailed much detailed work on the part of the composer and motion graphic designers. Christman explained the distinct approach taken for this project:

> A lot of smaller studios or smaller production companies couldn't justify the price tag for something like this. Most of them wouldn't have the opportunity to build something so customised. (2021)

This is related to an issue identified by Johnson, who notes that 'a number of businesses at the technological end of the value chain' such as BT, Amazon, and Apple 'have made aggressive moves into content production and delivery' and their size and capabilities means that these organisations 'have the potential to exert significant control over the online TV industry' (2019: 76). This ident signified Amazon further establishing itself within the content production industry; accordingly, even in an era of declining budgets, this was a large-scale project. Nonetheless, unlike the era of plenty, during which idents used live-action filming, this ident was created exclusively in CGI.

The graphics were created using a combination of motion graphics software including Maya and AfterEffects, involving combinations of many discrete elements. First, 3D

artists at the creative agency Ant Farm would create and 'assemble' the various elements—buildings, trees, lampposts, and the golden Amazon Prime movie theatre. Rather than using any form of pre-packaged elements, each component was designed bespoke for the project, 'by hand':

> There's no plugins, there's no cheats involved in creating this sort of thing, you know. We had a number of very talented 3D artists working on each one of these buildings. There was just so much detail that went into this animation and modelling—several thousands of keyframes. (Christman 2021)

After the animators had created the various elements, the creative director, Lucas Christman, placed them together in Adobe AfterEffects through compositing—a digital technique designed to 'integrate' different media (Manovich 2007: 72). As Manovich notes, according to the logic of non-linear-editing embedded within Adobe AfterEffects, each basic unit in the 'composition window' interface can be individually accessed, manipulated, and animated, 'conceptualised as an independent object' (2007: 72). In this way, the word 'composition' as it is used in software links to practices of drawing, painting, or design—the manipulation of objects in space.

The non-linear nature of this process means that the designer can exercise meticulous control over each individual element of the virtual 'world':

> I was doing all the compositing for this, so I was taking everything the 3D artists were making and I would reassemble everything in AfterEffects. I was really fortunate to have been able to do that. That's when you really get to know the project, you know, every pixel, every little thing in there. (Christman 2021)

As media scholar Karen Petruska notes, 'all of Amazon's Prime benefits serve one end: to situate customers within its corporate ecosystem more fully, firmly and inescapably' (2019: 358). This ident literally brings the viewer inside the 'world' of Amazon. Christman revealed that the designers and animators hid 'easter eggs' within the animation that rewarded repeated viewing—including one building interior that depicts the board room in Amazon's head office, and the addition of tiny Amazon boxes positioned on the doorsteps of some of the buildings.

The music and sound design were crafted in a similarly meticulous way. The composer Simone Benyacar was responsible for creating the tuning orchestra, as well as the sound design that accompanied this highly detailed animation. He commented on the

dual nature of his job, reflecting that the sound design, as opposed to the music, consisted of a distinct 'set of evolutions' (2021). The first element he created was the sound of the flipping pages of the book as it opened: 'I started recording literally pages of foley just like "prrr", the pages opening' (Benyacar 2021). The next stage was to create the sound design for the buildings, trees, and lampposts that emerge out of the book. Like the Sadlers in 1991, Benyacar's process involved a creative interpretation of the images:

> At the very beginning, the city almost looks like a toy Lego construction. It becomes more realistic as the camera swoops through the city. But, at the beginning, it feels almost like you're inside this fictitious kids' world, in my mind at least. I'm not sure if that's what was intended, but I read it that way. (2021)

Having decided to interpret the images as a 'fictitious kids' world', Benyacar began to experiment, using objects he had to hand—namely, his children's' toys, including magnetic tiles and Lego bricks. The kinetic sounds of the blocks snapping together bring a sense of tangibility and solidity to this make-believe world. Benyacar carefully 'scored' every 'single detail': 'I would do a layer of everything that was "metallic", for example, the streetlamp posts that open up in the city' (Ibid.). By the end of the process, the sound design consisted of hundreds of discrete elements. The sound design thus contributed to the construction of three-dimensional space:

> It was all about finding space in this really busy audio envelope. In a stereo sense, something had to be in the centre, something to the side […] There were 'swooshes' when things were happening in front of your face, so it feels that it's really right in front of you. (Ibid.)

In this way, both the designer and the composer can be considered as choreographers that plot and construct a sequence of events in a non-linear fashion, working through each small detail with care and precision. The overall effect of this ident is that of an engaging and immersive audiovisual space, flexibly designed to be effective within a range of media contexts.

4.3.2 BBC Two

Whereas Amazon Prime is a relatively new service, created within an internationalised and converging media industry, BBC Two is firmly based in the realm of traditional public service broadcasting. Nonetheless, there are certain aesthetic and technological similarities between the Amazon Prime and current BBC Two idents;

both use meticulously crafted motion graphics, music, and sound design to depict the channel as a virtual immersive space.

In 2018, BBC Two underwent its biggest rebrand since the 1990s. This project signalled a turning point, both in terms of production process and the aesthetic character of the idents themselves. To begin, the recently formed in-house creative agency, BBC Creative, invited design agency Superunion, a subsidiary of advertising group WPP plc, to pitch their approach to the BBC Two rebrand. The task was immediately defined in strategic terms of positioning and purpose:

> We were invited to pitch as branding experts, because they wanted a branding response, not just design. They wanted us to look at what BBC Two stands for, in terms of its core reason for being and who it's attracting, who it's talking to. (Tudball 2021)

In collaboration with channel executives, the designers devised what they called a 'mood strategy' for the channel, comparable to the categorisation of content on streaming platforms like Netflix and Spotify. For example, Netflix's genre categories range from 'Quirky Romance' and 'Absurd College Humour' to 'Cerebral Drug Movies'. BBC Two executives sorted the channel's programmes into categories, eventually settling on seven moods (neutral, pleasurable, fascinating, lively, eye-opening, non-conformist and challenging) containing 25 sub-moods. A separate ident was created for each of the 25 sub-moods. The project involved collaborations amongst an unusually large team: the internal creative department (BBC Creative), external design agency Superunion, composer Alex Baranowski, and sixteen different animators. Aardman, the creators of Wallace and Gromit, were commissioned to produce the 'silly' ident, and created a design based on a brightly coloured goggle-eyed monster.[82] The creative director from Superunion explained that they provided the animators with simple 'one-page mood boards', with the intention that 'they would take it and find their own way to do it' (Tudball 2021). The Superunion designers took a similar approach when briefing composer Alex Baranowski, who was provided with a written brief outlining the strategy, as well as images in the form of mood boards that 'he could bring his own interpretation to' (Tudball 2021). Overall, the briefing style permitted

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[82] BBC2, Silly, 2018: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-two-curve-silly-ident-2018. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

considerable creative freedom for the animators and for Baranowski, thus facilitating a balance between variety within unity within the series of idents.

The idents themselves signalled a drastic departure from the past, dispensing with the Gill Sans '2' logo that Lambie-Nairn had devised in 1991. Instead, the designers created a concept based on the curved shape of the '2' that runs vertically through the entire television screen. The idents are not only used to cut in and out of programmes but they also frame trailers and teasers within the breaks. Several versions of each ident were created, with different durations, so the animations can be used for a variety of purposes. This bespoke approach avoided the situation that occurred in the Glazer/Levi idents for Channel 4, in which large sections of the ident were often cut by the continuity team during live continuity announcements

According to Superunion designers:

> The two curve acts as the glue, connecting one mood to the next, through visual match-cuts where the curve aligns perfectly between the two animations. This takes the viewer from one mood state to another, transforming the entire ad break into one long ident and creating a seamless viewing experience. (Superunion 2019)

The ability to use versions of the ident throughout the entire junction is unique to the BBC; as a publicly funded broadcaster it does not sell any airspace to advertisers. Much like Netflix's online platform—which at the time of writing does not include advertisements—BBC Two can entirely shape and define the viewer's experience of the brand by transforming the entire junction into 'one long ident' (Ibid.). Figure 28 below illustrates an example of a junction on BBC Two that features trailers for two of its programmes, both bookmarked by idents that correlate with the mood and colour schemes of the programmes being promoted.
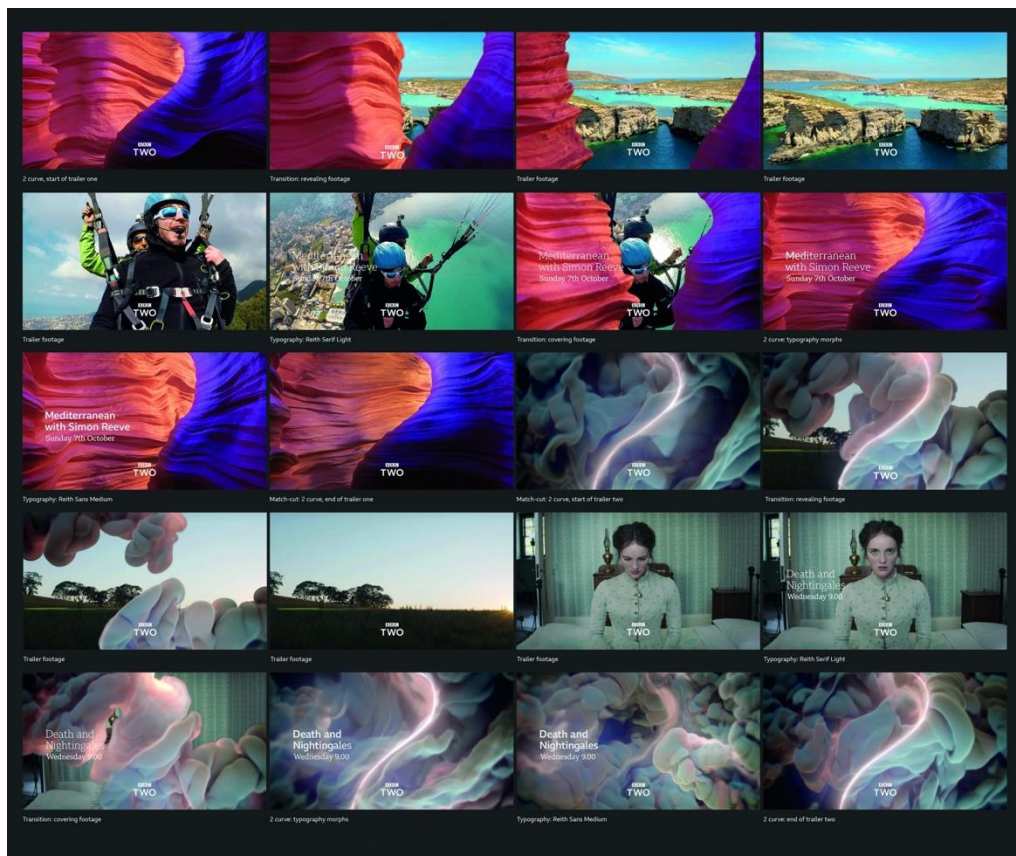
Figure 20: Structure of a junction featuring two trails: for 'Mediterranean with Simon Reeve' and 'Death and Nightingales' (2018)

In aiming to create a 'seamless viewing experience', the team at Superunion and BBC Creative redefined the broadcast flow as a patchwork of disparate content that must be sewn together by the broadcaster, and ideally experienced by the viewer as an unending flow, much like Netflix's auto-play feature and its goal of perpetual momentum whereby one programme is immediately followed by the next.

The music and sound of the BBC Two idents helps contribute to the feeling of instantaneity and fluidity. Since the shortest versions of the idents are just two seconds long, the music had to be highly flexible. There was little space for musical development, unlike Mica Levi's complex scores for Channel 4, discussed above. Here, the brief for the music stressed the need for a memorable mnemonic—a new sonic brand identity for the channel. Baranowski recalled:

> They wanted something that would be BBC Two as soon as you heard it. I think that probably lead them down the path of like, 'we need a tune'. But I suggested using just a couple of notes like, BBC Two: two notes. So, my very first ideas just had two notes at the beginning of each ident. We tried it, we ended up

cutting one of the notes which just ended up being one note. […] I don't think it's about making a memorable theme tune. I think it's really about creating a believable space. (2021)

In this way, Baranowski created a memorable sonic identity for the channel, that contains flexibility. Although Baranowski did not include a mnemonic figure, the music for the idents share sonic similarities—all include an arresting chime and harp chord at the start, and all are based on the tonal centre of D. However, each mood contains a different array of instruments, harmonies, and sound effects. The combination of harp and chime at the start of each ident nonetheless functions as an instantly recognisable timbre. Baranowski included the harp to connect the new idents to the brand's long history, harking back to Tony and Gaynor Sadler's ground-breaking compositions in 1991:

> They probably wouldn't notice but I did put a bit of an homage to the old idents in the new one. […] I did a sort of a harp in the background. That was my homage to the old ones. (Baranowski 2021)

Unlike many idents produced during the eras of availability (1982-2002) and plenty (2002-2016), which seem to unfold musically and tell a story over time, Baranowski's idents involve complex layers of instruments and sound effects. His ident compositions thus create an effect analogous to walking around an object and viewing (or hearing) it from different angles, in a similar manner to Benyacar's meticulous approach to the sound design of the Amazon Prime Studios ident. Baranowski explained that he worked very closely with the moving images, attempting to match the textures he saw with appropriate musical sounds, to create a sense of realism:

> What we tried to do with the sound is really carefully match every single movement with any single sound or musical movement. […] So if there were big metal things moving, it was the metal making the sound. It wasn't me making any sounds. It was just that making the sound. Everything had to come from the environment. (2021)

Baranowski's description of his role is redolent of Chion's concept of 'added value', by which the music or sound works to create the illusion that this information or expression 'naturally' comes from what is seen and is already contained in the image itself (1994: 4). The very language Baranowski uses to describe the music shows how he was approaching it in terms of sounds and textures rather than melodies and instruments: 'lighter moods have lighter instruments like a triangle; darker moods

would perhaps use a darker cowbell pitched down' (2018). Baranowski was particularly careful to ensure there were no prominent instruments or sounds; and that nothing was 'sticking out' of the texture to draw attention to the soundtrack:

> Any time we, when we were making the idents, any time it felt like that instrument is sticking out, there's a violin playing there, where's the violin? It was like no, get rid of the violin. […] That was the thing, everything had to come from the environment. (2021)

The analyses below highlight how Baranowski's contribution does not, in Chion's terms, 'merely duplicate a meaning' inherent in the images, but in fact 'brings about' meaning, through its relation to the image (1994: 5). I explore below three contrasting examples from the original set of 25: *Charged, Gripping,* and *Offbeat*. *Charged* and *Gripping* are both part of the 'challenging' sub-mood, whereas *Offbeat* was categorised under 'non-conforming'.

Charged

Figure 21: BBC Two Charged (2018)

In *Charged,* small clouds of purple smoke float in from each side of the screen. When the clouds meet, a bright white line flashes in the shape of the curve of the two.[83] The clouds flurry back and forth throughout the ident. Sonically, it begins with a 'chime' sound on an open fifth (D5, A5, and D6), a high and bright timbre that creates a 'hit point' with the flash of light emerging from the two curve. Then, a low-pitched windy sound effect enters as the clouds of smoke begin to unfurl. The next time the clouds join together, the bright light of the curved line is accompanied by crackling sounds that conjure images of electrical sparks. The harmony is based on a floating and

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[83] BBC Two, Charged, 2018. https://theident.gallery/player.php/BBC2-2018-ID-SMOKE-1. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

uplifting D major chord, with an added 7th (C#). Different pitches within the chord stand out at different moments, creating a sense of forward momentum whilst the graphics loop continuously.

Baranowski outlines ten layers of the music in a 'behind-the-scenes' presentation on video-hosting site Vimeo.[84]

1. Chime
2. Processed harp chord
3. Textured string tremolo swells
4. Piano and analogue tape delay[85]
5. ROLI seaboard[86] and analogue Moog filters[87]
6. Brushed cymbals
7. FX: Underwater rumbles and delays
8. FX: Wind
9. FX: Fizzing bubbles
10. FX: Layers of electricity

The heavy use of reverb and delay on the harp and piano create a sense of rhythm in this ethereal ident, as we hear the attack of the strings in the harp and piano reverberate, repeat, and fade away. Layers 7-10 are sound effects, the names of which provide a clue as to the composer's interpretation of the images. Combinations of deep, reverberating sounds of 'underwater rumbles' and wind are contrasted with the higher and more energetic layers of bubbles and electricity. Overall, the ident possesses a conflicting and ambiguous quality, due to the juxtaposition of contrasting sound effects, as well as the visual contrast between the dark clouds and the bright white light in the centre. This aligns with the ident's title, *Charged,* since a mood can feel 'charged' with energy, tension, fear, or anticipation. Moreover, electricity could be interpreted as a metaphor for a range of emotions.

This ambiguity is harnessed for great effect by the continuity team, and this ident has been used to introduce a range of programmes. For example, the *Charged* ident has

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[84] Alex Baranowski, 'Anatomy of a Soundscape'. https://vimeo.com/322756903. (Accessed Jun 17, 2022).
[85] An analogue tape delay is created by duplicating a track and creating an echo effect between the recordings.
[86] The Seaboard is a musical instrument manufactured by British music technology company, ROLI. It is a keyboard-style MIDI controller, named Seaboard due to the smooth and curved surface of the keys.
[87] One of the first synthesiser filters from the 1970s.

appeared before an episode of TV legal drama *Trust* (2003-), which documents the story of John Paul Getty III, grandson of an American oil tycoon, who was held captive by Italian criminals.[88] The announcer warns of 'violent scenes and strong language' as 'the Getty's fear the worst for young John Paul in *Trust'*, speaking in an elongated manner, with a downward inflection at the end of the sentence to reinforce the tension and darkness of the programme. The BBC's continuity team decided to use the same ident on BBC Two Northern Ireland, to announce a football match between Northern Ireland and Austria.[89] Whereas in the previous ident, the crackles of lightning seemed like a premonition of John Paul's fate, in this ident, the sparks of lightning could be interpreted as depicting the battle between the two football teams. The voiceover cheerfully announces: 'UEFA nation's league football now on BBC Two. Highlights of today's game between Northern Ireland and Austria, introduced by Steven Watson'. This announcer speaks with a higher pitched voice, at a faster tempo, and the voice is more staccato and energetic. In this context, the string tremolo and fizzing bubbles are an uplifting and energetic accompaniment to the announcer's voice.

Gripping
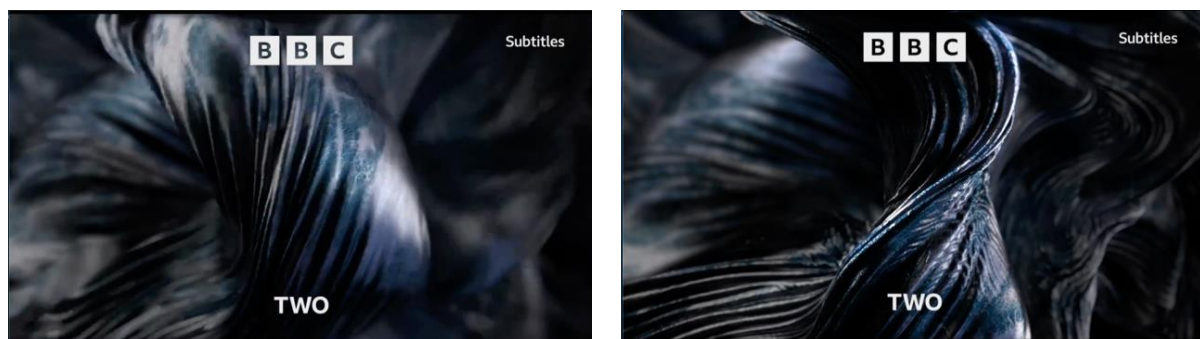
Figure 22: BBC Two Gripping (2018)

Another ident, *Gripping,* also part of the 'Challenging' mood, is less flexible in tone and is used to introduce 'gripping drama'. [90] The images are based on a metallic rope-like material that continuously twists around in knots, making contorted and disjunct

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[88] Charged, with 'Trust' voiceover. 2018. https://theident.gallery/player.php/BBC2-2018-ID-SMOKE-1. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).
[89] Charged, with football voiceover, 2018. https://theident.gallery/player.php/BBC2NI-2018-ID-SMOKE-1. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).
[90] BBC Two, Gripping 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L89ETEqCF9I. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

movements. The visuals for this ident were created by designers at Mainframe, who also created the idents for *Sharp Satire* and *Offbeat.* Mainframe Designer Lee Walker noted, 'Gripping drama uses bound metal-like fabrics that constantly twist without release to create suspension and tension' (Mainframe 2018).

With fewer rhythmic tape delays, the sound effects for this ident are more visceral and immediate, contrasting with the ethereality of *Charged*. Although *Charged* begins with an empty and ambiguous-sounding open fifth, the chord here is D minor, instantly establishing a dark and sombre mood. As the D minor chime chord continues to echo, low and metallic scraping sounds are added to convey the kinetic feeling of the metal being wound into the knot. The harsh metallic sounds inform the viewer that this animated material is heavy, solid, and requires great strength to move and twist. In one use of the ident, the continuity announcer seems to reproduce the tension and friction conveyed in the sounds and images. The announcer almost whispers, with a high degree of harsh breathiness in their voice, matching the crunching and scraping sound effects: 'the film premiere from BBC films now on 2. [*sharp exhale*] With some strong language, happiness comes at a price'.[91] Baranowski recalls:

> I ended up having quite a lot of chats with the continuity announcers, saying thank you so much for making it like that. […] I think it was a happy accident because we were really trying to make environments that sounded like they were realistic. (2021)

The close relationship between the graphics and Baranowski's evocative and detailed scores evidently created a sense of cohesion and integration that allows the live continuity announcer to establish a mood that matches the programme that follows.

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[91] This version of Gripping can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L89ETEqCF9I. (Accessed Jun 17, 2022).

Offbeat

Whereas *Charged* and *Gripping* were created to align with 'challenging' programmes, *Offbeat* was designed to sit alongside 'non-conformist' programmes.[92]
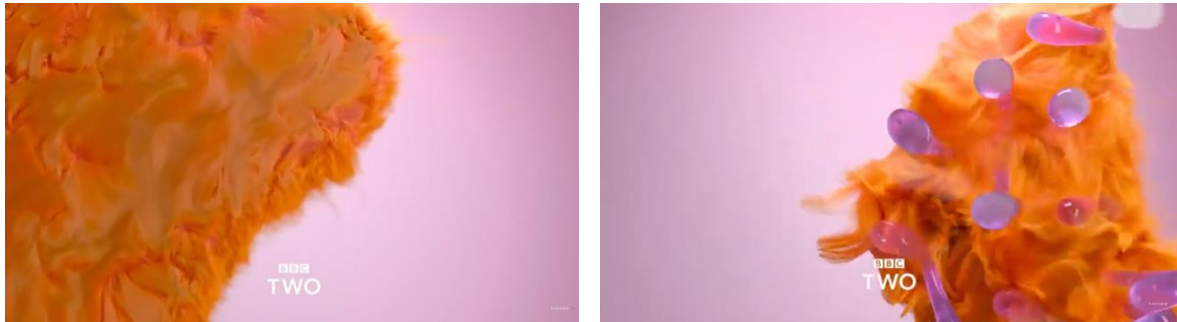
Figure 23: BBC Two Offbeat (2018)

The opening chord, here D major, has an added minor 7th (C). The music is minimal, and the track is mostly made up of quirky animal sound effects—slurping and snorting noises and high-pitched purring and squeaking. The designers noted that this ident was a subtle hark back to the 'jumping dog' variation of the BBC Two ident from 1993, designed by Lambie-Nairn.[93] Superunion designer Katherina Tudball recalled:

> The orange one that crawls across the screen: that became a fuzzy little creature which was a nice throwback to the fuzzy Two that jumps and does a black backflip. (2021)

Baranowski employed an eclectic range of sound effects for this ident, even recording his cat sleeping.

Overall, this new series of 25 idents earned several industry awards, including a Music + Sound Award, a Cannes Lion, and a D&AD Pencil. BBC executive creative director Laurent Simon suggested that the eclecticism within the ident series highlights the BBC's supportive role as a curator for talent within the creative industries:

> Only the BBC offers such a large, public platform for creative expression and exposure. What's also exciting is that [the ident series is] modelled to be iterative, refreshed and expanded by as many collaborators as we see relevant for the audience and channel. (McCarthy 2018).

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[92] BBC Two, Offbeat, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzNF2vhAxIA. (Accessed Nov 11, 2022).

[93] BBC Two, Jumping Dog, 1993: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc2-jumping-dog-ident-1992. (Accessed Jun 10, 2022).
BBC Two Window Cleaning, 2001. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc2-personality-ident-robot-3-2001 (Accessed Jun 10, 2022).

In using the idents as a promotional tool that showcases the breadth and variety of programmes aired by BBC Two, the idents highlight the value of public service broadcasting. Here, the success of the ident series within the branding industry and with audiences becomes a symbol for the continued relevance and function of the public service broadcaster within the industry ecosystem more broadly.

4.3.3 4oD and All4

Over the past ten years, Channel 4 has had to adapt its branding for its own streaming service, social media content, as well as the distribution of its content on third party platforms such as Netflix and YouTube. In 2015, Channel 4's streaming platform, 4oD, underwent a major rebrand and was renamed All4. The project was completed by design agency Magpie and production company We Are Seventeen in collaboration with 4Creative, and the sound design was by Rich Martin, who also composed the music and sound for the Channel 4 idents in 2004.

The new 4oD idents consisted of a series of variations that subtly harked back to the broadcaster's idents on its linear channels. Dan Brooke, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at Channel 4 noted at the time:

> It's an important moment in Channel 4's history as this new identity links our digital future to our creative roots, with the use of the much-loved multi-coloured logo, re-imagined for the multi-media 21st Century. (Channel 4, 2015)

Visually, the idents refer to the past by retaining Lambie-Nairn's original block-based logo designed in 1982. The logo is altered, now turned on its side, and the shiny colourful blocks have been replaced with a simple matte look against a white background. Rather than levitating in space, the blocks rest on a horizontal plane, the grounded character of the logo perhaps reinforcing the concept of All4 as a virtual 'destination' for viewers (Channel 4, 2015). The ident variations involve different treatments of the logo; for example, shattering into pieces or melting into the ground.[94] The treatment of the logo as a physical object is reminiscent of the practice Lambie-

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[94] Compilation of All4 idents, 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8odVjctD30. (Accessed Aug 22, 2022).

Nairn established in the 1990s with the BBC Two idents, in which the logo was conceptualised in terms of various materials.

Figure 24: All4 logo (2015)

Each ident is accompanied by different sound effects depending on what is happening in the images. Besides the sound effects, the idents also include a warm synthesised chord based on an open 4th, C5 and F5. This creates a subtle link with the original fanfare, also in F major, since the distance between the highest and lowest note of the original four-note fanfare used for the 1982 ident is a perfect fourth. The very simple music for these idents can thus be read as a development of the four-note mnemonic created in 1982. As media scholar Paul MacDonald notes, 'the "old" persists in permeating the "new"' (2022: 27).

