Interrogating Composition in the Age of Remix: the role of format in musical composition

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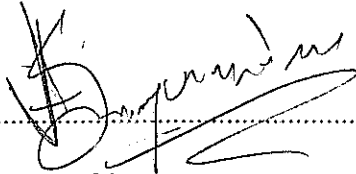
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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the audiovisual compositions and the accompanying commentary that constitute this submission are entirely my own work. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signature...

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Date......24....JUNE....2016

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with composing audiovisual mashup pieces that involve filmed music performance and remix practices. I present here a number of audiovisual mashups I composed by separately filming and recording clips that were produced in other contexts and by later subsuming them into a new compositional form. These pieces, produced between 2011 and 2016, range from music clip inserts and music videos featured in television programmes, to urban development documentaries and self-commissioned projects. Focusing on hybrid audiovisual art-forms closely related to music videos, I examine the work of contemporary audiovisual artists, Ophir Kutiel ('Kutiman'), Jack Conte ('Pomplamoose') and Mark Johnson ('Playing for Change'), focusing on projects produced between 2008 and 2014, in relation to their composition techniques and methods of production and distribution. My research has included an examination of the way that music functions in this particular audiovisual context. As well as presenting my portfolio of compositions, I also perform a close textual analysis of certain specific samples from the portfolio, identifying the methods and techniques I adopted and adapted from the aforementioned artists and reflecting on their use and effects in my own compositions.

Over the last decade, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of music artists who include video in their work and make it available through online streaming of their music, especially on audiovisual platforms such as YouTube. This development has occurred in association with the introduction of new audio and video technology and within the context of remix and internet culture. I view this visually

focused direction in music making as an artistic attempt to re-instate the visual

relationship between music performance and audience, a relationship included in the

music experience by default before the 1900's and the advent of recording. Using

Jacques Attali's model of music networks and expanding on his ideas through

Eduardo Navas' Remix Theory, I examine the inter-relation of repetition and

representation in current music production. By adding the visual element in my own

music compositions I am not suggesting that live music performance can be replaced

by recorded performance, as each functions within a different music network, but

attempting to create a more 'effective' music experience, which works both as

simulacrum for live music performance and as spectacle for recorded music.

Glossary of terms

The following terms are used within the context of this commentary and their explanation below is focused on the audiovisual nature of the analysed work:

- Social platforms (social media): Online websites that facilitate peer-to-peer communication and the exchange of uploaded content.

- UGC: User-generated content. The acronym refers to internet-user digitised material that is uploaded and/or shared online.

- Content: Digitised material that is being uploaded/viewed/exchanged between online users, including text, photographs, videos and other forms of hybrid audiovisual formats.

- Sampling: The activity of cut/copying & pasting digitised audiovisual information.

- Remix: The activity of taking samples from pre-existing materials to combine them into new forms according to personal taste (Navas 2006).

- View-count: Indicates the number of individual plays of an online video/song (or 'clicks' on a link), typically on a social platform such as YouTube, Facebook and Spotify. A high view-count (or 'click-through-rate' - 'CTR') suggests popularity and/or commercial success. A high view-count within a short time-frame constitutes the 'virality' of a video/song.

- Viral: When discussing online media, the term 'viral' indicates a high view-count rate and a wide range of transmission among online users.

Composition Portfolio

The compositions presented here can be found on the accompanying USB flash disk.

• May 2011

Demo_Deux (2011a) promo video (6min 33sec)

youtu.be/uEVUjplAji8

Piano-Voice duet with Anastasis Sarakatsanos and Spyridoula Baka. I was involved in developing the concept, artistic direction of the piece, recording and mixing the music and audio/video editing.

• October 2011

Refraction (2011c) (5 min 45 sec)

Audiovisual composition.

youtu.be/mfKKIvdr7QU

I composed, arranged, filmed, directed and edited an Audiovisual piece, titled 'Refraction'. In this Audiovisual composition, I attempted to film and edit pre-composed, pre-arranged music. I filmed musicians individually, performing their part of the composition. Later, I edited the parts together to form the final piece. Participants where all RHUL Music students, while equipment, studios and general assistance where offered by the RHUL Media Arts department.

• February - May 2012

Secrets of Music

Audiovisual compositions

'Secrets of Music' is a TV music programme, produced for Greek state TV channel (ET1). I was asked to deliver a series of audiovisual compositions, using original footage from the programme. Each music video was composed for a specific episode, linked to its thematic (episode thematics include 'What is Music?' 'Music in Education', 'Music Technology'). Certain episodes required remixing existing music and editing music videos in more traditional forms. In these instances I had the opportunity to work with a professional crew and direct these videos.

Audiovisual mashup pieces, composed for five episodes:

- *Secrets of Music - Music Video from ep. 01* (2012b) (55sec) youtu.be/HCQdz-pRz-s

- *Secrets of Music - Music Video from ep. 04* (2013h) (24sec) youtu.be/vRg_D8Efy0g

- *Secrets of Music - Music Video from ep. 13* (2013e) (1min 46sec) youtu.be/9kR_xLrBLA8 Used sample from Georges Bizet's *Pearl Fishers* (Aria: 'Je Crois Entendre Encore', Tenor: Alain Vanzo).

- *Secrets of Music - Music Video from ep. 14* (2013f) (1min 45sec) youtu.be/6iOXYwVdqQU

- *Secrets of Music - Music Video from ep. 15* (2013g) (1min 03sec) http://youtu.be/G8ebRR-1d9c

• January - May 2013

Influenza (2012a) (7min 05sec)

Audiovisual mashup composition

youtu.be/7AVONm7SWwA

Directed, composed, recorded, edited and mixed the piece.

• September 2013

Tatcho Drom (2013d) promo video for music band (1min 55sec)

youtu.be/HQrbC10EwPU

Directed and produced the video. Recorded and edited sound.

The result is a mix of live and pre-recorded sound, as well as sound design.

• September 2014

Heartbeat of Nieuw West (2014a). Part of a music documentary about life in the area

New West of Amsterdam, as seen through the eyes of its musicians. First group of

musicians filmed in June 2014, resulted in audiovisual composition. (4min57sec)

http://youtu.be/CI_9Iy-d5Aw

Directed, recorded, composed, mixed and edited.

• April 2015

Nieuw West - The Movement (2015) - parts A and B. Second group of musicians for

the 'Nieuw West' project, filmed in December 2014, completing the music

documentary about the area of New West of Amsterdam. (9min)

Directed, recorded, composed, mixed and edited the pieces.

- June 2016

Mezrab (2016). Promotional video for Mezrab Cultural Centre, based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. I planned, produced, directed, filmed and edited the project from January until June 2016. (5min 40sec).

The audiovisual mashup composition is available on the accompanying USB flash-disk.

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Additional Material – 1 USB flash disk containing portfolio pieces, additional material and works referenced in the text (where an online link is not provided). Logic and Final Cut files are available on request. Please e-mail: sarakatsanos.a@gmail.com.

1. Introduction

The aim of this commentary is to present my creative work in composing music by 'remixing' audiovisual material and to evaluate it in relation to similar work, produced by current music artists. Within the context of the digital environment of 'Web 2.0', including social platforms and the proliferation of 'homemade' video since the birth of YouTube in 2005, paired with the widespread availability of editing tools for film and audio, I regard my work as part of a shift in music-making to forms which are enhanced - indeed reshaped - by their relation to visual material.

In Chapter 2 - Critical Contexts, I present Jacques Attali's (1985) theory of 'music networks', in which he describes how certain expressions of music, relating to specific technologies and levels of social structuring, depart from older characteristics and functions and acquire new ones. Within the context of Attali's theory, I discuss the creative use of recently available technological tools which not only contribute to an audiovisual convergence (Holt 2011) and the formation of new, hybrid art-forms (Harrison 2014), but also allow new methods and techniques of composition such as 'cut, copy & paste' or 'sampling', an essential tool for 'the global activity consisting of the creative and efficient exchange of information' which I will refer to as 'remix culture' (Navas 2006). (see glossary) In Chapter 2, I also give a brief historiography of Remix, linking it to music practices of the 1960's and identifying its aesthetic references, evident in my work and the work of contemporary artists producing music in similar formats.

In Chapter 3 - Creative Contexts — Influences, I closely examine the work of some of these artists, with a focus on techniques used in composing, audio mixing and video editing, methods of presenting and distributing their work, as well as the public reception of this work and its commercial success. I also provide a close textual analysis of extracts from Ophir Kutiel's key project *ThruYou*[1] (2009), while highlighting my observations on a technical, aesthetic and also an ethical level, in relation to copyright and authorship issues in remix: all areas in which this artist has had a significant influence on my work.

In Chapter 4 - Creative Output — Close Textual Analysis, I expound my own creative practice and methodology, showing how it developed across a number of works included in my portfolio for this PhD. This includes work ranging from the conventional music video (2011a) to commissioned television pieces (2013h) and performance-driven pieces (2013b). What they have in common is the use and manipulation of 'found' ('unrelated') audiovisual material. Within this study, I use the term 'unrelated' to refer to separately filmed and recorded clips that were not originally part of the same composition. Rather, the original material was produced in other contexts and was later subsumed into a new a new compositional form. In this sense, all materials used 'pre-exist' the compositions, therefore justifying the designation of these compositions as 'mashups'. Presenting the portfolio in chronological order and performing a close textual analysis on specific samples of my work, I demonstrate the development of my technical skills in recording and editing

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[1] Ophir Kutiel is an Israeli audiovisual artist who attracted international attention with his 2009 project *ThruYou* in which he composed new music by remixing pre-existing clips he downloaded from YouTube. http://thru-you.com (Kutiel 2009a)

film and audio which became nuanced and refined by working with 'found' material. I also chart the development of my compositional approach, which was shaped by researching, and understanding the medium of 'audiovisual mashup', and with reference to the compositional techniques and methods of the artists discussed in Chapter 3 and creatively adapted and applied in my own work.

In Chapter 5 - Conclusion, I summarise the findings of this study by presenting an overview of the previous chapters. I also identify the limitations of this study as well as of my own experience in this creative practice and state the future directions of my work.

2. Critical Contexts

My drive to compose music using film comes from a desire to seek more than the passive, 'commodity-consumer' relationship (Adorno 2001: 37-39), between music and audience that was developed in the late 1900s with the domestication of music through the invention of the phonograph. My starting point was my observation that music listeners have been able to experience music as a solely sonic phenomenon only just over the last hundred years: a very short timeframe within the context of the history of human music-making, which is believed to extend back at least 55,000 years (Wallin et al 2000). Thomas Turino in *Music as Social Life* makes detailed reference to the processes and events towards the end of the nineteenth century, which led to the formation and development of a 'new musical field', that of recorded music and the domestication of the music experience (Turino 2008: 66-67). It can be argued that there is a clear correlation between the public's understanding of music as a sonic phenomenon and the use of recording and playback tools, which enabled this understanding and substantially transformed the music experience by making possible everyday practices such as listening to music in the car or at home, through our mobile phones and other playback devices. As Jacques Attali (1985: 32) observes in his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, such practices, inconceivable a few decades ago, are immediate results of a technological breakthrough in sound recording that led to the materialization of music and the individualization of the music experience.

Attali distinguishes four types of networks 'where music is expressed, heard and exchanged' and relates each of them to 'a technology and a different level of social structuring'. These are the *sacrificial*, *representation*, *repetition* and *composition* networks. While music today, in its different expressions across cultures, could be argued to function within all four networks in parallel, historically the first three types of networks succeeded each other. The sacrificial network, linked to rituals and the religious functions of music was succeeded by the representation network, where music became 'a spectacle attended at specific places: concert halls, the closed space of the simulacrum of ritual' (Attali 1985: 32). Similarly, Attali identifies the shift of music from the network of 'representation' to the network of 'repetition' in the invention of the phonograph and argues that by entering the latter network, music now becomes 'a blind spectacle', as opposed to the former network that values music as spectacle:

> The third network, that of *repetition,* appears at the end of the nineteenth century with the advent of recording. This technology, conceived as a way of storing representation, created in fifty years' time, with the phonograph record, a new organizational network for the economy of music. In this network, each spectator has a solitary relation with a material object; the consumption of music is individualized, a simulacrum of ritual sacrifice, a blind spectacle. The network is no longer a form of sociality, an opportunity for spectators to meet and communicate, but rather a tool making the individualized stockpiling of music possible on a huge scale. (Attali 1985: 31-32)

Finally, Attali envisions the network in which music is 'lived as composition'. He separates composition from all other networks as in it, music is 'performed for the musician's own enjoyment, as self-communication, with no other goal than his own

pleasure, as something fundamentally outside all communication, as self-transcendence, a solitary, egotistical, noncommercial act' (Attali 1985: 32).

It is my contention that since the end of the nineteenth century where Attali dates the shift between networks, wherever there has been technological development, our consumer society has learned to accept and celebrate the notion of the lonely listener, experiencing music in its solely sonic form, through audio speakers. Within a Western European tradition in which the perspective of 'high' art, as an intellectual process, feeds into the increasing commercialisation of music, it could be argued that the relationship between music and audience became increasingly individualised as music became primarily a marketed product for 'collectors' and 'fetishists' (Patke 2005: 198) (Adorno 2001).

To extend my thoughts on the transforming functions of music I return to Turino, who applies another structural system that at first makes the distinction between 'live performance' and 'recorded' music, where 'live performance' can be participatory or presentational (Turino 2008: 66) similar to Attali's networks of 'sacrifice' and 'representation' (Attali 1985: 31-32). Turino goes further to propose the distinction of making recorded music in two fields: that of 'high fidelity music' and 'studio audio art'. His definition of 'high fidelity music' as 'musical sounds heard on recordings that index or are iconic of live performance' (Turino 2008: 67) is presented in contrast with the 'democratic' nature of participatory music that is 'potentially involving the most people' (Turino 2008: 92).

Turino's argument on high fidelity recordings' potential to provide 'ideal'

presentations of music can be interpreted as the listener's desire to be at the moment

of performance (Turino 2008: 92). From the beginnings of audio technology, efforts

have been focused on meeting the audience expectations of a 'realistic' experience

that recreates the original sound environment and captures the participatory feeling of

a live performance. Audio technology has thus provided an experience which may be

considered as simulacrum, where the quest for extremely high-fidelity audio

reproduction may be seen as attempting, but ultimately failing, to re-create elements

of the original sound, and sound perspective, that have been lost by the physical and

the visual separation of the audience from the musical performance.

On the point of Turino's argument about the 'democratisation' of music, a

characteristic he attributes to participatory music, I would add that the availability and

spread of media post-production tools and techniques, has created a culture within

which new types of participation are formed. What I intend to show later in this

chapter is how the audiovisual convergence observed in current hybrid-media remix

practices, within the context of Web 2.0, not only 'blurs the lines between the

recorded field and presentational performance' (Turino 2008: 65) but offers new

economic models for musicians and social functionalities for music.

Before I continue drawing connections between the functions of music and its

historical context, I need to clarify 'remix', a term which will be heavily used in the

next chapters and the way it will be used to identify works of various artists, visited in

Chapter 3 as well as for the analysis of my work in Chapter 4. The word 'remix' or

're-mix' is commonly used to describe 'the activity of taking samples from pre-existing materials to combine them into new forms according to personal taste' (Navas 2006). Eduardo Navas, in his 2010 revision of his paper on *Regressive and Reflexive Mashups in Sampling Culture*, first makes a distinction between the concepts of 'mashups' and 'remix', with first including but moving beyond basic principles of the latter (use of 'cut/copy/paste' techniques, enabled by the use of digital technology), and defines the different forms of each category by functionality and the dominance of the original material in the remixed version. Considering the extensive manipulation of material and cut/copy/paste - remix editing techniques involved in the production of my compositions, I place these under the category described by Navas as 'reflexive remix', a type of remix that through extensive manipulation and re-appropriation, challenges the 'aura' of the prototype (Navas 2006). However, to define the result of my creative process, throughout this text I will be using the term 'mashup' which suggests use of remix techniques but, as explained in close-textual analysis of my work in Chapter 4, also includes all the audiovisual elements involved in the composition, both content and format-wise. Furthermore, emphasizing on the political contexts of this material activity, Navas extends 'the concept of remix as Remix (with a capital "R")' to all areas of culture, including music, architecture, fashion, film/television, video and software (Navas 2010). The role of remix as a political tool is discussed by Navas, whom I visit in further analysis below:

> Remix is a contemporary practice enabled by the convergence of digital networking technologies, the affordability of digital media production and distribution tools, and the proliferation of access to ever-expanding online archives of spreadable digital media content. The convergence of such factors

> has resulted in an unprecedented democratization of the tools and techniques previously available to an exclusive minority of well-funded producers. (Navas, Gallagher, and burrough, 2015: 52)

Extending Attali's viewpoint on the relation between current technology and how music is expressed, heard and exchanged (1985: 31) to more recent examples of technological development, including the advent of mobile technologies, one can observe how the social and music/video sharing platforms (Facebook, YouTube) function as distribution channels for the online peer-to-peer or 'public' sharing of music. Following the digitisation in audio and its technological developments, video technologies too became more portable and affordable and were increasingly adapted to artistic experimentation. Though developments in audio could be said to have preceded those in video, both media industries turned towards improving reproductive quality and formats and creating smaller, more portable recording and playback devices, altering not just the landscape of media reproduction but also those of perception, reception and production (Sonvilla-Weiss 2015: 168).

