"Punk Goes Pop": A post-semiotic theory of gestural transformation as signifier of style, meaning, and authenticity

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Abstract

The study of gesture offers a promising extension of semiotic theory. Naomi Cumming (2001), Robert Hatten (2004), and David Lidov (2005), and others have laid the foundations for a critical examination of gestures in music. Their work is, however, married to notated scores of the Western art music tradition: a fact that Giles Hooper (2013) regards as an ironic circling back towards music conceived through implicit analytical-structuralist assumptions.

In this thesis, I re-evaluate and develop current models of gesture into a theory of *gestural transformation*. I explore its practical applications as a tool for interpreting popular music by comparing two or more recorded performances of the same song to establish which alterations may transform perceptions of style, meaning, and authenticity. The small number of musicological studies that analyse recorded tracks are complicit in distorting the relative influence of particular musical features when defining musical meaning; these include analyses by David Brackett (2000) and Keir Keightley (2001). In confining discussion of the sonic artefact to readily definable aspects such as instrumentation, harmony and lyrics, these analyses oppose the common-sense view that musical meaning is contingent on the listener's perceptual-imaginative interpretation of *how* a musical unit is performed.

To explore an alternative analytical method, I focus on case studies drawn from the *Punk Goes…* series of compilation albums, in which contemporary punk-rock artists re-record popular songs. These albums contain cover-versions by bands such as A Day To Remember, Woe, Is Me, and We Came As Romans, and demonstrate numerous approaches to creating a cover-version. This allows for a comprehensive application of the gestural transformation theory. The analyses

within this thesis challenge assumptions that equate musical phrases with fixed nodes of musical meaning, suggesting instead that the interpreted manner of performance is more significant than syntactical concerns. In addition, the analyses investigate a new concept of play that exposes the problems with established musicological taxonomies and plays a significant part in the construction of stylistic, subcultural, and personal authenticities.

Acknowledgments

Regardless of the advice given from supervisors, colleagues, friends or family, nothing actually prepared me for the undertaking of a doctoral thesis. As the three years that seem like an age at the outset quickly turns into months and weeks, I pushed against a research project that took on a life on its own, refusing to be tied down to what I thought it would be. It is a process of discovery; only now do I feel equipped to tackle one.

I'm eternally grateful to my chief supervisor Nicholas Baragwanath for his time, cheerful encouragement and ability to instil confidence in me when it was most needed. In addition, I'm grateful to past and present members of academic staff at the University of Nottingham including Robert Adlington, Sarah Hibberd, Lonán Ó Briain, and Nanette Nielsen who have assisted in ways both big and small, academic or otherwise. Thank you to fellow post-graduates at the department of music, particularly James Cook, Alex Kolassa, Jono Herrick, Sarah Nussbaum, and Anne Macgregor whose friendship, humour and support continues to be greatly appreciated. Finally, gratitude to the AHRC for funding my research.

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DEFINITIONS

I offer a new set of definitions to be used throughout this thesis. Although some of these build upon existing ideas, they reframe the discourse from a cover/version dichotomy into a cover-version spectrum, positing a fundamental importance in listener-centric gestural interpretation and rejecting the dichotomy previously asserted in cover-version discourse.

- Musical material – Characteristics of a song or track that can be notated, as opposed to the aesthetic concerns of performance nuance: what is played, rather than how something is played. Musical material includes pitch, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, instrumentation, phrasing, etc.
- Song – An abstract form, seldom written down, which incorporates core musical material that is essential in identifying a musical performance as being of a particular song. The musical material usually includes lyrics, melody and harmonic sequences, but may also include any iconic riffs or instrumental phrases
- Track - Phonographic realisation of a song; a recorded artefact
- Original – A recorded track that acts as a reference point for the artist and the listener
- Repeating Phrase – A musical riff that recurs more than once in succession, but is interpreted as having been performed by an agent
- Looping Phrase – A musical riff that recurs more than once in succession, interpreted as having been created by digital means regardless of its actual genesis

- Covering – The act of recording a song that has been previously recorded by another artist
- Cover – A recorded track, performed by a different set of personnel to that assigned ownership of the original, that is interpreted as principally attempting to imitate the gestural character of the original recording
- Version – A recorded track, performed by a different set of personnel to that assigned ownership of the original, which is related to the original but in which a majority of the song is understood to have been performed with the new artist's own gamut of gestures; i.e., gesturally transformed
- Cover-Version Spectrum – The range of listener-based interpretations between the extreme poles of cover and version. Tracks can remain fixed to a point within the spectrum or move freely within the continuum
- Static Cover-Version - A recorded track, performed by a different set of personnel to that assigned ownership of the original that combines, in near equal measure throughout the entire track, gesturally transformed passages with gestures understood as deriving from the original recording
- Dynamic Cover-Version – A cover-version that utilises a gestural play, freely incorporating and moving between gestural imitation of the original and gestural transformation. These tracks are understood to freely move across the cover-version spectrum in correlation with the gestural-character

- Repetition – The act of performing a musical phrase repeatedly. Each phrase contains discrete performative nuances
- Looping – Related to 'repetition' but created through the process of digitally copying and pasting a recorded phrase. Identified by each phrase containing identical performative nuances

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"Punk Goes Pop": A post-semiotic theory of gestural transformation as signifier of style, meaning, and authenticity

1. GESTURES IN MUSICOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

In his 'critical account of the appropriation of semiotics in Anglo-American musicological scholarship', Giles Hooper (2013) concludes that an emphasis on 'post-semiotic' approaches, such as musical gesture analysis, provides a promising extension of semiotic methods.[1] The semiotic study of gestures has influenced a number of musicological discourses including, amongst others, authenticity (Peter Kivy (1995) and Allan Moore (2015)), value (Jerrold Levinson (2015)), musical topic (Robert Hatten (2004)) and performance analysis (Naomi Cumming (2001) and Mine Doğantan-Dack (2008 & 2012)). These twenty-first-century examples of gestural analysis differ from earlier semiotic approaches, which commonly relied upon formalist investigations of musical notation that resulted in musical phrases being equated to fixed nodes of musical meaning. This approach, apparent in both Kofi Agawu's analyses (1991 & 2008) and Nicholas Cook's description of semiotics in musical analysis (1994), is one-sided and self-limiting because it overlooks the potential for performers to alter the musical meaning. Only this Saussurean-based approach could render two performances of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 – for instance, Bernstein (Sony Classics, 1999) and Rostropovich (Teldec, 1994) – as

[1] Hooper, 'A Sign of the Times' (2013), p. 161

providing the same meaning. David Lidov's caveat that 'gestures cannot be read off structural units such as motives and figurations' should have been heeded.[2]

Twenty-first-century musicological applications of semiotics have placed an increased emphasis on performance. To varying degrees, Hatten, Cumming, and Levinson all tend to favour aesthetic concerns (how a piece is performed) over notated musical material (what is being performed). Hatten's semiotic analyses of piano repertoire (focussing on Schubert and Beethoven) are informed by his own interaction through performance. Yet Hatten is still limited to interpreting gestures and topics from scores. Cumming's examination highlights the need for including the formal features whilst describing a gesture, but notes that taking account of numerous performances is essential in determining musical meaning. Her review of semiotics cites a number of examples where gesture is central to scholarly and journalistic music appreciation.[3] In particular, Cumming sees evidence of a link between journalistic use of gesture and questioning the authenticity of a particular performance; a link that is developed and effectively applied to popular music by Moore.[4]

Other recent research goes some way towards supporting the hypothesis that musical meaning is *entirely* dependent on the performance of a piece, as opposed to any abstract examination of a score. Analysis of performance is especially pertinent for gestural analysis, because the association between the human body and music is readily apparent in performance. The research conducted by Doğantan-Dack and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2009) highlights the central role of the performer in determining musical meaning. They conclude that the interpretations we encounter whilst listening to a piece often bear little

[2] Lidov, 'Mind and Body In Music' (1987), p. 70
[3] Cumming, *The Sonic Self* (2001), pp. 24-28
[4] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), pp. 259-271

relation to an interpretation of the score. Moore (1992) previously insinuated as much through an analysis of harmonic patterns found within popular music. He states that defining musical style and meaning goes beyond harmonic patterns, and that they are 'chiefly played out in other domains'.[5] Although Moore cites rhythm, texture, and production techniques as important factors, I will put forward the claim that perceptual-imaginative interpretation of performative gestures is necessary to understand musical meaning, stylistic references and authenticity of recorded music.

The sheer multivalence of musical gestures (including those that can be notated, and understood through the many modes of communication, such as physical performance) supports the theory that these signs cannot be interpreted independently of their realisation in performance – real, or imagined. It is my hypothesis that tokens of established musical styles are neither stable nor fixed. A few cannot even be said to have a primary meaning. Here, meaning within individual pieces that make up a given genre is contingent on transformation through performative gesture. I aim to show, through examination of the cover-version genre of popular music, that semiotic meaning is dependent on the perceptual-imaginative interpretation of a performance. In addition, I will use this post-semiotic method to critique musicological taxonomy and loosen the more or less fixed meanings attributed to musical topics. This, in turn, may assist in explaining the proliferation of styles and sub-genres in popular music as a whole. Analysis of the musical material highlights similarities between these stylistic references, yet it is the nuanced differences in perceptual-imaginative response that helps to reveal the different styles through their respective association with differing performative characters.

[5] Moore, 'Patterns Of Harmony' (1992), p. 81

1.2 GESTURES IN POPULAR MUSIC

Although I support the view of Doğantan-Dack, Leech-Wilkinson and others studying performance who state that the way music is performed is more significant to musical meaning than the results of any score analysis, there remain a number of issues that need to be addressed in previous appropriations of semiotics within musicology. The term "gesture" is used in many contexts throughout musical discourse, but its differing meanings reveal the many ways gesture is defined and the subsequent problems with identifying and analysing gestures. Whether a gesture is perceived as a specific detail in a track or as a stylistic feature of a musical style or genre, I consider it to be essential to many facets of music making, including composition and performance, but especially in regard to interpretation. Much recent scholarship follows Lidov (1987) in conceiving gestures as physical movements that are interpreted as meaningful. Hatten concurs, considering gestures to be unavoidably tied to physical reproduction in the body and, as a result, to have an implied (or explicit) agency. These definitions are not dissimilar to that found in the Oxford English Dictionary (2012), which defines a gesture in two relevant ways:

- A movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning
- An action performed to convey a feeling or intention

Using these definitions of gesture as a basis to describe interpretations of gesture is perfectly sound for particular musicological discourses, but their application becomes problematic in much of the scholarship noted above (Moore

being the exception). Critical consideration of Hatten, Cumming et al. reveals that their gestural analyses are limited to works of Western art music, especially those of the classical-romantic tradition. I regard the application of gestural analyses to this style of music difficult at best; an opinion anticipated by Giles Hooper, who states that

> …it would remain ironic if a method intended to escape, or move beyond, implicit analytical-structuralist assumptions, as predicated on the ideal abstraction of the notated score, were effectively to circle back and confine its application precisely to that music traditionally and most obviously associated with the same.[6]

To apply gestural analysis to a style of music inextricably bound up with notated scores where no "body" is present seems contradictory. Modern classical performance practice limits performative gestures, at times as if confined to as little as "right" and "wrong". Owing to the prevailing contemporary 'Werktreue' ideology, as outlined in Lydia Goehr (1992), there is now little scope to deviate from a classical score, in a way that would result in genuinely contrasting performances of a piece. This has not always been the case. Performers commonly transformed scores in the past. For example, the castrato Farinelli famously performed the same aria in five completely different ways, each with a different gestural character.[7] Pianist Rachmaninov was adding improvised transitions to works by Chopin as late as the 1930s.

Because contemporary classical performances are limited by scores and because we are not able to listen to performance practices from centuries ago,

[6] Hooper, 'A Sign Of The Times' (2013), p. 174
[7] Grosley, *Neue Nachrichten oder Anmerkungen über Italien und über die Italiener in drei Theilen von zween schwedischen [sic.] Edelleuten*, (1769), p. 667

evidence suggests that certain styles of popular music, especially those of an African-American origin, offer a more suitable vehicle for developing theories of gesture. Where the body is essential to the interpretation and performance of Western art music, the body is also integral to the composition of blues, rock, funk and soul style tracks as these tracks are commonly composed at the key- or fretboard.[8] Although electronic dance music (EDM) is a notable exception, Moore (2013) and Timothy Koozin (2011) conclude that composers of popular music songs mostly favour what feels good to play as opposed to the common approach of most Western art music composers who favour notated cognitive processes.[9]

1.3 GESTURES IN RECORDINGS

Popular music rejects the primary and authoritative significance placed on notation in Western art music. Where the primary text (or 'minimum of commonality') in Western art music is the notated score, the primary text in popular music is commonly understood to be a particular audio recording.[10] Although a number of popular music pedagogical methods rely on notation to teach the fundamentals, the majority of amateur performers learn tracks via rudimentary charts (such as chord sequences written in letter form) or more commonly by listening and copying. When discussion turns to a famous classical work (such as a Beethoven symphony), there is no single recording that each participant will be discussing: an observation examined by Lydia Goehr (1992)

[8] A feature that forms the basis of Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002)

[9] As an aside, Eugene Montage (2014) claims that study of 'instrumental gesture' in Chopin's *Études* reveals that a number are composed around what works gesturally 'under the hands'. The assertion that the physical act of playing Chopin's op.25/1 proves more pleasurable than the act of listening could certainly ring true to performers of Western avant-garde music.

[10] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 3

with regard to the Werktreue ideology.[11] This is not the case with popular music, in which songs are often indelibly tied to a specific recording by a particular performer. As Moore repeatedly asserts, an audio recording is commonly the primary medium of interaction and the minimum of commonality, whether the track is heard on the radio, downloaded or even received as part of a promotional video.[12] It is for these reasons that the case studies within this thesis involve audio recordings.

Yet the question arises as to whether an audio recording provides the information that can be construed as gestural by the definitions listed above. Some scholars labour under the belief that a gestural analysis requires a live performance, citing that 'there is no visual element' in an audio recording and that the prevalence of studio-based multi-track recording contradicts any strict notion of a performance.[13] Stanley Godlovitch (1998), questioning whether music is still predominantly a performing art, has argued against the idea that recordings equate to performances.[14] Theodore Gracyk (1997 & 1999) goes further, defining a 'live performance' as:

> A public situation in which an audience attends to the actions of one or more performers, during which specified sounds are intentionally generated for the express purpose of being attended to as music by the audience.[15]

This quote begins Gracyk's discussion, in which he questions whether listening to a recording with no visual dimension restricts the listener's access to

[11] Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1992), pp. 243-286
[12] Moore, *Song Means* (2013)
[13] ibid., p. 259
[14] Goldovitch, *Musical Performance* (1998)
[15] Gracyk, 'Listening to Music' (1997), p. 139

the work and, in depriving the listener visual access to the *actual* physical gestures utilised to perform the piece, hinders their ability to listen 'authentically'. Misinterpreting Levinson (1990), Gracyk states that recordings 'will not provide the audience with sufficient understanding of how the sounds "are bound up" with specific gestures'.[16] I disagree with these views on methodological and psychological grounds. Firstly, I follow Moore in considering a live performance to be an 'evanescent thing, where subsequent attention to detail is almost impossible'.[17] Even if an analyst were to perceive and understand every nuance of a live performance, it is merely a first impression of that particular performance that cannot be absolutely duplicated, even by the same performer.[18] Repeated engagement with the same artefact is needed for an interpretation to be refined. This issue can be avoided by recording a performance, which allows for repeated listening and/or viewing when critically analysing a performance or performances. Although services such as YouTube have substantially increased an audience's access to audio-visual recordings of live performances, these are not a listener's primary medium of interaction. Promotional videos released by a record company dominate the viewing charts, and fan-made lyric videos flourish.[19]

An audio recording captures both those musical attributes that can be notated and the aesthetic nuances of performance, such as minute timbral subtleties and dynamic finesse. From the vast range of gestural possibilities available to a performer in executing a piece of music, a recording of a performance reifies one possible stream of gestures from the substantial range of

[16] ibid., p. 142
[17] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 14
[18] Following Cumming, Tiger Roholt (2014) refers to the nuances of performance (what musicians would consider as non-notatable subtleties in rhythm, dynamics and texture), as the central reason for this non-repeatability
[19] The latter due to the size of the file; younger fans with data restrictions will pick videos of lower resolution so that they can view more of them

gestural potential afforded to the performer. The act of ontological thickening through recording narrows the interpretational potential for a listener, as they are no longer interpreting an evanescent performance drawn from the near-infinites of nuanced performance, but interpreting one particular performance that can be repeatedly analysed, compared and discussed.

Gracyk also builds his case upon a misreading of Paul Thom (1993): recordings need not be distinct from live performances as recordings represent a 'performance as pure sound'.[20] Witness the number of concert attendees that close their eyes so as to remove any visual distractions from the music itself. To make an audio recording of someone playing a musical instrument, a type of performance must take place, regardless of whether it is 'live performance for an audience' or 'in the sense of the mere playing of music'.[21] In the latter quote, Gracyk likens studio recording to performing 'as when one practices the piano or plays only for oneself.'[22] I would challenge this assertion, as would most performers who have recorded in a studio-based environment. Whether undertaking multi-tracking studio-based processes or adhering to a live performance as closely as possible, the musician understands that there is an audience, although displaced physically and chronologically. And that is only if we choose to ignore the studio technicians, engineers and producers present in the studio at the time of recording. These agents are integral to the recording process; analysing, commenting and pushing the musicians to perform to the best of their abilities.

Clearly there is no direct visual element in listening to an audio recording, yet this is difficult to reconcile not only with the research of Cumming, Kivy and Roholt (2014), but also with my own experiences of listening to music. When I

[20] Thom, *For an Audience* (1993), p. 172
[21] Gracyk, 'Listening To Music' (1997), p. 140
[22] ibid.

hear a typical rock-style track for instance, I envisage a set of musicians performing before me. This fundamental interpretation is a 'perceptual-imaginative response':[23] a reaction to music that I would argue is vital to any gestural interpretation. Cumming's analyses are predicated on this perception, as she acknowledges:

> The possibility of movement in musical space is presumed in even the most basic descriptions of music, and need not be subject to sceptical questioning. Other descriptive habits, commonly thought of as "metaphorical," are similarly basic to musical experience. A musician's act of forming a "gesture," in the shaping of a melodic moment (or a listener's act of hearing that gesture in sound) need not, for example, be taken as evidence of delusional thinking, but of a developed practice in which it is understood that the *expressive shaping of human movement can be heard in sound, even without the reinforcement of visual clues.*[24]

Cumming sees no need to be 'sceptical', yet offers little underpinning to this practice. I consider that the concepts of embodied cognition and mimesis (also known as kinaesthetic empathy) go some way to explain how and why a listener has a proclivity to interpret the 'expressive shaping of human movement' (i.e., performative gestures) when a performance is divorced from its visual aspect.[25] This interpretation is not restricted to the mere impression of a musician performing, as cited previously. I consider that the interpretation of gestures must

[23] I follow Levinson, *Musical Concerns*, (2015) p. 73 in his definition of perceptual-imaginative response

[24] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, (2001) p. 15 – my emphasis

[25] For a detailed overview of embodied cognition, see Johnson, *The Body In The Mind,* (1990) and Lakoff & Johnson, *Philosophy In The Flesh,* (1999). For a detailed overview of the mimetic hypothesis, see Mead 'Bodily Hearing', (1999) and Cox, 'Embodying Music', (2011)

involve the envisaged performative manner of a musician. The sonic nuances present in an audio recording create the gestural image of a particular way in which an instrument has been played. Thus, the recording becomes the mediator of gestural meaning. If a listener can hear the nuanced differences in, amongst other characteristics, timbre, dynamics, and rhythm, then they are able to imagine a reified stream of physical gestures that continually inform their interpretation. As will be discussed in further details in chapters two and three, this has profound implications for stylistic classification and interpretations of authenticity.

A musician will not normally play a passage with no sense of gestural character; whether angry or casual, unsure or confident, perhaps monotonously, the theories of embodiment (Lakoff and Johnson (1981 and 1999)) and mimesis (Cox (2011)) support the ability and proclivity for a listener to interpret the gestural character. Paradoxically, overly rehearsed movements can be interpreted as "forced", ironic, or sarcastic. Cumming discusses whether these gestures are "lying" to a listener, and concludes in the negative.[26] However, the case studies that follow provide us with examples that could imply otherwise. Our most immediate interaction with music is the voice. Not only do our daily interactions with the voice promote easy interpretation of gestural meanings of recorded vocals on a musical track, but our voices give us an embodied basis for understanding music via a general understanding of the exertions needed to create sounds on other instruments.[27]

Kathleen Higgins (1991) questions whether experiencing music predominantly through recordings in our technological age alters the presumed performative nature of music.[28] Although recordings may relegate the role of the

[26] Cumming, *The Sonic Self* (2001), pp. 153-155
[27] Mead, 'Bodily Hearing' (1999)
[28] Higgins, *Music of our Lives* (1991), p. 150

performing body, this does not stop our dependence on the body to understand music or the proclivity to understand recordings as gestural; especially in rock music. Supported by the theories of embodied cognition and mimesis, it is my contention that studio-based recordings of rock music are still understood as performances and as such, as reified streams of physical gestures. This projection of a live performance has profound effects on popularity and constructions of authenticity. Witness the near-standardised placement of instruments within the audio soundbox that contributes to the perception that a recording could have been performed live, in one take with all the protagonists present in the same physical space: this feature is discussed further in part three.

The small number of musicological analyses that focus on recorded tracks are complicit in distorting the relative influence of particular musical features in defining musical meaning. These analyses are often restricted to positivist analysis of easily definable aspects such as instrumentation, harmony (including chord sequences and voice leading), form, and lyrics. These musical qualities are readily reduced to notated form and can easily be compared across recordings. In confining discussion of the sonic artefact to what is played (the musical material), these analyses oppose my theory that musical meaning is contingent on the listener's interpretation of *how* a musical phrase is performed; interpretations of which place significance in sonic nuances rather than their notated reductions. For instance, Keir Keightly's analysis of rock music styles (2001) centres on *what* is played rather than the perceptual-interpretive response of *how* the musical material is performed.[29] Even though Keightly highlights a distinction between the shuffle rhythm of rock 'n roll and the straight rhythm of post-The Beatles rock, her analysis inaccurately considers this aspect as gestural rather than rhythmic. (In

[29] Keightly, 'Reconsidering Rock' (2001)

any case, the distinction is largely inaccurate, as demonstrated by tracks such as Danny And The Junior's *At The Hop* and Little Richard's *Long Tall Sally*. They display a nuanced spectrum and uneasy layering of straight and shuffle rhythms. Similarly, David Brackett's (2000) analysis of *Pump It Up* by Elvis Costello includes analysis of notatable musical material, but a brief section on 'Rhythm and gesture' concentrates on accents and hypermetric boundaries, reducing this discussion of gesture to a single instance of the word 'groove' with no explanation beyond.[30]

1.4 THE "LIE OF LIVE"

A distinction needs to be made between the types of recordings discussed in the following chapters. The case studies are not recordings of live solo performances like those discussed by Cumming.[31] The examples in this thesis are audio artefacts that are consciously edited using studio-based processes such as multi-tracking and post-production effects. Knowledge of recording studio processes, through which the finalised audio output may have little-to-no chronological correlation to how it was recorded, could, in theory, disrupt a listener's processive perspective and spoil the gestural interpretation. Yet it does not. Listening to recorded music with presumed performative origins (i.e. any music using acoustic instruments that requires human interaction and conscious physical movement to perform, as is common in rock music) invokes an embodied response. Studio-based recording may be associated with a recording process in which all the individual tracks were recorded separately, yet their final form commonly projects a live performance in a

[30] David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (2000), pp. 157-198

[31] In the sense that her case study recording utilises little post-production processing to capture, using two or more microphones (using such microphone techniques as a X-Y coincident pair or a 'Decca Tree'), the stereo audio image as would be heard by an audience member at the time of the performance.

concert setting. I label this the "lie of live". Although a gestural interpretation may marry up with what physical actions occurred during the recording, this is of little importance. Of greater significance to a gestural interpretation is how the music is imagined at the point the listener encounters the recorded audio.

Production methods often aim to conceal any splicing, encouraging a listener to imagine the recorded audio as though it is a concert-style live performance setting. The Metallica track *Enter Sandman* (1991) is an early example of recording studio techniques such as 'punch-in' overdubs and splicing, whereby an individual instrumental track is composed from many different takes. The drum track was created by splicing together some fifty separate takes, allowing drummer Lars Ulrich and the record producers to build the drum track selectively from individual audio components, repeatedly editing together the best take of a particular drum fill or switching sections around so as to sit better with the other instruments.[32] Although a listener may be aware that there are editorial breaks in the track, there is no place where it is possible to tell that the drum track, or any other instrument, has been spliced together. Thus, there is no audible disturbance and the imagined gestural stream flows uninterrupted. It creates the illusion that the studio track was recorded in a single performance, flowing from the start to the fade out.

In most cases, the seamless editing together of different takes is the ideal. The gestural flow can be disrupted if a spliced section of instrumental or vocal audio does not flow into and out-of the audio that surrounds it. One example is the abrupt nature in which the vocal line moves into the second chorus in *Roxanne* (1978) by The Police.[33] This chorus should start before the reverberation of the '…right' has fully decayed, but the lingering reverb tail of the vocal suddenly cuts,

[32] Staub, *Classic Albums: Metallica – Metallica* (2001): non-scholarly resource #27 (p. 367)
[33] McKinney, '10 Recording Bloopers That Made The Album': non-scholarly resource #18 (p. 367)

highlighting the studio-based processes that have been used to splice together two separate takes of the track. This interpreted gestural glitch is marked against the rest of track that has been edited together so as to be conceived as a live band performing the track. Similarly, the producer of Eric Clapton's *Blues Power* (1970) attempts to splice together two recordings of the song at 1:30. In attempting to keep the drum performance consistent, the final syllable of the word 'power' repeats in a fashion that cannot be produced through human endeavour. These production errors and glitches serve to highlight the issues that can cause gestural disruption in a recording. The markedness of the above examples within their sonic context permits the listener to interpret them as production mistakes. However, EDM-based pop music has increasingly incorporated audio 'glitches'; these audible hiccups are not understood as mistakes, but as intentional rhythmic and melodic special effects, akin to an extreme utilisation of auto-tune. Commonly present in synthesized tracks, their presence in tracks that otherwise project a live performance can be disconcerting and create interesting gestural effects. These will be discussed in greater detail in the case studies.

1.5 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Given the human proclivity to interpret sound as embodied and the special characteristics of popular music, it is now possible to set out a theory of *gestural transformation*. Gestural transformation can be concisely defined thus: it is the listener-centric, perceptual-imaginative comparison of interpreted performative gestures generated from the listening to recordings of music.

I consider a gesture to be a form of perceptual-imaginative response to music whereby sound is interpreted as the conscious actions of a performer in

attendance to an instrument (including the voice). The communicated meaning is not dependent on any actual intentions of the performer, but rather the listener-centric interpretation of a recording: performers execute a gesture whilst listeners interpret them and define them. The response does not always correlate with the performer's intention, but it often does. It is the dynamic synthesis of sonic characteristics interpreted from an audio recording including, but not restricted to, instrumental timbre, pitch, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics, balance, panning, and reverb. It is not however, reducible to these characteristics. This definition informs all the analyses present within this thesis.

Where investigations such as those by Cumming (2001) aim merely to identify the "hearing the human" (citing the scraping of the guitar strings or an intake of breath as evidence), evidence suggests a further step is crucial. I consider the listener-centric description of how a performer appears to be attending to their instrument as central to a gesture: although both are indispensable, the aesthetics of *how* a phrase is performed is far more important than the semantics of *what* is played. For instance, is the performer pounding their instrument into submission or delicately stroking it? Are they driving the ensemble forwards or following the lead of other instruments? Is their phrasing uniform or full of rhythmic, dynamic and textural nuances? Are they a peripheral or central figure?

Whether or not a listener imagines the "correct" gestures (i.e. those physical actions that were performed whilst the recording was taking place) is of little importance. Within the studio environment, the "dry" recorded performance is subject to many processes (including equalisation, compression and reverb often as a minimum), which can drastically alter the gestural image. The addition of compression to a drum track can make the drummer sound as though they are playing uniformly; distortion on a vocal track can make the vocalist sound as

though they are powerfully projecting their lyrics. As witnessed in the brief discussion of *Enter Sandman*, paramount is the perceptual-imaginative response garnered from the track as presented to the listener.

This form of gestural investigation requires comprehensive analysis of the recorded audio. The case studies that follow demonstrate how the nuanced variations of the sonic characteristics are key to a gestural interpretation. At a fundamental level, it is commonly thought that phrases with absolutely no nuance give the impression of having been synthesized or sequenced by digital means, whereas the presence of sonic nuances is often regarded as evidence of human attendance to an instrument. The presence of nuances is not important for EDM, but these nuances are essential in rock music. Questions of authenticity emerge if the music becomes disembodied. Although the ear can detect nuances, I use the Sound Visualizer programme to identify and compare their properties and diagrammatically illustrate their presence throughout this thesis.

However, describing a gesture in words can be problematic. A reliance on non-notatable characteristics and the need for slippery adverbial language means that the subtleties of a gestural interpretation can prove ineffable. To overcome this issue, I broadly apply an ecological approach as set out by Eric Clarke (2005) and James J. Gibson (2014). Although it is not my aim to produce ecological analyses, my case studies compare recorded tracks to make effable the nuances and differences that can be difficult or impossible to describe. For instance, we may describe the colour of a shirt as black, but that description may change to very dark grey when it is placed next to a tie that is darker than the shirt. Placing an item in direct contrast with another allows for a better evaluation to be conducted.

It is through this act of comparison that my theory of *gestural transformation* comes to the fore. For instance, two recorded performances of the

same song performed by the same set of musicians will undoubtedly contain nuanced differences of timbre, pacing, rhythm, etc. that will result in changes of interpreted gesture; the second performance has generated a gestural transformation which can be interpreted by the listener. In notated form, musical phrases may be understood to have a fixed meaning but, in reality, the meaning will be altered when the musical material is performed in a different manner.

For example, a singer-songwriter records a tranquil vocal-and-piano ballad. An artist decides to re-record this song, but hammering the outline of the harmonic sequence on an acoustic guitar and screaming the lyrics. Although the change of instrumentation is important, the timbral and textural character of the guitar offers vital clues towards a drastically altered gestural transformation and different musical meaning. Investigating further, we hear that the piano ballad uses functional harmony and is saturated in reverb; the cover-version performs the chord sequence with power chords and there is little reverb present. These changes imply a different type of performer (trained vs. self-taught) and where the reverb-laden original implies a sense of isolation and loneliness, the relative lack of reverb in the cover-version generates a sense of intimacy, as if the guitarist is providing a personal performance for the listener. Although these interpretations could be gleaned from individual analyses, their comparison renders their differences within the recording and of musical meaning more readily discernible.

Gestural transformations can occur within numerous continuums, including those from overt to subtle, or intended to involuntary, and due to direct changes or contextual via transformations occurring in other instruments affecting the gestural interpretation of non-changing parts. A subtle gestural transformation may not affect the musical meaning, but several transformations occurring at once are likely to do so. The concept of gestural transformation rejects the notion that

musical phrases can be equated to fixed or even primary nodes of musical meaning.

The theory is not without prior examples. Robert Walser (1993) discusses the interpretation of two recordings of a hypothetical song by two different artists:

> Imagine this text being done by AC/DC, with raucous screaming and pounding: "I hear footsteps and there's no one there; I smell blossoms and the trees are bare." Now compare Frank Sinatra crooning it, backed by strings. The musical cues create very difference effects: one is the frantic agony of paranoia; the other is the delicious disorientation of bourgeois love.[34]

Although he concludes with two interpretations of the text, he skips over the reasons why these have occurred. I believe the gestural transformation executed by the performers and interpreted by the listener is central in altering the musical meaning.

With the advent of album re-releases and re-masters, the inclusion of "alternative takes" provides one resource. However, I argue that the concept of gestural transformation is revealed more readily in recorded cover-versions. There are two extreme renderings of cover-versions: some artists attempt to duplicate meticulously the recording of another (resulting in subtle and relatively involuntary gestural transformations), whereas others filter the musical material of the original through their own gestures and personal stock of tried-and-tested motifs and riffs, completely replacing musical phrases and radically altering the gestural character of the original.

[34] Walser, *Running With The Devil* (1993), p. 41

Both of these approaches and many variations between can be observed in the *Punk Goes…* series of compilation albums (2000-2014). Released by Fearless Records, the series comprises contemporary punk-rock artists re-recording tracks through various styles and through various approaches. The first release, *Punk Goes Metal* (2000), was followed in subsequent years by fifteen other compilations, including two *Punk Goes 90s* collections and six *Punk Goes Pop* albums. The tracks predominantly feature American punk-rock artists, such as A Day To Remember, Woe, Is Me, Pierce The Veil and We Came As Romans although electronic artists associated with the contemporary punk-rock subculture such as Breathe Carolina and The Ready Set also feature.

Each cover-version allows for comparison of the reified stream of physical gestures captured in audio form. A listener, perceiving this sonic form, will imagine musicians performing the track thanks to highly developed human practices and the propensity to assign agency to sound. Although there may be little correlation between the physical gestures utilised and a listener's imagined gestures within each track, this is not of importance here: paramount is the perceived gestural transformation that occurs when the song is performed and recorded by different performers. These differences, whether subtle or obvious, alter the musical meaning and will inform, amongst other characteristics, a listener's stylistic classification of the track, as guided by cultural conditioning.

Gestural transformation can inform many musicological discourses. In chapter two, I examine the relationship between gestural transformation and the terminology used in discussion of the cover-version genre. The analyses highlight issues with the established terms "cover" and "version". I propose that bringing questions of gesture to the fore will clarify their meanings and reduce

misapplication of the terms. Furthermore, gestural analysis of many *Punk Goes…* tracks reveals a gestural play not described previously in musicological discourse.

In chapters three through six, I explore the various ways in which gestural transformation can explain the construction and projection of authenticity within the *Punk Goes…* series. I demonstrate how contemporary punk-rock artists use highly evolved gestural practices to construct a subcultural and stylistic authenticity. In addition, I develop the notion of personal authenticity commonly applied to vocalists to explain how instrumentalists can also construct authenticity.

2. THE COVER-VERSION SPECTRUM

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

The discourse surrounding cover-versions commonly contains the indiscriminate misapplication of terminology that serves not only to confuse the interpretation and description of recorded examples of the genre, but also to diminish the nuanced approaches that are present within the *Punk Goes...* catalogue (2000 – 2014) and the genre as a whole. Both scholarly examination and non-scholarly discussion of cover-version recordings, usually based upon extra-musical matters or superficial methods of formalist analysis, commonly use two specific identifiers to classify the music. Tracks are usually labelled as either a "cover" or a "version". Significantly, these categories frequently bear little relation to what occurs within their corresponding recordings even though they generate the impression of distinct listener interpretations.

Recent developments within the cover-version genre, such as those witnessed in the *Punk Goes...* series, have resulted in the need to review how we analyse and subsequently label cover-version recordings. In the following chapters, I will demonstrate how gestural transformation assists an understanding of what I term the "cover-version spectrum". Following an initial review of current cover-version discourse, I will develop my proposed model that reframes the categorisation of cover-version tracks with questions of gestural interpretation brought to the fore, specifically linking the descriptive labelling of tracks (or sections of a track) to the number of perceived gestural transformations within said track.

There are two key outcomes from my cover-version spectrum concept. Firstly, where the labelling of tracks as either a cover or a version implied a

polarising dichotomy of interpretations, I view covers and versions as opposing ends of a spectrum with a high proportion of tracks understood as lying between the extremes. Secondly, analysis of *Punk Goes…* cover-version recordings reveals how artists play with this spectrum, freely moving between the extremities of cover and version; an aspect previously overlooked in both musicological scholarship and non-academic writing alike, and denied by the simplistic classifications previously used. I will investigate the relationship between gestural transformation and cover-version classification, focussing on recent developments witnessed in the *Punk Goes…* series where tracks do not fully correspond to the limiting identifiers of cover or version.

2.2 ESTABLISHED COVER/VERSION DICHOTOMY

Paulo Prato (2007) uses only the terms "cover" and "version" to label individual tracks throughout his study of 1960s Italian-language re-recordings of English-language tracks. Similarly, Sheldon Schiffer (2010) uses the labels in his discussion of 'The Cover Song As Historiography' and Christine R. Yano (2010) identifies the case studies within her examination of the Japanese popular music genre *enka* as either a cover or a version. Away from musicological scholarship, journalist Jeff Giles, writing for *Ultimate Classic Rock* webzine in 2016, uses both cover and version in his piece on Disturbed's adaptation of *The Sound of Silence*, originally recorded by Simon And Garfunkel. Finally, the two terms are applied in equal measure throughout a track-by-track review of *Punk Goes Pop Vol. 6* on the *Bring The Noise* webzine (2014).

Although these four examples typify the prevalence of the two terms in discussion relating to re-recordings of previously recorded songs, their application

is highly problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the two terms are seldom defined and, if they are, the descriptions are often vague and confuse describing the act of re-recording with the recorded product. This results in numerous overlapping and contradictory definitions that complicate the debate. For example, Prato's "attempt" (in his own words) to define a cover follows the definition by Pareles and Romanowski (1983):

> The term cover refers to the second version, and all subsequent versions, of a song, performed by either another act than the one that originally recorded it or by anyone except its writer.[1]

Beyond Prato establishing his discussion of recorded tracks on this performance-related definition, the description consolidates all covers into one category regardless of the recorded outcome, listener interpretation, or any intention by the re-recording artist. Scholars have subsequently attempted to be more specific in their definitions. These include Don Cusic (2010) who defines a cover as 'a recording exactly like the original, or first, recording except sung by a different singer and played by different musicians.'[2] Cusic is more specific in stipulating how the re-recording must sound, yet his definition does not account for the vast majority of cover examples that do not sound like the original. Furthermore, Cusic does not explain how a listener can interpret a different set of performers if the track sounds 'exactly like the original'; a factor that is of critical concern with regards to the interpretation of studio-based recording of instrumentalists, whose nuanced differences are more difficult to distinguish than the overtly embodied interpretation garnered from vocalists.

[1] Pareles-Romanowski's definition from Prato, 'Selling Italy By The Sound' (2007), p. 444
[2] Cusic, 'In Defense Of Cover Songs' (2010), p. 226

The definition presented in Grove (2001) follows these descriptions, yet expands the range of recorded outcomes to include 'a straightforward copy of the original song, or a more radical reinterpretation of it'.[3] Although there are examples of the genre that can be described in these ways, a greater number of examples fall between these two categories of 'copy' and 'radical reworking'. This issue is crucial to understanding the *Punk Goes...* compilation series. Furthermore, no clarification is given as to what characteristics are significant when classifying a re-recording as a copy or a reworking, and their definition of a "cover version" ('it can be a re-creation of the original or a radical reworking') implies that the terms "cover" and "cover version" are interchangeable.[4] Related to this issue, Christian Bielefeldt and Marc Pendzich (2011) associate the ontologically thick term 'cover recordings' with numerous emotional characters.[5] In their examination of how the genre developed throughout the twentieth century, Bielefeldt and Pendzich state that cover recordings can be 'a mere copy, a reverence, a translation, an ironic commentary'.[6] I suggest that the only thing that would connect covers that are described with these four distinct labels would be the act of re-recording, rather than any similarities manifest in the recorded artefacts.

The term "version" is frequently cited in non-scholarly discussion, yet definitions are scarce and some scholars avoid using the term entirely so as to avoid being drawn into a debate concerning semantics. Deena Weinstein (1998 & 2000) offers prime examples, preferring to describe her case studies across numerous articles as 'covers that are indistinguishable' and 'covers that are drastically different'. John Covach (2006) gives the only explicit definition of

[3] Witmer & Marks, A, 'Cover [Cover Version, cover record]', *Grove Music Online* (Accessed 5th Oct 2016)
[4] Gloag, 'Cover Version', *Grove Music Online* (Accessed 5th Oct 2016)
[5] 'Ontologically thick' taken from Gracyk, 'Listening To Music' (1997)
[6] Bielefeldt & Pendzich, 'Spot Checks of Pop History' (2011), p. 97

version in relation to re-recordings. Where Covach describes a cover as being 'almost note-for-note replications of the originals', he identifies a version as being 'by artists who might be interested in advancing their own approach to the music'.[7] Although Covach's definitions go furthest in assisting discussion of the genre, their pairing generates interpretational uncertainty due to the former focussing on transcribable elements (note-for-note replication) and the latter placing significance on performer ideology or intention (the advancement of their own approach).

Many examples of the genre not only fall between these poles but can also be classified under both definitions: these examples are readily encountered in the *Punk Goes…* series. A majority of *Hot N Cold* by Woe, Is Me (2010) rejects the inoffensive chart-pop style of the original Katy Perry recording (2008) by utilising musical material and performative characteristics taken from their own catalogue of self-composed tracks. Yet even inexperienced listeners will be able to distinguish an exceptional and clear caricature of Katy Perry's vocal style throughout the choruses. Classifying this track using Covach's definitions is highly problematic. Equally, Say Anything's *Got Your Money* (2008), Lorene Drive's *Hey Ya* (2008) and Mayday Parade's *In My Head* (2010) are three examples where note-for-note replication of the original does not result in a similar emotional character or stylistic interpretation. Although extended discussion follows this introduction, the performers of these three tracks have advanced their own approach despite the near-identical musical content.

In his edited collection examining the popular music cover song genre, George Plasketes's (2010) use of the two terms clearly aligns with Covach's definitions. Not only does Plasketes only use "version" to describe examples where

[7] Covach, *What's That Sound?* (2006), pp. 76-77

a change has occurred between original and re-recording (such as Linda Ronstadt's re-recording of popular tracks that feature a change of interpreted musical style), but he crucially avoids using the term "cover" when discussing re-recordings that are clearly distinguishable from their respective originals. As Plasketes puts it, 'where a song is transported to a different, musical, vocal etc. setting'.[8] And despite his flawed claim that 'imitation is intrinsic to all examples of the genre', Plasketes follows Covach in offering a rare example of an entirely consistent use of the terms.[9]

Related to the definitions of cover and version is the presence of an original recording. Despite the lack of any explicit definition, the above scholarship implies that an original recording is often assumed to be the first recorded release of a song, which acts as a reference for interpretation of all subsequent recordings. Some scholarship goes further. By way of Pareles and Romanowski's definition of a cover cited above, we can infer that they assume the original not only to be the first recording, but the one that is recorded by the writer of the track. This out-dated view does not allow for the typical popular music process in which the songwriter and recording artist are distinct. Following the Pareles and Romanowski definition strictly, any recording of a song performed by a musician who did not write it should be classified as a cover. This is clearly not the case. And regarding chronology, recent cases have diminished their first assertion that the original is always the first recording. The Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars recording of *Uptown Funk* (2014) is commonly identified as the original even though their release was pre-empted by X-Factor contestant Fleur East. Regardless of the chronology, the Ronson and Mars recording is commonly referred to as the original due to the

[8] Plasketes, *Play It Again Sam*, (2010) pp. 27-28

[9] ibid. *Baby One More Time* by August Burns Red (2009) is one *Punk Goes...* example that contradicts Prato's claim as it is unlikely to be understood as related to the Britney Spears original, let alone as an imitation of it

duo's involvement in writing the song and the manner in which it outsold East's earlier recording significantly in the UK and around the world.

It is also important to bear in mind that defining the original can be subjective. This is especially pertinent in cases where numerous recordings of a particular song exist or where listeners are initially introduced to a track with no knowledge of an existing recording. This is of little issue in the *Punk Goes…* series because the tracks are clearly labelled as re-recordings of existing songs and often released soon after the original so as to capitalise on its success. However, examples do occur. For the first *Punk Goes Pop* (2002), The Starting Line reference two previous recordings of *I'm Real*, both of which have claim to be the original. The first is a Latin-inspired release featuring the vocals of Jennifer Lopez (January 2001) which was followed by a more successful RnB remix which primarily features rapper Ja Rule and Lopez's chorus (July 2001). The Starting Line defy this issue by referencing both recordings equally. A similar issue is raised when discussing The Color Morale re-recording *Everlong* (2014), originally recorded by The Foo Fighters. For the *Punk Goes 90s Vol. 2* release, The Color Morale references both the Foo Fighters' studio recording (1997) and a popular acoustic version recorded for their Greatest Hits album (2008). These two examples highlight the issue that the originals, though clearly used as a reference to the later *Punk Goes…* re-recordings, are not necessarily the same recording to all listeners or performers.

These vague and contradictory definitions often lead to interpretational confusion and the frequent misunderstanding of what the author is trying to express. This is most clearly revealed where the labelling does not, in my view, correspond to the recorded artefact the author is discussing. I consider this most prevalent in scholarly writing of covers and versions. This point is illustrated in the

case studies used in Remi Miller's (2010) discussion of artist intentions in covers and versions. Beyond constructing his argument on hypothetical artist objections (rather than any interviews or listener-centric interpretation), his opening examples centre on the Disney Channel trend whereby older tracks are re-recorded with fashionable teen-idols who feature in their television shows and films. Although the reader is left to assume the exact meaning of the classifications, because Miller does not define either "cover" or "version" in his discussion, Miller references a cover of Earth Wind And Fire's *Shining Star* (1975), a version of *I'm A Believer* originally recorded by The Monkees (1967), and a cover of Joan Jett's *Bad Reputation* (1980).[10] Yet when listening to the Disney Channel re-recordings in question, Miller's labelling does not correspond to the definitions given by other scholars. Compared to the definitions cited above, I consider Miller's classifications as back to front. Such misapplication of the terminology gives the impression that the labels "cover" and "version" may have been applied indiscriminately, causing the reader to question all other references to covers and versions and complicating matters of interpretation.

Related to this example is the erroneous labelling of certain tracks as belonging to the genre. Bielefeldt and Pendzich are guilty of this by extending the remit to include any track in which the original remains a crucial part of the re-worked version ('manifold forms of partial or complete combination of a phonographic source').[11] This definition implies that remixes and tracks that contain samples should be described as covers. Although investigation of such tracks is beyond the remit of this study, even the most superficial glance at electronic dance music and hip-hop reveals how inaccurate this definition is. The issue of erroneous labelling is further highlighted in the case studies used by

[10] Miller, 'Artist Intentions' (2010), p. 231
[11] Bielefeldt & Pendzich, 'Spot Checks of Pop History' (2011), p. 110

Robert Springer (2007) that draw attention to the commercial exploitation common in popular music. Initially focussing on blues recordings of the early twentieth century, Springer identifies the vast majority of his case studies as covers, including examples such as Skip James's *22-20 Blues* (1931) and *How Long Buck* (1931). To Springer, these two tracks belong in the cover category because they reference Robert Johnson's *32-20 Blues* and Leroy Carr's *How Long Blues* (1927). Although James's recordings clearly use the musical material and lyrical themes of Johnson and Carr, I contest whether the recordings should be classified as covers. Regardless of Skip James's intentions (unproven beyond the evidence on record) and despite his tracks ostensibly corresponding to Covach's definition of a cover, labelling these tracks – which have different titles, lyrics, instrumentation, and most significantly, project different emotional characters – as covers is not in keeping with the examples offered for analysis in other scholarship and in the analyses that follow this introduction. At most, we should claim with little doubt that James copied Johnson and Carr, but labelling these tracks as covers is irreconcilable with the diverse cross-pollination of styles and musical material observed in popular music as a whole.

My experience with covers and versions within or beyond those included in the *Punk Goes…* series generally contradicts the binary structure presented by the two terms. Conventional use of the terms "cover" and "version" in both scholarly and non-academic discourse implies a dichotomy of realisations. Covach divides the genre into tracks where the artist has copied the original 'note-for-note' or developed the musical material in whichever manner they choose.[12] And though she does not use the two terms explicitly, Weinstein also splits her examples into two groups: the previously cited 'covers that are indistinguishable' or 'covers that

[12] Covach, *What's That Sound?* (2006), p. 77

are drastically different' when compared to their respective originals. However, Weinstein's language neutralises the ideological connotations associated with a cover or a version where others do not. Schiffer and Yano are two scholars who, in discussing the issue of authenticity relating to covers, classify them as mere copies; pseudo-individualistic efforts that are interpreted as inauthentic imitation. Similarly, Plasketes and Prato infer notions of difference, adaptation and innovation in their descriptions of tracks classified as versions; descriptions that are crucially linked to a perception of value and worth often viewed as absent in covers. This perception of value is not restricted to just covers and versions: the perceived value of an "original" may be clouded by classical ideology of the Work.