Some of the ident variations were designed to sit alongside programmes originating from specific channels: the main channel, Channel 4, or the ancillary channels including E4, More4, 4Music, and Film4. Each channel is associated with a particular colour: purple for E4, yellow for More4, pink for 4Music, and red for Film4. In an ident associated with E4, the irreverent and youth-oriented channel, the purple block emerges from the ground with a sausage placed on top (see Figure 33 below). For Film4, the red block rises and duplicates, transforming into a film spool that is accompanied by rustling sound effects (see Figure 34 below).[95] According to the production company, these idents were created 'to reflect and embody the distinct attitudes of each channel', reinforcing the idea that All4 is 'where all the four's come together' (We Are Seventeen 2015). Unusually for an online platform, each ident includes a voiceover that announces the channel from which the programme originates. In this way, the All4 ident series from 2015 utilised branding practices

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[95] The E4 ident can be viewed at 0.22 and the Film4 ident can be viewed at 0.44: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8odVjctD30. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).

established in terrestrial branding by maintaining a unified sonic and visual identity (the F major chord and Lambie-Nairn logo), whilst creating diversity amongst the variants.
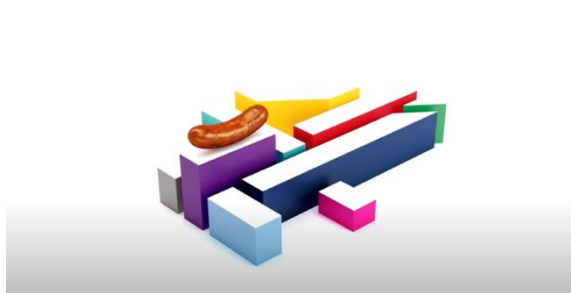
Figure 25: Pre-roll ident for E4 content on All4 (2015)

Figure 26: Pre-roll ident for Film4 content on All4 (2015)

In 2019, the All4 platform underwent another re-launch. Coinciding with a major update to its iOS app, this rebrand signalled a renewed focus on a 'digital-first' experience; a unified brand that functions 'across social media and VoD, mobile, big screen and desktop' (Channel 4 2019). The new ident, a single version rather than a series of variants, was simplified and developed a distinctive visual style that departed from the linear channels.[96] For the first time in the channel's history, the logo is here presented as a flat 2-dimensional and largely stationary graphic. The creative lead for the project, Harry Ead of branding agency DixonBaxi noted that the new two-dimensional, flat graphic was created with mobile devices in mind, since it appears distinctively even in the smallest of online spaces such as a Twitter feed on a smartphone (DesignWeek 2019a). Programmes are introduced on the platform as the yellow and turquoise 'playbar' stripe slides in from the side, the movement apparently symbolising the 'endless' and always-updating selection of TV programmes that can be viewed on the platform. In this way, the ident duplicates the focus on abundance reflected in Netflix's brand identity. The same year, Netflix had also updated its ident, in which the ident implodes to reveal a seemingly infinite number of rainbow-coloured horizontal stripes.[97] According to Van Esler, the idea behind Netflix's change was to turn the thumbnail images of the streamer's original programming on their side, 'calling to mind barcodes' which in turn provides an 'appearance of abundance' (2020:1).

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[96] All4 ident, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQCPTYhzhVE. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).
[97] Netflix, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GViooI4C8Ic. (Accessed Jun 22, 2022).

Unlike the previous All4 idents, there are no added sound effects and no voice-over. Instead, an A minor chord is followed by two notes on a synthesised piano C6-A6. These two notes can be heard as an echo of the final two notes of Dundas' fanfare (A-G-C-A), a subtle reminder of the organisation's long-standing sonic identity. The 'blossoming' effect of the synthesised chord which begins with a low bass note and expands in volume and pitch as it gets louder is redolent of Netflix's 'Ta-dum', but the style here is much quieter and more understated rather than dramatic (Taylor 2020).

Figure 27: All4 ident (2019)

In 2020, Channel 4 created another new ident, specifically to precede Channel 4-originated programming on third-party platforms such as Netflix and YouTube.[98]
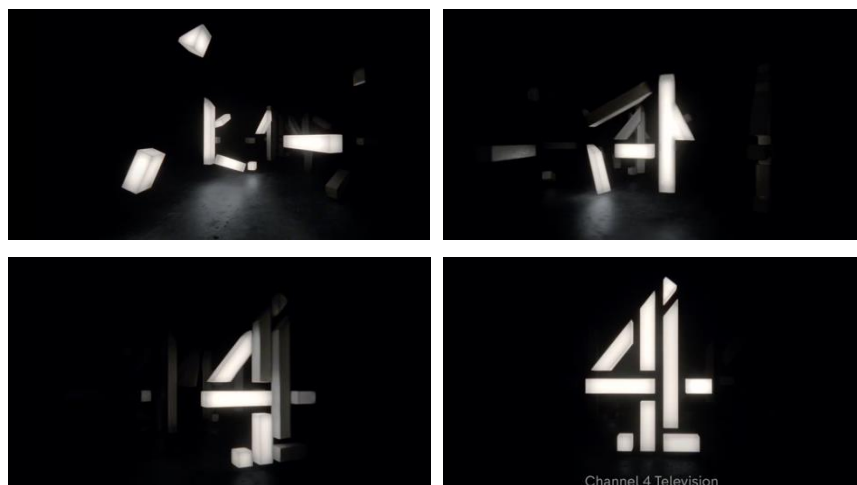
Figure 28: Third-party ident for Channel 4 (2020)

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[98] Channel 4 third-party VOD ident. 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMsZdMppHEo. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).

Unlike the idents on the All4 platform, the ident for third-party distributors features Channel 4's sonic identity much more prominently. Here, the entire four-note melody is heard, played on a low-pitched, monophonic marimba. The use of a marimba recalls the higher-pitched marimba in *Gold Bars* (2015, see 4.2.3 above) which highlighted the appearance of the tiny logo blocks embedded in the shaman's cave. In this ident, the arrangement of the logo recalls the play with perspective in the idents directed by Foraker in 2004 (see 4.2.1 above). Like the 2004 idents, the blocks remain in space whilst the camera animates them. The blocks appear as a three-dimensional puzzle made of glowing white animated blocks, which quickly spins around in a circle before stopping, showing the viewer the completed logo.

The music and images are complementary; in my interpretation, both contribute to the ident's tangible and grounded feel. The wooden marimba, in comparison to the brighter sound of a xylophone, creates a warm, resonant, and organic sound. The animated blocks give the ident a similar sense of materiality, through their hollow appearance and the reflection of the blocks on the shiny ground. At only three seconds long, this is an intricate yet swift version of the ident, designed for impatient streaming audiences. Nonetheless, it has a solidity to it that contrasts with the two-dimensional visual and wispy sonic mnemonics in the 4oD idents. Perhaps the Channel 4 creators felt that the ident needed a stronger and more substantial feel when appearing within third-party streaming platforms, in order to stand out against the powerful 'Ta-dum' mnemonic of Netflix.

Overall, Channel 4's online idents have evolved to become brief stamps of ownership over content. For an established brand such as Channel 4, sonic and visual mnemonics provide nostalgic shortcuts with which to efficiently tap into viewers' generalised associations with the channel, perhaps reminding them of their experiences of the channel in the past.

4.3.4 Summary of Overflow (2016-present)

The aesthetic character of the three case studies in this section can be described in terms of two contrasting approaches. The 4oD and All4 idents, as well as the BBC Three logomarks noted in the section's introduction, are highly compressed in duration

and include only a very simple sonic mnemonic, with minimal detail in the visual animation. Intended to be memorable and brief, these idents function like a 'stamp' of ownership on the content.

In contrast, the Amazon Prime Studios ident and the BBC Two idents encompass a more cinematic approach, and embrace detail and complexity, featuring intricate visual textures and layers of sound design and musical instruments. In the cases of Amazon Prime and BBC Two, the composers adopted a dual role of composer and sound designer, harnessing their skills across the two disciplines to create a blended soundscape. The composers strove to replicate or 'render' the detailed movements and textures in sonic terms, 'matching' the movements with instruments and sounds (Baranowski 2021). The intense synchronisation between music and image in the Amazon Prime Studios and BBC Two idents could be described in Cook's terms as 'conformant'. In these idents, the composers Benyacar and Baranowski strove for intersensory correspondence, creating an effect redolent of 'visual music' (see Chapter 2 above, 2.2.1). In these idents, television is an experience that is being sold, and like a cinema ident, these idents immerse viewers in the experience of preparing for the programme, giving a 'taster of what is to come' (Mollaghan 2019: 309).

In the current era of overflow, the creators of idents adopt a plurality of approaches. Whereas streaming platforms have tended to adopt a more visually and sonically compressed and simplistic style, the persistence of a more textural and cinematic aesthetic in idents such as BBC Two and Amazon Prime demonstrates that entertainment brand identities still offer composers and designers opportunities for intricate and creative work.

4.4 Chapter Summary

Overall, this chapter has addressed my first set of research questions, regarding the aesthetic character and role of sound in idents, in the context of three different eras of television channels: availability (1982-2002), plenty (2002-2016), and overflow (2016-2022).

I explored the question of how the sounds and images collectively contribute to the functions of idents across different time periods. At the beginning of the era of availability, ITV and Channel 4 signalled the start of competition in the industry with their punchy and memorable fanfares. Tony and Gaynor Sadler's evocative and imaginative soundscapes for BBC Two moved idents beyond simple mnemonics, creating flexible pieces of music that facilitated a sense of flow, rather than interrupting it. In the 2000s and 2010s, designers began to create live-action idents rather than graphics, and idents began to take the form of entertaining short films, with elaborate and diverse soundtracks that align with the genres of the programmes. In the era of overflow, some online platforms such as All4 have returned to using simple mnemonics, that recall the short fanfares in the earlier periods of broadcasting. In contrast, some television and streaming platform brands continue to develop a cinematic aesthetic based on intersensory correspondence and intense details that are intended to portray television as an immersive and engaging experience.

My analysis also discussed the relationship between the sounds and images, an aspect that had been previously neglected in most of the scholarship on idents (Johnson 2012, Brownrigg and Meech 1999). Across the case studies examined, the music and sound tend to occupy a complementary, or even conformant, relationship with the visuals. The composers generally worked to the images, musically interpreting the graphics. Reflecting on the animation in the Channel 4 ident, Lambie-Nairn wrote that 'the coloured blocks needed to really swish by your nose as you viewed the screen' (1997: 72). The musical fanfare in the ident can be heard as reinforcing this visual idea. The opening timpani crescendo gives a sense of something coming towards the viewer, and the regimented rhythm of the four-note motif in the winds and brass additionally convey immediacy and presence. In a different way, the Sadlers' work for BBC2 used unusual instruments and effects to generate a feeling of spaciousness. In the era of plenty in the 2010s, with the growing popularity of live action idents, the preoccupation with space shifted from a sense of virtual space to the depiction of real locations. These are no ordinary places, however: in the Channel 4 'Perspective' idents, objects levitate in the air, in the later 2014 Channel 4 idents glowing crystals radiate haunting chime sounds, and in the Sky Atlantic idents, people walk in slow-motion as the viewer is magically transported from London to the East Coast of the US. In each of these idents the music and sound design contributes to

the sense of place, whilst playing with perspective. Moving into the era of overflow, many channels begin to eschew live-action, instead using animations that exhibit an intense focus on detail and texture. In these idents, the music and sound create a sense of audiovisual correspondence, and composers such as Benyacar and Baranowski focus on 'rendering' the animated sequences, creating a 'believable' environment or space.

Building on Anahid Kassabian's concept of 'haptic listening', Mollaghan proposes 'haptic viewing' to describe experiences of intersensory correspondence that are facilitated by an intense focus on texture. She suggests,

> In haptic viewing our bodies are psychically involved with the process of looking, resting on a bodily relationship between the viewer and image so that we are essentially touching through our eyes. (2019: 306)

The composer for the Amazon Prime Studios ident, Benyacar, expressed his intention to create a similar sense of 'haptic listening', when he noted the 'swooshes' that happen 'in front of your face' as the buildings and streetlamps appear to emerge from the ground (2021). Similarly, Baranowski intended the BBC Two idents to convey enticing 'environments' that the viewer would want to 'visit' (2021). In these examples, therefore, the sound does not just 'conform' to the image but contributes to the sense of immersion and 'haptic viewing' (Mollaghan 2019; see 2.2 above). This intense relationship between sound and image can be considered an extension of the Sadlers' approach in the 1990s. The microscopic focus on textures and layers of sound has been made possible in this more recent period through the development of digital software packages, through which composers and graphic designers can move elements around, choreographing and 'building' an intricate world in real-time.

As the examples here attest, the aesthetic character of idents derives from a close collaboration between graphic designers and composers. In the next chapter I turn to focus on production process by exploring the themes derived from the qualitative analysis of interviews held with composers and graphic designers. Here I address the second research question, regarding the nature of the production process for idents, and the position and value of composers in this context.

Chapter 5: Thematic Analysis of Interviews

To gain a further understanding of the production process, I conducted interviews with 30 practitioners, predominately graphic designers and composers (see Table 7 below).

Role	Number of participants	Channels discussed
Composer	11	BBC News, BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Four, Channel 4, various UKTV channels, Amazon Prime Studios.
Graphic Designer (and/or Creative Director)	17	BBC News, BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Four, various UKTV channels, Channel 4, Film4, Sky Atlantic, Amazon Prime Studios.
Other	2 (one strategist and one producer)	Channel 4, BBC One, BBC Two, Sky Atlantic, ITV1, Netflix.

Table 7: Overview of Interviewees

As noted in Chapter 3, I selected the method of reflexive thematic analysis to interpret the interview data. During analysis, I used the six phases suggested by Braun and Clarke as a guideline (2006, updated in 2019). These steps consist of i) familiarising yourself with the data, ii) generating initial codes, iii) developing themes,[99] iv) reviewing themes, v) defining and naming themes, and vi) producing the report. Before exploring each of my themes in detail, I first outline my approach and the development of these themes.

i) Familiarising yourself with the data

First, I familiarised myself with the data through listening to, transcribing, reading, and re-reading the interviews.

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[99] In 2006, Braun and Clarke described this stage as 'searching for themes', but in 2019 the authors changed the wording to 'developing' to emphasise the active role of the researcher; themes do not 'reside' in the data but are an active construction on the part of the researcher.

ii) Generating initial codes

Next, I began to assign initial codes to short extracts of the transcripts. I followed the advice given to qualitative researchers to conduct several 'cycles' of coding (Saldaña 2015, Miles and Huberman 1994), and completed an initial 'exploratory' cycle followed by two further coding cycles, in which I refined the code names and reduced the quantity of codes. I aimed to ensure that my interpretation was reliable and consistent by repeatedly comparing codes and themes back to the individual data extracts and the overall data corpus (Braun and Clarke 2006: 21). During the first cycle of coding, I coded the same data extracts with several different codes. The second coding cycle involved examining the overlaps between codes and refining the code names. The codes generated after this second cycle of coding are listed below.[100]

'Evolving'	Collaboration	Hierarchy	Pitching	Royalties and
'Family'	Communication	Idea	Play	fees
'Fun'	Compartmenta-	Improvisation	Precarity	Self-awareness
'Lone wolf'	lisation	Influence	Process	Skills
Aesthetics	Constraints	Inside vs.	Production	Speed
Attitudes	Contracts	outside	quality	Status
Authorship	Craft	Inspiration	Public	Storytelling
Branding	Creativity	Intuition	Quality	Structure
Brevity	Direction	Labour	Rationale	Technology
Brief	Deadlines	Memorability	Rebellious	Training
Budget	Feedback	Metaphor	Respect	Trust
Change	Fit	Networking	Relationship	Typecast
Clarity	Function	Personal	Reputation	Value
Clients	Hidden	involvement		

iii) Developing themes

The third stage of coding involved combining salient codes to form analytical categories. For example, *Improvisation* and *Inspiration* were categorised under *Idea generation* (which eventually became part of Theme 1: *Creative Process*)*,* and *Reputation* and *Trust* were included in the *Relationships* category (which eventually became part of Theme 3: Collaboration). A mind map was created containing all the

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[100] Codes placed in quotation marks are In Vivo codes. These are codes that use 'words or short phrases from the participants' own language' (Miles and Huberman: 242.6). For example, a composer's statement that 'I was sort of like the lone wolf' was coded as 'Lone wolf'.

categories and codes. This process initially resulted in six main themes: *Industry Structure, Creative Process, Identity, Function, Craft, and Collaboration*.

iv) Reviewing themes

The next stage was to re-read the contents of each theme and the entire data set to check that they are 'internally consistent' (Braun and Clark 2006). This process led me to collapse the *Craft* and *Function* themes into an overarching theme, *Value*. I also decided that there were not enough salient data extracts to support *Industry Structure* as a stand-alone theme, and elements of this were incorporated into *Identity* and *Creative Process*. I found that determining the themes was an iterative and gradual process, often requiring me to shift codes and categories into different arrangements.

v) Defining and naming themes

An evocative quotation from the participants' own language was included to define and summarise each theme (Saldaña 2015: 199). According to Braun and Clarke (2013: 258), using quotations within the names of themes can provide 'an immediate and vivid sense of what a theme is about, while staying close to participants' language and concepts'. The themes are named below:

Creative Process – '*We need to figure out where we're going*'
Identity – '*Different types of creative brains*'
Collaboration – '*Neither can do what the other can do*'
Value – '*It's not just a pretty piece of film*'

vi) Producing the analysis.

I selected particularly illustrative quotes to include in Chapter 5, this current chapter, to provide evidence for each theme and sub-theme. According to Byrne, qualitative researchers have two options when writing up the results of a thematic analysis: data extracts can be presented illustratively, providing a 'surface-level description of what participants said', or analytically, 'interrogating what has been interpreted to be important about what the participants said and contextualising this interpretation in relation to the available literature' (2021, n.p.). Since reflexive thematic analysis is aligned with the interpretive theoretical perspective, it was more appropriate to provide

an analytical write-up, going beyond describing the data, but constructing a theoretically informed argument as to how the various quotations address the research questions.

Accordingly, I ordered the themes in such a way as to form a logical and meaningful narrative. Chapter 5 begins with *Creative Process*, to situate the analysis within the context of the production process. Next, *Identity* explores the impact of the creative process on the working identities of the individual practitioners. This theme includes the divisions between the 'creatives' and the 'suits' that result from the hierarchies and systems of judgement embedded within the descriptions of the creative process. The third theme, *Collaboration*, explores the interactions between composers and designers, and therefore expands on the links and disparities between the identities of these two types of creatives. Finally, *Value*, explores the perceived cultural, economic, and aesthetic values tied to idents and to the creative labour of composers and their colleagues.

In the analysis below, each theme is introduced with a thematic map, outlining the sub-themes and constituent categories. To indicate particularly illustrative phrases from which I have formed my interpretations, I have emphasised shorter segments of the text using emboldenment and italicisation.

5.1 Creative Process – *'We need to figure out where we're going'*
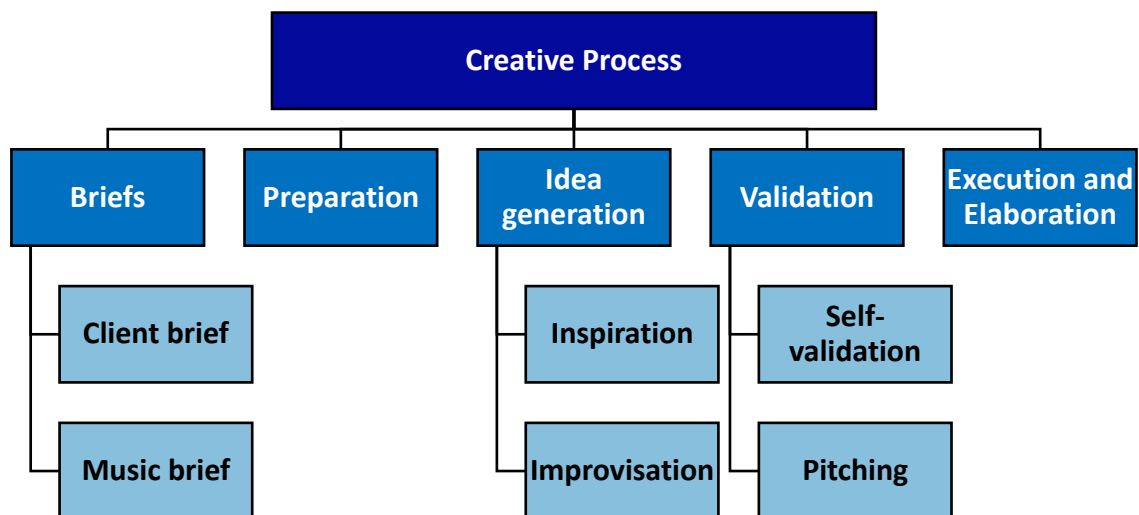
Figure 29: Thematic Map for Creative Process

This theme explores interviewees' observations and experiences of the creative process. Here, I consider and compare the perspectives of composers and graphic designers, to demonstrate the position of sound in relation to the overall production process. The five sub-themes loosely correspond with existing studies of creative processes across disciplines which posit five key phases: 1) problem finding, 2) immersion or preparation, 3) idea generation, 4) idea validation, and 5) application and outcome assessment (e.g. Wallas 1926, Amabile 1988, 1996). The process described by the designers similarly resonated with the well-established process codified in 2003 by the Design Council as the 'Double Diamond', consisting of four steps: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver (Ball 2019). The term 'double diamond' aims to describe the expansions and contractions inherent in the design process. The scope first expands during the research or 'discovery' process, after which designers narrow down the potential avenues into a concise definition of the problem in the form of a brief. This is followed by another exploratory phase where various potential solutions are sketched out. Finally, designers will work to produce and deliver the final product.
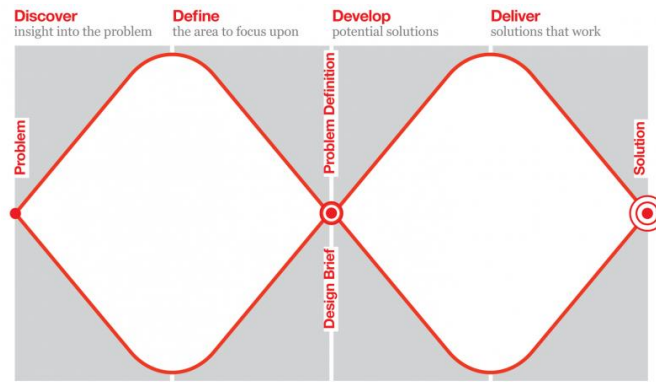
Figure 30: The Design Council's Double Diamond Design Process

My interviewees described the creative process in different ways, and it is clear that the term 'process' carries different resonances in the disciplines of graphic design and music composition. As the diagram above demonstrates, the field of graphic design is often systematically oriented towards a 'solution' to a 'problem'. In contrast, music composition is often considered as a more free and unrestricted form of creativity, linked to improvisation and experimentation. As explored below, there are many overlaps and resonances between the processes adopted within two disciplines.

One key unifying motif throughout many transcripts was the conceptualisation of the creative process as some form of journey. To sum this up, Creative Director and Designer Paul Franklin describes the creative process as a 'crazy roller-coaster':

> At the starting point, you appoint the agency and everyone's happy. You see the initial work and everyone's happy. You get the first visuals and everyone's really excited. Then, that's the point when you start making stuff and the excitement turns into terror. ***You're free-falling down this path*** and right at the very bottom you wanna sack the agency. You've wasted all your money and everyone hates each other. And then as it launches, at that point people like it and people say, 'what a great job you've done' and everyone likes each other again. [...] ***There are peaks and troughs along the way*** [...] It's never as smooth as you think it's going to be. (2020)

Franklin describes an emotional journey, changing from 'happy' and 'excited' to 'terror' and 'hate', and finally returning to a situation in which everyone 'likes each other again'. My analysis of this theme thus begins with the 'starting point' of the creative rollercoaster: the brief.

5.1.1 Briefs

Client brief

As creativity scholar Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi states, 'the creative process starts with a sense that there is a puzzle somewhere or a task to be accomplished' (1996: 97). In the production of idents, the creative process begins when the channel executives provide the graphic designer with a brief.

Before the broadcast industry adopted marketing in the late 1990s, designers were typically briefed by the head of the channel, the channel controller. Briefs were informal and often not written down (Platt 2021, Hifle 2021). After the late 1990s, however, briefs began to be explicitly driven by research and brand strategy, provided by a team of marketing executives. A brief of this type might consist of one or two pages of written text including a description of the target audience and examples of the types of programmes and genres that the ident would accompany.

Several designers initially perceived the introduction of a more formalised process in the late 1990s as creatively restricting, adding more layers or 'filters' into the process. For example, one designer noted, 'it got filtered as the years went on, and more people were involved' (Platt 2021). Designers often used movement-based metaphors to describe this change. For example, graphic designers noted: 'there were more stakeholders, so it was a less easy and clear route' and 'you had to jump through a lot more hoops (Williams 2021, Platt 2021). One designer recalled his initially ambivalent attitude towards the introduction of marketing:

> I think, initially, I remember the first meeting with someone from marketing thinking 'what are you here for?' 'what are you doing?' But actually, the more that I went on to work with people doing strategy, the more they are able to frame [...] the brief. That's really where they were fantastic, ***in being able to distil*** what the channel was and what was needed for the channel into a brief or ***into a way that was a creative springboard for you***. It was a big change, but I think it was good. (Platt 2021)

This comment suggests that the development of marketing within broadcasting eventually led to a division of roles between the clients and the creatives: the marketing

team metaphorically 'distils' the brief, providing inspiration that is used by the designer as a 'jumping-off' point in the creative journey.

As marketing and design became more closely aligned, interpreting the client brief became a core part of the designer's job. As Franklin noted, 'the problem-solving part of it is to listen to what someone said, and actually unravel what they really need' (2020). This typically involves reinterpreting the brief in creative terms:

> Most of the briefs I get from the client, I tend to glaze over because they all ask for the same thing. [...] You've got to find this other nugget of something in there. (Keeley 2020)

Sometimes, the brief was left 'open'; these types of briefs are more unusual but were seen by designers as a 'fun' challenge. For example, the brief for Channel 4 in 2004 'was quite literally open: it was just one line saying, what's next?' (Foraker 2021) Designers and composers occasionally prefer this kind of brief, as they feel trusted and left to their 'own devices' (Hanif 2021, Keeley 2021, Christman 2021). Accordingly, the client brief raises issues concerning the relative authority of the client and the designer:

> I think the best kinds of briefs for me are the ones which set out what you're trying to achieve. What you're trying to achieve as a business, not creatively—**that's our job**. [...] I think the practical briefs are the best ones rather than a brief that tries to get into the creative work because **that does your job for you** and ultimately you always have to unpick it anyway. (Franklin 2020)

However, without a clear brief, it can be difficult for designers to know where to start. Returning to a movement-based metaphor, Hifle noted,

> You don't want a loose brief. Somebody might not have an idea but they should really know their subject because **otherwise you can just go around in circles**. (2021)

Similarly, Franklin noted that restrictions in the brief can give the designer license to 'step out and do things that are a little surprising' (2020). Here, Franklin is echoing a mantra within the industry; advertising guru David Ogilvy famously requested that strategists he worked with should 'give [him] the freedom of a tight brief' (WARC 2020). Ogilvy brings the creative journey in parallel with real journeys, explaining that if creatives know 'where they're going, and they can start thinking about it on the way home' (Ibid.).