While presenting the analogy between the developments in use and function of audio and video technology I must take into account the different context within which the latter became widely available and affordable, compared to that of audio. Significant advancements in filming and screening technologies, in terms of recording quality and portability, such as the availability of digital high-definition cameras and camera - enabled phone/smartphones[2] made high resolution video recording an affordable

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[2] Charles Arthur in the timeline of smartphone technology he presents in *The Guardian* describes it as 'the most competitive technology market in the world: http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/jan/24/smartphones-timeline (Arthur 2012).

option for a much wider group of consumers. These advances were compounded by the birth of Web 2.0 around 2005, in sync with the launch of YouTube on that year (Peverini 2015: 721), that resulted to the wide circulation of online content.

Fabian Holt in his article 'Is music becoming more visual? Online video content in the music industry' (2011), describes the noticeable growth in the numbers of artists including the visual aspect of music performance in their work 'with the penetration of video in music industry practices of production, communication and distribution', leading music practices to 'the era of audiovisual convergence': 'Since around 2008, virtually every music magazine, record label and artist, and a growing number of live music promoters have been producing and circulating video of live and recorded music on their respective online platforms' (Holt 2011: 50-51).

Examples include Swedish singer Jonna Lee who anonymously promoted her audiovisual album *bounty*[3] (iamamiwhoami 2010b) by releasing a series of six short videos on YouTube in which she delivered a number of 'hidden' codes and symbols, starting with the title of each video, for example the piece *13.1.14.4.18.1.7.15.18.1.1110.*[4] (iamamiwhoami 2010a). Already a few weeks after the initial upload date, related posts started to appear on blogs, forums and archives 'dedicated to the audio/visual project iamamiwhoami' (Anon. 2010) made by online users who were attempting to decode the videos (Anon. 2011). The following extract comes from the post 'decoding iamamiwhoami', published in the blog *Forsaken*

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[3] https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8B1328A38C80B191 (iamamiwhoami 2010b).

[4] https://youtu.be/4yAI5_YXNqI (iamamiwhoami 2010a).

Order in 2010 and stands as an example of the general hype, created by the 'virality'

of Lee's videos: 'Each video is named using numbers. Some numbers can be

converted to letters and create words, others, we cannot assume what they really

mean, nor do we know how to use them' (dariana 2010). In the same blog post one

can also find the decoded titles of the videos and a detailed analysis on the archetypal

and mythological approach of the 'iamamiwhoami' project as well as on the singer's

hidden identity (Collins 2010) (Cragg 2012).

Multiple online social media and music platforms such as YouTube, MySpace, Vimeo,

Facebook and Tumblr, low-cost but high-end video production and high internet

speeds made it easier for artists to share a filmed rather than a recorded version of

their music performance. An example of such practices is the two-fold collective

'Blogotheque'[5] that started in 2006, producing works of 'artistically recorded live

performances' (Guyer 2010), and became commercially successful only via their

music blog and further online media distribution. From the avant-garde, such as

Israeli musician Ophir Kutiel's experimentation with YouTube videos,[6] starting in

2008, which eventually led to international acclaim, to the mainstream, such as singer

Beyoncé Knowles'[7] delivery of a full 'audiovisual album . . . designed to be

consumed as a comprehensive audio/visual piece from top to bottom' in 2013 (Danton

2013), there is evidence in current music productions, especially those that creatively

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[5] en.blogotheque.net (Blogotheque 2006)

[6] See Chapter 3.

[7] In her Master's thesis, Harrison (2014) uses Beyoncé's audiovisual album *Beyoncé*, released in 2013, as a case study to discuss *hybrid genres* in music. Current papers such as the above or Holt's *Is music becoming more visual? Online video content in the music industry* (2011), further contextualize the present thesis, contributing to the discussion on audiovisual convergence.

involve digital and online tools in their production or distribution methods, that shows

a visually focused direction in music-making and consuming.

Similarly, distribution channels based on online streaming and content sharing that

developed during the same period, resulted in a vast increase in online streaming of

music, especially on audiovisual platforms like YouTube[8] and in the numbers of

artists who shifted the distribution of their music to such platforms. I would argue that

a few defining examples that have established the parameters and standards for new

media composition practices over the last decade, are: Kutiel O. as 'Kutiman', Conte

J. and Dawn N. as 'Pomplamoose' and Johnson M. with the project 'Playing for

Change'. The work of these artists is examined in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Whether or not it was the explicit intention of these artists to relink musical

performance to visual experience, it was the affordable cameras, digital editing tools

and distribution platforms that enabled them to create and 'perform' their hybrid art-

forms.

Holt describes this shift in music distribution as the 'video turn':

> The impact of audiovisual convergence in the music industry can be registered
> in the video turn, affecting the status of the audio formats and the music
> industry. The distribution, presentation and communication about music have
> become more visual, with video playing an important role and transforming the
> websphere from discursive to more audiovisual communication. (Holt 2011)

Departing from the paradigm of the 'lonely listener', my process turns to grounded

research and to the exploration of music as a dynamic embodiment of cultural

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[8] 'The number of hours people are watching on YouTube each month is up 50% year on
year' (YouTube 2014).

relations between composer and participants. In my study, I understand music as cultural transaction, as an active cultural process. From rituals, religious events and political propaganda, to weddings, parties and generally events that are meant to strengthen social ties, music, within the sacrificial and representative networks, has served such functions throughout human history. As I have argued, however, availability of recording technology, particularly when interpolated through the ideology of individuated consumer pleasure, combined with the development of internet culture has not only affected the way music is produced and consumed but has also altered the functions it serves. While it could be argued that today's rave parties might have replaced ancient shamanistic rituals in providing what are essentially trance experiences (Papadimitropoulos 2009), recent developments in audio and film technology have made completely new ways of experiencing music available today.

Online sites like YouTube, in streaming live concerts and festivals, and allowing interaction between users as well as hosting their work, offer platforms for collective experiences and creative collaborations. Within the context of social platforms such as Facebook, different types of social behaviours are served and different types of social ties are developed. Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Spotify and Soundcloud amongst others offer listeners the opportunity to publicly 'like' specific music tracks, artists, albums or playlists, whilst listeners' musical 'preferences' can be 'followed' and 'shared' by other online users, transforming domestic musical listening and introducing concepts such as '*user-generated content, long tail, network as platform,*

folksonomy, syndication, and mass collaboration' the social and cultural effects of which are discussed by Manovich in 'The Practices of Everyday (Media) Life' (2008).

Enabled by the same developments in affordable filming equipment and online streaming platforms, I set out to explore the use of filmed music performance in my own compositions. The context set out above is at the starting-point of both the critical approach I take to the listening and reception of musical performance in its cultural and site-specific context; and also of the innovative process by which I compose, which involves proffering a stylistic or conceptual framework to participating performers, then creating audiovisual compositions that allow for considerable performative signifiers. Thus I deliver not only a complex collaged composition, but also an equally complex and nuanced audience experience which both draws on, and critiques, the notion of the culturally-specific performance.

The modes of musical composition used in my practice incorporate visual performative elements, exploring the dialectical relationships between technology and social function as played out through composition, performance and reception of music. I also consider the conceptualisation of the platforms used to host my hybrid-media compositions. Due to their online nature, the music experience maintains some of the material characteristics of a product. It is also missing elements from the social and cultural contexts of the performance. Yet, some of those dynamics of social relations and cultural influence are embedded within the music experience through the visual dimension of the compositions. As a carrier of cultural information, film, when added to a music composition, gives new meanings to that composition and music,

playing an additional role, finds new forms of expression that include the visual element of film.

In terms of aesthetics I place my creative practices within the culture of Remix, as described by Eduardo Navas in his blog *Remix Theory* (2006), revisited in *Regressive and reflective mashups in sampling culture* (2010) and extensively analysed in his book *Remix Theory: The Aesthetics of Sampling* (2012). In Navas' terms, I create audiovisual 'regressive mashups', by combining/juxtaposing two or more different samples, while using 'reflexive remix' techniques and principles that challenge and claim autonomy over the original. Although it is my contention that my work is also based on 'Regenerative Remix' principles, in the sense that I am indeed practicing 'a recombination of content and form that opens the space for Remix to become a specific discourse intimately linked with new media culture', Navas extends this notion outside of music, to software mashups and Web 2.0 applications, as '[it] can only take place when constant change is implemented as an elemental part of communication', therefore making it difficult to further relate to my own practice (Navas 2010).

In his online article *Remix Defined* (2006), Navas acknowledges Remix's vital role in online mass communication. As he explains, the digitisation of sound and image, paired with the computer and editing software, introduces the idea of treating sound and image as the same, 'as binary data to be manipulated at will by the user'. This is important because this 'manipulation' through the actions of copy/cut and paste, or sampling, applies equally to any type of digital information whether that is sound,

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image or text, thus making the computer 'the ultimate remixing tool' (Navas 2012). Moreover, it furthers my contention, originally inspired by Eisenstein's *The Film Sense* (1957) and further discussed by Kulezic-Wilson in *The Musicality of Narrative Film* that, 'in film, sound and image should not only be considered equal but also be employed in such a way that each always brings to the synthesis what the other is not capable of' (2015: 91-92).

Examining the history of Remix, we can identify the shift from a passive, consumer relationship with music to a more interactive model where the listener becomes the producer. Remix, as an emergent musical category, may be seen as aesthetically referencing 'turntablism' and the genre of Hip Hop. Such references are evident in the works of audiovisual music artists such as Ophir Kutiel, analysed in Chapter 3. Historically, Navas identifies the roots or Remix in the practices of Jamaican musicians in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where they produced 'versions' of songs played in dancehalls, by using the backing tracks of already popular songs and adding vocal tracks on top, as a way to bypass the economic constraints of producing a record of new songs (Navas 2006), (Perry nd). This culture of 'versions' was further developed by Hip Hop and Disco DJs in New York during the 1970s forming the practice of 'turntablism', which is described as playing 'with beats and sounds on the turntable to create unique momentary compositions'. The practice of turntablism not only provided the basis for the tradition of sampling but also '…played an important part in the cultural shift from a passive consumer model to a consumer/producer model, which is currently in place throughout the Internet…' (Navas 2006). It is worth adding that the aesthetics of turntablism, more specifically the fracture, rapture

and interruption of sound that occurs when turning a record backwards and forwards rapidly, later also transferred in film editing, forming the technique of 'hip hop editing' with Darren Aronofsky's films π and *Requiem for a Dream* being the most apparent examples.

Furthermore, this study has led me to investigate the underlying cognitive factors that cause music to be a more 'effective' experience, when encountered in conjunction with visual and performative stimuli. For the purposes of this paper, the term 'effective' is used as discussed in Scott Lipscomb's sense of creating a memorable and/or subjectively preferable musical experience, as discussed in his paper 'The perception of audio-visual composites' (2005). To further contextualize the need for effective experience I turn to Mick Grierson's doctoral thesis 'Audiovisual Composition' (2005: 12-14), in which he discusses Lipscomb's ideas.

Based on Chion's (1994) notion of added value, the idea that 'through the combination of audio and visual elements, a third *audiovisual* element is generated', Grierson (2005: 12) argues that the 'success or failure' of an audiovisual composition can be judged by the degree to which it demonstrates 'an enhanced audiovisual experience beyond what can be expected from a conventional film sound/music approach' Grierson (2005: 14), quotes Lipscomb (2005: 60) to assert that 'enhanced' or 'effective' audiovisual experience equates to a memorable and/or subjectively preferred audiovisual event 'when compared to other less accurately synchronised events'. Moreover, Grierson, through a comparative analysis of Chion (1994) and Lipscomb (2005), suggests that though Chion dismisses the conception of duplicated

audio and visual stimuli as 'multimedia', the 'effective' audiovisual experience this

duplication offers and its value are not to be easily dismissed:

> If one is willing to take seriously the results of Lipscomb's experiments, it seems that it may be unwise to dismiss the effectiveness of closely synchronised material. Audiovisual composition, in fact, may rely on an understanding of this 'effectiveness' and the complexity of its operation. Perhaps Cook is right, and it is not evidence of multimedia. However, this does not mean that it is unsophisticated or lacking in value. (Grierson 2005: 15)

Synchronism in film has been discussed since the early stages of cinema. Already in

1942, Sergei Eisenstein in his book *The Film Sense* identifies five levels of

synchronization: natural, metric, rhythmic, melodic and tonal (1957: 84). However, it

is only recently that scholars expand on these divisions, considering the advances in

technology and contemporary digital media, that allowed for much more precise

editing techniques and those in neuroscience that explain the way our brains respond

to synchronised audiovisual stimulation (Donelly 2014: 27-31, 73-76), (Vernallis

2013: 278).

The compositional method I follow in most of my projects, explained in detail in

Chapter 4 is the following: I film/record musicians performing separately in different

locations. They can be performing their own compositions, compositions of others, or

simply 'improvising' or 'jamming' on their instruments. I then sample and remix the

footage according to my own personal taste, in order to form new structures.

Sampling allows for the re-appropriation of both 'musical' and 'non-musical' sounds

that are stripped off their original purpose and are re-used as building blocks, for new

compositional forms. Two examples are, the mashup of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons:*

Spring which I produced for a television programme in 2013 (Sarakatsanos 2013h), and a mashup consisting almost completely of 'non-musical' sounds, I produced for the same programme (Sarakatsanos 2013g). Yet, the visual part of each clip, adds to the compositions some contextual information about the recording environment, the social setting and/or the musicians/participants. Though each clip used in the compositions originally had its own narrative, being juxtaposed to other clips, it loses some of its individual characteristics to form new narratives.

As much as I impose my own structural ideas, that are, to some extent, pre-conceived since they are formed while filming or first viewing the footage, the final form of the composition is constrained, to a significant extent, by the compatibility of the material: indeed, the material may itself indicate possible structures precisely by its inter-compatibility. If a 'useable' phrase is not compatible in pitch, harmony, tempo or even timbre, I process it and find ways to include it in the composition. 'Useable', for the purposes of this study, is considered any musical phrase, riff, solo, spoken word or song that I find musically interesting and that is sufficiently well recorded to be processed without major sound distortion.[9] In many cases, the effort to build inclusive structures for unrelated material turns the composition toward new, unexpected paths. Creating a database of carefully extracted and documented materials, seemingly offers a limited group of soundbites, therefore a limited number of possible combinations. The use of computer software, however, and certain stylistic choices, offer endless processing and mixing possibilities. Composition starts during the sound treatment. Everything that takes place before that stage, defines the composition on a conceptual

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[9] In some cases the recording may not be 'clean' enough to be useable due to external factors such as bad weather or traffic.

and aesthetic level but does not directly shape the compositional outcome. In that sense, and returning to Jacques Attali's theory of musical networks, I regard my mashup compositions as works that use 'repetition' as an 'aesthetic strategy' (Navas 2012: 88) and function as simulacra of 'representation'; in an attempt to 'cure' the blindness of the spectacle.

3. Creative Contexts — Influences

Three artists[10] in particular have influenced my work: the Israeli musician, composer, producer and animator Ophir Kutiel (aka 'Kutiman'); the American 'VideoSong'[11] duet 'Pomplamoose' (consisting of multi-instrumentalist, song-writer, entrepreneur and filmmaker Jack Conte and singer Nataly Dawn) and 'Playing for Change', a multimedia music project, created by the American producer and sound engineer Mark Johnson. Specifically, pieces composed by these artists from 2008-2009, such as Kutiel's *ThruYou*, Conte's *Videosongs* and Johnson's *Playing for Change*, have played an important role in shaping my aesthetic and creative interests.

In this chapter I consider what I regard as the key projects by these artists, and examine their work in relation to the techniques used in composing, audio mixing and video editing, and the methods of distribution and presentation. I also consider public reception of this work and its commercial success. Specifically, I look into methods of recording, filming and editing musical performance and the different effects these methods have had on my own audiovisual productions. I go on to present a close textual analysis of extracts from Ophir Kutiel's key project *ThruYou,*[12] while

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[10] As I have argued in Chapter 2, creative inter-disciplinary practices have been increasingly evident online within the last fifteen years, especially since the launch of YouTube in 2005. The wide range of such work, however, makes it difficult to find a term to encompass all these creative individuals collectively. For the purposes of this chapter I will collectively refer to them as 'artists' or 'cases', since I will be examining their work and closely analysing samples of it, below.

[11] 'Videosong' is a term introduced by the musical duo Pomplamoose in 2008 and refers to a specific form of music video. Its definition and the 'rules' that need to be applied during the creative process are explained by the duo's members, Jack Conte and Nataly Dawn, on their YouTube channel, in the description section of each of the VideoSongs. I discuss this definition and these rules further below. https://www.youtube.com/user/PomplamooseMusic

[12] http://thru-you.com (Kutiel 2009a)

highlighting my observations on a technical and aesthetic level. I also consider ethical aspects of this work, particularly in regard to issues of copyright and authorship in Remix, and show how these artists have influenced my own work in all these areas.