My analyses that follow this introduction emphasise a reframing of the cover and version discourse in terms of both methodology and language. I feel that previous efforts to project a cover/version dichotomy need to be refined into a cover-version spectrum whereby classification of cover-version tracks can be freely placed between the extremes of cover and version. This reframing is a consequence of the sheer number of *Punk Goes…* tracks that do not fit into the dichotomy presented in prior discourse. Between the extremes of cover and version, there are two forms that dominate the *Punk Goes…* series. The first is a static cover-version, where the whole recording is understood to combine an imitation of the original's gestural character with a newly introduced gamut of musical phrases and characters, commonly understood to reference the *Punk Goes…* artist's catalogue of self-composed tracks. The second (dynamic cover-versions) freely swing within the poles of cover and version, shifting between imitating the gestural character of the original and transforming it gesturally. This latter approach has become *de rigueur* in the *Punk Goes…* compilation series, with the artists understood to be creating a play between the poles of cover and version.

In a number of tracks, this play is born from the stylistic form of the referenced original recording. Where a majority of examples highlighted in previous scholarship reference a stylistically homogenous original (such as original recording of *Tainted Love* by Gloria Jones (1965) and *Stand By Me* by Ben E. King (1960), examined in Bielefeldt and Pendzich), many of the originals referenced in the *Punk Goes Pop* series are loaded with a range of different musical styles and performative characters. For example, a clear stylistic shift from pop to rock and a change of vocal persona is perceived in Kelly Clarkson's *Since U Been Gone* (2004). This alters the reference point from which to analyse the A Day To Remember re-recording (2007): similar analytical issues occur in We Came As Roman's cover-version of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (2014), originally recorded by Taylor Swift (2012). Although a more thorough analysis follows, A Day To Remember's recording is understood to move back and forth repeatedly between the poles of cover and version, sometimes in correspondence with the shifts understood in the Kelly Clarkson original, sometimes independently of it. A similar form can be observed in *Problem* (November 2014), as re-recorded by Set It Off. In this cover-version, the band follow the stylistic shifts perceived in the original recording by Ariana Grande (April 2014). Yet crucially, these shifts often mine unexpected stylistic territories, progressively extending into the version spectrum. Any analysis that attempts to label a re-recording of a track must do so in relation to changes that occur in the original recording: a methodological challenge that is repeatedly overlooked in previous analyses of the genre.

2.3 REFRAMING THE COVER-VERSION TAXONOMY

There are many reasons as to why the discussion of the cover-version genre has developed in this problematic manner. Firstly, evidence suggests that an analytical emphasis on sociological, economic, and political questions that focus on details surrounding the recorded artefacts plays a significant role in the issues discussed above. Beyond Covach's consistent definitions, his discussion of covers and versions repeatedly focuses on issues of race and appropriation. In addition, both Springer and Cusic ground their discussions of the credibility and authenticity of artists who record covers for economic reasons rather than in the nuanced differences manifest between the original and re-recording. This methodological emphasis could explain their inconsistent application of terminology. And although differences are legion between the recordings of *All Along The Watchtower* by Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix, Russell Reising (2010) rejects any discussion of what the tracks *actually* sound like, restricting his study of the Hendrix version to anecdotes relating to the recording sessions.

This is not to say that scholarship dismisses the recorded artefact entirely, but analyses that include examination of the recorded tracks not only place less significance upon this type of evidence, but also restrict the focus of the analysis to superficial, easily definable qualities such as instrumentation, form, and harmony. For instance, Covach's discussion of Elvis Presley's cover-laden early career focuses on the instrumentation and the general types of reverb and echo used rather than how they effect a listener's interpretation of the track.[13] Similarly, Bielefeldt and Pendzich's discussion of various *Stand By Me* recordings examines John Lennon's simplistic alteration of instrumental form and the change to a

[13] Covach, *What's That Sound?* (2006), pp. 79-82

repetitive harmonic sequence made by Ike and Tina Turner in their 1973 recording.[14] Emphasis is placed upon what was played rather than the listener's interpretation of how it was played. This analytical weighting is surprising given the human proclivity to interpret musical sound as embodied. I propose that any attempt to describe and label a cover-version track should make the interpretation of recorded sound the primary focus, specifically matters of interpreted performative gesture and a listener's perceptual-imaginative response to music.

My call to reframe analysis of cover-version tracks in this way is demonstrated in my reading of Prato's study of 1960s Italian-language covers of English-language songs.[15] His initial examples, all from 1966, include I Dik Dik's recording of *Sognando la California* (an Italian-language re-recording of *California Dreamin'* originally recorded by The Mamas And The Papas), Patty Pravo's *Ragazzo Triste* (an adaptation of the Sonny And Cher single, *But You're Mine*) and The Rokes' *Che Colpa abbiamo noi* (a version of *Cheryl's Going Home* by Bob Lind And The Blues Project).[16] Despite all three Italian-language recordings sounding similar to their respective English-language originals, Prato labels the first two examples as covers and the latter as a version. I agree with these classifications. Prato's difference in classification stems from The Rokes' alteration of the lyrical content. Where *Sognando la California* and *Ragazzo Triste* feature straightforward translations of the original English, The Rokes revise Bob Lind's original, which depicts a rain-soaked protagonist chasing after a romantic love-interest who is leaving on a late-night train, into a post-war counter-culture protest song whose central hook translates as 'What should be our fault?'[17] Although Prato cites the

[14] Bielefeldt & Pendzich, 'Spot Checks of Pop History' (2011), pp. 101-107
[15] Prato, 'Selling Italy by the Sound (2007), pp. 441-462
[16] ibid., pp. 441-442
[17] Although Prato's translation (p. 443) is cited here, the literal translation is 'What guilt do we have?'

altered lyrics as central to the change of interpreted musical meaning (and thus, the most significant aspect relating to his classification of the track as a version), I would also categorise the The Rokes recording as tending towards a version despite my inability to decipher the Italian lyrics. This leads me not only to believe that there are other differences between these two recordings of the song beyond the change of language and lyrics, but that there are differences that are more significant to interpreting this track as a version rather than a cover.

My interpretation is founded upon the human tendency to understand recorded music as embodied. I classify *Che Colpa abbiamo noi* as a version based upon my perceptual-imaginative response, on my instinct to associate the recorded musical sounds with a set of musicians performing the music in a live setting. Although Prato asserts that The Rokes's recording is a version due to a change of lyric, I understand that this recording is not a slavish imitation of Bob Lind's original because the performers I imagine perform the track in a manner distinct from that heard on the Bob Lind recording. I understand the change of musical meaning through the change of gestural character. Where I interpret *Sognando la California* and *Ragazzo Triste* as covers because they are gestural imitations of their English-language counterparts, I understand *Che Colpa abbiamo noi* to have been gesturally transformed by The Rokes. Although relatively obvious in the vocal delivery (due not only to the overt changes made but also owing to the heightened human ability to interpret the nuances of speech), a sense of quizzical resentment is infused into the instrumental tracks via the rhythmic and timbral nuances. Where the instrumental nuances on Bob Lind's recorded track project a sense of resignation, the bright instrumental timbres, swift attack of every note and drum events that seem to occur slightly before the projected pulse gesturally transform Bob Lind's original. I believe that this change is significant to the

interpretation and subsequent classification of the track within the cover-version spectrum.

Although a majority of the tracks named above are examples of the cover-version genre, the diverse range of realisations located in the *Punk Goes…* series go far beyond the boundaries of both imitation and creativity discussed in scholarship thus far. As most of the *Punk Goes…* tracks either sit between or freely move between the poles of cover and version, they cannot be described using the established language and approaches. Thus, I propose a reframing of the debate that not only brings questions of gestural interpretation to the fore, but also redraws the cover-version genre as a spectrum rather than a grouping of outwardly dissimilar tracks.

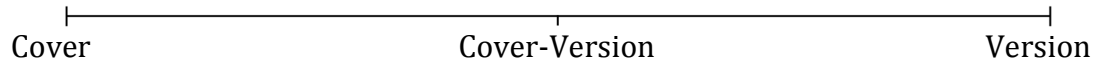


Fig. 2-1: Diagrammatic representation of cover-version spectrum

Some *Punk Goes…* tracks do sit outside the limits of this continuum. To "the left" of a cover in Fig. 2-1 is the assumption that the listener is hearing the original song (e.g., *Boyfriend* (2014), recorded by Issues), and beyond a version is a listener not understanding the relationship between the *Punk Goes…* recording and the original (e.g., *Baby, One More Time* by August Burns Red). Although both of these tracks are retrospectively interpreted as being part of the cover-version genre, it is important to note that both a difference and a relationship must be perceived.

Doğantan-Dack (2008), Koozin (2013) and Moore (2015) are amongst many others whose discussion of performative gesture suggests that a listener's perceptual-imaginative response, often overlooked in musicology, is fundamental to the interpretation of music as a whole. Although this form of interpretation has been dismissed in discussion of the cover-version genre, I believe that cover-

versions promote analysis of this phenomenon as the tracks share varying amounts of musical material, allowing detailed discussion of the interpreted differences – be they nuanced or otherwise. Placing the listener's gestural interpretation at the centre of an analysis provides answers to problematical examples of the genre, such as those encountered in the *Punk Goes...* catalogue. In all examples that I describe as a cover, I interpret the re-recorded track as having retained the gestural character of the original; conversely, a changed gestural character, even where the musical material is identical, will result in a track being defined as a version. A significant change has developed throughout the history of the *Punk Goes...* series: this is the manner in which artists move between replicating the gestural character of the original and recasting the musical material with new meaning through increasingly extreme gestural transformations. This latter issue forms the central development of cover-version scholarship; my reassigning of the terms "cover" and "version" from a dichotomy into the extremes of a nuanced spectrum.

Excluding the use of allosonic quotation (sampling), the re-recording of any track will result in gestural transformations. As such, labelling a track as a cover is not the same as there being no gestural transformations interpreted: if a listener were to interpret no gestural transformations, a mistaken interpretation would be made in thinking that the original track is being listened to, rather than a newer re-recording. A cover can be identified when the gestural transformations are so few or slight that the overarching gestural character of the original is retained. However, confusion does arise in the interpretation of tracks such as *Boyfriend* (2014) by Issues, *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* (2010) by Woe, Is Me, and *Interstate Love Song* (2014) by Memphis May Fire where allosonic quotations are nearly identical to the originals.

Gestural transformations are always present in *Punk Goes…* recordings because there are no autosonic quotations found within the series. This is because publishing restrictions related to sampling other recordings (such as a respective original) can create issues for the artists, publishing holders, and record labels. Dexter Hubbard, European label manager for Fearless Records who release the *Punk Goes…* series, confirmed this in an interview I conducted with him. He stated:

> There is actually no legal issue with recording a cover, as long as all the publishing is paid on it. You don't need permission from the original songwriter, or copyright or publishing holder. The only issue is when the lyrics are changed, and/or the structure of the music is drastically changed. Then you come into an issue of whether something is being sampled rather than covered, which brings further complications.[18]

Although the notion of what legally constitutes a changed lyric or drastically changed musical structure goes beyond the remit of this investigation, this quote explains the lack of samples within the *Punk Goes…* series. A number of tracks are understood to sample their original counterpart, yet this is often the result of a radically changed stylistic context amplifying any similarities to the original. However, the three tracks cited above not only highlight the facility for bands to almost duplicate their original counterpart, but the aptitude of some artists for perceiving and replicating the nuanced sonic details of recorded tracks.

[18] Quote taken from e-mail interview conducted with Dexter Hubbard from Fearless Records; see appendix for full transcription of the interview

2.3.1 Gestural Transformation in Covers

I classify covers as re-recorded tracks that retain the gestural character of the original. Regardless of other changes, I believe this interpreted quality to be critical not only to the labelling, but also to the understanding of covers. Examples of this association have been observed in prior scholarship. Although it is not commonly noted in musicological discourse, this relationship between preserving the gestural character of the original track and classification as a cover is true in a majority of the scholarly examples cited within the introduction to chapter 2. In practice, this equates to a small number of insignificant gestural transformations that do little to alter the overall gestural character of the re-recording. Not all covers contain a set amount of gestural transformations, and furthermore not all covers maintain a particular strength of gestural transformations. This is witnessed in a number of Prato's examples (including I Dik Dik's recording of *Sognando la California* and Patty Pravo's *Ragazzo Triste*), where the Italian-language covers preserve the gestural character of their respective English-language originals.

Covers encompass an area of the cover-version spectrum. As a listener hears the track, some instruments or entire sections will be understood to gesturally replicate or imitate the original more meticulously than others. Similarly, the introduction of a gesturally transformed phrase within the context of an otherwise gesturally imitative ensemble may cause a slight movement along the cover-version spectrum, but do little to sway the description to anything other than a cover. Understanding the track as relative not only to the original but also to previous sections of the cover is essential.

Although covers are rife throughout popular music, only a small number of tracks in the *Punk Goes…* catalogue are understood as wholly retaining the gestural

character of their original tracks. The most overt example is Knuckle Puck's (2014) cover of *Chocolate* (2013), originally by The 1975. Knuckle Puck's recording is almost indistinguishable from the original for a number of reasons, not least in terms of gestural character. The most obvious attempt to retain the gestural character is understood in vocalist Joe Taylor's endeavour to emulate the estuary-English accent of The 1975 vocalist Matt Heafy. Although it is mostly achieved, the imitation remains unconvincing due to inconsistencies in the accent: something that a non-English speaker of English may overlook.[19] Beyond these nuanced yet significant differences, the only other major change are the drum fills. Knuckle Puck drummer John Siorek repeatedly strains to squeeze an excessive number of notes into small spaces, generating a sense of rushing and tension (due to the struggle to achieve this task). These small gestural lapses stand out as inappropriate rather than shift the gestural interpretation as a whole.

2.3.1.1 PAPER PLANES BY M.I.A. / THIS CENTURY

The *Punk Goes…* tracks *Paper Planes* by This Century (2010) and *Torn* by Hands Like Houses (2014) are two other examples that I interpret as a cover despite a change of the protagonist's sex. Although there are subtle changes in instrumental timbres within these two tracks, the sonic qualities of the vocals (timbre, texture, rhythmic nuance etc.) lead the gestural interpretations. This is due to a listener's heightened ability to interpret vocal character. In *Paper Planes*, an imitation of the original opening motif immediately sets the classification as a cover. Although the

[19] The unconvincing nature of this imitation is discussed at length in relation to personal authenticity (p. 227)

instruments have different timbres and play subtly different parts, they project a similar character due to being highly processed.
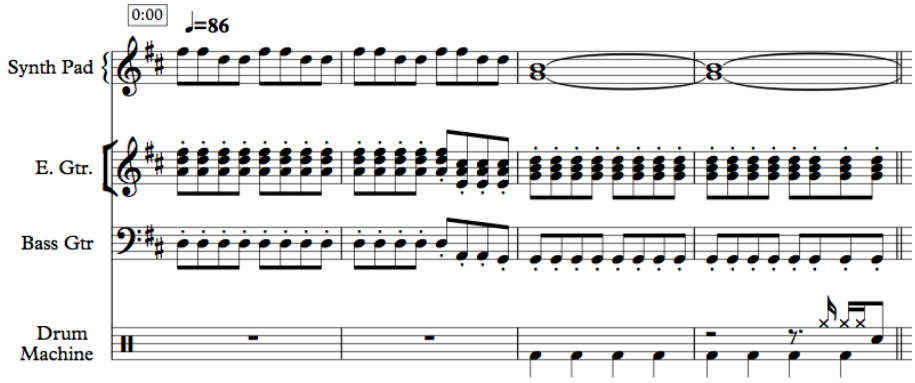


Fig. 2-2: Transcription of introduction to *Paper Planes* as recorded by M.I.A.
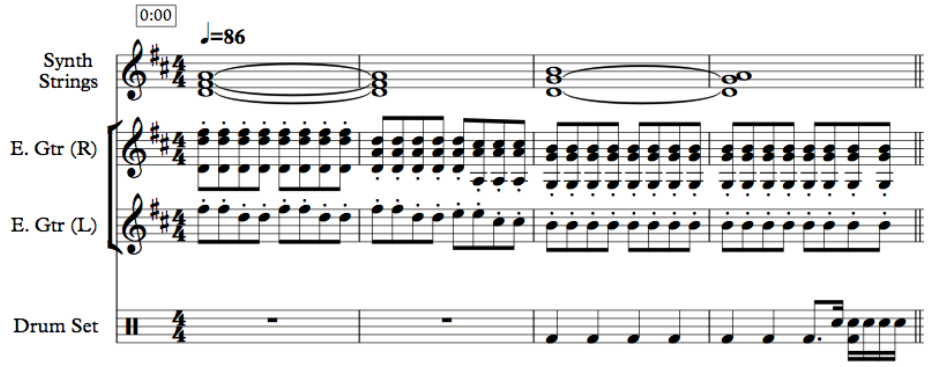


Fig. 2-3: Transcription of introduction to *Paper Planes* as recorded by This Century

Listening to the tracks, the brusque character of both guitar parts (created not only through detached phrasing but also by audio processing such as compression and gate) is very clear despite the nuanced differences in timbre. A similar retention of gestural character is understood from the percussion that enters some seconds later. Although M.I.A.'s percussion sounds are typical for her broadly electronica style (mixture of synthesized bass drum, finger clicks and unnaturally even hi-hats), This Century's arrangement on acoustic drum set articulates no significant gestural transformation. This is because the acoustic timbres are highly compressed, giving the impression of being quantized and sequenced. In addition, the decidedly syncopated phrasing, coupled with unusual

accentuation patterns, retain the lurching, uneasy feeling garnered from M.I.A.'s original. Beyond the timbres, the dynamic balance of the drum set matches that understood in the original with the bass drum loudest and piercing hi-hat much more prominent than the snare drum: a balance that is contrary to most rock-style production practice and is significant in retaining the gestural character garnered from the original.

The vocal character, often central to the classification of a cover-version, follows in the same vein. The polite and non-threatening vocal manner of both vocalists contradicts the lyrical depiction of smuggling drugs across borders and the manufacturing of fake papers for travel and work purposes. Regardless of the change of sex (M.I.A. is female, Joel Kanitz is male), both vocalists create a relaxed, nonchalant personality. The lyrical rhythm of their spoken-word style frequently stretches and contracts, freely rolling across the strict metronomic grid demarcated by the instrumental backing. And though Joel Kanitz's clearer elocution projects an upper social class, a carefree and relaxed nonchalance oozes from the soft dynamics and smooth lyrical phrasing with no sense that the vocalist is fighting the instrumental backing. The classification of this track as a cover does not weaken as the loop-based nature of the original and cover facilitates the sustained gestural character understood throughout the track.

2.3.1.2 *TODAY* BY SMASHING PUMPKINS / YELLOWCARD

A similar outcome is drawn from Yellowcard's (2014) cover of the Smashing Pumpkins track *Today* (1993). The various changes applied by Yellowcard do result in gestural transformations, yet they are not significant enough to alter the interpretation of the overarching gestural character. Yellowcard's retention of the

original gestural character is clear from the opening motif. Although the renowned opening guitar phrase is moved onto a violin, the interpreted gestural character is preserved. Fig. 2-4 and Fig. 2-5 highlight some similarities and differences between the two recordings:

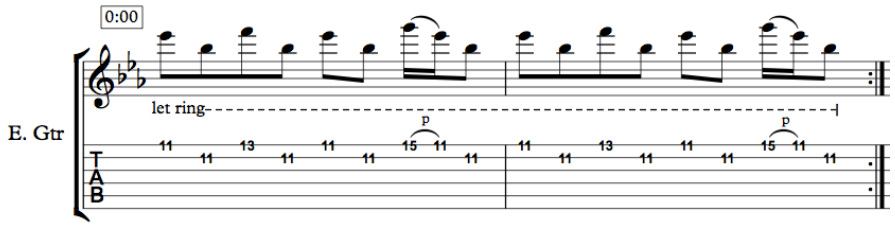


Fig. 2-4: Transcription of introduction to *Today* as recorded by Smashing Pumpkins
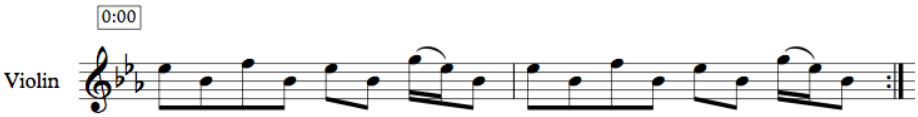


Fig. 2-5: Transcription of introduction to *Today* as recorded by Yellowcard

The choice of violin to assume the role commonly occupied by a lead electric guitar is outwardly peculiar, yet the violin is a clear marker of who is performing the cover to experienced listeners. The instrument is an integral member of the Yellowcard ensemble. Yet to experienced and inexperienced listeners alike, the change of instrument does not diminish the retained gestural character as the parts achieve the sense of childlike innocence and simplicity through differing means associated with their respective instruments. The original Smashing Pumpkins recording has clear semiotic links to a child's music box. Beyond the high pitches, ringing tones and monophonic phrasing that undoubtedly allude to the object and associated emotions, the instrumental timbre is highly significant. There is no discernible reverb and the non-distorted electric guitar, replete with swift attack but little dynamic decay implies a delicate touch. The phrase gives the impression of amateurish uncertainty and hesitation through the

instrumental tone and implied manner of performance. Yellowcard have attempted to capture this gestural character, albeit with a violin rather than an amplified electric guitar. This is a change that requires a different set of cues to imply uncertainty. Although Sean Makin (violinist of Yellowcard) plays the same music material (as witnessed in Fig. 2-4 and Fig. 2-5), the techniques needed to achieve the character are distinct from those required when playing an electric guitar. Although the simplistic rhythm and steady tempo are retained, Makin firstly eliminates the overlapping of notes. This change gives the impression of being played on a single string like a simple pedagogical study for a beginner. In addition, a lack of vibrato, monotonous *détaché* phrasing and a consistently slow attack to each note makes the motif sound tentative and uncertain. These characteristics do not give the impression of a proficient and confident performer, but rather a young, amateur musician who is not entirely sure of what he or she is doing. Created in a contrasting manner, Yellowcard retain the gestural character of the opening phrase.

Following this phrase, Smashing Pumpkins set up a simplistic I – V – IV harmonic sequence, steady pacing and simplistic quaver-pulsing rhythm that enhances the prior interpretation before Billy Corgan's breathy and nasal vocal delivery introduces a literal evocation of a child's singing voice that cements the interpretation. Ryan Key (vocalist of Yellowcard) replicates this character through differing means. Although his vocal delivery on Yellowcard's self-composed tracks usually feature marked pronunciation and a relatively even emphasis on each syllable, Key utilises a breathy portamento that emulates the childish, self-indulgent style typical to Corgan's Smashing Pumpkins-era vocals. Key does not attempt to impersonate Corgan, but uses different techniques to emulate the innocent character Corgan portrays. Other changes occur throughout the re-

recording of *Today*, yet crucial to labelling the track as a cover is the notion that Yellowcard have successfully copied the gestural character of the Smashing Pumpkins original and avoided caricaturing the way in which Smashing Pumpkins achieved such ends; an issue that has great consequences for the ascription of personal and stylistic authenticity.

2.3.2 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN VERSIONS

In contrast to a cover, a track I interpret and label as a version contains a noticeable change of interpreted gestural character, caused by significant and/or numerous gestural transformations throughout the entire recording. For a track to be considered a version of the original, the listener must perceive not only differences within their gestural reading of the recording (i.e., significant gestural transformations have taken place), but also understand that the version is a re-recording of another track. A majority of *Punk Goes...* tracks include sections that can be considered a version of the original. Few tracks in the series maintain the continual degree of gestural transformations required to enable the listener to consider the track as a version. The differences between original and version do not necessarily equate to a drastic alteration of musical material or change of instrumentation. Examples occur where a version ostensibly sounds the same as the original, but the gestural interpretation evokes a different musical meaning. As such, a re-recorded version can be described as the new artist performing the song "with their own gestures", thereby rejecting the performative character of the original recording. As with covers, tracks described as versions cover an area of the cover-version spectrum. Although some instruments or sections may be understood to "move towards" the gestural character of the original, this may only

result in a slight shift along the cover-version spectrum, rather than the redefinition of the track as a cover.

The perception that an artist has created a version of a previously recorded track usually involves the synthesis of numerous gestural transformations that can range from nuanced to overt. In the examples encountered in the *Punk Goes…* series, the former commonly occurs in instrumental parts whilst the overt usually occurs in vocals. This is not a reflection of a measurable amount of change that has occurred between original and version, but more an indication that listeners are more readily able to process, understand and decipher changes between two vocal performances as opposed to instrumental performances. This is because the gestural interpretation of a performing musician is most readily achievable in sounds that are most innately tied to agency; though acoustic instruments imply human attendance to an instrument, relatively small changes in interpreted vocal delivery can reap augmented changes of gestural transformation. Interaction with the human voice as a being-in-the-world is an everyday occurrence, whether through human contact, listening to the radio or television, etc. As human beings, we are highly susceptible to the nuances of the voice, and as such, are conditioned to be able to discern and understand subtleties. Through relatively small changes in the sonic characteristics, listeners are able to distinguish between different gestural characters – whether in relation to biological concerns (whether they are male or female), points of geographical and social concern (American or British), or emotional affect (angry or sad).[20]

Any re-recorded track could be considered a version. Regardless of the recorded outcome, a listener can consider any track as a musician performing "with their own gestures". Artists discussing their *Punk Goes…* tracks repeatedly

[20] The ideas from this paragraph derived from the theory of mimesis set out by Cox (2011)

reference playing the track "their own way" or "making the track their own". For instance, Alex Gaskarth of All Time Low revealed that 'it was cool to put our spin on [*Umbrella*].'[21] Similarly, Jeremy McKinnon (vocalist of A Day To Remember) explains how the band 'put our touch on it' in relation to *Since U Been Gone*, and how *Over My Head (Cable Car)* was 'pretty easy to make our own.'[22] Furthermore, We Came As Romans refer to having 'a vision of how to make [*I Knew You Were Trouble*] in our own style' by doing 'the typical We Came As Romans thing', implying that they performed the song in their own way.[23] These artists highlight the common desire to produce their own version of a previously recorded track. All the tracks referenced here share a starting point (an abstract form of the song) and a compositional approach (using their own set of musical phrases and performative gestures). Whether or not this attempt has been successful is entirely dependent on the listener's interpretation. Although this can be shaped by extra-musical information, there is no absolute amount or number of gestural transformations that result in a version as opposed to a cover. Fundamental is the listener's interpretation and subsequent classification.

In the analyses that follow, evidence of performing with their own gestures is made via comparison to self-composed tracks recorded and/or released around the time of the *Punk Goes…* recorded. The central reason for this is the issue of recording personnel. Following the reasoning of Cumming, the performative actions of a musician will affect the sonic output captured in a recording.[24] It is important to know not only which musicians are performing, but also the chronology of the recordings so as to compare with those around the *Punk Goes…*

[21] Shelter, 'All Time Low Discuss 'Dirty Work Album'': non-scholarly resource #32 (p. 367)
[22] First quote from Tate 'Absolute Punk: Interview with A Day To Remember': non-scholarly resource #1; the second from Jon Ableson, 'Interview: A Day To Remember - 22/02/09': non-scholarly resource #5
[23] Bruce Henne, 'We Came As Romans Cover Swift's Trouble': non-scholarly resource #25
[24] Cumming, *The Sonic Self* (2001), pp. 21-22

version. Not only do the abilities, ideologies and tastes of individual performers mature over time resulting in a continually developing gamut of capabilities and preferences, but also a number of *Punk Goes…* artists are subject to personnel changes between releases. Changing the performers will clearly have significant effects on the outcome of any recorded track. It is important that any relationships drawn between a *Punk Goes…* recording and self-composed track include the same musicians who are recording with a relatively unchanged set of ideologies and similar capabilities.

Key examples are witnessed in the four cover-versions recorded by Woe, Is Me. Their recordings of *Tik Tok* (2009) and *We R Who We R* (2012) originally recorded by Ke$ha, and *Hot N Cold* (2010) and *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* (2011) originally sung by Katy Perry. A superficial analysis reveals a number of characteristics common to all four cover-versions, including the typical rock-band instrumentation, the utilisation of the original pop track's musical style before a sudden change to a heavy-metal style, the correlation between screamed and sung vocals and the strophic form, and riffs with cross-band rhythmic unity. However, a more thorough engagement with these four tracks reveals a division between the two tracks recorded pre-2011 to those recorded in 2011 and after. Beyond the more obvious differing grain of the vocalists, different gestural interpretations are gleaned from differing roles the instrumental parts take. For instance, the pre-2011 versions contain virtuosic lead guitar arpeggios over power-chord sequences, whilst the post-2011 recordings commonly utilise cross-band unison rhythms that project a sense of magnitude and power. It should be considered no coincidence that this split is caused by a personnel change within the band. Thus, *Tik Tok* and *Hot N Cold* are related, but perceptively dissimilar to *We R Who We R* and *Last Friday Night* due to a change of vocalists and lead guitarist in the final

quarter of 2011. Although the differences and consequences pertaining to gestural transformation involves a more comprehensive examination of the tracks, it is clear that knowledge and consideration of the personnel concerned is vital to observing and subsequently relating the performance of his or her own gestures between the recorded cover-version of a song and a self-composed track.

This concept of playing with their own gestures in *Punk Goes…* tracks also occurs between two poles. Firstly, there is the practice of performing the original musical material with new phrasing so as to generate gestural transformations. Opposing this approach is the comprehensive substitution of musical material. This is a process where the *Punk Goes…* artist retains the abstract form of the song (i.e., lyrics and harmonic sequences) but replaces the foreground musical material with motifs understood to be similar to those heard in their recorded back catalogue. Regarding the former, *Got Your Money* (2008) by Say Anything clearly retains a majority of the original's musical foreground but it is understood as having been performed in a different manner. This produces a gesturally distinct interpretation. *Got Your Money* is ostensibly very similar to the Ol' Dirty Bastard original (1999). Not only do Say Anything retain the notes and rhythms of the original, but they also closely replicate the instrumental sounds. Such details would imply that the track would be classified as a cover, yet Max Bemis's caricaturing of Ol' Dirty Bastard's vocal delivery generates a strident gestural transformation; one that influences the interpretation of the instrumental backing, rendering small changes part of a larger sarcastic exaggeration of the original.[25]

[25] This is analysed in relation to personal authenticity, p. 278

2.3.2.1 *ROYALS* BY LORDE / YOUTH IN REVOLT

A similar instance occurs in a version of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (2014). This version of *Royals* is heavily indebted to Lorde's original recording (2013). The two recordings share a vast amount of musical material, including harmonic structure, lyrics, lyrical melody and even numerous individual instrumental phrases. However, listening reveals how Youth In Revolt have chosen to play the song in their own way, which results in a gestural transformation.

Opening the track, Youth In Revolt gesturally transform the percussion introduction. The following analysis examines the changes in percussion sounds made by Youth In Revolt and how this causes a general shift from acousmatic sound to live performance, which sets up a gestural context against which all preceding sections are understood. In addition, investigation of the Youth In Revolt acoustic drum set reveals a number of sonic qualities that do not correspond to the interpretation of a live performance. In the *Royals* cover-version, the choice of instrumental timbres overrides a complete lack of performance nuance indicating that gestural transformations are formed based on a hierarchical synthesis of sonic qualities.

The changes of percussive sounds are instantly understood the moment the Youth In Revolt version begins. Where the introduction to the Lorde original comprises electronically synthesized acousmatic percussion sounds, Youth In Revolt exchange these samples for acoustic drum sounds that give the impression of a performer attending to an acoustic drum set; a common change in *Punk Goes…* versions, such as those cited above. This instantly changes the listener's perceptual-imaginative response from acousmatic sound to a live performance. Despite this change, Youth In Revolt could have chosen to replicate the

overarching gestural character of the original percussion introduction. However, Youth In Revolt generates an altered gestural character. From Lorde's isolated, bleak, and resigned original comes an energetic, confident, yet irritable reworking. This change is instilled into every instrument of the *Punk Goes...* recording and crucial to its identity as a version, rather than a cover of the Lorde track.

The opening percussion introductions are significant in setting the gestural character of each track. Youth In Revolt have directly copied the drumbeat from the Lorde original, yet give the impression of redistributing the electronic percussion sounds around an acoustic drum set. Although the bass drum remains, the backbeat finger clicks are moved to a snare drum – an instinctive change for rock drummers who associate the backbeat with snare – and the sub-bass drum that occurs on every first beat is relocated onto two tom-toms. Fig. 2-6 and Table 2-1 illustrates the changes made between the two recordings:

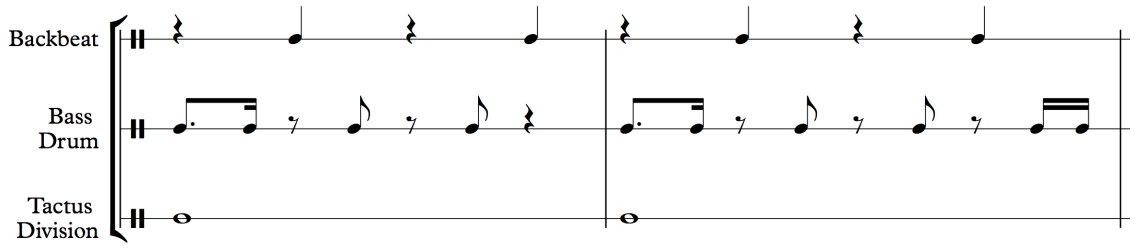


Fig. 2-6: Transcription of introduction to *Royals*

	Lorde	**Youth In Revolt**
Backbeat	Sampled finger-click	Acoustic snare flam
Bass Drum	Electronic bass drum	Acoustic bass drum
Tactus Division	Electronic sub-bass drum	Acoustic tom-toms

Table 2-1: Table categorising the three distinct parts of the percussion phrase and the respective sounds utilised by Lorde and Youth In Revolt

The general split between electronic and acoustic sounds is primarily created by the timbres and textures of the individual percussion elements. The Fig. 2-7 spectral analyses capture the structure of the two bass drum timbres. The black readings relate to the electronic-sounding bass drum, the grey to the acoustic-sounding bass drum.

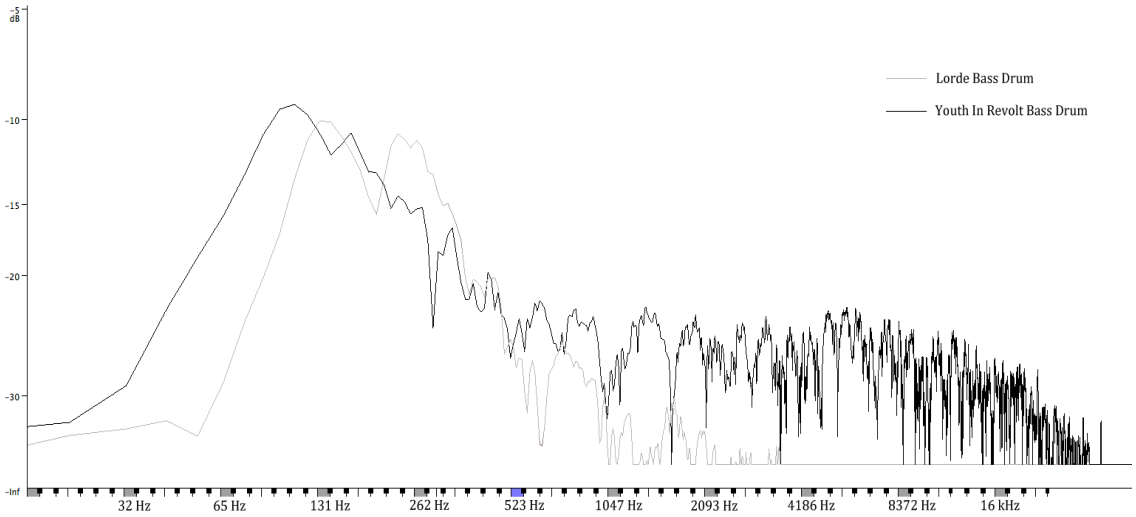


Fig. 2-7: Spectral analyses of the bass drum taken from each recording of *Royals* by Lorde and Youth In Revolt.[26]

Although both analyses display a typically undulating frequency response (a feature characteristic of percussion instruments, which are rich in many frequencies but not necessarily harmonics or resultant tones related to any particular fundamental frequency), there are a number of key differences. Beyond the difference in peak frequencies, (the Lorde bass drum has two peak frequencies at approximately 115Hz and 220Hz; Youth In Revolt bass drum has a slightly lower-frequency peak at approximately 87Hz), the Lorde bass drum utilises a much narrower range of frequencies: there is minimal audio activity occurring above 2kHz in comparison to the Youth In Revolt bass drum that has a high level of

[26] The analysis uses readings from bass drum 4 of each version (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). This particular bass drum was chosen as it is at a point where no other percussion notes are heard and allows for minimum disturbance from reverberations lingering from previous notes

audio activity up-to-and-beyond the 16kHz mark. Furthermore, the two frequency spikes in the Lorde track dominate the frequency landscape in contrast to the Youth In Revolt recording where a majority of the audio information does not come from the 87Hz peak, but from the large amount of audio activity in the relatively high frequencies beyond 2kHz. The dominance of the two particular frequencies is significant in understanding why the Lorde bass drum is perceived as synthetic. The audible domination of the two frequencies – facilitated by a lack of other audio activity – generates the sense of purity, or clarity, not typically characteristic of acoustic bass drums. Acoustic drum set bass drums are often satiated with other frequencies, as witnessed in the Youth In Fig. 2-7 readings. This gives acoustic bass drums a sonically complex and rich character evidenced in the Youth In Revolt spectrum analysis but not in the Lorde track. The relative lack of activity in the high frequencies witnessed in the Lorde bass drum establishes the interpretation that the sound has been sonically clipped, or restricted. This feature is significant to understanding the sound as being generated electronically. Though it cannot be sonically separated for analysis, a similar interpretational outcome occurs for the sub-bass drum.

Even though the proclivity to hear acoustic drum sounds as the outcome of conscious human effort in attendance to an acoustic drum set is significant in creating this gestural transformation, the timbral character of these acoustic sounds is vital in shaping the imagined performative actions of the drummer striking the bass drum. The prior analysis of the Youth In Revolt bass drum highlighted a significant amount of high-frequency activity; it is this that provides an attacking “click” to the drum sound, which equates to a bass drum being struck

with a high amount of energy.[27] Evidence of this can be collected from sonic analysis of a bass drum that is struck with increasing force:

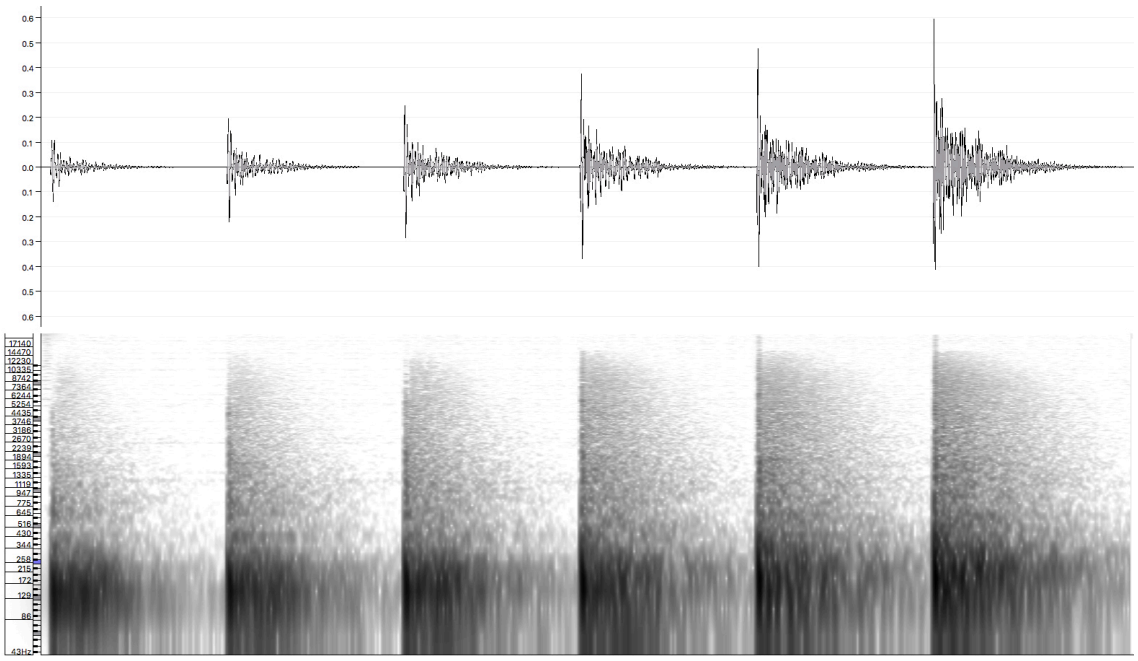


Fig. 2-8: Waveform and spectrogram analyses of a bass drum, struck with a foot pedal, played with increasing force

The waveform analysis in Fig. 2-8 details the resultant dynamic crescendo and the spectrogram analysis shows evidence of ever-increasing high frequency activity as the striking force increases. Where the lower frequency activity remains fairly constant, an increase of higher frequencies causes the increased dynamic and eventually saturates the digital waveform. In terms of interpreted performance, the sound of the bass drum gives the impression of a drummer forcefully striking the bass drum; utilising their hips and core body balance to push the bass drum pedal, rather than playing from the knee or ankle. A similar interpretation is drawn from the timbre and dynamics of the tom-toms and snare drum. Their frequency-rich textures and saturation of the digital waveform shown in Fig. 2-9 implies that forceful performative gestures are used to play the drumbeat.

[27] Where the notion that the bass drum can be described as "the Youth In Revolt bass drum' may seem incompatible with the idea that a live performance can result in a consistent and uniform drum sound. This issue is resolved at the end of this particular analysis.

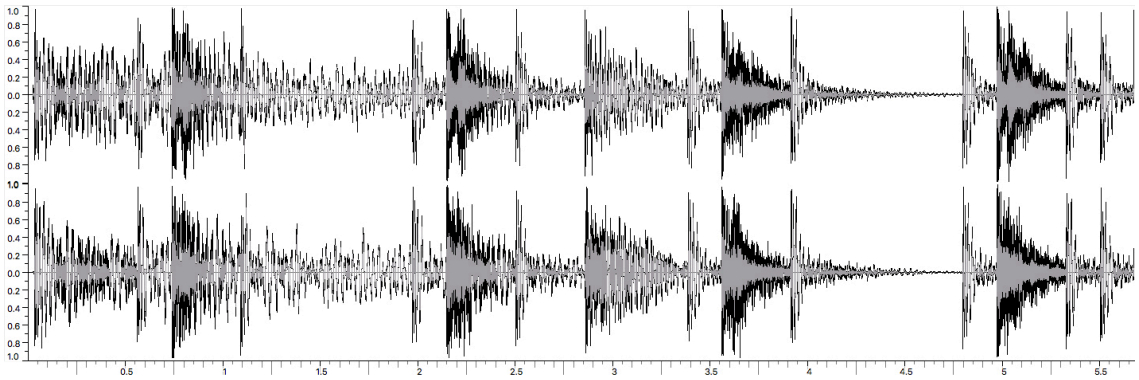


Fig. 2-9: Waveform analysis of introduction to *Royals* as recorded by Youth In Revolt

Although reaching dynamic capacity is undoubtedly aided by compression and equalisation, the interpretation remains – a listener's perceptual-imaginative response will understand the performer playing with forceful gestures. Moreover, the snare drum flam and two tom-toms also contribute to the notion of an energetic performative action, attempting to play the drums as loudly as possible by using both arms rather than a single limb. An interpretation that, when retrospectively compared, emphasises the sense of lethargy and resignation gathered from the Lorde original.

The change of percussion sounds is highly significant in altering the interpretation of sonic attributes that are maintained from the Lorde original. These include a lack of performance nuance and a hall-style reverb: in each recording, they reinforce the distinct interpretations cited above. Regarding the former, the lack of inter- and intra-event nuance is clearly discernible in the Lorde recording. It is the central reason as to why the backbeat finger clicks (usually associated with human agency), are understood as digitally composed. This interpretation stems from their identical rhythm, dynamics and texture. The waveform analysis Fig. 2-10 and accompanying Table 2-2 highlights the mechanical consistency of the rhythm:

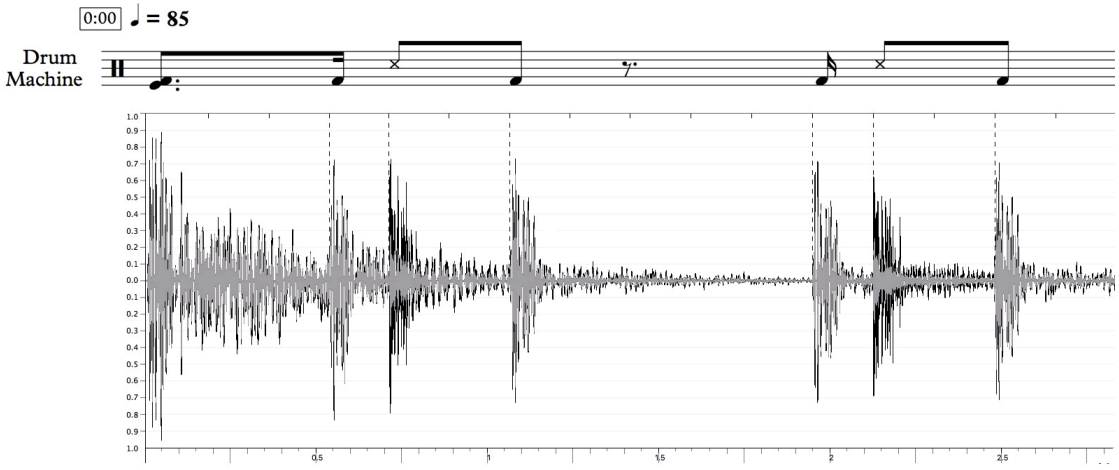


Fig. 2-10: Waveform analysis (mean of stereo signal) and transcription of *Royals* by Lorde (0:00 – 0:03)

Percussion Sound	Transcription Beat	Metronomic Timing (s)	Percussion Timing (s)	Timing Difference (s)	Margin of Error (%)
Tactus	1/16	0.000	0.000	0	0
Bass Drum	4/16	0.529	0.531	0.002	1.1
Finger Clicks	5/16	0.706	0.705	-0.001	-0.5
Bass Drum	7/16	1.059	1.060	0.001	0.5
Bass Drum	12/16	1.941	1.942	0.001	0.5
Finger Clicks	13/16	2.118	2.119	0.001	0.5
Bass Drum	15/16	2.470	2.470	0	0

Table 2-2: Table comparing expected metronomic timings against measured timings from digital waveform analysis of the Lorde recording of *Royals* (Fig. 2-9)

The onset of each percussion event aligns with a quantized framework with the biggest offset measured at 0.002 seconds. Such imperceptible timing differences render the Lorde drumbeat as metronomic and mechanical, and crucially adhering to the interpretation that the phrase has been created through electronic means. The waveform analysis Fig. 2-11 offers visual proof of the dynamic the uniformity perceived in the track:

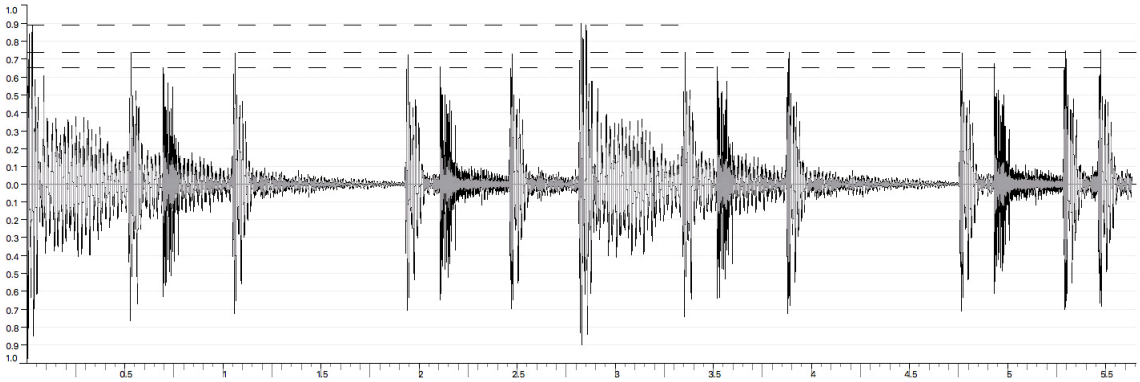


Fig. 2-11: Waveform analysis (mean of stereo signal) of introduction to *Royals* by Lorde with horizontal dashed lines to highlight the uniform dynamics

Each percussive element corresponds to a particular dynamic level throughout the two-bar phrase, further supporting the synthesized interpretation. Finally, a lack of performance nuance is perceived in the uniform texture of each percussion sound. Although clear in the bass drum and sub-bass drum, close analysis of the backbeat reveals a recurring textural character composed not of a single finger click, but of numerous superimposed finger clicks. This could be the reason as to why Scott Baker (drummer of Youth In Revolt) chose to play the backbeat with a snare flam, rather than a single strike of the snare drum more commonly heard in rock music. Although the lingering reverberations of prior notes complicates the comparison, the near-identical textural make-up of the opening four finger clicks is clearly visible in Fig. 2-12:



Fig. 2-12: Spectrogram analysis of the four backbeat finger clicks in introduction to *Royals* by Lorde, displayed in chronological order

Although differences occur in the lower frequencies (the darker banding of the lower frequencies in backbeats one and three are due to the remnants of the sub-bass drum that occur just a beat before augmenting the readings), key is the near-identical readings above the 1kHz frequency. Note how each repetition has the same thick vertical band in contrast to the brief sustain of most percussive instruments (highlighting how the numerous click onsets begin at various points) and the same peak around the 2.5kHz frequency despite the percussion sound being rich with textures. It is quite clear that this textural uniformity, in conjunction with the rhythmic and dynamic evenness, is unattainable in live performance. This lack of nuance sounds mechanical and metronomic, implying that the drumbeat has been constructed through digital means, rather than via a musician's attendance to a drum set.