In short, the graphic designers interviewed expressed conflicting ideas surrounding the utility of the client brief. Some suggest that the client brief has limited creative value for them ('they all ask for the same thing' and 'you always have to unpick it', Keeley 2020, Franklin 2020). Others find the restrictions imposed by the brief to be a helpful stimulus for creativity ('Sometimes the more [restrictions] you have the more creative you have to be', Keeley 2020). Overall, the stage of receiving and interpreting the brief is posed as a creative process, as designers re-interpret the problem or 'puzzle' presented by the brief in creative terms.

After receiving and interpreting the brief from the client, designers will then devise and pitch their initial ideas. For most of the practitioners interviewed, only after visual designs were nearly complete would the designers write a music brief and begin to invite composers to pitch their responses.

Music brief

Composers have a more peripheral role in the process than graphic designers and tend to be involved towards the end, often in the final few weeks of a project. In contrast to the client brief discussed directly above, the music brief is written towards the end of the project, usually by the graphic designer, sometimes with input from the client. The form of the music brief varies. Some participants suggested that music briefs tend to be 'informal' and are commonly not written down. Instead, designers have a conversation with the composer, or provide them with still images or moving visuals (Franklin 2020). For example, Lambie-Nairn preferred to meet with composers to discuss their ideas.

Designers noted that they often wrote an intentionally ambiguous music brief, to leave room for the composer's 'creative input' (Keeley 2020). Here, designers again use metaphors alluding to journeys, movement, and exploration to describe the creative process:

> When you're a creative briefing another creative **you don't want to direct their thoughts**. (Franklin 2020)

Sometimes you're looking to the musician to come up with a **twist**. [...] That for me is what makes the job fun and exciting. Because if everything turned out how you first perceived it in your head or your storyboard, and it didn't **wander along the way,** it would be a bit dull. (Keeley 2021)

If you're not a control freak who tells them, 'it needs to be exactly like this', that helps the project. **If you keep the minds open, everybody can explore**. (Gabathuler 2021)

Composers similarly described taking a musical idea 'on a journey' and deciding of their own accord what the musical 'direction' should be (Martin 2021, Lowe 2020). Although designers believe that the brief should not entirely 'direct' the thoughts of the composer, an element of direction is necessary and helpful. Benyacar described a link between the clarity of the music brief and the success of the creative 'journey':

The good briefs are where you have **a clear direction, it allows for some exploration** but from the first note I write, **I know what my goal is**, because it was given to me in the brief [...] I can't just write a piece of music, **we need to figure out where we're going**. (2021)

In fact, several composers noted that they preferred working to a brief, and that they found the restrictions inherent in this type of short form work to be inspirational:

I used to write my own songs, but I'm so used to working to a brief that it's hard coming up with something that has a direction and a purpose. [...] You've got to give yourself your own brief somehow. (Lowe 2020)

I think being a composer—the fear of the blank page, you can write anything, what are you going to write? But as soon as somebody gives you the structure of a duration and some imagery to work with it's really inspirational and it immediately gives you an idea of tone and texture. **It does a lot to set you on a path.** (Martin 2021)

Although designers and composers tend to be briefed at different stages of the overall production process, there are commonalities in the way they approach the brief. In general, briefing is framed as a starting point in an exploratory journey, in which the graphic designer and composer work to define and envision the creative 'goal'. The brief provides the first direction; then, it is the role of the designers and composers to facilitate the unpredictable 'wanderings', the 'twists and turns' of the process. When considering the role of their clients, however, designers often describe the briefing stage in terms of scientific techniques of distillation, condensation, and clarification. Perhaps these conflicting metaphors indicate that the process relies on a balance between artistic and commercial values of the designers and the clients.

5.1.2 Preparation

After receiving a brief, the next stage is preparation, which often involves researching relevant materials. As designer Paula Williams notes, creative ideas in branding and advertising are commonly based around a particular 'insight' or observation:

> You can't design something or write a piece of music based on nothing. It needs background research and you need to pull an insight out of that. (2021)

For example, in the Amazon Prime Studios example discussed in Chapter 4 above, the designer Christman and his team 'spent weeks and weeks researching different architecture and different theatres' on which to model the computer-generated cinema theatre (2021). BBC News composer, Lowe, suggested that a musical idea is an 'abstract concept', which can be based on 'nurturing through life and what you experience' (2020). More specifically, he described his ideation of the BBC News theme as an 'accumulation' of tacit knowledge gained about the BBC throughout his life:

> Ideas happen in a split second. [...] It's an accumulation of all those years, I think, of building up to the point where the idea just pops in, in a split second. (2020)

These comments suggest that creative processes can be influenced by a composers' previous life experiences, depending upon the whole process of formal and informal education (Amabile 1996: 65). This idea resonates with literature and how-to guides for composers. For example, in his book targeted at commercial composers, Steve Karman advises: 'remember that the few moments a prize-fighter is in the ring represent the culmination of months and months of disciplined preparation. Pulling a melody out of your subconscious deserves no less an amount of dedication' (1989: 83). Therefore, the 'preparation' stage is often closely tied to the individual's identity and educational background.

5.1.3 Idea Generation

The generation of creative ideas is the crux of the roles of the designers and composers:

> It's an idea, it's rooted in something that has a purpose at the heart of it.
> (Bovill 2021)

> The best things I've ever done musically have always been when you can hear an idea in the music. [...] Getting an idea right is probably the essence of being a composer for brands. (Lowe 2020)

Interviewees suggested that 'ideas' can be understood as the symbols that become 'assets' for the brand. For example, the idea of creating a balloon styled as a globe for BBC One in 1991 established '[t]his incredible, amazing icon that you could be recognised for' (Chapman 2020). Similarly, a musical 'idea' might include sounds or motifs that become connected with the brand; as Lowe noted,

> When you're creating any brand sound, you're basically coming up with a musical idea that represents the concept of the thing. And that's brief for all idents really. (2020)

An example of a 'brand sound' is the BBC News 'pips', about which designer Keeley observed, 'Those little thoughts – they are the things. They're like the brand thoughts' (2020). In other words, the designers and composers both consider their work in terms of constructing visual and sonic ideas that ultimately add value to the brand.

The creative process revolves around ideas. However, a particularly ambiguous aspect of the creative process is the question of where ideas come from. This sub-theme, Idea Generation, accordingly splits off into two strands: Inspiration and Improvisation.

Inspiration

'Inspiration' can be defined as a 'breathing in or infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind' (OED 2022). Inspiration can be experienced as a spontaneous awareness of a new idea, that often seems to have come from an external source. For both designers and composers, inspiration happens spontaneously; as Tony Sadler recalled whilst working on the BBC2 ident, 'an idea just came into my head' (Sadler 2020). In fact, moments of inspiration are valuable for practitioners. Designer Tim Platt demonstrates: 'I might look online and start researching that way, but I would try and look there (*points to head*) first of all' (2021).

Several designers attributed their creative inspiration to their observations of the world around them:

> I just observe a lot of things, I just see things and they either make me laugh or they make me smile, or they make me think 'that's really beautiful'. It could be anything, it could be a picture, it could be just seeing someone in the street, or the way things move. (Platt 2021)

> There might be... I don't know, there could have been an exhibition or something that someone saw and thought 'well, that was brilliant!' or... I don't know—where does the inspiration come from? It comes from all over the place. (Williams 2021)

Since composers tend to be employed later in the process, the already-completed graphics are often a trigger for inspiration. Composer Mark Sayer-Wade recalled, 'we'd be asked to go along and watch the film, so we'd start getting ideas, start getting the creative juices going' (2021). The graphics can provide inspiration to composers through a type of intersensory correspondence. For example, as described in the first section of Chapter 4, Tony Sadler noted 'I really liked the way the paint came on and trickled and splashed on the two, and I thought, okay, I'm getting wind chimes' (2020). One designer, Christof Gabathuler, described his work in similar terms, noting, 'I always try to think of music when I design as well: the beats, the rhythm.' (2021) For several composers, the brief also played a central role. Imran Hanif, composer for the BBC One 'Circles' idents created in 2006, noted that when beginning a project, he would first listen 'to the requirement and see if there's anything that comes to mind straight away' (2021). Similarly, David Lowe recalled his briefing meeting with Lambie-Nairn: 'the ideas started to pop into my head as he was talking, and I just started to come up with the idea of using the pips as the sound to a beat. And it all started to make sense' (2020).

It is difficult for creatives to explain exactly where their ideas come from ('they come from all over the place', Williams 2021). For designers, inspiration may come from research and from their observations of the world around them. Composers working in this field may experience inspiration through talking with graphic designers and engaging with the visual elements of the ident; accordingly, the generation of musical ideas is inseparable from the collaborative context of the production process. The generation and communication of ideas between the visual and sonic disciplines is an area that I return to in Theme 3: Collaboration, below.

Improvisation

Many compared the generation of ideas to a type of improvisation. Improvisation is defined as 'the action or fact of doing anything spontaneously, without preparation, or on the spur of the moment' (OED 2022). Improvisation is also concerned with working with materials that are to hand: 'the action of responding to circumstances or making do with what is available' (Ibid.). Several participants described ident production as a form of improvisation, in terms of working with pre-existing materials or structures. Tony Sadler pointed out:

> People always think improvisation—you just sit down and play. Well, yes, that's true. But if you think about jazz or blues, there's always a structure, isn't there, and it will be an improvisation on a well-known song. The Blues is a 12-bar form, so everybody knows what the structure is. (2020)

Designers are required to develop and use structures in producing idents; for example, they must work with certain fixed visual elements and timings. In the case of Channel 4, the nine blocks of the logo that Lambie-Nairn created in 1982 became a structure that was reinterpreted in future idents. Designers and creative directors Brett Foraker, Grant Gilbert, and Chris Bovill then went on to 'experiment' and 'play' with the logo, reinterpreting it in new ways. For example, Gilbert and Bovill described their process in 2016 as a form of collaborative improvisation—experimenting and playing with the materials that were available to them (see section 4.2.3 above). Again in 2018, Dougal Wilson, through improvising or 'playing' with the 3-D printed blocks, created an anthropomorphic new '4':

> And again, we were like right we've got these building blocks. And then [Dougal Wilson] basically got Blu Tack and stuck it together and went—eh? (Bovill 2021)

The generation of the idea came from improvising with the objects at hand: the physical Channel 4 blocks.

Musicians also describe idea generation as an improvisation that involves spontaneity within a structure. Composers Tony and Gaynor Sadler explained that during their studies at the Royal College of Music, the course that best prepared them for their career in commercial composition was a musical improvisation class. In these classes, composers created a piece of music based on existing materials that might range from a musical pattern to a haiku or a picture. The composers stated that they later viewed

these classes as a 'lesson in dealing with a brief' and applied this approach in 1991 when working on the first BBC Two idents designed by Lambie-Nairn (2020). The first ident they worked on was *Paint*, and Gaynor Sadler, quoted in Chapter 4 above, recalls the improvisatory nature of his ideas in responding to the images:

> The paint coming on to that figure '2' was like an action painting, a moving action painting. And our reaction to that was to do the same kind of thing, to throw these percussion sounds at the image and let that work for itself. So it was a natural kind of partnership, really. (2020)

In *Paint*, they had created a structure which then functioned as a template for the many other BBC Two idents the partners were to create over the next twenty years:

> Because we'd got a really good, solid structure from the original one, it was very liberating for our imaginations on all the other ones. […] Harking back to our improvisation classes, it was basically the perfect structure for us. Everything else [...] up to 2001 came out of that first improvised, semi-improvised piece of music. (Sadler 2020)

Once a structure has been established, designers and composers can experiment. For example, several designers spoke of 'playing around' with ideas during brainstorming (Gilbert 2021, Bovill 2021). Paula Williams suggested that this 'play' can involve improvising with objects that happen to be at hand, recalling the process for a humorous BBC Two ident called 'Woodpecker':

> The Woodpecker one, I think it's the movement of those little things, I think maybe someone had one in the studio—one of those little things that you used to stick on a pencil? Kids have them and there's like a little spring and a little woodpecker. (2021)

Similarly, the composers 'play' by experimenting with different instruments or objects they can use to make sounds. Several interviewees mentioned using children's toys, giving this creative experimentation a playful childlike quality:

> I've got a four-year-old and he has a toy box of musical instruments which I got out recently. [...] I used this (holds up toy accordion). This I ended up using, there's [an ident] called 'Feel Good' where there's lots of balloons going like 'shhh', so I actually ended up using that (rustles toy accordion). (Baranowski 2021)

> I went into my kids' room and I stole bunch of their toys, including Legos and wood blocks and these magnet tiles and I started recording basically that 'clack clack clack' sound so that I could make the match to what I saw. (Benyacar 2021)

The process of creating visuals and sounds for idents is inherently limited. The graphics must contain the channel logo, the ident must have a particular duration, the sounds and music must be recognisable, engaging, and yet unobtrusive so as to not distract from the voiceover. Often, designers and composers are adapting visual and sonic materials that have been developed by those working on the channel before them. However, these restrictions evidently provide the graphic designers and composers with structures and materials with which to improvise, experiment, and play to make something new.

5.1.4 Validation

Having come up with several ideas, designers and composers then assess their ideas by first considering the suitability for the brief, and then by pitching to the client.

Self-validation

The stage of self-validation often involves questioning the ideas in a critical way:

> I formulated the idea in my head pretty much as I was leaving the meeting with him, really. [...] I sat there on the train on the way home, thinking 'can I do that or is it too obvious?' [...] But I was thinking no, that's got to be the one that works, so I'll just do it anyway. To me it was just blindingly obvious. (Lowe 2020)

> I remember getting the brief and I think in the first 30 seconds of my pen hitting the paper I had already drawn that heart. Because the inside of the two reflected is the heart. [...] [I thought,] I can't just go with that, I can't live with that. I spent three weeks [...] and I couldn't come up with a better idea. So that's part of the creative process, sometimes you might fight for three weeks to try and come up with something and then you finally get it and sometimes you'll get it in the first thirty seconds. (Hifle 2021)

Hifle and Lowe both demonstrated uncertainty towards their own moments of inspiration, trying and failing to come up with alternatives, fearing that the idea was too 'obvious'. This self-consciousness reflects an internalisation of the judgement system of the creative 'field' as the creatives attempt to evaluate their own ideas (Csikszentmihalyi 1998; Gilmore 2006).

Often, this self-validation is described in metaphors relating to sensation; designers and composers assess ideas in terms of how they 'feel' or how they align with a certain 'vision', for example:

> I would just sit there and play around in a very crude way on the keyboard and just see what it **felt like** it matched. (Martin 2021)

> We were looking at the film going hmm... **this feels good**! (Tony and Gaynor Sadler 2020)

After deciding amongst themselves which ideas might intuitively 'feel' right within the context of the brief's requirements, the creatives pitch their creative idea to the client. The creatives first validate their ideas based on their own artistic intuition, and do not mention reliance on any kind of quantifiable resource, such as testing with audience members, for example. This is similar to the situation in advertising suggested by marketing academics Chris Hackley and Arthur Kover, in which the creatives respond to the disempowering systems of judgement in agencies by carving out 'self-respect by setting their values at odds with those of their employer' (2007: 68). This method of self-validation in a sense distances the creatives from the often more empirical methods of valuation employed by their clients, such as audience testing.

Pitching

The pitch typically takes the form of a short presentation. Before the late 1990s, the designers would pitch directly to the Channel Controller, but after the adoption of marketing departments, in-house designers would usually pitch to a team of marketers instead. For both composers and graphic designers, the pitching stage is a pivotal and often pressure-filled moment. As Foraker noted, when pitching it is necessary to frame the creative idea in terms of a 'story' that can be sold and rationalised to the decision-makers:

> What doesn't come through in any of the books on this stuff is just how much kind of internal pressure there is to not only get it right, but also give the people very high up a story. (Foraker 2021)

Designers would often pitch multiple ideas, with the process of 'narrowing' or 'honing' the ideas conceptualised as a metaphorical journey with 'parallel routes':

> I remember sharing that with the channel head at an early stage, these are **various directions** we could go in. It **narrowed down** the conceptual and

strategic point of view. And then, for a long time we had **two different routes tracking parallel** [...] We put more energy into a totally different idea for a really long time, and it was a completely different, it would have been a completely different outcome. (Brattestad 2021)

[We presented], I think, maybe between 10 and 15 unique concepts with supporting visuals and mood boards and stuff so then we'd go back to [the client] and go through everything and see what they responded to and what they weren't really interested in, so **we honed them down**. I think after that process **we narrowed it down** to like three or four ideas. Another unique point for this logo, I think, we took these three projects over the next several months, [we took] the three concepts relatively far. (Christman 2021)

The pitching process is often the most difficult and unpredictable part of the process. Interviewees' discussions reflect the non-linear nature of the process by describing journeys that involve going in an opposite direction or returning to a place visited earlier: 'Sometimes you go back to the first or second idea you presented [...] and you go right the way round the block' (Hifle 2021).

When the brief has been unclear, the pitching process can result in tensions between the creatives and the clients. For example:

A lot of people they don't know what they want until they've seen it and that's frustrating because you'll present something and they'll say it didn't quite work and you say 'what do you want?' and they go 'I don't know: you go away and come up with another idea'. And that's quite frustrating. (Hifle 2021)

If the clients just say, 'we'll know what we want once you show it to us', that means you'll be working forever. (Gabathuler 2021)

A similar situation also happens when pitching music, with clients often adopting the attitude that they will 'know it when they hear it':

It's hard for them to explain what they want. And you can be close to the target. You could play them something that's almost right and they say 'no, that's not quite right', and you don't know whether it's way off, or whether it's just a couple of tweaks to make it right. (Lowe 2020)

In such circumstances, interviewees describe 'pitching' in metaphors that relate to 'pitching' in sport: 'to cast, throw, *or fling forward;* to hurl (a lance, javelin, etc.)' or '(of a ball): to land or strike the ground' (OED 2022). For example, pitching is described as a 'game' composers and designers have to play, and 'if you're lucky you hit it right',

'hit the mark', or 'hit that target (Benyacar 2021, Hifle 2021, Foraker 2021). Often, this is a game played 'blindfolded':

> [When there is] no direction, it's a little bit of ***throwing a dart blindfolded into the dark.*** (Benyacar 2021)

> The hardest ones are [...] where they have no musical reference. Because then you're kind of ***poking in the dark***. Because they offer you the job and you get the job. They say 'well, what do you want to do?' And you do it, and they go 'no we don't like that', and it's like, 'what do you like?' 'give me some references!' And they go, 'we don't know, it's up to you, you're the composer'. So that was a really hard one because I was ***throwing so much stuff at the wall, seeing what would stick***. (Hanif 2020)

Part of the process of pitching involves providing rationale and preparing the listener for what they are about to hear; Tony Sadler summed it up: 'tell them what you're about to do, do it. Tell them what they've just experienced. And sometimes it works' (2020). As Martin noted,

> You have to, as much as you can, manage their expectations before you play a single note, and get as much information out of them as you can. Because you don't really want any surprises when you're playing that first playback. (2021)

As Lowe noted, there is rarely a 'correct' solution: 'You never listen to it on the telly and go, "oh I wonder what the other versions sounded like". You go, "oh that's what it is"' (2020). In this context of uncertainty and unpredictability, graphic designers and composers must rely on their skills of persuasion and presentation to convince the client that their idea is suitable.

5.1.5 Execution and elaboration

Once a creative idea has been approved, the graphic designers or composers must then elaborate the idea and produce the final series of idents. Maintaining the 'journey' metaphor discussed above, designers noted that elements such as the colours or the technology chosen to 'execute' the creative idea can change the direction of the project.

> [Our idea was initially] to shoot in live action, create all these sculptures and actually do it all on camera, but ***we ended up going in this direction***, kind of the opposite, all on the computer. (Christman 2021)

> We went off-white, which **was a big departure** because everything was on black previously. (Keeley 2021)

There are still forks in the road and decisions to be made that affect the final 'destination' or outcome of the project: for example, 'I think doing it in CG was **the only way forward**' (Gilbert 2021). The comments of these designers highlight that the crafted execution of an idea is still part of the creative journey—not its endpoint.

Creating new idents within the same series can be considered as an 'elaboration' or continued improvisation on a given theme or 'core idea' (Baranowski 2021, Chapman 2020, Lowe 2020, Keeley 2020). Lowe expressed a similar point when discussing the regional variations for the BBC News theme, described as making 'additions' to a 'core' sound (2020). Mixing metaphors, he also refers to the creative 'journey', like the participants above:

> All I need to do is use the **same core sounds** of the drums the bass, and the pips, but just build different melodic things around them. I thought **that's the direction**. (2020)

When discussing the elaboration of the music of the ident variations, interviewees also spoke in terms of a journey:

> A refresh maybe, a remix, we'd have a remix. **As long as you didn't stray too far**, then yeah updating it is fine. It can lift things a bit. (Keeley 2020)

> Over the scale of it, I played live guitar myself, got some strings, I worked with a cellist on one, my wife played cello and violin on a Hawaiian one, beautiful string tones. **Occasionally we would stray in one direction or another** but all mostly melodically or tonally [...], they come from a family. (Martin 2021)

As the two above comments illustrate, practitioners were careful not to 'stray too far' from the recognisable sounds, music, and visuals of the original, whilst introducing some variety in the execution by changing the instrumentation or 'remixing' the track.

5.1.6 Theme summary: Creative Process

This theme dealt with different elements of the creative process, or creative 'journey'. It highlighted the role and value of designers' and composers' creativity in every part of the process, from interpreting the brief through to the execution. The first sub-theme,

problem definition, involves the brief, which is often seen as the 'starting point' in the journey. Preparation and idea generation are where the creative agency of the designers and composers come to the fore, often considered as an exploratory 'wandering'. The next step, the validation of the creative ideas, involves pitching to the clients; here decisions are taken as to the continued 'direction' of the project. Finally, if the ident series or idea is successful, it will be subject to further elaboration and improvisation. Through discussions of the creative process, the designers and composers conceptualised their work as a highly creative endeavour.

5.2 Identity – *'Different types of creative brains'*
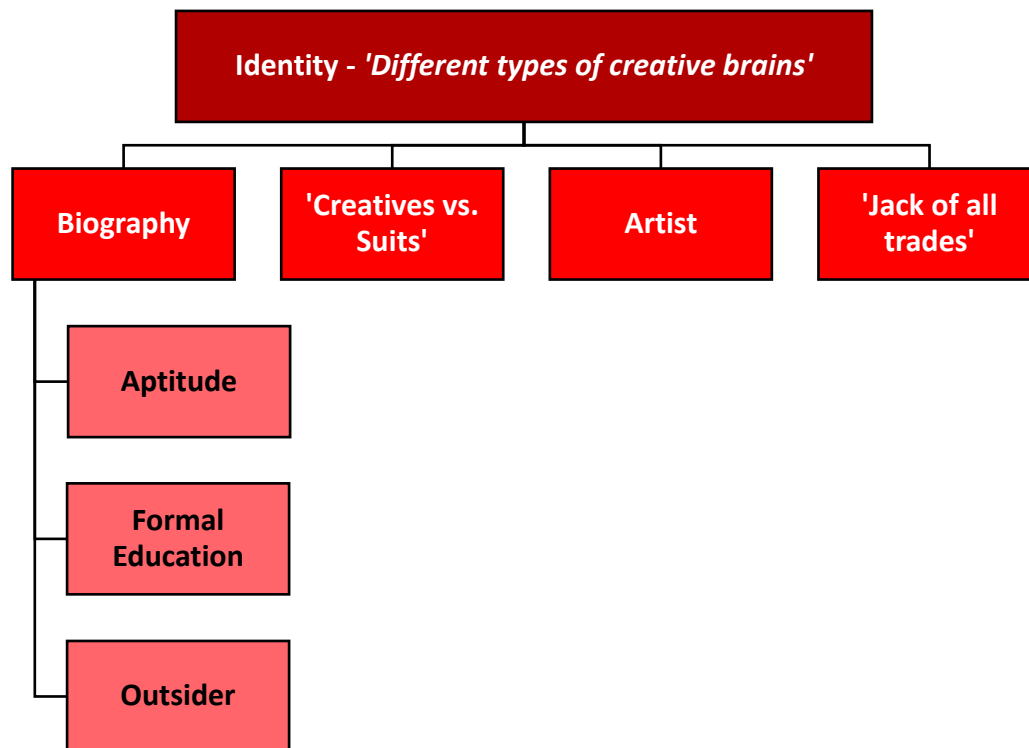
Figure 31: Thematic Map for Identity

Composers and designers who work on idents traverse creative and commercial realms. This is similar to the experience of creatives in advertising identified by Hackley and Kover, in which the 'tension between the values of art and aesthetics on the one hand, and commercial reality on the other, has become a major resource for the negotiation of professional identity in advertising agencies' (2007: 65). The exact nature of the conflicts between 'commercial' and 'aesthetic' values in ident production as raised by participants is described in more detail in the fourth theme (Value), but this theme, Identity, focuses on how these conflicts affect the self-identity of the composers and designers.

5.2.1 Biography

Aptitude

Academic studies of creativity often consider the early lives of creative people, since it is asserted that 'most creative achievements are part of a long-term commitment to a domain of interest that starts somewhere in childhood' (Gilmore 2006: 15, see also Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The graphic designers and composers interviewed echoed this idea, often tracing their career paths to creative aptitudes that developed during childhood. Several graphic designers noted: 'I'd always been pretty good at drawing and painting as a child'; 'I always loved to draw'; and 'I always wanted to be a graphic designer' (Foraker 2021, Keeley 2020, Franklin 2020, Gabathuler 2021). The composers also spoke of an aptitude for music that originated during childhood:

> I've always been musical in that my thing was playing a bit of guitar growing up, I've got a good ear and a feel for playing things. (Martin 2021)

> I'd always had music as a thing in my head. I had a music bent, if you like, from when I was a kid, and I was always thinking of tunes. (Lowe 2020)

Anthony Giddens argues that a person's identity is to be found 'in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going' (1991: 55). In other words, our identities depend on our ability to understand our own biographies in such a way that it conveys a consistent story about ourselves. The composers and designers who explain they 'always' had been musical and 'always' loved to draw actively contribute to a consistent narrative that define them as inherently creative individuals, thus establishing their values as distinct from those of their clients.

Formal education

All the graphic designers I interviewed attended art college, where they faced a choice between two routes: Fine Art or Graphic Design. Almost all the designers selected the latter route, in which students learned skills such as illustration and typography and practised working to a brief. Graphic Design is primarily viewed as a vocational course with a focus on functional creativity and craft skills (Swanson 1994). In the 1980s, the

time during which most participants were studying, motion graphic design was still an emerging field, and thus graphic design courses did not include motion graphics, but largely focussed on traditional printed graphics. As computer technology developed, most of the specific technological skills associated with television graphics were learned 'in the real world' and 'on the job' (Lambie-Nairn 2020, Franklin 2021).