I first encountered the audiovisual compositions of the above named artists on YouTube in 2008, while conducting online research for my MA degree in Composition for Film and Media, which led to my first audiovisual composition *Panigiri* (Sarakatsanos: 2010). In *Panigiri*, eighteen musicians were filmed individually in different locations while improvising on a given tetrachord (a sequence of four notes) and a rhythmic pattern. For the latter part of the work, I composed six different rhythm patterns, ranging from 6/8 to 12/8 and then assigned each pattern to one percussion instrument and two melodic instruments, encompassing a total of eighteen participants. Musicians playing a percussive instrument were asked to improvise on their given rhythmic pattern, while the remainder used a specific tetrachord in which they developed their improvisations on a harmonic and melodic level. By using the practice of 'cut/copy and paste', also referred to as 'sampling', I remixed their recorded improvisations into an audiovisual composition or mashup, aiming to create, in Chion's terms, a 'semantic' listening experience (Chion 1994: 28).

I presented the audiovisual composition in the form of a music video on YouTube, following the methods and techniques of the aforementioned music artists, not only in composition but also in distribution. As will be explained below, these artists and their works differ in production, scale and style and were created for differing artistic

purposes. In this chapter, I focus on the aspects of format that they share, particularly audiovisual mashup involving elements of recorded music performance; and distribution platforms, primarily online streaming and social networking sites.

Continuing with my academic studies in 2010, leading into the beginning of my PhD programme, I began to explore these remix formats on a theoretical level, attending relevant seminars and lectures and researching related bibliography, while I periodically invested time in my own creative work. These periods, adding up to a total of more than two years, allowed me to experiment with audio and film technologies and test some of the techniques I was examining in each of my projects. The process of studying the work of relevant artists, theorising their methods and techniques and applying these methods to my own creative practices directly affected my own compositional style and techniques, as I explain in detail in Chapter 4 of this work.

The works analysed in the present chapter were produced between 2008-2014 and are examined within the context of a 'consumer media revolution' that started in the early 2000's in association with increasing access to affordable, high quality equipment, high speed internet access and online social platforms, which peaked after 2005 and the launch of YouTube (Manovich 2015: 286-288). This 'revolution' not only created the new paradigm in music production which I discussed in Chapter 2, but also introduced new terminology that has since become popular within online cultures.

The first artist whose work and compositional techniques I will examine in this

chapter is Ophir Kutiel, who, amongst other musical activities, has so far produced

two collections of audiovisual compositions, *ThruYou*[13] in 2009 and *TruYou Too*[14] in

2014. The first collection gained extensive exposure on YouTube, with millions of

views within the first week of upload and attracted significant media interest, being

named by *Time Magazine* as one of the '50 Best Inventions of 2009' (Kluger 2009).

As a result of his success on the channel, Kutiel was invited by YouTube to perform at

the 'YouTube Play exhibition opening at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in

New York City in 2010.[15]

ThruYou is a series of audiovisual compositions of thirty minutes total duration. It was

initially delivered through a website in the form of a playlist consisting of eight

embedded YouTube videos (Kutiel 2009a). Seven of the videos feature songs

composed by Kutiel, created by collecting a large number of clips of user-generated

content (UGC) from YouTube, and editing them together in the process known as

'remixing'.[16] The content of the original clips used is mostly musical: amateur and

professional musicians performing or practicing their instruments, free-styling in rap

or improvised poetry or giving online music tutorials. In terms of genre, the

compositions shift from funk and soul to jazz and trip-hop. The songs are followed by

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[13] http://thru-you.com (Kutiel 2009a)

[14] http://thru-you-too.com/#!/ (Kutiel 2014)

[15] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDvXvuvAwo8 (YouTubePlay 2010)

[16] Eduardo Navas defines the term 'remix' in his online article *Remix Defined* (2006): 'Generally
speaking, remix culture can be defined as the global activity consisting of the creative and efficient
exchange of information made possible by digital technologies that is supported by the practice of cut/
copy and paste' (Navas 2006)

an eighth video, also made by remixing UGC with footage of the composer

addressing the camera, titled 'About',[17] in which he describes the process of creating

ThruYou. As Kutiel explains in his own words, 'what I did here is that I collected all

kinds of different, unrelated YouTube movies of all kinds of different people playing

different instruments or singing… I put them together and created songs and new

music'. What seems to intrigue the artist's creativity is the connections he was able to

find in what was seemingly 'unrelated' material. 'It was really amazing to see how

often different movies matched together without me even touching it' (Kutiel 2009b).

As will be exemplified in the close-textual analysis on Kutiel's work that follows in

this chapter, using individually filmed musicians allows for the layering of tracks and

the more general use of 'cut/copy and paste' (sampling) practices. As each instrument

or sound, and each frame of the musicians' video clips, can be isolated and treated

separately in the mixing and editing process, it is common for musical 'matches' to

occur, amongst hundreds of samples. This is something I experienced in my own

practice, while editing the audiovisual composition titled *Influenza* (Sarakatsanos

2012a), for the purposes of this portfolio. During the first minute of that video we can

see the saxophonist and the violinist performing in separate locations, each playing a

modal improvisation on a pentatonic scale. These musical performances, which are

visually intercut, give the impression that the musicians are playing music 'together',

as they often coincide in key changes and appear to be responding to each other's

musical phrases or following a similar development in their improvisations. The

'matching' of these two individually filmed improvisations occurred while I was

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[17] http://youtu.be/Kz0gYbqOZXQ (Kutiel 2009b)

trying to digitally pitch-correct the track of the saxophone player in *Logic,* because his

instrument was tuned slightly higher than the rest of the instruments in the mix, as

often happens with brass instruments. During this process, I accidentally un-muted the

layered violin track. Listening to the two tracks simultaneously, I realised that by

lowering the pitch of the saxophone by a tone, it could be made to match the key of

the violin track. Apart from the pitch alteration to the saxophone track, very little

additional editing was needed for the tracks to coincide in key changes, dynamics and

timing for the following minute of their performance, which I then used in the

opening sequence of *Influenza* (Sarakatsanos 2012a). Remixing two modal

improvisations on pentatonic scales, as an aesthetic choice, may have been influenced

by my undergraduate background in ethnomusicology and my study of modal scales,

and in particular, to musical influences imbibed during my four years of study in

Epirus, Greece, where the core of the regional folk repertoire uses pentatonic scales.

What I understood by reflecting on Kutiel's compositions, while editing my own

work, was that regardless of how many musical coincidences might occur within a

selection of audio material, it is the specific samples Kutiel chooses to keep and the

way he uses them that define his compositional style and give *ThruYou* its sense of

autonomy and originality as a series of compositions. Jeffrey Kluger, in *Time*

Magazine's 'The 50 Inventions of 2009', attributes this sense of autonomy to the

composer's 'grooviness that brings it all together as if it were meant to be' (Kluger

2009). I would argue that what Kluger describes as 'grooviness', is in fact Kutiel's

musicality as shaped through his aesthetic references and expressed through a series

of artistic choices he makes when he samples sound and image. The composer refers

to his 'groovy' funk and soul musical influences, evident in the 7 songs composed for *ThruYou*, during a phone interview to *The New Yorker*: 'I don't read blogs, I don't read music papers. I don't know what's new music right now, really. I am still listening to old music—Bobbi Humphrey, James Brown, Fela Kuti. I don't think I am done with them yet' (Frere-Jones 2009).

According to the composer's interview in *The New Yorker*, *ThruYou* does not owe its commercial success to any online marketing strategy: 'When I was done, I sent the songs to a few friends and told them not to talk about the *ThruYou* site until we were ready to tell more people. But one of my friends didn't listen, I guess.'

In March 2009, the site's opening video *Mother of All Funk Chords* (Kutiel 2009c) went viral, with over one million views within the first week after its original broadcast date in March 7, 2009. In *The New* Yorker, Kutiel continues: 'The next day, I opened up my MySpace page and saw all these new friend requests and messages. People had found it, and after that, so many people tried to look at the site that the whole thing crashed. I got so many nice messages. One person called me "Jesus of YouTube." I don't think that's right but it's a good feeling' (Frere-Jones 2009).

This raises the question of what might have contributed to *ThruYou* attaining this large view-count within such a short timeframe, especially as no online marketing strategies appear to have been employed in its distribution at the time. Works of similar style had been produced in the past and broadcast through mainstream networks but without substantial audience response. In 1995, for example, *EBN*

('Emergency Broadcast Network'), a multimedia performance group formed in 1991 by Joshua Pearson, Gardner Post and Brian Kane, released one of the first Enhanced CDs ever produced, titled *Telecommunication Breakdown.*[18] The CD comprised a series of audiovisual compositions created by sampling and editing together clips sourced from cable television broadcasts. EBN's work contained contributions from established musicians such as Bill Laswell and Brian Eno, while it attracted further mainstream commissions for the group, most notably from the group U2 and the MTV Video Music Awards. However, there is little evidence that the original series of videos was popular or commercially successful.

A 2009 online review of *Telecommunications Breakdown* on *AllMusic* describes it as 'an elaborate treat that snuck past a lot of critics and potential audience when it was released back in 1995' (Langley 2009). This failure to reach a large audience could be due to the format in which the videos were released. The fact that the compositions were also offered on a floppy disk, included in the original edition of the CD, indicates that not all buyers had access to a CD-ROM drive at the time (1995). If, according to Manovich, 1995 'can be designated as the year of the professional media revolution', perhaps EBN's 'potential audience' was not yet technologically equipped to allow for a wider spread of their work (Manovich 2015: 286). It could be argued that Ophir Kutiel and his project *ThruYou* had a greater opportunity to gain public recognition almost fifteen years after EBN, within the context of social media, internet culture and the potential for video 'virality' on YouTube.

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[18] Samples of their work are available on a YouTube playlist under this link: http://youtu.be/6d-h0iEkDEkU?list=PLszBKioqV0GSrBErZyjKEVjzEO4-Yoe6q

It is worth noting at this point that the birth of MTV in 1981 and the development of the medium of music video as a result of the channel's success and and commercial viability set the grounds for a shift in the aesthetics that possibly allowed for the relative success of EBN's project but, most importantly, that were passed on to film practices, specifically 'the emancipation of narrative form the constraints of linearity and time-space unity' (Kulezic-Wilson, 2015: 30) and the shift from a 'deep gaze' to a 'glance' aesthetics (Vernallis 2013:34). Music video industry funding dried up during the first few years of the 21st century, as a response to free downloading but a second wave of directors, 'especially attuned to the new technologies and the new audiovisual relations', flourished in later phases of the music video format, especially after 2005 and the launch of YouTube (Vernallis 2013: 5).

Still, the question remains: even in 2009, what made Kutiel's thirty-minute audiovisual anthology go viral, given that it was just a tiny component of approximately 20 hours of UGC uploaded on the same platform, every minute of every day during the same year?[19] Today, our understanding of corporate control over the internet allows us to identify the marketing strategies employed in the creation of a viral video (Ashton 2013). In 2009, however, within an ethos that defended 'free culture' and regarded the Internet as a power that 'threatens established content industries' (Lessig 2004: 9) and particularly in the early days of YouTube where the market was arguably less nuanced and segmented, what might or might not go viral seemed more a matter of happenstance. For instance viral videos that year included an

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[19] http://joaogeraldes.wordpress.com/2010/09/09/2005-2010-youtube-facts-figures-history-statistics/
(Geraldes, 2010)

eight year-old being filmed by his father while returning from the dentist,[20] a baby dancing to Beyonce's video of *Single Ladies*[21] and Susan Boyle's 'X Factor' audition.[22] It is worth noting that amongst the videos that became viral in 2009 there were many 'homemade' clips that employed stop-motion, time-lapse and other techniques associated with professional equipment, which by then was an affordable option for many non-professionals. Examples of such creations include a stop-motion film by Bang-yao Liu, an animator who used his office wall and a few packs of post-it notes to make an award-winning video[23] and a video by Christoph Rehage, a traveller who made a time-lapse film of his journey walking from China to Germany by taking a picture of himself every day.[24] While the selection of videos referred to above says little about the artistic context in which *ThruYou* was introduced, it does show a tendency towards creative uses of technology by 'amateur' users of YouTube.

Kutiel manifests this tendency by choosing to source his compositional material from YouTube and by having 'amateur' musicians 'perform' his works. In a *Huffington Post* article, Timothy Karr regards *ThruYou* as current and relevant and argues that Ophir Kutiel 'has captured the Zeitgeist of the moment — a time when our rapidly evolving Internet culture is toppling old regimes and handing over control of popular information to people like you, me, Kutiman and his YouTube orchestra' (Karr 2009).

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[20] http://youtu.be/txqiwrbYGrs ('David After Dentist', 2009)

[21] http://youtu.be/mk42wSXXGq8 ('Baby Dancing - Beyoncé - *Single Ladies* (Put A Ring On It) Official', 2009)

[22] http://youtu.be/RxPZh4AnWyk ('Susan Boyle - Britains Got Talent 2009 Episode 1 - Saturday 11th April | HD High Quality', 2009)

[23] http://youtu.be/BpWM0FNPZSs (Liu, 2009)

[24] http://youtu.be/5ky6vgQfU24 (Rehage, 2009)

To further discuss the techniques and ideas in Kutiel's project, I will use as an example one of the 8 pieces of *ThruYou*, titled *Mother of All Funk Chords*.[25] The video opens (00:00) with a shot of a drummer sitting behind his drum-kit and directed to the camera, asking 'What can I do?', while playing four bars of a 16-beat rhythmic pattern on the drums. At 00:04 it cuts to a guitar player who also talks to the camera, saying 'you could play that 16th-note groove', followed by a cut to a second guitar player (00:07) who says 'just straight' and plays three notes on the guitar. The screen then (00:09) splits to four equal-sized parts, three of which show the drummer and the guitar players and in the fourth the percussionist playing the congas. As soon as the screen splits we see the first guitar player saying 'go' and the drummer saying 'ok'. Meanwhile, the three-note theme introduced by the second guitar player becomes a loop that plays continuously, the drummer joins the second guitar player with his 16th-beat groove (00:12) and is followed by the conga player (00:19) while the drummer says 'alright!'. At 00:24 the second guitar player says 'there is more than one guitar part there will be…', he is interrupted by the the first guitar player who says 'ok', and then the second continues '…somebody playing single notes, somebody playing chords and then we'll mix them together'. The first guitar player (00:31) says 'then let's just pick the mother of all funk chords, let's pick a ninth chord'. All four parts of the split screen are replaced by videos of other musicians of all ages, playing mostly horn instruments (00:36). Some of them are playing single notes, some are playing melodies and chords or practicing scales. At 00:40 the screen splits into nine windows, each featuring a different musician. Altogether, the total of twelve musicians that appear within the first forty seconds of the video, form a

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[25] http://youtu.be/tprMEs-zfQA (Kutiel 2009a)

augmented sixth chord based on the dominant suggested by the looped guitar riff. The augmented sixth, also known as the German Sixth, is explained in music theory as a chromatically altered ninth chord. The sixth chord is sustained for one bar before it resolves to the dominant chord (00:43), at which point each musician starts playing his/her own riff. The riffs are in most cases constructed by the fragmented editing Kutiel applies to his material. To achieve this riff-construction, he cuts down the material to single notes and re-constructs them to create his own melodies and patterns, regardless of the musical content of the original clip. The video thereafter alternates from full-frame to split-screen, focusing on particular musicians according to their prominence in the composition, whilst visually stressing the breaks, variations and solos in the arrangement.

During the opening of the video, Kutiel's editing works on two levels: on a narrative level, he creates a virtual dialogue between the musicians who appear to reply and comment on each other's words. The drummer seems to be wondering if there is anything more to say when the first guitarist suggests that he could play a '16th-note groove' before he offers to play a sixth chord himself. The second guitar player seems to be commenting and almost interrupting the flow of the conversation between the first two musicians. This dialogue, constructed by Kutiel's editing, establishes the virtual relationship amongst the unaware participants while in effect familiarising the viewer with the fragmented style of his work.

On a musicological level, this dialogue comments on the actual musical content of the video and vice-versa. For example, when the first guitarist suggests the 16th-note

groove, the audience refers to the 16th-note rhythmic pattern already being played by the drummer. Equally, when the second guitarist comments 'just straight', again the reference is the same pattern which plays for 4 bars, without variations. The part where the second guitarist describes a process of taking notes and chords and mixing them together (00:24) functions as a prologue to the part where the horn section joins the arrangement and they all build together a sixth chord (00:40), explaining the creative process that Kutiel himself undergoes to create this composition. This part can be read differently if the audience assumes that the sixth chord was constructed by the composer to validate or realise the words of the guitarist. The sixth chord as a compositional choice to open a piece, apart from offering a dramatic effect, also comments on the first guitarist's suggestion to 'pick a ninth chord'. For anyone with knowledge of music theory and a trained ear this can be perceived as a humourous reference to replacing a ninth chord with a sixth. With this double use of references, Kutiel describes his creative process through the edited words of the musicians: a technique he also uses in other videos, but also suggests that, to an extent, his compositional choices are dictated by the content of his material.

This technique of manipulating content through remixing prompts reflection on Karr's reference to 'Kutiman's YouTube orchestra'. Referring to Kutiel's virtually assembled clips of musicians as an 'orchestra' may be intended as a validation of the homogenised result, but, perhaps unknowingly, raises questions of copyright protection as well as of authorship: who composes and who performs the pieces in *ThruYou*? Kutiel's heavy sampling of the clips deconstructs the original performances to a granular level, reducing them to single bars, notes or beats. The clips' content is

remixed to a point that makes it unclear if and to what extent it guides Kutiel's compositions.