Although the interpretation of the Youth In Revolt recording suggests human attendance to a drum set, it too contains a lack of performance nuance that conflicts with the interpretation. Analysis of the sonic artefact reveals that the percussion introduction was most likely constructed through electronic means in a similar, if not the same manner as the Lorde original. As witnessed in the Lorde recording, the Youth In Revolt version also contains mechanically consistent rhythms, dynamics and textures. Most readily measureable is the lack of rhythmic nuance as observed in Fig. 2-13 and detailed in Table 2-3.

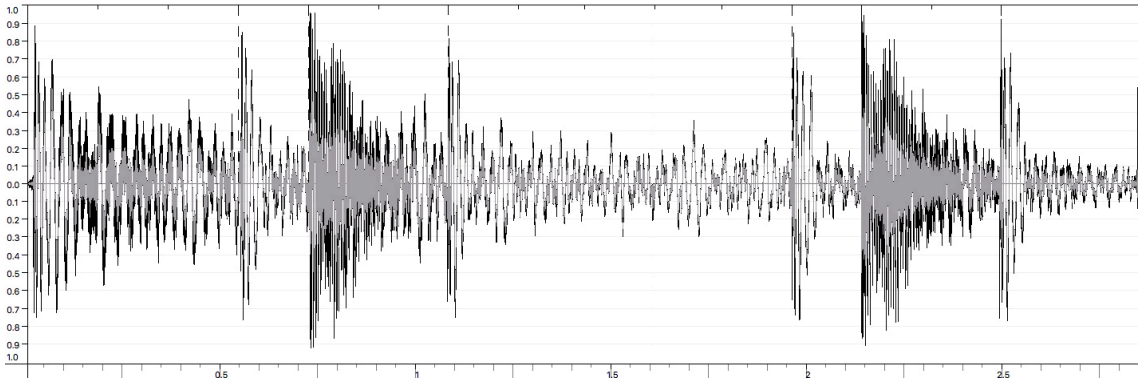


Fig. 2-13: Waveform analysis of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (0:00 – 0:03) highlighting the rhythmically quantised nature of the percussion introduction

Percussion Sound	Transcription Beat	Metronomic Timing (s)	Percussion Timing (s)	Timing Difference (s)	Margin of Error (%)
Tactus	1/16	0.000	0.000	0	0
Bass Drum	4/16	0.529	0.531	0.002	1.1
Finger Clicks	5/16	0.706	0.705	-0.001	-0.5
Bass Drum	7/16	1.059	1.060	0.001	0.5
Bass Drum	12/16	1.941	1.942	0.001	0.5
Finger Clicks	13/16	2.118	2.119	0.001	0.5
Bass Drum	15/16	2.470	2.470	0	0

Table 2-3: Table comparing expected metronomic timings against measured timings from digital waveform analysis of the Youth In Revolt recording of *Royals* (Fig. 2-13)

Just as it was observed in the Lorde recording, the onset of each percussion event strictly adheres to a rhythmic framework with the sort of accuracy that is simply not possible with human endeavour. In addition, Table 2-3 demonstrates that the Youth In Revolt recording is actually more rhythmically precise than its acousmatically-interpreted original. Similar evidence relating to a lack of performance nuance follows in the analysis of dynamics and textures. Fig. 2-14 highlights the consistent volumes of each individual percussion element, whilst the Fig. 2-15 spectrum analysis compares the timbral constitution of each individual acoustic bass drum:

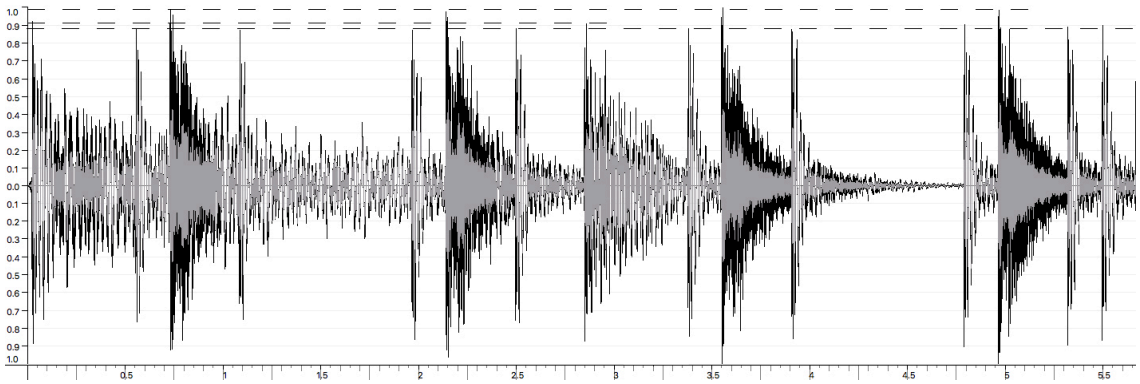


Fig. 2-14: Waveform analysis (mean of stereo signal) of introduction to *Royals* by Youth In Revolt with horizontal dashed lines to highlight the uniform dynamics

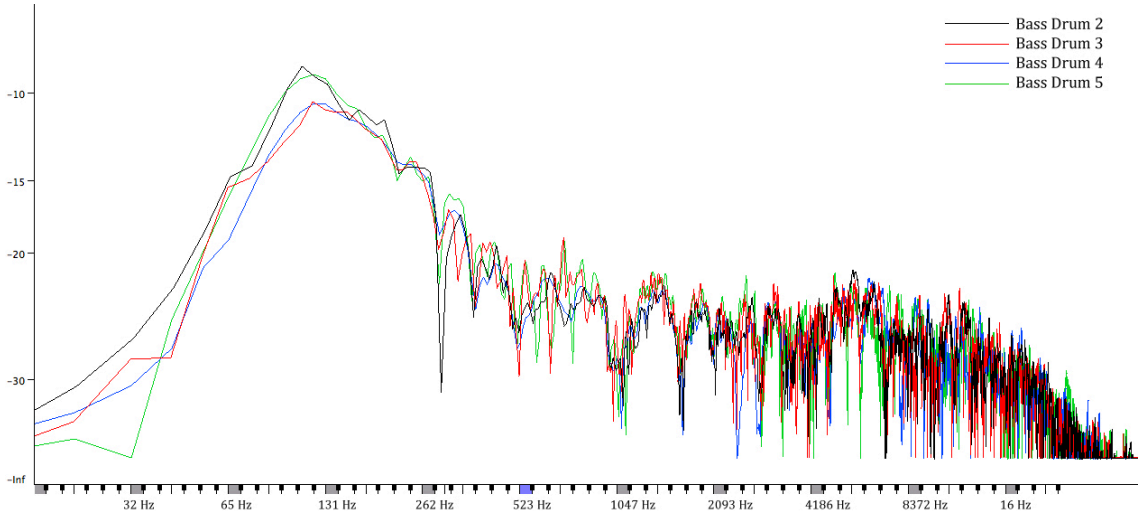


Fig. 2-15: Spectrum analysis of individual bass drum timbres in b.2 of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt

Even though Fig. 2-15 omits the bass drum that occurs with the tom-toms (as neither can be separated from each other), the analysis displays the astonishing similarity between each bass drum event. Where the mechanised uniformity contributes to the digitally composed interpretation in the Lorde original, they help project a very different interpretation in the Youth In Revolt version. In the version, the consistently rich textures and loud dynamics provide the perceptual-imaginative response of a drummer reaching the dynamic threshold of their instrument. In this recording, the interpretation is that the drummer is playing so forcefully that the drums will not go any louder, and thus sound consistent.

The applied reverb is essential to interpreting the Youth In Revolt version as a "live performance". It helps shape the virtual sonic environment within which the performance is understood to take place. Although Fig. 2-14 demonstrates the presence of reverb, Fig. 2-17 demonstrates the character of the reverb differentiating between the darker vertical bands of a percussion note onset and subsequent reverberation tails. Fig. 2-16 and Fig. 2-17 reveal a similar application of stereo hall-style reverb to both recordings of *Royals*: a reverb where high frequencies diminish quicker than low frequencies.

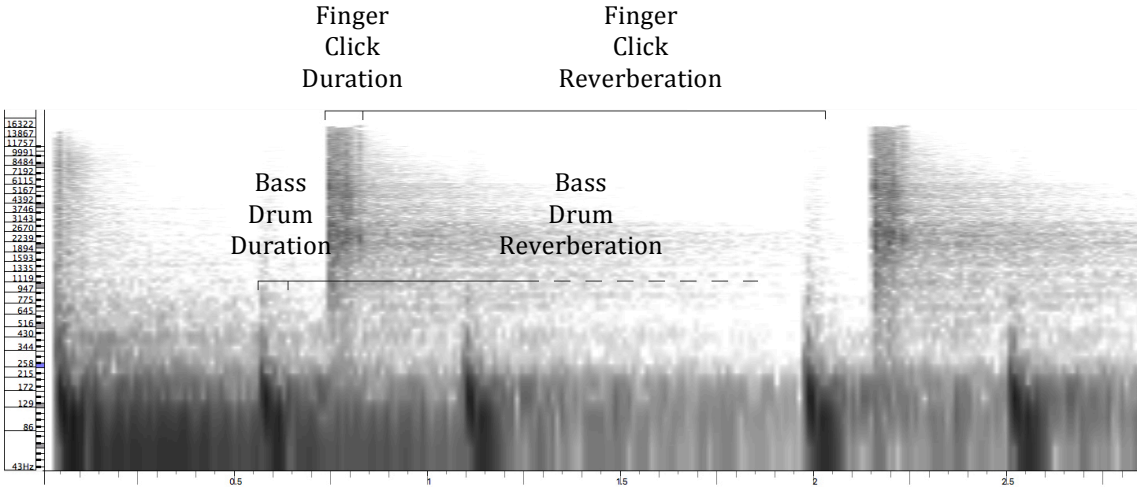


Fig. 2-16: Spectrogram analysis of Lorde recording of *Royals* (0:00 – 0:03)

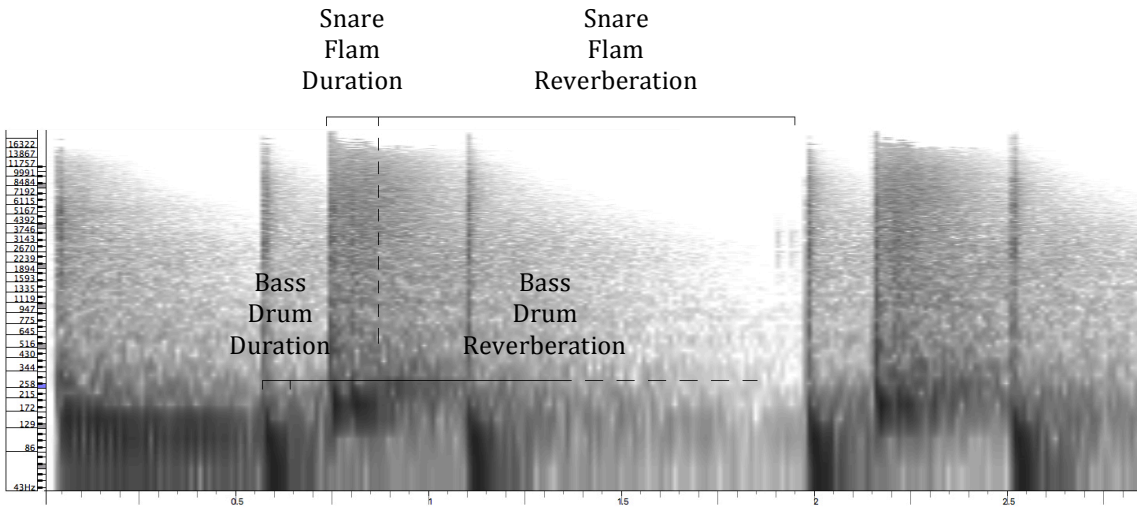


Fig. 2-17: Spectrogram analysis of Youth In Revolt recording of *Royals* (0:00 – 0:03)

The application of this type of stereo reverb gives the impression of sounds occurring in a large and highly reverberant room, within which the listener is placed. Although both recordings of *Royals* are saturated in a similar reverb, the reverb generates two distinct impressions of the environment. Where the Youth In Revolt introduction is typical of rock music in that it gives the impression of an enthusiastic and vociferous drummer attempting to fill every corner of the virtual environment, Lorde's introduction projects a feeling of isolation: a digitally-composed, acousmatic sound reverberating around an empty space.

Analysis of the introduction demonstrates how Youth In Revolt retains a number of characteristics from Lorde's recording of *Royals.* These include the character of the reverb and the lack of performance nuance. However, the change of percussion sounds from electronically sampled to acoustic is clearly a crucial element in this gestural transformation. The change of percussion timbres overrides the lack of performance nuance, which would normally be assumed to be integral to the interpretation of a live performance. Even though other qualities such as the hall-style reverb are significant in generating the effect of a performance within a particular environment, they are also important in generating the gestural transformation that alters the interpretation of an acousmatic sound ethereally echoing around the listener to the perceptual-imaginative impression of an energetic and confident performer, attempting to fill every corner of a large performance space.

As the band enters, they each gesturally transform their individual parts, further contributing to the understanding that the Youth In Revolt recording of *Royals* is a version of the original. Understanding the gestural transformation of the bass follows a similar analytical approach, but crucially involves alteration of the musical material in a manner witnessed in other versions such as All Time

Low's *Umbrella* (2008). Beyond the change of bass sound, the change to the bass phrasing is highly important to the gestural transformation. Rather than transferring the Lorde original wholesale, Kenny Torres (bass player of Youth In Revolt) elects to change the bass part from the original recording. Fig. 2-18 and Fig. 2-19 emphasise how distinct the two bass parts are, yet the role as providing a harmonic foundation and their time of entry remains unchanged from the Lorde recording.
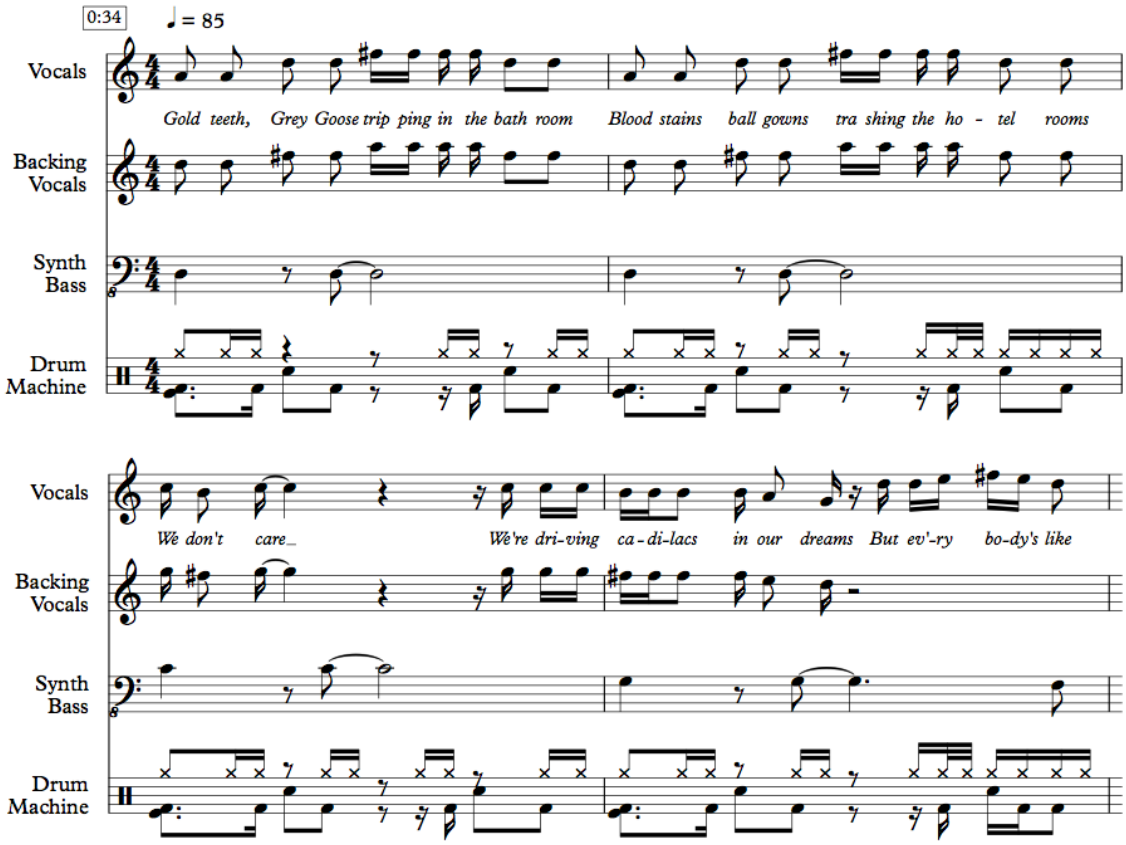


Fig. 2-18: Transcription of *Royals* (0:23 – 0:34) as recorded by Lorde
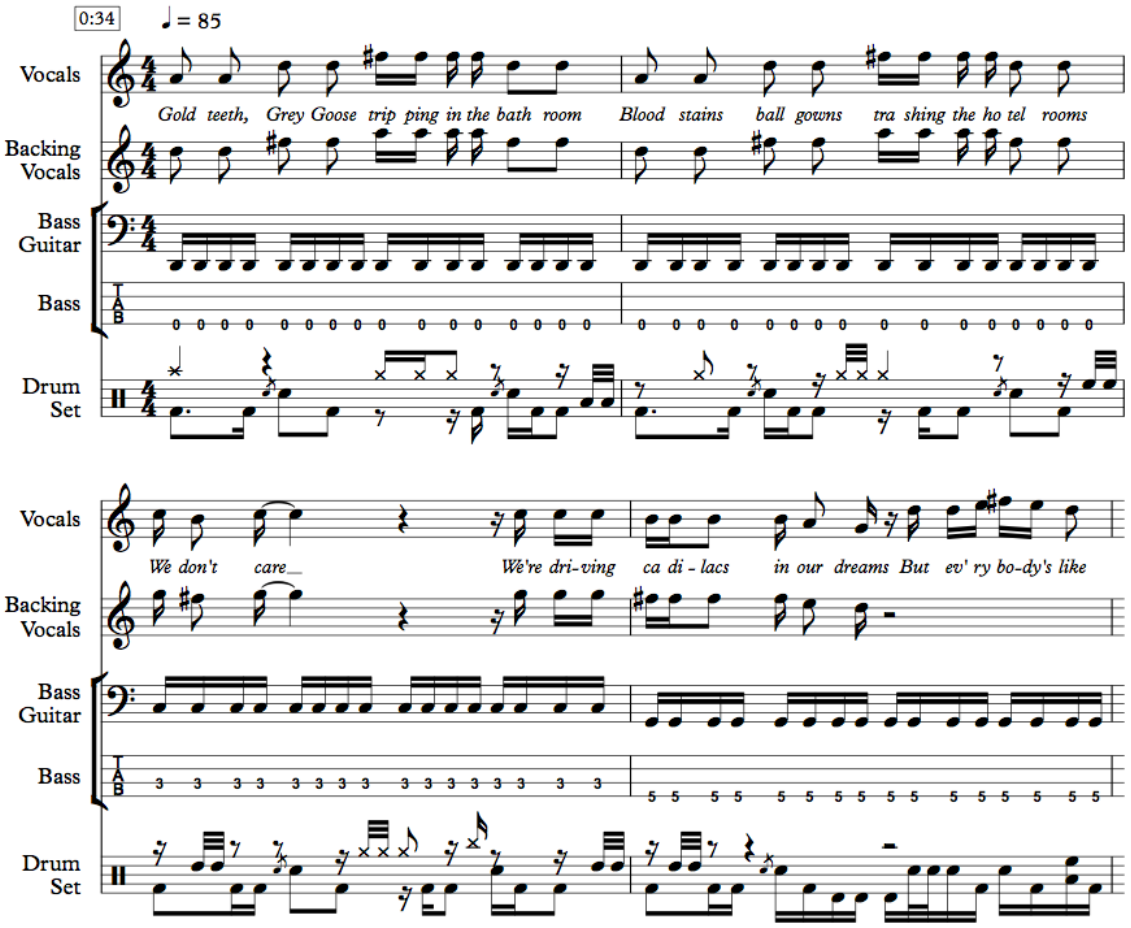


Fig. 2-19: Transcription of *Royals* (0:23 – 0:34) as recorded by Youth In Revolt

The decision to replace a part with a different phrase is relatively common in *Punk Goes...* versions. Where artists create covers by taking the original recording as their central inspiration, performers creating versions may choose to take a further step and opt to build on the track's abstract song form. In this example, Torres has retained the fundamental chord sequence but effectively ignored the choices made in Lorde's recording. This results in the distinct musical foreground and manner of performance witnessed in the Youth In Revolt recording. However, the experienced listener, using the original recording as a reference, still anticipates not only the entrance of a new instrument, but one that will provide the harmonic foundation. Even though there are few similarities between the two bass parts, their role within the ensemble remains. When heard in combination with other instruments that directly reference the original (vocals

and drum set), the bass part is understood as both a rewriting and a gestural transformation of the original. The change from a sparse and syncopated bass line into a driving, semiquaver pulse is significant in altering the gestural interpretation. From Lorde's relaxed, booming bass foundation, Youth In Revolt produce an incessant, driving underpinning that continually propels the track onwards.

Although the most noticeable difference between the transcriptions is the alteration of what is played, the change of instrumental timbre is equally, if not more perceptible between the recordings. Initially, the sound of the Lorde bass blends into the percussion due to its timbral similarities to the sub-bass drum. It is only when the second note occurs that the new part is perceived. The bass part is understood to be of synthesized origin, primarily due to the fact that no acoustic instrument is capable of producing this pure, sub-harmonic tone with very little activity above the fundamental frequency (D3). In addition, the rhythmic precision and dynamic consistency are significant in denying the listener the image of a performer joining in. It is interpreted as acousmatic and joins the percussion introduction in ethereally surrounding the listener with no clear performative origin. In contrast, the nuanced and distorted timbre of the Youth In Revolt bass implies performance on an amplified electric bass guitar. The sound is rich with low and mid-range frequencies that are instantly understood as a new, distinct instrument. Even though the distorted nature of the instrument results in dynamic compression, each note is highly varied. Some notes contain a greater amount of high frequencies that provide an attacking bite to the note, whereas others are duller and give the impression of being quieter. There is no observable pattern to these nuances (other examples have noted a relationship between the nuances and

location on or off the pulse), implying that the pattern is generated by other means.[28]

The gestural interpretation provides some clues. Playing the bass guitar in a controlled and relaxed manner would not result in this type of nuance; it is only forceful and overzealous attendance to the instrument that would result in the highly varied textures heard here. This manner of performance causes the strings of the bass guitar to oscillate wildly, because when they are tuned lower, the relatively loose bass guitar strings are able to vibrate much more freely than those on an electric guitar. As such, the musician picking the repeated note will catch the string in any number of positions and either moving towards or away from the direction of the plectrum. Although the distortion contributes to the impression of a powerful and animated performance, it is the timbral nuances perceived here that are key to the perceptual-imaginative response. In combination with the incessant, repeated semiquaver phrasing, the overzealous and forceful manner brings connotations of an unrefined punk-rock style.

Similar connotations transpire when the distorted electric guitars enter in the chorus. Entering in place of an additional saw-wave synth that doubles the bass, the two guitars are panned to opposing sides of the stereo image, providing width to the centrally placed drums, bass, and vocals. The extra width cements the implications of a live performance interpretation, with the space implied by the stereo-reverb finally utilised. Just as the Lorde saw-wave synth doubles the bass, the replacement electric guitar in the Youth In Revolt version also doubles its respective bass. It is unsophisticated, direct and unremitting, doing nothing more than doubling the bass rather than the more typical task of harmonic filler or lead counterpoint. In conjunction with the subtle coarsening of the vocal grain, the

[28] This nuance of performance is discussed in relation to *Just The Way You Are* on p. 172

instrument teases new musical meaning out of the lyrics. Where Lorde seems resigned and disheartened by the fact that she and her friends will '…never be royals', Youth In Revolt reject the notion. They are engaged with the situation, as though their current standing as commoners can be overcome and changed with endeavour and stubbornness.

2.3.2.2 *UMBRELLA* BY RIHANNA / ALL TIME LOW

The changes made to the musical foreground heard throughout the beginning of *Royals* are relatively small and few. Yet the notion of "playing it your own way" can result in versions that contain more radical changes of musical foreground that also contribute to a distinct gestural interpretation.[29] Following on from *Royals*, All Time Low's *Umbrella* is a typical example of where the listener understands that some aspects of the original are retained, yet the gestural interpretation is highly dissimilar due to a changed musical foreground (altering the interpreted manner of performance).

All Time Low's version of *Umbrella* (2008) is clearly related to Rihanna's original recording (2007). For instance, Alex Gaskarth (lead singer with All Time Low) is understood to have retained Rihanna's nasal vocal grain (in opposition to both the distorted punk-rock instrumental backing and Gaskarth's more typical vocal style) as well as Rihanna's detached vocal style and nuanced inflections. These give the impression that his vocal delivery centres on imitating the idiosyncrasies of the original Rihanna recording. Although there are similarities in the vocals, All Time Low also retain the overarching form as exemplified by the

[29] Although extreme changes of musical foreground occur throughout the *Punk Goes…* catalogue, these are often reserved for cover-versions, discussed in the following section (p. 75)

textural thickening in the chorus and the retention of ringing chords in the bridge. However, a highly distinct gestural character generates a clear change of lyrical and musical meaning. An inexperienced listener may not think that All Time Low has changed much despite hearing their version as being "a little rockier", yet it is clear that All Time Low have chosen to extensively develop and in parts, totally ignore, the majority of Rihanna's recording: an interpretation in opposition to other *Punk Goes…* versions, such as Say Anything's version of *Got Your Money* and parts of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt. Although the consideration of the vocals highlights the obvious gestural links between original and version, investigation of the instrumental backing demonstrates the typically complicated relationship between originals and versions. *Umbrella* highlights how versions can be understood as a development of the original despite the extensive development of the musical foreground, which has a profound effect on the gestural transformation.

All Time Low's instrumental backing creates conventional impression of a live performance occurring directly in front of the listener. It is a change that feeds into issues of interpreted style and is crucial to understanding the changed musical meaning. At a most cursory level, an obvious modification occurs where All Time Low replace Rihanna's sparse, saw-wave synthesized stabs with pulsating guitar phrases and transfer the digitally-sampled percussion onto an acoustic drum set; yet closer investigation reveals that a more nuanced development of the original has occurred. For instance, All Time Low preserve the accentuation of the harmonic sequence in the verses. In Rihanna's recording, each chord change within the IV – V – iii – vi harmonic sequence is marked by a saw-wave synthesizer bass stab and a crotchet-length open hi-hat before the percussion continues under the vocal melody (Fig. 2-20). All Time Low also accentuates each change of chord, but

with an open-strummed crotchet-length power chord instead of a synthesizer chord (Fig. 2-21). Furthermore, All Time Low also links each of these open chords with quaver-length palm-mutes over a driving, unsyncopated drumbeat that projects a double-speed tactus in relation to the original.
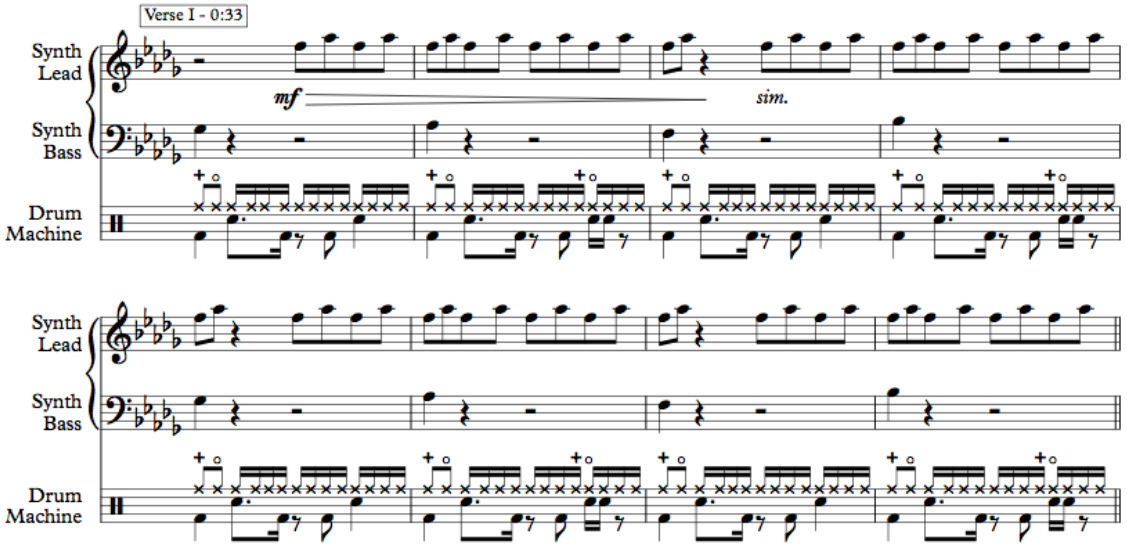


Fig. 2-20: Transcription of instrumental backing in the verse of *Umbrella* as recorded by Rihanna
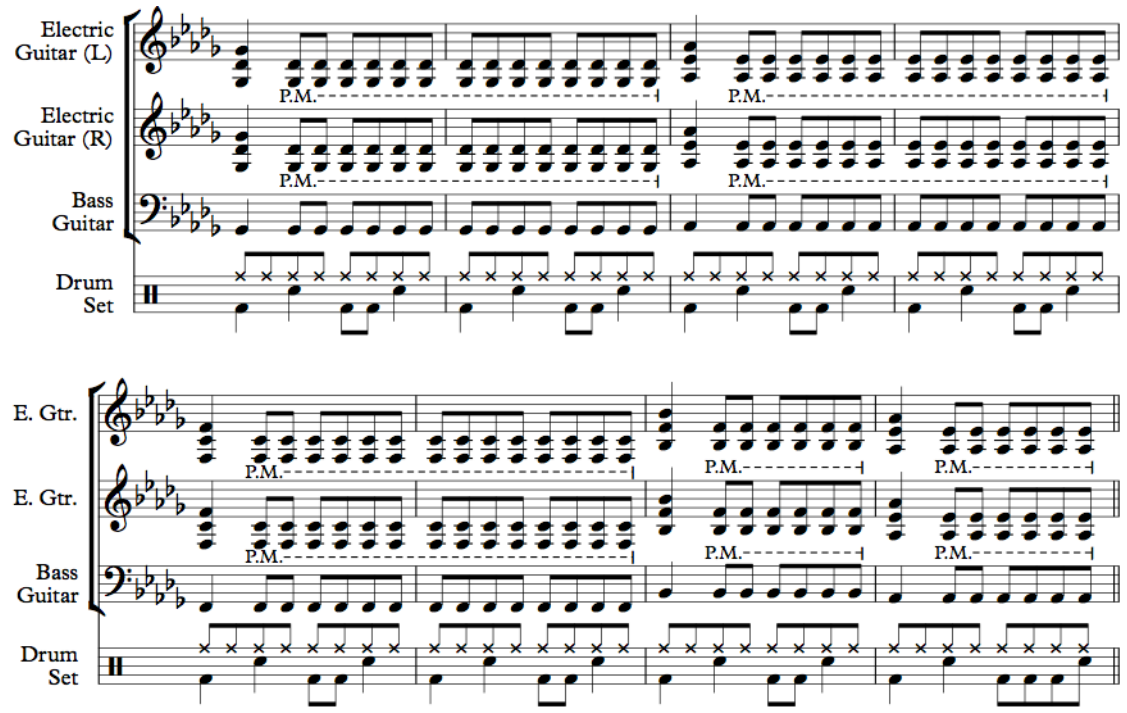


Fig. 2-21: Transcription of instrumental backing in the verse of *Umbrella* as recorded by All Time Low

Where Rihanna's vocal delivery over an acousmatic RnB style backing gives the impression of detached defiance – to whom or to what remains unclear, though some believe the track to trace out a conversation between the devil and Rihanna herself – the distinct gestural interpretation garnered from All Time Low's recording projects a sense of unity and upbeat urgency.[30] The gestural interpretations are key to this change of musical meaning, yet they are contingent on changes to what is played beyond the interpreted manner of performance garnered from the recordings. Rihanna's vocal is repeatedly isolated above a percussion backing, leaving her persona disconnected from her surroundings.

Gaskarth's vocal is not only continually backed by full rock-band instrumentation, but its sonic treatment (reverb, equalisation, etc.) is no different to the surrounding instruments, gesturally binding the vocalist and backing instruments together in a manner not understood in the Rihanna recording. Although the instrumental movement from a saw-wave synth to distorted electric guitar is logical due to their timbral similarities, the addition of the palm-muted quavers between the accentuation of the chord changes counters Rihanna's stop-start instrumental. Where Rihanna's musical foreground is continually stunted and seldom gathers any momentum, the continually pulsing electric guitar supports the sense of incessant progress throughout the verses, contributing to a sense of urgency and insistence initially established by the drum set's projection of a double-time tactus.

Beyond changes to what is played, the individual instrumental textures contribute to the two contrasting gestural interpretations. While Rihanna's percussion dynamically dominates her sonic landscape, the individual sounds are dry, crisp, and texturally thin in comparison to the texturally rich percussion

[30] 'Occult and Prophetic Messages In Rihanna's "Umbrella"': non-scholarly resource #45

sounds heard in the All Time Low recording (a difference most noticeable in the snare drum and semi-open hi-hat). Each of All Time Low's drum timbres is consistent, texturally thick, and dynamically relative, projecting a sense of energetic and powerful live performance. A similar gestural interpretation is gained from the electric guitars, whose palm-muting and modern-type compressed distortion are not the only factors that influence the thick, punchy sound of the guitar; the use of power chords – that creates a new fundamental frequency an octave below that of the root – makes the guitars sound bigger, more assertive and energetic than would be the case in comparison to playing Rihanna's single-note backing.

These gestural transformations are key to understanding the changed musical meaning. Where Rihanna's isolated vocal against the acousmatic backdrop (similar to *Royals*) implies communication with a missing other, All Time Low's driving electric guitar lines, simplistic drumbeats and texturally rich timbres consistently projects an energetic declamation of friendship and unity between the performers themselves and crucially between performers and audience. Placing the listener front-and-centre in a concert setting generates a powerful sense of second-person authenticity, whereby the listener is drawn into the live performance experience such as those described in chapter six.[31] Even though both songs are ostensibly about supporting friends in harder times, All Time Low encourage the listener into believing that they are singing about them through recreating the concert experience in which the band are communicating directly to the listener.

That the gestural transformations result in this reading is unsurprising, given that the lyrical theme of friendship is a common topic throughout

[31] This subject position is examined in relation to record production (p. 292)

contemporary pop-punk. A majority of tracks by associated bands such as The Wonder Years's *Summers In PA* (2011), A Day To Remember's *City Of Ocala* (2013) and Four Year Strong's *Heroes Get Remembered, Legends Never Die* (2008) not only contain lyrical themes centred on friendship, harmony, and common goals, but they are all performed in the energetic, determined manner projected in All Time Low's *Umbrella.* The synthesis of chosen musical phrases (including the power chord-based guitars over a quick drumbeat) and their sonic character (distorted palm-muting and texturally rich) create the virtual image of a particular manner of performance (energetic, determined and upbeat); it is this gestural transformation that is crucial in creating the stylistic link to other pop-punk tracks and projecting a different meaning.

Throughout *Umbrella*, All Time Low recycle phrases from their own gamut of commonly used motifs, replacing the RnB-style motifs heard in the original with pop-punk inspired phrases. As such, All Time Low's version of *Umbrella* is understood as having been performed by All Time Low "with their own gestures" due to the track generating a near-indistinguishable perceptual-imaginative response when compared to a number of their self-composed tracks. The phrasing used by All Time Low is commonly used in a number of All Time Low's self-composed recordings around the time *Umbrella* was released. In tracks such as *Dear Maria, Count Me In* (2007), *Hello Brooklyn* (2008) and *Let It Roll* (2007), this cross-band combination of phrasing occurs:
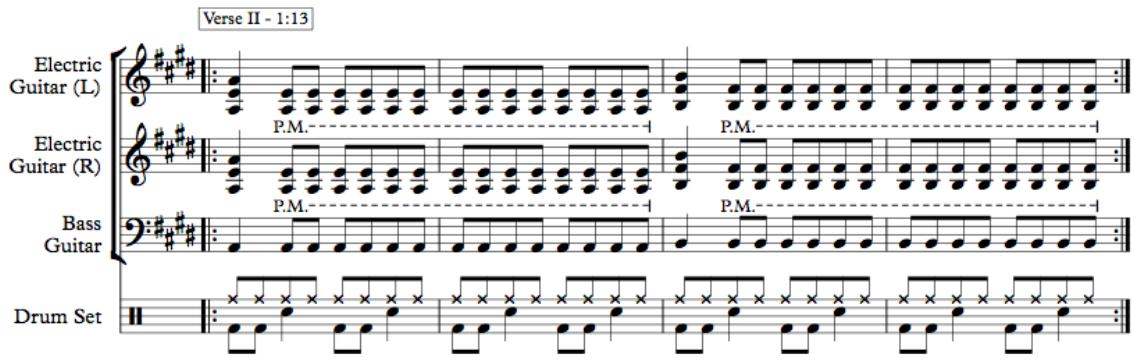


Fig. 2-22: Transcription of *Let It Roll* (verse two) as recorded by All Time Low

The notational similarities between All Time Low's *Umbrella* (Fig. 2-21) and *Let It Roll* (Fig. 2-22) are clear, yet the most striking resemblances are heard in the recordings, where near-identical instrumental timbres, panning, relative dynamics and reverberation are present. Not only have they replaced motifs heard in the original recording with ones from their own gamut of commonly used phrases, but they are understood as having been performed in an very similar manner; both individually and as part of the ensemble. Witness the similar driving nature of the unsyncopated drum beat and palm-muted distorted guitar, the semi-open hi-hat that projects the image of a drummer battling to have his quietest component heard above the din and the bass guitar laying out an unadulterated harmonic foundation upon which the track is built.

All Time Low's *Umbrella* is rare in that its interpreted status as a version is maintained throughout. This is because changes that occur in the original are matched with equivalent changes in the *Punk Goes...* version: an issue that has not been raised in prior musicological analysis of the cover-version genre. This process is clear in the chorus of *Umbrella* where a number of changes occur in relation to the preceding verses. The original choruses contain a shift to a fuller instrumental backing, with the staccato saw-wave bass that marked out Rihanna's harmonic sequence changed to held notes that both trace the harmonic sequence and

underpin the entire chorus, and a new bell-like synthesizer line that provides a harmonic filler. These changes to the instrumental backing are reproduced by All Time Low, but in a manner that corresponds to their overarching pop-punk style. The textural thickening created by Rihanna's more constant bass is replicated by the removal of the palm-mute, creating a more constant stream of power chords throughout the chorus. In addition to these power chords, the bell-like synthesizer line is replaced with an arpeggiated lead guitar line that functions as both a melodic counterpoint and harmonic filler. Similarly, when the instrumental emphasis in Rihanna's final chorus shifts to emphasise a synthesized string line, All Time Low match the change by replacing their arpeggiated lead line with an octave counterpoint. This shift from driving palm-muted verses to openly strummed chords with arpeggiated or octave lead choruses is highly typical to All Time Low recordings, including *Damned If I Do Ya*, *Stella* (2008), *Dear Maria, Count Me In* and *Vegas* (2007).
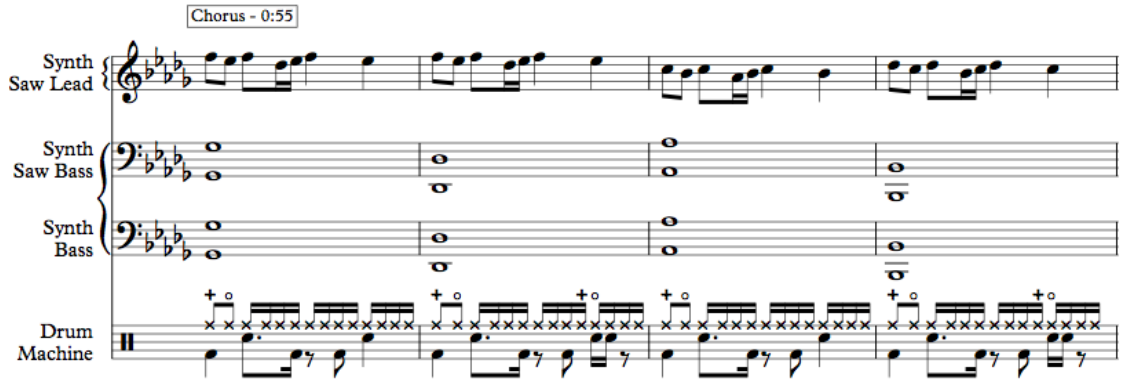


Fig. 2-23: Transcription of *Umbrella* (chorus) as recorded by Rihanna
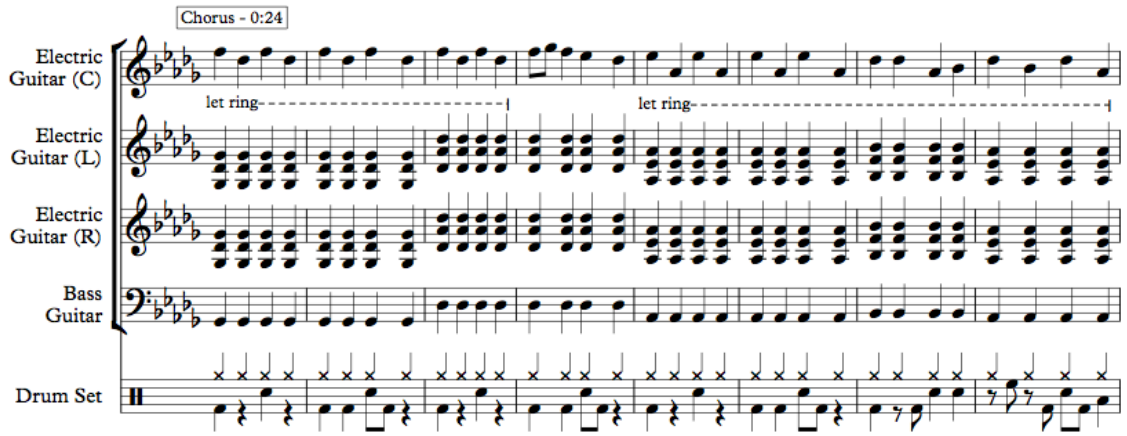


Fig. 2-24: Transcription of *Umbrella* (chorus) as recorded by All Time Low

This consistent adaptation of the original song is unusual for versions, yet it is made easier by the loop-based construction of the original. All Time Low match the introduction of new instrumental streams in the choruses by introducing their own stylistically appropriate phrases to thicken the musical texture. However, analysis and interpretation becomes problematic in cases where the original track freely moves between numerous musical styles. In these instances, it is common for the *Punk Goes...* artist to swing between the poles of cover and version, in a way not sufficiently accounted for in previous scholarship on the cover-version genre.

2.4 Gestural Transformation in the Cover-Version Spectrum

The majority of *Punk Goes...* tracks do not fit into the cover/version dichotomy accepted by previous musicologists. Analytical methodology and language commonly simplify the interpretation of cover-version tracks, implying a consistency of style, intention and affect that is only applicable to a few *Punk Goes...* recordings. Distinct from both covers and versions, I consider cover-version tracks to be recordings that incorporate, in some significant measure, gestures from the

original and those that have been transformed. These sit centrally in the cover-version spectrum diagram (Fig. 2-1).

Within the *Punk Goes…* catalogue, this definition results in two types of cover-version: I define tracks that are understood to incorporate gestures both of the original and of their own throughout the entire track (a combination of cover and version) as static cover-versions. Secondly, I define tracks that are understood to freely swing between copying the gestural character of the original and not (a movement between cover and version) as dynamic cover-versions. Although the former usually borrows from and results in stylistically unvaried tracks, the latter has grown increasingly common during the history of the *Punk Goes…* compilations. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the most obvious, is the proclivity for progressive development within the genre, bringing about an increasing tendency for *Punk Goes…* artists to play with established forms, including those of a gestural nature. As such, a trend to fluctuate between mimicking the original track and playing the song "in their own way" has arisen, resulting in ever-more extreme contrasts of gestural interpretation. The second cause relates to the more modern tendency of reference tracks also containing overt incorporation and movement between numerous musical styles and characters. This shifting reference point clearly affects the interpretation of the cover-version covertly. Examples of this will be examined below.

2.4.1 STATIC COVER-VERSIONS

Where my interpretation of cover and version tracks such as *Umbrella* (2008), *Chocolate* (2014) and *Today* (2014) does not change as the track progresses, there are tracks where the interpretation of a cover-version is maintained. I categorise

these as "static cover-versions". These are tracks that do not fit into the cover/version dichotomy previously applied by musicologists because they are understood to sit centrally between the two poles of cover and version. Static cover-versions are understood to combine gestural transformation with gestural imitation in near-equal measure throughout the entire track. In the *Punk Goes...* catalogue, static cover-versions typically create a problematic mix of live performance gestures and incorporate the loop-based aesthetic projected in a number of originals; the latter often understood to undermine the projection of a live performance archetypal to most rock music.[32]

Although rare throughout the series, I classify tracks such as *Put Yo Hood Up* by Set Your Goals (2008) and *Gin And Juice* by Hot Rod Circuit (2008) as static cover-versions. In replacing the synthesized instruments of the original with amplified acoustic instruments, the artist generates a gestural transformation resulting in the perceptual-imaginative response of a live performance occurring in front of the listener. However, where tracks such as *Umbrella, Chocolate* and *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (2011) successfully project the image of the *Punk Goes...* artist performing the song from start to finish as though a live performance were occurring in front of the listener, the cover-versions of *Gin And Juice* and *Put Yo Hood Up* also use the loop-based procedures of their respective originals. This creates a gestural split between the acousmatic interpretation commonly garnered from loop-based tracks and the embodied live performance interpretation typically garnered from "functionally produced" rock music tracks.[33]

[32] Another viable method for creating a static cover-version could involve the *Punk Goes...* artist imitating the gestural character of the original loop-based track but performing it from start to finish without the looping procedures. There are no examples of this within the *Punk Goes...* series.

[33] 'Functional production' taken from Zagorski-Thomas, 'The Stadium In Your Bedroom' (2010)

2.4.1.1 *GIN AND JUICE* BY SNOOP DOGG / HOT ROD CIRCUIT

In their cover-version of *Gin And Juice* (2008), Hot Rod Circuit retain the musical material of the original Snoop Dogg (1993) backing track (percussion, bass and keyboard harmonic filler). These three tracks are fundamental to a listener understanding the relationship between cover-version and original.
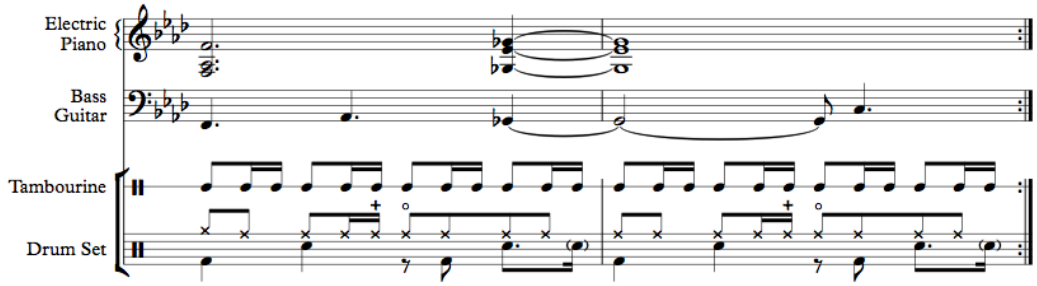


Fig. 2-25: Transcription of instrumental backing loops in *Gin And Juice*, as heard in both recording by Snoop Dogg and Hot Rod Circuit

Although Fig. 2-25 highlights a number of identical characteristics between the two recordings, the perceptual-imaginative response gained from the two recordings is highly distinct. This is primarily due to Hot Rod Circuit re-recording Snoop Dogg's sampled phrases, resulting in gestural transformations that would normally result in a version. Where the original features synthesized instrumental timbres rigidly adhering to a metrically precise framework that project a loop-based acousmatic backing to a rap vocal lead, the Hot Rod Circuit track consists of acoustic (albeit amplified) instrumental timbres saturated in rhythmic, dynamic and textural performance nuances that are interpreted as a live performance occurring in front of the listener: an interpretation that is in direct opposition to the looping sample construction understood from the original. Firstly, the acoustic percussion timbres (particularly the bass and snare drum), their panning across the stereo spectrum, and the rhythmic, dynamic and textural nuances project the

virtual image of a drummer physically performing the track in front of the listener. Note the manner in which some of the open hi-hats and snare drums are rhythmically snatched early, and the uneven dynamics of the hi-hats that, initially, seem to have no discernible pattern. Although the lack of any high frequencies in the electric bass likely masks most nuances, the repeated rhythmic push on the final note of the two-bar phrase and the scuffed note that precedes it (presumably produced by awkward fingerings) all emphasise the performed nature of the original.