In contrast to the graphic designers, there was no set path for musicians who wished to compose music for commercials or idents. Around half of the sample of composers studied at a music conservatoire, including the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music. Their education focussed on 'art music' and they studied conducting, performance, and composition. David Arnold reflected that at the time he was studying, 'none of' the conservatoires, 'encouraged people to go and participate in commercial music: they were a bit more highbrow than that' (2021). Tony and Gaynor Sadler noted similarly:

> Back in our day when we were students, anything that was at all commercial was deeply frowned upon. Deeply frowned upon. And writing music for adverts and idents didn't even count, you know, it was below the floor—is that even music? (2020)

From this account, it seems that conservatoires excluded ident production from valuations of artistic creativity—it 'didn't even count'. Nonetheless, the Sadlers' educational background seemed to have been valued by graphic designers who briefed and worked with them, for example:

> They were an absolutely brilliant example of people who would just do their research. You'd brief them and then they would go off and do all this amazing research and come out with insight around an instrument or something. ***They were very academic about how they approached their music and sound design,*** it was always based around research and music theory. Yeah, they were amazing those two. (Williams 2021)

Today, the established music conservatoires such as the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama have begun to introduce courses that focus on the production of commercial music, such as Guildhall's BMus Electronic and Production Music course. Moreover, there are several newer institutions where students can exclusively study music production or music technology, such as the Institute for Contemporary Music, and the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. Many mainstream universities also offer music technology or production courses, with some specialising in composition for television and film. One participant, Baranowski,

studied Sound Recording at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. Rather than focussing on music theory or 'art music', the course taught 'the tools' necessary to create and record music and sound, and involved 'collaborating with people', responding to briefs, learning about the 'the professional world' (Baranowski 2021). The course did not include composition—a skill that he developed in his own time and through his work for theatre, television, film, and advertising.

Outsider

In contrast, two composers, Martin and Lowe, began their careers as sound engineers. Martin explained:

> I feel like an outsider to a certain extent because my training and my route up in the industry was as a sound engineer. I'm a sound engineer first and foremost—that was my thing. (2021)

However, the backgrounds of both composers proved beneficial when working on idents, as both were able to combine the skills and knowledge about broadcasting gained from their initial career with their interest in and aptitude for music.

Around half of the sample of composers did not study music or sound at an academic institution. Many did not learn to read music, but instead compose 'by ear' or by using a combination of software such as Logic Pro and an electronic keyboard. Composers who do not read music may face prejudice from clients, who seem unsure of how to determine a composer's ability. For example, Hanif recalls initially encountering resistance when pitching for the ident jobs:

> When I had my initial meeting with all the directors [...] they said 'oh tell us about your musical background, where did you study?' I was like, I started off listening to Van Halen albums, you know, playing guitar, and I don't read music. And they were like 'Oh my god, what have we done?' (2020)

Ultimately, however, Hanif's unique approach won the pitch for the BBC One 'Circle' idents, for which he created a variety of sound tracks based on a three note descending motif.[101] Imagining the response of the client from Red Bee Creative, he

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[101] BBC One, Circles. 2006. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc-one-bikes-long-ident-2006. (Accessed Sept 20, 2022).

stated that he 'doesn't think like everyone else' and 'I just did what I wanted to do [...] I was like, "this is what I think goes"' (2020).

In many cases, framing themselves an 'outsider' was helpful to composers and designers as it highlighted the originality of their creative contributions. For example, Franklin explained that his 'outsider' status provided a helpful 'new' perspective on the Sky Atlantic project: 'They gave it to us because they thought we would bring something new. [...] I think it was because I didn't come from a traditional broadcast identity background. I did it differently' (2020). Similarly, recalling working on the 2018 BBC Two idents, brand designers Tudball and Erik Brattestad suggested that their lack of previous experience in television design 'gave us a kind of innocence and naïvety which ended up being an asset, I think' (2021). Composer Rich Martin also suggested that 'naïvety' is a positive quality:

> The problem is for all you classical lot is you listen to all this incredible music and you think 'that's not me I can't do that'. Whereas I was more naïve about it, me being young, it felt really low risk for me to try something out. (2021)

Martin noted that 'I suppose I wasn't particularly respectful of the rules of music and the structures. When you're doing something that's only 20 seconds long [...] it has to be a bit more immediate' (2021). Several composers also agreed that a benefit of not having attended a music conservatoire was that they were able to work in a more flexible and often intuitive way. For example, Lawlor noted:

> I can't make generalisations, but the people who struggled most tended to be people who attended music college. Because you have to break a lot of rules when you're doing this sort of work. You've got to be really flexible. (2020)

Whether or not composers studied music formally, their position as independent freelancers also situated them as 'outsiders'. For example, when pitching for the 2018 BBC Two idents, composer Baranowski emphasised his independent authorial approach:

> The BBC tend go to these big sound design houses in Soho, a big company. And I was sort of like the lone wolf. [...] At the very beginning they wanted me to collaborate with a music company, because 'you can't do it on your own'. I said, well, no, this is my brief. This is what I want to do. So I stuck to my guns and luckily got it that way. And it was worth it, I think. (2021)

Presenting themselves as an 'outsider' also helpfully positions the creatives as external to the systems of value and judgement of their clients, as illustrated in the next sub-theme, Creatives vs. Suits.

5.2.2 'Creatives vs. Suits'

In advertising, there is a historical division between the 'creatives' (the designers and copywriters) and the 'suits' (the clients and account managers). Hackley and Kover argue that as a result of this division, there is an assumption in the advertising and promotional industries that '[c]onsumers and clients respond to creativity while creative professionals and artists understand it' (2007: 71). They argue that:

> The bureaucratic system of judgement in advertising agencies usually disempowers creatives. This can create a semi-permanent state of marginalisation, which some creatives resolve by locating their sense of identity in an idealised realm of legitimate creativity. […] In this way, the state of tension and animosity between the creatives and the 'suits' in agencies can, in some cases, be institutionalised as a taken-for-granted resource serving the apparent interests of both parties (2007: 7).

The interviewees identified a similar division between suits and creatives in ident production, based on conflicting priorities and values, for example:

> It's the age-old thing of the creatives and the suits. The suits are more bothered about money, and x, y, z, and the creatives want to make something beautiful. (Franklin 2020)

Although this statement presents a polarised and perhaps over-simplified dichotomy, it does seem that tensions often arise between the two groups due to these conflicting priorities. Participants suggest that designers are keen to 'push the boundaries' and take creative 'risks' whilst the channel executives are often 'fearful' and want to maintain the status quo (Hifle 2021, Tudbull 2021, Lambie-Nairn 2020, Franklin 2020). Franklin summarised, 'If you run a business the unknown is terrifying. If you're a creative person, the unknown is exciting'. (2020)

Many of the interviewees posited 'creativity' as a realm that they, unlike their clients, could understand. Composers and designers criticised clients' creative decision-making and lack of creative understanding. This has often led to tensions with the composers when their artistic territory is being invaded:

And then the corporate people, the marketing, the brand managers, they've all got a say in it as well. Half of them are tone deaf and they have no sense of rhythm, don't really have an idea (Hanif 2021)

Terrible problems arise when people who aren't used to working on music try to take control of the details. Indeed, the more involved they get, the worse the end result. (Lawlor 2020)

Notoriously marketing will always want to change things and go back and rework. So well, everyone was like let's do this, 'can we do this', 'I want this sound'. That's not how we do it. [...] I'll say, well, this is not how we work. So I guess people don't realize or think about that process. [...] (Baranowski 2021)

Baranowski suggested 'trying to take stuff with a pinch of salt' (2021) whilst Lawlor maintained 'You mustn't just go with what they say because sometimes what they're asking for is not going to get through' (2020). When marketing 'committees' have too much of a say in the composition or design of an ident, the result can be a 'watered-down' or 'filtered' version of the original idea (Lawlor 2020). For example, Lowe suggests that after years of refreshes and iterations, the BBC News 'sounds more global brand-y now. A little bit, I suppose, watered down' (2020). In a similar vein, Chris Bovill argued that the role of an in-house creative department is to 'protect' the creative ideas, an asset that is 'sold' to superiors:

Our sell to them is that we can protect the idea. We love this idea, and the channel is built on good stuff and so we'll protect it, it won't get watered down. (2021)

The power imbalance between the creative and the suits is particularly evident during the pitching process when the creative work is either approved or rejected by the client. It seems that clients often have strong opinions regarding the music:

You can have quite visceral reactions [...] Over the years, I've had good and bad visceral reactions from music that I've played to people, because it is such a direct emotional connection. It can create a very intense feeling. (Martin 2021)

Music is the most challenging element of it, because it's so subjective, and it's very, very hard to argue strategically about, you know, it's like you can't persuade someone to love you for rational reasons, it's just a gut thing, and it's very much like that with music—you can say why you think it's right for the target audience, why you think it's the right melody or the right rhythm, but if someone doesn't like it, they don't like it. It's always probably the hardest part of every project. (Mawer 2020)

It seems that the perceived subjectivity of music is the cause of many difficulties in the pitching process. The lack of strategic thinking on the part of clients when it comes to music means that composers often have to pitch 'blind', unable to predict their clients' response.

5.2.3 Artist

The previous sub-theme ('Creatives vs. Suits') showed how composers and graphic designers sometimes define their identities in opposition to the 'suits'—their clients. The following two sub-themes highlight that the 'creative' identities of the designers and composers are themselves complex and contain tensions between artistic and commercial values and ideals. Composers and designers adeptly negotiate a range of complicated elements in the process, including maintaining client relationships, and responding to the branding and technical requirements of the briefs. It seems that in some situations, the interviewees present themselves as 'artists', and in other situations they strive to avoid this label.

The Romantic idea of the 'artist' as an individual 'genius' can be traced to the disappearance of the patronage system in the early 19th Century, where composers and artists relied on narratives of individuality and originality to protect their status and earn a living (Goehr 1992: 20; Klein 2020: 9). Notions in music surrounding authorship, authenticity, and artistic 'genius' persist in popular music discourse today; as Jason Toynbee (2017) and Bethany Klein (2020) observe, popular musicians are frequently portrayed as artists and geniuses. In the 1960s in advertising, the new roles of the creatives as art directors and copywriters became another modern embodiment of the 'creative genius', stereotyped as 'quixotic individuals' who experienced sudden 'flashes of inspiration' (Bilton 2009: 27). As Bilton has argued, the advertising and branding industries have moved away from such stereotypes from the 1990s onwards; nonetheless, the 'old charismatic mythology has proved difficult to cast off' (Ibid.: 30).

Composers and designers indicated ambivalent attitudes towards the label of the 'artist'. Sometimes they align themselves with Romantic ideals concerning authenticity. For example, composers and designers spoke of sudden 'flashes of inspiration' when working on an ident project, claiming 'an idea just came into my head'

(Lowe 2020). Two composers take this even further, attributing their ideas to a spiritual, unknown source:

> A good melody is just remembered. [...] You pluck it out of the air where it's been and somehow it's always been there. And so, in a way, **you're just a conduit of that** and you present something that is pre-existing somewhere. (Arnold 2021)

> Honestly, and here's the really wacky thing, I'm not sure how much of that I write. *I think someone's channelling it through me*, but honestly, if they (gesturing upwards) want any royalties, they can fuck off, they're not getting them. The royalties are mine but keep the ideas coming. (Sayer-Wade 2021)

We could take these accounts at face value and assume that the composers experience their ideas in a way that feels like they are a 'conduit' or 'channel' for creative ideas originating elsewhere. Alternatively, these comments could constitute an unconscious internalisation of the 'creative genius' mythology so prevalent in music and advertising. They could also signify a form of 'impression management' (Goffman 1956: 210). Since composers are paid by their clients for their original ideas, they rely on their reputations as creative artists to earn a living. Accordingly, it is in their interest to depict musical composition as a mysterious and perhaps even divine gift, rather than a learned or mechanical process.

As creative individuals, both composers and designers demonstrate a high level of dedication to their work, often bringing their work home with them when generating ideas for a brief. One designer spoke of 'sleepless nights trying to come up with the idea' (Hifle 2021), and one composer stated, 'very often I'd just lie in bed thinking, what the hell, what can we do for that one' (Baranowski 2021). Referring to his work on the Amazon Prime Studios ident, designer Christman also suggested a deep personal involvement with the work: 'you really get to know the project, you know every pixel, every little thing in there [...] Yeah, you can just watch it and it brings back good memories' (2021). Composers often took this involvement in the work further by drawing parallels between the character of the music they produced for idents and their own personality. This is what Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves, and Dorothy Miell term 'music in identity', which describes 'how we use music within our overall self-identities' (2017: 4). For example, Lowe speculated that an affinity between

his own musical identity and the brand identity of the BBC News was partly responsible for the positive reaction he received from the clients:

> That's probably why they like it. Edgy enough to be edgy but not edgy enough to scare the grandparents. ***Which is like I am as a person***. I want to be edgy but I'm a bit middle of the road in the end, so it sort of comes out in the music. (2020)

Similarly, Martin stated that his music and sound design for the Channel 4 idents in 2004 reflected his own compositional 'voice' (2021). As mentioned in my discussion of the creative process above, the personal identity and history of the composer is an important element that contributes towards the generation of ideas.

However, interviewees also strove to avoid an overly strong attachment to the Romantic idea of an 'artist', as to do so would undermine the other skills involved. As Lowe noted, 'it's a lot more involved than just coming up with a piece of music [...] you need to know all sorts of other things about how things fit in and your solution to their problem' (2020). Other composers also felt that their more practical craft skills, as opposed to artistic talent, were often undervalued, for example:

> It would be nice for people to understand that it is a skill to be able to do this job properly. The talent is kind of taken for granted but the skill, particularly when you're branding something, for both audio and the visual elements, you have to have skills to be able to do the job really well (Sadler 2020).

Glasman self-identifies as a 'craftsman', and noted that the 'artist' label can alienate composers from the process:

> Ironically, what many directors and creatives in advertising often want you to do is be an 'artist' [...] The last thing they want you to do is to think of yourself as someone in branding because they regard themselves as having sold their soul to the devil. So, when they psychologically approach a composer, they think: 'we want this guy because he's a great creative artist', and they will never mention branding to you at all. (2021)

Some interviewees reconcile these identity conflicts by personally identifying with the abbreviated type of work that ident production involves. For example, designer Grant Gilbert noted, 'we're happy to squeeze as much communication as we can out of 10 seconds – we are not long-form people' (2021). Martin also identified as a 'short-form' person, explaining: 'I tend to write music for channel idents. My ideal duration is… anything longer than a minute I start to break out into a sweat' (2021). Similarly, Lowe

and Glasman identified with ident composition: 'I just thought "that's it for me – that's the perfect thing"', 'perhaps it chose a composer like me' (2020, 2021).

Several graphic designers interviewed noted that the work requires a 'balance' between two approaches:

> [There's] two ways of doing things: One of them is 'I'm going to do what I like', which takes you more towards being an artist, and then there's the other thing which is: there's a brief and a challenge to solve, a problem to solve, which is being a graphic designer, which used to be called a commercial artist, **[T]here's always a balance between the two sides.** (Franklin 2020)

> From a design community standpoint, you have very **different types of creative brains, you have that right and left brain** and I think, in a way, **idents are sort of where it meets up**. (Becker 2021)

> I've sort of got a bit of a mathematical brain and I've got an art brain so **there were kind of two sides.** (Bovill 2021)

This balance between creativity and business, artistry and problem-solving is at the core of the work carried out by graphic designers and composers.

5.2.4 'Jack of all trades'

One composer summed up his working identity as a 'Jack of all trades' noting that composing for short-form promotional media is a multifaceted job that necessitates an understanding of the brand identity, of the broadcast environment, and of the client's specific goals (Lowe 2020). The variety of the work is also linked to the industry structure in which 'creatives', particularly composers, often work as freelancers. Arnold sums up the position for composers:

> I think nowadays you've got to be multi-skilled. You can't just say I just conduct concerts, or play Mozart. Because you wouldn't be working very much [...] You have to respond to the market as it is. (2021)

Reflecting on the early parts of their career, partners Gaynor and Tony Sadler composed and produced a wide range of music, from singing on pop records to composing music for commercials: 'All useful when you've had a classical training, to be singing rock and roll! But we did whatever work came through the door.' (2021) Similarly, Sayer-Wade reflected: 'it was all a great big fat hotchpotch of work.' (2021) Composers may identify as a 'Jack of all trades' because they enjoy working in a range

of styles and media and possess a range of skills and areas of knowledge, but also because the nature of work as a freelancer involves working for a variety of clients and projects.

In the area of graphic design, the range of broad and specific skills required of a designer is often referred to as 'T-shaped'. CEO Tim Brown borrowed the term 'T-shaped' from IT and businesses environments and applied it to the design community (Baratta 2017). T-shaped designers combine a broad (horizonal) knowledge of many design disciplines with a deep (vertical) expertise in one design discipline. Several graphic designers interviewed expressed a desire for variety: for example, 'I like doing different stuff' and 'I've enjoyed the mix. An eclectic mix' (Franklin 2020; Hifle 2021). Similarly, several composers highlighted that they embraced the variety of styles and instruments required when composing for short-form promotional media ('I love the variety'; 'I'm very lucky—I like having a mix', Benyacar 2021, Baranowski 2021).

When asked why they enjoyed the variety, many interviewees reflected that it was because it provided opportunities for creative challenges and growth, whilst preventing boredom or creative stagnation. The three interviewees quoted below, two composers and one visual designer, reflect this:

> I would **just be bored** after two years of only having, this might sound terrible, but only having different compositional techniques to work with, rather than constantly working inside different genres. And having that **crossword puzzle kind of stimulation** of: How am I going to solve this problem? [...] So maybe that's just like partly a personality thing, partly ADHD or something. (Glasman 2020)

> I feel like I probably would get, not bored, but the repetition of the same type of project **would probably hinder my creativity**. I'm challenged by a lot of different type of projects on a weekly basis, week after week after week so I'm used to that, and I like it. (Benyacar 2021)

> If I was stuck doing sports TV channels the rest of my life, I'd go mad. Because it is one of those things that **becomes a learned behaviour**. (Franklin 2020)

Baranowski echoed Franklin's aversion to 'learned behaviours' in creativity: 'I think if I do too much of one thing I get, not bored, but I find myself repeating myself but if you start changing it up you can't repeat yourself' (2021). The variety inherent in this type of creative work clearly provides composers and designers with creative stimulation and inspiration, by compelling them to develop broad skillsets.

5.2.5 Theme summary: Identity

Although I did not originally intend to focus so much on identity when devising my research questions, my analysis resulted in many codes and categories relating to this topic, and thus I developed 'Identity' as a main theme. In sum, graphic designers and composers both tend to identify as 'creative' people, tracing their artistic or musical aptitudes back to their childhoods. As 'commercial artists', graphic designers straddle the boundary between art and commerce; for composers, this duality poses more complex issues for their identity. I highlight above that composers tend to describe their processes in terms that recall the Romantic concept of the creative artist, seeing themselves as a conduit for musical ideas. However, a couple of the composers also suggested that the 'artist' label can be constricting as it does not account for the pragmatic thinking and persuasive skills required for this work, and can serve to alienate composers from the strategic side of the project. In Chapter 6, I explore this idea further, drawing a link between the tendency to label composers as 'artists' and their marginalised status in the industry ecosystem.

5.3 Collaboration – *'Neither can do what the other can do'*
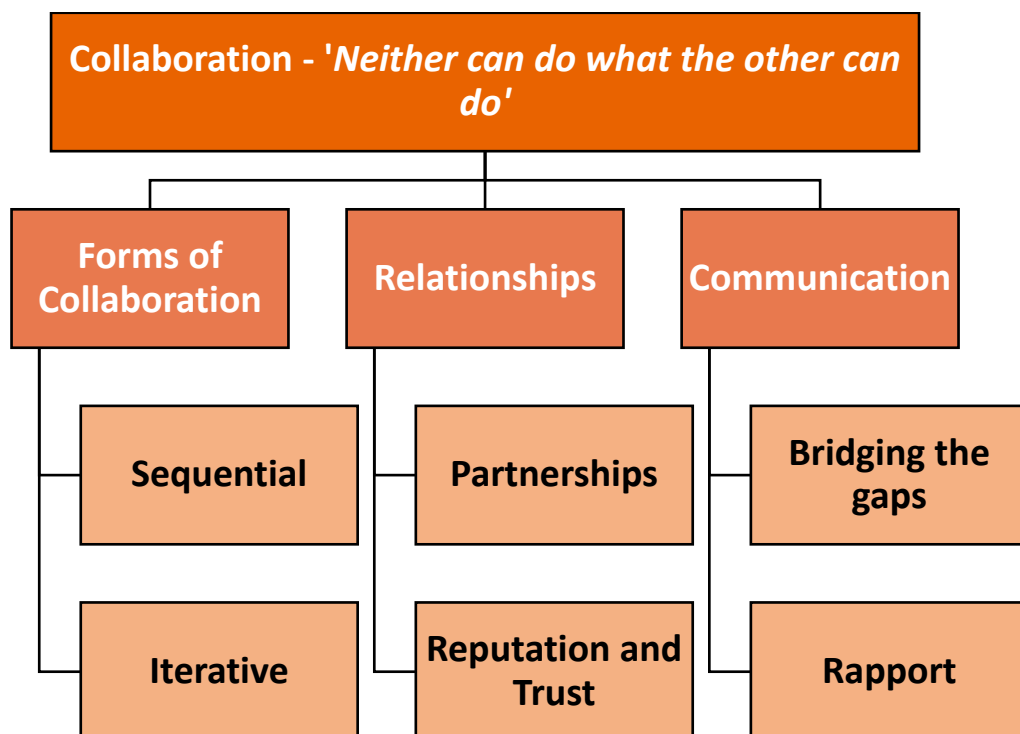
Figure 32: Thematic Map for Collaboration

5.3.1 Forms of Collaboration

Ident production does not only require graphic designers and composers to have diverse skillsets, it also involves collaboration between individuals with different craft skills or abilities. Many participants discussed collaboration as a required 'mindset' (Lambie-Nairn 2020, Bovill 2021). As two graphic designers noted,

> It's about being humble sometimes, when someone says, 'have you tried this?' and you go, 'I haven't thought of that'. [...] And that's what I mean about ***being collaborative about ownership***, and not being too precious sometimes. I can't pull off anything I come up with without the craft skills of so many other people. (Hifle 2021)

> Sometimes there are so many people working on it and you're just trying to contribute to something bigger. […] It's never really owned by somebody, it's constantly shuffled around and you're just trying to really have as much of a creative voice or as a creative input as possible. (Gabathuler 2021)

In general, participants highlighted the importance of the collaborations between graphic designers and composers in the production of idents, stressing similarities and differences between the disciplines:

The relationship between graphic designers and composers: I think that's a really vital relationship. When it works, it works brilliantly. Because there's **so many overlapping skills of creativity** [...] **Much of it is overlapping, but neither can do what the other can do.** I think you're both activating the same parts of the brain, **but doing it in completely different directions,** which is just fascinating, I think. (Martin 2021)

That's the point with idents: I'm not a musician, I'll work with someone, I understand the impact of music, but they know more than that. **So you meet in the middle, it's like a Venn diagram.** (Bovill 2021)

The graphic designers and composers express respect for each other's expertise and for the distinctions between the disciplines.

The collaboration itself can take various forms: the creative individuals may work synchronously or asynchronously; they make work in the same or separate locations; and they may work on the same section of the work or divide the tasks in a more compartmentalised manner. Finally, the creatives may share authorial status, or there may be a hierarchy in which certain individuals are deemed authors and others are not. This first sub-theme explores two forms of collaboration which I have labelled Sequential and Iterative. They are not mutually exclusive; graphic designers and composers shift between the two forms of collaboration, sometimes even on the same project.

Sequential Collaboration
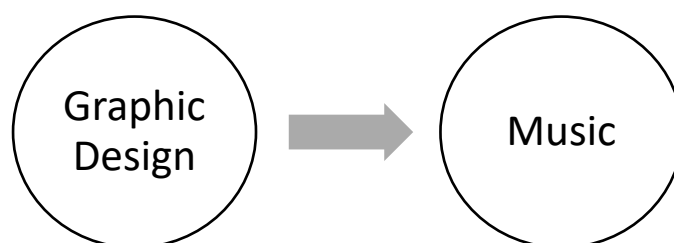
Figure 33: Sequential Collaboration in Ident Production

In their categorisation of types of collaboration, Donna Brien and Tess Brady propose that sequential collaboration 'occurs when one writer/artist might produce the initial outline (such as a plot, characters, location, or theme) and another writer/artist develops this, fleshing it out' (2003). Other examples of sequential collaboration might

include a production line or chain, or the publication of a book, where the work is handed from the author to the editor to the illustrator and lastly to the publishers. Sequential collaboration is common in the production of music for multimedia, particularly in the film industry, in which the composer tends to be recruited only after the visual component is almost or entirely complete (Cook 1998: 105). Ident production usually follows this hierarchy, illustrated in Figure 40 above. Participants noted that 'music is the last thing really in the chain' and 'music tends to come second a lot of the time' (Sadler 2020, Foraker 2021).

Composers noted this hierarchy, describing their work as a *reaction* to that of the graphic designers: 'the visuals were always a very strong diktat for what was needed' and 'my job was a bit more of a reaction to what visually they had done' (Sadler 2020, Benyacar 2021). As noted above, the visuals can provide inspiration to composers. Since music and images are not directly translatable or transferrable, the composers' reaction to the graphic designers' work involves an element of individual creativity and imagination. Accordingly, many participants suggested that a sequential form of collaboration is beneficial as it allows for the composers to exercise their creative agency. For example, the Sadlers recalled:

> We used to really like working with graphic designers, you know, Martin and all the guys at the BBC, because **they brought a different slant on things** and then **we brought a different slant on things.** And if you were working in really good harmony with one another, you'd get something very, very special happening. (2020)

In the quote below, Keeley describes a 'departmentalised' process, in which the composers and designers do not encroach too much on each other's disciplines, working in a sequential manner:

> We were always quite departmentalised, [...] and I think that's really helpful. It's like the film business. Look at the crew that built the armour on *The Lord of the Rings* or something. I mean, these guys in factories building, putting rivets into…. Then they have a guy who's in charge of the costume team. He just works on the chainmail. And that's just for one set of costumes on a film. And for me, it's this detail, and people that are looking at their little bits—that's when you get great work. I think in our process from getting a brief to the end, **what you're looking for is everyone to put in a little bit of what they do**. [...] That's kind of what you're after—creative contributions on every level. (2021)

Sequential collaboration, where one creative process follows the other, can lead to unexpected outcomes, and composers often bring new interpretations to the images,

for example in the Sadlers' creative interpretations of the BBC2 idents, as discussed above (see Chapter 4, p.63 above). Another example is a BBC2 ident called *Scientific Periscope* created by the BBC's in-house graphic design department in 1995, which features a 2-shaped periscope that opens to face the camera, intended to be aired alongside scientific factual programming. Two different soundtracks were used for the same visuals, which became two different idents, called *Scientific Periscope* and *Cute Periscope*.[102] The graphic designer for the project, Platt recalled,

> It certainly wasn't designed to be cute [...] And I think when the musicians did it they probably just did a version that had a slightly cute sound on it, and so we presented that and the client said 'Oh well, that's really put a whole different spin on it'. It doesn't look like a surveillance thing anymore, it's suddenly like a little, almost like [...] a line of those toy ducks or something. (2021)

The affordances and limitations of the technology used by practitioners greatly influences the nature of the collaboration. Before the widespread use of digital technology in the 1990s onwards, the graphics and music were each recorded onto tape. Any edits had to be made by physically cutting and splicing pieces of tape together. Composers were usually handed the finished films and would create music to synchronise to the images. To make changes in the timings of the images at this point was problematic for composers:

> Every time the change came back, you'd have to re-jig the music all over again and wasn't quite as simple as it is nowadays. […] You have to chop the tape up, can you imagine? We had to chop everything up. (Sadler 2020).