A characteristic example of this level of deconstruction is the opening sequence of *Babylon Band*[26], a composition from Kutiel's project *ThruYou*. In the first six seconds of the video, we see a young man sitting in front of a drum set and loosely playing an accelerating roll, using the drumsticks. This is followed by a further twenty-five seconds of the same frame, but this clip is edited by Kutiel so that the drummer appears to be playing a fast drum pattern. That is achieved by cutting down the footage to single beats of different drums and cymbals and then structuring original patterns by pasting and editing those beats, using isolated sounds as building blocks. The original performance and its level of virtuosity are effectively dissolved by Kutiel's remix, in which Kutiel performs his own musical ideas by remote-controlling the hands of the musicians. It is worth noting that though copyright concerns and ownership objections could be raised by anyone involved in his pieces (Blasquez n.d.), the result is accepted by 'participants' as mutually beneficial (Arom 2014). In contrast to the way he imposes himself on the material through his editing skills, the composer opts out of taking personal credit for his work by using a pseudonym (Kutiman), while he meticulously documents and posts links to the footage from which he samples, offering exposure to the sampled artists, regardless of their professional status in music.

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[26] http://youtu.be/JffZFRM3X6M (Kutiel 2009d)

Logie (2015), discussing authorship in mashup compositions, grounds them in a 'notion of play with respect to the concept of authorship.' Basing his argument on ideas from Barthes' (1967) paper "Death of the Author" and developing Foucault's thoughts on the 'anonymity of a murmur' in his (1969) paper, "What is an Author?", Logie concludes that the 'search for authorship is—in effect—an attempt to assign legal ownership as expeditiously as possible. This is needed for commerce even when it is not needed by the composers or the cultures they are addressing' (Logie 2015: 700-702).

Since *ThruYou* is a non-commercial project, it could be suggested that Kutiel attempts to avoid claiming legal ownership, and thereby to challenge the notion of authorship, both by his refusal to monetise his videos through advertisements on YouTube, and, more importantly, by his use of a pseudonym (Logie 2015: 701). Distributing his work through YouTube, the same platform from which he sourced his materials, under the same, non-commercial conditions as the amateur musicians who unknowingly became his subjects, suggests a parity between the two, through a collaborative model of creative production. Reflecting on 'cut-copy-paste culture', Sonvilla-Weiss (2015: 168) notes 'It is exactly this spirit of participation, cooperation and sharing that has fundamentally altered media perception, reception, and production'. Henry Jenkins in his book *Convergence Culture* goes in greater depth to identify three distinct levels of participation (production, selection and distribution) and to explain where and how it occurs on YouTube. On a production level, YouTube provides a great visibility platform, inciting new expressive activities. It also 'functions as a media archive where amateur curators scan the media environment, searching for meaningful bits of

content, and bringing them to a larger public', effectively contributing to a selection and focus shift process. Finally, as YouTube functions in relation to other social networks (such as Facebook, MySpace and blogs), its content gets 'reframed for different publics and becomes the focal point for discussions' (Jenkins 2006: 274-275). Moreover, in *Spreadable Media*, Jenkins et al, note that this participatory model of culture sees the public 'not as simply consumers of reconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined' (2013: 2).

> As material spreads, it gets remade: either literally, through various form of sampling and remixing, or figuratively, via its insertion into ongoing conversations and across various platforms. This continuous process of repurposing and recirculating is eroding the perceived divides between production and consumption. (Jenkins, Ford, and Green, 2013: 27)

To further explore remix as discourse I turn to Virginia Kuhn's (2012) view of remix as digital argument. In 'The rhetoric of remix', Kuhn notes that scholars of remix (e.g. Wees 1993, Arthur 1999, Horwatt 2010, Navas 2006) have located remix's origins in cinema studies, and specifically in the schools of Soviet montage and French avant-garde collage. Kuhn points out that this analysis focuses almost exclusively on visuals, disregarding sound and the interplay between the visual and the aural. Furthermore she argues that this view of remix as 'art' reinforces the amateur/professional binary by displacing remix from the domain of speech:

> Both montage and collage… …consign remix to the realm of art rather than to the domain of speech, and in so doing, privilege certain artefacts while devaluing others. This view also reinforces the professional/amateur binary and elides consideration of community, for although art engages in

an implicit conversation with other art, culture, or both, speech absolutely depends on a shared lexicon and the intent to communicate. (Kuhn 2012: 3)

Complimentary to Kuhn's point, I would argue that technological literacy and availability of postproduction tools, used both by Kutiel and the original clip-creators, are narrowing the distance between amateur and professional. Moreover, the multiplication of sources over the last two decades, within a content-producing, highly technologised environment, provides the 'shared lexicon' and 'intent of communication' (Kuhn 2012: 3) needed for remix practices to be used and understood as part of public dialogue. Although it is Kutiel's creative skill which remixes the downloaded clips and effectively re-contextualizes their content, with *ThruYou,* the composer attempts to re-define authorship within a social context that is consonant with his 'vocabulary', placing his creative work back in the 'free' online culture from which it originates, effectively celebrating the 'once joyous, communal, ham-radio DIY spirit shared by prosumers and viewers when the site was ad-free' that by then, had evaporated (Vernallis 2013: 14).

Kutiel chooses to present *ThruYou* in the form of an online playlist, accessed through a webpage that resembles a distorted sketch of YouTube's interface (Kutiel 2009a). The use of a distorted sketch as layout for the webpage suggests a level of deconstruction in his work, which may refer to the remix practices he applies to UGC, effectively deconstructing and reconstructing YouTube content. With *ThruYou*, Kutiel is not establishing a new composition technique, since such techniques had been pioneered by EBN in 1991, but he makes a statement about current technology and its

creative uses. Whether by using animation, split-screen or mixed editing techniques or by including musicians performing on experimental musical equipment, the composer explores potential creative uses of technology in all of his projects. By juxtaposing clips on an aural and visual level to create a cross-sensory experience, Kutiel's compositions acquire new meanings and more importantly, suggest new ways of making but also 'listening' to music. Karr, in *The Huffington Post*, continues:

> In politics, economics, arts and culture, an era of privileged access is giving way to something that's much more decentralized, participatory and personal. We no longer passively consume media, we actively participate in it. This often means creating content, in whatever form and from whatever sources. (Karr 2009)

To conclude, *ThruYou* embodies the new paradigm in music perception, reception and production, shaped within an online culture of 'participation, cooperation and sharing' (Sonvilla-Weiss 2015: 145), which emerged from the post-consumer media revolution. Use of UGC in *ThruYou* not only makes it current as an artistic statement but also makes it relevant to an audience that no longer relates to the 'traditional distinction between professional and amateur' (Sonvilla-Weiss 2015: 169).

Since the release of *ThruYou* in 2009, Kutiel has produced a number of audiovisual compositions in the style of 'city-branding' videos, in which he films and edits shots of musicians performing individually and shots that depict the landscape of each city, focusing on cultural expressions in everyday life. A specific example of this practice can be found in his piece titled *Thru Jerusalem* (Kutiel 2011), commissioned by *Jerusalem Season of Culture 2011* (Mautner 2011). Watching this composition, the viewer goes through a virtual tour of the city, created by fast-paced, heavily edited

sequences of hand-held shots of public space, juxtaposed with shots of musicians, performing in their personal space. Street markets, commuting, entertainment and social events are visually and aurally included in Kutiel's compositions, providing sociopolitical and religious references which further contextualize the musicians' performances. In the following chapter, I will show how Kutiel's city-branding videos have been a point of reference for my own projects *Influenza* (2012a) and *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015).

Following the success of his previous projects, in 2015, Kutiel was co-commissioned by the British Council and arts website *The Space*[27] to create a similar video for the city of Tel Aviv, Israel, titled *Thru Tel Aviv*. Furthermore, they together created a website, called *Mix the City*[28] that functions as a mixing platform for the audiovisual material Kutiel used in his composition. The material is separated into individual clips that can be played and stopped, automatically syncing with the rest of the clips that appear on-screen. Visitors to the webpage are invited to operate the mixing platform and re-order the material to their own preference, in order to create, as the website creators put it, 'their own mix of Tel Aviv'. Visitors can then export their own version of the composition as a video file and download it to their computers. Though this process excludes the audience from the process of material selection and editing, this interactive tool can be used to familiarise audience members with remix practices and inspire further experimentation in music-making.

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[27] http://www.thespace.org/artwork/view/mix-the-city

[28] https://www.mixthecity.com

Returning to the idea of how the amateur/professional binary is affected by the use of modern technology and remix practices in music production, another, perhaps more direct, example may be found in the work of the duo, Pomplamoose, consisting of Jack Conte and Nataly Dawn. Starting in 2008 by uploading self-made videos of original and cover songs on YouTube, Pomplamoose developed a commercially successful six-year career. As detailed below, this led Jack Conte to become co-founder of *Patreon,* a crowdfunding, content-hosting online platform for audiovisual artists.

In 2008, Conte and Dawn released their first songs on their YouTube channel,[29] in an audiovisual format they titled 'VideoSongs'. The duo explained in the description of each of their YouTube videos: 'A VideoSong is a new Medium with two rules: 1. What you see is what you hear (no lip-syncing for instruments or voice). 2. If you hear it, at some point you see it (no hidden sounds)' (Conte and Dawn 2008b).

In contrast to mainstream music videos of that time that focused on bizarre imagery[30] and often a fictional storyline,[31] Conte and Dawn suggest the use of a medium founded on transparency that focuses on the musical content and performance of the songs. In a Pomplamoose interview on the online video forum VideoSift, Conte stresses the importance of following the self-imposed rules of their medium:

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[29] https://www.youtube.com/user/PomplamooseMusic (Conte and Dawn 2008a)

[30] http://youtu.be/d2smz_1L2_0 (Gaga 2009)

[31] http://youtu.be/D1Xr-JFLxik (Swift 2009)

> I like following the rules and I do my absolute best to make sure that it's real. Because that's what's interesting about it. No fog, no mirrors and smoke machines - it's all just straight-up bedroom home studio kind of deal. I think actually seeing the instruments being played as opposed to lip-syncing is what makes it a different kind of medium. (Houston 2009)

The duo's distinctive process consists in simultaneously filming and recording the performance of each instrument or vocal track. The filmed clips and recorded audio tracks are remixed by Conte, to create an audiovisual composition.

While Conte, like Kutiel, uses editing techniques of cut/copying, pasting and layering samples of recorded and filmed clips, the difference in their methods is that Pomplamoose film and record their own material. Though this method leads to a more targeted production process, the techniques employed in the editing of the videos show a high level of sophistication. As exemplified in a large number of VideoSongs produced since 2008, both Pomplamoose as a duo, and Conte as a solo artist, experiment with available audiovisual technologies of production and reproduction,[32] including cameras, projectors, samplers, MIDI controllers and analog synthesisers,[33] as well as popular filming and editing techniques that include split-screen windows, colour mask filters and multi-angled shots that simulate a '3D effect'.[34]

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[32] http://youtu.be/lBUUOJpFg9Y (Conte 2009)

[33] http://youtu.be/mZ02alEkbLw (Conte 2013)

[34] http://youtu.be/dm3ZEMQf98k (Conte ad Dawn 2013)
http://youtu.be/OCNDHEuKpCA (Conte 2011)
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL73323A5328141496 (Conte 2008)

Starting their online career in 2008, Pomplamoose quickly became popular on YouTube. The duet's VideoSong cover of *Hail Mary*[35] went viral in 2008. Working almost entirely through online platforms, they gave online shows which included their own live performances, Q&A sessions about their music as well as lectures and discussions concerning production, the music industry and alternative funding patterns.[36]

Through a number of marketing strategies, including merchandise distribution, competitions and collaborations with influential artists like Ben Folds and Nick Hornby,[37] but mostly by offering a constant flow of content to their audience, Pomplamoose developed a devoted network of fans that allowed them to finance further projects through crowdfunding. Notably, in July 2011, Dawn launched a Kickstarter (crowdfunding platform) project to fund her solo album, asking fans for $20,000. By early September 2011, she had exceeded her target figure by far, raising $104,788.[38]

Unlike Kutiel who, as discussed above, separates his works into commercial and non-commercial segments, Pomplamoose strategically use their VideoSongs for self-promotion and commercial purposes in both direct and indirect ways. Always staying within legal limits, they give full credit to any other artists involved in their covers,

[35] http://youtu.be/fYy2p_0DVMU (Conte and Dawn 2008b)

[36] http://youtu.be/6p-tvIWRX98 (*Hey it's Pomplamoose Live #1*, 2011)

[37] http://youtu.be/6G5JaicYuVU (Conte and Dawn 2010a)

[38] http://techland.time.com/2013/02/12/nataly-dawn-on-her-new-album-how-i-knew-her-and-why-kickstarter-fans-can-be-fickle/ (Peckham 2013)

including song writers, composers and performers, and offer their performances of popular song covers, from which copyright law forbids them to profit, as free downloads for their audience.

Being one of the first bands to be invited into the *Musicians Wanted* program: a 2010 YouTube collaboration scheme that monetises videos by placing advertisements and shares the revenue with users,[39] Pomplamoose introduce a self-sustaining work model for musicians who wish to work 'without the constricting demands and needs of a record label' (Miller 2011). In Conte's words: 'Now you can quit your day job… … and make money by doing somethings that you love' (Conte and Dawn 2010).

As discussed in Kutiel's case, the distribution of creative work within UGC hosting platforms such as YouTube and social media leads to boundaries between creators and audiences becoming fluid. Soon after Conte and Dawn's appearance on YouTube, several users started making their own VideoSongs and uploading them to the same platform. While Pomplamoose were joining the YouTube program, online communities were being formed around the medium of VideoSong, where users exchanged advice on how to produce VideoSongs, organised VideoSong contests and shared their work.[40] An online search of the terms 'VideoSong' and 'cover' on YouTube will find hundreds of clips uploaded since 2010 by numerous VideoSong creators. Exploring the uploaded content of certain music artists who have become

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[39]http://youtu.be/fnolku2sJc4 (Conte and Dawn 2010b)

[40] A large number of VideoSongs produced by several musicians between 2010-2013 have been posted on this online forum: https://www.facebook.com/videosongs (Ceres 2010)

commercially successful online within the last decade, such as Jacob Collier,[41] Bayu

Ardianto[42] and Sam Tsui,[43] shows evidence of a rapidly developing VideoSong

culture that, following the example of its founders, creates 'YouTube stars': musicians

who make a profit by allowing YouTube to place advertisements alongside their

uploaded content.

In 2013, having failed to achieve financial stability through the YouTube program,

Jack Conte co-founded *Patreon*,[44] offering other artists a new platform to share and

monetise their work. With *Patreon*, Conte encourages content creators across

platforms to shift to a modern patronage model, using crowdsourcing practices and in

effect, supporting a culture of art-sharing through peer-to-peer transactions

(McKinney 2014).

Another commercially successful campaign based on the use of audiovisual

compositions can be found in the work of 'Playing for Change', an audiovisual music

project created by the American producer, Mark Johnson. According to the project's

website, 'Playing for Change seeks to inspire, connect and bring peace to the world

through music'. It is also connected to the 'Playing for Change Foundation' which

builds music schools for children around the world. Playing for Change's cover of

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[41] http://youtu.be/9s1baxrxGHU (Collier 2014)

[42] http://youtu.be/QEvO82Uqbs4 (Ardianto 2010)

[43] http://youtu.be/a2RA0vsZXf8 (Schneider 2010)

[44] Patreon is a crowdfunding platform that appeals mainly to online content creators for example YouTube musicians, video producers, animators, podcasters and webcomic artists. https://www.patreon.com (Conte and Yam 2013)

Ben E. King's *Stand By Me,* uploaded in 2008, became their first audiovisual

composition to go viral, with fifteen million views.[45] To date, Johnson, through

Playing for Change, has produced and released almost a hundred audiovisual pieces,

in which music is given a leading to role in the promotion of humanitarian awareness

and aid.

Johnson composes the audiovisual pieces by remixing music performances that have

been individually filmed and recorded in separate locations, and in most cases, in

different countries. He uses split-screen editing to visually blend the performing

musicians in the same, virtual space. Musicians are filmed playing different

instruments or singing in separate locations yet, they all perform parts of the same

composition. The end result is a split-screen music video, where all musicians appear

to be playing the same song simultaneously, from different points on the globe.

Johnson's production techniques are closer to those of Conte, in that all participants

are fully aware of their contribution to the recording of the composition, than to those

of Kutiel who works with material he has discovered without the performer's

knowledge. Nevertheless, there are significant similarities between all three

composers, all of whom feature the process of music recording in their videos,

focusing on the importance of documenting live performance within the performer's

context. The viral spread of their videos suggests that including visual recordings of

music performance and distributing this hybrid-medium through this system of online

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45 http://youtu.be/Us-TVg40ExM ('Stand By Me | Playing For Change | Song Around the World',
2008)

platforms contributes to the projects' commercial success. As found above in the analysis of 1995 EBN's case (Langley 2009), it was the technological advancement of recent years, both in literacy and equipment, that matched the distribution network of social platforms, forming new economic models for music and making mashup a commercially successful medium.

Relating these models to my own work, an aesthetic and compositional choice involving filmed music performances in composition can result in a more 'complete' music experience, and one that may exist within, and contribute to, a commercially sustainable model, since this experience is accessible by billions of Internet users.[46] Finally, my analysis of these projects adds further perspective to the idea, introduced in Chapter 2 of this work, that listening to music can be more that a mono-sensory activity.