Yet Hot Rod Circuit go further than the simple movement from acousmatic to embodied performance. Their performance projects an entirely different character to the one understood from the original. Hot Rod Circuit could have chosen to replicate the character of the original but instead they play it in a different way. The instrumental timbres and performance nuances are central to projecting an overtly hushed, laid-back performance; an embodiment of the central chorus hook. In regard to the drum set timbres, the booming bass drum, texturally thin snare drum (each with no high frequency attack associated with forceful striking of the drum) and thin sizzle of the open hi-hat all project a light touch from the drummer. Although the bass itself is loud in the final mix (heavily compressed to replicate the synthesized sound of the original), the timbre of the instrument is significant in projecting a particular attendance to it. The lack of any high frequencies implies a soft attendance to the instrument. In addition, the consistent timbre and dynamic shape across the length of the held notes also implies a relatively delicate performance: Fig. 2-26 highlights how striking a bass note in a different manner affects the timbre, attack and decay of the tone.

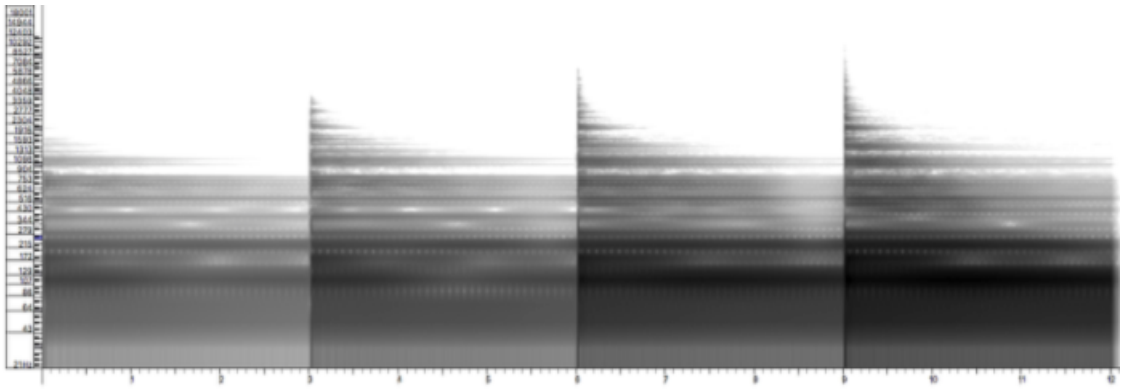


Fig. 2-26: Spectrogram analysis of a bass note being struck with differing amounts of force

As well as the diminished high frequency activity, the dynamic decay of notes plucked with a softer touch is much shallower than those plucked more forcefully. Such a response is present in the *Gin And Juice* cover-version, giving the impression of a soft performance with notions of a controlled and relaxed manner included.

Although the timbre of these instruments is central to the projection of a gentle, laid-back performance, the rhythmic nuances are also significant. Although clear in each individual instrument, the loose rhythmic integrity is only understood when the track is viewed as a whole. Even though pushed and pulled bass notes have already been noted, it is also prominent in the quasi-improvised fuzz-laden lead guitar that eventually evolves into a recognisable development of the original's square-wave synth line. The sparse musical texture rarely lines up completely, with each instrument repeatedly moving out of sync with the rest of the ensemble. Instances of such impreciseness adorn Hot Rod Circuit's first two albums (*If I Knew Now What I Knew Then* (1999) and *If It's Cool With You, It's Cool With Me* (2000) but the interpretation there is very distinct. The timbrally rich and attacking instrumental timbres witnessed across those albums give the impression of very animated, highly energetic and committed performances. The lack of

rhythmic precision there amplifies this interpretation, giving the impression that the performers' enthusiastic attendance to their instruments has lead to other errors (including moments where guitars and vocalists are out of tune). Here, the hazy rhythms augment the interpretations described above: a relaxed nonchalance permeates the instrumental introduction to *Gin And Juice*.

These characteristics all point towards describing the *Punk Goes...* recording as a version, yet repeated listening reveals the recurring location of these performance nuances. This does not affect the overarching character *per se*, but does undermine an understanding of the track as a live performance and the description of this track as a version. Apart from the vocals and fuzz-laden lead guitar, two-bar phrases are looped to create the entire backing track. This interpretation is most prominent in the drum set and bass tracks that run through the majority of the track. Note the consistency in which the closing of the hi-hat is rhythmically snatched at the second bar; the consistently quieter volume of the second note in the bass loop; the repeated hiccup of the third bass note; the ostensibly unstructured hi-hat nuances that are understood as looping when examined closely. These are four amongst many other nuances that precisely repeat in every two-bar phrase.

The loop-based aesthetic is central to the original track (and most others on the 2008 *Punk Goes Crunk* album) and retaining it does have a profound effect on the interpretation. Firstly, the acoustic timbres and performance nuances that otherwise project a live performance occurring in front of the listener are rendered as samples, looped and layered in a manner identical to the original. This is the central reason as to why I describe the track as a cover-version. Although other tracks on the *Punk Goes Crunk* album may perform the track from start to finish, they can be described as cover-versions because they retain the emotional

character drawn from the original (*California Love* by My American Heart (2008) and *Put Yo Hood Up* by Set Your Goals do so to varying degrees in sections of their tracks). Here, Hot Rod Circuit do the opposite by retaining the loop-based aesthetic of the original, but gesturally transforming the loop upon which the track is built. Secondly, the character of the track does not alter beyond the first two-bar loop, hence the description as a static cover-version. The non-looping form of the lead guitar and vocals allows for the possibility of a shift in the gestural character, both are understood to work within the appropriate confines of the funk style. As such, the lack of any development in relation to the gestural transformation means that any initial interpretation is likely to remain throughout the entire track: the loop-based form results in an interpretational stasis in relation to gestures, resulting in a cohesive style, form and cover-version interpretation occurring.

This track is one amongst many that defies the musicological tendency to label tracks within the genre as either a cover or a version. *Gin And Juice* by Hot Rod Circuit combines elements that would normally result in defining it as either a cover or a version. *Gin And Juice* is rare, inasmuch that the loop-based composition means classification does not stray from an initial interpretation. The versions and covers analysed previously may be understood to move, albeit marginally, within a narrow range along the cover-version spectrum, but always within the confines of being understood as either a cover or a version. However, there are numerous examples of *Punk Goes...* tracks that are understood to swing across the cover-version spectrum, with extreme instances freely moving between the poles of cover and version. These tracks incorporate a gestural play, whereby individual sections of the track are understood to gesturally transform or gesturally imitate the referenced original. I identify these tracks as “dynamic cover-versions”.

2.4.2 GESTURAL PLAY IN DYNAMIC COVER-VERSIONS

It should be noted that the above examples of cover-versions not only reference and incorporate loop-based practices that contradict the live performance aesthetic of punk-rock music, but they also appear on early editions of the *Punk Goes…* series that were released prior to 2009. *Punk Goes…* cover-versions released after this point have shown an increased tendency to incorporate a progressive play of gestural transformation, rather than a static combination of new and old gestural characters. I believe that A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone* (2009), intended for but not released on the *Punk Goes…* series, is pivotal for this form of gestural play. A Day To Remember's cover-version of *Since U Been Gone* both imitates Kelly Clarkson's original (2004) and is understood as being played in an altogether different style due to the synthesis of numerous gestural transformations. However, where *Punk Goes Crunk* tracks by Hot Rod Circuit and My American Heart are understood to combine the gestural imitation and transformations throughout their respective cover-versions, A Day To Remember also split the imitation and transformation into distinct formal sections. This was a development new for the genre at the time, which goes beyond taxonomies set out in previous musicology.

2.4.2.1 *SINCE U BEEN GONE* BY KELLY CLARKSON / A DAY TO REMEMBER

Written by Max Martin and Lukasz Gottwald (also known as Dr. Luke), *Since U Been Gone* was originally released in 2004 with recent *American Idol* winner Kelly Clarkson on vocals. Having produced and written chart-pop songs for a host of artists (including Backstreet Boys and N*Sync), *Since U Been Gone* marks a

conscious move by Martin and Gottwald to create alternative-based pop music yet retaining Martin's 'Don't bore us, get to the chorus' philosophy.[34] Regardless of their intentions, Clarkson influenced the style of the final recording, pushing for the guitar-heavy instrumentation heard in the final mix.[35] The track is her bestseller to date and was crucial in her move away from the easily definable chart-pop sound that followed her *American Idol* win in 2002.

The decision to record the cover-version was taken during a professional lull for A Day To Remember. Having finished the promotional touring for their second album *For Those Who Have Heart* by early 2008, they began to write tracks from their follow-up *Homesick* (2009). Realising that their trademark mixture of pop-punk and metalcore was being taken to new extremes, they decided to record a cover-version of *Since U Been Gone* to retain their slowly dwindling market interest (primarily due to the lack of new material for fans) and as a 'feeler for what we were about to do because [we] knew that was the direction that the record was going to go'.[36] Never intended as a single release, the band were surprised that it became a fan-favourite: vocalist Jeremy McKinnon stated that 'It was never meant to be anything more than something to keep people happy 'til we could throw up some new demos or something…It ended up going way better than we expected'.[37]

There is evidence to support the argument that the band A Day To Remember based their recording of the song *Since U Been Gone* on the earlier version with vocals by Kelly Clarkson. Beyond A Day To Remember's promotional video, which parodies Clarkson's version scene for scene, A Day To Remember refer to their recording of 'Kelly Clarkson's song' in numerous interviews. This

[34] Willman, 'Dr. Luke: The Billboard Cover Story', *Billboard*: non-scholarly resource #12
[35] 'Anticipation at Fever Pitch for "Breakaway"', *P.R. Newswire*: non-scholarly resource #30
[36] 'All Signs Points To A Day To Remember', *Sludge Factory*: non-scholarly resource #36
[37] Storr, 'A Day To Remember', *Punktastic*: non-scholarly resource #33

accreditation implies that A Day To Remember consider Clarkson the owner of the song, even though the writing and production are officially accredited to Martin and Gottwald.

Although gestural analysis should take extra-musical aspects into account, it is the recording that principally demonstrates how the band's realisation is a part-imitation and part-development of the earlier Clarkson recording. Shifting between these practices results in the gestural play. The introduction and first stanza of the cover-version begins with three distinct instrumental parts that are understood to either imitate or gesturally transform their respective original instrumental streams. Although a gestural transformation of the guitar arouses new musical meanings, the drum machine and vocals are understood as imitating the original, which creates a interpretational conflict. However, there are many musical and aesthetic similarities, audible differences generate uncertainty as to whether the track is a cover, a version, or somewhere between.

2.4.2.1.1 INTRODUCTION (0:00 – 0:04)

The opening repeated electric guitar chord is a clear example of a gestural transformation. A listener will interpret the sound of each electric guitar as the imagined physical actions of a performing guitarist, primarily due to the presence of performance nuance (strict repetition of each chord would imply a non-human origin, such as computer processed digital sampling). Not only does each recording share identical guitar voicings (although transposed, due in-part to the de-tuned guitars commonly utilised by A Day To Remember), each recording has nuanced inconsistencies of rhythm and chord-to-chord balance that support the interpretation of these electric guitars being played with conscious human effort.

In the Clarkson original, this hypothesis is later reinforced by performance "blemishes", such as an erroneous open E string (0:11); a common guitar performance gesture where the strumming hand continues to strum so as to mask the deadening of the strings caused as the guitarist physically moves between chords.

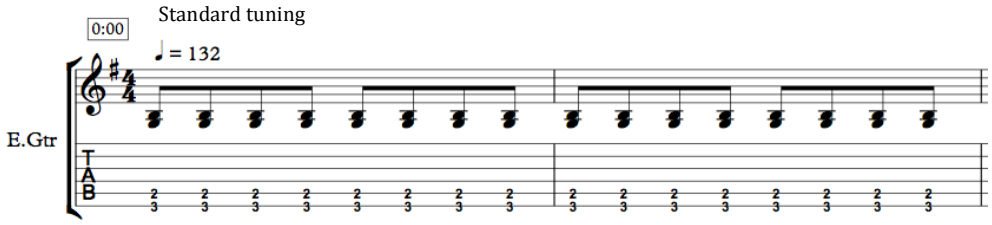


Fig. 2-27: Transcription of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by Kelly Clarkson

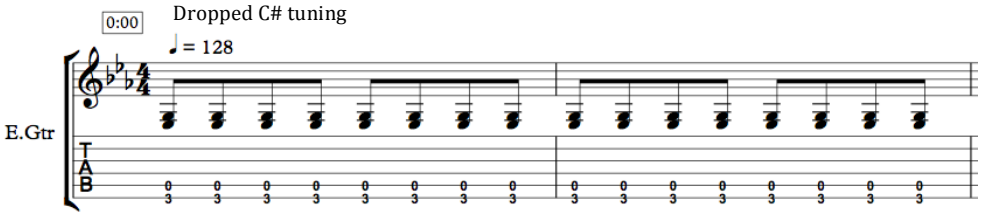


Fig. 2-28: Transcription of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by A Day To Remember

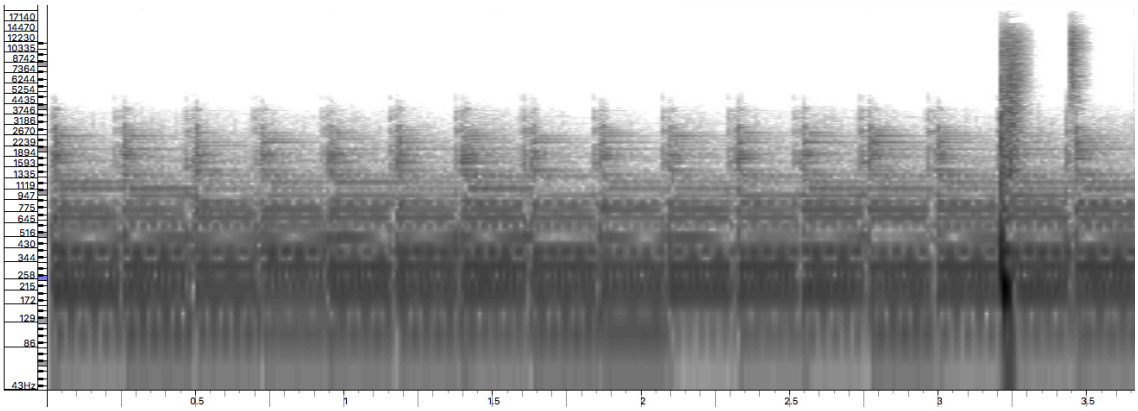


Fig. 2-29: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by Kelly Clarkson, highlighting textural inconsistencies

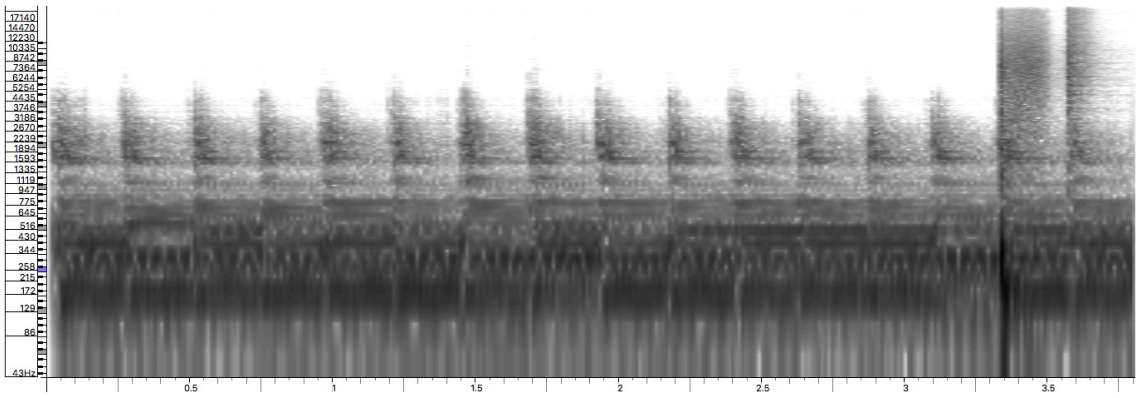


Fig. 2-30: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by A Day To Remember, highlighting textural inconsistencies

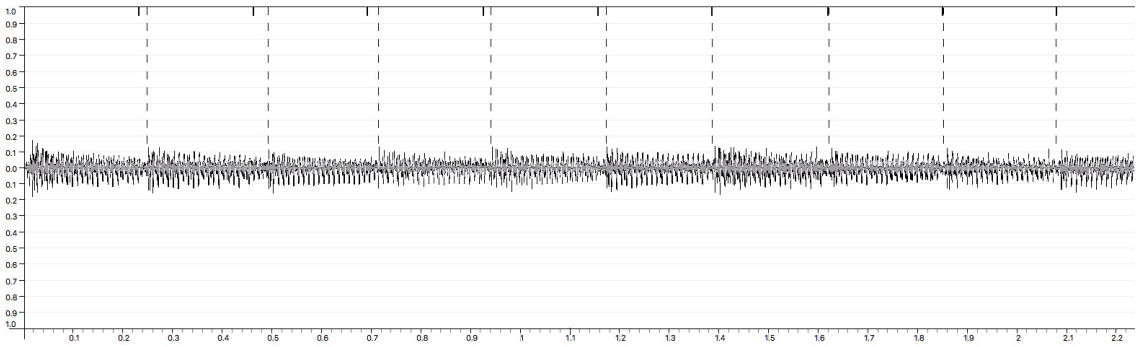


Fig. 2-31: Waveform analysis of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* by Kelly Clarkson, highlighting rhythmic inconsistencies against metronomic pulse

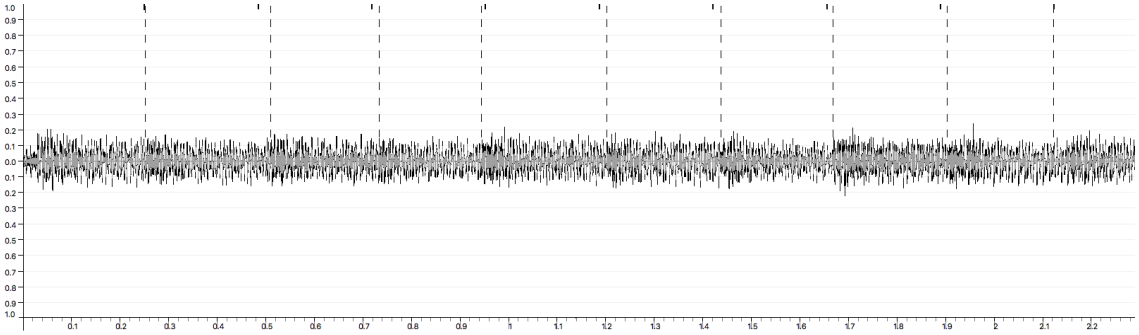


Fig. 2-32: Waveform analysis of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by A Day To Remember, highlighting rhythmic inconsistencies against metronomic pulse

To repeat my contention with Cumming's (2001) performance analyses, it is not enough to state that a listener will "imagine a guitarist playing these chords". Investigating the specifics of a listener's perceptual-imaginative response is vital to the gestural interpretation of each recording. It reveals distinct musical meanings. The above spectrogram analyses (Fig. 2-29 and Fig. 2-30) and waveform analyses

(Fig. 2-31 and Fig. 2-32) highlight small inconsistencies of rhythm and chord balance heard in the opening two bars of both the Kelly Clarkson and A Day To Remember tracks. Firstly, the repeated chords are not perfectly metronomic, yet they are rhythmically consistent enough to be heard as a pulse and project a metre; secondly, the lower note of each chord is dynamically emphasised; finally, there are no erroneous notes due to inaccurate strumming causing scuffed strings. These relative consistencies imply that a listener will almost certainly interpret these opening chords as being performed with a repeated gesture. It is through my own experience as a guitarist and pedagogue that I have found a guitarist is more likely to achieve the relatively uniform chordal balance and near-metronomic accuracy as demonstrated in these first two bars by playing the chord with a repeated "down-stroke" gesture. If a guitarist were to play this figure with an alternating down-up strumming motion, the initial down-stroke motion is likely to emphasise the lower string and conversely, the up-stroke return will tend to accentuate the higher string, resulting in an increased disparity in chordal balance; the kind of disparity that is not encountered on either Clarkson's or A Day To Remember's recordings. Furthermore, a return up-stroke is highly likely to contain scuffed, extra notes caused by catching adjacent strings. In testing this hypothesis, I re-recorded the guitar introduction (Fig. 2-28) with an alternating down-up strumming motion. Fig. 2-33 reveals the sonic differences between those chords strummed on the beat and between the beats. Observe the manner in which the strumming pattern corresponds to two chordal textures: the lower frequencies are emphasised on the beat and the higher frequencies are emphasised off the beat in a manner not witnessed in either the Kelly Clarkson or A Day To Remember recordings.

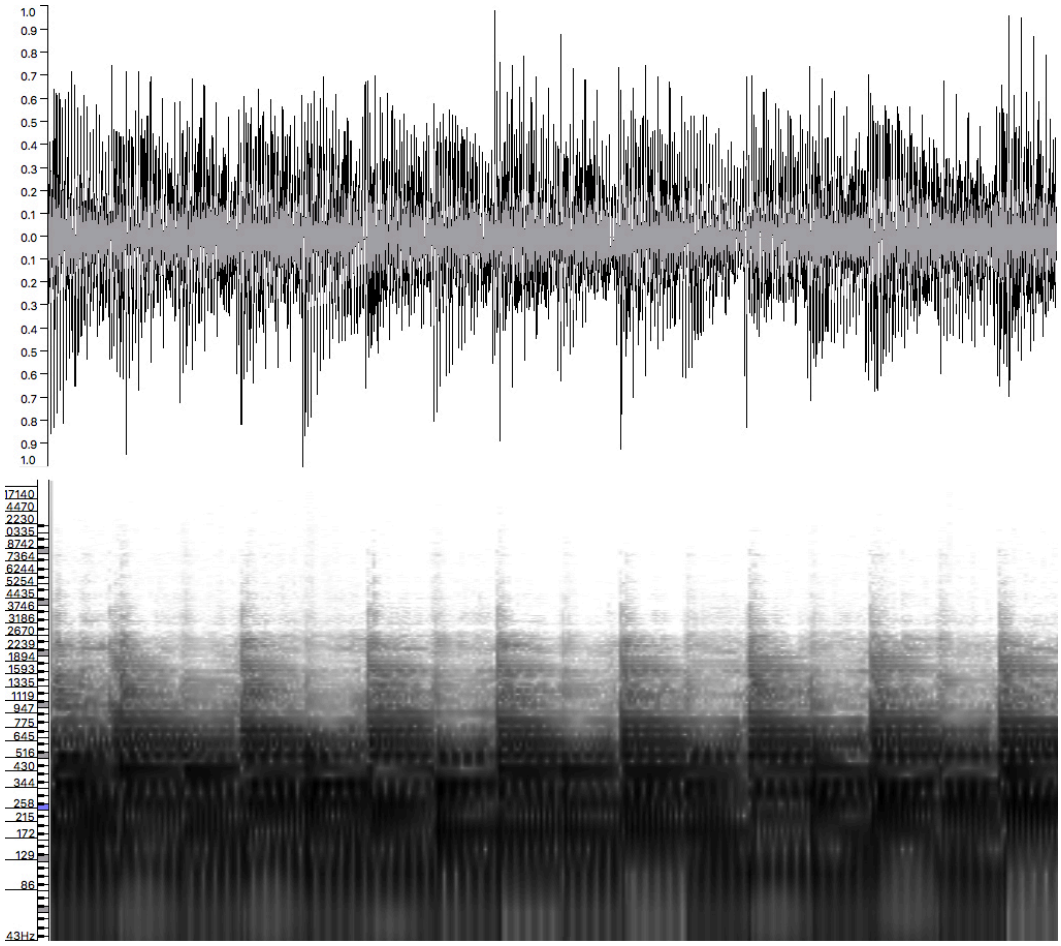


Fig. 2-33: Waveform analysis with accompanying spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Since U Been Gone* (ADTR) recorded by the author using alternating strumming

Although a listener may imagine the guitarist performing a similar gesture for these two recordings of *Since U Been Gone*, the sound of the opening chords in each track implies that the instrument is being attended to with subtly different gestures that result in an altered interpreted emotional character. The following is a non-exhaustive discussion of differences between the recordings, subsequent implications to a listener's perceptual-imaginative response, and the possible consequences for a gestural interpretation.

The recording by A Day To Remember is slightly slower (128 bpm compared to 131 bpm); aided by the lower pitch, this steadier pace contributes to an increased sense of gravitas to the imminent lyrical narrative. The sound of the A Day To Remember guitar has a more cutting attack, often caused by a guitarist who

has strummed the strings with more vigour. This interpreted increase of energy would correspond with a gesture that incorporates a wider arc of strumming motion; the increased distance of arm travel causes the plectrum to be travelling quicker as it strums the string. A faster plectrum speed triggers the string to vibrate with more amplitude, increasing number of overtones present in the recording. This corresponds to the sound of the guitars in the A Day To Remember recording, causing the guitars to sound texturally thicker and louder in dynamic, implying a sense of increased strength.

Differences such as the more cutting attack, increased distortion and thicker texture as heard in the A Day To Remember recording may be a consequence of electronic means – be it dialling in more gain at the amplifier or generated in post-production processes – but key is their effect on the gestural reading of the perceived audio. The thicker texture in conjunction with the brighter attack can further the interpretation that the guitar was played in a gesturally more energetic manner. From this perceptual-imaginative response, subjective variance permits different interpretations of musical meaning; a listener may hear this introductory section by A Day To Remember as being more determined, or perhaps more angry in emotional character. In addition, A Day To Remember's guitars display relatively more inconsistencies in terms of rhythmic and textural nuances. Could this imply that a less skilful musician perhaps recorded the guitar part? Or by a guitarist with less regard to accuracy? Could it be suggested that this performer is self-taught and thus, their unrefined technique not able to produce consistent chords? Or has the performer, by attending to the instrument in a more aggressive and energetic manner, reduced their ability to play consistently and accurately? All this is in contrast to the Clarkson version

where the texturally thinner and quieter, less invasive audio presents what can be imagined as relatively gentle, relaxed gestures.

Related in transcription, the two-bar motif gesturally transformed by A Day To Remember projects a distinct performance character. In perceiving this gestural transformation, a listener will imagine different gestures associated with the way that the musician attended to their instrument. Although it is only in direct comparison that an investigation can distinguish these nuanced characteristics, it does not restrict an experienced listener perceiving them subconsciously and interpreting the differences in the track in such a way as explained above, regardless of understanding the significance of the transformation.

2.4.2.1.2 FIRST STANZA (0:04 – 0:18)

In the first stanza, the introduction of the drum machine percussion and vocals complicate the cover-version classification. Where a listener will interpret the distinct gestural character of the opening electric guitar phrase and label the track as a version, the drum machine and vocals clearly imitate the gestural character (or lack of) garnered from the original. The synthetic drum machine timbres are devoid of performative gestures, beyond the possible notion of pressing play on a device to launch the looping drumbeat. Not only does this match the acousmatic interpretation of the Clarkson original, but both cause a gestural disorientation whereby the undoubtedly embodied guitars, strumming in a typically rock style, conflict against the disembodied sound of the drum machines. In further contrast to the gesturally transformed guitar, Jeremy McKinnon (vocalist of A Day To Remember) has clearly attempted to imitate Clarkson's original vocal character. This is evident through many aspects including pronunciation (for instance, one of

Clarkson's many idiosyncratic vocalisations is a pronounced /t that brings the word 'pretend' to a close; McKinnon's imitation seems more than coincidental), low pitch (both vocalists sing in the lower echelons of their vocal ranges), hushed speaking-volume dynamic (evidenced in the generally husky delivery) and identically placed and overt intakes of breath. Both Clarkson and McKinnon give the impression of an unmediated and candid persona, delivering their opening stanza directly to the listener as if they were friends engaged in personal conversation.

These two elements gesturally imitate their original counterparts, confusing matters relating to the cover-version spectrum. I consider the opening eighteen seconds of *Since U Been Gone* to be typical of a cover-version (i.e. placed in middle of the spectrum), not unlike Hot Rod Circuit's recording of *Gin And Juice* discussed previously. Yet where *Gin And Juice* contains a consistent combination of imitation and transformation throughout the entire track, subsequent sections of *Since U Been Gone* create a gestural play in which differing amounts of imitation and transformation are interpreted. This gestural play affects the cover-version classification. In the section that follows (0:18 – 0:45 encompassing stanzas two and three), a sudden and dramatic gestural shift occurs. Centred on the introduction of heavily distorted electric guitars and acoustic drum set, these instruments generate an entirely different gestural character, not only affecting the listener's cover-version classification but also drawing out a comedic aspect highlighted in A Day To Remember's promotional video.

2.4.2.1.3 STANZAS TWO & THREE (0:18 – 0:45)

Where the instrumental backing in the Clarkson original continues in the same vein, A Day To Remember filter the song through their own motifs and gestures, creating a completely distinct perceptual-imaginative response. Beginning with the guitars, changes are made to how the I – ii – vi chord sequence is performed. The most obvious difference is the change made to the guitar sound. A Day To Remember replace the clean sounding electric guitar with a heavily distorted instrument. This change of timbre caused by an electronic clipping of the guitar's signal increases the harmonic and enharmonic overtones, instantly thickening the instrumental texture at 0:18. In addition, A Day To Remember do not perform the chord sequence in the functional manner witnessed in the Clarkson original. A Day To Remember replace all the chords with power chords. This change is typical for their punk-rock style and further thickens the instrumental texture by creating new fundamentals below the root note.

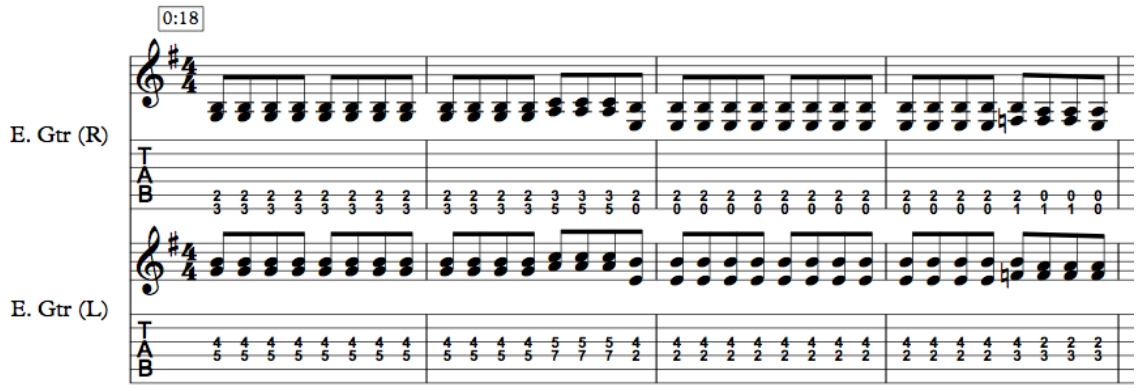


Fig. 2-34: Transcription of electric guitar phrase at 0:18 in *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by Kelly Clarkson

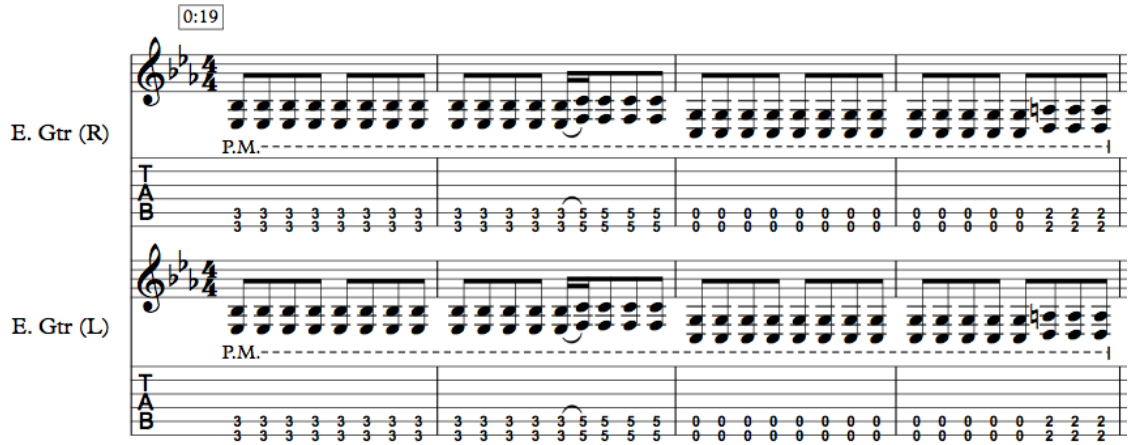


Fig. 2-35: Transcription of electric guitar phrase at 0:18 in *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by A Day To Remember

Although Fig. 2-34 and Fig. 2-35 highlight similarities between the fretted root notes, A Day To Remember's drop-C tuning (standard for their entire back catalogue), palm-muted performance, and stereo-spread (two guitars panned left and right) creates a powerful, menacing sound that entirely surrounds the listener. When this character is combined with the driving quaver power chords, the guitar provides an intimidating undercurrent to the lyrical narrative in a manner that contrasts Clarkson's guitar intimate setting and delicate performance.

The switch to acoustic drums is a gestural transformation in itself, yet this does not fully describe the changes of interpretation: the manner of interpreted performance is crucial to understanding the musical meaning. Nevertheless, there are changes to the drumbeat, which also have a consequence for the perceptual-imaginative response. Consider Fig. 2-36 and Fig. 2-37 that highlight the differences between the drumbeats:
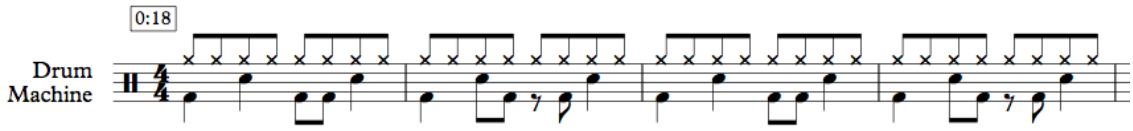


Fig. 2-36: Transcription of drumbeat at 0:18 in *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by Kelly Clarkson
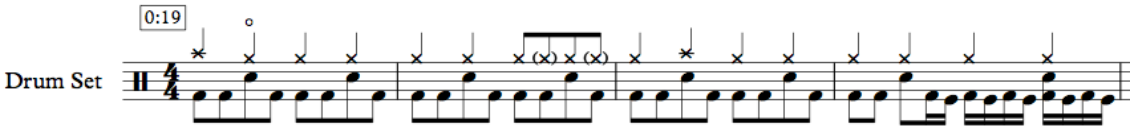


Fig. 2-37: Transcription of drumbeat at 0:18 in *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by A Day To Remember

While there are a number of changes made to the drumbeat, these changes go initially unnoticed. This is because the semi-open hi-hat is very quiet and the bass drum occurs in unison with the newly introduced electric guitars and bass guitar; the former dominating the sonic landscape. Yet the change to continual quaver bass drums does have an effect on the overriding gestural interpretation, bringing a sense of insistence, driving the track forwards with an unrelenting momentum that is not heard in the Clarkson original. The bass drums themselves sound consistent and are, as is typical for the style, texturally rich, attacking and dynamically loud, creating the image of a repeating powerful and resolute performance gesture. Such an image is complimented by the snare drum whose loud, rich, attacking sound is akin to those understood in *Royals* by Youth In Revolt.

Even though the quietest element, the hi-hat is the crucial identifier of the interpreted gestural image. In opposition to the precise "chick" of the synthetic closed hi-hat in Clarkson's original recording, the hi-hat in the A Day To Remember recording is semi-open, resulting in a splashy and noisy sound that rings throughout the phrase. This sound is an indicator of a drummer trying to play the hi-hat forcefully. The hi-hat doesn't get louder *per se*, but the duration of the cymbal(s) lengthen as sound continues to emanate from the still moving cymbals

rubbing against each other. This is demonstrated in Fig. 2-38; a waveform analysis of a recording made by the author.

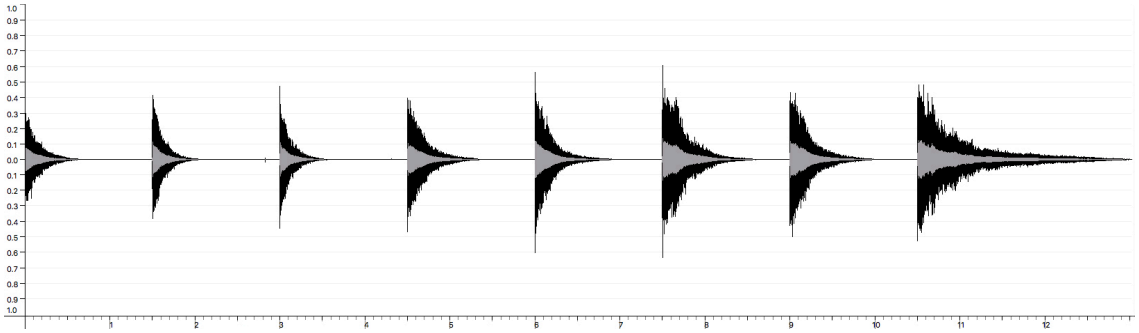


Fig. 2-38: Waveform analysis of hi-hat being struck with ever-more force (taken from recording made by the author)

Although in the background, this sound is crucial to the interpretation of a drummer trying to play the hi-hat loudly, so as to be heard over the other elements of the drum set. When heard in combination with the other percussive timbres and the change of drumbeat, the drumbeat gives a sense of unrelenting and formidable performance gestures that are in stark contrast to not only the acousmatic interpretation of the drum machine, but the light, thin textures heard within.

The electric bass guitar enters with the rest of the band. The bass functions as the harmonic foundation and contributes to projected image of a live performance occurring before the listener. Placed centrally, it is treated with hall reverb in the same manner as the other instruments, further supporting the coherent sonic environment. Combined, these accompanying instruments alter the emotional character of the vocals, even though the vocal character does not change in comparison to either the opening stanza or the Clarkson original. This full-band backing brings a menacing, intimidating undercurrent to the vocals: with the band now overpowering the vocals, the vocalist's presence now appears more sinister, as if delivering threats in a calm and ominous manner.

Although my ears have become accustomed to the changes of style, discussion with inexperienced listeners reminded me of my initial shock at this

particular change. However, some form of change is anticipated, thanks in part to a guitar feedback crescendo, the gestural shift that occurs at 0:18 is not without a comedic element. Most overt is the sense of surrealism, created by the juxtaposition of two extremely contrasting musical styles. Beyond the surrealist nature of the juxtaposition, A Day To Remember have created a parody of Clarkson through imitation of her track and more crucially, her vocal style: although there are a number of differences between the two recordings, the radical shift of style makes A Day To Remember's earlier imitation retrospectively seem like a closer replication than it actually is.

2.4.2.1.4 CHORUS (0:44 – 1:03)

These gestural transformations that affect the interpreted meaning of the track clearly influence the cover-version classification of the A Day To Remember track. From the initial cover-version interpretation, the change of gestural character creates a movement towards the version end of the spectrum. At this point, A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone* could be described as a version of the song. These changes made by A Day To Remember are referenced against the Clarkson original that has remained gesturally resolute from the opening stanza. In this instance, it is changes made by A Day To Remember that alter the listener's interpretation of the track. Yet in the chorus that follows (beginning at 0:44), changes in the Clarkson original result in another swing across the cover-version spectrum, towards being interpreted as a cover, rather than a version or even a cover-version.

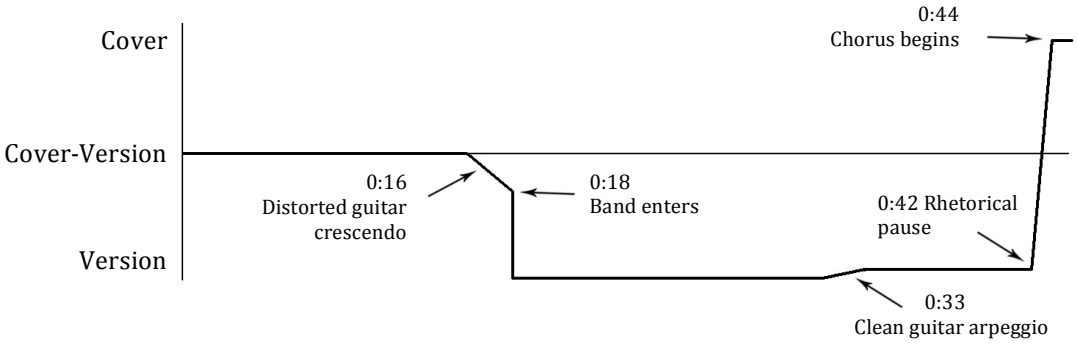


Fig. 2-39: Diagrammatic representation of how *Since U Been Gone* by A Day To Remember moves across the cover-version spectrum

In comparison to the other full-band sections, the choruses are understood to share a higher number of similarities. This interpretation is not necessarily due to similar gestural responses garnered from both recordings, but due to the sudden and marked closing of the gestural differences relative to the previous sections of each respective track. This structure is heard in other *Punk Goes…* cover-versions, such as *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans, *Problem* by Set It Off, and Issues's *Boyfriend*. These three examples are amongst many other *Punk Goes…* cover-versions where the listener interprets individual sections of each track as being nearer the cover end of the spectrum, despite a listener interpreting gestural differences between the original and cover-version. However, those cases are due to the *Punk Goes…* artists making a conscious return towards gestures projected in the original track. In *Since U Been Gone*, interpreting the chorus as a cover is not caused by changes made by A Day To Remember, but rather by the Clarkson recording "catching up" with gestural changes made earlier in the A Day To Remember adaptation. Where a marked change in gestural character in the A Day To Remember recording occurs at 0:18, there is an equally sudden but not so strident change of gestural character around the rhetorical gap at 0:42 in the original *Since U Been Gone*. In this respect, *Since U Been Gone* is comparable to other tracks such as *Toxic* by Further Seems Forever (2009) and

Yeah X3 by Allstar Weekend (2011), where gestural shifts in the original track are interpreted to realign with changes already made in the cover-version. This sudden and profound closing of the gestural gap results in a re-evaluation of the A Day To Remember track against the cover-version spectrum. The A Day To Remember recording is still understood as containing gestural transformations, but these are much fewer and more nuanced than those encountered in the prior section (0:18 – 0:45); where that section was understood as being a version of the original, Clarkson's shift in gestural character at 0:43 results in a profound swing of interpretation from version to cover.

Direct and isolated comparison of the two choruses highlights a number of differences that result in distinct perceptual-imaginative responses to the music. Yet despite gestural transformations being understood, crucial is the relative convergence of the gestural character in comparison to the prior verses. This coming together is heard in all the instrumental streams, but most obviously so in the electric guitars, vocals and acoustic drum set. Fig. 2-40 is a transcription of each chorus and highlights a number of differences, including each drummer using different elements of the drum set to perform two different drumbeats, and A Day To Remember's transformation of the two guitar parts:

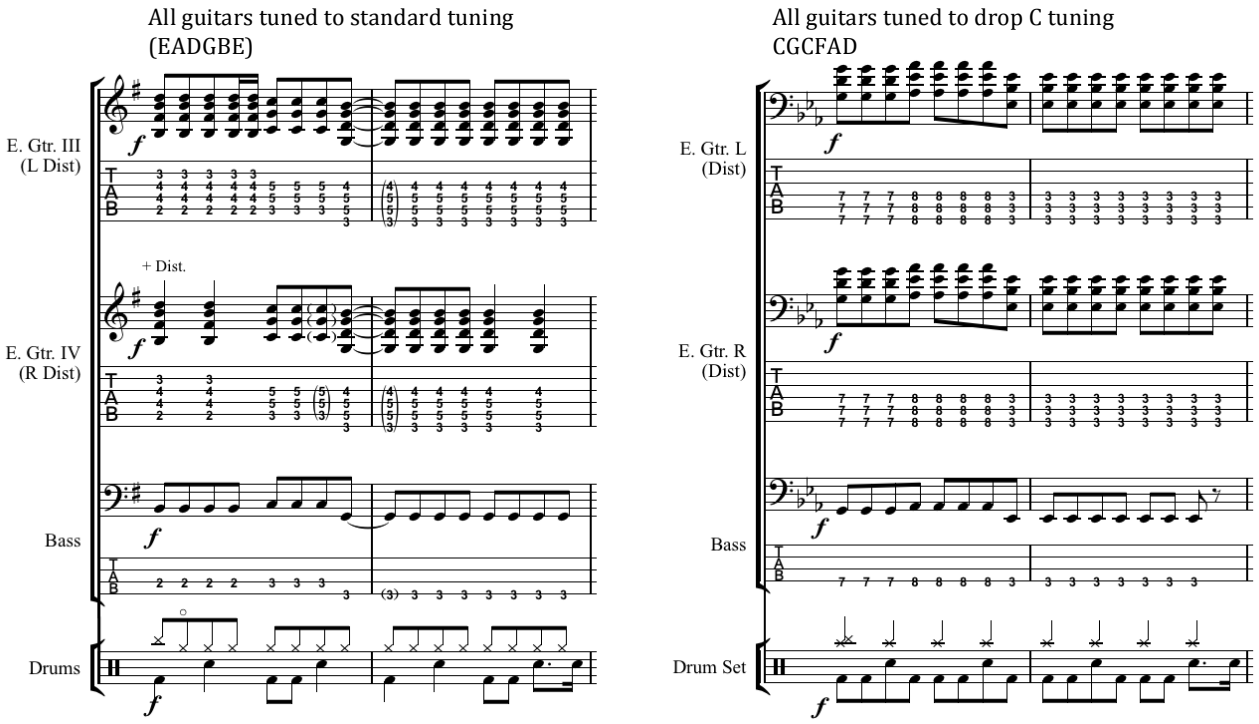


Fig. 2-40: Transcription of chorus to *Since U Been Gone* as recorded by Kelly Clarkson (left) and A Day To Remember (right)

Both project an identical crotchet-level tactus; isolated comparison of the drumbeats hints at two distinct interpretations. The major differences are the A Day To Remember drumbeat featuring a continually pulsing bass drum and a riding of the crash cymbal. Although these differences contribute to a sense of incessant drive and an extreme attempt to be as loud as possible, the most telling differences occur in the individual timbres that comprise the completed drum set. As is common in the rock-style songs in the *Punk Goes…* series, the cover-version's bass drum is dynamically louder, texturally more dense and has a sharper attack than its counterpart in the Clarkson recording. A similar interpretation is understood from the snare drum, where a relatively high-pitched and snappy snare drum is replaced by a highly reverberant and thick snare drum by A Day To Remember. When compared directly, the A Day To Remember drum set sounds louder and as though it has been attended to in a more aggressive manner, yet this does not mean that the Clarkson recording projects a wholly contrary response.

Although the differences may be amplified in direct comparison, understanding the Clarkson drum set within the context of its own track actually projects a very similar gestural response. Where there are no gestural similarities between the recordings in the previous section, here, the presence of some likenesses renders this chorus section a cover. Despite these likenesses not being enough to interpret other songs and even other sections of *Since U Been Gone* a cover, the relative convergence of gestural character at this particular point is enough to shift the interpretation. Firstly, this is the moment that the acoustic drums enter, creating a clear shift from the acousmatic drum machine to an embodied acoustic drum set. This in itself however, is not enough to affect evaluation in terms of the cover-version spectrum, for the acoustic drumbeats could have been understood to have been played in entirely different ways. Even though the sets of acoustic drums sound different and the differences of gestural interpretation are amplified when compared in isolation, understanding the gestural interpretations in relation to the changing perceptual-imaginative response that occurs as the track progresses highlights that there are many shared elements to the gestural interpretations.

Beyond the switch to acoustic drums that are understood as being attended to by a performer in a live setting, the chorus drumbeats share a lack of performative nuances, relative dynamics and some textural characteristics, in comparison to an absolute contrast of drumbeats heard in the verses. Both drum sets include an attacking snare drum that is consistent in terms of dynamics and tone, implying that the snares are being struck with all the force the drummer could muster. A similar interpretation is garnered from the bass drum, with the open hi-hat used by Clarkson's drummer so as to generate the impression of volume through a thickening of the texture, even though the hi-hat itself is not very

loud. Although the Clarkson drum set is generally quieter in comparison to the other instruments, the dynamic and textural uniformity mean that it is not understood as being played with any less force that its a Day To Remember counterpart; if anything, the interpretation projects the image that the drummer is further away from the listener rather than any portraying a different gestural image. Of course, understanding the similarities in perceptual-imaginative response are heightened by both Clarkson's switch to an acoustic drum set and the rhetorical gap that directly precedes the entry of the acoustic drums. The sudden introduction of an embodied performer in the Clarkson recording will sound marked against the acousmatic drum machine prior, contributing to the relative convergence of the gestural character, despite gestural transformations being present in the cover-version.