This process transformed in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the development of technologies that enabled non-linear editing (Tim Amyes 2001: 92-3). The creation of software packages such as Maya and Adobe AfterEffects for designers and Logic and ProTools for composers, meant that practitioners could easily move, edit, and delete individual elements of a project. Instead of a sequential process, where the composer only works after the graphic designer has finished, digital technology facilitated more iterative forms of collaboration. Iterative collaboration, discussed in the section below, tends to involve more stages of feedback between the designers and the composers.

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[102] BBC2 Ident, Cute Periscope, 1995. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc2-periscope-cute-ident-1995. (Accessed Aug 20, 2022).
BBC2 Ident, Scientific Periscope. 1995. https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/bbc-motion-graphics-archive/bbc2-periscope-scientific-ident-1995. (Accessed Aug 20, 2022).

Despite the new possibilities facilitated by the development of non-linear editing, graphic designers and composers still often opt for a more sequential and departmentalised process, partly for budgetary reasons. Since digital technology means that music can be composed, recorded, and mixed more quickly, it can also be done more cheaply. Therefore, deadlines can be very short, minimising the potential for collaboration. As Lowe notes, 'sometimes they need turning around on the day, or they need it by tomorrow or something' (2020). Baranowski also noted that in general:

> There was a lot more trust I think for the composer. Whereas now I think they don't trust you as much, **they want to hear it as it will be finished**. (2021)

This compartmentalised, and often rapid, way of working can still be considered collaboration, even though collaborators may not work at the same time or in the same spaces.

Iterative Collaboration
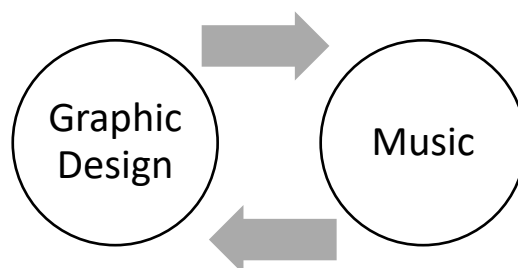
Figure 34: Iterative Collaboration in Ident Production

Like sequential collaboration, iterative collaboration involves a demarcation of roles between graphic designers and composers. However, unlike sequential collaboration, the practitioners operate simultaneously and provide feedback on each other's work-in-progress. Feedback is crucial to iterative collaboration. Before the advent of digital editing technology, the feedback process usually occurred face-to-face. For example, Lambie-Nairn adopted a model from the film industry, in which composers would often sit at the piano and 'play through cues for directorial approval' (Sapiro 2016: 106). An illustrative example is his work with film composer Colin Towns on the Sky Atlantic idents in 2011:

> We sit together, and he plays stuff and I say 'no', and he says, 'well what about this?' And I say 'oh yes', and he says 'I think we should do this' and I go, 'oh yes', so it works like that. We sat down and he turned to me and said can you

go away for half an hour, I said 'yeah sure', so I went and sat on the sofa and read the newspaper while he was working away. And he opened the door and said come in and listen to this. And that was it. I mean, he just played it and I said 'wow, that's fantastic'. (Lambie-Nairn 2020)

Today, with file sharing apps like Dropbox and WeTransfer, feedback can be shared remotely. For example, Baranowski recalled that during the BBC Two ident project in 2018:

> We'd check in every couple of days and I'd send them my most recent work to their most recent animations. [...] We're on the phone and I'll send them a video on Dropbox [...] and all the feedback was very much like: 'I really like this', 'could we bring out this a bit more', or 'maybe that's a bit too much'. **Really, really amazing, really great collaboration.** It was really lovely. (2021)

Digital editing means that the graphics and music can be created simultaneously. The composer and graphic designer can consequently work together iteratively to craft the sound-image relationship. In a chapter on television title sequences, Davison illustrates the significance of non-linear editing for the relationship between music and image, providing an example of one editor who describes his role as creating 'nerve endings' between the music (the muscle) and the visuals (the skin) (2013a: 162). Baranowski describes the iterative process of aligning sound and image in similarly organic terms, stating that he wanted to 'ensure the sound world moves and breathes with the dynamic animated environments.' (2021) This close relationship necessitated a more iterative form of collaboration, and was made possible, or at least easier, by the capabilities offered by non-linear editing. Similarly, in the Amazon Prime Studios ident, the team strove for a close synchronisation between the sounds and the images. Benyacar worked iteratively to new versions of the graphics, and after each new version was finished he would play that back to the designers:

> We worked closely to the point that on a daily basis, you know, we went on for several weeks. Once they would give me a new version of the visuals I would work for a couple of hours, or a couple of days, depending on what point of the stage we were at, and I would share with them what I did. (2021)

As Baranowski notes, though, there remains a hierarchy within this type of collaboration, in which it was often helpful to wait for the images to be almost completed before finishing the music:

It's not like they can work to the music or the sound. I very much had to take the lead on what they were doing. And because I really wanted the sound to originate from the movement, I had to really wait for it to be formed enough for me to play. Very often I worked to quite rough images and then it would all be rendered beautifully and I'd think, this sound doesn't work. I've done quite hard sounds and actually rendered it's much more soft and beautiful and if the lighting is different the sound is different. So yeah, it needed to be a certain place before you can really click. (2021)

Similarly, Benyacar noted that he often waited for the animators to progress with the visual features, explaining 'once I started seeing more details happening, I noticed what I had to focus on sound design-wise.' (2021) Even when working in a more iterative fashion, composers often still work 'reactively' to the visuals.

The use of software packages that enable non-linear editing facilitates both types of collaboration. On the one hand, composers are now expected to create polished demo tracks quickly, encouraging a more compartmentalised or sequential form of collaboration. On the other hand, designers and composers now have the ability to share various versions of their work early on, encouraging a closer and more iterative form of collaboration, a feature that seems to have been well utilised in the Amazon Prime Studios and BBC Two (2018) projects.

5.3.2 Relationships

Partnerships

A small number of the participants mentioned working in a creative partnership with a practitioner from the same creative discipline. Brien and Brady would classify this as 'joint collaboration', in which:

> Two or more writers/ artists work together on a single product producing a seamless text unrecognisable as belonging in part to any individual collaborator. **Joint Collaboration** differs from **Sequential Collaboration** in so far as the writers/artists concerned indicate that the collaborative process does not follow categorical steps or demarcations of roles, and remains instead, a more fluid process. (2003)

In this project, two of these partnerships were music composition teams (Tony Sadler and Gaynor Sadler, and Mark Sayer-Wade and Tolga Keshi). I also interviewed Chris Bovill, who previously led 4Creative with his creative partner John Allison. These participants suggested that working in a partnership can be more efficient, noting: 'two

heads are better than one' and 'we are able to pass ideas around, and you get to places quicker and better' (Sadler 2020, Bovill 2021).

Bovill and Allison's partnership is based on the traditional 'creative partnership' in the advertising industry. In the 1960s, advertising executive Bill Bernbach introduced the partnership between copywriters and art directors, a structure which was adopted by British agencies over the following decade. This relationship was often referred to as a 'creative marriage', and partners were commonly 'hired together and fired together' (Gilmore 2006: 136). Bovill compared his partnership with Allison to this historic type of creative partnership: 'It's a marriage—me and John are married, basically. We're also married to our other partners, but it's, you know, I see him more than anyone else' (2021). However, Bovill and Allison's partnership is less compartmentalised than Bernbach's traditional partnership between the art director and copywriter, in which the former would create the artwork and the latter the words. Instead, their relationship is more akin to 'joint collaboration' described by Brady and Brien (2003). Bovill noted, 'we kind of do a bit of both' (2021). However, Bovill suggested that partnerships are a 'dying breed' and 'I know some [partnerships] still but I know a lot more singles now' (2021). Hackley and Hackley argue that the decline of the art director-copywriter relationship is due in part to increasing specialisation in the industry; because clients now expect advertising and promotional campaigns to be 'spreadable' across multiple digital platforms, the work increasingly requires input from a range of specialists (2021: 151).

The other two partnerships in this project were music composing teams. When problems and tensions arose during the process of working with the client, the division of labour often involved one partner managing the relationship with the client whilst the other composed the music:

> If you're just one person, you don't have time. You need one person to quell the situation so that [the clients] don't panic—because that happened all the time, deadlines were always so short, because we were the last thing in the chain. And the other person could actually get on and do the musical idea. (Sadler 2020)

In this case the partnership is beneficial because they can divide the many tasks between them. Although a partnership is a less common type of collaboration amongst the participants, it is evidently fruitful for those who do work in this way. This form of

close collaboration in which authorship is collectively distributed has been used in the TV branding industry by artistic co-operatives such as OneDotZero, Why Not Associates, and Tomato. For example, OneDotZero is defined as a 'network' of creatives from different disciplines with 'collaboration at its heart' (OneDotZero 2023). As noted by Macdonald (2016, 12, 38), these organisations provide a contrast to the more compartmentalised and 'corporate' structure of agencies such as Lambie-Nairn, and of the participants interviewed for this project.

Reputation and Trust

Establishing trust and a good relationship with the graphic designer were often prerequisites for composers to win the pitch. For example, Lambie-Nairn explained: 'We tend not to pitch—we work with the people we like working with.' (2020) Lowe recalled that Lambie-Nairn's working style involved building a rapport with the composer, working 'face-to-face' and 'evolving the idea' together (2020). Usually, composers work to establish a reputation in the field, which in turn makes the graphic designers more likely to trust their work:

> Sometimes, if you work with someone you've built up a relationship with, they'll just come back to you for music, because **they like what you do and they trust you** and all that. (Lowe 2020).

> We were very familiar with the modus operandi of the BBC and they were very familiar with us. [...] They liked what we were doing. They liked our taste in music. So **they trusted what we'd deliver to them, basically.** (Gaynor Sadler 2020).

As creative practices, design and music composition are to an extent inherently unpredictable. Accordingly, trust and effective communication are important elements of the collaborative process.

5.3.3 Communication

When collaborating, particularly in the music briefing stage, composers and designers need to be able to communicate their ideas to each other. This is sometimes challenging since the practitioners come from different disciplinary and educational backgrounds.

Bridging the gaps

In the title of this theme (5.3: Collaboration: 'neither can do what the other can do'), I adopted a quote from Bovill's interview (2021). It is important for creatives to maintain the boundaries between their disciplines (as emphasised in section 5.2.2: Creatives vs. Suits, above). This is evident when interviewees discussed the ways they communicate with each other.

As Min Tang notes, 'interdisciplinary communication and collaboration is a creative process, as people of different disciplines need to apply creativity to bridge gaps and create new combinations' (2020: 678). One composer remarked on the creative nature of communication:

> The important component **was filling in the communication gaps**. I was a big Wittgenstein fan at university—he was interested in the inability of language to communicate ideas. What I would do when I would have a meeting, I would interrogate them from different angles and try to pin down what they were trying to say. It is impossible to describe music that doesn't exist. It's hard enough to describe music that does exist. (Lawlor 2020)

The process of 'filling in the communication gaps' itself involves a creative leap. There are two main strategies that the participants use to bridge these gaps. The first strategy is qualitative adjectives. For example, composers suggested that poetic and descriptive words referring to moods are preferred over technical vocabulary:

> It's hard to talk about music, but there are ways to exemplify if something is **optimistic, positive, major key, versus dark, dramatic, serious**. (Benyacar 2021)

> We always say to them, don't tell us what music you think it should be. Just give us some buzz words, basically. **Describe the mood** that you're trying to portray. That was very important. (Sadler 2020)

Lambie-Nairn tended to adopt this approach. He noted that there are disadvantages to including too many adjectives in the brief, however:

> My music briefs are very, very brief. Because what happens is if you give written pages of brief, the musicians hang on the wrong word, or they hang on the wrong idea. So you don't put it all in. (2020)

The second strategy used to bridge the communication gap is to refer to examples of already-existing music and films:

Sometimes they show you some pieces of music that illustrate that. And ***then you can really get hold of it.*** (Glasman 2020)

When you meet somebody on a job that you haven't worked with before, I think you just try and reference things very quickly, whether it's films or stuff you like, so you're sort of drilling down into that creative process really quickly. (Hifle 2021)

Hifle's comment, 'stuff you like', indicates that the form of the reference often depends on the taste of the individual. Thus, this process is often easier when a good rapport has been established and collaborators feel that they share and respect each other's taste in music and art.

Rapport

Participants also noted that this form of collaboration is particularly fruitful when the creatives are friends, perhaps because they feel that then they are more likely share the same 'taste':

Brett Foraker, the creative director, [...], we had a relationship at that point—we'd been working together for years, we'd become friends. ***So there were a lot of shortcuts.*** He's not a musician but has a very good ear for music, he's very musically literate and has a ***very broad taste***. So it was easy to arrive at references. We could just boil down very quickly what the mood of a film should be. (Martin 2021)

And I'd been working with Rich for like 10 years or something. I already knew what his skill set was, and I knew he'd be perfect to take it on. (Foraker 2021)

Many interviewees described the communication between designers and composers as an inherently creative and unpredictable process. Some relied on an electricity-based metaphor, speaking of spontaneous 'sparks' between the creatives:

You end up working with these people and they end up being your friends. One of my best friends is a composer and we work really closely together*.* [...] If it's someone you've been working with for a long time [...] you have certain signatures and sparks and things that happen in your conversation automatically. (Hifle 2021)

You're there for that ***creative anarchic spark*** [...] That's what we were there for—the anarchic spark [...] 'Arcing'—there you're talking, that's even better isn't it? It's like you're arcing between two cathodes. (Sayer-Wade 2021)

By using the term 'arcing', Sayer-Wade is referring to an electric 'arc' which occurs when an electrical current jumps over a gap between two conductors of electricity.

This metaphor neatly highlights the entanglement between collaboration and creativity: creativity 'sparks' in the productive 'gaps' or differences between the visual and sonic disciplines. Therefore, having good rapport means that the practitioners can create 'shortcuts' in the creative process. Although designers and composers are coming from separate disciplines, they are united in their understanding of creativity.

5.3.4 Theme summary: Collaboration

Collaboration is a key theme in my analysis, since the cooperation between graphic designers and composers forms the crux of the creative work for producing idents. In sum, I identified two different forms of collaboration between graphic designers and composers, that I have called 'sequential' and 'iterative' collaboration. Sequential collaboration takes place when the composers work after the graphic designers have completed the visuals, in a more compartmentalised manner. This form of collaboration seems to have been more common in the era of linear editing, since edits involved laboriously cutting and splicing pieces of tape. The second type of collaboration, iterative collaboration, occurs when graphic designers and composers share earlier drafts of their work and work together in a more recursive fashion. There is an element of flexibility between these two types of collaboration, and the same project can involve different types of collaborations at different stages of the process. For example, the graphic designer and composer could devise the brief iteratively, but then create the actual images and sounds separately. Communication through briefs and meetings was a vital part of the collaboration between graphic designers and composers. Ideas can seem to 'spark' and ignite when practitioners collaboratively bridge the gaps between the disciplines.

5.4 Value – *'It's not just a pretty piece of film'*
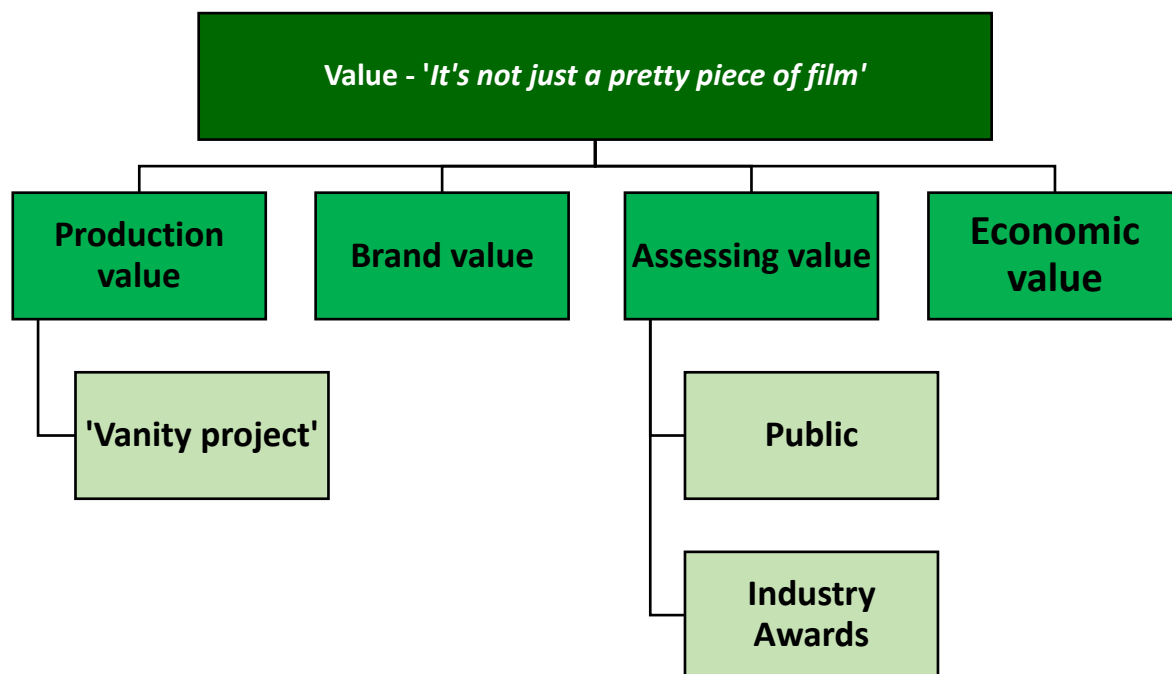
Figure 35: Thematic Map for Value

This theme explores the ideas surrounding value raised in the interviews. As highly compressed audiovisual texts, idents are appreciated by participants for their aesthetic character and production values, often deemed to be greater than that of the surrounding programmes. Idents are also valued for the technical functions they perform for audiences and broadcasters, providing information and facilitating smooth transitions between programmes (Christman 2021).[103] In conveying a favourable impression of the channel, idents are intended to help increase the brand equity or 'brand value' of the service. Creatives can also ascertain the cultural value of their work from the responses of various audiences, including press articles, fan blog posts, and industry awards. Lastly, the budgets and fees exchanged for the composers' and designers' creative labour heavily impact discourses surrounding the utility and value of idents.

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[103] 'Vanity project' is a derogatory term usually used in film discourse, which can be loosely defined as an indulgent pet project undertaken by a director or artist to satisfy their own artistic interest and curiosity, rather than at the service of any commercial or social aim.

5.4.1 Production value

John Ellis argues that interstitials 'stand out from the TV that surrounds them', in part due to their 'greater production values' (2011: 62). 'Production values' is a term used predominately in film criticism to refer to the perceived quality of a film and is often related to the production's budget.[104] Ellis states that 'the majority of interstitials, channel idents and trailers, as well as commercials, have more resources per minute poured into their creation than the surrounding programmes' (2011: 68). Idents therefore constitute an artistic and beautiful version of television—'television as it could be', if only 'it were even more costly than it already is' (Ibid.: 65).

The ideas expressed by many of the participants resonated with Ellis' argument; the work was often described in terms of a 'compression' or 'condensation' of sonic or visual details:

> There were a lot of details. Although it was only a short 15-second bite, it had enough information that could cover a whole movie. (Benyacar 2021)

> I just enjoy music and sound, and there's something quite satisfying about **condensing** a musical idea into a really short amount of time. (Martin 2021)

> And everything's **compressed** so you don't have huge amounts of time to develop a story. You have to cut to the chase. (Hifle 2021)

> You had to get the goodies in, pack them in. (Sadler 2020)

The ideas raised in the comments above resonate with Ellis' description of interstitials as a 'distillation of television', and emphasise idents' high production values, demonstrating to audiences and industry practitioners alike the creative possibilities of the medium. In his interview, Foraker drew a link between idents and production values, noting that idents could represent the 'aspirations of a channel at a given time' (2021). Sound is seen to significantly contribute to production values by covertly adding to the perceived quality of the images:

> You've only got to look at any of the idents without audio, you know, sometimes the music and the **sound design does the heavy lifting,** to add comedy or to

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[104] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as 'the quality of a production in terms of the money spent on its staging, set, and appearance'.

make something feel more dramatic or to enhance the tone and mood. (Williams 2021)

For a not-so-good film, you need some Pollyfilla in the gaps, but if it's a poor-quality drama you need breezeblocks. (Sayer-Wade 2021)

One way in which music is considered to add to the production values is in the use of 'real' instruments as opposed to electronic samples:

It's an interesting thing that **people can sense quality in music production**, but they can't describe it. And if you play two versions of the same piece of music and one was beautifully produced with real orchestras and the other was a synth Photostat version, people would know that there was a difference. They wouldn't know why, but they would certainly know that there was a difference. [...] There's a sense of emotion with real music that you don't get with a computer, because in a sense there is a collective communication between one human being and another. I think that's probably the difference. (Arnold 2021)

I mean you can replicate some strings. **There is some layering, for production values**, even the string parts. […] I tend to record live string players and then layer it underneath, to fill out the stereo feel from a production level, giving prominence to the live strings. (Hanif 2021)

Hanif's decision to combine live string playing with layers of electronic samples in order to 'fill out' the sound is a common practice in film and television composition as it creates the illusion of there being more players in the recording studio, and thus a bigger production budget.

Nonetheless, some composers feel that music and sound is often undervalued, or even ignored, by industry practitioners and audiences alike:

Sometimes people, when you say did you like the music, they'll say what music? Because they're so wrapped up in what the visual of it. And if the music is working properly with the visual, **they don't even notice it**. Which is very interesting. That's not everybody, but there's a great deal of people, they won't even kind of clock it you know. (Gaynor Sadler 2020)

Sound does so much more than I think people realise. If you just have some lovely visuals on the TV that can be nice. But actually, if you put some sounds there that make them look real, you think, okay, this is real. We don't think it's because of the sound, we think it's because of the visuals. (Baranowski 2021)

These discussions highlight the 'hidden' or 'unheard' nature of music in media and the implications of this for the value and status of composers (Gorbman 1978).

'Vanity project'

From the perspective of the channel executives, idents take up airtime in the television schedule or space in the online streaming experience that could otherwise be allocated to the programmes themselves or sold to sponsors and advertisers. One designer suggested idents could be considered by some as a 'vanity project' on the part of the channel brand itself:

> For a studio or production company, this is almost a ***vanity project***. They're not going to make any money off of this; this is a budget they need to carve out internally to represent their brand, the studio, or production company. (Christman 2021)

Many media commentators who take this view seem uncertain of the purpose or value of idents, and even consider them to be a frivolous waste of money, particularly when it comes to the publicly-funded BBC. In 2006, the new BBC One ident series prompted an article in the Daily Mail headlined: 'BBC blows £1.2m on 80 seconds of hippos, kites, and surf scenes' (MailOnline 2006). The BBC's more recent rebrand, which involved an overhaul of its corporate logo across all channels and platforms, attracted similar criticism; for example, James Max of Talk Radio responded: 'When are they going to learn that content is king? How you wrap it up doesn't matter' (Max 2021). Participants appeared to acknowledge these perspectives, particularly in the case of the BBC:

> '[The BBC] can't justify spending loads of money when they need to be saving money.' (Lowe 2020)

> It's a tough call when you have the press calling out everything you try and do that is commercial—'you're not allowed to do that, you can't do that'. It's a tough one because they have to work like a business but they can't be seen as being commercial. So it's really not about what the BBC wants but it's more about what the press and politicians allow them to do. Because ***they have a brand that is incredibly valuable but it's a public service brand***. ***They have to be very careful about how that message is communicated***. (Chapman 2021)

This results in a tension and some disagreement on the role and purpose of idents:

> I keep saying it, but it's an idea, it's rooted in something that has a purpose at the heart of it, and they have a point to it or it's trying to do something. ***Rather than just being a pretty bit of film, which some idents can be,*** some idents it's just moving logo, isn't it, it's just a dancing logo, basically, and it looks really nice, there's nothing wrong with that. That's one way to brand. (Bovill 2021)

Participants seem undecided on the relevance and future of idents in an age of online streaming and social media. Some suggested that the work is declining in utility and relevance:

> The idea of them needs to be updated because I think if not they'll kind of drift away. I think, as an expensive luxury. [...] Maybe the ident will be something that will be consigned to history. ***These bits of beautiful film that are created that no one can work out what they are for anymore.*** (Franklin 2020)

> I think the idea of a long one-minute ident: that's done and dusted now. Some of them were really long. It was a really ***decadent*** time. (Gilbert 2021)

> I don't know if [idents are] relevant now. (Foraker 2021)

According to these participants, the high production values of idents in the past now risk being perceived as a 'decadent' and 'irrelevant' 'luxury'. Not all participants seemed to agree with this somewhat pessimistic and nostalgic view. In contrast, some participants, including Foraker who is quoted above questioning the 'relevance' of idents, also argued that the aesthetic quality of idents is even more important in today's crowded market:

> I think now if you were to do [idents], the idea would be, could you get something that was **very beautiful very watchable** that people really felt good about not fast forwarding or skipping. You know, like when you're on Netflix and it gives you the option of skipping a title sequence. If it's bad, I will skip it, if it's really great I will stay, I'll watch it 10 times every episode. [...] I think [idents'] meaning is mutating, it's growing into something new. (Foraker 2021)

> They've become more so pieces of entertainment in themselves. They never were—originally it was [...] just waiting for the programs to come on. [...] It's evolved over many, many years, and now, these are pieces of entertainment. (Williams 2021)

For these participants, the production values of idents are deemed valuable and useful in today's television market, as beautiful and 'watchable' idents are more likely to attract the scarce attention of audiences. This resonates with Catherine Johnson's argument that the entertainment function of idents is becoming especially important in the digital age: that they 'need to be more entertaining because they can be more easily avoided' (2013b: 38). In short, participants seem divided over the use and worth of high production values in relation to idents. Whereas some celebrate the 'watchability' of idents, others fear that a focus on audiovisual beauty will render them

obsolete as the television landscape continues to change and marketing budgets shrink.