Researching and studying the work of Kutiel, Conte and Johnson has not only influenced my work on a compositional level,[47] but has also shaped my understanding of the medium and its uses. In retrospect, I attribute choices in my work to the effect of Kutiel's views on authorship and Johnson's use of the medium in aid

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[46] Information retrieved from officially published statistics on YouTube's website: https://www.y-outube.com/yt/press/en-GB/statistics.html ('YouTube Statistics' 2014)

[47] For example, layering audio material as well as juxtaposing film clips can allow for musical or visual connections to occur. These connection points are particularly useful in the creative process as they can be used to mark the structure of the composition, as exemplified above in the analysis of *Influenza*, where the coinciding improvisations of two musicians were used as the introduction of the piece (Sarakatsanos 2012a).

documentaries.[48] Adopting Kutiel's remixing techniques, Pomplamoose's self-imposed rules for 'authenticity' and Johnson's 'ethnographic' approach, since 2010, I have created a series of audiovisual compositions, comprising the portfolio of the present thesis. Most of the pieces were produced for commissioned projects, ranging from theatre productions and music documentaries in which I was involved, to promotional videos for other artists or organisations, and were distributed on online platforms. Over the course of five years I have had the opportunity to develop my compositional techniques in audiovisual pieces by applying the findings of the above study to my work. The content of my portfolio and the methods and techniques employed in creating it are further presented, discussed and analysed in Chapter 4.

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[48] Such as the selection of participants for the project *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* and *Nieuw West - The Movement*, regardless of the musicians' professional status (further discussed in Chapter 4). http://youtu.be/CI_9Iy-d5Aw (Sarakatsanos 2014a) (Sarakatsanos 2015)

4. Creative Output — Close Textual Analysis

In this chapter I will expound my own creative practice and methodology, showing how it developed across a number of my works included in my portfolio for this PhD. This portfolio comprises pieces produced between 2010 and 2016 and focuses on the audiovisual aspect of my work. Specifically, since 2010, I have produced twelve audiovisual mashup pieces, of which three were used as promotional videos for music bands in Athens and London and a cultural centre in Amsterdam. In most of these compositions, I remix unrelated material, separately documented audio and film clips that were not originally part of the same composition. Presenting the portfolio in chronological order, I demonstrate the development of my technical skills in recording and editing film and audio as well as my compositional techniques, as shaped by the processes of researching and understanding the medium.

I began my research by critiquing the way in which recorded music, subject to the rules of the network of *repetition*, as discussed in the Chapter 2 of this thesis, forfeits its social characteristics (Attali 1985). While developments in technology, such as the phonograph and radio transmission, provided the apparatus of the repetition network, fulfilling the need for domestic or outdoors listening, they also effectively altered the functions of music, turning it into an individualised experience (Goodman 2010).

Whilst the phonograph and radio made music primarily an aural experience, however, more recent advances in audio and film technology, such as portable recording and playback devices, online streaming, social-networks and music-platforms have shifted

music practices to a more visual state. YouTube, counting over one billion users and with its hours of viewing rising by 50% annually since its launch in 2005 (YouTube Statistics 2014), has offered a distribution platform, as well as a source of revenue, for many musicians and composers who creatively use visuals in their work.

Enabled by these technical developments, in particular, affordable filming equipment and online streaming platforms, and inspired by artists like Ophir Kutiel, Jack Conte and Mark Johnson, whose work I analysed in Chapter 3, I explored the use of filmed music performance in my own compositions. From 2010 until 2016, I undertook a range of specific musical commissions, all of which I will describe in detail below. These range from work for the theatre to broadcast television documentaries. I worked with performers from different disciplines, including classically trained and folk musicians, dancers, film and theatre actors and directors and TV producers, learning and applying compositional techniques to a number of different platforms and media, each examining different aspects of music composition and phases of production. I will present my portfolio in folders of related works, from which I will select some particular pieces to be analysed in greater detail, in order to exemplify specific techniques and approaches. In this presentation, I will make further reference to specific ways in which I have been influenced at a methodological level by other works in the field, discussed in Chapter 3. Some of the works presented in this chapter involve more traditional audio and video editing techniques and were not included in the portfolio as the latter focuses on pieces were I have been practicing remix techniques. However, I allow space for a detailed analysis of the creative process that familiarised me with equipment, filming/recording styles and techniques and explain

how these were, in later projects, utilised in the formation of this medium's concept and the production of several remix compositions.

In October 2010, I collaborated with the Athens-based theatre group 'Grasshopper' on a production of the play 'DNA' by Dennis Kelly (DNA 2011)[49]. I composed original music for the show, recording an acoustic ensemble of cello, clarinet and piano and mixing it with recordings from rehearsals. I also produced a video by remixing footage I documented during the rehearsals and combining it with extracts of music compositions in progress. The video was used as the show's online trailer.[50]

Due to the theatre's space restrictions and other technical difficulties, the stage-set depicted an interior space, which created an issue of how to approach the play's exterior scenes, dramaturgically and musically. Creating soundscapes for scenes of the play set in exterior spaces, such as *DNA:1.3cabc* (2011), proved to be an especially challenging task.[51] While trying to balance the 'outdoors' stage action within an 'indoors' stage-setting, I realised that apart from issues of instrumentation and sound mixing, the use or absence of music is of key importance in maintaining a realistic atmosphere in the play. George Burt in *The Art of Film Music,* discussing realism in relation to the presence or absence of music, concludes that though he can 'recall innumerable moments that have been made *more* real… …because music *was*

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[49] All files referenced in the analysis of *DNA* (2011) are included in the accompanying USB drive, under separate folder 'Additional Material'.

[50] http://youtu.be/8PDmzSkkLYY (Sarakatsanos 2011)

[51] For this piece, I used Logic Pro to layer different tracks of ambient sounds and tracks of solo instrument recordings (clarinet and cello) I made for other pieces in that play, on both of which I applied several reverb and delay filters. *DNA:1.3cabc* (2011)

included', it is however a matter of context whether use of music adds to or detracts from 'the realistic flavor of a sequence' (Burt 1994: 213-215).

Consulting with the director, Sophia Vgenopoulos, we agreed to keep a 'cinematic' approach in the music as well other aspects of the staging of the play. 'Cinematic' was mutually understood as achieving a similar feeling in the theatre to that of watching a film. In addition to the musical soundtrack, unusual light sources and stage props were used in order to create the illusion of watching a film. The director claimed that by inviting the audience to participate in the conventions of watching a film, their attention would be drawn away from the unrealistic stage setting, thus making the experience more realistic. Similar to film practices, use of non-diegetic music was expected to add to the realism of the experience (Burt 1994).

In order to create a 'cinematic' feel for the play, I decided to film the rehearsals and review them while composing at home. During the two months of rehearsals, I revisited the group's rehearsals several times, filmed entire sessions and spent time with the team of actors. Watching the rehearsal footage at home, during the composition process, affected the way I used the available technological options to produce music. I realised that in order to achieve a cinematic feel, I had to minimise the distraction of the external sound emanating from the theatre's speakers and extend the sonic space of the play, so that the audience is submerged in it and perceives sound and stage action as a unified experience. Technically, this was achieved by placing speakers behind the audience seats as well behind the stage, creating a 'pseudo-surround' effect, in other words, a more inclusive sound environment.

Compositionally, as further explained below, I chose to use existing, documented rehearsal material as an attempt to create a sonic world that feeds its sounds from the stage action. An example of this practice can be found in *DNA: 1.1*. In that scene of the play, a group of teenagers bully and eventually murder a younger boy by throwing pebbles and stones at him. Later in the play, *Leah*, a central character, asks her partner in remorse: 'what have we done, *Phil*?'. Further expanding the compositional concept of 'feeding material from the stage', I sampled recordings of stone and pebble sounds and edited them to create several rhythm patterns that were then used in the above referenced piece (timecode 00'00'' — 00'32''). I also sampled the voice of the actress playing *Leah*, reading out her lines 'live', in rehearsal, specifically the one that signified her remorse, 'what have we done, *Phil*?' (*DNA: 1.1*, timecode: 00'17'', 00'32'' and 00'56''). These samples were also included in the piece *DNA 2.1* (2011) (timecode: 00'23'', 00'37'' and 00'44''). I chose to use this particular phrase as a leitmotif (a term also borrowed from the language of film music) because I found it captures the character's guilty conscience. Considering it as an indicator of a particular psychological state, I could use it as a point of reference to re-introduce that state when needed. Pieces *1.1* and *2.1* were played in the scenes before and after the actual scene of remorse, introducing and echoing the 'leitmotif' 'What have we done, Phil?' throughout the play.

During my two-month participation in this project, I worked on two different formats and editing software: *Logic Pro* for music production and *Final Cut Pro* for video editing, while I was also operating filming and recording equipment. Returning to Burt's (1994) point on realism in film and extending his thoughts to realism on stage,

I found this cross-platform method an effective way to resolve the stage-setting issues and make spatial transitions in the play seem more realistic, given the stage restrictions described above. Moreover, using material across editing platforms, I applied 'cut, copy & paste', otherwise known as 'sampling' techniques in the production of the music, as discussed in Chapter 2 - Critical Contexts. I also developed a range of technical skills related to transferring and converting different audio and video file formats (such as .avi, .mov, .mp4, .aiff, .wav and .mp3), as well as editing and exporting digital files, knowledge of which is essential in enhancing the 'Craft of Remix', as analysed by Knobel and Lanjshear in *Remix: The Art and Craft of Endless Hybridization* (Knobel and Lanjshear 2008).

This period also allowed for experimentation with video recordings and extracts from compositions-in-progress, as a way to examine the effectiveness of my music in creating a 'cinematic' feel, as defined above. During this process of experimentation, I produced a short video that was later used by the theatre company as the trailer for show[52], becoming the first of a number of trailers I have produced since. Working on this project provided experience in documenting live performance and producing promotional videos, both of which proved to be important skills, as will be exemplified in the presentation of the following projects.

Developing my interest in live performance, in 2011, I decided to compose music for three performances, directed by students from the Drama Department of Royal Holloway, University of London. Performances of these pieces, entitled *The*

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[52] http://youtu.be/8PDmzSkkLYY (Sarakatsanos 2011b)

Possibilities, After the End and *I Dream of Sleep,* were staged in May 2011, as part of the Royal Holloway Drama Department MA final pieces showcase. The work produced for these projects, which included electronic music compositions, soundscapes and sound design, is not included in the portfolio as the research focus was different to the audiovisual compositions which are central to this study. Nevertheless, I consider this period to be an invaluable part of my learning process, in which I gained experience in utilising the human and material resources provided, including crew, musicians, actors, dancers, directors, choreographers, filmmakers and documentarists as well as filming equipment, tutorials on operating the cameras and working with video editing software, rehearsal and performance spaces.

From 2011 onwards, my compositional work increasingly involved working with film and shifted towards the use of unrelated, 'found' material and to composing music during what is commonly known as the 'post-production' period. Directly influenced by the work of Ophir Kutiel and Jack Conte, as discussed in Chapter 3 - Creative Contexts, I considered any video footage of musicians performing or, more generally, any footage that contains recorded sound and also depicts the source of that sound, to be my raw compositional material. Working on the projects described below, I realised that as my compositional material became less inter-related or less related to a preconceived idea, it also became more open to interpretation, making the creative process more interesting. Thus, the most intensely creative compositional stage of my work occurs, paradoxically, after the initial performance and involves refining and reinterpreting elements of that performance, in order to move forward into the next stage of production.

My next project was *Refraction*[53] (2011c): the first audiovisual composition I produced for the purposes of the present study. For this project, I used equipment provided by Royal Holloway's Media Arts Department and worked with students and staff from the Music, Media Arts and Drama Departments of the University. The piece, arranged and scored for the participants and the instruments they played, including clarinet, violin, flute, voice and beatbox, was based on my earlier composition, *I Dream of Sleep* (Sarakatsanos 2010), originally composed for one of the drama pieces described above.

Having scored the piece, I then filmed each musician in a different location on Royal Holloway campus, performing their part of the composition on their instrument. I also filmed them individually in Media Art's studios, each performing an improvisation on their given part. The result is a composition that features all the participating musicians playing both scored and improvised parts, presented in an audiovisual format. The improvised parts were mixed together by layering the recordings and selectively adjusting their duration and levels in the sound mix, in order to produce my desired amount of harmonic resonance and dissonance. From the visual aspect, I applied split-screen and fast cutting techniques to the performances filmed outdoors, following the order of 'appearance' of the instruments and the tempo of the music. The improvisation of each performer was filmed in the Media Art Department's 'green box' studio, with the intention of using the 'green box' technology to explore creative options such as the combination of that footage with shots of 'refracted' images. Failing to find a creative use of the studio footage, I chose to replace it in the

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[53] http://youtu.be/mfKKIvdr7QU (Sarakatsanos 2011c)

edit with home-made footage of music scores filmed through glass, creating a 'refracted' effect that conceptually fitted the project (02'18'' - 3'36'').

Though, for the reasons explained above, having to do with not using the green box footage, I consider that *Refraction* (2011c) did not meet the expected results, what I learned while producing this project is that montage creates very specific meanings and that shots which seem theoretically relevant do not always add to the composition. In this case, visual illustration did not resonate. Nevertheless, I value the cross-departmental collaboration through which I acquired technical knowledge of filming and recording both in studio conditions and on location. Working with students in music, drama and media also provided useful experience facilitating future creative collaborations in similar projects.

Ultimately, I found the format of *Refraction* unsatisfactory because composing the music before documenting and editing the performances reduced the visual element to a secondary and merely illustrative role. Essentially, this method recreates the limitations of the studio-recording process. It is effectively the same process as recording each instrument separately performing a pre-composed piece which is the antithesis of my preferred compositional process, which is to manipulate 'found' material. While the style and aesthetics of each of my compositions are partly affected by a series of creative choices I make in the early stages of production, such as the selection of musicians and filming locations, the content and the final audiovisual product are a result of manipulating or 'remixing' footage during the editing process. Thus, even though filming the performance process does enhance our appreciation of

it to some degree and opens room for exploring the importance of visually engaging

with musical performance in having a more 'effective' experience (Lipscomb 2005),

the performances, within this methodology, do not have the power to affect and

transform the composition itself. I concluded, therefore, the freedoms afforded by the

techniques and principles of film-editing could allow me, as a composer, to move

beyond the methods of *Refraction*. The tools of filming and editing not only suggest

the use of the 'remix' techniques of 'cut/copy/paste', but also indicate the phase in

which the act of 'composition' will be most fruitful and creatively fulfilling. I

consider *Refraction*, then, as an intermediate step in my audiovisual work, leading

towards fully submitting my creative control to the phase of post-production, as I did

in my later projects *Influenza* (2012a), *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw

West - The Movement* (2015).

Further investigating the use of film and sound in composition while practicing my

editing skills to be able to create stronger visual narratives, I produced a number of

clips for commercial use, most of which can not be included in the portfolio as

remixes. However, these productions provided the field to experiment and make the

observations I share below. Since 2011, I have produced five commercial videos

including promotional videos for musical bands, for a conflict resolution organisation

and for a touring theatre show. These videos range significantly in production size,

from *MANOS Hadjidakis*[54] (which was produced without any budget, out of old

footage and home recordings) to *Demo_Deux*[55], a production that met professional

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[54] http://youtu.be/xNHxdiYJqxg (Sarakatsanos, 2013c)

[55] http://youtu.be/uEVUjplAji8 (Sarakatsanos, 2011a)

standards. However, regardless of the size or topic of each audiovisual production, the

compositional method I found most effective and artistically fulfilling was similar in

all five: I first spend an adequate amount of time in research, in order to understand

the work being done and promoted in each case. Then I collect a large amount of

footage, the content of which varies according to the theme of the project, to create a

wide range of creative options in the editing process. Lastly, I decide on the content

while reviewing the material and build the narrative structure of the video, through

constant reevaluation during the editing process. For example, for an eight-minute

video I made to promote workshops run by the International School for Storytelling

and Peace,[56] I documented more than eighty hours of workshop sessions over a ten-

day filming period, before spending a week reviewing footage and over two weeks

editing the final product. While this practice is not as time and cost effective as

filming based on a script, I find that it provides a much wider spectrum of choices in

material. Though to some extent, ideas regarding the content or the narrative structure

of the video were being formed while filming, it was during the later periods of

reviewing and editing the material that these ideas were shaped and realised.

Being personally involved in most of these productions, either as performer or

musical director, gave me access to freely document material during rehearsals or

performances. Even in cases where I was not actively participating in the event or

group being promoted, such the videos made for Roma musical band 'Tatcho Drom'[57]

and a workshop for Arab and Jewish Israelis and Palestinians organised by the

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[56] http://youtu.be/j3wsGTvb6YU (Sarakatsanos, 2014b)

[57] http://youtu.be/HQrbC10EwPU (Sarakatsanos 2013d)

'International School for Storytelling and Peace',[58] having this creative freedom of documenting material at will and ensuring adequate time for research and filming were top priorities.