A similar analytical narrative occurs within the guitar parts. Where the guitar parts in the verses were very distinct (Clarkson's centrally placed, solo, clean guitar strummed lightly compared to A Day To Remember's stereo-spread, highly distorted, aggressive palm-muted performance), the chorus features a coming together of the imagined performative gestures that also contributes to understanding the chorus as a cover. As with the drums however, there are clear differences between the two sets of guitar performances; differences that are highlighted when comparison is made in isolation from the rest of the track. Even though the guitar parts provide the harmonic filler in both recordings, their performance results in two contrasting musical foregrounds. The guitars most obviously differ in terms of timbre: where the A Day To Remember guitars are severely compressed, heavily distorted and texturally thick as a result of the high-gain amplifiers commonly used by the band, the Clarkson guitars have a much

cleaner sound, which results in a relatively thinner but much brighter and more attacking sound.[38]

Further differences occur in what is performed by the two sets of guitarists. Although a iii – IV – I harmonic sequence is heard in both choruses, each are heard in a different key (A Day To Remember's recording is down a minor third due to the lowered guitar tunings, however the root note remains on the 3rd fret of the lowest string), with the altered voicings and distinct rhythmic patterns as transcribed in Fig. 2-40. Where the guitars backing Clarkson play two discrete rhythms and outline a 5-4-3 melodic counterpoint, A Day To Remember's guitars play the chord sequence with power chords in a ceaseless quaver pulse. In choosing to perform the harmonic sequence in this manner, A Day To Remember's recording should offer a highly distinct gestural response (aggressive, energetic, unsophisticated performance), I understand the gestural responses to be similar. Further comparison reveals an underlying change of gestural character that occurs between the verses and choruses of both recordings, contributing to the notion that the cover is understood as a cover of the original.

Although the guitars have different musical foregrounds, they do share similar performative nuances. These matching nuances are significant. In both recordings, chords that are heard on the beat generally emphasise lower notes and appear thicker in texture than those chords heard off the beat, where higher notes are emphasised. Because of this, I argue that a listener will imagine a guitarist utilising an alternating 'down-up' strumming motion in contrast to the repeated down-strokes of the introduction and verse. In performing a down-stroke on the beat, the guitarist will unintentionally give emphasis to the lower notes of the chord resulting in a chord with greater textural thickness. Conversely, the

[38] Thank you and acknowledgement listings on their albums reveal their sponsorship deals, including those of Mesa Boogie, Peavey and Bogner who produce high-gain guitar amplification.

returning up-stroke motion employed to play chords off the beat is consistent with the relatively 'thinner' chords, as the up stroke emphasises the higher notes of the chord causing a chord that has a thinner texture. Although the guitar audio cannot be separated from its context, the following transcriptions are accompanied by the strumming pattern that corresponds to the textural and dynamic nuances encountered in both recordings.

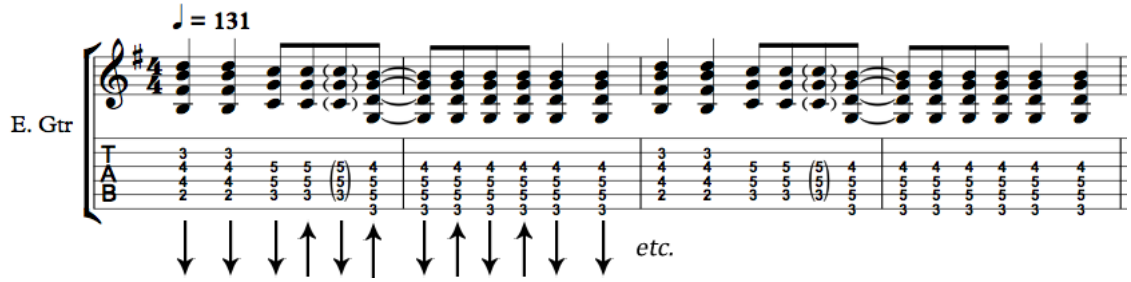


Fig. 2-41: Transcription of *Since U Been Gone* chorus (Clarkson) rhythm guitar with inferred strumming pattern

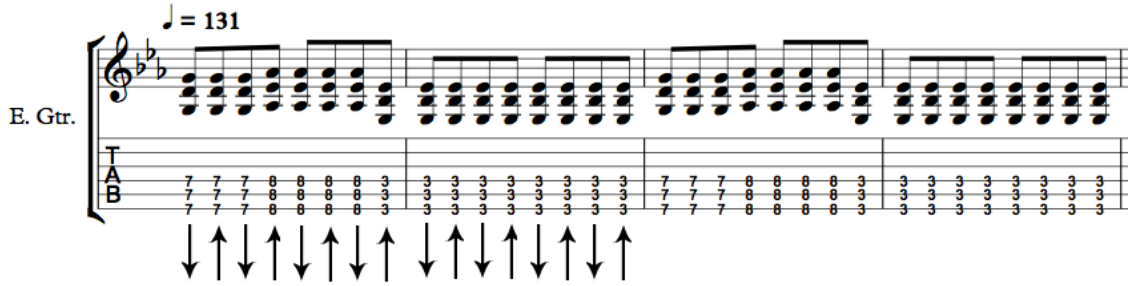


Fig. 2-42: Transcription of *Since U Been Gone* chorus (ADTR) rhythm guitar with inferred strumming pattern

In the Clarkson track (Fig. 2-41), some of the individual strumming motions do not strike the strings and no sounding note is heard. This results in a mixture of crotchets and quavers. This alternating strumming gesture implied in the Clarkson track is also inferred by the perceived textural nuances of the guitars in the chorus of the A Day To Remember adaptation (Fig. 2-42). Here, a listener can perceive a subtle textural thickness in chords played on the beat. I argue that a listener would imagine the same alternating 'down-up' strumming motion heard in the chorus of the A Day To Remember recording. In the A Day To Remember cover-version, a

chord is heard at every quaver pulse implying that the strings are strummed on every down *and* up stroke. Where the same implied strumming motion resulted in the same musical material in the introduction, this outwardly identical strumming gesture results in a different musical material outcome.

These identical changes from a repeated down-stroke motion to an alternating strumming motion are significant in identifying the chorus as a cover. The alternating strumming motion utilised in the chorus is more economically efficient (as the guitarist plays two chords for every down-up gesture) but crucially, the crotchet tactus strum cycle is more relaxed in sound and appearance than in the introduction quaver-tactus example, where a chord only sounds on the initial down-stroke and the up-stroke is needed to return to the starting position. The repeated down-stroke gesture imagined in the introduction (and verse) manifests in an almost twitchy and more agitated motion which can be associated with the lyrical content of the verse where the protagonist lyrically depicts all the issues they had with a partner. This is in contrast to the relatively relaxed guitarist gestures associated with the chorus where the lyrics describe the elation the protagonist feels at being freed from this partner and damaging relationship. Although there are differences in the musical foreground between both the Clarkson and A Day To Remember recordings, differences in the perceptual-imaginative response between formal sections of the song are also telling of the emotional content portrayed in the lyrical content.

A similar analytical narrative occurs in the vocals. In direct comparison, the character of the two vocalists is distinct. Jeremy McKinnon's (vocalist with A Day To Remember) chorus vocal grain sounds more hoarse than Kelly Clarkson's cleaner delivery; in addition, McKinnon's tendency to emphasise plosives and stray from strict tuning contrasts against Clarkson's controlled and measured phrasing

and tuning. However, these differences are part of a larger change of gestural character, where both are understood to move from one-to-one communication with the listener to a public declaration, projecting an assertive and resolute persona who dominates the sonic environment. Yet when compared to the vastly differing gestural characters gleaned from the previous section (0:18 – 0:43), the gestural interpretation of the vocalists also converges in line with all the accompanying instrumental streams. In the verses, the sinister, intimidating character of McKinnon is marked against the personal, story-telling Clarkson despite McKinnon imitating Clarkson through reproducing her vocal idiosyncrasies. This difference in character was not due to any discernible differences within the vocals, but rather caused by the distinct instrumental accompaniments. It should be considered no coincidence that the shift to a rock-band accompaniment in the original track results in a coming together of the vocalists' gestural characters.

2.4.2.1.5 CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of *Since U Been Gone* demonstrates not only the dynamic relationship between a cover-version and its corresponding original release, but also the challenges faced in analysing any cover-version recording. A Day To Remember's recording of *Since U Been Gone* does not fit into the long-standing musicological framework that understands the genre in terms of a dichotomy. *Since U Been Gone* contains frequent movements across a cover-version spectrum that correlate with the changes in the perceptual-imaginative, or gestural, interpretation. Analysis of this relies on the synthesis of numerous musical aspects including pitch, rhythm, voicing, pacing, texture, and timbre within each instrument individually and as

part of the collective. Where sections understood to imitate the gestural character of the Clarkson original are placed towards the cover region of the spectrum, sections understood to transform the gestural character are placed towards the version end of the spectrum. Many sections of *Since U Been Gone* are placed nearer the centre of the spectrum. These are understood to mix gestural imitation and transformation as described in "static cover-versions".

This analysis suggests a need to reframe the musicological discourse that assumes a dichotomy between cover and version. However, a secondary development highlights how relativity is fundamental to any gestural analysis. At the time of writing, all musicological analyses of the cover-version genre have involved relativity, yet this has been restricted to the relationship between the original track and the re-recording. Analysis of *Since U Been Gone* highlights how necessary it is to incorporate the manner in which these tracks are heard, thus relating any section of the cover-version to previous sections of the cover-version. Gestural analyses must take into account the process of listening to music, through which interpretations build upon what has previously occurred, projecting forward and anticipating what may occur next. Introducing a two-dimensional relativity (across to the original and retrospectively to what has already occurred), gestural analysis of A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone* features not only sections that are contingent on any changes that occur in the original recording, but also sections that are determined by what has occurred with the cover-version already.

The musical foreground and a listener's perceptual-imaginative response intertexturally relates to a multitude of other A Day To Remember recordings, especially those released around the time of the *Since U Been Gone* cover-version was recorded. While gestural contrasts are a common strategy in their self-

composed songs (and throughout contemporary punk in general), they are often restricted to emphasising movements between formal sections of a song. In *Since U Been Gone*, these gestural contrasts occur at hypermetric boundaries but not necessarily in correspondence with any change of formal section. They create further layers of meaning in relation to understanding the lyrical content and the range of performative options available to the band in recording any previously recorded track.

2.4.2.2 *HOT N COLD* BY KATY PERRY / WOE, IS ME

Where the changing gestural character of the Clarkson's original affects the interpretation of the A Day To Remember cover-version, a majority of the dynamic cover-versions create gestural play in a different manner. The interpreted movement across the cover-version spectrum as witnessed in *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* (2011) and *Hot N Cold* by Woe, Is Me (2010) and *Boyfriend* by Issues is primarily caused by the *Punk Goes…* artist consciously creating a gestural play in their own recording, rather than being affected by changes in the original. In these examples, sections that mimic the original are juxtaposed against sections that contain radical gestural transformations. These juxtapositions, the form of which often bears no link to the original, create wild swings of gestural character and thus, movement across the cover-version spectrum.

In both Woe, Is Me cover-versions, radical gestural transformations of Katy Perry's original recording render any inclusion of (or even swing towards) her original gestures as moving towards a cover. This occurs numerous times within *Hot N Cold*, resulting in several shifts from cover to version and vice versa. Following an acousmatic two-bar drum machine introduction (with a drumbeat so

generic that it masks any connection to any specific song, style or genre), Woe, Is Me are understood to enter with an aggressive, uncompromising, and mob-like unison character that bears little musical and no gestural resemblance to the original Perry recording. The gestural transformations made by Woe, Is Me between 0:02 – 0:22 are so radical that no listener would assume a link to the Perry track beyond the identical name. A similar situation occurs in *Baby One More Time* by August Runs Red (2009). Although the opening twenty-three seconds of *Hot N Cold* is retrospectively understood as a version of the original, anecdotal evidence from playing this track in rock clubs reveals that it is only in the pre-chorus (0:23 – 0:29) that listeners are likely to comprehend any link between this cover-version and the original. Although the rhetorical pause created by the accompanying instruments aids the comprehension of the link, the vocal is central to the shift from version to cover. At this point, near-incomprehensible screaming breaks into a replication of Perry's chart-pop style vocal. The interpreted accuracy of Tyler Carter's vocal imitation of Perry is no doubt influenced by the sudden and radical change of gestural character that occurs between the verse and pre-chorus, whereby the extreme nature of the preceding gestural change masks any differences between the imitation and original.

Carter's remarkable ability to duplicate the vocal idiosyncrasies of Perry alerts listeners to a relationship between this track and the Perry recording, yet the instrumental pause causes confusion as to the genesis of the vocals. With the band (including screaming vocalist) making way for the gesturally contrasting pop vocals and reintroduction of the introductory acousmatic drum machine, the sudden and radical shift in gestural character renders the pre-chorus so identical to the original that it is likely to be mistaken as an autosonic quotation rather than, as evidenced by the gestural transformations that are exposed in direct

comparison, an allosonic quotation.[39] It is the vocal cue that marks the start of the chorus at 0:29 (''cause you're hot then you're cold') to fully confirm that the Woe, Is Me recording is a cover-version of the Perry original. It is as this point that the opening verse is retrospectively interpreted as a version of Perry's *Hot N Cold*, rather than merely sharing a title.

Following the death-metal verse and cover-version chorus, the gestural play of *Hot N Cold* reaches extremes at the beginning of the second verse (1:02 – 1:16). This section is understood as a cover of the original, though direct comparison against the original reveals a vastly different musical foreground that results in a highly distinct gestural interpretation. At the beginning of the second verse, a caricature of a female pop vocal (following in the Maria Carey and Christina Aguilera mould) that features an altered vocal grain and produced rhythmic glitches with echoes that smother the listener is accompanied by acousmatic instruments that sound timbrally and texturally distinct from their counterparts in the original. However, these characteristics are rendered as nearly identical to the original due to the preceding sonic context: the heavy-rock and metal stylistic environment previously built by Woe, Is Me amplifies this slight return to the gestural character understood in Perry's original. These conscious efforts to include gestures from the original track at various points within the cover-version establish a gestural play, creating movement along the cover-version spectrum. However, this play is created in a distinct manner to that created in *Since U Been Gone* by A Day To Remember. Where the movement of A Day To Remember's track across the cover-version spectrum was as a result of changes of gestural character in Kelly Clarkson's original recording, the movements understood in Woe, Is Me's

[39] Lacasse, 'Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music' (2007), pp. 147-170

cover-version are a direct result of changes made by Woe, Is Me to move away from and towards the gestural character of the original *Hot N Cold*.

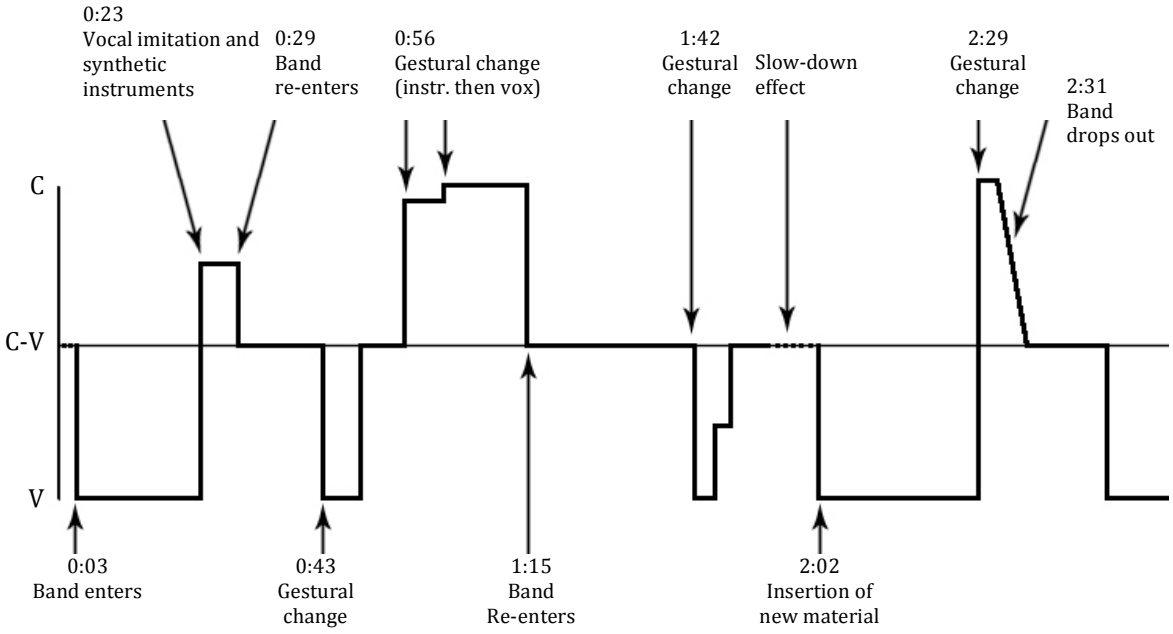


Fig. 2-43: Diagrammatic representation of how *Hot N Cold* as recorded by Woe, Is Me moves across the cover-version spectrum

A similar situation occurs in *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (2011). This *Punk Goes...* version sets up an energetic, positive, yet unpredictable punk-rock context by incorporating free and irregular swings between numerous contemporary punk styles (including pop-punk and hardcore-punk).[40] However, Pierce The Veil are understood to suddenly and arbitrarily mimic Bruno Mars's original recording in the second half of the third verse (1:38 – 1:45). This interpretation is generated by a sudden change in the gestural character, which results in a marked shift in the cover-version spectrum.

[40] These swings of style, generated by gestural transformations of the original musical material, are discussed in relation to *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil and authenticity (p. 150)

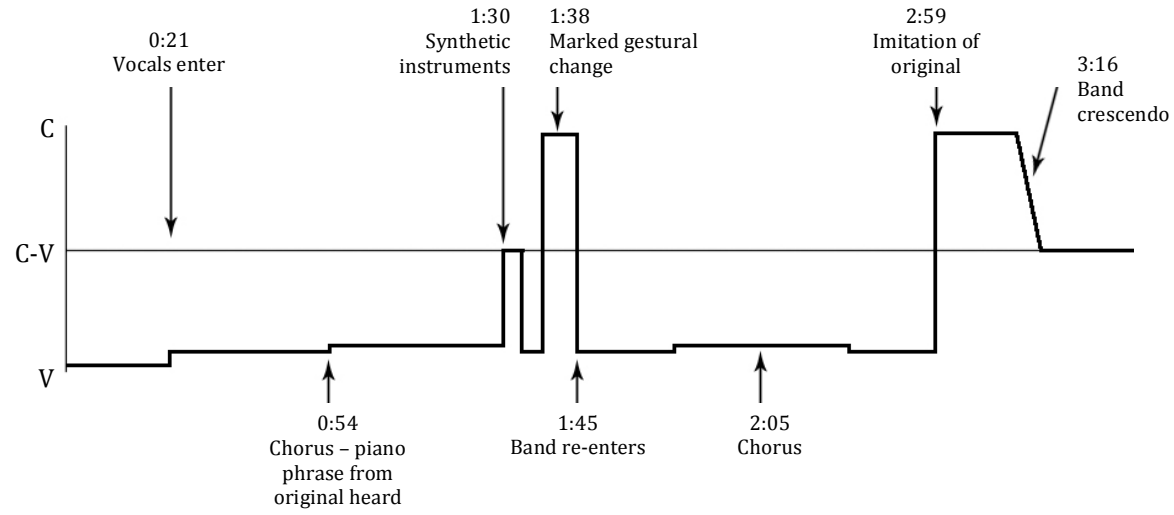


Fig. 2-44: Diagrammatic representation of how *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Pierce The Veil moves across the cover-version spectrum

Despite understanding this section as a cover, there are few similarities between the *Punk Goes…* recording and Mars original beyond Vic Fuentes's uncanny vocal imitation of Bruno Mars and the introduction of the iconic piano phrase from the original that has not featured up until this point. The differences manifest between the two sections would normally render this section of the Pierce The Veil recording a version, yet the marked change in gestural character leading into this section is significant in skewing any interpretation. Emerging from an unrelenting, forceful and energetic live performance context (typical for punk-rock tracks), the sudden presence of performance nuances (especially in the drums), thinning of the instrumental texture and near-whispering vocal line creates a relative convergence of gestural character that moves towards the calm and untroubled character projected by the Mars original. Similar to the manner evidenced in the *Punk Goes…* recording of *Hot N Cold*, the sudden calming of the indefatigable punk-rock gestures not only masks the differences but also amplifies the similarities understood between the original and *Punk Goes…* recordings of *Just The Way You Are*.

2.4.2.3 *BOYFRIEND* BY JUSTIN BIEBER / ISSUES

In their cover-version of *Boyfriend* (2014), Issues exaggerate and intensify the type of gestural play interpreted from other *Punk Goes…* cover-versions. Issues follow in the footsteps of bands like Memphis May Fire, We Came As Romans and Woe, Is Me developing juxtapositions of gestural character to radical extremes.[41] However, the sections of *Boyfriend* understood as covers feature a unique mixture of methods: firstly, Issues employ allosonic quotation of the 2012 original by Justin Bieber (although witnessed to varying degrees of success in other covers, Issues replicate the original so well that some sections are confused for autosonic quotations), and they also create sections that are interpreted as being covers despite containing few similarities to the original through juxtaposition against sections of radical gestural transformation (similar to the manner described in the Pierce The Veil analysis above). Despite inconsistencies in approach, all these sections are interpreted as covers. I argue that such a result renders the perceptual-imaginative response central to the interpretation of the cover-version genre. These extreme swings across the cover-version spectrum establish a schizophrenic persona whose wild mood swings culminate in an explosive coda section.

At the beginning of *Boyfriend*, Issues meticulously reproduce the Bieber original. While the introduction of the two recordings can be mistakenly believed to be identical (0:00 – 0:08), close analysis reveals nuanced differences between the two recordings.

[41] Literally in the last case, as two members of Woe, Is Me form the song-writing and production partnership of Issues

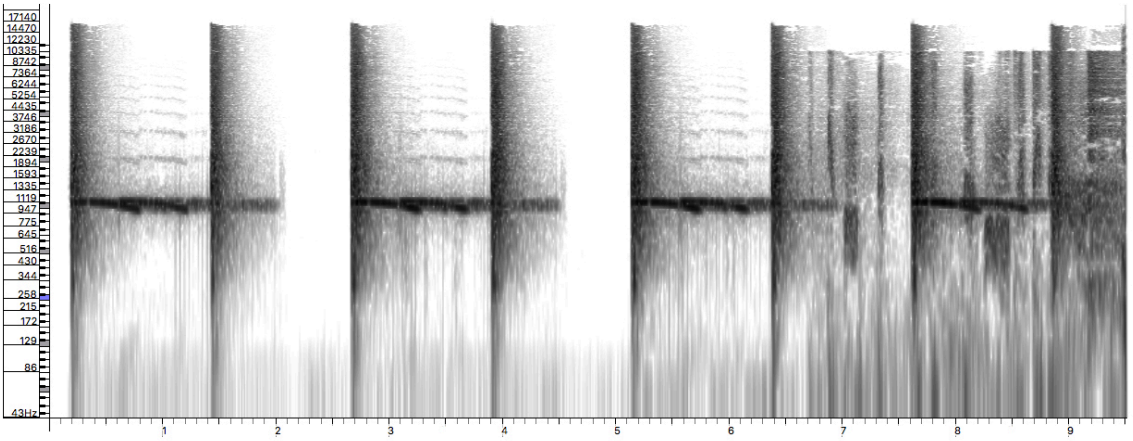


Fig. 2-45: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Boyfriend* as recorded by Justin Bieber

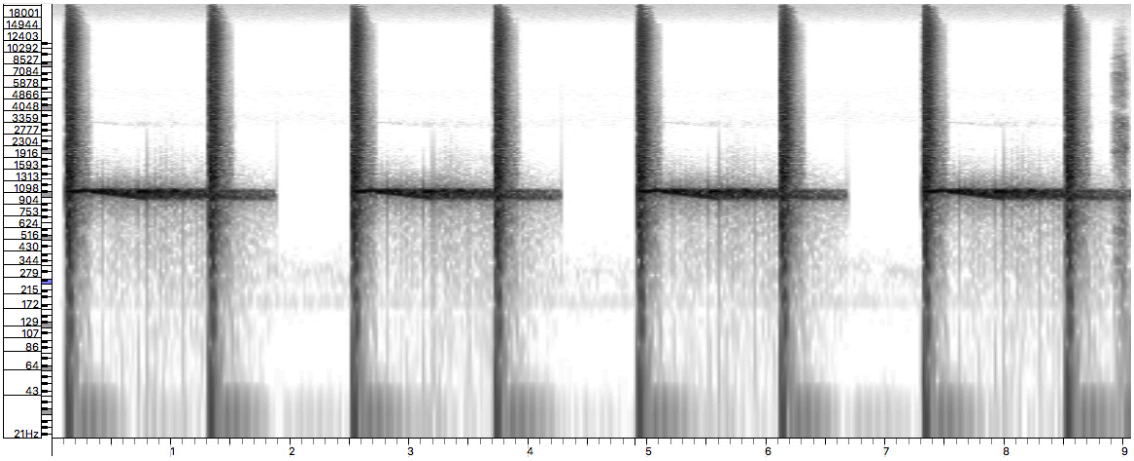


Fig. 2-46: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Boyfriend* as recorded by Issues

Firstly, the synthetic snare drums have subtly different characters, with the Issues cover-version using a thinner and less sustained sound for the backbeat. Secondly, Issues's drum and the swooping high-pitched "seagull sound" reverberate and echo differently around their sonic environments. Despite this evidence for an allosonic interpretation, the accuracy of the replication invites doubt as to the genesis of the Issues introduction. I believe the uncertainty is due to the acousmatic nature of the section. Were these differences evidenced in a vocal recording, it would likely result in a profound gestural transformation, but the digitally synthesized percussion sounds are not so readily understood as gestural. Thus, the interpretation is not so affected by the nuances evidenced within. This hypothesis is supported by other *Punk Goes…* tracks where a listener

remains unsure as to whether a section is an allosonic or autosonic quotation. *Last Friday Night* by Woe, Is Me and *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire (2014) are two examples. These two recordings are initially understood to contain an autosonic quotation before a gradual shift in interpretation shifts to an allosonic quotation. It should be considered no coincidence that the gradual shift of interpretation in *Last Friday Night* and *Interstate Love Song* corresponds to a shifting of the perceptual-imaginative response from an initial acousmatic interpretation towards an imagined performance. A relinquishing of production effects causes this shift.[42] Not only do the effects mask differences in performance nuance, but they also change the fundamental nature of the gestural interpretation, altering the perception of acousmatic sound into an imagined live performance. As the listener is made more aware that they are not listening to a recording of a recording, conviction in the initial interpretation shifts in parallel.

The uncertainty continues past the *Boyfriend* solo percussion. The introduction of a centrally placed, dynamically and texturally dominant male vocal distracts the listener from the other changes that occur in the accompaniment (including the introduction of a piercing synthetic hi-hat that does not feature in the original). Just as he did with the Woe, Is Me re-recordings of Katy Perry, Tyler Carter's reproduction of Bieber's whispering and beguiling vocal lead between 0:08 and 0:13 is highly accurate. Beyond the projection of the protagonist talking privately to the listener, the detailed replication of Bieber's phonetic idiosyncrasies borders on the obsessive. The staccato over-pronunciation of each syllable, intakes of breath and distinctive manner Bieber pronounces words such as places (ps'us') and before (b'fo') are meticulously replicated by Tyler. The opening thirteen seconds are understood as a cover due to the profound resemblance of Carter's

[42] For a more thorough analysis of *Last Friday Night* and *Interstate Love Song*, see p. 317

impersonation of Bieber and any differences being restricted to the acousmatic instruments that do little to effect the overarching gestural interpretation.

The creeping gestural transformation of Bieber's vocals between 0:13 – 0:18 is central in alerting the listener to the fact that this *Boyfriend* may not be the original recording. Carter's gestural transformation results in the steady change to the vocal grain from an intensely private whispered manner to public screaming at 0:18, via normal speech, heightened speech and excitable shouting. Although a distorted electric guitar crescendos in tandem with the vocal gestural transformation, it is only towards the end of the section where the sound is understood as a distorted guitar. The steady relinquishing of an equalisation filter finally allows the high frequencies through, eventually revealing the characteristic and nuanced sound of a distorted guitar attended to by a musician. Prior to this, the initial heavy processing applied to the guitar heard within the context of an acousmatic percussion introduction renders the guitar synthesized.

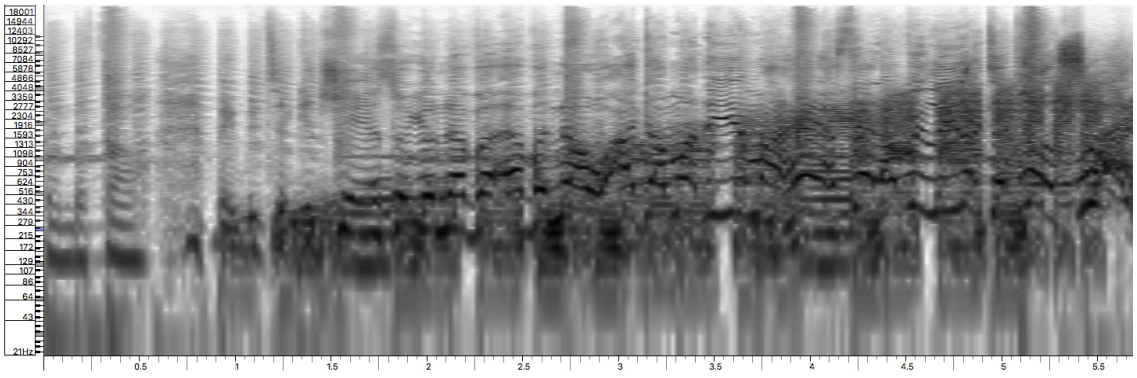


Fig. 2-47: Spectrogram analysis of Boyfriend as recorded by Issues (0:13 – 0:18) showing filtered guitar entry and screaming vocal

Throughout this section analysed in Fig. 2-47, a steady re-interpretation of the cover-version takes place. The gradual gestural transformation of the vocals and the eventual realisation that the newly introduced instrumental stream is

another performed instrument clearly is fundamental to a shifting of the interpretation along the cover-version spectrum. Although the rate at which a listener may change their interpretation from cover towards version may differ between more conservative and radical listeners, the shift corresponds with the gestural transformations.

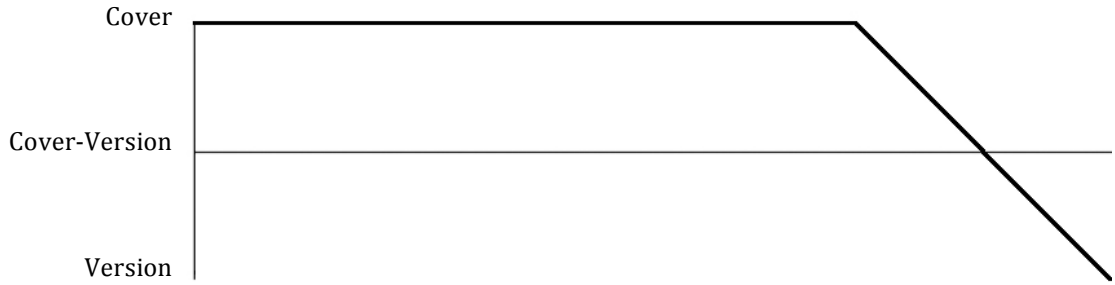


Fig. 2-48: Diagrammatic representation of how Boyfriend as recorded by Issues moves across the cover-version spectrum (0:00 – 0:18)

The sudden change of gestural character at 0:18 affects the interpretation of the preceding verse and the following pre-chorus (0:28 – 0:35). The move to an aggressive, belligerent and dominating character, understood across the ensemble, marks the moment of an interpretational shift to a version. Beyond Issues replacing acousmatic phrases with instruments that listeners are inclined to understand as being performed, Carter's screamed vocals, texturally dense and loud drum set, and addition of a syncopated and angular guitar riff saturated with distortion all combine to project an perceptual-imaginative response where each musician is performing in an uncompromising and forceful manner entirely distinct to the one garnered from the surrounding sections. Regarding the earlier introduction, it retrospectively supports, if not amplifies, the autosonic interpretation previously rendered. With only the lyrics, vocal rhythm and tactus retained at 0:18, the excess of gestural transformations further augments the near-identical interpretation of the opening section.

These gestural transformations assist in rendering the subsequent pre-chorus a cover even though the only similarity between the *Punk Goes...* and Bieber recordings is the vocal. It is significant that this pre-chorus is understood as a cover, given that the introduction featured a near-identical replica of the original. This allows direct comparison to the original in a way that is not permitted in the Pierce The Veil version of *Just The Way You Are*. Once again, the vocal is crucial to understanding this section as a cover. The listener's heightened ability to interpret the gestural character of the vocals above instrumental sounds and acousmatic sounds sways the interpretation along the cover-version spectrum. Despite there being differences within the instrumental accompaniment, it is Carter's meticulous imitation of Bieber's vocal character that is fundamental to understanding a section as a cover. In both the original and Issues pre-choruses, a gestural schism surfaces between the vocals and instrumental. In instrumental parts, a general shift from the performed rock-band instruments in the second verse to acousmatic sound in the pre-chorus marks a return to the digitally sampled aesthetic witnessed in the Bieber original. When the rock-band instrumentation suddenly drops out, a drum machine, synthesizer pads and saw-wave bass all saturated in reverberation swirl around the listener, creating an expansive acousmatic foil against the intense and precise rock-band performance gestures. A corresponding shift occurs in the vocals. At this point, there is a marked return to the mainstream vocal style witnessed in the original. The incensed, screaming vocals of the second verse are replaced by a quasi-falsetto vocal, which features the melodic over-elaboration and marked articulation of syllables evidenced in the Bieber original. These characteristics project an entirely different persona, supplanting the aggressive and dominating character of the second verse with an innocent, sweet and affectionate temperament.

Even though there are differences between the *Punk Goes...* cover-version and original, the sheer number of gestural transformations perceived in the preceding verse two section aids the interpretation of the pre-chorus as a cover. Yet what is most curious is the variety of musical foregrounds that are understood as covers, including sections that are nearly identical to the original (including the introduction and the third verse beginning at 0:57) and sections that are distinct from it (including the pre-chorus and bridge beginning at 1:55). What links these sections is their interpreted use of the original's gestural character: each of these cover sections is understood to imitate the gestural character of the original, despite there being differences between the original and cover-version. The interpretation occurs both in literal and relative terms: in comparison to sections that contain radical gestural transformations, any slight return to the gestural character of the original will result in a shift along the cover-version spectrum. There are numerous swings between cover and version throughout *Boyfriend*, all of which correspond to shifts in the gestural character. The interpreted movement across the cover-version spectrum is represented in Fig. 2-49:

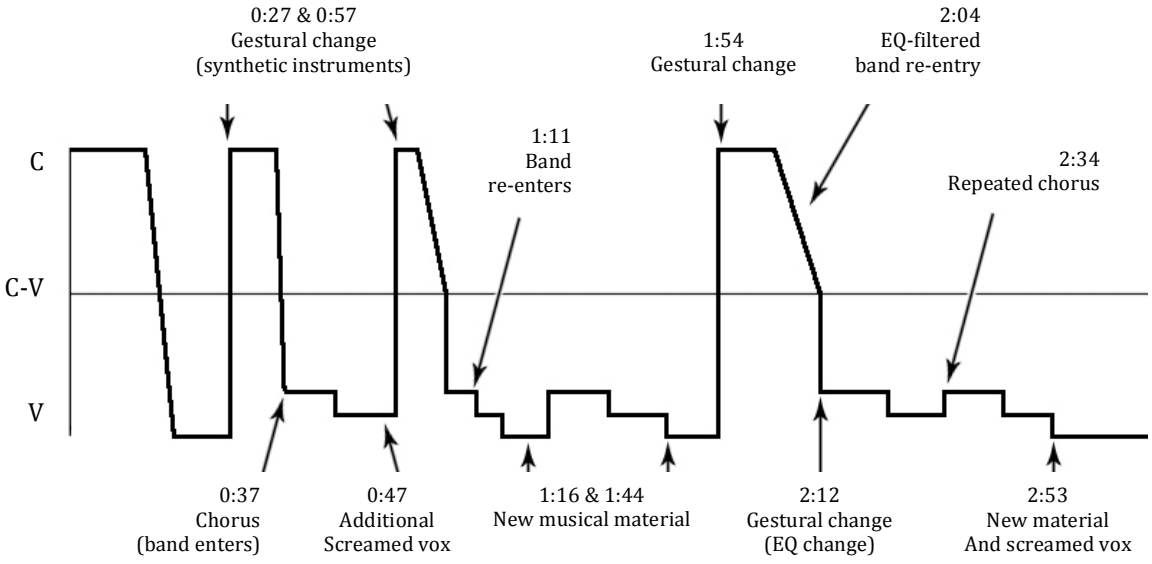


Fig. 2-49: Diagrammatic representation of how *Boyfriend* as recorded by Issues moves across the cover-version spectrum

Although Issues are meticulous in their replications of Bieber, their use of gestural play creates new layers of meaning. Issues are clearly playing upon the assumed virtuous innocence of the young pop star by placing it in direct juxtaposition against the wild belligerence of a heavy metal band. Although Bieber's original does include numerous switches of character, these are interpreted as swapping between an inner monologue and outward conversation with a significant other. Carter's sudden, extreme and unpredictable swings of character (created through part-imitation and part-radical gestural transformation of Bieber) create the impression of an inconsistent, irrational and unsound mind. Amplified by corresponding shifts in the instrumental backing (again, part replication, gestural imitation and extreme gestural transformations), I comprehend the shifts between Carter's enticing, considerate, and playful qualities and the aggressive, intimidating, and possessive side as a musical characterisation of a persona with a mental disorder such as bipolar personality disorder or even schizophrenia. Carter's persona eventually becomes so worn from these swings of mood that he erupts in a postscript to Bieber's *Boyfriend*. This additional coda provides the context to these schizophrenic mood swings. Where Bieber is attempting playfully to woo a significant other who is unsure as to whether or not enter into a relationship with him, Carter's persona creates the image of a grown man unable to enter into a relationship because the girl is underage (*Bitch, I ain't your boyfriend/'cause you are underage/Call me in a couple years and we will fucking rage/Slut*). The repeated back-and-forth between parts of his personality reveals his attempts to groom an underage girl, acting as a peer (quasi-falsetto voice, over-elaboration typical to young pop stars) and lashing out in defiance of her (seeming) rebuttals, which dent his ego and apply against society as a whole.

Gestural play in the *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions is primarily created by means of the *Punk Goes…* band juxtaposing sections of gestural transformation and gestural imitation. The tracks included in this analysis are just some of the cover-versions that highlight the direct correlation between the listener's perceptual-imaginative response and interpretation along a cover-version spectrum. In theoretical terms, the simplest method by which to create a gestural play is to juxtapose sections of gestural transformation against near-identical replication of the original. While *Boyfriend* by Issues is the analytical focus above, *Glad You Came* by We Came As Romans, *Last Friday Night* by Woe, Is Me and *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire are three further examples where the band create the cover sections through meticulous gestural imitation of their respective originals.

Changes across the cover-version spectrum are understood in relative terms. Sections that include numerous gestural transformations create a perceptual-imaginative context against which sections that contain a comparative return to the gestural character of the original are judged. In *Just The Way You Are*, Pierce The Veil create a wholly vivacious punk-rock context within which a tenuous imitation of Bruno Mars's recording is understood as a cover of the original. Similarly, several swings of cover-version interpretation occur in *Hot N Cold* by Woe, Is Me. Even though a majority of the cover sections bear little relation to the Katy Perry original, the change of gestural character across the band signals a shift in the interpretation.

The examples above all require changes of gestural character by the *Punk Goes…* artist. However, cover-versions such as *Since U Been Gone* by A Day To Remember are affected by changes in gestural character witnessed in the original. The growing tendency for chart-pop tracks to include distinct fluctuations of style

and gestural character creates an irregular gestural context against which the cover-versions are interpreted. Although a majority of originals utilise loop-based forms (implying that the gestural character will remain static throughout), Kelly Clarkson's *Since U Been Gone*, Ariana Grande's *Problem* (2014) and Taylor Swift's *I Knew You Were Trouble* (2012) all swing between numerous gestural characters. Such an undulating reference could be problematic for analysis, but as witnessed in these analyses, the *Punk Goes…* artist often uses these points of gestural shift in the original as markers to initiate free movement back and forth along the cover-version spectrum.

3. GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND AUTHENTICITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is often understood as crucial to music. To be perceived as sincere, genuine, or original is of critical importance in a vast number of contemporary music styles, especially those identified under the broad umbrella of popular music. In the style of rock music, for instance, great 'authentic value' is placed upon the live performance spectacle and thus the live performance ideal is constructed in recordings via the manipulation of the perceptual-imaginative engagement that listeners experience.[1] Due to the embodied response listeners have towards music, it follows that the interpretation of gestures is of essential importance in discussing authenticity in rock music. After examining the current debate regarding authenticity in music, I will focus upon three types of authenticity commonly at play in *Punk Goes...* tracks, using the theory of gestural transformation as a tool to establish how these *Punk Goes...* artists attempt to generate listener-ascribed authenticity.

3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AUTHENTIC

Throughout much of the twentieth century, musicological debate on authenticity commonly centred on a particular musical style – that of Western art music, and more specifically the related practices of the historically informed performance movement. This trend in music, which Richard Taruskin (1988) took to represent

[1] Levinson, *Musical Concerns* (2015), pp. 68 - 86

a crowning achievement of modernism, sought to perform musical works emphasising the composer's intentions and the contemporaneous sounds they would have experienced at the performance of their works. Laying to one side for the moment the obvious issues that arise in assuming a composer's intentions and replicating historical experiences, musicologists and reviewers have frequently cited a direct correlation between the faithful reproduction of what the composer would have heard and wanted to hear and an "authenticity". This debate as to whether a recording or performance had succeeded (or failed) in giving the impression of authenticity commonly focussed on a limited number of aspects: namely, adherence to a score, adherence to appropriate stylistic conventions, and the use of period instruments.[2] However, these modes of authenticity raise a number of problems. For example, such formalist reasoning results in believing a musical realisation can have a degree of inherent authenticity before a note is heard. Secondly, there will always be gaps in our knowledge as to what a composer's intentions were and what a performance would have sounded like at its inception.

In critiquing these modes of authenticity, Peter Kivy (1995) dismisses the direct correlation between a "good" performance and the fulfilment of 'objectivities of exactness' (i.e., a performer's aptitude to recreate a composer's supposed intentions, using period instruments etc.).[3] Richard Taruskin (1988) and Lawrence Dreyfus (1983) provide vehement criticism of the authenticities that were commonly associated with historically informed performance. In particular, Taruskin observes how these types of authenticity were being lost to commercial

[2] Such examples can be read in Willets 'Authenticity' (1975), who discusses the direct link between authenticity and use of period instruments, Keller 'Whose Authenticity?' (1984), who examines use of appropriate performance style and Hill '"Authenticity" in Contemporary Music' (1986), who considers search for the 'composer's voice'. These are discussed in further detail on p. 124

[3] Hill, '"Authenticity" In Contemporary Music' (1986), p. 4

propaganda – modernist historical enquiry used as a commercial gain. This Adornian view highlights the commodification of Western art music, whereby a façade of authenticity is manipulated, ultimately to generate sales of recordings. That the supposed autonomy of Western art music was being undermined by commercial pressures was not lost on modernist thinkers such as Arved Ashby (2010), who derided the seeming ever-closer union between the high-art of classical music and the commercialism of popular music.

The academic dismissal of authenticity by Taruskin and Dreyfus has not quelled subsequent discussion or the ostensibly continual search for authenticity by audiences, performers and composers alike – whether within or away from the Western art music style. The importance of authenticity in relation to music composition, performance, and interpretation of music is repeatedly reinforced, be it explicitly or implicitly. For example, Kivy identifies 'being authentic' as the 'highest term of praise one can bestow' upon a performance, despite dismissing the explicit links between being authentic to good performance.[4] In her detailed examination of authenticity in club culture (specifically electronic dance music, but her examination incorporates any type of public music event that includes recorded music), Sarah Thornton (1995) opens her discussion by asserting that 'Authenticity is arguably the most important value ascribed to popular music', referring to its perceived 'cure both for alienation and dissimulation' as its reason for significance.[5] Charles Hamm (1995) continues in this vein, developing the capacity of popular music to authenticate an individual via a community, be it a geographical, sociological or ideological one. More recently, Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor (2007) question how the quest for authenticity has shaped the careers of

[4] Kivy, *Authenticities* (1995), p. 1 – I discuss and investigate Kivy's four types of authenticity in the next section beginning on p. 128

[5] Thornton, *Club Cultures* (1995), p. 26

performers and entire styles of music, examining how and 'why so many musicians base their approach on being authentic and why music critics and enthusiasts see it as the *sine non qua* of an artist's success'.[6] With record labels and the associated music industry spending tens of thousands of pounds on recording, promoting and developing an artist or record, the apparent authenticity of an artist has clear financial consequence of both a positive and negative nature. Conversely, Allan Moore (2013) infers the importance of authenticity via the associations linked to inauthenticity:

> The most damning descriptor to throw at any popular musician is that they are derivative…that all they are fit for is to reproduce some other source…what they are doing is frequently seen to have no value.[7]

Beyond academic inquiry, the importance of authenticity is reinforced in everyday discussion of music. Robert Walser (1993) highlights the issue in relation to heavy metal journalism, where 'the most heated debates are over "authenticity", which often implicitly revolves around issues of gender and sexuality'.[8] This is evidenced on social media. YouTube and message-board forums are continually flooded with heated debate regarding the perceived authenticity of one artist or another. For instance, in stating that 'I just thought that he was promoted as being all "from the streets" and authentic and stuff, so assumed that they wouldn't have listed any co-writes', internet forum user Calumlynn equates the authenticity of a musician to having both experienced an unprivileged upbringing and the capacity

[6] Barker & Taylor, *Faking It* (2007), cover notes
[7] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 259
[8] Walser, *Running With The Devil* (1993), pp. 129-130

to relay those experiences without the help of other songwriters.[9] Developing that latter issue, Jeremy Gordon's review of the Macklemore & Ryan Lewis album *This Unruly Mess I've Made* (2016) cites how 'Macklemore is a former addict, and his invective about the parasitic sway of drug abuse…carries the moral authority of lived experience'.[10] Macklemore's authenticity is considered by Collin Robinson who states the rapper 'comes off much more authentic with references to his struggle with drug addiction' in comparison to his commentaries on racism and capitalism.[11] Away from hip-hop music, forum user kvincent5555 asserts that punk music stripped away the excesses of glam rock, replacing it with something 'authentic and true to the raw, simple spirit of rock', implying that authenticity can be absolute ("true") and is linked to a stylistic Zeitgeist.[12]

The popular music examples quoted above share a number of qualities beyond their assertions of authenticity being of high importance in music. Firstly, it is clear from these examples that authenticity is a loaded term, regardless of the style of music being referenced. It has strong positive associations beyond any literal meaning that could be put forward, and any sense of "faking it" or a lack of authenticity is condemned. The holy grail of any music performer is to seem authentic to their audience, created by a performer 'speaking for themselves…and not told what to think'.[13] Thornton goes further, describing a performance to be 'perceived as authentic when it *rings true* or *feels real*, when it has *credibility* and comes across as *genuine*.'[14]

Secondly, they all establish that authenticity is *ascribed* to a musical artist, performance, recording etc., by an audience, and is not an intrinsic, inherent

[9] 'Who Writes Jake Buggs [sic] Songs?', *Drowned In Sound*: non-scholarly reference #15
[10] 'Macklemore/Ryan Lewis – "This Unruly Mess I've Made"', *Pitchfork*: non-scholarly reference #31
[11] 'An Honest Attempt at a Macklemore/Ryan Lewis', *Stereogum*: non-scholarly reference #41
[12] 'Punk Music', *Music Discussion*: non-scholarly reference #28
[13] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right?' (1989), p. 180
[14] Thornton, *Club Cultures* (1995), p. 26

quality of music. A number of scholars have joined Thornton's overt declaration of this concept ('most important value *ascribed* to') and in doing so, raises the spectre of Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* (1967).[15] For instance, Mark Butler (2003) views authenticity to be constructed discursively via listeners (be they other artists, fans, the media etc.). This is reinforced by Steve Redhead and John Street (1989) who state that 'Authenticity is rarely understood as a question of what artists "really" think or do, but of how they and their music and image are interpreted and symbolised.'[16] While Moore openly aligns himself with the ascription of authenticity model ('"authenticity" is a matter of interpretation'), his investigation moves away from the musical object that is being authenticated, focussing instead on the artist, audience or style that is being authenticated with music.[17] Evidence highlights how authenticity is of high importance to popular music analysis. The many definitions of authenticity that have been offered here testify to the inextricable bind between popular music and notions of authenticity.