5.4.2 Brand value

Participants also viewed the value of idents in terms of contributions to the channel's brand identity:

> For me, an ident could be something more than just an identifier of which channel you are, or a gear shift, *it can also be a piece of marketing*. (Mawer 2020)

Participants understood their roles in terms of devising distinctive images and sounds that contribute towards the brand equity of television channels. As one designer highlighted: 'You have to have something strong, you know, the distinctiveness is the most important thing' (Keeley 2021):

> It's all about trying to stand out from the crowd. That's what branding is. *That's the bottom line*. And so I guess there's that thing where the more there is, the more need there is for something different. (Keeley 2021)

> The more unique you can make it, the more it doesn't sound like anything else, the more that people notice it. (Lowe 2020)

These graphic designers and composers are evidently conscious of the commercial value of their work. Through contributing to brand equity, music is conceptualised as a branding 'weapon' or asset:

> You know, with any branding it's part of your tone of voice, the audio. Branding is about how you look how you speak and how you behave. And you know the audio is very much part of the branding *tools* that you have. (Williams 2021)

> If you don't have the aural brand, that's *part of your armoury* you've just handed back. (Arnold 2021)

In other words, music and sound are valued as a commercial tool that helps increase brand equity and, thus, protect the channel against its competition. This language resonates with industry discourse; for example, sonic branding specialist Daniel Jackson claims that an identity '"arms race" has been created, where every brand is seeking to add more and more dimensions to their identity' (2013: 40)

One way in which the music and images of idents are used as a branding 'tool' or 'weapon' is through improving the memorability or salience of the brand identity (Keller 2001: 16). Sonically, idents must pass what is known in the industry as the 'radio test' (Lowe 2020, Keeley 2021, Lambie-Nairn 2020), the idea that if an audience member is not looking at the screen, they would hear and recognise the brand sound of the channel. Therefore, the music and sound created must be 'distinctive on its own' or 'stand on its own' (Keeley 2021).

> It's one of those things with any brand, if you are in the kitchen making a cup of tea or whatever and you hear it and you know it, then **you've done that job too**. It's: can you recognize it without the pictures? (Keeley 2021)

> They wanted something that would be 'BBC Two' as soon as you heard it (Baranowski 2021).

It is important to highlight that there is no clear division between the interstitial and branding functions. As Lowe demonstrates, some sonic elements that begin as purely functional segue devices acquire associations with the channel over time, gradually becoming an integral part of the brand's identity:

> We put that long ramp, they call it. Basically, that ramp is nothing to do with the art, it's just a sound to get out of the headline bed back into the pictures again seamlessly and just so it sounds okay. But that's now **become a sound** as well. (2020)

The distinctive 'ramp'—a sustained chord in the synthesised strings and cymbal sound that gradually crescendos before the start of the theme—has since become an integral part of the BBC's brand identity.[105]

5.4.3 Assessing value

Public

Many participants indicated that public acclaim for idents was one barometer of success for ident projects. Despite their ephemeral status in television schedules and on streaming platforms, idents attract the attention of journalists and audience members, sometimes inspiring blog posts, newspaper articles, and review videos.

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[105] The ramp is audible in the first two seconds of this clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TSJhIZmL0A. (Accessed Aug 23, 2022).

Arguably, the ephemerality of idents makes these instances of public recognition even more striking. The comments below regarding the 1991 BBC2 idents illustrate this:

> BBC2 took off like there was no tomorrow and it just really, really did engage the audience. People did talk about the ident—I mean, no one talks about the channel ident for goodness' sake, you know, but at dinner parties and things like that they would be discussed. (Lambie-Nairn 2020)

> I think what happened was the success of BBC 2's. They had fan clubs, people would write in about their favourites. Everyone realised they were really onto something. (Chapman 2021)

> We've had so much public acclaim for them, which is interesting.(Sadler 2020)

Moreover, participants valued the fact that idents are seen and heard by a potentially very large audience: 'These animated logos, they play in front of so many eyeballs. [...] As time goes by, more people see it' (Becker 2021). Many also actively monitored the public response to their work in articles and blogs (Tudball 2021, Gilbert 2021).

Public recognition of idents is evidently a source of pride for the practitioners, who are unsurprisingly pleased when their work is valued by audience members. In turn, idents that are known for being particularly 'loved' by the public tend to have greater longevity than those that did not garner such attention. In fact, some idents were so popular that channel executives and designers expressed fear when it came to changing the idents:

> The biggest problem for any of these people is coming in after something super popular. So whoever came in after the BBC2 idents and had to redo those was screwed. (Foraker 2021)

> Because we grew up in the UK, we are of that generation that remember all the 90s work, this classic BBC2 [...] We were very, very scared of getting it wrong. (Tudball 2021)

In these cases, press articles seem to have been a way for designers to quickly gauge the public response to their work, noting that 'luckily the feedback on our work was really on the whole pretty positive' (Tudball 2021).

Industry

Grainge and Johnson argue that industry awards bodies such as PROMAX UK and D&AD are 'central to valuations' of promotional creativity (2015: 77). Advertising scholars have observed an 'awards-driven' culture in advertising, in which 'peer recognition' confirms the 'creatives' competence and the value of their work among their peers' (Gilmore 2006: 138).

To enter awards competitions, executives submit an 'effectiveness paper' that summarises the challenge, approach, and outcome of the campaign or rebrand. Reflecting on the rebrand for UKTV channel Dave in 2007, Mawer noted in his interview:

> Because none of the programming changed, it meant that we could write this advertising effectiveness paper that proved that what we do has got a value, it made an extra 25 million pounds in revenue the first nine months in commercial revenue. So that was a big thing for our industry as a whole to go: it matters, it's not just nice to have, it's not just that the controller goes 'I want a new identity', it has commercial value. (2020)[106]

For individual creatives or freelancers, awards are important in signalling creative acumen to potential clients and are integral in the development of a creative career. Foraker attributes the beginning of his career in television branding to winning several industry awards, including several Promax awards, for his work on American channel TNT and global channel TCM; 'everyone was like what are you going to do next? [...] That was the first exposure [...] and that brought me to the attention of Film4' (2021). Similarly, composer Glasman indicated that his previous award-winning work had led to his work for the BBC:

> I was well-known and I'd won awards in advertising mostly for short-form work, already. So obviously I had the reputation, and I can understand why they would have come to me. (2020)

Awards are also an indicator of the success of a project more generally, signalling the approval of the industry and the public. Among the BBC's channels, BBC Two was the most-mentioned channel in terms of awards and seems to be known as a place for ground-breaking work in the industry. This harks back to the channel's original remit

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[106] For an in-depth account of the Dave rebrand, see Mawer and Bryant 2016. *The TV Brand Builders*. pp.48-50.

as directed by the government to be a 'test-bed' for new technologies, confirmed by the channel's experiments in colour technology in 1967 (Crisell 1997: 115). Following the experiments in colour television and computer technology by BBC designers Sid Sutton and Alan Jeapes in the 1960s and 1970s, Martin Lambie-Nairn's 1991 idents were awarded a BAFTA craft award and multiple D&AD awards. These became 'one of the most successful and long-running' ident series on UK television (Myerson 2015: 150).

Although awards might be helpful for participants in winning jobs and progressing in their career, many participants stated that awards are not a primary source of motivation:

> I think the BBC Four won a few, and obviously BBC One won some. So yeah, I've been lucky to have a few [awards] and there they are: (gestures to shelf). It's not in my lounge or anything. Don't worry, I'm not like that. But it seems silly not to have a few of them out. Awards are great, but I mean it's not the biggest thing. After you've won a couple it's like oh, everyone gets one now. (Keeley 2021)

> I'm not a really big awards guy myself—I don't really care that much about awards. I just care about something looking good or being good conceptually. (Becker 2021)

> I've got gold albums and awards, but I don't put them up. If I put them up my career will end. If you ever see me in front of a Gold award—no, that's not what you do. [...] You've got to keep moving forward. (Sayer-Wade 2021)

In part, this seems to be driven by modesty and a reluctance to seem self-celebratory ('Don't worry, I'm not like that'; 'that's not what you do'). It also may indicate a greater sense of intrinsic motivation to 'keep moving forward' and create 'good' work, rather than an extrinsic motivation for the approval of their peers.

For an in-house creative department, industry awards can help signal the creative prowess of the broadcaster to the rest of the industry:

> One of the things Martin [Lambie-Nairn] and Pam [Masters] wanted to do from the outset is change the attitude to presentation graphics, and how that could be changed. And [the BBC] department became award-winning, it won D&AD because they were doing BBC 2's, and Christmas sequences and things like that. (Chapman 2021)

It is clear that practitioners appreciate validation of their work, whether this is derived through industry awards or recognition from audience members and the media. In part, this comes from the precarity and insecurity that comes from working as a creative:

> Creatives—they're massively insecure, insular people who are constantly craving people going 'yeah that's good that', 'Oh, cool, is it? Thank you'. Oh my god. And then you panic because you think you won't be able to do it again. And it's all that imposter syndrome all swilling around. It doesn't matter how long you've done it for, every time you start again you think you're never gonna be able to do it again. (Bovill 2021)

> When you start doing it, your confidence levels are really low and if they go 'no, it's not quite right' you go 'oh it's a load of crap I'll ditch that one'. (Lowe 2020)

Industry awards bodies are useful in articulating and demonstrating the commercial value of promotional work. This is important for agencies and creative practitioners as it helps justify budgets spent on promotion to their clients. For individual creatives, industry awards are helpful for progression and recognition, but are not reported to be the primary intrinsic motivator.

5.4.4 Economic value

Generally, the composers for idents are paid in royalties, meaning that a payment is made to them each time the ident is broadcast. This payment structure corresponds to the notion that composers possess singular authorial status over their work. Idents, which can be aired many thousands of times, are thus seen as attractive work for composers:

> The thing about it was, the royalties were very high because it was on very often – about 48 times per day. (Lawlor 2020)

> Everyone and their grandma pitched for [the BBC One] job, as you can imagine, that was a big job. (Hanif 2021)

Graphic designers, however, are not typically paid in royalties, instead paid either a fixed salary or a lump fee, depending on whether they work for an in-house creative department or an external agency. One graphic designer hinted at a tension caused by this difference in payment structures:

> Musicians had it all sewn up there, the only people really, I believe. As designers, we had no control over what happened to our work and we earned

no money from it, we were paid the salary and the BBC owned the copyright on everything we did. (Graham-Smith 2021)

However, composers spoke of the competitive and economically precarious nature of the work.

Because obviously getting into music is hard, and for a long time for no money. (Baranowski 2021)

My mother used to say, 'It's catch your mouse and eat it'. You know, you get a bit of money together and then we spend it on recording. So we were always doing okay. Surviving. (Sadler 2020)

Often, a job was appealing more for prestige than for the monetary value they offered to the composer: 'it doesn't cost as much as you think, it's not wonderful. That's okay, it's the BBC. It's iconic' (Baranowski 2021). Moreover, several composers depicted the industry as a 'buyers' market' (Hanif 2021). Lowe explained that he composed and pitched a piece of music, but the project did not go ahead:

That would've been 250 grand as well but now that piece of music's not worth anything. It's not used for anything, it has no value at all at the moment. (2020)

Arnold discussed his work in similar monetary terms:

They just bought it, and it was as simple as that. It's really just out to rent. […] We call it a beauty contest. The BBC will line up six composers and kind of discard five of them. So it's often not working together, it's a beauty parade. That's often how we're treated. But you know, that's the way that it is, so that's fine. (2021)

Many of my participants noted that in the current era of television, budgets have generally decreased in the face of fragmenting audience and increased competition from streaming services. To some graphic designers, the decrease in budgets resulted in a decrease in aesthetic value:

But there's just no budgets to do anything – that's part of the problem. I just worry that you don't tend to see amazingly great work anymore. I just don't see much. (Keeley 2020)

In this interpretation, a reduction of budgets accorded to idents directly translates into a decline in production values. Nonetheless, several graphic designers and creative directors suggested that dealing with shrinking budgets was simply another challenge of the job, and does not necessarily prevent the production of creative work:

> You can make something look amazing for not loads of money. It's just the idea isn't it, making it good. (Foraker 2021)

> Budgets aren't everything. I think there's always a good design solve for any budget, you know, but some things are just more time consuming and that just means money. (Christman 2021)

When discussing budgets and fees, many composers noted a historical shift in the economic value of music and attributed this to changes in production technology. As noted in Chapter 2 above (section 2.1.3) the digital revolution had a democratising impact on the production of music. The relative affordability of recording devices and synthesisers resulted in a new generation of amateur composers who could record and mix an entire track from their bedroom (Prior 2010: 402). A similar process happened in motion graphics with the development of software packages for personal computers. For composers working throughout the media industries, their clients and employers began to realise that music could be composed and recorded much more cheaply and in shorter stretches of time. This change was highlighted by several composers interviewed.

Many composers harnessed the increased speed of production to their advantage. When Mark Sayer-Wade and his creative partner Tolga Keshi began using computers:

> [The clients] started cottoning onto the fact that we did everything with computers, which means: 1) we could work cheaper and 2) we could work a hell of a site faster. So, all of a sudden, we started getting these really big gigs from the BBC and it was all to do with the speed that we could turn stuff around: edit stuff, chop stuff, this that, and the other, and hopefully because we had quite a bit of talent too. (Sayer-Wade 2021)

Similarly, Lowe noted:

> They need things all the time: 'Can you just do two seconds of this?' 'Can you do five seconds of that?' Sometimes they need turning around on the day, or they need it by tomorrow or something. […] They can just phone me up, music to go. (2020)

However, many participants also feared that the increased pace would de-value the art and craft of composition for media. In the comment below, one composer compared the digital revolution in composition to a mechanical production line:

It's like the economic concept of productivity. The first time anyone makes a fridge, it's a hugely expensive item and it's produced on a small scale and then basically the whole thing becomes more productive because everyone knows how fridges are made, lots of people learn how to make economies of scale and it becomes a more productive process, it can all be done cheaper. But what happens then is that the price of doing that process can be brought down but the creativity, the careful creativity of the process, disappears slightly. (Glasman 2020)

Several of the other composers I interviewed agreed that the changes after the technological revolution in music production had resulted in a 'decrease' or 'devaluing' of the creativity of music in this field:

I just feel like the value of [composing] has really decreased. I mean if you go into [Logic] and you see all the sound packs that you can get, all the ready-made stuff, you can slap something together really quick in there. If a brand manager at a TV station, or brand is happy with what that sounds like, then bobs your uncle on that one, and that could have been done by the intern in the office. (Hanif 2021)

Well, the difference that's happened in the industry is that with the advent of computers, and Logic and Garage Band and all of these programs, the world and his brother now thinks they're composers. And **it's devalued the art of composition for media work** to such a degree that to be in that industry now would be… you're… It's just a cottage industry because so many people purport to be composers, they're not. They're actually technicians that can sort of write something. (Sadler 2020)

There was music technology revolution, which gave everybody an Apple computer and a keyboard. And suddenly the producer's nephew can write music and younger producers **didn't necessarily understand the craft that had evolved** in the previous generation and therefore they went, 'well it's music isn't it?' And if my nephew can do it in his bedroom, then what's the difference? (Glasman 2020)

These interviewees seem to believe that there is now a lack of meritocracy in the process. The composers' imagined competitors are people who happen to be in the right place at the right time: the 'producer's nephew' and the 'intern'. The technological revolution has also opened up the competition to the 'the world and his brother'. The male-gendered nature of these accounts also indicate a continued gender imbalance in the industry, an issue noted in Chapter 3 above.

The ideas discussed in this section present a rather bleak and pessimistic picture of the value of composition and graphic design work in TV branding. To many participants, decreasing budgets from channels and the increased speed of production

have eroded the creativity and the opportunities for engaging and artistic work. Nonetheless, as I have argued, several creatives also believe that the current hybrid television landscape provides opportunities for creative, collaborative work in the production of idents. I explore the question of the economic and artistic value of sound, music, and graphics further in the following chapter.

5.4.5 Theme summary: Value

In conclusion, idents are assessed according to a range of values, including production values, monetary value, brand equity, aesthetic value, and functional utility as interstitial texts. Overall, participants tended to stress the production values of idents, supporting Ellis' argument that interstitials constitute a 'beautified' version of television—television 'as it could be' (2011: 62). Production values are evidenced by the highly detailed and laborious work carried out by designers and composers and by hiring musicians to record acoustic instruments rather than using electronic samples. However, many participants seemed to frown upon the idea of creating an ident that is simply 'pretty' if it does not fulfil the various interstitial and branding functions. Some also feared that idents are less relevant and therefore less valuable than they used to be to channels and their audiences, since 'people don't watch TV like that anymore' (Franklin 2020). Practitioners estimate the perceived value of their work through monitoring press and fan discourses as well as industry awards, which also help practitioners in their career development. Fee structures differ between composers and graphic designers and play an important role in establishing the relative value and worth of the creative labour across the two disciplines. In particular, there is a key distinction between the 'safety' of a salaried job as a designer in an in-house agency and the precarity of freelance work faced by the composers and some designers.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have explored each of the themes developed from a reflexive thematic analysis of the interview data. As discussed in Chapter 3, the interviews were designed based on my second set of research questions, relating to the nature of the production process and the role and position of composers within the industry:

2. What is the nature of the production process and what is the role and position of composers in the industry?
    a) What skills and techniques are used by composers in this industry?
    b) What kind of educational or musical background do composers have?
    c) What is the relative status and position of graphic design and music and sound design within the production process?
    d) To what extent are idents the product of collaboration?

When conducting the thematic analysis, I took care to ensure that my codes and themes were primarily inductive and 'data-driven', rather than simply replicating the research questions (Braun and Clarke 2016: 14). As a result, some aspects of the second set of research questions were emphasised more than others.

The first theme, *Creative Process*, presented an overview of the production process. I highlighted the ambivalent relationship between freedom and constraints within the process. For example, briefs are seen as a helpful stimulus or 'springboard' for creating thinking, and yet it is important that enough space is left for creative 'twists and turns'. This theme also explored the relative status and position of graphic designers and composers. Although graphic designers and composers are involved at different stages of the project, the process for both includes briefing, idea generation, validation, pitching, and execution. The biggest point of tension for both the designers and composers seems to be the pitching stage. Pitching is a daunting moment, as the creatives rely on the clients' subjective reaction to their work. Music pitches tend to be particularly unpredictable, provoking 'visceral' reactions from some clients.

The second theme, *Identity,* explored the impact of the creative process on the working identities of the individual practitioners. This theme primarily addressed the two sub-questions that relate to skills, techniques, and educational backgrounds. Practitioners often related their work to pre-existing stereotypes, such as 'artist', 'creative', and 'suit'. The *Identity* theme thus also touched on the third sub-question, by exploring the interviewees' perceptions of the hierarchies and systems of judgement embedded in the production process. The *Collaboration* theme addressed the fourth sub-question by exploring the interactions between composers and designers in a context where composers are typically employed after the visuals are complete. My examination of

the forms of collaboration, iterative and sequential, highlighted further the hierarchies between the visual and sonic disciplines in the process. The fourth theme, *Value*, moved the focus beyond the individual sub-questions, and explored the perceived cultural, economic, and aesthetic values tied to idents and to the creative labour of composers and their colleagues. In the next chapter I look beyond my original research questions to examine the broader implications of my research.

Chapter 6: Discussion

I began this project with the aim of highlighting the value of sound in idents. My premise was that idents, despite their compressed and functional nature, hold value and meaning in culture. I also aimed to demonstrate that idents involve significant creativity and artistry in the construction of both the visuals and the sound. Approaching idents from my perspective as a musicologist, I was particularly keen to highlight the musicality of idents themselves, as well as the labour of the composers involved in their creation. Rather than adopting an approach based entirely on textual analysis or production processes, I decided to set these two perspectives alongside each other. My research questions reflected my two-fold approach, considering the aesthetic character and role of sound in idents themselves, as well as the nature of the production process. In Chapter 4 above, I addressed the first research question by analysing the aesthetic character and roles of sound in a range of idents across three periods of UK television. Chapter 5 complemented this by providing in-depth answers to the second research question regarding production processes and the role of composers within the industry ecosystem. The contributions of this thesis extend beyond the answers to the two individual research questions, however. In this current chapter, I synthesise the findings from the previous two chapters, setting out three overarching arguments.

6.1 Filling in the gaps

6.1.1 The creative process

In this thesis, I have shown that the study of idents presents a rich area of research within which to explore the relationships between sound and moving images in a promotional context. Methodologically, I combined a 'thick' text analytic approach with a rigorous method of qualitative interview analysis grounded in the social sciences. I have illustrated the complementarity between these two methods, by using them to examine the phenomenon of idents from two different analytical perspectives.

I have approached both methods through an interpretivist lens, where knowledge is understood as a co-construction between the researcher and the objects of study (see

section 3.1 above). This thesis accordingly reflects my own interpretations of visual, sonic, and verbal codes in the idents and in the interview transcripts, that I combined and arranged during the process of writing. In other words, my research process has been akin to an act of 'composition', defined as

> The action of putting together or combining; the fact of being put together or combined; combination (of things as parts or elements of a whole). (OED 2022)

A parallel can be drawn between my research process and my own objects of study, the production of idents. To restate Lowe's observation, quoted above, a composer's aim in producing an ident is to create the illusion of inevitability:

> You never listen to it on the telly and go, 'oh I wonder what the other versions sounded like'. You go, 'oh that's what it is'. Getting to the point where you decide what it's going to be is another matter altogether. (2020)

Producing a text, 'getting to the point where you decide what it's going to be', involves bridging a gap between the original ideas and the crafted execution or product. In the case of ident production, in which many individuals must collaborate, there are further gaps within the process: those between the client's objectives and the designers' and composers' aspirations; between the visual and the sonic media; and between the past and future renditions of the brand identity. As Robert Faulkner argues in his sociological account of Hollywood film composers, 'the approach to a film score cannot be fully programmed or anticipated *before* it is written and recorded' but must be 'talked through, defined, argued out' (1983: 129). The same can be said for the creation of sound for idents. In this way, 'composition' is an overarching metaphor that describes my own research process, as well as the production of channel idents: a method of 'filling in the gaps' between constituent elements. In the following sections, I consider the productive 'gaps' that occur in the collaboration between designers and composers during the construction of a channel brand identity.

6.1.2 Collaboration between graphic designers and composers

Idents are combinations of two different media: images and sounds. Although images and sounds may exhibit certain structural similarities, such as rhythm, there is no direct

way to 'translate' one media into the other. As my analyses in Chapter 4 highlight, the composers characterise or 'render' the visuals in musical and sonic terms, a highly creative and imaginative process (Chion 1994: 110). These interpretations are often based on individualised responses to the graphics. For example, when composing music for the BBC2 idents in 1991, Tony and Gaynor Sadler interpreted *Silk* as a shipwreck and *Water* as a 'tattered flag' (see section 4.1.1). Simone Benyacar, when watching the Amazon Prime Studios animation, envisaged a 'fictitious kids' world' (see section 4.3.1). If each of the directors for these projects had employed a different composer, it is likely that the result would have been very different. Nonetheless, when we hear and see an audiovisual text, we experience it as an inevitable whole, or as Lawrence Kramer puts it, a 'homogenous semiotic entity' (2002: 174). When successful, the sensory input of sound and image each mutually influence each other, creating an overall experience that is greater than the sum of its parts (Gorbman 1978: 15). Sound thus adds value by enhancing and enriching the images, whilst affording the construction of new meanings.

The intrinsic differences between the two media, images and sound, has implications for the collaborations between composers and graphic designers (see section 5.3). As Min Tang notes, also quoted above, 'interdisciplinary communication and collaboration is a creative process, as people of different disciplines need to apply creativity to *bridge gaps* and create new combinations' (2020: 678, emphasis added). Composer Martin remarks on this creative 'gap' in the collaboration between composers and graphic designers, explaining that the two disciplines possess 'overlapping skills of creativity', although 'neither can do what the other can do' (2021). The relationship between practitioners, like that between the visuals and sounds themselves, is thus inherently 'gapped'. Composers and designers have different educational backgrounds and knowledge, they use different tools, terminology, and techniques. They strive to 'meet in the middle, like a Venn diagram', through building rapport, discussing briefs, sharing references, and providing feedback on drafts of work (Bovill 2021).

The distance between the disciplines become especially apparent during the briefing process. As composer Lawlor recalled, 'the important component [is] filling in the communication gaps' (2020). Like the process of composition itself, communication involved a certain amount of creativity and invention: 'it is impossible to describe music

that doesn't exist. It's hard enough to describe music that does exist' (Ibid.). Composers 'use their discretion' in interpretating briefs and forming creative ideas and require the trust of their employers (Sadler 2020). This process is not a simple 'translation' from idea to execution; it involves interpretation and creativity to make the leap between 'talk' and 'realization' (Faulkner 1983: 129).

For this reason, composer Sayer-Wade describes the collaboration in terms of electric sparks. As noted in Chapter 5 above, Sayer-Wade uses the term 'arcing', alluding to the spark of electricity that occurs when an electrical current jumps over a gap between two conductors of electricity. Creativity therefore 'sparks' in the productive 'gaps' or differences between the visual and sonic disciplines.

6.1.3 Constructing a brand

One of the fundamental roles of idents is to construct and convey a brand identity for the channel. In the paragraphs below, I discuss how this idea of 'filling' or 'jumping' the 'gaps' relates to the construction of the channel brand and how the combinations of graphic design and composition ultimately serve this broader function. Here, I return to brand theory (introduced in section 2.3.1 above) to explore how the collaboration between graphic designers and composers may relate to the construction of a channel brand.

As I noted in Chapter 2, a brand is an emergent construct, rather than a static entity. Like a piece of audiovisual media, its meaning is contingent, subjective, and 'emerges in parts' (Lury 2004: 2). As a former CEO of Disney put it, 'a brand is a living entity— and it is enriched or undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures' (Eisner 1999). This also applies to TV brands. Creative executive Chris Bovill proposed that TV brand identities 'can't sit still basically, otherwise they're dead' (2021). The TV brands that I have discussed in this thesis depend on the creative contributions of graphic designers and composers for their meaning, adaptation, and survival. The 'anarchic sparks' between the visual and sonic aspects keep the brand 'alive'.

Just as sound and images transfer meaning to one another, a piece of promotion such as an ident interacts with the channel's brand identity in the emergence of meaning. Interviewees reflected on the emergent properties of the brands they work to create, conceptualising a brand as an assemblage of images and sounds and of the labour of multiple producers: '5% of this, 5% of that, and they all add up to something that hangs together' (Keeley 2020). Several interviewees curiously settled on the same ratio of similarity and difference in terms of brand communications for television channels, claiming 'as long as 80% reflects the values they're doing well' (Sunderland 2020) and 'as long as you get 80% of it right, then the brand will hold up' (Chapman 2020). For example, certain sonic and visual elements become integral parts of the brand—such as the BBC News 'pips' or the four-note mnemonic for Channel 4. Whilst idents appear to be an expression of brand identity, in reality, they participate in the construction of that identity. Meaning is thus generated through 'mutual implication' between a channel brand and its idents (Gorbman 1978). The creative process of ident production necessarily involves negotiations regarding which elements constitute the core of the brand identity, and which elements can be changed.