In 2012, I worked as a music researcher, advisor and editor of a television music documentary series entitled 'Secrets of Music', produced for Greek state channel ET1. I also created a series of mashups for four of the sixteen episodes, using original footage from the programme. Each music video was composed for a specific episode, linked to its respective theme:.'What is Music?',[59] 'Music Listening',[60] 'Music Technology'[61] and 'Music in Education'.[62]

In this production I had the opportunity to further expand my creative practice of remixing 'found' material rather than having to create my raw beforehand, as in previous projects. Unusually for a television commission, I was supplied with unedited footage and had considerable amount of editorial control of the image. To give a few examples, the material I was supplied with by the programme editors included interviews with music artists on various subjects, backstage footage of the creator and presenter of the programme: film and theatre composer Nikos Kypourgos, and shots of urban and rural landscapes. The material was in cases thematically

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[58] youtu.be/j3wsGTvb6YU (Sarakatsanos 2014b)

[59] http://youtu.be/HCQdz-pRz-s (Sarakatsanos 2012b)

[60] http://youtu.be/vRg_D8Efy0g (Sarakatsanos 2013h)

[61] http://youtu.be/9kR_xLrBLA8 (Sarakatsanos 2013e)

[62] http://youtu.be/6iOXYwVdqQU (Sarakatsanos 2013f).
http://youtu.be/G8ebRR-1d9c (Sarakatsanos 2013g)

'unrelated' to the extent that few points of connection were immediately apparent, making the composition process challenging.

These constraints proved to be creatively liberating, however. Being detached from the documented material, as I hadn't filmed it myself, I felt at liberty to experiment with the dialectical relationship between sound and image as well as my own musical methods and stylistic approach. I did this by putting into practice a number of techniques I had met in the work of artists mentioned in Chapter 3, developing my editing skills in split-screen, fast cutting, stop-motion, applying filters and colour grading, as well as my skills in music mixing and sound design. All of the above techniques are evident in the mashup I produced for the fourth episode, titled 'Music Listening' (2013h), based on supplied footage of the Athens-based 'Armonia Atenea' orchestra[63] rehearsing and performing Vivaldi's *Spring* from *The Four Seasons*.

Attempting an 'original' remix of such a recognisable work made me push my stylistic boundaries and shift to a more 'fragmented' approach in sound treatment. Apart from the sound of the orchestra tuning, which I used as the underlying track for the whole piece (0'00'' - 0'24''), no other sound sample used in this composition lasts more than one or two seconds. In contrast to the inter-contextualization that occurs through mixing longer musical phrases, as seen in my later work, *Influenza* (2012a),[64] in this case, I found that sampling shorter sound extracts resulted in a more effective de-contextualization of the material. The original piece by Vivaldi and any

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[63] http://www.megaron.gr/default.asp?la=2&pid=138

[64] See analysis in Chapter 3.

connotations attached to it dissolve under the fragmented remix practices I apply to the material. As explained below in the analysis of later projects, it was not the choice of one, but the combination of both approaches, that led me to my current compositional style.

As advisor to the programme's creator and presenter, Nikos Kypourgos, I had access to all levels of production, including planning, filming and post-production, which provided valuable insights which I was able to apply to all my future projects in terms of production planning, team management, recording, filming and editing techniques and technical specifications. Perhaps most significantly, I gained experience in conducting and filming interviews. I found that interviewing musical participants on camera can be an effective way to extract 'useable' material for my compositions.[65] Applying this insight to all my later compositions, I conducted and filmed interviews with the participants in addition to recording their music performances, in order to create and document a moment of communication and a shared experience of a performance. From 2012 onwards, engaging in communication with the participants on camera has been my main approach when documenting material for my audiovisual compositions.

In late 2012, after working for theatre, TV and documentary productions and gaining experience on multiple levels, I decided to produce a larger project where I could put into practice the composition methods and techniques I had been developing, specifically the combination of sampling and remixing longer and shorter sound

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[65] See definition of 'useable material' in Chapter 2.

extracts, as detailed above. In this project, titled *Influenza* (2012a),[66] I applied some of the rules, concepts and ideas I had found in the works of previously examined artists, including Pomplamoose's consistent use of non-dubbed, on-set recordings of filmed performances and the ethnographic approach of the project *Playing for Change*. Producing *Influenza* also provided an opportunity for me to observe and refine the levels of creative control I allow on each phase of production, from setting up the project and scouting for participants to documenting the 'unrelated' material and remixing it. Before proceeding to close-textual analysis of *Influenza*, I will spell out the insights I developed between projects through reflecting my own work, in order to make the compositional methods and creative ideas clearer to the reader.

The artistic choice of using 'unrelated' material in my compositions, influenced by Ophir Kutiel's *ThruYou* project, conflicted with my methodology of selecting and documenting the musicians participating in *Influenza* (2012a) myself, meaning that I would be indirectly predisposing the musical inputs to a certain extent. Following my experience in the production of *Refraction* (2011c),[67] I had decided that both music and video parts of each piece should be composed at the post-production phase. My experience in producing videos for the Greek television programme 'Secrets of Music' (2013), however, had shown that the period of filming is of key importance in providing 'useable' samples to be subjected to the editing process.

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[66] https://vimeo.com/54866350 (Sarakatsanos 2012a)

[67] Detailed above in this chapter.

Since my compositional method is based on the use of unrelated or 'found' material, I regard the filming/recording phase of each project as the period in which I create the material to be 'found'. During my experience with the *Refraction* project (2011c), I had found that the process of filming interviews and musical performances needed to be separated from that of composition, in order for that material to appear 'unrelated' in the end result. Therefore, while filming the musicians for *Influenza*, I applied general conceptual guidelines, such as using the topic of 'musical influences' as a starting point for the interviews I conducted with participating musicians. Producing and directing the project myself allowed me increased control over choice of film locations and the specifications of filming and recording tools, adding to the project's overall sense of coherence. Moreover, each participating musician was interviewed separately, and was unaware of how many musicians would be participating in the project, or of who those musicians would be, in order to ensure that participants would remain unaffected by each other's performances. I avoided setting factors such as tempo, specific melodic lines or harmonic structures that could predefine the compositional outcome. Aiming for a creatively fulfilling compositional process and an 'effective' musical experience, I maintained my loyalty to the methodology of using 'unrelated' material, whilst realizing that it was necessary to construct a conception of the work that would encompass all the above parameters.

The concept of *Influenza*, as described below, is based on the idea of making a documentary about the function and effect of influence in music. In December 2011, I filmed the interviews and performances of ten London-based musicians. Shou Jie Eng, a violin player from Singapore; Kyriacos Shionis, saxophone player from South

Cyprus; George Tsauss, multi-instrumentalist from Greece were just three of these ten, all of whom lived in London at the time, and were either studying music or were in the early stage of their music career. Instruments include piano, acoustic guitar, percussion, electric bass and voice. As young musicians from international backgrounds, they had all received classical training as well as being familiar with playing the folk music of their country of origin. Through the interviews I conducted with each of them, I explored the elements that comprise their 'musicality' and tried to identify their 'origin'.

Participants were interviewed on the topic of 'music influence'. They were asked questions on their musical background and work. Through a retrospective of their music education and practice, participants identified the key figures that had influenced their musicality. Pop and rock idols, favourite bands or songs came up as initial answers but as the musicians went further into conversation, they increasingly mentioned people they had direct communication with, including friends, colleagues and teachers, identifying their direct influence. Additionally, they were asked to give music examples on their instruments, performing the music, songs or compositions to which they referred as well as their own music, in order to illustrate the input to their work.

Audio and video recordings were made using separate file formats, and footage of the interviews and performances was grouped, analysed and mapped for categorisation purposes, in order to simplify the development process. While browsing through the categorised audio material, I gained a general sense of the available and 'useable'

material and started forming ideas of possible structures. I then edited the sampled material, applying filters, adjusting tempo and pitch and looping. Building the timelines in Logic Pro and Final Cut Pro was followed by arranging the piece, and applying similar editing techniques to the video footage, as well as dealing with technical issues including video and audio formats, synchronising timelines between software and sound engineering to correct audio problems.

I now move to close textual analysis of *Influenza*, pointing out the factors that shaped my composition, specifically referring to the first two minutes and thirty seconds of the piece. The video opens (00:00) with Shou Jie Eng, tuning and warming up his violin inside a cafe, being filmed from the outside, while we hear his improvisation on the violin. The video then cuts to the cafe's interior, with several shots of Shou Jie playing, talking and tuning (00:07), when we first hear Kyriacos Shionis on the saxophone joining Shou Jie with his improvisation. During this part of the composition, I applied a technique I developed based on audience feedback and shaped by observations made in previous audiovisual work: intentionally introducing the instruments' sound into the composition before presenting them on screen. I found that 'hiding' the source of the sound, or rather not visually exposing it, creates a sense of curiosity and expectation for the audience that if met, when the source is revealed, contributes to a positive experience. Fourteen seconds after the introduction of the sound of Kyriacos saxophone, then, I cut to the first shot of the musician at 00:21. Kyriacos is seen playing under a bridge, next to Bethnal Green railway station in East London. The choice of location and how it affected the composition is further discussed below.

Arrangements I had with Shou Jie prior to the shooting date, regarding the location of the interview, affected the direction and composition of this scene both conceptually and compositionally. When asked where he would feel most inspired to perform in a public setting, he suggested being filmed under a train bridge, as the sound of passing trains inspires his improvisations. The closest option was *Hurwundeki*, a Korean cafe/restaurant/barber shop in Dalston, East London. Being built inside the arches of an active rail station, this filming location provided a satisfactory sound recording environment that also met Shou Jie's request. With the manager's permission and the customers' patience, we were allowed two hours of silence and space inside the cafe. Shou Jie started each of his improvisations as a train passed over the cafe, building his improvisation from either the tempo or the harmonics created by the sound of the train wheels on the tracks.

Following the theme of 'train bridges', as I found them to be visually representative of the area, I filmed Kyriacos (and also singer Anna Kalogirou who appears later in the composition) under a train bridge in Bethnal Green, East London. Both Shou Jie's recordings and those of the couple included the sound of many passing trains, which were used in this short section of the composition. Though hidden in the mix and barely audible without high-end speakers or headphones, the sound of passing trains served both as a reference to Shou Jie's inspiration point and as a means of 'authenticating' the visual environment, by making the soundscape more realistic.

At 00:41, the video cuts back to Shou Jie while we can still hear the violin and saxophone improvisations overlapping. At 00:45, the video cuts to pianist, Ira Menin,

who describes how she takes a melody from a jazz standard and 'turns it into' a bass-line for a hip-hop tune, as well as the way her classical background is apparent from the way she plays the trills on the piano. Meanwhile, the saxophone and violin improvisations can still be heard in the background. At 01:03, as the other two instruments fade out, Ira plays two and a half bars of a chord progression on the piano that functions as a bridge to the following part of the composition.

At 01:11 and with a fast, repetitive cut, Ira plays two bars of a bass-line. These two bars continue to play in a loop until 01:31 when video cuts to shots of Shou Jie as he prepares for the filming sessions: tuning the violin, tightening the bow, adjusting his sight-glasses as my hands become visible in front of the lens, ready to 'clap' - in lieu of a clapperboard to synchronise audio and film clips in editing. At 01:37 we hear my hands clapping and then immediately forming a fast rhythmic pattern which was constructed by sampling the sound of clapping and and using *Ultrabeat*: a plug-in for building rhythmic patterns, provided as a default in *Logic Pro*. The shot of the clapping hands is cut two frames before the hands are seen clapping. I found that in cases, displacing cuts by as little as one or two frames can result in interesting effects. In this case, allowing two extra frames and showing the hands touching weakened the impact of the following shot, that of Shou Jie. A powerful cut back to Shou Jie was needed as at 01:37 he starts playing (or continues improvising) a five-note theme for two bars, which also becomes an ostinato, playing alongside Ira's bass-line on the piano and the rhythmic pattern created by sampling my clapping hands.

At 01:44, with these loops still playing in the background, guitarist George Tsauss first appears, playing a harmonic chord. George, facing the camera and holding his

guitar says 'I like playing with pedal…', meaning attaching pedal-boards to his

acoustic guitar, '…echoing…' playing an open E string on his guitar, '…playing with

oriental tetrachords…', as he plays a mixed, chromatic and diatonic series of four

notes (C#, D, E, F). Sampling the four notes, I created a riff that is introduced at

01:58, when the previous loops break to a rest.

Layered under the constructed guitar riff, Kyriacos's improvisation on the saxophone

resumes, now coupled with singer, Anna Kalogirou. The sound of the couple is

accompanied by shots of them both under the Bethnal Green train bridge, is slowly

fed into the tune, for two bars, until 02:04, when all three previous loops (violin

ostinato, piano bass-line and hand-clapping) return to the mix and join the couple's

improvisation. The returning violin riff is distorted, filtered through an electric guitar

distortion pedal, also a default plug-in in *Logic Pro*. Taking inspiration from Kutiel's

Mother of All Funk Chords, I use distortion on the violin as a reference to George's

earlier quote concerning using pedals on the guitar, further adding to the dialogic

relationship between the filmed performances. I attempt to transfer that distortion to

the visuals by using filters on *Final Cut* that create a 'shaking' effect and a chromatic

aberration. A strong, 'metallic' sounding beat, made from various soundbites taken

from the project's recordings, was added to the mix in the post-production phase, to

match the aggressive sound of the distorted violin and strengthen the impact of the

visual distortion on Shou Jie's performance.

After this point of climax and following the conclusion of the couple's improvisation,

the loops all play simultaneously for six bars, decreasing in velocity and/or density

and at 02:24 come to a rest for another two bars. Three loops continue to play during the two-bar rest: two percussive loops to maintain the sense of rhythm and an electric piano loop I recorded in post-production to enhance harmonic continuity between the other, melodic loops. During these two bars, used as a 'diminuendo' before the next part of the composition, the audience can see Anna and Kyriacos relaxing after the end of their improvisation, laughing, getting out of their 'performative zone' and returning to a state of being 'camera-shy'. At 02:30, the video cuts to black, synchronised with the sound of a passing train, concluding the first part of the composition.

In the full version of the documentary, this piece would be split in three parts (00:00-02:30, 02:31-05:00, 05:01-06:23) which in turn would be mixed with additional parts from the interviews and further pieces composed at later stages of production. Though *Influenza* was not developed into a documentary as planned, I consider composing this audiovisual piece from the footage of the first group of musicians as a step forward in crystallising my compositional method.

I was able to put this method into practice again and further explore its benefits and limitations in my most recent samples of audiovisual work, titled *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015).[68] Nieuw West is the most western district of the city of Amsterdam, Netherlands. It was built in the 1950's under an urban expansion plan and expanded during the immigration waves of the 1980's and 1990's. During these two decades there was an increase in crime that

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[68] http://youtu.be/CI_9Iy-d5Aw (Sarakatsanos 2014a)

contributed to the area's bad reputation making it unpopular for locals and tourists.

Since 2001, the district has been subject to several renewal plans, aimed at resolving

some of the crime-related issues arising from conflicting lifestyles, lack of

communication and feelings of insecurity between different ethnic groups. Such

renewal plans have sought to make the area safer and more appealing by developing

'inter-cultural dialogue' between the different ethnic groups that live in the area of

Nieuw West (Alhadi 2014: 18-23). I had become familiar with the area and its issues

while visiting Amsterdam for other, non-related projects in previous years and was

looking for a way to contribute to the collective efforts being made in the area by

European institutions, Dutch governmental institutions, the city municipality of

Amsterdam, the municipality of Nieuw-West district and locally active organizations

(Alhadi 2014: 9).

Inspired by Ophir Kutiel's practice in applying his compositional methods in city-

branding videos,[69] I made a proposal for a short music documentary to DW-RS

Productions,[70] an Amsterdam-based art production company that focuses on the

promotion and artistic development of the district of Nieuw West. The proposal I

submitted to Director of DW-RS Productions, Arjen Barel[71] described a short music

documentary that sought to capture the area's shifting cultural landscape and cover

the theme of 'life in the New West' as experienced by musicians who live and/or work

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[69] See Chapter 3.

[70] http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/members/dw-rs-producties

[71] http://spotonisrael.com/arjen-barel/

in that area. Barel accepted the proposal and became executive-producer of the documentary.

For the purposes of the documentary that comprises the pieces *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015), I interviewed approximately twenty musicians and filmed them perform either in arranged meetings or at their live performances from June 2014 until December 2014. Musicians were filmed in several public places across the district of New West, such as the Rembrandt Park, Sloterplas, the lake around which the district has developed, and 'recognisable' public sites such as squares and monuments. Other filming locations included rehearsal rooms, music clubs and theatres and anti-squat buildings (in which participating musicians live and work for a low rent). Filming for this project also involved shooting outdoors, in open markets, parades and festivals, documenting the social interaction evident in these public spaces. I combined public and personal space in an attempt to inter-contextualize participating musicians and their music practice within the area.

Though this project primarily concerns musicians and their practice, criteria for participation were not based on perceptions of musical quality. As explained in the analysis of Ophir Kutiel's work in Chapter 3, the footage is fragmented during the editing process to such an extent that the musical effect of the piece is more reliant upon the technical skills of the editor than the musician's virtuosity, allowing musicians of a wide range of skill-levels to participate, and therefore, for a much wider range of cultural characteristics to be included in the documentary. Examples of this inclusive musical approach are described below.