3.3 THE FOUR AUTHENTICITIES OF THE MODERNIST

Beyond their overt or tacit implications of authenticity's significance, the above references and quotes problematize the definition of authenticity. Within this short introduction alone, several contrasting ways to define musical authenticity have been introduced. This tallies with the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of the term:

[15] Overview of Barthes's concepts taken from Seán Burke, *The Death And Return of The Author* (1998)
[16] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right?' (1989), p. 180
[17] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 266

- Of authority, authoritative (possessing original or inherent authority)
- Original, firsthand, prototypical (opposed to copied)
- Really proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine (opposed to counterfeit, forged)
- Belonging to himself, own, proper
- Acting of itself, self-originated, automatic (The spontaneous or authentic motions of a clockwork)

Kivy uses these five types of authenticity as a framework for his critique of musicological authenticity. His discussion, which draws upon his own experiences of the historically informed performance of Western art music, links the perceived authenticity of a performance to four central aspects. These are *authenticity as intention* (i.e., a composer's intentions via the score), *authenticity as sound* (i.e., via the use of period instruments), and *authenticity as practice* (i.e., the appropriate use of contemporaneous stylistic norms), and the seemingly numinous *other authenticity*. It is useful for this discussion to briefly separate them into two separate groups along their ideological divide. The first three historical authenticities are a clear development of the modernist ideal, and discussion of these three is rife in early music discourse. For instance, Christopher Page (1993) revises a number of medieval music transcriptions considering the composer's intentions as being of central importance; Carl Willets's (1975) discussion of period instruments is concerned with the sound of a performance; and Hans Keller (1984) examines the appropriate use of stylistic ornamentation and vibrato in a wide historical range of Western art music (and in challenging the then prevailing

dogma of other pedagogues, further illustrates Kivy's point regarding the supposed link between appropriate technique and a subjectively 'good' performance).

A fourth ideologically distinct class of authenticity accompanies these three authenticities. Kivy labels this fourth type as the *other authenticity*, before describing it more specifically as *personal authenticity*. Kivy defines this authenticity as a 'faithfulness to the performer's own self, original, not derivative or an aping of someone else's way of playing'.[18] On the face of it, this fourth personal authenticity can be understood to undermine the objectivist framework constructed by the first three. The emphasis on "playing it your own way" seems initially to be mutually exclusive to the ideal culmination of authenticities one to three. Although ideologically distinct, personal authenticity can be considered as a way to characterise the factual gaps that will inevitably occur in objectively approaching performance via authenticity as intention, sound, and practice. Observing the dichotomy, John Rink (2004) does not view the historical authenticities and personal authenticity as mutually exclusive, stating that performers are '…museum curators, laboratory subjects, theorists and analysts, at the expense of their identities as musicians'.[19] Rink proposes a form of authentic relativism that I will develop shortly.

Although it is not typically explicitly acknowledged in non-academic discussion, scholarly examination of authenticity in popular music follows Kivy in unpacking the phenomenon as a multiplicity of differing types. Due to the multifarious range of styles identified under the umbrella term "popular music", it is common for these differing types of authenticity to overlap even though investigations develop from differing frames of reference.

[18] Kivy, *Authenticities* (1995), p. 7
[19] Rink, 'The State of Play in Performance Studies' (2004), p. 41

For instance, Thornton's discussion of dance music club cultures posits two types of authenticity related to two different aspects of club culture. She ascribes an *authentic aura* to the artistic aspects of club culture (such as ontologically thick records), and the second *authenticity to community* to the anthropological aspect of the subculture (such as the audience, who 'makes it a "living" culture').[20] Several scholars have developed Kivy's authenticity of practice into their own authenticity schemas. These include Timothy Taylor's *primality,* which he describes as the creation of authenticity through stylistic links to a 'timeless' originating practice.[21,] Moore's *authenticity of execution* is the authentication of an 'absent other' or 'third person' through the re-creation of a particular stylistic practice or sound-world.[22] Both Moore and Taylor theorise three-way authenticity schemas, but where Taylor's *positionality* (creation of authenticity against a supposed inauthentic other) and *emotionality* (the expression of personal feelings) focus on an inherent authenticity within a song itself, Moore's tripartite structure of authenticity examines who the performance and/or recording is trying to authenticate. Following from this third person authenticity of execution, his second person *authenticity of experience* examines the manner in which performances (and recordings) authenticate an audience, and first person *authenticity of expression*, which overlaps with Kivy's personal authenticity to the extent that both are concerned with the performer's desire to be understood as being sincere, trustworthy, and original.

A majority of the previously cited examples are amongst a growing number that not only describe authenticity as a multiplicity of differing types, but additionally as a relative quality. As the notion of a single authenticity has been

[20] Thornton, *Club Cultures* (1995), p. 30
[21] Taylor, *Global Pop* (1997), p. 26
[22] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 269

dismissed, this consideration of authentic relativity is not primarily concerned with a singular yes/no of interpreted authenticity (a simplicity commonly exemplified on social media). A development of Michael Pickering (1986), the theory of authenticity relativity relates more specifically to both an intra-authenticity and cultural capital. Kivy exemplifies a simplistic form of authenticity inter-relativity through the discussion of an effective trade-off between his four types of authenticity.

To paraphrase Kivy's examples, imagine a hypothetical performance of a piece that manages to be authentic not only to the composer's intentions, but also authentic to the acoustic and stylistic norms at the time of writing; this performance will lack a sense of personal authenticity as the performer is aiming to embody the gestures of an absent other.[23] But as previously ascertained, such an apogee of the three historical objectivist authenticities is not possible. The lack of conclusive knowledge regarding a composer's intentions, historical timbres and use of appropriate style, will be offset against relative amounts of personal authenticity. There is a crucial issue with this particular example. The increasing of one authenticity due to the diminishing of another implies that an abstract cumulative amount of authenticity remains equal for each performance or recording, and it is clear that not all pieces are interpreted as being equally authentic. Although this example is a useful theoretical construct in highlighting how an overall interpreted authenticity is created through relative amounts of each form of authenticity (for instance, those four posited by Kivy above), it is not entirely suitable for analytical application. The sheer number of different ways a performer can create authenticity, their success or failure to generate authenticity lies on a spectrum, with each authenticity influencing the interpretation of others.

[23] Kivy, *Authenticities* (1994), pp. 108-130

Specifically related to popular music, both Lawrence Grossberg (1992) and Timothy Taylor rely upon authenticity being a relative quality, and each of Thornton's two authenticities is diagrammatically illustrated (reproduced in Fig. 3-1), each within its own spectrum and as interrelated, with the DJ bridging the gap between the artistic aura and anthropological subcultural authenticities:

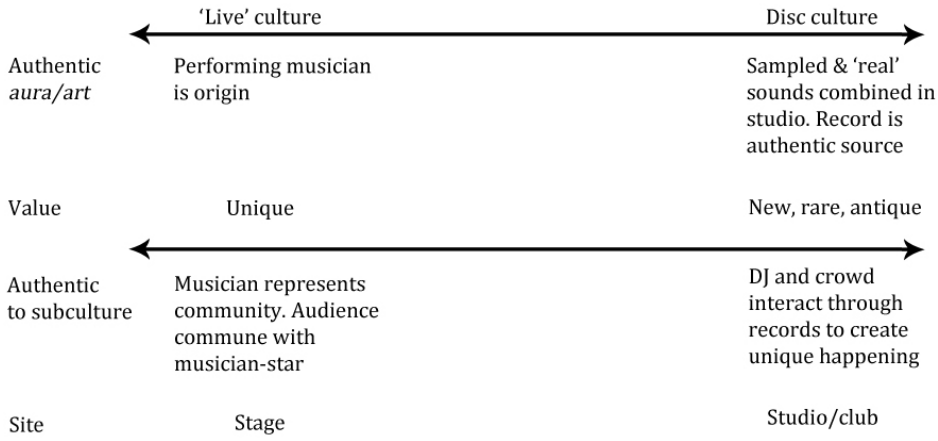


Fig. 3-1: Reproduction of Thornton's diagrams describing the relativity of her two authenticities, 'aura' and 'subcultural'[24]

Focussing explicitly on the interpretation of authenticity, Moore develops Kivy's discussion of relativity, questioning whether a certain number of authenticities need to be present in a performance for it to be interpreted as 'authentic'. Emphasising that 'there is no single authenticity', Moore proposes that:[25]

> It is highly unlikely that a listener would require that all these conditions were met, although I suggest that if as few as one were, it is unlikely that the track would be perceived as having much authenticity.[26]

[24] Thornton, *Club Cultures* (1995), p. 31
[25] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 263
[26] ibid., p. 267

This rational conclusion follows a brief example, debating whether an audience would believe (i.e. find authentic) John Lee Hooker's *I'm In The Mood*.[27] Moore suggests that this particular recording successfully establishes a sense of interpreted authenticity through Hooker's use of the blues style (execution), the perception that no overdubs were used whilst recording the track (experience, authenticating the audience through the impression of a live performance), and his 'untrained' vocal (expression, giving the impression of unmediated emotions). It is hard to disagree with Moore's reasoning due to the particular methods of generating authenticity used here (the pre-commercial style, no overdubs and untrained vocal) all convey authenticity across a number of different demographics and communities.

Introducing the notion of differing subject-positions (e.g. different demographics, communities, subcultures etc.) problematizes the outcomes of any interpretation. Not only does the relative value or cultural capital of a particular type of authenticity change according to its interpretation by different subcultures, but also the value of the manner in which those authenticities are created is likely to change. To demonstrate, I shall briefly examine the contrasting value of authenticities and their methods of production in rock music and hip-hop. Robert Walser describes the authenticities of positionality (the artist perceived to be against commercialisation and consumerist culture) and expression (that the performer is seen to have written and performed the track themselves) as being of exceptionally high value in the musical styles of rock and heavy metal. Yet, Justin Williams's (2011) examination of authenticity in hip-hop concludes that knowledge of and practice within the stylistic boundaries is of more importance

[27] ibid., pp .266 – 267

than the image that the performer has self-composed every minutiae of their tracks.

The relativity of authenticity is not simply restricted to each type of interpreted authenticity, but also concerns the interpreted manner in which that authenticity is generated. For instance, the ways in which artists create an authenticity of positionality in these contrasting musical styles of rock and hip hop holds differing value within their particular demographic or subculture. In the heavy metal subculture, artists against consumerism are generally held in high esteem, yet those who expound the virtues of a materialistic attitude, consumption and anti-hegemonic defiance are commonly regarded most highly in the gansta-rap subculture. Because of this, it is highly plausible for one particular recording to both succeed and fail in garnering a sense of authenticity depending on the expectations of a particular subculture, and the manner in which the performer attempted to generate authenticity. In the case of *Punk Goes*… recordings, the broad expectations of the rock music community to which a majority of these musicians belong and their assumptions regarding mainstream pop goes some way towards dictating a vast number of choices made in the recording of these cover-versions. These choices range from the nuanced details of each performer's attendance to their instrument through to the production of the track as a whole.

Authenticity is tied to the notion of value. Jerold Levinson (2015) alludes to this bind in considering the complex concept of musical value. In opposing the aestheticist approach of Roger Scruton (1997) and Andrew Ridley (2004), Levinson questions the hypothesis that art's lack of value gives it its greatest worth. Studies grounded on the concept of musical autonomy disregard the extra-musical significance of music in fields such as economics, politics and concerns of a sociological nature such as subcultural capital. Levinson unpacks multitudes of

differing forms of musical value and finds that there are 'priorities and asymmetries among them. Some musical values are more important than others, and some musical values presuppose and depend on others.'[28] For examples, he notes the interdependency of listener-, performer- and composer-related values. This tripartite schema is challenged through the examination of cover-version authenticity since the *Punk Goes...* artist is all three. In listening to the original, composing a reinvention and performing for the gesturally transformed recording, attitudes regarding musical value of all three positions come to bear. Yet, the most significant for the cover-version genre is that of the listener, for every musician begins as and continues to be a listener throughout their career. The attitude of the musician-as-listener has great influence over personal ideology, informing decisions made by the musician-as-performer and musician-as-composer in attempting to appeal to the listener; whether that be themselves, or others of their subculture or beyond.

In the Western art music that Levinson surveys, high worth is given to instrumental value (a confusing term given the case studies; 'functional value' would be a more apt descriptor), aesthetic value (experiencing the music sonically), and artistic value (expressing emotion and originality of invention by the performer).[29] These modes of value do not necessarily translate into popular music or, and more specifically, rock music. Because rock music has origins in live concert performance (as opposed to the studio-based styles of electronic dance music), great significance is placed on characteristics that generate the perception of embodied and unmediated live performance in recordings. This is bound up with numerous types of value, including artistic value (in which the performer is understood to be the sole creator of the heard sound) and symbolic value (the

[28] Levinson, *Musical Concerns* (2015), p. 73
[29] ibid., pp. 68 -82

ability of the recorded music to convey meaningful movement, i.e., performative gesture). Moving away from performer-generated modes of authenticity, the listener-centric authenticity of experience is bound to notions of social value (ability to bring communities together) and both aesthetic and symbolic value by virtue of the perceptual-imaginative engagement with the recording. Value also works in the negative, for the anti-hegemony and anti-capitalist positionality common to punk-rock music reacts against typical economic value. This relates it to the aestheticist position, in that to be seen as having no economic value generates value for punk-rock listeners.

The generation of authenticity in cover-versions relies on notions of listener value. That a cover has little artistic or unique value (by virtue of being no different to the original) could explain the general punk-rock audience disregard of covers that closely match the original. Conversely, the manner in which a number of *Punk Goes…* artists reinvent the musical material of the original gives the track artistic, aesthetic, and social values.

3.4 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION TO DETERMINE AUTHENTICITY

Understanding authenticity as a multifarious and dynamic quality affords the opportunity to investigate the delicate balance of authenticities at play in these cover-versions and examine the manner in which they are created. Beyond this examination of projected authenticity by an artist, analysis will uncover the interpreted value of particular authenticities within the punk-rock subculture and their effectiveness in manufacturing a sense of authenticity to the listener. Having discussed the importance of authenticity in music and developed the concept that there are multiple relative authenticities, I will closely examine a number of

authenticities relevant to cover-versions and explain, how they are contingent on the interpretation of gestural transformations. In addition, I will investigate the manner in which the musicians and producers of *Punk Goes…* cover-versions generate these authenticities, using case studies to show how all these authenticities, though separated for critical discussion, are highly dependent on each other.

The interpretation of gesture is crucial to the measure of authenticity in recorded rock music, owing to the propensity to understand musical sound as human in origin (having been made with conscious movement that can be interpreted as meaningful i.e., gestures) and the centrality of live performance to the style. This perception of live performance affects numerous modes of authenticity, including personal authenticity (relating to positionality and persona), stylistic authenticity and listener-related authenticity of experience. If listeners can interpret gestures from a recording, it stands to reason that listeners can differentiate between those performative gestures that seem sincere or trustworthy (i.e., the performer's own) and those that give the impression of being deceptive or fabricated in some way: gestures that Leigh Roche (1992) interprets as having been appropriated or manufactured.

Further to these, the listener is able to distinguish between those gestures that are subversive or forced and those that are genuine. The tool of gestural transformation goes some way to unravelling the complex issue of authenticity, in terms of projection by the recording artist and ascription by the listener via their perceptual-imaginative response. Most of the choices made in the recording of these cover-versions were designed to project a sense of authenticity. As the genre has developed, so to have the methods by which this is achieved: a similarity between projected persona and the recorded performer; positionality against

commercial interests or "other" musical style; and the overt projection that the cover-version musicians have performed their own parts. While some tracks such as Say Anything's *Got Your Money* (2008) or Woe, Is Me's *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* (2010) seek to undermine or subvert the gestures of the original track, more common is the act of emphasising the distance between gestures belonging to the original track and gestures belonging to the newer *Punk Goes…* recording. However, not all of these need to be present for a track to be interpreted as having authenticity, most purveyors of the genre do use these methods as a means of generating authenticity.

4. AUTHENTICITY AS PRACTICE: POST-SUBCULTURAL VALUE

Kivy's historical authenticities have not proved entirely compatible with popular music study. The foremost factor for their reduced significance is the centrality of audio recording technologies in popular music; in terms of both listening to and production of recorded music. While Kivy's historical authenticities may retain their usefulness in particular areas of gestural analysis (for instance, in the study of tribute acts specifically devised to recreate the performance of a particular artist), their wholesale application to popular styles of music that use a recorded medium has been diminished.[1]

Yet an anomaly lies at the heart of Kivy's *authenticity as practice*. Despite Foucault and Nietzsche's opposition to the 'lofty ideal' through which musicians faithfully adhere to a musical style, the majority of musicological inquiry into authenticity of practice in popular music often seeks to uncover evidence of a direct lineage between a relatively contemporary recording and older archetypes of the style.[2] The evidence in musicological inquiry often emphasises extra-musical factors above transcribed similarities, with questions of perceptual-imaginative response often set aside completely. Other scholars have developed Kivy's authenticity as practice into their own authenticity schemas. These include Timothy Taylor's *primality* (creation of authenticity through stylistic links to a 'timeless' originating practice), and Moore's third-person *authenticity of execution*

[1] Tribute acts named here include those devised to recreate the performance of a deceased artist (for instance, Nottinghamshire-based Freddie Mercury tribute 'The Great Pretender'), a retired or non-performing artist (Australian ABBA tribute 'Bjorn Again' or Staffordshire-based 'OK Sis' Oasis tribute), or an expensive artist to a smaller venues and audiences (the myriad of Michael Bublé or Adele tribute acts that have established themselves over the past decade)

[2] Bouchard, 'Foucault, Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' (1980), p. 143

(the authentication of an 'absent other' through recreation of a particular stylistic sound-world).

Authenticity as practice is commonly cited as being the central way of conveying authenticity within the popular music styles of folk and blues. In relation to folk music, Philip Bohlman (1988) cites a stylistic 'purity of practice' as a common generator of authenticity.[3] In addition, Redhead and Street (1989) assert that folk musicians generate authenticity via demonstration of their 'roots': 'the sounds and style of [folk] music should continue to resemble the source from which it sprang'.[4] Bluesmen such as Eric Clapton and John Mayer have engaged in this form of authenticity via their recording of pre-war blues songs and thorough assimilation of the musical phrases of early blues players such as Robert Johnson, B.B. King and John Lee Hooker.[5] In rock music, the use of authenticity of practice as a measure of authenticity abounds throughout the history of the style: the authentication of The Beatles through their performances of late 1950s American rock and roll; The Gaslight Anthem's recreation of Bruce Springsteen's pre-Born To Run Americana; and Queens Of The Stone Age's development of Black Sabbath's riff-laden heavy rock are just three instances across the broad stylistic spectrum of rock music.

Judging authenticity as practice on earlier "pure" instances of a particular style creates analytical complications that are exemplified in following two quotes by Moore. Firstly, he states that:

> [Authenticity of execution] I believe to be particularly useful … for it maintains that there is no necessary contradiction between singing

[3] Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (1988), p. 10-11
[4] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right?' (1989), p. 180
[5] Indeed, both these performers have recorded the blues standard *Crossroads* with performative gestures that a highly suggestive of Johnson's original 1936 recording

> another's material and convincing listeners of your authenticity in so doing.[6]

And:

> the most damning descriptor to throw at any popular musician is that they are derivative, that their music derives from some other source, which carries the implication that all they are fit for is to reproduce that other source.[7]

Although a recorded cover is the extreme application of Moore's first quote (both singing another's material and mimicking their gestures), it implies that the re-recording of another artist's track does not necessarily negate the authenticity of the re-recording. However, the latter quote suggests that such imitation would be interpreted as derivative and inauthentic. I believe the difference lies in the interpretation of the performative gestures and the form in which these allusions to a style are made. Regarding the former, the subtle differences in interpreted gesture can alert the listener as to whether a particular stylistic reference is being conducted with sincerity, such as that interpreted from A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone* (2009) or sarcasm in Say Anything's *Got Your Money* (2008), or whether this attempt has been successful as understood in Woe, Is Me's *Last Friday Night* (2011) or ineffective as taken from Knuckle Puck's *Chocolate* (2014).[8] Yet, other *Punk Goes…* tracks highlight a different approach to generating style-specific authenticity, whereby bands incorporate and juxtapose a myriad of intra-stylistic

[6] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 269
[7] ibid., p. 259
[8] These particular examples are subject to detailed study in the section on persona (chapter 5.2)

references so as to appeal to an audience. Although authenticity as practice is revealed in each band's self-composed recordings, the manner in which these styles are presented in the *Punk Goes…* cover-versions is distinct from their self-composed tracks. In the cover-versions, the referenced styles are more likely to be conceived in distinct formal sections of the track and presented in an explicit manner; a practice rendered to the extreme in Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are* (2011).

Away from musicological examination of rock, folk and blues, Justin Williams examines the influence of this form of authenticity within hip-hop. Williams's analysis concludes that the highest value of authenticity in hip-hop emanates from an artist's knowledge of the hip-hop subculture. Demonstration of this subcultural knowledge manifests in hip-hop artists borrowing from earlier "romanticised" examples of the style that pre-date the subculture's move into commercialised popular culture.[9] This borrowing is exhibited through allosonic or autosonic quotation of earlier hip-hop recordings and also through the referencing of lyrics and imagery of earlier practitioners. Williams does problematize the highly subjective nature of his inquiry in the vein of Taylor, who states that 'there are multiple subject positions available to anyone and multiple interpretations and constructions of those positions'.[10] This shapes what I would consider to be the central conclusion to Williams's analysis. Even though the trend of intra-hip-hop borrowing may be of little use in defining an objectively accurate genesis of the subculture, it is of no less importance as a signifier of authenticity.

[9] Williams, 'Historicizing The Breakbeat' (2011), p. 165
[10] Taylor, *Global Pop* (1997), p. 21

4.1.1 *LAST FRIDAY NIGHT (T.G.I.F.)* BY KATY PERRY / WOE, IS ME

Following on from Williams's examination of hip-hop, a similar type of borrowing is witnessed throughout the *Punk Goes…* catalogue where intra-stylistic gestural tokens are used to generate authenticity as practice. This is especially the case in those instances of the pop-core style, the contemporary punk-rock style most directly linked to the *Punk Goes…* compilation series. While the style is an amalgam of numerous styles (most commonly hardcore punk and pop-punk, but with elements of metal and mainstream pop styles also present depending on the track), certain gestures have clear links to older instances of the style. The pop-core tracks on the *Punk Goes…* albums are replete with general stylistic markers and use of common forms. For example, all-male gang vocals, quarter-time drumbeats and a screamed-verse/sung-chorus contrast are all present in *Fuck You* (2011) by Sleeping With Sirens, *Some Nights* (2012) by Like Moths To Flames and *Royals* (2014) by Youth In Revolt. However, the most obvious example occurs in the cover-version of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me (2011). This cover-version references a number of bands with which Woe, Is Me and the *Punk Goes…* compilation albums are associated. In appropriating stylistic tokens fundamental to the cover-version genre and to other bands that are significant to its popularity, Woe, Is Me attempt to project a sense of authenticity by aligning themselves with archetypes of their style and the *Punk Goes…* series.

The presence of a rhetorical cough at 0:19 has clear links to *I'm Made Of Wax Larry, What Are You Made Of?* (2009) by A Day To Remember. This tribute is not unsurprising. The resurgent popularity of the *Punk Goes…* series and the subsequent interest in the bands that appear on their numerous editions is highly indebted to A Day To Remember and more specifically to their recordings of *Since*

U Been Gone (2008) and *Over My Head* (2009). Although only the latter of these appeared on the *Punk Goes…* series, these two recordings play with the spectrum of cover and version in a way that had not been previously explored within the genre. Furthermore, this choice of reference is a memorable gesture from A Day To Remember's *Homesick* album (2009). This album inspired a number of artists including Woe, Is Me, Chunk! No, Captain Chunk! and generated audiences for Pierce The Veil, Sleeping With Sirens and State Champs through touring.[11] Although the cough reference is not strictly pre-commercial, it is certainly a quotation citing the early developments of the related pop-core style, with *Homesick* being the first number one album released by a band that appeared in the *Punk Goes…* series.[12]

Experienced listeners will instantly recognise the reference and understand it as an attempt by Woe, Is Me to be considered as a part of the stylistic canon and thus be deemed authentic by their audience. While the *Last Friday Night* rhetorical cough can be understood as a stylistic reference away from its sonic context, it is comprehending it within its sonic surroundings that establishes the gestural similarities. Yet critically, the two coughs generate different effects in the cover-version and *I'm Made Of Wax Larry*. Considered away from their context, there are clear parallels between the two coughs. Fig. 4-2 and Fig. 4-3 spotlight the two coughs in *I'm Made Of Wax Larry* by A Day To Remember and *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me:

[11] Zaleski, 'Exclusive Interview: Woe, Is Me open up about Tyler Carter's departure, new vocalist Hance Alligood', *AltPress*: non-scholarly reference #4, Pearson, 'Interview: Chunk! No, Captain Chunk!', *Ike Productions*: non-scholarly reference #20

[12] 'Independent Albums - 2009 Archive', *Billboard*: non-scholarly reference #10

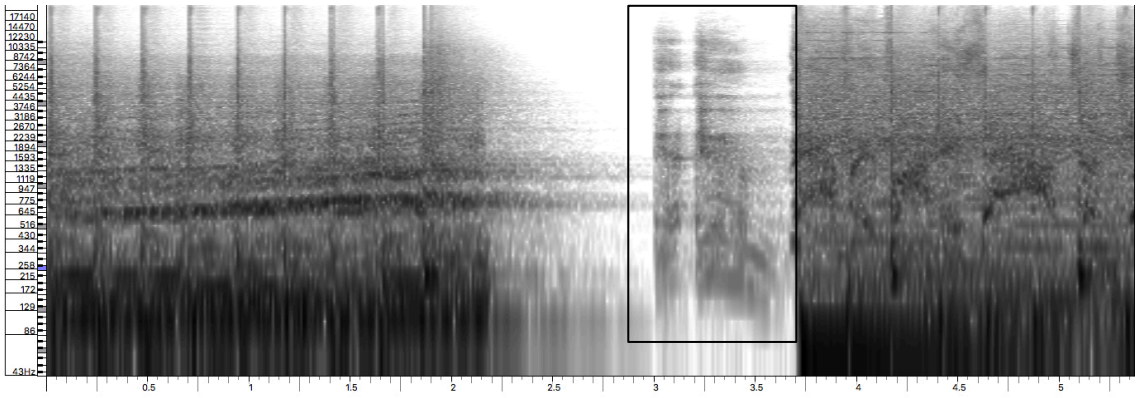


Fig. 4-1: Spectrogram analysis of *I'm Made Of Wax Larry, What Are You Made Of?* as recorded by A Day To Remember (1:50 – 1:55), with the cough highlighted in square

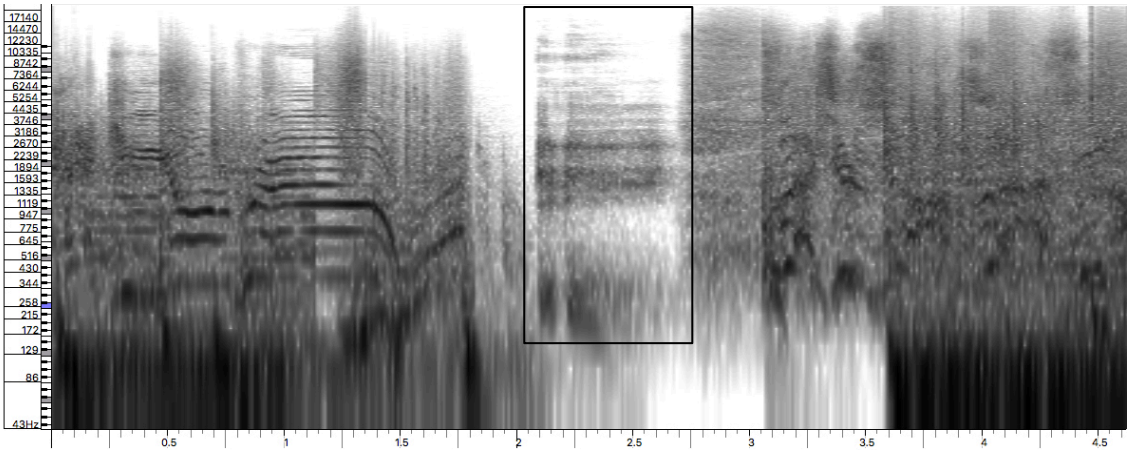


Fig. 4-2: Spectrogram analysis of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* as recorded by Woe, Is Me (0:17 – 0:22), with the cough highlighted

Fig. 4-1 and Fig. 4-2 confirm the similarities between the two gestures. They are both made up of two individual coughs that follow a similar contour and rhythm. Each first cough is pitched higher than the second and a short, staccato cough is followed by a longer drawn out cough. Furthermore, they are both dynamically quiet in relation to both the track as a whole and to the individual vocal track. But significantly, they both understood to have the same gestural character. The light, yet slightly forced and artificial "put on" cough infers at an embellished clearing of the throat. It is a gesture that signifies the ensuing proclamation is to be significant and worth noting in some way. Within the context of popular song, it is a rare and exceptional gesture that succeeds in drawing the listener's attention further.

Examination of the cough's location within each track reveals further similarities. Not only is each placed at the end of a hypermetric divide and at the end of a formal section, each breaks the silence of a 'rhetorical gesture' and thus becomes part of the rhetorical interruption.[13] The location of the cough within the silence amplifies both its prominence and meaning. It acts as a sonic barrier between two formal sections of each track, gesturing to effectively set aside what has come before and inviting the listener to pay heightened attention to what is about to unfold.

Although the character and the meaning of the two coughs may be similar, differences surrounding the silence generate differing effects. In *I'm Made Of Wax Larry*, the rhetorical cough is made between two stylistically similar sections. The crucial difference lies in *Last Friday Night*, where the cough signals the moment where a dramatic and extreme change of musical style occurs. Where the pre-cough introduction of Woe, Is Me's *Last Friday Night* is an allosonic imitation of the Katy Perry original (so convincing is the imitation that we assume it is Perry and her backing musicians rather than a re-recording), it suddenly launches into a metal-inspired post-hardcore style that is as removed from Perry's original in terms of gesture as one could get.[14] As such, the cough acts not only as a sonic barrier, but also a gestural barrier that separates the different interpreted performative styles. The relaxed and buoyant character of the introduction is supplanted by an aggressive, misogynistic hammering.

This wider context highlights the different effects that are caused by the rhetorical cough. Where the break in *I'm Made Of Wax Larry* implies added emphasis to the subsequent section, the interruption in the *Last Friday Night* cover-version also serves to undermine the character of the introductory pop style.

[13] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures* (2004)
[14] This change of style is discussed in relation to positionality (chapter 5.2)

Where the meticulous care with which Perry's version was allosonically recreated doesn't imply any sense of subversion or sarcasm up unto 0:18, the cough is understood as belittling the introduction once the post-hardcore style typical to Woe, Is Me is launched. The Woe, Is Me introduction becomes a sardonic and cutting commentary upon Perry's track and perhaps the culture surrounding mainstream pop music as a whole.

The rhetorical cough is an attempt to garner authenticity as practice through the stylistic referencing of prior exemplars of the style and the *Punk Goes…* cover-version genre. Although the cough itself corresponds with Williams's argument, the allosonic reproduction of Perry's *Last Friday Night* is not consistent with more typical occurrences of artists and bands attempting to generate authenticity through stylistic references. Even though the meaning of the cough remains unchanged in this new setting, its effects within the wider context of the cover-version track alter the musical meaning and retrospective interpretation of previous sections. While the allosonic reference to Perry's original track and its juxtaposition against a projected live performance post-hardcore style is linked to style-related authenticities, detailed examination of the satirical gestural transformation is raised in the following section on positionality.

4.2 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND POST-SUBCULTURAL THEORY

This allusion to A Day To Remember by Woe, Is Me and Williams's analysis of hip-hop authenticity brings to mind Nietzsche's claim that there is a general 'belief that

things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth'.[15] Crucially, Williams ties this 'moment of birth' (and thus authenticity) to a pre-commercial exemplar of its own subculture. This particular aspect is not only apparent in Williams's case studies but also in those of folk and blues cited earlier. Furthermore, it has clear ties to subcultural theory, as established by sociologists associated with the Birmingham-based Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Although a large amount of the CCCS-associated output concerns itself with musical styles, Dick Hebdige (1979) and Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (1976) are commonly cited as two examples of CCCS work that engages with music through a semiotic framework. In both, the 1970s punk movement is put forward as a prime example of the correlation between pre-commerciality and the ascription of authenticity. CCCS-based subcultural theory has been accepted in musicological inquiry for its central principles, I believe, form the basis of an argument that legitimises popular music in the wake of Adornian critique that labelled popular music as entirely 'standardised' and 'pseudo-individualistic'.[16]

Yet while punk, folk, blues, and hip-hop are examples of musical styles that generate authenticity by invoking pre-commercialised instantiations of themselves, examples in the *Punk Goes…* series attempt to generate stylistic authenticity with a range of resources and for different purposes. Regarding the differing resources, A Day To Remember and Pierce The Veil garner style-centric authenticity as practice by incorporating a multitude of post-commercial-era rock music styles into their respective versions of *Over My Head (Cable Car)*, originally by The Fray and *Just The Way You Are*, originally by Bruno Mars. As the following case study will show, these include classic rock, pop punk, thrash metal, hardcore

[15] Bouchard, 'Foucault, Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' (1980), p. 143
[16] Adorno, 'On Popular Music' (1941), pp. 17-48

punk, and stadium rock. Although some of these sub-styles have pre-commercial beginnings (such as the first phase of pop punk by U.S. bands such as Bad Religion and The Descendents), the stylistic references made are to their relatively modern and commercially successful developments (such as Green Day and Blink-182). Fundamental to understanding these stylistic references is the perceptual-imaginative interpretation of performative gesture. Not only is this especially pertinent in rock styles where the difference in ascribed style is contingent on the manner in which a musical phrase is performed (for instance, hardcore punk and thrash metal share a vast repertoire of core musical material, yet it is the differences in perceptual-imaginative response that can change the character of a phrase and encourage the interpretation as belonging to a particular rock music sub-style above others), but also significant for tracks that allude to different rock styles, each with its own sets of sonic tokens, values and ideologies. Robert Walser noted the importance of this latter aspect, stating that 'Rigid genre boundaries are more useful to the music industry than to fans', highlighting the importance of understanding these artists who compose the *Punk Goes…* tracks as part of a network of interacting styles, not as contained within a homogenized culture.[17]

The agenda for this approach is clear. It should be considered no coincidence that the myriad of musical styles overtly exhibited in *Punk Goes…* cover-versions (especially those cited above) are likely to directly correlate with the tastes of their audience most likely made up of white, middle-class males that play instruments and with varied tastes across different rock music subcultures. In appearing on a compilation album with various other artists, it stands to reason that these *Punk Goes…* tracks are a prime promotional tool. It is there to appeal to those listeners who may not be familiar with the band in question. I interpret the

[17] Walser, *Running With The Devil* (1993), p. 5

practice of incorporating numerous rock styles as an attempt by the *Punk Goes…* band to communicate their style-based authenticity as practice with their audience. Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are* (2011) is an extreme case of where the overt juxtaposition of many post-commercial rock styles acts as a subcultural identifier – a calling card if you wall – that sets up a communication between musician and audience not only along the lines of "we share tastes; if you like these styles of music that we've referenced, then you'll probably like us too", but also "we're authentic because we share same experiences as you do, including learning our craft via learning archetypal tracks of the styles we're referencing, just like you". I consider this to be the primary objective of *Punk Goes…* artists who, in the vast majority of the *Punk Goes…* tracks, include references to numerous older rock music styles.

This communication results in understanding the *Punk Goes…* musicians as "artists-as-fans". In attempting to cast themselves as artists-as-fans via authenticity of practice, the *Punk Goes…* artists also garner authenticity via the mode of *authenticity of the ordinary* developed by Elizabeth Eva Leach (2001). Authenticity of the ordinary is often analysed in terms of qualities beyond the recorded music (the most common being fashion, though this is also the case here as these *Punk Goes…* artists are often visually indistinguishable from their fans), yet here it is manifest in the sonic artefacts via the musical styles presented by the artists. Understanding the referenced rock styles as an attempt to highlight a shared set of tastes and influences renders the *Punk Goes…* bands as speaking as part of the audience rather than *for* an audience. Not only does this directly contradict the prevailing musicological view presented by Leach, itself developed from Nicola Dibben (1999), but also the CCCS-based understanding of subculture exemplified in Paul Willis (1978) John Clarke (1976) where this artist-as-fan

dualism is flatly rejected. While Clarke's examples cite music as important, little is said about how music itself plays a part within the subculture beyond its objectification on a par with clothes, hairstyles and modes of transportation. Clarke is joined by Hebdige and David Laing (1978) in viewing musicians as mere producers of commodities that are consumed by audiences as a 'strategy of resistance' to mainstream popular culture.[18] In focussing on extra-musical and socio-political matters, subcultural theory diminishes the influence of recorded music in shaping and defining style. This perception contradicts the high-esteem in which musicians are held in the punk-rock community, but also denies the opportunity to understand the *Punk Goes…* bands as artists-as-fans.

Beyond the use of numerous intra-subcultural musical styles to generate third-person authenticity as practice akin to that witnessed in hip-hop by Williams, the conclusions and approaches of CCCS subcultural theory do not correlate with the majority of examples from the *Punk Goes…* catalogue. Firstly, the use of post-commercial rock music styles as an attempt to generate stylistic authenticity by a majority of *Punk Goes…* artists undermines the subcultural assumption that leisure industry appropriation of a musical style results in a supposed inauthentic mass-market mainstream dilution of it. It stands to reason that references to numerous post-commercial 'inauthentic' rock styles made by A Day To Remember and Pierce The Veil would render their cover-versions as wholly inauthentic under subcultural theory. Secondly, subcultural theory maintains that membership to a subculture is defined by identifying and strictly adhering to a style, whether that is through fashion, taste and/or ideological values. Where the styles of punk, blues, funk and hip-hop seemingly fit this aspect of subcultural theory, a majority of the punk-rock tracks that appear on the *Punk Goes…* catalogue demonstrate a more

[18] Bennett, 'Subcultures or neo-tribes?' (1999), pp. 599-617

progressive (and when viewed through a subcultural framework, more problematic) approach to stylistic authenticity by engaging with styles across stylistic and subcultural borders: a feature that is incongruent with examining *Punk Goes…* tracks under a subcultural framework.

A majority of the cover-version examples strongly suggest that the hypothetical divisions between supposedly autonomous subcultures have become increasingly blurred, resulting in subcultural style, taste and identity becoming increasingly flexible. Beyond the referencing of numerous rock music styles by A Day To Remember and Pierce The Veil, this hypothesis is manifest in a majority of *Punk Goes…* tracks (the exception being outright versions) through the appropriation and quotation of mainstream music styles (be that R'nB, chart pop or the plethora of electronic dance music styles). Where a subversive belittling of the original mainstream track or style as understood in Issues's *Boyfriend* (2012), Set Your Goals's *Put Your Hood Up* (2008) and Say Anything's cover of *Got Your Money* (2008) could be understood as a form of *bricolage*, subcultural theory does not account for the enjoyment reaped from Woe, Is Me's *Hot and Cold* (2010) and *Last Friday Night* (2011), We Came As Romans's *Glad You Came* (2012) and *I Knew You Were Trouble* (2014) and *We R Who We R* by Chunk! No, Captain Chunk! (2011). These latter examples successfully allosonically replicate their respective original recordings without the need to engage in overt mocking and condescension.

Where subcultural theory posits adherence to a single style as a 'strategy of resistance' to mass-market mainstream culture, understanding the authenticity of practice at play within these cover-versions, even at a most fundamental level, must reference two poles of practice whose tastes, values and ideologies ostensibly conflict with each other. Firstly, that of the original mainstream recording artist

and that of the *Punk Goes…* cover-version. This stylistic play most closely correlates to *post-subcultural theory* established by Steve Redhead (1990) and subsequently developed by Andy Bennett (1999) and David Muggleton (2000). Other models based on post-subcultural schemas such as *lifestyle cultures* developed by David Chaney (1996) and *taste cultures* pioneered by Herbert J. Gans (1999) also correspond with this play of musical styles.

Post-subcultural theory has debunked several of the central methodological conventions of subcultural theory that have had significant influence in musicology. Michelle Phillipov (2012) and Andy R. Brown (2003) are amongst many who have questioned the proclivity of subcultural theorists to press political programmes and emphasise sociological, anthropological and ethnographical issues, rather than the qualities relating directly to the recorded tracks: the type of analysis manifest in Angela McRobbie (1989) and David Laing (1978). Not only does this subcultural approach result in musical styles being overlooked or assumed to be "inauthentic" due to a lack of political stance, but evaluation of musical style places, what I consider to be, too much emphasis on extra-musical matters.

Phillipov and Brown discuss this latter point in relation to death metal and heavy metal respectively; two styles that are repeatedly encountered in the *Punk Goes…* catalogue. Phillipov's invites us 'to change the co-ordinates of criticism [through] a re-orientation of musicological inquiry with questions of pleasure brought to the fore.'[19] Popular music styles have been excluded from the newly configured popular music canon due to the 'overriding assumption that music should in some way address and resist social inequality…[or] be readily connected

[19] Upton, 'Review of 'Death Metal & Music Criticism' (2012)

to progressive politics'.[20] Similar rejection and denigration occurs for the other musical styles that are understood to form the rich stylistic tapestry of the *Punk Goes…* catalogue. Contemporary punk-rock styles of pop-punk and emo also have been subject to claims of inauthenticity by both fans and academics alike, due to a general rejection of any political soapboxing or interpreted political worth, though exceptions do include Green Day's *American Idiot* (2004) and Thursday's *War All The Time* (2003). Demonstrating how a musicological framework based on socio-political matters limits our comprehension of popular music reveals a more compelling issue: what else has popular musicology (dis)missed?

Using the framework set out by Phillipov and Brown, investigating these *Punk Goes…* recordings with questions of musical pleasure brought to the fore reveals how enjoyment can be taken from understanding how the cover-version has engaged with the original in a wry, witty, knowing and self-referential manner. Although some *Punk Goes…* artists incorporate mainstream styles so as to present themselves as "anti-mainstream", any allosonic references to mainstream music and styles creates new musical contexts which expose new insights and meanings. Understanding the cover-versions within a musical pleasure framework also illuminates the enjoyment garnered in being tricked by the *Punk Goes…* artist in successfully replicating the performative gestures and style of their respective original track or, as witnessed more often, the enjoyment from understanding how a *Punk Goes…* artist has taken the material of another and developed it via gestural transformation.

[20] Phillipov, *Death Metal & Music Criticism* (2012), p. 68

4.2.1 *JUST THE WAY YOU ARE* BY BRUNO MARS / PIERCE THE VEIL

Pierce The Veil transforms the loop-based repetition of Bruno Mars's *Just The Way You Are* (2010) into a stylistically unpredictable and volatile track. Pierce The Veil's referencing of a number of rock music styles creates an unpredictable musical foreground that is exciting and encourages a type of 'active listening' elevated by Kivy, Scruton, and Adorno and rarely understood to apply to popular music.[21] Gestural transformations abound throughout the *Just The Way You Are* cover-version, occurring simultaneously across the entire ensemble. They are key to the projection of the differing styles incorporated into track, which include glam-metal, pop-punk, classic rock and metal-core. As a number of these musical styles share core musical phrases, the gestural characters adopted by each musician influence the stylistic interpretation. The myriad of styles used by Pierce The Veil, contingent on gestural transformation, create a semiotic narrative that reveals a communication between band and audience. This endeavour closely adheres to the post-subcultural model in which musicians and audiences are not understood as mere producers and passive consumers respectively, but as equal participants within a live subculture. A community that interacts with its own style in a self-referential and knowing manner and engages with styles and artefacts considered as being beyond their typical stylistic borders in a wry and witty manner.

Beyond aiding the interpretation of style, the gestural transformations are key to the questioning or projection of authenticity. The tool of gestural transformation exposes a gestural division between the backing instruments and vocals of the Bruno Mars original that causes the listener to question the

[21] Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?* (2002), pp. 33-50

authenticity of the track. Yet the listener's ascription of Pierce The Veil's authenticity is dependent on the gestural interpretation that the band is not viewed as mocking the styles they reference. In doing so, Pierce The Veil attempt to demonstrate overtly the older rock music styles as a set of influences, a majority of which will be shared with their audience. Allusion to older musical styles is manifest in their endeavours via the performative gestures they have absorbed into their own gamut of gestures through their study of archetypal styles, bands and tracks. Indeed, the form that these stylistic influences manifest is an influence itself; principal singer and songwriter Vic Fuentes names Queen's *A Day A Night At The Opera* (1975) as a key influence to his vocal style.[22] Yet where references to rock music styles are understood to have been taken in reverence, references to musical styles that are taken to be atypical to Pierce The Veil are understood as ironic. If Pierce The Veil really did like it *Just The Way You Are*, then why include a multitude of changes?

4.2.1.1 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN LOOPING/REPEATING FORMS

Pierce The Veil's repeated changing of musical styles camouflages the looping harmonic form that is retained from the original recording. A consequence of this stylistic fluidity is the removal of the perceived binds in the Bruno Mars original. These occur between an instrument and a musical phrase, and crucially, a musical phrase and a particular way of performing it. This is also the case in a number of digitally looped phrases, whereby a change in accompanying figures changes the gestural interpretation of the looped phrase. This aspect highlights the relative and dynamic nature of gestural transformation. It is significant in fostering the

[22] Whitt, 'Weekly Playlist #23', *AltPress*: non-scholarly reference #3

interpretation that performance nuance is permanently present in the Pierce The Veil rerecording, leading to the understanding that the track was recorded by attendance to musical instruments. Such a perceptual-imaginative response leads to, for example, digitally looped phrases being understood as repeated. This ties into other style-related authenticities, specifically related to rock music as a whole. While authenticities directly relating to the perceptual-imaginative interpretation of a live performance are developed in the section on record production, examining both the Bruno Mars original and the Pierce The Veil version of *Just The Way You Are* via the tool of gestural transformation reveals how the composition and recording processes garner highly distinct gestural interpretations, with Pierce The Veil rejecting any replication of the standardised and pseudo-individualistic mainstream original by Bruno Mars.

Released in the US in December 2010, *Just The Way You Are* was Bruno Mars's debut solo single, following his appearance on Travie McCoy's top-10 single *Billionaire* (2009). Discussing the lyrics, Mars told Bluesandsoul.com:

> …there's no mind-boggling lyrics or twists in the story - they just come directly from the heart…There's nothing mind-blowing about it. I'm just telling a woman she looks beautiful the way she is.[23]

Reaching number 1 in five countries, it has been certified five-times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America and sold 13 million copies worldwide in 2011. Pierce The Veil's version of *Just The Way You Are* (2011) was recorded just six months after the original, and it is one of two tracks that features on *Punk Goes Pop, Vol. 4* to be subsequently released as a separate single.