The results of the textual analyses and examination of the production process can be drawn together to form the first argument of this chapter:

> **_Argument 1:_ _In the production of idents, the creative labour of graphic designers and composers adds value to TV brands through negotiating mutual gaps or differences between the media and between the disciplines_**.

6.2 Technology and artistic value

In this second section, I reflect on how the perceived artistic value of music and sound in idents has been affected by recent technological and industrial changes.

In the mid-2010s, the beginning of the era of 'overflow', budgets available for on-screen branding were decreasing, and several broadcasters took the decision to establish in-house creative agencies, facilitating an agile structure that often relies on

freelance and casual work on a per-project basis. As Bovill, former executive director of Channel 4's in-house creative agency, put it:

> It's a new world of worlds combining, I think. […] It's all in one big pot now, isn't it? I think it's cool, quite adaptive. […] You pull all the skill sets in […], whether it's a production company […], or it's a social arm to something, or it's a music company. Whatever it is, you bolster it, plug the bits in. You bring them in when you need them, and it feels more nimble. (2021)

This 'adaptive' form of working means that in-house departments can draw on a wide pool of skilled freelance workers, tailoring the team to each project. This approach was demonstrated in the BBC Two 2018 case study examined above, where the main agency Superunion worked with the BBC's in-house agency to hire eighteen animators, ranging from a single freelance animator in Canada to the large-scale global creative studio, FutureDeluxe. Notably, although the visuals for this project involved a raft of animators and designers, Baranowski alone created all the music and sound design, mixing and combining musical instruments and sounds to create a flexible yet unified sonic identity.

Today, composers are multi-skilled and often take on several roles in the same project, combining the skills of music composition, sound design, recording, arranging, and mixing. This is reflected in the headlines for the websites of several of the composers interviewed, including Rich Martin, 'sound designer and music specialist'; Alex Baranowski, 'Composer, arranger, sound designer'; and David Lowe 'composer, arranger, producer'.[107] The ability for a single musician to carry out all these different roles is partly due to the technological revolution in the late 1990s.

As discussed above (section 5.4.4: Economic Value), many composers interviewed for this research expressed concerns that the 'democratising' power of technology is devaluing the art of composition: 'suddenly the producer's nephew can write music and younger producers didn't necessarily understand the craft that had evolved in the previous generation.' (Glasman 2020) Gaynor Sadler concluded, 'It's become a cottage industry', as composers can work remotely and send tracks to clients (2020).

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[107] Rich Martin: https://www.richmartin.uk/home; Alex Baranowski: http://www.alexbaranowski.com; David Lowe: https://davidlowemusic.com. (Accessed Oct 18, 2022).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, clients expect music to be created in ever-decreasing timescales, exacerbating the disconnected and individualistic way of working. A composer often operates remotely as a 'lone wolf', working from a home studio and thus has even less control over the decision-making process than in the past when composers would present their ideas to clients in person.

Several composers hold a pessimistic view of the industry, noting 'it's not the serious industry it was when we were working in it', and that the 'creativity of music briefing has been massively degraded by these various revolutions in technology' (Sadler 2020, Glasman 2020). Faced with reduced deadlines and increased isolation, this type of work can seem to leave little room for individuality or experimentation. In several case studies examined in this thesis, however, composers and graphic designers resisted the dominance of technology in the process by incorporating analogue tools and techniques, creating unique combinations of music, sounds, and images.

Graphic designers and composers explained that they viewed both digital software packages and analogue practices as tools that helped them execute their ideas. For example, one designer described a transition in the 2000s away from 'flat 2-D graphics' towards three-dimensional ones that seemed 'tactile and human and real' (Gilbert 2021). Franklin, who began work in television branding under the guidance of Martin Lambie-Nairn, reflected:

> I think that's the thing about Martin, [...] he is ultimately a craftsman. If he could choose his profession, he'd be a stonemason, he'd carve things. [...] Within him is this kind of frustrated craftsman who wants everything to be perfect and honed to the absolute precise best. (2020)

This urge to create something tangible seems to have been passed on to the subsequent generation of designers. In 2016, when Gilbert worked with Bovill at 4Creative on the new iteration of Channel 4's identity, the designers worked through their ideas by 'playing' and 'throwing' the physical blocks of the '4' logo onto the table. Gilbert recalled that:

> Originally, we wanted to shoot everything and have the blocks in different materials, in chalk, and they would degrade, all these different things, but it would just cost so much money that we ended up doing it CGI in the end. But we had this Romantic vision of filming the whole thing. (2021)

Similarly, motion graphics designer Christoph Gabathuler noted that computer graphic techniques sometimes aim to emulate analogue tools and processes:

> In motion design, you always try to imitate film reel, so you use all these little tricks, like a little bit of chromatic aberration or a lens effect, just to make it more organic. (2021)

This supports Macdonald's argument regarding motion graphic design:

> I have found 'digital natives', those born after 1990, and the launch of Adobe Photoshop, to be eager to challenge the digital orthodoxy and to work with hybrids that capture the unique expression of heritage and analogue practices with the flexibility and malleability that digital software affords. (2016: 3)

To the designers quoted above, the construction of physical objects and the use of material crafts are considered in terms of a 'Romantic' ideal, whereas CGI offered a practical and economical compromise.

The composers similarly embraced a hybridity of techniques, blending sound design and music, and electronic production tools with acoustic instruments and objects. This is an approach that has persisted in various ways throughout the three 'eras' of television examined in this thesis. In the 1990s, the Sadlers were 'straddling' digital and analogue production techniques, digitally manipulating samples they created with recordings of acoustic instruments such as harps and bells and physical objects ranging from skateboards to rubber gloves. During this time, music composition and sound design in ident production were represented as 'crafts' that involved the manipulation of pre-existing elements, captured in the name of Sayer-Wade's company, the 'Music Sculptors'. Moving into the 2000s, Martin and Lowe both worked to blend sounds and music together: Lowe, through turning the Greenwich Time Signal 'pips' into a dance track for the BBC News ident; Martin, through combining location sound with electronic samples and musical instruments in the Channel 4 2004 idents. In more recent years, composers Benyacar and Baranowski continue to view composition for idents as a blend of music and sound design, requiring a wide range of skills and tools. When working on the Amazon Prime Studios theatrical logo, Benyacar combined acoustic instruments with electronic samples and the recordings of the sounds of everyday objects. He explained:

> It was a combination of a lot of different elements. […] I'm not a violin player at all, but to play the sound of an orchestra tuning and finding specific sonorities

that can give you that feeling of being with the orchestra, even a bad player can succeed. (2021)

To Benyacar, only a physical instrument, even 'badly' played can give the viewer the 'feeling of being with the orchestra' (Ibid.). Both Benyacar and Baranowski used objects at hand, their children's toys, to create the sound effects. Benyacar's children's Lego bricks, wood blocks, and magnet tiles became the 'clicks' and 'clacks' of the animated buildings springing together in the Amazon Prime Studios ident. Baranowski used a toy accordion for the rustling of balloons in the *Feel Good* variant for BBC Two, and a wooden rattle for the wooden textures in the *Thought Provoking* variant. Even Baranowski's snoring cat makes an appearance in the *Offbeat* ident.

In the context of graphic design, Macdonald states that in combining heritage techniques with computer technology, designers can harness the 'endless malleability of digital benefits with the individuality of the human mark and the haptic resistance of handmade materials' (2014: 150). A similar argument can be made in the context of music composition. The composers' combination of objects, instruments, and digital and analogue production tools constitutes a process and a craft that is at odds with traditional ideas of creativity in arts such as music. As Paul Louis March and Vlad Glaveanu note, 'creativity is essentially viewed as an intellectual activity with the manual activity of craft therefore lying beyond the pale of western creative endeavour' (1999: 217). They note that:

> from ancient times, thinking-with-the-mind has been considered to exist on a separate and higher level from thinking-with-the-hands. Indeed 'thinking' and 'mind' are now so inextricably linked with the brain that thinking-with-the-hands is almost an oxymoron. (1999: 217)

However, the work of composers and designers in the production of idents combines forms of 'thinking-with-the-mind' and 'thinking-with-the-hands', highlighting that idea and execution, product and process are inextricably linked. Discussing hybrid production methods in the craft of motion graphics, Macdonald argues that practitioners seek

> to embrace a pluralist approach that accommodates the sleek and perfected solutions but also the sublime accidents, the contaminated and the hybrid. (2015: 45)

Working with physical objects and 'thinking-with-the-hands' creates possibilities for 'sublime accidents' and 'contaminations' for both composers and graphic designers. These include the 'lightbulb' moment when Gilbert threw the Channel 4 blocks onto the table, and when Benyacar decided to use his child's Lego bricks. Composers and designers contribute to brands through the unpredictability and hybridity of their creative processes. This final point leads to the second argument of this chapter:

> *<u>Argument 2:</u> The execution of a creative idea is an integral part of the process. 'Execution' is here understood as an embodied and unpredictable process, reliant on the tools and materials available to the individual, as well as their unique interpretation and intuition.*

6.3 The art and craft of composing for idents

Throughout this thesis, I have shown how idents are the product of the creative labour of graphic designers and composers. In the title of this thesis, I borrowed a term used by Mawer to describe idents: a 'hidden art form'. In this section, I discuss the implications of considering the production of sound for idents as an 'art form', in light of the findings in Chapters 4 and 5. In short, I argue that ident production can be considered as both an art and a craft. It parallels the film industry and the advertising industry in the way it bridges creativity and commerce. Faulkner describes the film industry as an 'odd mixture of art and business' (1982: 1). According to Faulkner, film composers must attempt 'to manage the structured contradictions between the business and creative aspects of artistic labour' (Ibid.: 4). Although channel idents, in their extreme brevity and lack of narrative, are a world away from a feature film, the production processes function in similar ways. In fact, one of my interviewees described TV branding as a 'mini-film business', in the way that work is compartmentalised amongst specialists (Keeley 2021). In the production of idents, the composers and graphic designers are classed as 'creatives', a group that is distinct from the channel executives (the 'suits'). In this way, the industry also mirrors structures in advertising (see section 5.2.2 above). In this section, I discuss how the graphic designers and composers I interviewed are required to be both creative and commercially strategic in their work.

Composers as artists

Many graphic designers and composers position 'creativity' as a realm that they, unlike their clients, understand. This distinction is the result of the different roles played by the 'creatives' and the 'suits' in the process. Whilst the creatives are responsible for constructing the visual and sonic 'assets' that form the brand's identity, channel executives 'filter' and guide the ideas through briefing and brand strategy (see section 5.1.1 above). From the creatives' perspective, the intrusion of marketing often 'dilutes' the work, and brand identities tend to 'wander' or 'depart' from the original vision of the core creative team once the project is handed to clients. As composer Baranowski noted, 'notoriously, marketing will always want to change things and go back and rework' (2021). Therefore, from the perspective of creatives, the graphic designers and composers are responsible for not only constructing the visual and sonic brand assets, but also for protecting them from the influence of marketing executives who may 'water down' the brand identity by contributing their own creative ideas without 'understanding how the process works' (Baranowski 2021, Hanif 2021, Bovill 2021).

Although designers and composers are both classed as 'creatives' in the stereotypical division between 'creatives' and 'suits', there are significant differences in their position within the industrial ecosystem. Composers tend to work as independent freelancers, typically operating out of home studios. In contrast, designers are commonly employed by an independent or in-house agency. Accordingly, designers tend to have clearer career paths. Many of the interviewees had attended courses on branding and graphic design at specialist educational institutions such as Central St Martins (University of the Arts London) and several interviewees who had worked at the BBC's Graphic Design department subsequently helped establish and teach specialist motion graphic courses at Ravensbourne University London. Graphic designers define themselves as 'commercial artists' that straddle commercial and artistic realms:

> One approach is 'I'm going to do what I like', which takes you more towards being an artist, and then there's the other thing which is: there's a brief and a challenge to solve, a problem to solve, which is being a graphic designer. (Franklin 2020)

In design more generally, value is considered in terms of 'usefulness', exemplified by American architect Louis Henry Sullivan's axiom 'form follows function'. However, as Michael Erlhoff and Tim Marshall argue, form and function are inextricably linked, since an 'object's form cannot be peeled off like a sticky label to reveal the naked function' (2007: 176). Nonetheless, the field of design tends to place emphasis on problem-solving; as Erlhoff and Marshall state, 'function is inherent to design' (2007: 176). As 'commercial artists', graphic designers in television branding seem to be motivated not by artistic values alone, but also by creating solutions to practical problems. In advertising more generally, creativity is similarly inseparable from promotional function. Advertising industry awards organisation Cannes Lions defines creativity in relation to 'usefulness':

> We define creativity as 'unusual, original and unique thinking, which can be usefully applied and executed.' (Cannes Lions 2022)

The composers in my interview sample tended to express a more ambivalent attitude towards the relationships between art and function than the graphic designers. Whilst 'function' is arguably integral to the discipline of design, the relationship between music and function has historically been more strained. In fact, many argue that music is inherently 'useless', and that its artistic value can be derived from the fact that it is not intended to 'satisfy any practical objective' (Levinson 2015: 67). This idea relates to historical ideologies surrounding music in Western cultures that have tended to stress its intrinsic artistic worth rather than its functional or economic value. As Lydia Goehr points out, this distinction emerged during the late 18th century. Previously, the term 'art' included 'not just works imbued with "aesthetic" value […] but all utilitarian products of skilled or mechanical labour' (1992: 149, 150). However, with the emergence of 'fine art', realms such as music, painting, and sculpture were elevated above 'practical' crafts, resulting in a crystallised distinction between 'aesthetic value and functional utility' (1992: 152). These tensions between art and function, creativity and commerce persist in popular music today, and surface most prominently when artists are charged with accusations of 'selling out', 'perceived as pursuing commercial gain at the expense of cultural autonomy' (Klein 2020: 2). Thus, the entry of composers into the apparently profit-centric worlds of mainstream entertainment, advertising, and branding constituted a direct contradiction of cultural ideals surrounding music as an

art form. When composers began to enter the Hollywood film industry, they battled prejudices and often felt the need to legitimise this work. As Mera notes:

> Film composers in early Hollywood […] appeared to be constantly troubled by the distinction they perceived between craft (*inventio*) and art (*creatio*), and felt the desperate need to be validated as 'real' composers, not hacks. The prejudice was driven by notions of originality in concert music, compared to which film music was seen as an inferior form of commercial and derivative work. (2017: 39)

Indeed, Faulkner describes film composers as 'commercial artists/craftsmen' that straddle both worlds and must develop a variety of practical and artistic skills (1983: 240). If film composers face scepticism and prejudice regarding the artistic authenticity of their work, this problem is magnified when it comes to commercial composition for short-form promotion like logo shots, idents, and advertisements. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Sadlers explained that music colleges 'deeply frowned upon' such types of composition: 'writing music for adverts and idents didn't even count, you know, it was below the floor—is that even music?' (2020)

Nonetheless, the 'artist' identity seems to be an integral part of being a composer for many of my interview participants. The composers conceptualise their compositions for idents as an expression of their unique personal identity. For example, Martin's use of 'grungy, scuffed up' sounds constituted a musical interpretation of Channel 4's edgy and alternative brand identity. As argued in Chapter 5, composers may rely on the concept of Romantic artistic intuition for their own self-identity and to market themselves to their clients as valuable contributors to the project. Several composers stated that their ideas seem to come from a divine or otherworldly source (Sayer-Wade 2021, Arnold 2021). This statement may be part of a deliberately performed survival strategy that harnesses cultural ideas about artistic genius to 'sell' their unique approach to potential clients. Conversely, this belief may be a more authentic aspect of their identity, having internalised the 'Romantic and inspirationist' script of the creative 'domain' (Amabile 1996: 83).

The findings outlined in Chapter 5 suggest that the creative process is suffused by the perception that music is something that can be felt but not described. Despite the growth of formalised processes and written briefs, many practitioners still believe that music is subjective and thus immune to strategic and logical processes, with one

creative executive comparing the selection of music for idents to 'falling in love' (Mawer 2021). Since music is considered to be subjective, composers rely on the trust of the designers and channel executives and use their own intuition to form creative interpretations of the graphics and brief. On the one hand, this reliance on subjectivity and intuition enhances the composer's autonomy and legitimises their creative identity. On the other, it often leads to tension with clients, the decision makers. Music is often composed near the end of the project, coinciding with the lowest point of what Franklin described as the creative 'rollercoaster' (2020, see section 5.1 above). This is the moment when 'excitement turns into terror', the client fears they've 'wasted all [their] money and everyone hates each other' (Ibid.). Clients may reject the music at this point, on the grounds that 'if someone doesn't like it, they don't like it' (Mawer 2021). The Sadlers recalled often relying on their presentation skills at this crucial point, breaking down the music into its constituent sounds, reassuring the client by explaining why they had taken certain compositional decisions. The uncertainty inherent in the pitching process, particularly in relation to the music and sound, means that composers need to develop skills in interpreting briefs, and in building rapport and trust when pitching. The practitioners involved in producing idents combine practical skills and a pragmatic attitude with creative experimentation and intuition. As noted by Glasman, 'there is a dismissive attitude to the craft as opposed to the art of all these areas' (2021). I argue that it is important to value all the skills required by commercial composers, not just the generation of creative ideas. Commercial composers are marginalised when they are valued only for their artistic intuition, and when the other pragmatic and strategic skills are ignored.

In advertising more generally, the 'creatives' often rely on their intuition as a source of knowledge and value in creating campaigns. In a study that explores the working lives of advertising creatives through the analysis of qualitative interviews, Charlotte Gilmore showed that intuition is a valuable resource for her participants (2006). She explains that for creatives, 'the solution would often suddenly "announce itself" without warning' (Ibid.: 156). The creatives and creative directors talked about intuitively knowing when an idea was the 'right' solution (Ibid.: 156). Moreover, these creatives 'felt that their intuition had become more refined with experience', and therefore, 'learning on the job and internalising the rules of the domain' are crucial (Ibid.: 157). In the context of a precarious and individualistic industry, creatives rely on their

intuition, often 'more influenced by their own inner standards than by those of the profession to which they belong' (Gilmore 2006: 8, see also Amabile 1983, 1996; Gardener 1993). However, in an era of increasing accountability and rationalisation of budgets, perhaps the ideal to aim for is to 'temper intuition with analysis' (Crosier, Grant, and Gilmore 2013: 1).

Marginalisation

Hesmondhalgh and Baker have described characteristics of 'bad' labour in the creative industries, highlighting the insecurity, isolation, and risk that comes with reliance on a 'portfolio' career with many jobs and employers (2011: 15). The increasingly casualised, freelance, or part-time nature of creative work means that many individuals resort to overwork and self-exploitation. The 'myth of the starving artist' further normalises this self-sacrifice (Ibid.: 226).

The job of composing music and sound for idents shares many of these features. Music scholars have blamed the instability of commercial composition on the lack of uniformity and objectivity in the selection process for music for advertising and promotion (Graakjær 2015, Kupfer 2021; Krishnan and Kellaris 2021). Peter Kupfer conducted research into the process of selection of popular music for advertising campaigns and concluded that evaluation of appropriateness is usually made on the basis of 'gut feel' and anecdotal evidence (2021: 84). He argues, 'the ability for creatives to rely so heavily on their intuition and instinct is a result of a fetishisation of creativity' (Ibid.: 84). Sonic branding practitioners Daniel Jackson and Paul Fulberg similarly argue that the market for music in promotion is 'wholly irrational', 'explicitly obtuse' and 'unapologetically illogical' (2013: 3). They complain that there exists:

> no globally accepted method for choosing the music for a brand, no globally accepted method for pricing the music for a brand and no globally accepted method for measuring the usefulness of music for a brand. (Ibid.: 3)

According to Jackson and Fulberg, the reliance on intuition and subjective processes of valuation are to blame for the 'random and last-minute' state of music in promotional industries (Ibid.: 12). This thesis shows that composers and designers similarly

encounter such problems when presenting their work on idents to clients. Composers lamented the unpredictability of the pitching process, comparing it to 'throwing a dart blindfolded', 'poking in the dark', 'throwing stuff at the wall and seeing what would stick' (see section 5.1.4 above).

Kupfer argues that the reliance on intuition and subjectivity is a result of the lack of 'objective' or empirical tools with which to measure creativity or the effectiveness of music in the production and pitching processes. Jackson et al fear that a lack of systematic methods for choosing music and assessing its usefulness for a particular brand is 'limiting the value being sought and delivered from brand investment in music and they are stunting the growth to maturity of the music industry' (2013: 12). These writers make an important call for increased measurability, structure, and logic in the process—a development that would simultaneously alleviate clients' fears and improve the unpredictable working conditions of composers. As discussed in the conclusion of this thesis, this is an important area for future research.

Throughout Chapters 4 and 5, I argued that creating idents involves imagination, ingenuity, and artistic creativity. However, in this section I have highlighted that it is important to temper this celebration of the artistry of this work with a recognition that applying the 'artist' label to composers in this field has some drawbacks. Accordingly, my third argument is as follows:

> ___Argument 3___: **The composition of music and sound for idents is valuable as both an art and a practical craft, bridging categories of commercial and artistic value.**

6.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed three key arguments arising from the findings of this thesis. In the first section, I argued that the creative contributions of composers and designers derive from the gaps between the disciplines of graphic design and music composition. When working on an ident, composers often find the graphics to be inspiring and thought-provoking. Conversely, by adding music and sound, the composers create possibilities for new interpretations of the visuals. The approach of

each composer and designer will be different, as the individual creative may draw upon their knowledge and past experiences.

Building upon the unpredictable nature of creativity, in the second section of the chapter I argued that the execution of an idea is integral to the creative process. A graphic designer's 'execution' of a strategic idea, or a composer's 'rendering' of an animation requires imagination and is based on a subjective interpretation of the brief. In other words, the execution of an idea involves traversing a 'gap' between 'talk' and 'realisation' (Faulkner 1983: 129). As Macdonald notes,

> [t]he role of the designer is not simply to solve a problem as a scientist might, but to enrich our experience of life, humanise it with a sense of enjoyment and pleasure by using materials that lie within a tradition. (2016: 118)

Creative workers thus add value to businesses and organisations by taking ideas on a metaphorical 'journey' or adding an 'anarchic spark' of creativity (see sections 5.1.1 and 5.3.3 above).

In the third section of this chapter, I concluded that the creation of idents can be described as both an art and a craft, and that this work holds commercial and artistic value. Although idents are compressed, functional and commercial texts, they carry with them the same tensions between creativity and commerce, and issues of authorship, that arise in other artistic fields. These issues resonate differently with the disciplines of design and music, however. Whereas graphic design is taught in universities and colleges as a practical application of creative skills, music composition is more likely to be imbued with ideas surrounding creative genius and authenticity. As I have shown, this widely held belief means that clients often feel unsure how to evaluate music, relying on 'gut reactions', which creates further uncertainty for composers in the production process (Martin 2021). The advent of digital software for music composition and the proliferation of amateur 'bedroom composers' created additional tension in the music industry, provoking debates regarding the artistic merit of this work, especially for the composers who had invested in degrees at universities or conservatoires. This thesis contributes to these debates by highlighting that creating music and graphics for television idents is a specific creative challenge that requires a particular skillset, including creativity, presentation skills, and the ability to establish

rapport with a client. All these skills are valuable and should be recognised as such. Composers in this field have varied backgrounds, some being classically trained and others self-taught, and each bring different artistic, commercial, and practical abilities and strengths to a project. I argue that we should take idents seriously as a site of creative labour and aesthetic achievement, a practice that bridges commercial and artistic realms and provides opportunities for collaboration between graphic designers and composers.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I outline the implications of my research for both researchers and practitioners and suggest future avenues of research.

7.1 Implications for practitioners

My research has highlighted new knowledge about commercial compositional practices, including the nature of the music-image relationship in successful idents, as well as examples of fruitful collaboration with graphic designers within the production process.

In the idents that I examined in Chapter 4, there are certain audiovisual approaches that I consider to be particularly successful. Within my selected case studies, the idents that were long-lasting, popular, and award-winning, such as the 1991 BBC2 idents (section 4.1.1) and the Channel 4 2004 idents (section 4.2.1), tend to include many complex visual and sonic details that reward multiple viewings. These idents involve an imaginative play with perspective, conjuring a liminal space where objects and materials refuse to obey the rules of perceptual realism. In the BBC2 idents, for example, drops of paint fall sideways and move in slow-motion, and the sound of gongs and wind chimes are extended and distorted. In the Channel 4 2004 idents, the blocks mysteriously levitate in the air, and the viewer's perspective moves from the inside of a car to the outside, momentarily confused by the crackling of a car radio. These idents offer a different version of reality that is constructed through an interplay between visuals and sound. Where successful, this alternate sense of reality relates to the character of the channel's brand identity, whilst promoting the forthcoming content as an immersive and transportive experience.

This deep correspondence and interplay between music and image depends on effective collaboration between designers and composers. Several practical recommendations can be inferred from my discussion with interviewees, especially regarding the briefing process. Within the sample of composers, there were differing opinions on the ideal form of a music brief. Several composers prefer inspiring

adjectives and 'buzzwords' whereas other find references to specific pre-existing tracks to be helpful. This implies that it is helpful for designers to get to know the composers and to understand the way in which they prefer to be briefed. Both groups of interviewees suggested that it is not helpful when clients try to use technical words in the brief. Creative individuals may even resent their client or colleague for becoming too 'involved in the craft' because 'that's our job' (Glasman 2020; Franklin 2020). Glasman summarised:

> People who are bad briefers are people who think they know about music and can actually get involved in the craft with you. Good briefers are people who talk to you in emotional terms or in terms of the brands. (2020)

In other words, it is beneficial for practitioners and their clients to respect the specific expertise of the various disciplines.

In several of the case studies I analysed, the collaboration was further enhanced when the composer was involved early in the process. In the BBC Two 2018 project, Baranowski was involved from the point when Superunion, the creative agency, were preparing their pitch to the broadcaster. When the composer is brought in as a member of the team from an early stage, the designer and composer can share drafts and work together to develop a nuanced relationship between the visual and sonic aspects of the ident, a feature that often makes the ident more engaging and encourages repeated viewings.

This research is also relevant for practitioners because it highlights the value of sound. Advertising and marketing trade journals and reports have recently suggested that the industry is experiencing a 'resurgence' of sonic branding, as marketers wake up to the value and utility of sound (WARC 2021). Sean Gogarty, former Global Divisional CEO at Unilever, suggests that sound has been the 'Cinderella' of the industry: 'it's been overlooked, or I should say—not heard' (2020). Adapting to an age of social media videos, podcasting, smart audio devices, and connected homes, brands across a range of industries have begun to develop distinctive sonic identities, from banks and broadband providers to toothpaste and coffee brands.[108] As Gogarty puts it,

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[108] Recent examples include Mastercard, BT, Colgate, and Nescafé.

'Cinderella is going to the ball now' (Ibid.). Accordingly, my research highlighting the hitherto-neglected role of sound is timely and resonates with an emerging interest in the power of sound and music in branding more widely. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, TV idents present an especially rich area for creative collaborations between graphic designers and composers. Therefore, any brand looking to develop an aural or audio-visual identity can look to decades of work in TV branding for inspiration.