Whilst the basic criterion for participation in the project was simply residence or musical activity within the area of New West, I studied the demographics of the area, aiming to create a realistic representation of multi-nationality as experienced in contemporary New West and to reach out to less open communities. I was similarly inclusive in choice of instruments, music genres and ages of participants, showcasing talent and expression from different generational and ethnic groups. Participants included a Surinamese soul/funk songwriter, a Caribbean drum-band, including both adult and youth groups, a Moroccan/Dutch folk singer, a Turkish saz-duo, and other Dutch, French and Italian musicians from the music scenes of jazz, hip-hop, dance/ electronic, symphonic and underground psychedelic rock.

Identifying suitable musicians for this project was not simply a quest for virtuosity or 'professional status' measured by public recognition. In the first group of musicians (June 2014), I included hip-hop artist Pascal Griffioen, known as 'Def P'.[72] 'Def P' is locally famous for his hip-hop band 'Osdorp Posse', formed in the 1990's and is specifically known for songs dealing with social issues such as prostitution, domestic abuse and religion. We filmed Def P's performance at the Sunday 'Osdorp Square Market', developed as part of the district's urban renewal planning programme. Def P can be seen at timecode 3'58'' of *Heartbeat of Nieuw West*.[73] During the same week, we also filmed a young man who introduced himself as 'Groove' (no further details are known). I encountered Groove while filming outdoors. He was sitting on a bench at the side of the road and asked us what the filming was about. When I explained, he

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[72] http://www.defpenco.nl (Griffioen 2012)

[73] http://youtu.be/CI_9Iy-d5Aw (Sarakatsanos 2014a)

showed interest in the project and introduced himself as a 'rapper': part of New West's active hip-hop music scene. I saw this as an opportunity to capture a spontaneous moment and challenged him to 'freestyle' (improvise) on camera. Part of his improvisation is used in the composition (03'18''). Though Def P is a more acclaimed and experienced rapper than Groove, both, regarded as carriers of cultural information and documented within their context, are equally valuable to the project's needs and aims.

The structure of the documentary that *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015) are parts of is built around a series of short mashups I composed by drawing materials from the footage. The compositions are intercut with short excerpts from interviews with the musicians. Musicians were interviewed on their background and daily life experience as well as their musical practice in the New West. Though this video project might potentially function as a platform for the artists, its purpose is not to 'profile' them. Interviews focused on their musical influences and cultural heritage, their practice and the elements they bring into the landscape, but also on how the New West influences them in return. The interviews provide the documentary with short bridges from one composition to the next and function both as introductions for the musicians in which they tell their own story, as well as an insight into their daily life experience in the area. The aim is to extend the dialogue from the professional to the 'daily life' practices of the musicians, seeing them not merely as the carriers of musical information but as the people who actively form the cultural landscape of New West, through their everyday practice within and amongst communities.

Regarding each performance documented as a form of cultural expression, I place

musicians and their practice at the epicentre of this project. Music, regarded as

cultural information, covers geographical distances and it does so through various

means. In the case of New West, successive waves of immigration since the 1990's

have been crucial. Moreover, the co-existence in the area of different ethnic groups,

including Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese, to name but a few, comes with a high

level of cultural exchange. From folk songs to lullabies and from ritualistic music to

marching songs, within a different context, these musical fragments fuse and create a

new landscape. Participants are approached as autonomous musical personalities that

all play their role in the formation of the cultural landscape.

The aim of these compositions is to create a virtual platform, on which multiple artists

from different backgrounds meet and participate in a creative dialogue. What this

composition suggests is opening gates between communities, transcending cultural

barriers and participating in the ongoing formation and transformation of this area's

collective identity.

Retrospectively looking at the first year of production, this dialogic relationship,

between and amongst cultures, is evident in almost all musicians filmed. Whether

they are part of multi-national groups, fusing folk music from different countries, like

participants Mohamed Ahaddaf[74] and Samira Dainan[75] or touring the world,

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[74] http://ahaddafquartet.com (Ahaddaf 2014)

[75] http://samira.dainan.nl (Dainan 2012)

collaborating with artists from different genres, like Vincenzo Castellana,[76] these

musicians and their practice, and the ways they shape a particular district in a western

European city, can be viewed as a microcosm of broader processes of cultural

transformation.

In a broader sense, these compositions suggest possible forms of social interaction by

projecting a reality that, as observed, already exists within creative communities. By

documenting the musicians in a performative setting or in their own space and by

interviewing them, I attempt to offer more than a re-presentation of their performance.

Elements from the participants' culture, as expressed within their communities and in

the specific environment of the New West area, such as their clothing, home setting,

public and social activities are also captured during the documentation of their

interviews and performances. Examples are evident in the piece at timecodes 1'11'' -

1'59'' and 3'31'' - 4'19''.[77] I include these visual elements in the compositions with

the intention of contributing to an insight and furthermore, a sense of 'understanding'

of the participants' reality in the district.

The latest mashup piece included in the portfolio was composed for the needs of a

project commissioned by the 'Mezrab', a cultural events venue located in Amsterdam,

The Netherlands and was produced between January and June 2016. Mezrab was

founded in 2004 by Sahand Sahebdivani, an Amsterdam-raised musician and

storyteller, whose family settled in the Netherlands in the 1980's, after fleeing

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[76] http://www.vincenzocastellana.org (Castellana 2011)

[77] youtu.be/CI_9Iy-d5Aw *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (Sarakatsanos 2014a)

Khomeini's regime in Iran. The Mezrab is known in Amsterdam for hosting an ethnically and culturally diverse range of different music genres (focusing on jazz and world music) and spoken word events, including storytelling, improv theatre and comedy. Nicola Bozzi on the online magazine 'The Towner', in his insightful article on *Amsterdam's Storytelling Revolution: A brief history of the Mezrab*, places diversity 'at the core of the Mezrab experience' (Bozzi 2016).

The overall projected outcome of this commission was a series of filmed performances that would be uploaded on the Mezrab's YouTube account and promoted through several online platforms that the Centre has set up profiles on (such as Facebook and Wordpress), as well as its official website[78]. Over a period of four months, I was expected to film and record several concerts, choose one piece from the setlist of each concert, edit a music video for it and deliver it to the Centre which, would then use it for communication/promotional purposes. These music videos are not included in the portfolio as there were no remix techniques involved in producing them[79]. However, additionally to the series of music videos, I was commissioned to produce a promotional video that familiarizes potential audiences with and attracts attention to the work programmed by and presented in the Mezrab. The idea of re-using the footage I had filmed for the single music videos into creating a mashup video came from the Centre's owner and artistic director, Sahand Sahebdivani who, while discussing the details of the project in our email correspondence, specifically

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[78] mezrab.nl

[79] https://youtu.be/BR1uNcHMljU Though not included in the portfolio, this stands as sample of this series, published on the 'Mezrab' YouTube channel.

asked for this to be a mashup video, as he considers it to be the right medium to showcase the diversity in his Centre's programme:

> If there's any type of video that I want for the Mezrab it's a mash-up video. The reason is that there's not a single artist or even a single medium that captures the spirit of the Mezrab, it's the diversity. The diversity in backgrounds with which people come, the type of stories they tell and instruments they play. When I saw the video you made for Amsterdam New West, which shows the same for a city quarter, I thought 'this is for Mezrab!'. (Sahebdivani 2016)

It was clear from the beginning of this production that one of the key elements to be promoted in the mashup video was that of diversity. For that reason, I extended the period of filming to four months, in order to cover the widest possible range of musical genres and performance formats presented in the venue. Additionally, I decided to interview Sahebdivani on his Centre's history and artistic aims, in order to obtain more information and develop a better understanding of the characteristics of the Centre I was commissioned to promote. The interview was filmed and recorded and, as I will explain later in this chapter, parts of it were used in the mashup as the backbone around which the composition was built.[80]

Over the four-month filming period but, also through the interview I conducted with Sahebdivani, I made several observations that informed my approach in filming as well as in editing the mashup. Apart from offering a diverse programme, Mezrab is also a place where one can observe a high level of social interaction amongst visitors, a fluid mode of participation with large numbers of volunteers working behind the

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[80] An audio file copy of the complete interview is included in the accompanying USB drive, under separate folder 'Additional material'.

bar, kitchen and audio/light desks and, often, 'no clear distinctions between people visiting to enjoy the event and people helping out' (Sahebdivani 2016). Similar observations were made by young Social Sciences scholar Fadoua Boufarrah at the University of Amsterdam, who conducted her research in the Mezrab, focusing on modes of reciprocal exchange between customers and the owner of the venue as well as staff and volunteers. Boufarrah, in her MA thesis *Mezrab* describes how the operating modes of the Centre lead to an elevated sense of 'inclusion' for the people working and volunteering and provide a feeling of 'belonging' to its customers, concluding that 'Mezrab is a place that offers people a physical space wherein everyone can decide for themselves how much they want to be part of this modern family' (Boufarrah u.p.: 12, 30, 42). Identifying diversity, high level of social interaction, fluid participation, inclusion and sense of belonging as key elements of the Centre's identity, I focused my efforts on how to capture these on film and highlight them through the editing of the mashup. Through this scope and in relation to the aforementioned elements, I will now proceed to a description of the six-month production process, including that of composition and particularly referring to the defining criteria of combination, organisation and manipulation of materials.

The owner and artistic director of the Mezrab, Sahand Sahebdivani provided absolute artistic freedom in terms of the musical and visual style of the mashup as well as in which events should be filmed and which parts should be sampled. However, there were actual constraints linked to the specifications of the project. Considering that the venue was busy before each event, with staff and technicians setting-up the bar, stage, lights and sound and that the audiences would stay in the venue after, the only

opportunity to film each act, band, musician or speaker was while performing during the event. Therefore, it was not an option to repeat shots or recordings that didn't go well during the event. Moreover, any recording or filming should be done without disrupting the performance, the work of staff and technicians or the audience experience. As a result, the first month of production was invested in familiarizing myself with filming and recording equipment used in this project, learning how to use the venue's sound and light desks and figuring out filming angles, microphone positions and recording set-ups that would best accommodated the way each event was staged and, in most cases, amplified. This month of preparation was essential in minimizing production cost while elevating the sound and image quality as it allowed for fast, discreet and efficient work modes in the venue and a greater adaptability when dealing with technical difficulties and unexpected staging or sound conditions.

The next four months of production were dedicated to the filming period, when I collected all material used in the piece. Overall, from February to May 2016, I filmed and recorded seventeen events in the Mezrab, from set-up and soundcheck to encore and afterparty. Nine out of seventeen were music concerts, six spoken word shows and two political debates. This project has its own particularities when it comes to the defining criteria of combination, organisation and manipulation of materials. The video was made to promote the inter-cultural exchange that takes place in an events space that mostly hosts musical acts visiting Amsterdam from across the globe. Therefore, mashing-up musical material as diverse in genres as possible (thus, exemplifying the diversity in Mezrab's programme) was one of the main objectives of the composition. Examples of the bands featured in the mashup video are *Valia Calda*,

an ethno-jazz band formed in London by greek brothers Thodoris and Nikos

Ziarkas[81], *Parne Gadje*[82], a Balkan music band originating from the Netherlands and

Itamar Borochov Quartet, a jazz band with Arab and Pan-African influences formed

by Jaffa-raised trumpeter Borochov[83].

In terms of highlighting the elements of social interaction, participation and inclusion,

I had to adjust the way I was used to filming music performances in previous projects.

Instead of placing the camera opposite of the musician(s), having them perform

directly to the lens, I chose to film them from the sides of the stage, attempting to

show the relation of each musician to the rest of the band. I also used depth shots

taken from a three-quarter rear angle that included parts of the audience, focusing on

the relation between the band and the audience, and showing a preference to eye-level

and low angle shots that would match the 'audience perspective' and affect the viewer

experience by suggesting a participatory viewpoint. I extensively filmed work done

behind the bar by staff or volunteers, mainly focusing on their interaction with

customers. I also filmed customers staying after an event and forming small groups

that spread all over the venue, including the performance space, while they were

discussing, eating, drinking and generally socializing. By doing so, I attempted to

visualize the image of a friendly and inclusive place, as described by Sahand in his

interview (Sahebdivani 2016: 11'31'').

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[81] http://www.valiacaldaproject.co.uk

[82] http://www.parnegadje.com

[83] http://itamarborochov.com/about/

When it comes to participation criteria, unlike the challenges I faced in *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015), in this project I did not have to choose between professional and amateur musicians as the vast majority of musicians filmed are experienced, international performers. It is worth noting however, that there were no strict musical criteria in the sampling process, in the sense that any soundbite that would be considered useable for the composition could be included, whether that would be originally coming from an instrument solo, more complex arrangements or non-musical sources. The length of each sample ranges from 16-bar riffs to single drumbeats. Examples of the above can be found in the last piece of the portfolio, titled *Mezrab* (Sarakatsanos 2016) at 4'40'' minutes, where *Parne Gadje*'s lead member, Marc Constandse, plays a solo on the bandoneon, at 0'52'' - 1'17''where the horn section of *Valia Calda* plays a dual-voice theme, and at 1'52'', where one of the members of *Bamoné*, a Dutch-based band that mixes Brazilian instrument *berimbau* with West-African *n'goni*, can be heard shouting out to the audience 'c'mon, move your —', in attempt to reinforce audience engagement and participation. The last word of his phrase is not audible in the mix as it is covered by a beep-tone that I made by processing the audio signal of a short drum sample through several oscillators and pitch-shifting plug-ins. To summarise, in terms of content, the level of performance for most part of the footage was elevated (if compared to earlier mashups) nevertheless, the sampling criteria remained as open.

In terms of organisation, I followed the methodology that I developed during the course of this study (as described earlier in this chapter), sampling from the material I have been filming and recording over the four month period, while even attempted to

optimize it to a certain extent. What I altered in my methodology this time was inserting the process of indexing footage between events. As a process, this includes storing footage on hard-drives and creating back-up copies, synchronizing audio and video clips on Final Cut and Adobe Premiere timelines, listening through the recordings while watching the videos and deciding which parts are more musically/ visually interesting then, cutting, copying and pasting them on a separate timeline, where all the usable samples are stored to be later processed and used in the composition. I found the practice of indexing footage as soon as I finished filming each event to be timesaving and leading to a more effective compositional process than leaving all the indexing work as a separate period, following the filming one.

After each event, all the material (themes, melodies, moments that stood out during the show) were still fresh, re-playing in my memory, making it easier to go through the footage and quickly decide which clips/segments/samples could be useable, rather than going through the complete stock of footage at the very end of the filming period and having to recall all the moments or watch the footage in its entirety before I made any decisions. Moreover, having all footage indexed and sampled by the end of the filming period made it possible to proceed with composing the piece, without the feeling of fatigue that usually came from overexposing myself to the material for extended periods of long editing shifts. The type of composition I am practicing, as a process itself, involves a great deal of digital manipulation that sometimes practically translates to listening to the same sample for hundreds of times on repeat, until I reach the desired level of some or the other effect. An example can be identified at 0'51'' and 1'46'' of *Mezrab* video mashup (2016) where musician and member of Bomoné,

Hassie Dune plays the n'goni. Recording through the venue's mixing desk provided a clear audio signal that I could then process more easily, compared to external recordings that contain a lot of ambience noise and give a more diffused signal. The sound of the n'goni, processed in Logic Pro, went through several equaliser filters that emphasize on or 'mask' specific frequency bands, a guitar and a bass amplifier to amplify the signal and give it a 'metallic' sound, make it more dynamic and therefore competitive as an element in the mix and also to 'match' the digital sound of the composition. In addition, I processed the signal through a compressor to make the sound more compound and flatten the peaks that could lead to 'clipping'. I also added a reverb effect, the same that was selectively applied to other sounds, to different extends, creating a 'common' aural space where these instruments perform and in attempt to 'unify' this sound with the rest in the composition. The example of the n'goni sound described above took hours of trial and error as well as heavy editing on the sample itself (building a 16-bar riff by cutting and pasting sometimes even individual notes and time-stretching them to match tempo) until the sound was ready to be mixed and then, days ahead of re-adjusting specific parameters of each of those oscillators and plug-in effects, in relation to the rest of the sounds in the mix. Reaching this state of the process while musical material still feels 'fresh' as well as not having to dread the sampling process as one that stands between the collection and the composition of the materials, leads to an overall more motivated creative process.

When it comes to manipulating material, I used very similar editing software, plug-ins and effects as in latest mashup videos *Influenza*, *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* and *Nieuw*

West - The Movement. As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, the use of digital tools in manipulating sound and image suggest certain aesthetics by default so, in that sense, this latest mashup followed more or less the same aesthetic line, as formed in recent projects. However, practicing the craft of presenting interviews in a musical-mashup format in earlier video *Nieuw West - The Movement* (2015)[84], I was eager to apply the same technique throughout the *Mezrab* video. Slicing the interview in smaller clips on the timeline allows for a re-appropriation of words and sentences that forms a fragmented take on reality, leaving to the viewer the work of drawing links between the sentences. In terms of content, this technique results in a more specific version of the original interview that can address the elements to be promoted with time-efficiency and focusing to the point. Moreover, adding this remixed version of the interview to the rest of the musical composition creates a cross-feeding effect, where speech informs the composition, adding context to the sound and images. In return, the composition, juxtaposed with the rhythm of visuals, editing and speech, allows for moments of counterpoint that make the relationship between them more dynamic and transforms the remixed interview into a form of spoken word performance.