[23] Lewis, 'Bruno Mars interview', *Blues And Soul*: non-scholarly reference #14

The loop-based form used to create Bruno Mars's recording does not facilitate intra-instrument variance. Much like other contemporary popular music tracks re-recorded in the *Punk Goes…* catalogue, including Gotye's *Somebody That I Used To Know* (2011), Snoop Doggy Dogg's *Gin and Juice*, and *Royals* by Lorde, each instrument in Bruno Mars's *Just The Way You Are* is tied to one phrase, which is indivisible from a particular performance of it. In terms of gestural interpretation, each phrase is interpreted as being coupled to one particular performance of that phrase. This looping of instrumental phrases calls to mind the standardisation and pseudo-individuality of popular music put forward by Theodor Adorno. Consider Fig. 4-3, displaying the form of Bruno Mars's recording of *Just The Way You Are*:

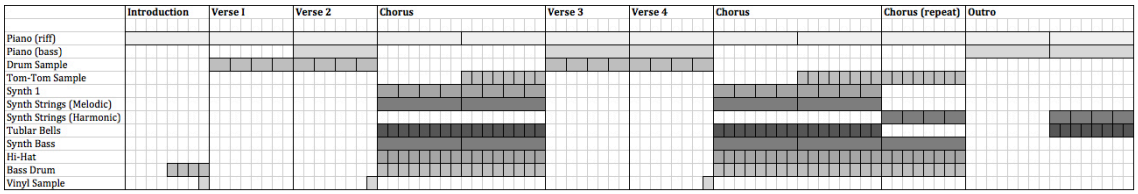


Fig. 4-3: Diagrammatic analysis of *Just The Way You Are* by Bruno Mars, highlighting the looping form of the track (each box = one bar)

The above figure diagrammatically outlines the instrumental parts heard in the recording. The omission of the voice is due to Mars's vocal being the only instrument that strays from the palpable loop-based arrangement of the track: although highly repetitive, it does not strictly loop. Beyond revealing the song's formal divisions at the changes of instrumentation (movement from introduction to verse to chorus etc.), Fig. 4-3 crucially demonstrates how each individual instrumental track is tied to a particular phrase (each displayed in the accompanying transcriptions), which are looped and layered. Every box denotes an identical statement of a particular instrumental audio loop and highlights how the track is built up of a small amount of sonic and musical material. There is no

variation between each statement of an instrument's phrase, be it nuanced or otherwise. This lack of nuance within each individual track's musical material can be detected on closer inspection of the audio. An obvious example is the two-bar percussion loop used in the verse.
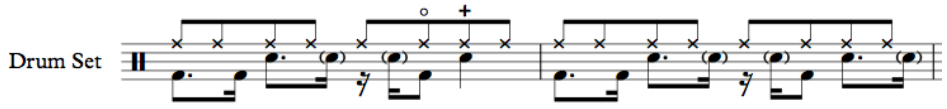


Fig. 4-4: Transcription of the drum phrase looped throughout the verses of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Bruno Mars

Although its sonic context amongst other instrumental parts makes thorough analysis problematic, the short duration of the percussion phrase permits its easy interpretation as a looped sample. The presence of repeating rhythmical, textural, and dynamic nuances across a two-bar hypermeter indicates that the percussion track is not a traditional "performance" from beginning to end, but formed by the looping of a two-bar sample. Furthermore, the addition of sonic crackle synonymous with old vinyl records, whether synthetic or otherwise, generates the impression that this percussion phrase has been sampled from another record. Aided by the lack of any conspicuous features, the percussion loop is an extreme rendering of Adornian pseudo-individuality; the listener is left with the impression that they have heard this unremarkable phrase before. In addition, the sampled nature of this phrase influences the perceived genesis of all the other instrumental parts: it undermines the notion that any of the instrumental tracks has been recorded specifically for the Bruno Mars recording of *Just The Way You Are*.

In addition to the two-bar percussion loop, the 8-bar piano phrase demonstrates a lack of inter-loop performance nuance. Fig. 4-5 is a transcription of the phrase:
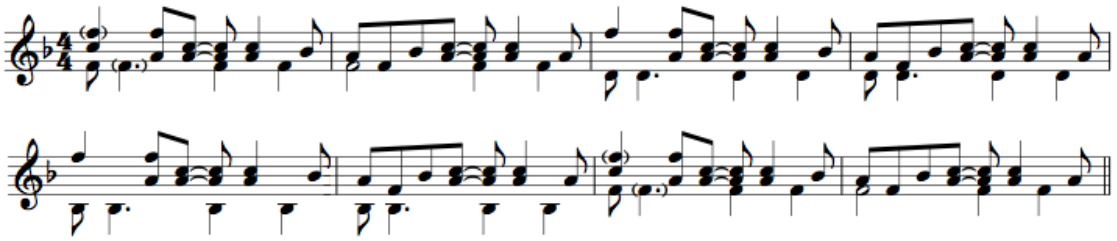


Fig. 4-5: Transcription of piano phrase used in the verses of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Bruno Mars

Although, the upper melody and harmonic filler repeat every two bars, the presence of performance nuance between each of these four repetitions does initially imply a non-looping origin. Examining these nuances on a larger hypermetric scale reveals a pattern. There is repetition of performance nuances, but they are synchronised with the overarching I – vi – IV – I harmonic sequence at an eight-bar hypermeter. The piano part does loop, but at eight-bar intervals. Evidence for this eight-bar loop can be heard in the track. For example, the manner in which the first melodic high F (F5) is hardly audible but made in the following three repetitions and how the tone of the inner thirds varies within each eight-bar phrase from matching the rest of the first melodic phrase in bars one to four, to being abruptly bright and piercing in the bars four and five. Where other instrumental phrases (such as the verse percussion part and the chorus synthesizer that shadows the upper melody of the piano) are markedly looped, the looping nature of the piano part is less noticeable. The primary factor for masking the loop-based construction of the piano part is the length of the loop; the 8-bar loop length equates to seventeen seconds passing before the piano phrase repeats exactly, in contrast to the shorter loop lengths of other instrumental parts where only two seconds passes before an identical repetition.

The timbre of the piano part also supports the interpretation that its "performance" is looped. Experienced listeners will immediately interpret the piano timbre as belonging to an electric instrument. Essential to this interpretation is the particularly compressed nature of Bruno Mars's instrument, which results in a piano sound that lacks harmonic overtones and is less sonically rich than an acoustic counterpart.[24] The timbre of the contrasting chorus instruments also reinforces the computerised loop-based form of the verses. Where the looping form of the verse was generated via repeating inter-loop nuance, the instrumental timbres that materialise in the chorus are central to forging the looping form, akin to the interpretation fostered by the percussion timbres in Lorde's *Royals*.[25] In the chorus, the bass drum and numerous string parts are clearly of a synthesized genesis, leading to presumptions regarding computerised music production with MIDI software instruments in programmes such as Logic and Cubase.

To an inexperienced listener, the instrumental backing of Bruno Mars's *Just The Way You Are* is highly repetitive, yet to a listener experienced in popular music production, the instrumental backing is understood as unmistakably looped via computerised processes. Interpreting the instruments as being looped has consequences for the gestural interpretation. The perception that these backing instruments are digitally looped creates a gestural division between those musical elements that are understood as looped and those that are not, such as the vocals. As all the instrumental parts give the impression of being looped, this implies that each instrumental part is tied to one envisaged stream of looping physical gestures. Where a traditional live performance of *Just The Way You Are* includes nuanced fluctuations in all musical characteristics across the ensemble (despite

[24] Differences inherent between electric and acoustic pianos analysed by Errede, 'Electric vs. Acoustic', (Accessed 10th November 2015)
[25] Analysis of *Royals* in chapter 2.3.2.1

the use of electric pianos and synthesizers in performances by Mars and his band around 2011), the digitally manipulated loops in the recorded version create the impression of an artificial backing track, gesturally divorced from the vocalist's nuanced performance.[26] Where synth-pop artists such as Pet Shop Boys and The Human League mask the gestural division through deadpan vocal delivery, the gestural schism in Bruno Mars's *Just The Way You Are* causes a gestural unease that has consequences for his construction of persona and the credibility of his lyrical declarations.

Although the computer-based musical material could have been directly transferred note-for-note into Pierce The Veil's guitar-based instrumentation, each instrument plays a significant role in moving away from the computerised loop-based interpretation of Mars's original track. Where other *Punk Goes…* tracks such as Hot Rod Circuit's cover of *Gin And Juice* retain the loop-based form but with different instrumentation, Pierce The Veil have chosen to use new instrumentation *and* repeatedly develop the musical material encountered in Bruno Mars's original in numerous ways. This results in the generation of numerous gestural transformations, in which interpreted performance nuances simultaneously generate the impression of an "authentic" live rock concert performance, as well as referencing many differing rock music styles in an attempt to generate style-based authenticity and formal interest despite a looping harmonic sequence.

In moving away from looping processes, the form of the Pierce The Veil recording cannot be expressed in the diagrammatic method used in Fig. 4-3. This is because Pierce The Veil do not treat the harmonic sequence as inseparable from a particular way of playing it. In contrast to Mars's version that 'never builds to any climax and […] simply falls a bit flat', Pierce The Veil create additional interest in

[26] 'Bruno Mars – Just The Way You Are (Live) [HD]', *YouTube*: non-scholarly reference #47

their version of *Just The Way You Are* by not treating the fundamental looping harmonic sequence as inseparable from a single set of performance gestures.[27] Where Mars's looped gestures cultivate predictability and do not allow for small-scale variation (even structural gestures such as drum fills are repeated verbatim), Pierce The Veil's recording flexibly incorporates tokens from an array of distinct styles.[28] Changing the way these sequences are played results in an alteration of the style as perceived by the listener. Although listeners may not be able to identify or label each individual style or stylistic token, they retain their ability to differentiate between musical styles.

As encountered in the examination of *Royals* and *Gin And Juice*, the instrumental timbres and their location within a stereo spectrum are significant in fostering within the listener the perceived image of a live performance taking place. This illusion is fundamental to producing an impression of authenticity in the rock music style.[29] In Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are*, the immediate entry of distorted guitars, electric bass, drum set, and vocals and their positioning within the stereo spectrum not only establishes a typical rock-band arrangement, but also the perceived image of a recorded live performance. A number of extra-musical characteristics foster the impression that the Pierce The Veil track was created by recording the instrumental parts from start to finish, resulting in the interpretation that there is performance nuance present, regardless of whether sections of the track are formed through repeating phrases. A number of these repeating phrases are subject to gestural transformation, resulting in identifiable changes in musical style. The myriad of styles referenced by Pierce The Veil are an attempt to flaunt overtly their musical influences; the majority of which will be

[27] Baniamer, N., 'Bruno Mars – *Just The Way You Are* Single Review', *Contact Music*: non-scholarly reference #51
[28] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures* (2004)
[29] See discussion of gestural transformation in relation to record production (chapter 6)

shared with their audience. Key to the success of these allusions is the gestural interpretation. The perceptual-imaginative interpretation is not one of mocking mere appropriation, but one that shows how Pierce The Veil have absorbed the myriad of musical phrases and associated performative gestures into their own gamut of gestures through their study of archetypal styles, bands, and tracks.

4.2.1.2 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION AS STYLISTIC CLASSIFIER

Applying the tool of gestural transformation to the Pierce The Veil version of *Just The Way You Are* demonstrates that this recording is qualitatively different from the Mars original. This analysis will not only compare specific sections of the Pierce The Veil version to Bruno Mars's original recording, but also examine the manner in which musical material and interpreted gestural character coalesce to form a semiotic narrative, developed as an overt attempt to garner style-related authenticity. The multi-instrument transformations interpreted here are formed via the synthesis of numerous instruments, each constructing an ever-changing context within which a myriad of musical styles are presented. In doing so, Pierce The Veil reject the tiresome pseudo-individualistic monotony of the original by establishing an unpredictable musical experience permanently rooted in the perceptual-imaginative interpretation of a live-performance setting.

4.2.1.2.1 PUNK-ROCK - VERSE ONE: SECTION ONE (0:19 – 0:27)

A bombastic introduction (0:00 – 0:18) establishes a clear live-performance perceptual-imaginative interpretation. The track is produced in a very polished manner. Although it projects the image of Pierce The Veil performing the track in

front of the listener, it is the sonic replication of an ideal performance rather than an actual performance. The track utilises the entire frequency range with a relatively flat dynamic response across the spectrum. The instruments can be heard at all times with no signal distortion in spite of the loud dynamic. The instruments are spread around the stereo image in a manner that correlates to a live performance setup and reverb is applied to give the impression of a live performance in a large venue. Following the introduction, the opening of the first verse is marked by a sudden shift in musical foreground and interpreted gestural character. Both of these aspects are key to the projection of a contemporary punk-rock style. Consider the transcription in Fig. 4-6, which presents an unambiguous I – vi – IV – I Ionian harmonic sequence in F:
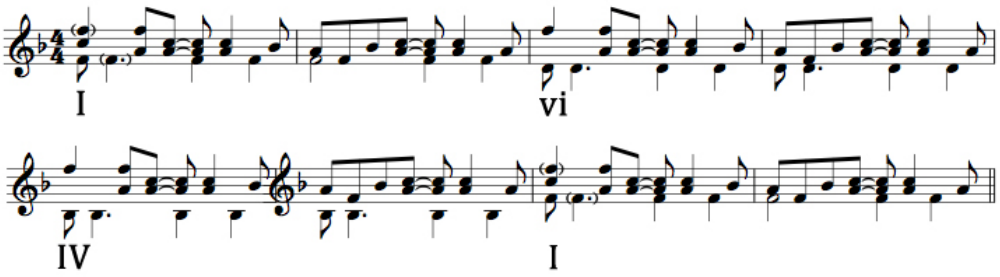


Fig. 4-6: Transcription with accompanying harmonic analysis of piano phrase in *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Bruno Mars

The piano phrase is split into three distinct parts: the harmonic foundation in the bass clef, a melodic phrase outlined in the highest notes, and the resultant F and A pitches (F4 and A4) that can be classed as harmonic filler. In the verses, this piano phrase is paired with a looping two-bar drum sample, transcribed in Fig. 4-7:
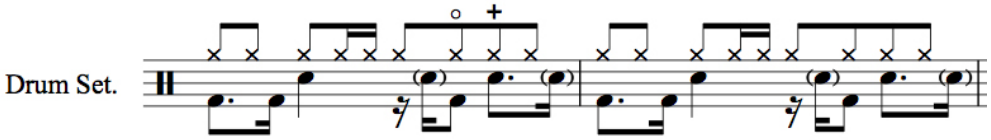


Fig. 4-7: Transcription of looped drumbeat heard in verses of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Bruno Mars

Pierce The Veil subject this looping verse motif to several alterations throughout the four verses and coda. Differing combinations of stylistic tokens and interpreted gestural character create an unpredictable musical foreground that projects numerous rock music styles. The first is the simplest. Here, the first half of the Mars eight-bar hypermeter is performed with a distorted electric guitar tracing the harmonic sequence in driving octaves (with the addition of a voice-leading step-wise movement to join the intervallic leap of a third between F to D), which is underpinned by a pounding floor-tom dominant drumbeat.
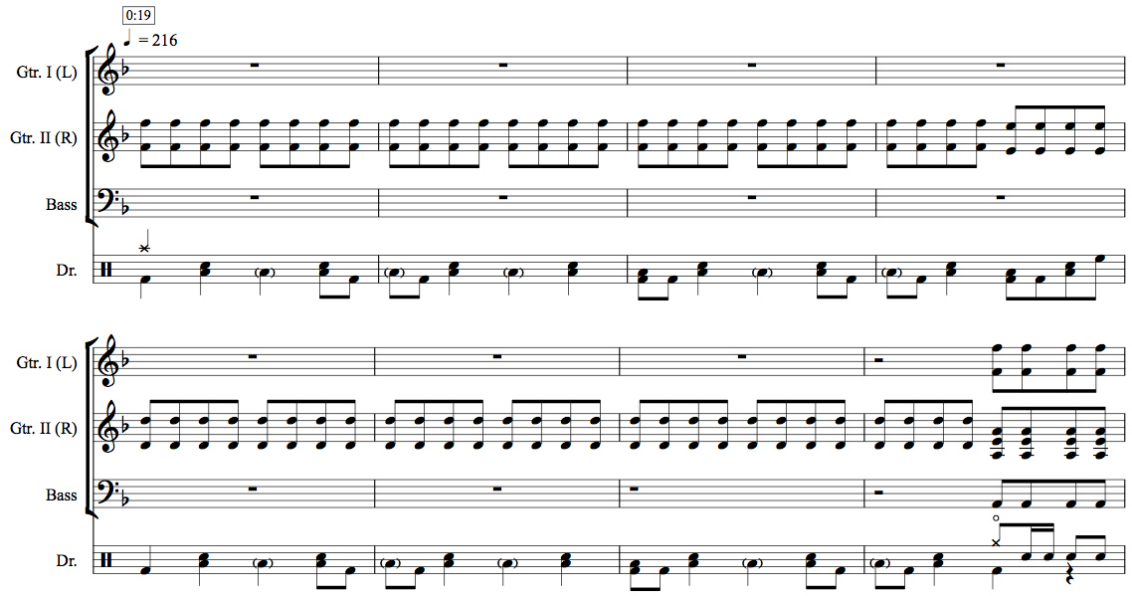


Fig. 4-8: Transcription of *Just The Way You Are* (0:19 – 0:27) as recorded by Pierce The Veil

In replacing the piano with an electric guitar playing octaves, Pierce The Veil have completely stripped away both the melodic element and the harmonic filler of the original Mars piano phrase, leaving a basic outline of the harmonic progression. The incessant octaves of the verse provide rhythmic filler that is dynamically, rhythmically, and most crucially gesturally offset against the grandiose ringing chords encountered in the introduction. Performance nuance is clearly discernible within these guitar octaves. As the dynamic and textural emphasis is coupled with the on-the-beat quavers, this electric guitar phrase will

be understood as being executed with an alternating down-up strumming motion. Consequently, the guitar phrase is understood as simplistic both in terms of musical phrasing (unrefined octaves setting out fundamental harmonic framework) and gestural interpretation, thanks to the envisaging of an unsophisticated and undemanding performative action that is easy to execute.

However, the lively 216 bpm projected tempo and the heavily distorted timbre creates the impression of this guitar part being performed in a highly animated manner. This is not animated in an aggressive sense – the likely interpretation resulting from listening to the guitar part in isolation due to the distorted timbre of the instrument asserting significant interpretational influence – but rather in an enthusiastic and effervescent sense due to the quiet dynamic and thin texture in comparison to the texturally dense introductory section and to the dynamically raucous drum set that accompanies. By examining the guitar phrase through mere transcription and in isolation, this passage could be argued to project one of a number of rock music styles. Bands as varied as Avenged Sevenfold (metal), Arctic Monkeys (indie), Foo Fighters (hard rock) and Sum-41 (pop punk) frequently use the variety of melodically static octaves transcribed in Fig. 4-8. Furthermore, stylistic uncertainties also stem from its highly contrasting character in relation to the preceding introduction. The panning of this part to an extreme side, the relatively quiet dynamic and thin texture lead to confusion as to whether this guitar part has been altered by effects or not. Retrospective interpretation from the subsequent section leads us to believe that this octave passage has no effects applied. The octave guitar has a thin texture and is relatively quiet simply because of the sheer number of instruments and dense texture apparent in the introduction. Although the gestural interpretation helps in

understanding the character of the phrase, understanding the electric guitar part within the context of the track is crucial to narrowing the stylistic interpretation.

There are two obvious alterations made to the percussion part. Beyond the change in drumbeat, characteristic rock music timbres are heard. As detailed in the case study examining Youth In Revolt's cover-version of *Royals*, the use of acoustic drum set timbres overrides the unmistakably synthetic genesis or heavily doctored production of this drumbeat that is revealed in detailed examination. All components of the Pierce The Veil acoustic drum set are texturally dense, dynamically loud and highly reverberant, marking it as a dominant member of the ensemble. These characteristics are identified in Fig. 4-9 and Fig. 4-10.

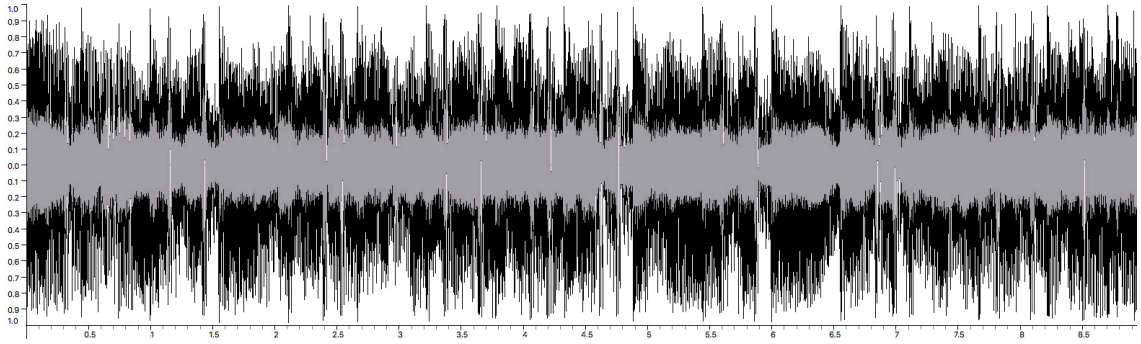


Fig. 4-9: Waveform analysis of *Just The Way You Are* (0:19 – 0:27) as recorded by Pierce The Veil; the dynamically saturated transients correspond to elements of the drum set

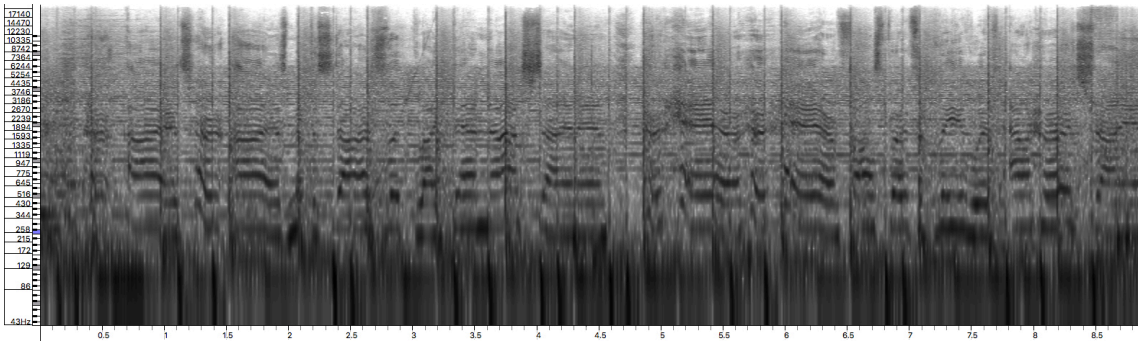


Fig. 4-10: Spectrogram analysis of *Just The Way You Are* (0:19 – 0:27) as recorded by Pierce The Veil; darker vertical bands correspond to drum set events

Firstly, witness how the spectrogram demonstrates that every drum event is not only comprises a large number of frequencies, but how every occurrence of each drum group are of identical textural character (i.e., all the bass drums are

identical, all the backbeat snare-and-tom combinations are identical). Secondly, note how the waveform analysis highlights how each strike is at nearly peak volume. Rather than indicating that the drumbeat has been digitally composed, this gives the impression that a highly competent drummer is not only attending to his or her drum set in front of the listener.

The above attributes (texture, dynamics, reverb, and timbre) contribute to the imagined image of a drummer performing in a highly energetic fashion. The drummer is understood to be playing as vociferously as humanly possible to generate the volume, texture and subsequent reverb that tails from every drum strike, filling every corner of the imagined sonic environment. The choice of floor tom and snare drum further promotes this gestural interpretation. For common cross-handed drummers, this choice (as opposed to hi-hat and snare drum) facilitates unrestricted movement of the arms, as the right hand does not need to cross over the left to gain access to the floor tom. This allows full arm strokes to be performed, which corresponds to the loud dynamic for both floor tom and snare drum.

This gestural reading is in contrast to the physical gestures imagined from the Bruno Mars verse percussion. All of Mars's drum parts fluctuate dynamically and texturally, creating the impression that the drummer is performing with different amounts of force, as opposed to Pierce The Veil's relentless pounding of the drum set. Furthermore, the individual components of the Bruno Mars drum set are not as texturally rich as their Pierce The Veil counterparts, giving the impression that the drums are not being attended to with as much force. This implies a relatively relaxed performance that gesturally matches the accompanying piano part.

The particular choice of drums used by Pierce The Veil is also central to the gestural transformation. Where Bruno Mars's sample utilises a more conventional spread around the drum set (hi-hat pulse with a snare drum backbeat), Pierce The Veil choose to move the pulsing hi-hat onto a floor tom, and the backbeat is created via a combination of the snare drum and accented floor tom. Compare Fig. 4-11 with Fig. 4-4:
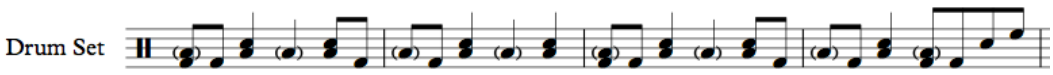


Fig. 4-11: Transcription of drum phrase in *Just The Way You Are* (0:19 – 0:27) as recorded by Pierce The Veil

This choice to use the floor tom as an indicator of pulse and its use in unison with the snare drum dramatically alters the stylistic interpretation of the track. Where Bruno Mars's drumbeat implies the effortless groove of a rhythm and blues or soul track, the primitive pounding of the snare-and-tom combination with little-to-no nuance brings to mind musical styles commonly associated with unrefined and 'do-it-yourself' self-taught gestures. Even though the drumbeat itself is a staple of all rock music styles, the unrelenting pounding manner in which it is interpreted to have been played, in combination with the fast-moving tempo, evokes a punk-rock style; examples range from The Ramones (*Blitzkrieg Bop,* 1976) to The White Stripes (*Seven Nation Army*, 2002) or Fall Out Boy (*I Don't Care,* 2009).

Following Pierce The Veil's relatively metrically indistinct introduction, the establishing of a clearly repetitive drumbeat at the beginning of the first verse likely revises the previously projected sense of metre. Where the tactus of the Pierce The Veil introduction is eventually inferred by the harmonic movements at the end of bar three and reinforced at the end of each two-bar phrase at crotchet = 108, the combination of the snare drum and pounding floor tom that is interpreted

as a backbeat becomes the sole stimulus for the doubling of the projected pulse to crotchet = 216. This shift is indicated by the presence of a metric modulation, evident at the beginning of the Fig. 4-8 transcription (the electric guitar quavers are equivalent to semiquavers in Bruno Mars's recording). Doubling the speed of the projected pulse increases the sense of rhythmic momentum, generating a sense of urgency and insistence that the guitar does not project in isolation. Again, an analysis that exclusively focuses on a transcribed reduction may infer a lessening of the overall gestural energy due to the paring down of both the number of instruments and their texture in comparison to the introduction. Indeed, the transformation of the projected pulse corresponds to the previously examined electric guitar gestures where the dynamic and textural nuances projected the rhythm as being understood as quavers at crotchet = 216 rather than semiquavers at crotchet = 108. The following analyses corroborate this argument. For Fig. 4-12 and Fig. 4-13, I recorded the opening guitar octaves (Fig. 4-8) but with a different pulse level projected in each. The recordings were made on identical equipment and using identical recording techniques and software.

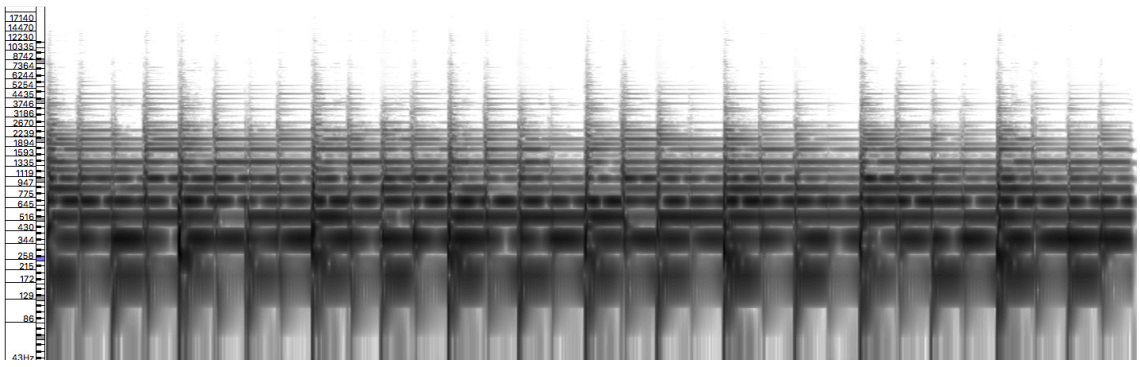


Fig. 4-12: Spectrogram analysis of the repetitive guitar octaves realised as semiquavers at crotchet = 108 (recording made by the author)

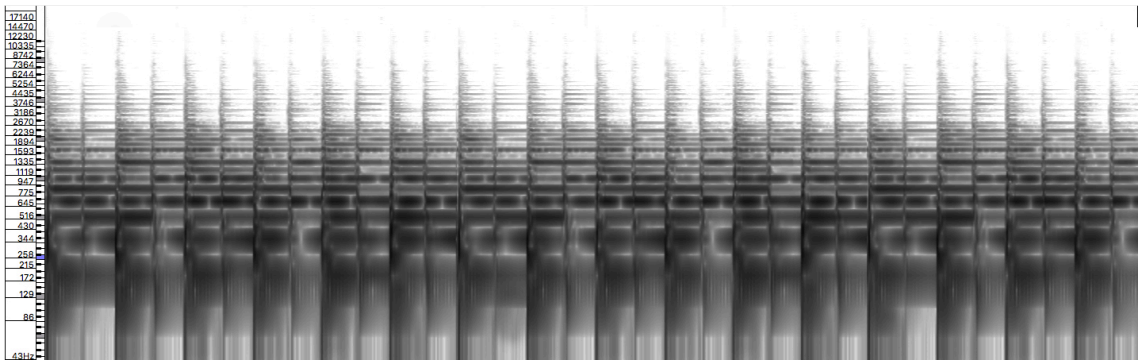


Fig. 4-13: Spectrogram analysis of the repetitive guitar octaves realised as quavers at crotchet = 216 (recording made by the author)

Nevertheless, both transcriptions would most probably be played with an alternating down-up strumming motion, the nuanced emphasis is subtly different for each reading. In the first recording (Fig. 4-12) a slower crotchet = 108 pulse is used as a reference to perform the phrase, resulting in dynamic and textural nuance on three distinct levels of emphasis. Here, the chords played with a down-stroke are texturally thicker and dynamically louder than their up-stroke counterparts, with a further emphasis understood on those down-strokes that occur on the first beat. Conversely, the second recording (Fig. 4-13) uses a crotchet = 216 pulse and different patterns of nuance occur. This second "faster" recording has only two levels of emphasis that correspond to being on or off the pulse. It is the lower analysis that is understood from the Pierce The Veil recording, musically and gesturally corresponding to the projected pulse of the pounding snare-and-tom backbeat. This quicker projected metre of the lower quavers transcription generates an increased sense of momentum and energy, in comparison to the Pierce The Veil introduction and in comparison to the slower metre of Mars's version.

Characteristics of the instrumental tracks establish interpretations of the musicians' imagined performance gestures, which in turn inform an inferred musical style. Although the interpretation that the Pierce The Veil track sounds like

it has been performed on a stage is important, the manner of the gestures is more significant in establishing an interpreted musical style. In the first half of verse one, the musically and performatively simplistic distorted guitar part, which crudely traces the harmonic sequence, combines with the highly energetic, perhaps even primitive pounding of the drum set to imply a punk-rock style.

Where Bruno Mars's calm vocal temperament gesturally connects with the piano and sampled percussion instrumental backing, the Pierce The Veil vocals can appear gesturally divorced from their instrumental accompaniment. Although obvious, it must be noted that the Pierce The Veil lead vocalist is male. Due to the prevalence of male vocalists in rock music styles, the interpreted gender has a profound effect on the ascription of musical style. Whilst the lead vocal is gesturally transformed through small changes in character and inflection, the vocal gestures seem to be mostly at odds with those of the instrumental backing. Interpretation of the Pierce The Veil vocal is highly dependent on the context in which the rerecording is heard. In direct comparison to Bruno Mars's vocal, the vocal recorded by Vic Fuentes (lead vocalist of Pierce The Veil) gives the impression of a relatively energetic, eager performance in which the first-person protagonist seems impatient to tell the audience of his feelings. This contrasts greatly with the envisaged gestural character garnered from the Bruno Mars recording, in which a cool laid-back Mars seems in no rush to express how 'Her eyes make the stars look like they're not shining'. A number of small alterations within these opening lines create the change of interpretation. In comparison to Mars's original, Vic Fuentes tends to accentuate the plosives in his vocalisation. For instance, Mars's introductory vocals utilise a soft 'uhrr' in contrast to Pierce The Veil's more attacking 'arrh'. Whether or not this is a consequence of a differing vocal register (although both sing the same note, Mars's low-pitched falsetto

contrasts with Fuentes's high modal voice register), Fuentes's high notes imply increased exertion, in contrast to Mars's falsetto. Whereas Mars's effortless vocal lightly sits on top of the 'breezy' accompanying piano riff, Pierce The Veil's vocal part is relatively quieter in their particular context. This gives the impression that the vocalist is fighting the rest of the instruments and supports the interpreted inference of a more energetic performance. Beyond the introduction, Mars's warm vocal timbre occupies a narrow dynamic range, whereas Fuentes is dynamically irregular with a wider dynamic range, separated syllables (compare, for instance, the word 'without') and a nasal quality that coarsens the vocal grain. All these qualities in combination with the southern American accent place it firmly within the gamut of American rock styles, within which contemporary punk-rock is a significant component.

This interpretation arises in direct contrast to Bruno Mars's original recording, yet it presents an opposing interpretation when understood in relation to other Pierce The Veil tracks. From this perspective, the vocal of *Just The Way You Are* is understood to retain the relaxed, easy-going temperament of Mars's original. A cursory vocal comparison of *Just The Way You Are* to other Pierce The Veil tracks, such as the frantic *King For A Day* (2012), the boisterous *The Boy Who Could Fly* (2010), or the positively indignant *Bulls In The Bronx* (2010), reveal how Vic Fuentes appears to be checking any overtly enthusiastic or zealous gesturing in the *Punk Goes…* recording. The vocal of the *Just The Way You Are* re-recording certainly contrasts with the above three Pierce The Veil tracks and with what could arguably be described as Fuentes's principal vocal style.

A brief consideration of tracks such as *Hold On Till May* (2012), *Bulletproof Love* (2010), and *I'm Low On Gas And You Need A Jacket* (2012) demonstrates that the musical phrases and gestural characters utilised in section one, verse one of

Just The Way You Are are certainly within the capabilities and the stylistic inventory of Pierce The Veil, even though cross-band application of these all particular musical tokens at the same time is never seen within their catalogue of self-written songs. However, sections of the self-composed tracks where these pop-punk tokens are employed not only feature the softer, gentler vocal character Fuentes uses in *Just The Way You Are*, but also electric guitars tuned to drop D tuning, rather than Pierce The Veil's usual drop C# tuning. Although the change is not gestural in itself, it changes the gestural contingency of the guitars by altering their timbral characteristics; the lower drop C# tuning is reserved for hardcore-punk style tracks due to the guitar's thicker texture, as opposed to the lighter pop-punk style tracks where the guitars are tuned to a drop D tuning. Whether Pierce The Veil are conscious of such choices can be debated, but the link between guitar tuning and style appears more overt as other recordings are taken into account.

My interpretation that the vocals create a gestural disparity is coloured by my exposure to Pierce The Veil's catalogue of studio recordings. I am however prepared to concede that listeners who lack this knowledge will be prone to understand the vocal as texturally coarse and dynamically rough, creating the gestural impression of raucousness that matches the instrumental backing. In either interpretation, the simplistic guitar line, boisterous drum sounds, and comparatively eager vocal gestures give the impression of a contemporary punk-rock style. Although the musical material in Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are* informs this stylistic classification, more significant are inferred gestures produced by the instrumental timbres and textures.

4.2.1.2.2 POP-PUNK - VERSE ONE : SECTION TWO (0:27-0:35)

Where the second half of Mars's verse continues to loop in the same manner as the first with no alterations to the instrumental backing or their interpreted gestures, Pierce The Veil defy the loop-based form of Mars's original in a number of ways. Leading into this second half, a drum fill and previously unheard guitar parts perform new material that clearly rejects the gestural form of the original. Pierce The Veil develop the punk-rock style presented in section one by altering what is played and how it is played. From the general 'punk-rock music' style heard in the first half of the verse, the second half is transformed into a modern pop-punk style akin to bands such as Green Day, Blink-182, and New Found Glory. Where formalist analyses would connect the subtle shift in musical style to the inclusion of more style-specific tokens, such as arpeggiated lead-guitar lines and specific drumbeats, I assign more significance to the shift in the manner the track is being performed.

Although the introduction of left-sided electric guitar and electric bass guitar should increase the textural density, the individual instruments perform in a texturally lighter and gesturally constrained way. In the second half of verse one, the new stereo-spread electric guitar parts provide harmonic filler (left-side) and a 'lead' counterpoint melody (right-side). While the prior right-side electric guitar octaves implied a sense of animated energy via heavy distortion and an interpreted alternating strumming motion, this phrase comprised of individually picked palm-muted notes is in stark textural and gestural contrast.

A lighter texture is apparent even though the full band has re-entered. The introduction of the left-sided guitar and electric bass guitar are offset against the texture changes in the right-side guitar and drum set. Even though the guitars still

play two notes simultaneously, both guitars perform single-note palm-muted lines, which reduces the output in a number of ways: firstly, the palm-muted technique restricts the vibrations of the strings, rendering them quieter; each instrument creates a smaller number of resultant tones whilst playing single notes due to a lack of interaction with double stopped notes (in the case of the prior octaves); both of which result in a quieter output from the guitar, which reduces the amount of distortion that occurs within the amplifier. This change in texture corresponds with a differing gestural image of the guitarists. At a most cursory level, the diminished textural density results in a relaxing of the gestural character; the previous interpretation of a primitively animated performance is tempered to the point of being gesturally constrained. This interpretation correlates to the controlled movements required of the guitarist's strumming arm to accurately perform the palm-muted guitar phrases.

Similarly, the drum set's reduced dynamic and texture corresponds to a change in gestural interpretation. For this second half of the verse, the prior pounding drumbeat is transformed into a typical rock-style drumbeat with syncopated bass drum. The pounding floor tom is replaced by a driving closed hi-hat, with syncopated open hits that rhythmically correspond to the syncopated bass drum rhythm. The notated reduction may suggest that this drumbeat is texturally denser in comparison to the preceding primitive floor tom drumbeat, but this is not the case. On record, the texturally dense boom of the floor tom in the previous section is replaced by a dynamically quieter and texturally thinner 'chk' of quaver hi-hats. Furthermore, the incessantly uniform and gesturally rowdy strikes of the floor tom are replaced by a nuanced and highly syncopated stream of hi-hats strikes that result in a reimagined gestural interpretation. The lowering of the dynamic and thinning of the texture results in a gesturally less energetic

imagined performance. This correlates to the recorded reality, where the physical gestures utilised to perform this quaver hi-hat phrase are restricted by the speed with which the quavers are played. While the floor tom crotchet pulse of the previous section is understood as having been performed with an uninhibited full-stroke movement, these hi-hats will be interpreted as having been played with a combination of relatively confined wrist and lower arm movements known as the Moeller technique.[30] Even if an open-handed technique were used, to allow a full range of motion for each upper limb (with no need to cross arms over to play the hi-hat), the speed of the quavers restricts the distance that the arm can move before needing to return. This constriction of the imagined physical gesture is understood from the record, where the change in the musical foreground equates to a decrease in the textural density and a slight relinquishing of the physical energy. This defies the likely interpretation that would be inferred from an analysis of the notated reduction. More instruments and increased texture would normally suggest a gaining of gestural momentum and energy.

The change of musical phrases, coupled with a change in the interpreted manner in which this material is performed, alters the stylistic interpretation. The primitive pounding and simplistic harmonic outlines of section one give way to an effervescent energy that, although diminished in comparison to the prior section, gives the impression of latent vivacity that could burst out at any moment. The interpreted more general 'punk-rock style' of the first half of the verse is further refined as being pop-punk in the second half.

[30] For an in-depth discussion of the Moeller technique, see Jojo Mayer, *Secrets For The Modern Drummer* (2010): non-scholarly reference #19

4.2.1.2.3 POP-PUNK - VERSE TWO: SECTION ONE (0:36 – 0:41)

Where Pierce The Veil split the first verse into two distinct musical styles, the second verse (beginning at 0:36) is split into four distinct stylistic sections, each corresponding to one chord of the harmonic sequence. Where this quickening of the stylistic and gestural rhythm generates increased momentum, the lack of logic to the stylistic changes (there is no anticipation) causes the listener to be pushed and pulled through an increasingly unpredictable array of rock music styles. Beginning with another pop-punk variant, Pierce The Veil briefly transforms Bruno Mars's musical material into a hardcore-punk style, then a stadium-rock style before returning to another pop-punk variation. Vital to these judgements is the manner in which the musical material is understood to have been played in the track's sonic environment. Within this verse alone, Pierce The Veil project a vast range of performance gestures that colour the stylistic interpretation of each individual section.

By disorientating the listener through rapid deviations in style, the listener becomes further detached from any sense of similarity to Mars's original recording. Due to the time-span (30 seconds) and the numerous changes in musical foreground that oppose Mars's looping form, Pierce The Veil have created a stylistic distance in which, by the beginning of the second verse, their version has become stylistically dissociated from the original. In the first verse, the entrance of the vocal will prompt a listener to understand Pierce The Veil's recording in direct relation to the Mars original. But due to the numerous unpredictable musical styles obscuring the original, the second verse of the Pierce The Veil version is understood as a development of their own first verse, as opposed to a further development of Bruno Mars's original recording. By this point in the Pierce The

Veil track, the listener's ability to reference Mars's piano phrase and rhythm and blues percussion sample has been severely diminished.

The first of the four distinct verse two styles is understood as a development of the first half of verse one. Not only are they formally related by their placement at the beginning of each verse, but a number of the individual instrumental verse one phrases have been incorporated and/or developed in this second verse; the two drumbeats are linked via a common bass-and-snare-drum pattern, a guitar performs an octave melodic line in quavers, and the vocal traces a near-identical melodic contour and syllabic pattern.
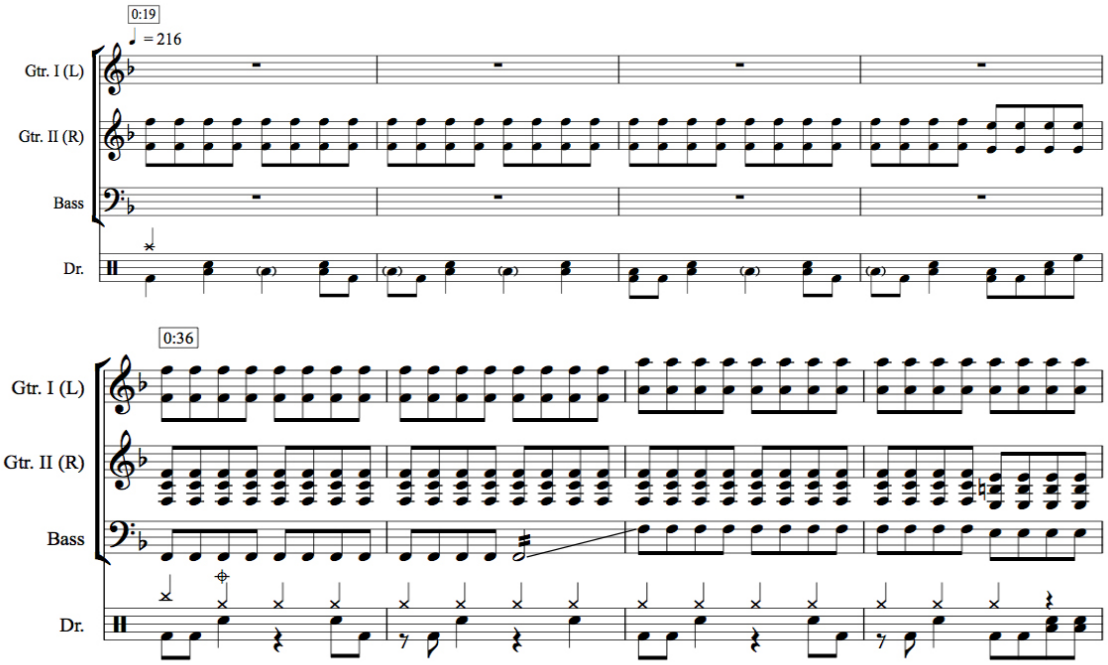


Fig. 4-14: Transcriptions of the opening bars of verse one (0:19) and verse two (0:36) of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Pierce The Veil

Even though a number of the phrases are apparent in both verse one and two, each produce contrasting gestural images. Where the verse one solo guitar octaves that outline the F to D harmonic movement are interpreted as a rhythm guitar part, a similar octave guitar part heard in verse two is transformed into a quasi-lead guitar melodic line, due to its context within the ensemble. The setting of the quaver octaves on top of power chords and electric bass alters the role of the

octaves within the arrangement. Although the imagined physical movements of the guitarist may not change between the two parts, its gestural character is transformed due to its new position of heightened contrapuntal importance within the ensemble.

The physical gestures enacted by the right-side guitar and electric bass will be imagined to be identical to that of the octaves heard at the beginning of verse one; in all three parts, the dynamic and textural nuances of each quaver imply the same alternating down-up strumming pattern. Similarly, the pounding crotchet floor toms have been switched to the more conventional hi-hat, yet critically a semi-open variant that contrasts with the predominantly closed hi-hats heard in the second half of verse one. This part-opening of the hi-hats completely alters the sonic capabilities of the instrument and the subsequent gestural interpretation. Where closed hi-hats are held together, open hi-hats are allowed to vibrate more freely. This occurs on a spectrum. Gradually loosening the foot pressure on the hi-hats results in ever coarsening, harsher sounds. In *Just The Way You Are,* these semi-open hi-hats are not actually louder than their closed counterparts, but their thickened texture gives the impression of being louder and thus, is imagined as being performed with a more forceful performative gesture. In being allowed to vibrate and sizzle against each other, the semi-open hi-hat cymbals sound harsh and abrasive, which again alters the gestural interpretation towards a more forceful and vigorous performance style.

This interpretation is not limited to just the hi-hat. Although the sonic quality of the snare drum does not alter between the first two verses, the drum beat used in the second verse seems to project a more forceful strike than its first verse counterpart. This corresponds to the reality of attending to the drum set whilst recording. While the volumes of the drum set components do not change,

the timbre and the changed texture of the hi-hats alter the interpreted dynamic and, thus, the gestural interpretation. By reverting to a crotchet pulse, the drummer is afforded the opportunity to utilise a 'full stroke' that includes movement of the arm from the shoulder. Not only does this performative action counter the constrained movements of the speedy quavers from the prior section (resulting in a louder, thicker hi-hat sound), but it also allows the snare drum arm to strike in physical synchronicity with the hi-hat arm, resulting in a snare drum strike uninhibited by hi-hat arm quickly pulsing quavers.

In moving the crotchet tactus from floor tom to an open hi-hat, the atmosphere of the second verse alters. Although the bass drum and snare back beat are retained, the direct juxtaposition of these crotchet open hi-hats after the quaver closed hi-hat highlights the tendency to hear the open hi-hats as being performed with more energy, creating the illusion of a performance that is, at this particular moment within the song, relatively more ferocious and aggressive. Again, this alteration subsequently affects the other instruments as their interpreted sound is influenced by their immediate sonic context. The major harmony does curtail any sense of gestured aggression, but the open hi-hat coincides with the sudden textural thickening provided by the addition of the right-side guitar (playing power chords) and the electric bass. This choice of open hi-hat implies that the track was arranged in a live performance setting (be that a practice room, or on-stage in a pre-concert sound-check), where the drum set requires an increase in volume so as to be heard over other instruments. This contradicts modern recording procedures, as the performers are likely to record their parts individually, playing with recordings of the other instrumental parts through headphones. With this method, the volume of the instruments within the recording studio environment can be controlled. This particular option of the open

hi-hat utilised to equal the rise in overall dynamic and texture is no longer strictly necessary; the studio engineer can alter the playback volume of the other instruments so that the drummer is able to hear himself at all volumes if needed. However, retention of the closed hi-hat in this section of *Just The Way You Are* would have stood out: the movement to an open hi-hat furthers the illusion of the band performing live, as the drummer fights to have individual components of the drum set heard over the instruments at any given moment. This change is one of many that may have come from working out the arrangement live in a rehearsal. Thus, arrangement decisions that are primarily decided, learnt, and brought from the practice room are directly applied in their recording so as to sound like a live performance.

The addition of the new guitar parts and the movement to the hi-hat marks this section of verse two as relatively standard in pop-rock instrumentation: pulsing power chords grounded with driving bass with an optional melodic thread (left-hand guitar octaves) over a snare backbeat with syncopated bass drum. Not only do these parts of the track utilise tokens of the contemporary pop-punk style of New Found Glory, Blink-182 and early Fall Out Boy, but it sounds like and could have been performed by these bands. The nuanced performance of the *Just The Way You Are* musical material generates a gestural interpretation akin to these aforementioned bands. It is not enough for the Pierce The Veil track to just use the same musical material as these pop-punk contemporaries. It can only be understood as belonging to this style if the listener can imagine similar gestures being employed.