7.2 Implications for researchers and areas for future research

In this thesis, I have argued that the production of idents is a creative discipline that deserves scholarly study and scrutiny. I have positioned this research in relation to the fields of musicology, motion graphics, and media studies. The primary contribution to knowledge made in this thesis is to establish the study of idents from a musicological perspective. Although musicologists have studied short-form audiovisual texts such as title sequences and commercials, I have argued that idents use music in particular ways, and merit specific attention. I have contributed to the nascent area of musicology that explores the commercial 'use' of music in advertising and branding, by focussing specifically on TV idents.

My research also goes further than this by exploring the links between text and production processes. This is an issue that musicologists have begun to explore, particularly in relation to the film industry (Faulkner 1983, Sapiro 2016). I have complemented this emerging research by exploring production processes for a short-form and highly functional type of text that contrasts with the film industry. My focus on idents also highlights points of connection between music and motion graphics; an area that has been touched upon in musicology through analyses of title sequences and end credits (e.g. Davison 2013a, 2013b). Finally, it contributes towards existing thinking on the promotional screen industries within media studies, as it highlights the work of composers in the creative labour of television promotion.

The methodology used in this thesis reflects its interdisciplinary approach, combining complementary ideas from musicology and the social sciences. In Chapter 3, I recalled the observation of Braun and Clarke that every research project is underpinned by the researchers' philosophical assumptions and beliefs (2021). I believe that it is beneficial for researchers to reflect on and disclose these assumptions, and that if this is done, it can lead to the discovery of common ground between disciplines. Within this thesis, a constructionist epistemology and interpretivist approach underpinned my musical analysis of idents as well as my reflexive thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. I considered both methods as a creative and interpretive form of 'composition'. In this way, I have also demonstrated a way in which sociological methods and musicological concepts can be brought together in future research.

Further research could continue to explore links between the arts and crafts of composition and motion graphics across a variety of different areas, including TV and film graphics, audiovisual logos for YouTube channels, advertisements on social media, and more. Researchers could also further explore the communications strategies amongst creatives and their clients. Whilst I have focussed on the 'creative' level—composers and graphic designers—a comparative study could focus on interviewing channel executives who brief them, comparing the educational backgrounds, briefing style, and strategies for collaboration. In the currently 'agile', remote, and adaptive industry context, it is especially important for practitioners to understand each other's perspectives.

This thesis has focussed almost entirely on the UK context. Future research projects could examine this industry in other countries. Even though the UK was originally the centre for broadcast design in the 1980s, motion graphics for television has since become a globalised industry, and designers and composers from the UK are often hired by broadcasters in other countries. Indeed, several of my interviewees have worked for channels across the globe, including China, Abu Dhabi, Norway, Switzerland, and Italy. For example, Lowe has composed music for the flagship national Chinese channel, CCTV1. In our interview, he discussed the issues that arise when composing music for a national broadcaster that operates in a society unfamiliar with the composer, noting:

> I'm not an expert in writing Chinese music, so I just do what I think sounds Chinese. […] It's that thing about making ice for the Eskimos or something, getting a bloke from Birmingham to make the music for the main Chinese news channel. But in a way that's what gives it a distinctive feel, it sounds familiar but different and for them that's what gives it the identity which works. (2020)

This future work could relate to existing musicological discussions of musical clichés and stereotypes in film and television (Newborn, Anderson, and Sadoff 2008, Sadoff 2004, Letcher 2009, Durand 2020).

Another area for future research is audience perspectives on idents. For example, qualitative interviews, focus groups, or participant observation could be employed to explore how viewers interact with idents. Empirical research could explore the impacts of the music, sound, and graphics of idents on elements of brand equity, such as memorability or cohesiveness. Audience-based research could also explore ident 'fandom'. There are several online archives of idents such as TVArk and The Ident Gallery that have been created by fans of TV presentation. Several YouTube accounts are dedicated to critiquing and memorialising TV idents.[109] Students in graphic design commonly use existing channel logos and idents to practice their skills and create their own interpretations and variations. Researchers could explore how these archives and experiments created by amateurs and students relate to the cultural and social value of this ephemeral and overlooked form of artistic practice.

Finally, future research can explore the role of AI in the creation of music and motion graphics, and how this might relate to our understanding of the relationship between sound and image. In Chapter 2, I highlighted the impossibility of directly 'translating' image into sound and vice versa, and in Chapter 5 I explored the role of creativity and interpretation in the work of composition for audiovisual media. Over the past ten years, however, the field has seen a proliferation of algorithmic tools that enables transformations between visual and sonic information, including digital audio workstations such as Kaleidoscope and MetaSynth, which allow a user to generate and change sounds through manipulating visual elements such as colour, shape, and brightness. Google is currently developing a tool named MusicLM which promises the ability to generate music from text or images. Scholars have begun to analyse the

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[109] For example, Adam Martyn has uploaded his critiques in his playlist 'The Ident Review' since 2012. https://www.youtube.com/c/AdamMartyn. (Accessed August 22, 2022).

ways algorithms transform images into sounds and vice versa, a process known as 'transcoding', several linking this development to artistic depictions of synaesthesia in the early 20th century (Schedel 2018, Sagiv, Dean and Bailes 2018). Future research could explore the ways software tools 'translate' images and sounds, and what this says about the role of creativity and interpretation and its implications for the branding sector. AI music or image generators rely on large datasets of sounds or images that have been classified into different categories, with collections such as AudioSet for sounds and ImageNet for images. The process of assigning labels to snippets of music and sound has already been an important issue in the study of advertising music (Kupfer 2020, Tagg and Clarida 2003), as well as in the emerging area of library music research (Durand 2020). Future analyses of composers' and designers' uses of algorithmic software in short audiovisual pieces of branding could be compared to the experiences of composers and designers explored in this thesis.

7.3 Around and back: Concluding thought

In 1982, Lambie-Nairn and Dundas collaborated to create a forty-second animation that would visually and sonically signify the UK's fourth television channel. This project signalled a turning point in the industry, when audiences and practitioners alike realised that idents could move beyond their function as a signpost and could become pieces of creativity and entertainment. For the first time, a television ident became a talking point, even inspiring a cartoon.

Figure 36: Cartoon by Ken Pyne, depicting the logo as a talking point amongst a diverse group of people.

Forty years later, elements of this original Channel 4 ident, including the logo, the blocks of which it is comprised, and the four-note figure, remain distinctive brand assets that continue to be modified and interpreted by designers and composers as the broadcaster adapts to a hybrid digital-broadcast landscape.

The area of TV channel idents thus contains a rich history of long-lasting and adaptable branding from which the emerging sonic branding industry can learn. Silicon Valley futurists predict that the next stage of the internet will take us into the 'metaverse', the idea of an embodied, virtual, and three-dimensional version of the Internet that we can physically immerse ourselves in, for example through using virtual reality headsets. This stems from the creation of virtual worlds and communities, from *Second Life* (2000-) to popular online video games like *Animal Crossing* (2001-), *Roblox* (2006-), and *Fortnite* (2017-). Beyond gaming, proponents of the metaverse such as venture capitalist Michael Ball, believe that we will enter the metaverse to 'work, socialise, learn, and do our shopping' (2021). These virtual environments will hopefully facilitate more collaborations between motion graphic designers, animators, composers, and sound designers for a range of commercial and creative purposes. Today, TV idents function in linear television and streaming platforms as 'paratexts': 'undefined zones' between the inside and the outside of the world of the channel or platform (Genette 1997: 1). In the future, when our lives will likely be even more technologically mediated, it seems there will be more use for similar sonic and visual interstitials that provide boundaries and entryways into different virtual spaces, within and beyond the realm of TV and entertainment.

In short, the production of TV idents is just one area where collaborations between composers and motion graphic designers add value, meaning, and enjoyment to moments in our everyday lives. Through the interviews I conducted with composers and graphic designers, it is apparent that the aesthetic, technical, and structural limitations that come with constructing idents can stimulate invention, improvisation, and creativity. The fluid and vibrant nature of TV brands evidently can be creatively inspiring for the designers and composers who work in this field.

Appendix 1: Sample recruitment email.

[Section in italics added where applicable].

Dear ___,

My name is ____ and I am a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, researching the history of television channel idents. I have been interviewing creatives working in the industry and I have been lucky to have some wonderful input from graphic designers and composers so far. [*I have already interviewed ___, who suggested you would be a great person to speak with, and kindly passed your email address on to me*].

I was wondering whether you might be willing to speak with me about your career and work, [*in particular…*]. I would greatly appreciate your input, as this would be very valuable to my PhD project.

Kind regards,

Melissa Morton

Appendix 2: Example topic guide for interviews

<u>Introduction</u>

- Tell the interviewee about the project.

- Ask whether they consent to being recorded and quoted in my PhD by name. Inform them that they can withdraw consent and refuse to answer questions at any point.

<u>Career and background</u>

- For example, ask how they got started working in the industry, the work they have done, what their education was.

<u>Process and the industry</u>

- How do you go about gaining a job? Pitching and briefs – what are these usually like?

- How do you approach interpreting a brief? What makes a good brief?

- Ask about interaction with other people – marketers, client, etc.

- If composer: How do you compose for short form promotional media such as idents?
    - How do you approach setting music to graphics?

<u>Specific examples</u>

- In your work on ___ can you describe how the process worked?
    - Who from the organisation did you work with? How much interaction did you have with them? Any advertising agencies or other organisations involved? Ask about brief and pitching process. How did you go about interpreting the brief?

- Questions about the creative process.
    - Why did you choose these particular sounds (or graphics/ concepts) to represent that brand?
    - Any particular pieces of music, genres, commercials, art etc that influenced you?
    - Technology: What kind of technology/ software did you use?

<u>Thank and close -</u> Thank the interviewee for their time. Ask whether they know of any other useful people I could interview.

Appendix 3: Ethics review form

PGR Self Audit Checklist for Ethical Purposes 2019/20

Response ID	Completion date
193399-193392-60556572	26 May 2020, 16:16 (BST)

Student name	Melissa Morton

Universal username (UUN)	S1981434

Programme name	PhD Music

Title of Project	Television Idents in UK Broadcasting

Project Supervisor / Tutor	Dr Annette Davison and Dr Charlotte Gilmore

Funding Body (if applicable)	Edinburgh College of Art

Are there any issues of confidentiality which are not adequately handled by the normal tenets of ethical academic research?	No

Are there issues of data handling, management and consent which are not adequately dealt with and compliant with academic procedures?	No

Are there any special moral issues/conflicts of interest?	No

Is there a potential for harm or stress for those involved in your research?	No

Is there a potential for physical harm or stress for those involved in your research?	No

Is there a potential for risk to the researcher?	No

Is there any aspect of the proposed research which might bring the University into disrepute?	No

Are any of the participants or interviewees in the research vulnerable, e.g. children and young people?	No

Is there any aspect of the proposed research which might bring the University into disrepute?	No

Are any of the participants or interviewees in the research vulnerable, e.g. children and young people?	No

Does your research concern groups which may be construed as terrorist or extremist?	No

Appendix 4: Interviewee biographies

David Arnold

David is a British composer, music producer, and orchestral conductor with wide-ranging experience in many areas of the music industry. Having written and arranged for radio and television for many years, David has built up a huge music library of arrangements, from classic greats and opera to musical and film scores. His television credits include BBC One idents, *Blue Peter, Guinness World Records*, *The Big Breakfast*, *Live and Kicking,* and *Tomorrow's World*. On radio, he has produced station themes for the BBC World Service, LBC, as well as Classic FM and countless other stations.

Alex Baranowski

Alex is an award-winning composer based in London. Recently he scored *True Things* (The Bureau / BBC Films, 2022) directed by Harry Wootliff, which recently won Best Original Score at Les Arcs Film Festival, as well as two series of hit BBC One comedy *Staged* staring David Tennant and Michael Sheen. Upcoming feature releases include *A Gaza Weekend* for Film 4/BFI directed by Basil Khalil, and *Burial*, a WWII Drama for Altitude. He was previously nominated for a Tony Award for Martin McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inishmaan* on Broadway. He has won several Music + Sound Awards, including Best Feature Film for *McCullin* (2012) and his ballet adaption of *1984* for Northern Ballet won the South Bank Award for dance after a sold out run at Sadler's Wells.

Aaron Becker

Aaron is a designer and director of title sequences, as well as co-founder of Filmograph (previously known as Becker Design). He began his career working with Prologue in Los Angeles and Digital Kitchen in Chicago, before founding Becker Design in 2010. The company evolved into Filmograph in 2012. He has a BFA in Visual Communication from Washington University in St. Louis. He has designed and directed main title sequences for films such as *The Conjuring* (2013), *Mission: Impossible: Rogue Nation* (2015), *Split* (2017), *Power Rangers* (2017), *Get Out* (2017), and *Aquaman* (2018), as well as television titles for *Clear History* (2013), *Waco* (2018), *The Dangerous Book for Boys* (2018), and *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018).

Simone Benyacar

Simone is an award-winning composer who began as a classically trained pianist at the age of 4. From Italy he moved to the US to study music composition, where he graduated from UCLA in Composition and Musicology. Simone has provided music supervision services and written original compositions for a wide variety of campaigns including: *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter, Transformers*, *The Wolf of Wall Street, Mission: Impossible, Joy, Call of Duty* and *Assassin's Creed*, and has written custom mnemonics for companies like Amazon Studios, Pepsi and many others.

Chris Bovill

Chris and his creative partner John Allison have been responsible for iconic and genre-defying work for some of the world's biggest brands, channels, and platforms. They made their name at TBWA/London before becoming Executive Creative Directors of Fallon, where they generated some of the public's favourite campaigns of the decade for Skoda and Cadburys. Between 2012 and 2017 they headed up 4Creative, Channel 4's in-house creative agency where they oversaw over 900 pieces of content a year and were responsible for a steady stream of risky, bold work. After two years spent transforming Warner Music's in-house entertainment content studio, they now divide their time between working on scripted entertainment and short-form and branded projects.

Erik Brattestad

Erik is a Senior Designer at creative agency Superunion. Originally from Norway, Erik studied Graphic Design at the University of Hertfordshire. He then worked as a designer at The Partners. In 2018, The Partners merged with four other agencies to become Superunion, which was bought by WPP. Erik worked with creative director Kath Tudball on the 2018 BBC Two idents, which gained recognition from numerous industry awards bodies, including CLIO, Cannes Lions, Creative Circle, British Arrows, and D&AD.

Celia Chapman

Celia joined Lambie-Nairn in 1989 as Executive Producer and was instrumental in creating the iconic BBC2 idents in 1991. Previously, Celia had worked at Sky as 'Head of Interstitial' during the launch of their satellite channels. In 2007, Celia worked with Martin Lambie-Nairn to establish the agency ML-N. In 2009, she joined Heavenly to become brand consultant and creative services director. Celia continued to work with Lambie-Nairn on projects until the late 2010s.

Lucas Christman

Lucas is an award-winning designer with over 15 years of experience. He began his career at Picture Mill, working on dozens of blockbuster main titles. From 2008 to 2018, he led the design staff at the entertainment industry marketing agency Ant Farm. A graduate of the Art Center College of Design, he is the winner of a number of industry awards, including two Key Art awards, two Game Marketing awards, an Effie award, and a Golden Trailer award. Christman has developed visual identities and animations for brands including: Amazon Studios, Pepsi, Marvel, Microsoft, Google, Disney, The Mummy, Transformers, and numerous videogames. He has also creative directed large scale experiential installations for the videogames Call of Duty and Destiny at E3, Marvel Universe Live, and Chevy for the Detroit International Auto Show.

Paul Franklin

After studying Graphic Design at the University of Salford, Paul worked with Martin Lambie-Nairn's agency on international TV brands including Abu Dhabi TV. In 2010, he joined Heavenly, where he worked as Creative Director on projects for Sky Atlantic

and Fulham Football Club. Franklin then founded Red&White, a brand consultancy based in London. As Creative Director at Red&White, Paul worked for brands including BT, Sadlers' Wells, Kodak, The British Library, and The Alan Turing Institute.

Liz Friedman

Multi-award-winning designer Liz Friedman worked as a Creative Director/Senior Designer for the Graphic Design Department for BBC Television, leading a small team specialising in designing for Dramas, Documentaries and Features. Liz was at the forefront of the creation of 3D computer generated imagery and computer simulation, working with computer graphics pioneer John Vince. Amongst numerous awards, Liz won a Primetime Emmy for her work on the drama The Dorothy L. Sayers' *Mysteries* and two BAFTA nominations for Michael Palin's *Around the World in 80 Days* and for *2000 Today*, the 24-hour broadcast for the Millennium. After her career with the BBC, Liz left to apply her knowledge to the education of undergraduates and postgraduates at the University of Ravensbourne, where she was a Course Leader and established the Motion Graphics course as the main feeder to the industry.

Christoph Gabathuler

Christoph is an LA-based multidisciplinary designer and art director with a demonstrated history of working in the entertainment industry. Christoph has worked and studied for the last 16 years in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Finland, and the United States. Skilled in concept development, 3D animation, and graphic design, he directed boards for theatrical and broadcast projects, worked on main titles and studio identities, and directed events, infographics, and short films. Christoph has worked on projects including the Netflix Original Series Identity, the Lantern Entertainment logo animation, and main titles for *Fractured* (2019, Brad Anderson), *Detective Pikachu* (2019, Rob Letterman), and *The Darkest Minds* (2018, Jennifer Yuh Nelson).

Grant Gilbert

Grant's design career started at cult 90's TV shows *The Big Breakfast* (1992-2002, Channel 4) and *The Word* (1990-1996, Channel 4) before honing his craft and directing skills at Channel 4 and New York based design agency, Attik. After returning to London and freelancing for over six years, Grant started Double G (DBLG); a strategic collective of artists, directors and designers who create engaging brand experiences through explorative motion design.

Joe Glasman

Joe is a multi-award-winning composer and founder of Hum, a London-based music company specialising in audio branding and on-screen channel branding. Glasman has been commissioned by leading global brands including the BBC, BT, and Sky. His company's output includes Hum Tracks, a unique production music label boasting quirky and unexpected music, as well as albums by a clutch of brilliant singer-songwriters. Hum has been the winner of more than thirty awards for composition, audio branding, commercials, songs, corporate videos, gallery installations and more.

Michael Graham-Smith

Michael joined the BBC in 1972 as a Designer for the Open University production unit at Alexandra Palace. He moved in 1974 to the mainstream of motion graphics at Television Centre, where he worked on a broad spectrum of programmes and became a Senior Designer. After leaving the BBC in 1994, Michael became a Professor in the Design Faculty of the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, Germany, where he taught motion graphics to undergraduates and post-graduates for a decade, using state-of-the-art technology in a 12th Century building. He retired from his post in 2004, after winning with his students the Prix d'Or at the Anneçy Student Animation Festival. Michael was responsible for initiating the project to create the BBC Motion Graphics Archive which was launched by the BBC and Ravensbourne University in March 2021.

Christine Butner (Green)

Christine studied graphic design at Kingston Polytechnic in the early 1980s and joined the BBC about a year after graduating. She worked at the corporation for 13 years in all, eight full time and 5 part time. Christine started out as an assistant to a senior designer and after a couple of years started taking on her own projects. Christine's work ranges from the iconic title sequence for *The Story of Tracy Beaker* (2002-2006) to the Queen's Christmas speech via *Our Friends in the North* (1996), as well as numerous documentaries and dramas. Christine considers herself lucky to have realised her childhood dream of making pictures for television, and the reality has far exceeded her expectations.

Imran Hanif

Imran is a music producer, multi-instrumentalist, artist, and composer based in London. He has over 17 years' experience in providing bespoke music across a broad range of industry sectors. Imran composed the music and sound design for the BBC One Circles idents (2006-2016). He has also provided music and sound design for leading brands including Nestlé, Toyota, Sky, Adidas, and Universal Films.

Rob Hifle

Rob started his career as a director in television at the BBC in 1991. In the mid-nineties, he formed the design and direction agency Burrell Durrant Hifle (BDH) where he went on to be an award-winning commercials director working on high profile commercials such as Playstation, The Guardian, and Drambuie. In the early 2000's Rob worked as Creative Director on music shows including the European MTV EMA. In 2019, Rob founded television production company Academy 7 Productions which has made long form shows for ITV, PBS and BBC. More recently Rob has been working on high profile series and feature drama documentaries with Netflix and APPLE+. In November 2022, BDH has rebranded as Lux Aeterna which specialises in high end VFX for film and television. Rob's work has been nominated and awarded for BAFTA, D&AD, EMMY, PROMAX and several Royal Television Society awards.

Jason Keeley

Jason has designed and directed moving image sequences for many brands, nationally and internationally, including the BBC, ITV, UKTV CCTV, SF1, BT, FIFA, Sainsbury's, and Coca-Cola. He has won many prestigious industry awards including D&AD Silver pencil. As an on-going personal project, he has created a series of abstract and figurative printworks. These have been inspired by dance, the human form and by the pop artists of the 60's.

Martin Lambie-Nairn

In a career spanning five decades, Martin was widely acknowledged as one of the leading graphic designers and creative directors of his generation. From his ground-breaking identity for the launch of Channel 4 in 1982 and the rebranding of BBC News to his appointment as a Royal Designer for Industry and creating the original idea and concept for the TV series *Spitting Image*, Martin's accolades and achievements are too numerous to list. Martin sadly passed away in December 2020.

Peter Lawlor

Peter read PPE at Oxford and then worked as a trader at Salomon Brothers on Wall Street. On returning to the UK, he set up Water Music, which went on to be the world's biggest music production company. He has a BAFTA, six Cannes Golds, and numerous other awards for composition. He also set up and ran White Water Records, the first release of which went to number 1 in the official UK charts. In 2006 he returned to the financial world, becoming the Principal Economic Advisor to the German Stock Exchange.

David Lowe

David is an established composer, arranger, and producer working primarily in television, radio, branding, idents, and commercials, both in the UK and internationally. He has created music for a wide range of programmes including news, current affairs, factual, wildlife and entertainment shows. He has also composed for National Radio and for special events, such as the London 2012 Olympic Games. Lowe is a member of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA). He has twice been awarded honorary doctorates, first by Staffordshire University in 2005, and then by Birmingham City University in 2014.

Rich Martin

Rich is a sound engineer specialising in music for television, and front-of-house live sound. He also writes and arranges music for TV. He has provided the soundtrack to idents for BBC 4 BBC 3, BBC Knowledge, SYFY, Discovery, Dave, SKY, and Channel 4, E4, Film 4, and More 4. Rich has contributed to some of advertising's best loved campaigns, bringing with them credits on Black and Yellow Pencils, Arrows, and Lions. His work also received gold awards from the Music and Sound Awards, British Arrows, and the Creative Circle.

Charlie Mawer

Charlie is the executive creative director of Red Bee Creative. He has led complex network re-brands for the BBC, UKTV, Virgin Media and NBC Universal, and campaigns for Doctor Who 50th, Comic Relief, Fox Turkey, FX Channel, RTÉ and BBC World. A branded content pioneer, he created TV series for Ikea, Renault, and the COI. More recent work for brands includes Bacardi, Barclays, and Hyundai. Charlie's many creative awards include Promax, Creative Circle, BTAA, D&AD Pencils and a BAFTA nomination. He has contributed to books on TV marketing and with Andy Bryant he is co-author of *The TV Brand Builders – How to Win Audiences and Influence Viewers* (2016: Kogan Page).

James Mobbs

James is a freelance Senior Designer and Creative Director with over 10 years' experience working with world-leading television, digital and media brands. Clients include the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5, Sky, Netflix, Bauer, Global, Shell and Virgin. James previously spent 8 years working on the UK's biggest breakfast show, *BBC Breakfast* along with iconic children's news programme *Newsround*. James continues to work with BBC Radio 1 along with a range of other broadcasters, and his work can now be seen on hit TV shows including *Britain's Got Talent, Top Gear* and *The Circle*. James is a regular judge and speaker for the National Student Television Awards a juror for the Royal Television Society Awards.

Tim Platt

Tim studied for a BA (Hons) Degree at St Martin's School of Art and graduated in 1983. He freelanced as an illustrator/designer until 1987, when he joined the BBC Graphic Design Department. In 2005, Tim moved as a Senior Designer/Creative Director to Red Bee Media. He left in 2010 to set up, together with Paula Williams, their own agency Wonder Creative, before becoming a Senior Lecturer at Ravensbourne University on the Motion Graphics Design Degree course in 2015. Tim was closely involved in the BBC Motion Graphics Archive project, which was launched in March 2021. Tim has worked with many global brands including Canal+, ITV, Renault, Discovery, Univision, UKTV and the BBC. His work has been recognised with numerous awards, including D&AD Gold, Design Week, Promax BDA and two BAFTA nominations.

Tony and Gaynor Sadler

Tony and Gaynor Sadler (formerly known as Logorhythm Music) have become synonymous in the broadcast and advertising world with cutting edge, innovative and beautiful music. Both graduates of the Royal College of Music London, they discovered their talent for composition to picture on a Ryvita commercial. Since then, they have written and produced over 4000 pieces of music all of which are published by their own Imprint, Montgomery Music Ltd. Credits include hit records for acts such as Talk Talk and Spandau Ballet; branding for the BBC; and advertising campaigns for the National Lottery, Heineken and BMW.

Nick Sunderland

Nick is a brand strategist and copywriter with over 20 years' experience working across the entertainment, technology, charity, and cultural sectors. He has worked on a wide range of projects including the launch of Sky digital, the Wellcome Collection, O2, and Sky Atlantic through to brand development programmes for Sadler's Wells, the British Library, British Red Cross and most recently J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World. Before founding Why Projects, an independent brand consultancy, in 2012, he worked for Saatchi & Saatchi, BSkyB, Lambie-Nairn and Heavenly.

Katherina Tudball

Born in Kuala Lumpur and raised in London, Katherina is a multi-award-winning designer with 20 years' experience. When studying at Central Saint Martins she began collaborating with fellow graphics student Julia Woollams. After graduation the pair were hired as a team at Johnson Banks, where they worked together for over a decade. In 2016 she joined The Partners and now leads a team at Superunion as Creative Director. Katherina has a keen interest in design education, as a regular visitor at arts universities such as CSM and past external examiner at the London Metropolitan University. Katherina often appears as a speaker on design and branding, is a regular creative awards judge and a former D&AD Design Trustee.

Paula Williams

Paula is an award-winning creative director with over 25 years' industry experience, working as part of the BBC's in-house creative team, RedBee Creative brand identity team and currently as co-founder of Wonder Creative. She creates engaging and effective multi-platform identities with media brands, including BBC, ITV, Discovery, Canal Plus, Univision and Renault – working with ambitious clients across the UK and international markets gaining global perspectives. Her work is internationally recognised and awarded; D&AD, The Royal Television Society, Design Week, Bafta, Promax BDA, New York Festivals, Marketing effectiveness Laus. She is a founder member of the BBC Motion Graphics steering group, a regular mentor for Ladies Wine and Design London and a Judge as part of Promax Europe and Global Excellence Awards.

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