In *Mezrab* (2016) I further explored the limits of this relationship by spreading the parts of Sahebdivani's remixed interview over the total duration of the mashup and building the composition around them, effectively taking into account while composing, the pace, intonation and volume of Sahand's speech, as well as the general atmosphere or message each part should convey, in order to increase the

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[84] between 0'32'' - 1'32'' of the *Nieuw West - The Movement* video, Amsterdam-raised singer Belou Dentex appears to state her views on the area of New West of Amsterdam and the cultural policies applied there, while the first musical part of the composition is building up.

effectiveness of the mashup's promotional use. In that sense, the clarinet solo from *Parne Gadje*'s event, placed at the first part of the composition (timecode 0'00'' - 0'52'') facilitates an introductory tone, where the question 'what is the Mezrab?' is indirectly asked by Sahand, explaining 'why it is so difficult for [him] to explain what the Mezrab is, is because [he] never set it with a particular plan'. The sound of the clarinet in the audio background, played with a Balkan technique and on a modal scale, functions as reference to the folk cultural background this Centre represents. Applying a reverb effect adds a hollow/mysterious tone to the sound which, coupled with the slow-motion exterior shots, approaching Mezrab's location, set a more 'enigmatic' scene for the audience which is more likely to keep them engaged as the question 'what is the Mezrab?' is being indirectly posed and answered.

Subsequently, Sahand delves into a more detailed explanation of what his Centre represents, by analogy with the traditional Iranian, extended family gatherings, where 'anyone and everyone can just join in' (Sarakatsanos 2016: 0'44'' - 1'42''). This, almost a minute-long segment, is accompanied by a high-tempo (127bpm), four-bar rhythmical riff that seemingly accelerates the pace of the composition making the information flow faster (which is an important factor in making a promotional video). Additionally, the build-up of the musical part, partly coincides with the narrative structure and the images in Sahand's analogy ('picking up a serving tray and playing a rhythm', 'then you have a party'), creating the illusion that the development of the composition is dependant on Sahand's narration.

In terms of technological tools, two more platforms were added in my workflow (Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects) that enabled me to do post-production work on a more detailed level. Premiere Pro provided a timeline which was easier to work with, as it handles different types of video file formats without the need of rendering or transcoding the footage beforehand, a major time constraint when working with Final Cut Pro. After Effects allowed for a greater creative control over colour correcting and grading the footage as well as in all text and graphic work (such as titles and credit rolls).

Overall, manipulation on both audio and video levels carry the aesthetic line formed in last two projects, one that allows space for longer music samples and enjoys coincidence, as described by Kutiel in his interviews in Chapter 3 but, also, one that deconstructs the prototype and uses the original clips as mere audio or visual information, used to construct new ideas and patterns that claim autonomy over the original material. To give an example of this I will use the last forty seconds of *Mezrab* mashup where together with bandoneon solo from *Parne Gadje* and guitar solo from *Lyradanz* (a folk band from Italy), I mixed the horn section of Valia Calda playing the theme of 'Kontoula Lemonia' a folk song from Epirus, north-western Greece. This song is widely recognizable in Greece, as it is part of a national repertoire, taught in state-funded folk dance and music institutions for the past century. I sampled the first thirteen notes or half the verse's melody and used it in loop for a part of the composition that served as Coda (timecode 4'45" - 5'25"). I then sent a rough mix of the composition to five colleagues, asking for their opinion on the mix, two of them born and raised in the area of Epirus where this song is

almost considered as regional anthem. What I found most interesting in their feedback is that none of the five recognised the song this sample originates from. To explain this in Navas' terms, when it comes to the manipulation of audiovisual material, this mashup uses techniques of 'reflexive remix' which 'allegorizes and extends the aesthetic of sampling, where the remixed version challenges the aura of the original and claims autonomy even when it carries the name of the original' (Navas 2006).

I discovered many advantages to this more grounded research practice which allows the material to dictate the critical agenda, and references many other musical traditions and practices. For example, producing *Influenza* (2012a) and *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a), I was introduced to musicians from various ethnic backgrounds and while interviewing them I came to learn much concerning their musical heritage, which widened my understanding of musical practice. Similarly, producing the video for the Mezrab Cultural Centre and filming a series of events, including world music concerts, storytelling events and political debates, plunged me into actual situations of social exchange, tension and conflict that drove my creativity to a new level.

5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the functions of music, drawing on sociological perspectives to analyse and understand them. I applied Attali's theory of music networks on contemporary internet culture with particular reference to technological development and changing economic models. I extended Attali's analysis of the introduction of the phonograph and the consequent formation of new music networks, and applied a similar model to the recent phenomenon of affordable video technology and online distribution platforms.

First, I focused on technological development, observing the minor shifts in music and its functions within the network of repetition, such as the portability of the 1990s and the digitisation of the 2000s and argued that the 'video turn' in music- making is a further step in this process. I then turned to the changes in economic models, using the public reception and commercial success of contemporary audiovisual mashup compositions to link the 'video-turn' in musical production with the new economic paradigm of crowdsourcing and content-creating reward systems made possible by Internet (Web) 2.0. Moreover, I extended Attali's conception of 'the blind spectacle' to encompass these new technologies and networks, and explored creative ways to move beyond the 'blindness' of the spectacle through 'effective' music experience that transcends the sacrificial, representation and repetition networks. While discussing this, I visited a number of related topics which are presented in detail below. Though I do not adequately cover these topics, whether because they are out of this study's scope or they belong to a completely different discipline, for example that

of Cognitive Neuroscience, I used them as further indications to why the visual aspect of music performance adds to its experience.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of the thesis and introduced the terminology needed to analyse the format of audiovisual mashup on a technical as well as on a theoretical level. I used acronyms such as 'UGC' (user-generated content) and neologisms such as 'sampling' and 'remix' to describe the methods and techniques used to manipulate digital audiovisual material. Use of terms such as 'viral', 'view-count', 'like' and 'share' is indicative of the ways that audiovisual material is distributed and used as a means of online mass communication. Though these terms are not widely used in academic texts on audiovisual analysis, they are established through everyday online use on a mass level and are slowly becoming evident in more recent texts, especially studies of online media and recent academic research on hybrid-media and audiovisual remix, such as the *Routledge Companion to Remix Studies*. I use this terminology not just because it is a necessary tool for my analysis, but because such use may contribute to establishing it in media studies enabling further critical engagement with, and exploration of modern media practices.

In Chapter 2, I presented Jacques Attali's theory of networks and linked it to Eduardo Navas' Remix Theory. I then went on to present a brief historiography of Remix identifying the aesthetic references of recent audiovisual remix works or mashups in the 'versions' of Jamaican musicians and Hip Hop tracks of New York DJs of the late 1960s and early 1970s. By examining the format of audiovisual mashup, within

Attali's context, I presented further evidence to show how technology and social structures affect the production, consumption and functions of music. I contextualised remix within the repetition network identified by Attali, and demonstrated why Remix - the re-appropriation of audiovisual material – may be classified as Composition. I went on to present an overview of technological developments within the last decade, and drew on scholarly research pertaining to these developments to provide evidence for the shift of music production and consumption towards a more visual state. Last, I turned briefly to perception and cognition studies and specifically to Grierson's study on 'Audiovisual Composition' to examine how the duplication of audio and visual stimuli contributes to a more 'effective' music experience and to suggest that the audience preference towards audiovisual music formats may be biologically predisposed, a suggestion which would, however, require further research to validate. I suggest that audiovisual mashup and the audience preferences towards such formats would greatly benefit from cross-disciplinary research connecting music, perception, cognition and social studies.

In Chapter 3, I presented the work of audiovisual artists Ophir Kutiel, Jack Conte and Mark Johnson, produced between 2008 – 2015, and compared this work to earlier attempts to produce music using similar formats in the 1990s. In so doing, I showed how the format of audiovisual mashup has become more popular since the development of Web 2.0, particularly since the launch of YouTube in 2005. I demonstrated the ways that remix has contributed to the mass communication functions that music serves within the new paradigm of hybrid media, and provided further evidence for what is described as the recent 'video turn' or the shift of music

to a more visual state. Moreover, by describing the distribution methods used by these artists, I explained how their work became commercially successful outside the established network of record labels and monetised distribution models: in short, how this new format was linked to the music market in new ways. I then performed a close textual analysis of samples from Kutiel's work *ThruYou* (2010), drawing on academic theories of authorship and of remix, and related this analysis to my own musical practice, showing how Kutiel's work has influenced my own creative production, particularly in relation to methods of composition and distribution.

In Chapter 4, I presented and analysed a portfolio of my own work exploring the various uses of remix in already existing audiovisual formats. Trailers for theatre pieces and concerts, promotional videos for organisations, television programme episodes and short films and documentaries have been some of the pre-existing types of videos which I used for my creative practice. I performed a close textual analysis of samples of my work, examining the ways in which I applied certain techniques to each piece and track and the contribution of each towards the 'effectiveness' of the musical experience. Following, step by step, the process of establishing a compositional method that involved collecting, sampling and remixing audiovisual material, I concluded that 'effectiveness' of the end-product lies in the level of creative control I allow myself in each stage of production. By making certain stylistic choices while collecting musical material and using the interview as my main method of 'extracting' such material from the participants, I pre-define each piece at a level of concept and aesthetics. Moreover, by delaying the composition of each piece to the stage of post-production, through the process of editing, I create distance

between the composition process and the collection process, helping me to treat the collected material as 'found'. This distance enables me to re-appropriate the material, free of its original context, and creatively build new structures within the context of the particular project, whether that is a promotional video, a television documentary or an online music performance.

Technical Aspects of my Creative Practice

While the sociological perspective occupies a large part of this study, I made very little reference to the technical part of my work, specifically to the hardware and software involved in producing the works discussed in previous chapters as well as the editing process, that of sampling and remixing. The current rate of development in video technologies and the existing shared knowledge of technological terminology and use of sampling tools make most specific references unnecessary and very soon relatively 'outdated'. As discussed in earlier chapters, the use of technology is important as it introduces the notion of treating sound and image as the same - as binary information - while it also suggests sampling practices that not only shape the work process but to an extent the aesthetics of the audiovisual product as well. However, the specifics of the hardware and software was used in filming and editing the pieces is irrelevant to both the process and aesthetics of the work.

I have been digitally editing sound and video for more than ten years, during which I have used various different operating systems (OS) as well as brands and versions of video and audio editing software, such as FruityLoops, Cubase, Premiere, Logic and Final Cut, to name just a few. Though they differ in terms of layout, user interface,

import/render/export systems and the types of files each software reads, the main functions and the underlying logic of all are similar. Each software programme arranges the composition, whether audio or video, in the form of a timeline that contains a number of vertically stacked tracks, each of which contains a number of horizontally sequenced audio and/or video clips. The horizontal axis represents time and the vertical indicates the number of clips playing simultaneously. Within the timeline, each audio or video clip can be cut/copied and pasted, re-arranged and digitally processed to acquire one or more effects. The above described characteristics are common in all sequencing and editing software I have used and certainly affect the outcome of my work as well as the actual process of production.

This is not to say that the use of this technology leads to a specific type of musical result, as I have produced different types of music, for instance, music for theatre and film, using the same recording hardware and editing software. The difference lies not in the use of the software, but in the creative stage at which this technology is introduced. In the case of scoring a film for example, the same technology can be used to record the instruments performing the music, to store and mix the recordings and to synchronise them with film. In this case, the aesthetics of the music product are not dependent upon the technology used to produce it. However, if this technology is involved in the composition process, editing the audiovisual material material then directly affects the contents, structure and aesthetics of a composition. Such compositions may be categorised as mashups, which, as described in previous chapters, has very specific origins and aesthetic references.

Future Directions

In summary, the process of undertaking these compositions, with their particular construction of performed audiovisual content, for me as a composer has been creatively simulating. The qualities and characteristics of the work, like the strong socio-political commentary highlighted in *Heartbeat of Nieuw West* (2014a) and in *International School for Storytelling and Peace* (2014b), as well as the particular aesthetics in selecting and composing the material, which I apply to the entirety of my works, have been recognised by audiences, and have led to my being commissioned by theatre and music organisations in Amsterdam, Paris and Athens to create further works in various audiovisual formats, such as music documentaries and music-video projections in live theatre performance. Specifically, over the Summer of 2016 I have been re-commissioned by the National Greek Television Network for another season of the television documentary series 'Secrets of Music' to which I have extensively referred in Chapter 4, where I was promoted to editor-in-chief of the programme's content and was asked to deliver another series of mashup videos that will be included in the episodes, airing Fall 2016.

After the city-branding documentary for the of Amsterdam Nieuw West area I have received proposals to do similar projects in neighbourhoods of other European cities facing inter-cultural and inter-religious issues. Due to my experience in making these pieces so far, I now know that a good production planning and budgeting are vital. As the effectiveness of these compositions partly relies on the quality of 'found' material at both audio and visual levels, to the extent that they make the result 'realistic' and effectively familiar, the material needs to be filmed and recorded under the best

possible conditions. Lack of time or funds can lead to decisions that jeopardise the quality of the material thus affecting the audience appreciation of the overall result. Aiming to create more effective audio-visual experiences, for these next projects I intend to secure adequate funding to elevate the standards of crew/equipment and to carefully and realistically schedule the production.

Final Assessment of my Creative Practice

Given the facts that for most projects I had limited resources and that my experience in film-making was more limited than my music-making skills, I am pleased with the overall results both on a production and on an artistic level. Some of my works have been hosted on various webpages where they have generated thousands of 'clicks', some have been used as trailers for international touring theatre shows, whilst others were broadcast in programmes produced by the National Greek Television Network. Exposure on these various platforms has not only showcased the variety of formats in which my audiovisual mashups can be effective, but also demonstrated that there can be a direct link between my creative practices and the music market, especially within the online, self-sufficient economic paradigm that is being shaped for creators after the digitisation of music and development of Web 2.0. Moreover, the nature of my work and the level of social exchange usually involved in my production processes stimulate my creativity, driving my work to achieve progressively elevated production and artistic results. Whilst it might seem that the last can only be measured by the re-commissions I receive for similar projects in other European cities, I suggest that the value of the work goes beyond that which can be measured in commercial terms, and that the relationships built in the production process, with performers, communities

and interactive online audiences, reconnect the aesthetic to the social, playing a role in moving music in the 21st century beyond the 'reproduction network'.

Critical responses on my latest projects have been limited, due to various reasons. For instance, the Amsterdam New-West project has not been officially published to date while, the Mezrab project is still under development. Both projects are planned to be published in September - October 2016. Until then, they are excluded from online promotion or participations in film festivals. However, online audience reception, feedback from participating musicians and colleagues at paper presentations has been enthusiastic. In 2010, after the release of the video mashup *Panigiri*, participating drummer Thomas Kostoulas, called to thank me for realizing his dream, which was to play with some of the other musicians performing in the video. What I find interesting in his kind gesture is that by watching the result of remixing the performances of himself and eleven other musicians, he perceived his contribution to the mashup as collaborative with the rest of the participants even though throughout the project they had never met and had no information on what others were playing. Moreover, I can recall several occasions over the course of my studies in which, after cross-departmental paper presentations and research forums such as the 'C4CC' (Centre for Creative Collaboration, London)[85], colleagues would come up to me after the end of a video and congratulate me in excitement, typically commenting on the overall dullness of the event and how my videos provide an 'uplifting' and 'refreshing' way to listen to music or, how they 'saved them from boredom'. To conclude, I believe

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[85] http://creative-collaboration.net A research forum, initiative of the University of London, working in collaboration with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Goldsmiths, University of London, and Royal Holloway, University of London. I gave two presentations in 2013, where I screened *Influenza* (2012a) and a selection of videos from *Secrets of Music* (2013).

that by producing the mashup videos included in this portfolio of compositions, I have offered the participating musicians an exciting opportunity to listen to, and to watch their music being remixed in unexpected ways and a fascinating experience to the audience, tailored to fit in and spread by popular online viewing platforms as well as consistent with the landscape of visually shifted media perception, reception and production. As for the fourth network described by Attali, in which music is 'lived as composition', it is my strong belief that anyone creating in any form of art, functions, in essence, as a filter of his/her time, gathering and crystallizing experiences and information and then offering these to the audience in suggestive forms. In order to achieve that and communicate their message, artists need to use a language that is comprehensible by the audience therefore, they are inclined to make use of the expressive means known to them and their audiences by knowledge and/or experience. For a composer raised within the MTV and remix culture of the 1980's and later experiencing the exponential growth of Web 2.0, working on multiple editing platforms and remixing material to create new compositions are familiar and comfortable practices. Last, I consider involving visual elements in my compositions as being in-line with contemporary music-making practices, as discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

As I believe I have demonstrated, the thesis has been more challenging in terms of critical context as this field is relatively recent, and its development was mainly manifest via informal social media and other online content; there are few scholarly or well-referenced works on my main sources as yet. Also, many of the principles of a mashup composition - using commissioned or 'found' music, allowing the visual

elements to influence the montage of sound - go against the traditional canons of individually-imagined written score. By bringing together here examples of innovators in the field, and the scholarly works on musical networks, on functions of live and recorded music performances and on the audiovisual convergence as exemplified through the hybrid-medium of audiovisual mashup, by Jacque Attali, Thomas Turino, Eduardo Navas and Fabian Holt on the topics of musical networks, functions of live and recorded music performance, and the audiovisual convergence as exemplified through the hybrid-medium of audiovisual mashup, I have tried to create a new context in which my work can be considered and critiqued, and in which other work in this type of composition may be considered, as this field grows and develops in the future.

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