4.2.1.2.4 HARDCORE PUNK - SECTION TWO: VERSE TWO (0:41 – 0:45)

The second section of verse two is a direct development of musical material previously heard in their recording of *Just The Way You Are*. Section two is highly marked against earlier parts of the track, not only because of drastic changes to the musical foreground and interpreted gestural character, but also because a rupture occurs at an unanticipated point within the harmonic sequence. This gestural transformation relates to previous sections of the Pierce The Veil recording rather than, as in other case studies, being understood as a transformation from the original recording. Between 0:41 – 0:45, the pop-punk style heard in verse one is transformed into a hardcore punk style. This stylistic change is produced by a transformation of the gestural character. This transformation is established by a number of factors. Firstly, the incessant quaver rhythm that typified the previous pop-punk variation is transformed into cross-band, staccato chordal stabs, which are coordinated with the rhythm of the drumbeat's bass drum retained from the previous section and first verse.
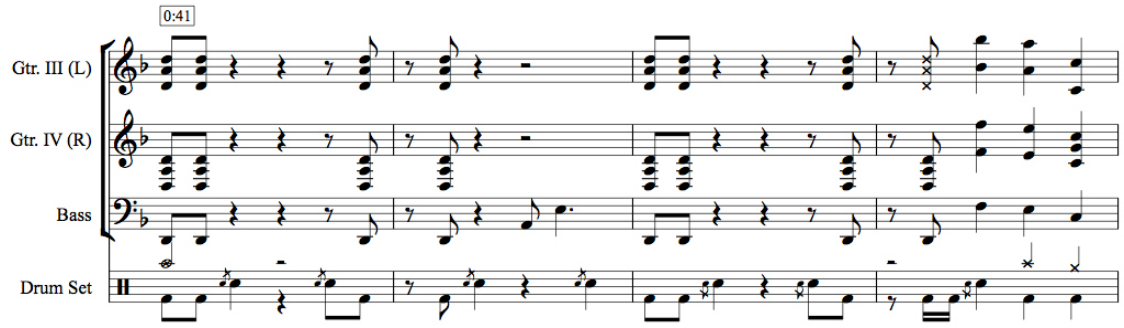


Fig. 4-15: Transcription of *Just The Way You Are* (0:41 – 0:45) as recorded by Pierce The Veil

Beyond the change of rhythm, there is a change of combined guitar timbre, a movement to an implied minor chord, an alteration of the interpreted function of the guitar parts (from a predominantly harmonic function into a highly rhythmic one), and a move from relatively independent instruments to unison. However, the

guitar parts between at 0:41 – 0:45 share harmonic roles with previous sections in a pop-punk style (the right-side guitar plays power chords, the left-side guitar performs a 'lead' tonic octave, and the electric bass plays the root note), they differ in terms of gestural interpretation. The energetic cheerfulness of the pop punk style gives way to a more aggressive, insistent and uncompromising interpreted gestural character.

The lack of melodic third within the D power chord at 0:41 could imply modal ambiguity, yet the chord projects a minor mode in relation to the F power chord before to it. Beyond the usual connotations between minor key and darker emotions, this affect is also reinforced by the texture of the chords, which distinguishes them from their major predecessors. Firstly, the movement down to the D harmony utilises the lowest open strings available to electric guitars tuned to drop-D (see Fig. 4-15). Power chords, open strings, and lower pitch all generate textural and timbral richness in distorted electric guitars; all three are present here. As the open strings are allowed to vibrate more freely, they send a louder sound to the amplifier. Although the amplifier distortion compresses and limits the output volume, the increased input volume generates a thicker texture. In addition, the interaction between the three notes of the power chord generates additional higher frequencies and, crucially, an extra fundamental frequency an octave below the root, resulting in a texturally thicker and more powerful sound. This textural richness supports the gestural interpretation that these chords are being attended to with an aggression absent in the opening pop-punk sections.

As with the preceding pop-punk style, these three guitar parts cohesively project the same physical gestures across all three instruments. But while the dynamic and textural nuances of the incessant pop-punk quavers implied a relatively relaxed alternating strumming pattern, each of these D minor staccato

guitar stabs presents as identical in texture (the relative balance of the individual notes is the same across the staccato chords). This consistency of timbral quality implies that all eight stabs are performed with the same physical gesture; that of a forceful down-stroke strumming motion.

Most telling from the gestural interpretation is the manner in which the instrumentalists project a unified force, generated by all instruments playing an identical rhythmic motif in unison. Even though the guitars in the previous pop-punk section can be described in the same way, the inclusion of the drum set and the use of rests to underscore the rhythmic unity and command the attention of the listener. Although detailed analysis of the pop-punk continuous quavers reveals nuanced qualities, their understanding as a unified set of performers is masked by a lack of sonic definition. Even though the vocals obstinately continue in the same character, the united front projected by the accompanying instruments is unlike any previous gesture in *Just The Way You Are*. This sort of one-note rhythmic motif is common in many musical styles (The Foo Fighters's *The Pretender* (2007), for example), yet its location within the harmonic sequence at a point where the minor chord occurs transforms the musical gesture and introduces a new musical style. This type of motif is a token of both the hardcore punk and metal-core styles of punk-rock music. Both are renowned for their emphasis on rhythm rather than melody, with single-chord syncopated passages as a principal identifier of the style. To my mind, it deliberately references *New Noise* by Refused; the *non plus ultra* of the contemporary hardcore punk style and a major influence in twenty-first century punk-rock music making:
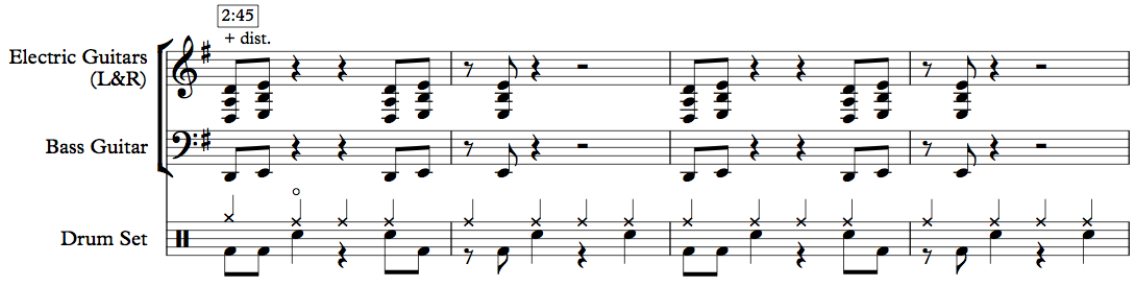


Fig. 4-16: Transcription of *New Noise* by Refused (2:45)

This type of repeating rhythmic motif is also heard in metal-core style tracks, yet with a few differences that generate further gestural transformations. To compare the styles, note both the notated similarities and differences between 0:41 – 0:45 of *Just The Way You Are* and the following transcriptions of Avenged Sevenfold's *Unholy Confessions* (2003), Norma Jean's *Memphis Will Be Laid To Waste* (2002) and Funeral For A Friend's *Red Is The New Black* (2003).
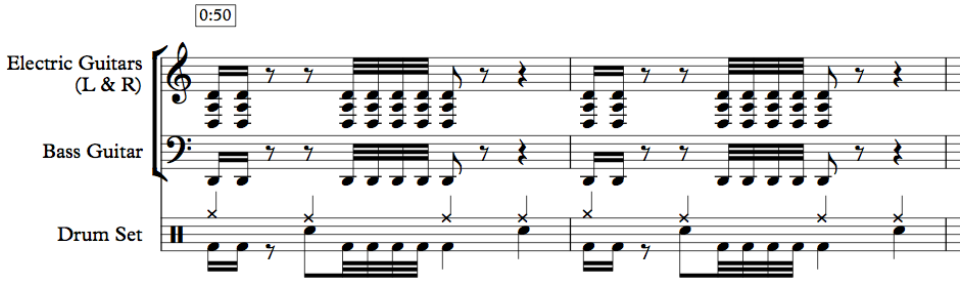


Fig. 4-17: Transcription of *Unholy Confessions* (0:50 – 0:55) as recorded by Avenged Sevenfold

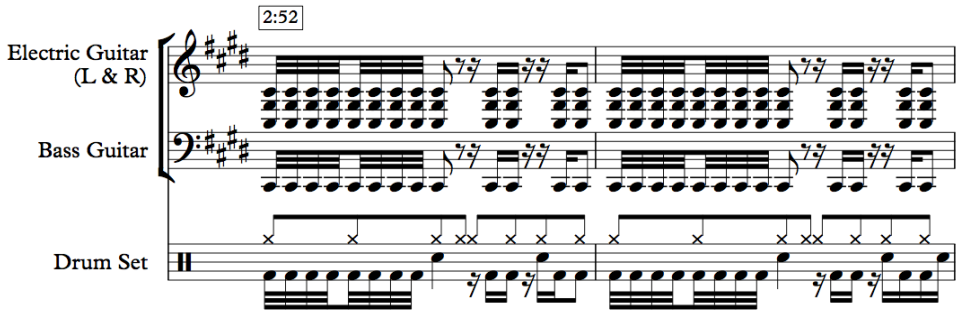


Fig. 4-18: Transcription of *Memphis Will Be Laid To Waste* (2:52 – 2:57) as recorded by Norma Jean
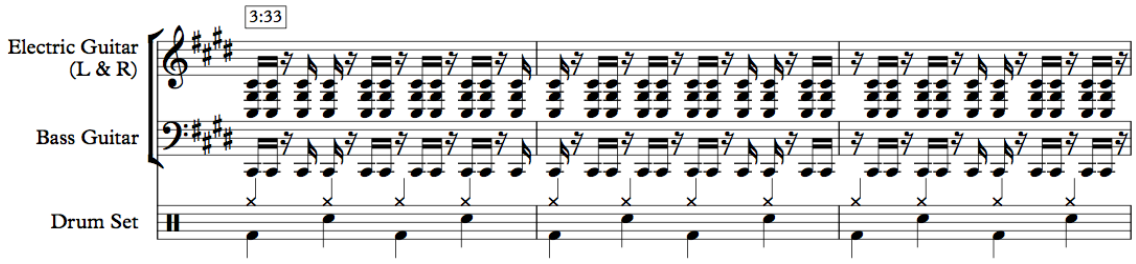


Fig. 4-19: Transcription of *Red Is The New Black* (3:33 – 3:38) as recorded by Funeral For A Friend

Nonetheless, the cross-band presentation of a repeating, single-note rhythmic motif is retained, the screamed vocals, palm muted distorted electric guitars and half-time drums (with double bass drum) commonly imply a metal-core variant. This style is utilised later in *Just The Way You Are* and the gestural interpretation is significant to understanding it as another distinct musical style. This style of this section develops the energetic gestures of previous pop-punk variants and the aggressive and forceful interpreted performance character of hardcore punk, moving towards a metal-core style typified by the tracks featured in Fig. 4-17, Fig. 4-18, and Fig. 4-19.

4.2.1.2.5 STADIUM ROCK - SECTION THREE: VERSE TWO (0:45 – 0:50)

Continuing the process of development in section two of verse two, Pierce The Veil further transform their own version of *Just The Way You Are* in section three. They evoke a stadium rock style by applying different stylistic tokens and an unusual gestural character; essential to stylistic interpretation is the gestural interpretation of the instruments that are briefly absent in this section. The stylistic tokens include a particular choice of drumbeat and a vocal-and-drum set duo, which crucially alters the perception of the applied reverb. This recasts the sonic environment in which the listener imagines Pierce The Veil to be performing

Just The Way You Are. Fig. 4-20 is a transcription of Pierce The Veil's verse two, section three:
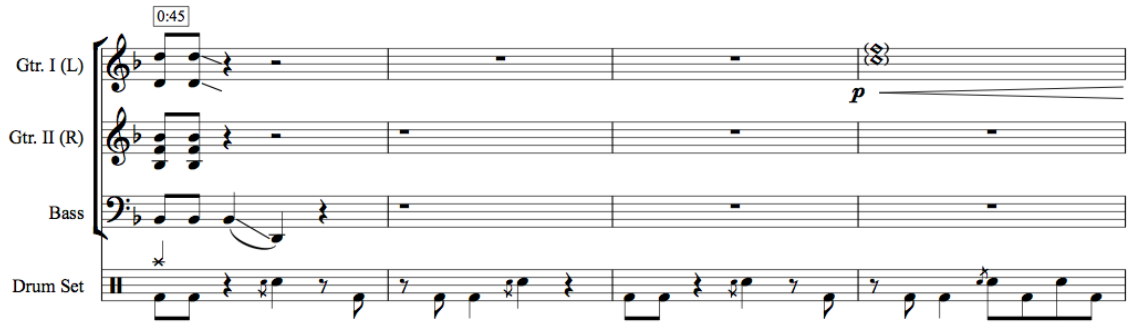


Fig. 4-20: Transcription of *Just The Way You Are* (0:45 – 0:50) as recorded by Pierce The Veil

Although Fig. 4-20 is written in accordance with the previously projected crotchet = 216 tempo, the music is not heard in this way. It is perceived as having a pulse half as slow (half-time feel) in comparison to the preceding section. This change in tempo is highly significant for the gestural interpretation. While the drumbeats in sections two and three share a number of key features (they only use bass drum and snare drum flam and have a similar bass drum syncopation), the rhythmic augmentation of the snare drum projects a new half-time feel in section three. The snare drum dominates the perception of tempo in a rock track, because it is commonly used as a backbeat, landing on beats two and four. The rhythmic augmentation of the snare causes a change in tempo from the crotchet = 216 tempo in verse one and most of verse two, to a half time crotchet = 108 feel. Thus, Fig. 4-21 could be considered a more accurate representation of the track as heard:
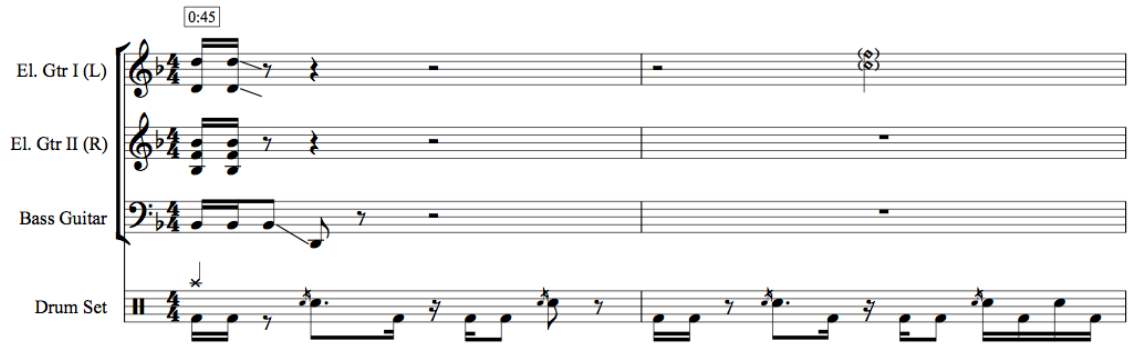


Fig. 4-21: Reimagined transcription of *Just The Way You Are* (0:45 – 0:50) by Pierce The Veil, written in projected 'half-time' tempo of crotchet = 108

The implied tempo of Fig. 4-21 matches that of the original Mars recording. However, where the projected crotchet = 108 tempo is an unrelenting constant throughout the entire Mars track, it sits in marked contrast to surrounding passages in the Pierce The Veil recording. Pierce The Veil's halving of the tactus creates a short-lived interruption, briefly relaxing the incessant pace and interpreted gestures, which were central to the stylistic interpretation of the first verse and first half of verse two. The steady half-time feel is an important aspect of the interpreted style of section three, and a number of aspects of the drumbeat (notated and otherwise) are very similar to those already encountered in the introduction of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt; it is no coincidence that both sections of these cover-versions are interpreted as having been transformed into a stadium-rock style.[31]
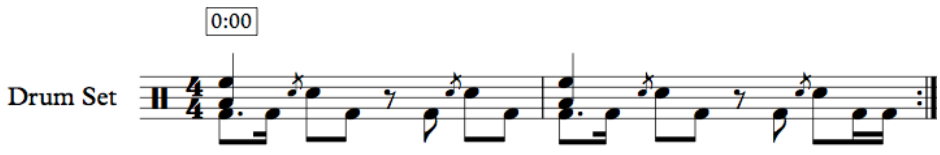


Fig. 4-22: Transcription of introduction drum phrase in *Royals* as recorded by Youth In Revolt

Although both drumbeats share a number of notated aspects (backbeat snare flam and syncopated bass drum pattern), key to their similar style is their

[31] See analysis of *Royals*, chapter 2.3.2.1

envisaged gestural character. This is shaped by the snare flam, the perceived dynamics of the drum set, timbres of the individual drum set elements, and the post-recording application of reverb. As witnessed here in *Just The Way You Are* and in *Royals* by Youth In Revolt, the snare flam gesturally implies that the snare drum was struck with two limbs rather than a single arm, resulting in a gesturally excessive and explicitly energetic strike. Secondly, drum set elements in both recordings maximise the available dynamic range, which saturates the digital signal, giving the gestural impression of having been played with great force. In support of this interpretation is the textural richness of each percussion sound. As observed in *Royals*, the high number of frequencies present for each strike creates the unmistakable sound of acoustic drum set performed with considerable force. Finally, the gestural interpretations are dependent on the long hall-style reverb that has been applied. While the character of the reverb may not have changed since the opening drum fill anacrusis, the guitars in this third section of verse two create a sonic void, within which the relatively quiet reverberant tails of the drum hits can be more easily distinguished. This hall reverb, where the reverberations occur in stereo and high frequencies fade relatively quickly in comparison to low, gives the impression of a performance occurring in a very large, open space such as a concert hall or, as the stylistic markers imply, a stadium. In this perceived environment, the interpreted gestures of the drummer require great energy just to reach the corners of the virtual concert venue. Without the applied reverb, the drum set becomes unnaturally "dry", vitally disrupting the gestural interpretation.

Section three was described above as an interruption, and this interpretation can be garnered from the changes in texture, dynamic instrumentation, and gesture. At the beginning of section three, the guitars fall silent. The proclivity to interpret *Just The Way You Are* as being performed in front

of the listener reinforces the interpretation that these performers stop playing, but crucially remaining within the envisaged stage environment for the duration of their instrumental silence. A similar gestural interpretation occurs in *Till The World Ends* by I See Stars (2011) and *Boyfriend* by Issues (2011). There are other factors that give the impression that the musicians do not remove themselves from the imagined performance arena. The continuation of the drum set and vocals helps to maintain the sense of live performance, yet this is not the case in *Till The World Ends*, *Boyfriend* and other *Punk Goes…* recordings, in which rock band instruments are replaced by synthesized instruments. In other instances, including *Glad You Came* by We Came As Romans (2012) and *In My Head* by Mayday Parade (2010), the cessation of an instrumental part coincides with its imagined departure from the virtual stage. One significant difference between these two interpretations is the location of the interruption within the track. In cases number one and two where the stream of instrumental gestures ceases, this clearly occurs at the end of a hypermetric section and at the end of the track (the change coincides with the beginning of an outro section). In the former cases (including *Just The Way You Are*), the interruption occurs both in the middle of the song and within the middle of a hypermetric section (chord three of a four-chord harmonic sequence). Even though the instrumental streams cease in *Just The Way You Are*, the listener still envisages the performers participating due to the location of their silence where the track is clearly far from complete. The interpreted performance gestures continue into their silence with the promise that they will soon return to playing their instruments.

This type of drum and vocal duet is most commonly associated with the stadium rock style. However, the gestural presence of silent guitars is crucial to the interpretation of the stylistically unstable foreground of *Just The Way You Are* by

Pierce The Veil. In this third section, the lead vocal with percussion backing brings to mind Queen's *Radio Gaga* (1984 - specifically the section beginning at 3:33), Def Leppard's *Pour Some Sugar On Me* (1989), and Twisted Sister's *We're Not Gonna Take It* (1984 - beginning at 2:39). The gestures commonly associated with these particular sections involve the performers relinquishing the grip on their instruments and enticing their audience to clap along with the highly reverberant drum set and sing/chant along with the vocalist.

Promotional videos of these three particular tracks (and countless recordings of other live performances where a performer vocally cues audience participation) encourage this image of the performer-turned-conductor, leading a crowd of willing participants (implied by the sudden addition of extra backing vocals). The addition of the backing vocals is not a direct replication of a crowd joining in with the vocalist. Even though other cover-versions do this via the use of gang vocals (such as in the outro of We Came As Romans's *Glad You Came* and A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone*) and a number of pop-core bands regularly utilise this token in their own tracks (such as Four Year Strong and Chunk! No, Captain Chunk), Pierce The Veil do not use gang or chanted vocals. Vic Fuentes tends to layer different vocals to create the impression of numerous vocal personas singing together. This is the case here, where three distinctly panned vocal lines texturally thicken the melody and generate the interpretation of a group of people communicating the lyrical message together.

Incorporated into this section are other musical symbols that convey the stadium rock style. These include the brief swell of guitar feedback that creeps in at the end of section three. The sound of feedback is the consequence of an electric guitar being allowed to vibrate in close proximity to its own amplified audio output (i.e., the speaker from which the guitar can be heard). Although it is often

straightforward to position the speaker away from the performer whilst recording, the generation of feedback creates within the listener the image of a guitarist performing physically close to their amplifier, which is set loud enough to generate the feedback. The example at 0:49 follows four seconds of silence with the surge of sound cueing the inevitable return not of the guitarists themselves, but of the playing of their instruments. The feedback, which builds under a drum fill and continuing vocal line, can generate a number of imagined gestural responses for the listener. Those listeners who play guitar are most likely to understand the feedback as the consequence of the guitarist relinquishing his-or-her pressure on the strings, having muted them at the beginning of this section.

However, this image does not correspond with my previous suggestion that the musicians actively engage with their audience so as to sing and clap along. Guitarists cannot hold their instruments so as to stop feedback from occurring *and* enact a clapping gesture at the same time. One gestural interpretation could consist of the performers gesturing at the audience before the feedback crescendo coincides with a guitarist increasing the volume of their guitar up by rotating the volume knob often found on the front of the guitar; others may understand the sound of the feedback as the consequence of turning the guitar 'on' via the pickup selector switch.[32]

The feedback implies the presence of a guitarist near to an amplified source, customary in the live performance of rock music. How a listener construes the imagined performance gestures of the guitarist is debateable; that they will be within the context of a live music setting is not. Yet most ironic regarding this particular instance of feedback in the recording of *Just The Way You Are* is that these live performance gestures do not occur when the band perform the song live.

[32] On guitars such as Gibson's SG and Les Paul and the PRS Custom allow the performer to set one pickup to silent, therefore enabling them to effectively turn the guitar on and off.

As witnessed in a live performance video of *Just The Way You Are,* the lack of feedback in this section and at the end of the song does not diminish the generated live performance spectacle.[33] The use of faux live performance gestures by Pierce The Veil (including the vocal shouts of 'come on!' as if to an imaginary audience at 2:37) is a prime example of acoustic cartooning to establish the lie of a live performance, which ties into many different modes of authenticity related to the rock music style.

4.2.1.2.6 METAL-CORE - POST-CHORUS BREAKDOWN (2:41 – 3:00)

While Mars's piano motif is referenced elsewhere in the Pierce The Veil recording (in the introduction and between 1:38 – 1:49), its inclusion up until 2:41 is understood only as acousmatic. This interpretation directly opposes the embodied, live performance perceptual-imaginative interpretation garnered from the rest of the track. Following these clear references to a synthetic-sounding piano, Pierce The Veil gesturally transforms this Mars piano phrase immediately after the second chorus. In doing so, Pierce The Veil generate another stylistic reference: the gestural transformation at 2:41 results in a metal-core version of Mars's piano phrase via a combination of tokens associated with that style and envisaged performance gestures. The initial compositional development of this phrase parallels that understood in the introduction of Mayday Parade's *Somebody That I Used To Know* (2012). But while Mayday Parade finish with a pop-punk style transformation, Pierce The Veil develop the corresponding musical material further so as to create the more radical stylistic change. Beyond the development

[33] 'Pierce the Veil - Just the Way You Are (Live at Irving Plaza, NY 12/3/11): non-scholarly reference #49

of the *Just The Way You Are* piano phrase, this post-chorus section features three individual musical phrases that are rife throughout the metal-core style.

Before examination of the post-chorus breakdown, consideration of the more explicit reference to Mars piano phrase should be included. Firstly, the piano phrase reference in the Pierce The Veil recording sounds ostensibly indistinguishable from the Mars original, despite a number of changes that occur. This interpretation is due to the sudden shift in musical style. When the piano motif enters, there is a movement away from the established punk-rock musical styles. However, these obscured differences do have an effect on the gestural interpretation of the vocals and electric bass guitar. In disregarding the sonic context, both instruments are understood to project performance gestures previously interpreted in the track; the bass guitar actually plays a rhythmic motif previously encountered within the track. However, the gestural interpretation of these parts is heavily influenced by a gesturally transformed piano phrase and a drummer who is understood to perform in a manner distinct from earlier and later moments in the track.

While it is not an exact copy, the prevailing punk-rock context of the Pierce The Veil recording makes the inclusion of the piano phrase at 1:38 sound indistinguishable from the Mars original. Its stark and marked stylistic contrast within the Pierce The Veil context conceals the musical and gestural differences that modify the character of the phrase to project a simplistic and childlike character. The retention of the upper melody is the most essential element taken to identify the phrase as derived from Mars's original song. Although part removal of the inner harmonic filler and bass foundation does not diminish the identity of the phrase, it does alter its gestural quality. These differences are highlighted in Fig. 4-23 and Fig. 4-24:
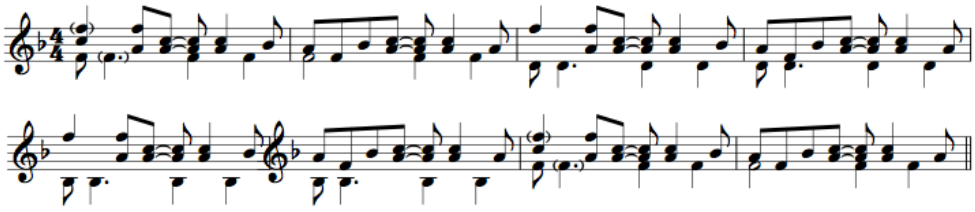


Fig. 4-23: Transcription of piano phrase heard in verses of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Bruno Mars
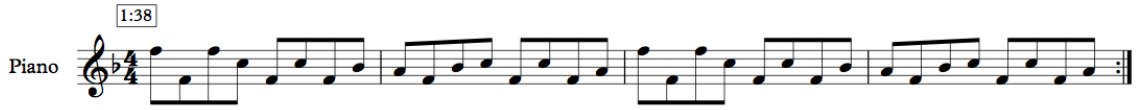


Fig. 4-24: Transcription of gesturally transformed piano phrase heard in *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (1:38 – 1:48)

Pierce The Veil's version reconstructs the phrase into a single melodic line, in opposition to Mars's tripartite division of melody, filler and bass. Understood as a single melodic line, the phrase diminishes the sense of complexity. Furthermore, the uneven and irregular performance nuances (most noticeably of dynamic) assist in conjuring up an image of simplicity and naivety; as though a beginner were asked to replicate Mars's piano phrase but did not have the technical expertise to do so. The timbre and sustain of the instrument used for this phrase develops this sense of naivety further. Where the Mars recording is understood as having been performed on a digital piano, the timbre of the Pierce The Veil piano is more explicitly synthetic, stylistically and gesturally distancing it from the embodied rock band instrumentation that surrounds and accompanies it. Every note of this phrase has lengthy sustain that creates a bell-like, ringing quality to the tone of the instrument. This chiming helps foster the interpretation of simplicity, inasmuch that the phrase sounds as though it is acousmatically emanating from a music box or toy.

In addition to the gestural transformation of the piano phrase, there are other sudden, unexpected, and extreme changes to the musical foreground and

gestural interpretation. Beyond the guitars dropping out at 1:38, the snare-centric drumbeat (Fig. 4-25) incorporates numerous dynamic levels and textural nuances in contrast to the consistent dynamic and textural uniformity of the punk-rock sections.
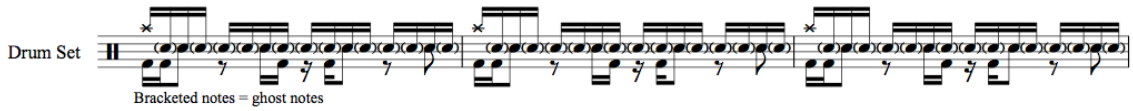


Fig. 4-25: Transcription of gesturally distinct drum phrase heard at 1:38 in *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Pierce The Veil

Where the consistent high dynamic and texturally dense drum timbres in the punk-rock sections results in an energised and forceful gestural interpretation, the relatively nuanced drumbeat projects a more relaxed manner of performance. This calming of the interpreted gestures has a remarkable effect on the other instruments. Despite not changing timbre or dynamic, the interpreted gestures of the vocals and electric bass also relax in correlation with the interpreted drum set gestures. This is especially noticeable in the electric bass, where similar staccato phrasing in section two of verse two projects an aggressive and forceful gestural interpretation: changes to the drum beat have coerced a gestural transformation in the unchanged electric bass phrase.

With these sonic and perceptual-imaginative characteristics combined, this section sounds gesturally and stylistically divorced from the punk-rock context that surrounds it. While the guitars may fall silent, the musicians are not understood to move swiftly onto a keyboard instrument to perform the phrase. Quite the opposite is projected, as the promise of the previous stadium rock style is finally fulfilled. The previously implicit stadium rock gestures of the temporarily silent guitarists are given sonic materiality through the introduction of dynamically subdued handclaps. Although their dynamic and textural uniformity

implies a synthetic genesis, their quiet dynamic is compatible with the projected live performance: concealed beneath the amplified rock band instrumentation, the uniformity of the handclaps goes undetected, resulting in a gestural interpretation that corresponds with the live-performance perceptual-imaginative response garnered from the rest of the band.

The simplified piano phrase is a compositional halfway house between the original Mars piano phrase and the post-chorus breakdown transformation that occurs at 2:41. Firstly, the phrase is performed on a heavily distorted electric guitar; a sound synonymous with the broader style of rock music. However, that style is dependent on both the sonic character and the perceptual-imaginative response whereby listeners will interpret the sounds as embodied and projecting a live performance occurring directly before them. Where the modified piano version removes a majority of the harmonic filler and any bass notes that occurs at the same time as an upper melody, the post-chorus guitar version completes the move to full monophony by creating a linear version of the phrase. The upper melody of Mars's phrase (which is key to its identification as referencing the phrase) is wholly preserved, with any notes that simultaneously occur removed. This results in the inner harmony being completely eradicated and some bass notes being kept. Where other *Punk Goes…* artist's development of a phrase may stop at this point (such as Mayday Parade's transformation of *Somebody That I Used To Know*), Pierce The Veil make a further alteration to Mars's piano motif to generate gestural change. The pitch of the phrase is dropped to as low a point as possible within the remit of their particular electric guitar tunings (drop-D in this instance), resulting in the version heard on the Pierce The Veil track and transcribed in Fig. 4-26:

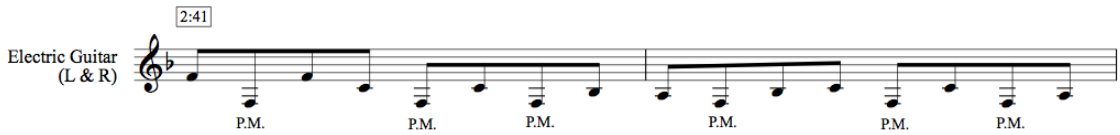


Fig. 4-26: Transcription of Pierce The Veil's gesturally transformed metal-core adaptation of the Bruno Mars piano phrase (2:41 – 3:00)

Although closely related, the compositional interpretation of this guitar version is understood in a different way to the piano version. The piano version is understood as a single melodic thread whereas the guitar phrase is understood as being a two-part construction, despite the guitar motif being wholly monophonic. The choice of instrument is the central reason for this difference of interpretation. Whereas the digital piano version allows for an altogether consistent, bell-like texture, the guitar performance contains a textural division between the upper melody and underpinning bass. This generates the interpretation of two distinct parts that slot effortlessly together in a quasi-hocket formation, akin to the effect found in solo string pieces such as J.S. Bach's Prelude to the Cello Suite No.1 in G Major, BWV 1007.

This nuanced textural division occurs despite the heavily distorted nature of the guitar phrase. Where such guitar processing is prone to a near uniform timbre, the difference in texture perceived here is heightened because the phrase is spread over numerous guitar strings. Note the timbral differences in Fig. 4-27, where the same pitch (B3) is performed on five different guitar strings:

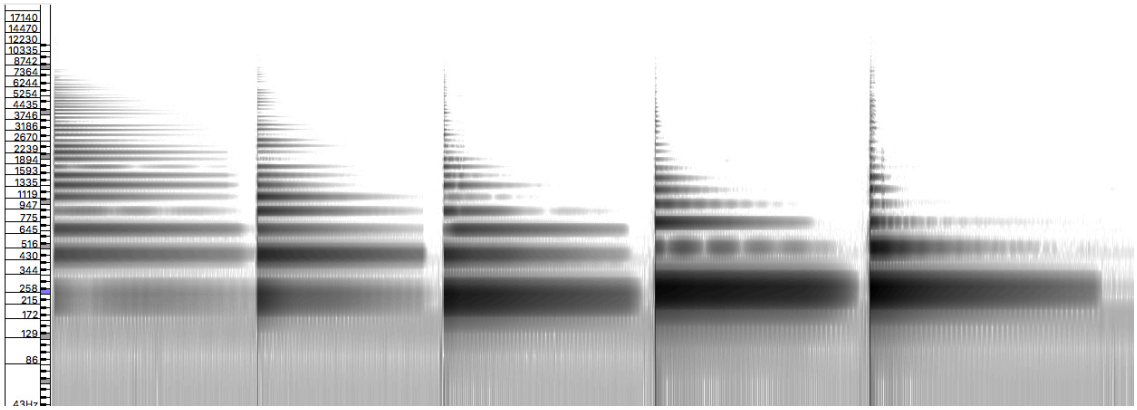


Fig. 4-27: Spectrogram analysis of B3 being performed on five different guitar strings (analysis taken from recording made by author)

The relatively thick construction of the lowest string emphasises the lower frequencies contained within the note, resulting in a warmer, bass-frequency-heavy timbre. Conversely, the pitch played on the higher, thinner strings results in a relatively thinner texture with less low-frequency energy. It is this spectrum of tone, witnessed in the *Just The Way You Are* post-chorus guitar phrase, which emphasises the distinction between the low notes (rounded, warm) and the upper melody notes (cutting, with quick attack); a differentiation of character absent in the acousmatic digital piano version.

The timbrally discrete bass and melody are unlikely to be understood as two guitarists performing a strict hocket (one guitar plays the bass, the other the melody). As the two electric guitars have been placed at opposing ends of the stereo spectrum, this configuration would result in the phrase disconcertingly swerving between the outer extremities of the stereo landscape. This is not the case. On initial consideration, the guitar phrase emanates from the centre of the envisaged environment. However, closer inspection reveals that the guitar phrase projects a sense of breadth and magnitude that is not understood elsewhere in the track. This effect originates from the combination of two guitarists playing the

phrase but panned to opposite sides of the stereo spectrum.[34] By playing the same phrase but on two different guitars each with a subtly different tone, some of the sonic information will match, creating a virtual-centeredness of these particular frequencies and amplitudes. However, information that does not strictly match through nuanced differences will spread out from the virtual-centre, resulting in a widening of the guitar phrase. Where the earlier piano version projected an innocent and childish character through timbre and an unpredictable dynamic, this guitar version gesturally transforms the musical material gleaned from Mars's original into a figuratively immense vast wall of sound that battles the other instrumental parts for superiority and the listener's attention. This, combined with the heavily distorted guitar tone, lowered pitch, and spatial breadth, culminates in the most gesturally formidable statement of the whole track.

These features contrast with those qualities borrowed from the Bruno Mars piano phrase and, more critically, those understood from the Pierce The Veil piano phrase encountered in the third verse. It is the third-verse piano phrase in the Pierce The Veil recording, with its connotations of child-like simplicity arising from the toy piano timbre and lack of dynamic consistency, that provide a more significant springboard for the gestural transformation. The change of instrumentation is significant. Where the timbre of the chime-like piano ethereally materialises as a separate acousmatic element in the third verse, the heavily distorted guitar transformation corresponds with the live-performance context established throughout the previous sections of the track. Where the piano is not interpreted as embodied, the guitar riff is understood as being performed by a guitarist, free to roam the stage. The unsophisticated and innocent character of the piano phrase heard at 1:38 intensifies the character of the distorted guitar riff,

[34] This phenomenon is discussed in detail with reference to *Interstate Love Song* in chapter 6.3.1.2

generating an amplified sense of power and energy that is translated via a perceptual-imaginative response into dynamic performative actions on the part of the imagined performers. This helps to produce a sense of earnest resoluteness, giving the overlaid lyric a sense of gravitas absent elsewhere in the track.

As noted previously, this post-chorus section shares a number of features (both musical material and gestural) commonly associated with the metal-core style of punk-rock music. This guitar transformation of the Mars piano phrase displays similarities with archetypal metal-core style riffs by metal-core bands such as Killswitch Engage and Enter Shikari. Consider Fig. 4-28 and Fig. 4-29:

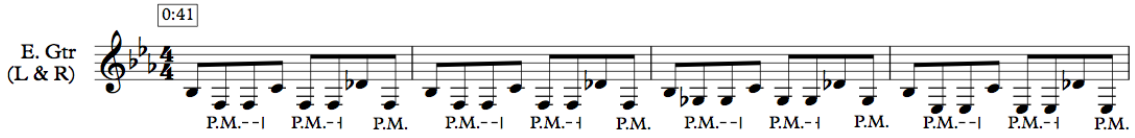


Fig. 4-28: Transcription of guitar riff in *Take This Oath* (0:41 – 0:47) by Killswitch Engage (2004)

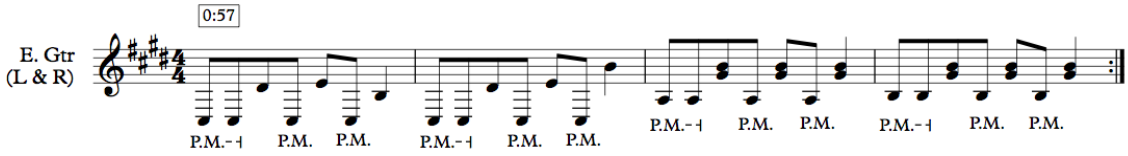


Fig. 4-29: Transcription of guitar riff in *Sorry You're Not A Winner* (0:57 – 1:03) by Enter Shikari (2007)

These examples highlight a number of similarities, yet for the Pierce The Veil track to be interpreted as a stylistic reference, the resemblances need to move beyond notated similarities. These include incessant quaver rhythms, a quasi-hocket configuration created by the textural separation of bass and melody through the palm muting of bass notes which further emphasising the two-part construction, similar pitch ranges with the melody located an octave above the reiterated bass pitch and, (though not shown here), these melodic motifs are commonly repeated over the course of a larger hypermetric section above a harmonic sequence.

Away from notated connections, the guitars in examples Fig. 4-26, Fig. 4-28 and Fig. 4-29 all share a similarly distorted timbre to the guitars in the Pierce The Veil track and are often understood as being played in unison by two radically panned guitars, sonically combining to create a statement that dominates their particular recordings. Furthermore, the riffs are understood as having been performed in a rhythmically accurate manner due to the lack of any overlapping of notes and each note instigated with swift attacks – the latter being a common feature owing to the dynamic compression generated by distorting the audio signal.

Away from the guitar riff, the vocals, drum set, and electric bass all play a role in fostering the gestural interpretation of the guitar phrase and provide further stylistic links to the metal-core style. Most obviously, the accompanying drum set and electric bass guitar lock together into an unremitting polymetric groove under the dominant guitar riff. Fig. 4-30 highlights the disparate gestural strands that contribute to stylistic classification.
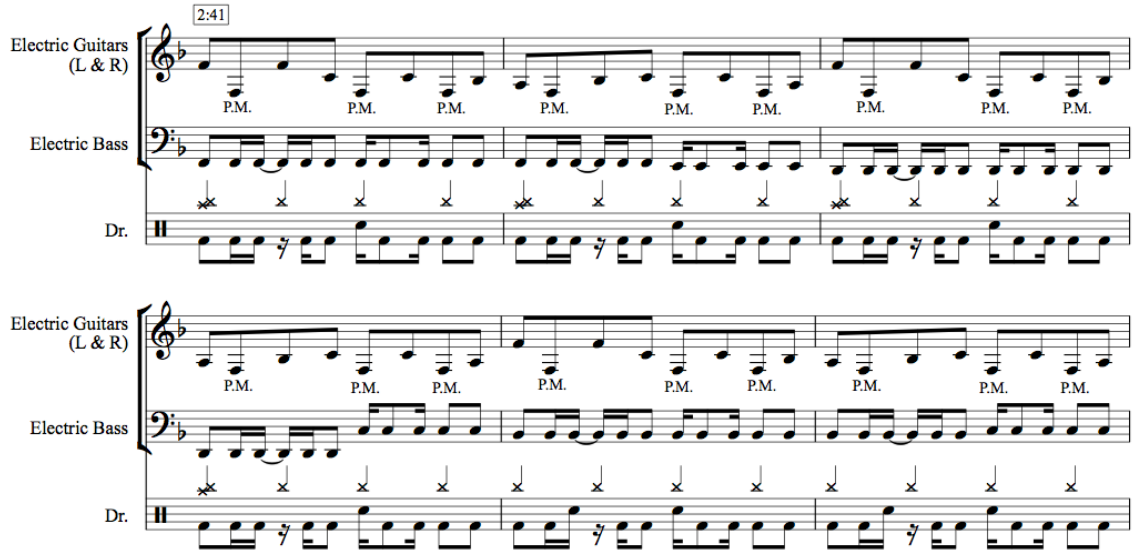


Fig. 4-30: Transcription of *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (2:41 – 2:54)

Such phrasing is typical for the metal-core style. Consider the following transcriptions of two other archetypal metal-core tracks by the bands Thrice and Killswitch Engage:

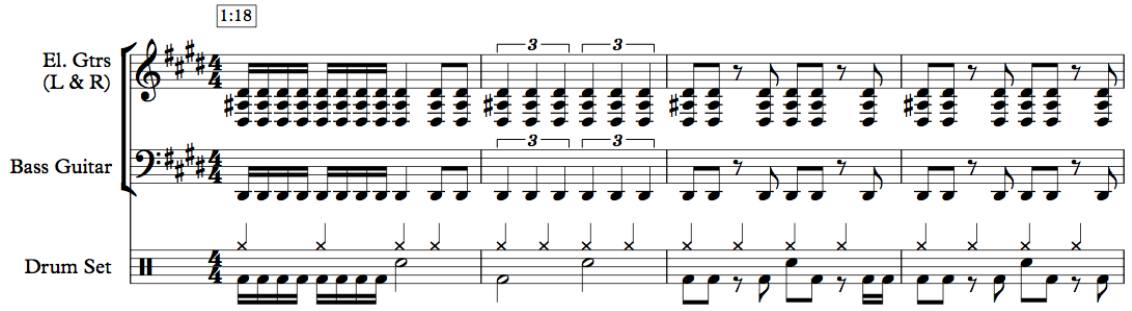


Fig. 4-31: Full band transcription *Where Idols Once Stood* (1:18 – 1:22) by Thrice (2001)
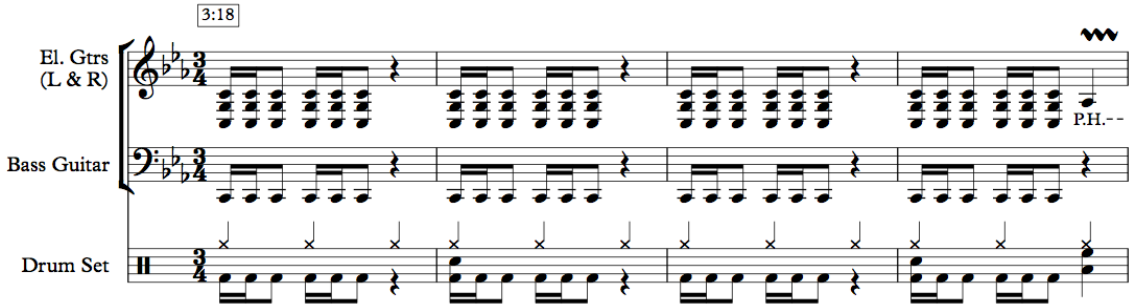


Fig. 4-32: Full band transcription *Wasted Sacrifice* (3:18 – 3:23) by Killswitch Engage (2004)

Fig. 4-31 and Fig. 4-32 highlight the more obvious, transcribable resemblances, including rhythmic complexity that resolves at the beginning of each bar, the lingering on one note, and the augmented tactus. Related gestural interpretations are central to understanding these examples as stylistically related to metal-core. The constant and relentless hammering of the piercing bass drum linked with the bass guitar asserts a unwavering and untiring gestural counterpoint, with texturally dense and timbrally bright qualities that project an aural image of musicians applying force beyond the capacity of their instruments.

There are enough musical and gestural links between the Pierce The Veil bass and drum set and the examples in Fig. 4-31 and Fig. 4-32 to note a stylistic association. At the end of this section, the electric guitars eventually merge with

the polyrhythmic underpinning as the harmonic sequence returns to the tonic at the end of the hypermetric section. This is shown in Fig. 4-33.
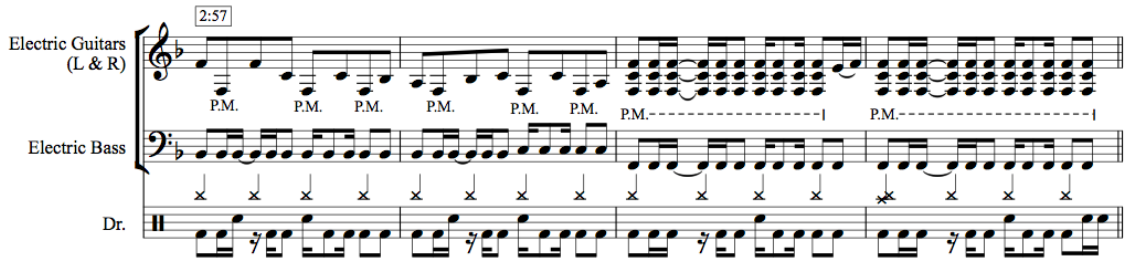


Fig. 4-33: Full band transcription of *Just The Way You Are* (2:57 – 3:00) by Pierce The Veil highlighting the gestural resolution as previous discrete phrases unite

The previously modest feeling of harmonic resolution that occurred at the end of every hypermetric boundary is intensified through this resolving of the gestural tension: at this point, the harmonic resolution is felt most intensely. Where the instrumental factions clash against each other (including the gesturally incongruent synthesized strings), this closing statement pulls all the instrumental parts together into one unified gesture. This gestural unification amplifies the harmonic resolution in combination with the ever-increasing addition of a V - I cadence in the choruses. Within each chorus (1:07, 2:18, and 3:28), this cadence steadily increases, with the amount of dominant chord reaching a climax in the final repetition of the harmonic sequence.

The dominant movement of the bass underpinning alludes to a perfect cadence in each chorus, heightening the sense of harmonic return at the end of each phrase. This creates a sense of closure and reaffirming the tonic in a way that the plagal cadence at play for the rest of *Just The Way You Are* does not. It is the harmonic movement within this post-chorus section that feels most intense. This is generated by the additional unification of the performative gestures. Where the first six bars of the post-chorus section are gesturally factious, the eventual movement to a cross-band unison gesture signals the climax of the Pierce The Veil

recording, retrospectively reinforced by the sudden reintroduction of the simplistic, child-like reimagining of the original Mars piano phrase – a return that signals an altogether different gestural character and instigates a slow dissipation of the gestural energy throughout the final two repetitions of the harmonic sequence.

Pierce The Veil's adaptation of Mars's piano phrase does, however, conflict with archetypal metal-core riffs in terms of its is pacing. Where the *Just The Way You Are* quavers occur at a rate of 216 per minute, metal-core examples are commonly upwards of 300 per minute and beyond. However, this disparity in tempo is masked by an extreme augmentation of tactus. In *Just The Way You Are*, a halving of the snare drum backbeat (following an already half-time chorus) is central in governing a quasi-quarter time tactus. This rhythmic augmentation of the snare backbeat is common in metal-core music, and is heavily associated with what is commonly referred to as a 'breakdown': a part of the track that is synonymous with hardcore dancing or moshing, and is often referred to as the climax of a hardcore track. But where a breakdown in dance-centric styles such as disco and funk often results in a number of instruments cutting out (as witnessed in *Everybody Dance* by Chic (1977) and *Daddy Cool* by Boney M (1976)), a breakdown in styles such as metal-core and death-core is a part of the track generally characterised by an extreme augmentation of the tactus (be it half-time, quarter-time or further) framing a cross-band unison riff. These riffs commonly fall into two types: the melodic type witnessed in the electric guitars (and as witnessed in Fig. 4-28 and Fig. 4-29 for other metal-core examples) or the rhythmic type witnessed in the drum set and electric bass accompaniment (and as witnessed in Fig. 4-31 and Fig. 4-32 for other metal-core examples). Although Pierce The Veil do not strictly follow the cross-band unison riff, they do

incorporate all of the three chief components of a metal-core style breakdown. In combining the melodic and rhythmic riffs with an augmentation of the tactus, Pierce The Veil have combined the three foremost instrumental tokens of the metal-core style. Even though such an arrangement is extremely rare (3:19 in Avenged Sevenfold's *Unholy Confessions* is the only one I have encountered), the pairing of two of these elements is commonplace. In this way, Pierce The Veil have created an artificially comprehensive exemplar of the metal-core breakdown not only in terms of musical foreground, but also in relation to form and gesture.

Regarding the former, the breakdown section of *Just The Way You Are* occurs at a point common to a majority of metal-core tracks. The correlation between the breakdown and the climax of a track means that they are often located at around two-thirds of the way through, following a second chorus. Reductions of *Just The Way You Are* and other metal-core tracks are presented in Fig. 4-34, highlighting the similar locations of the respective breakdown sections.

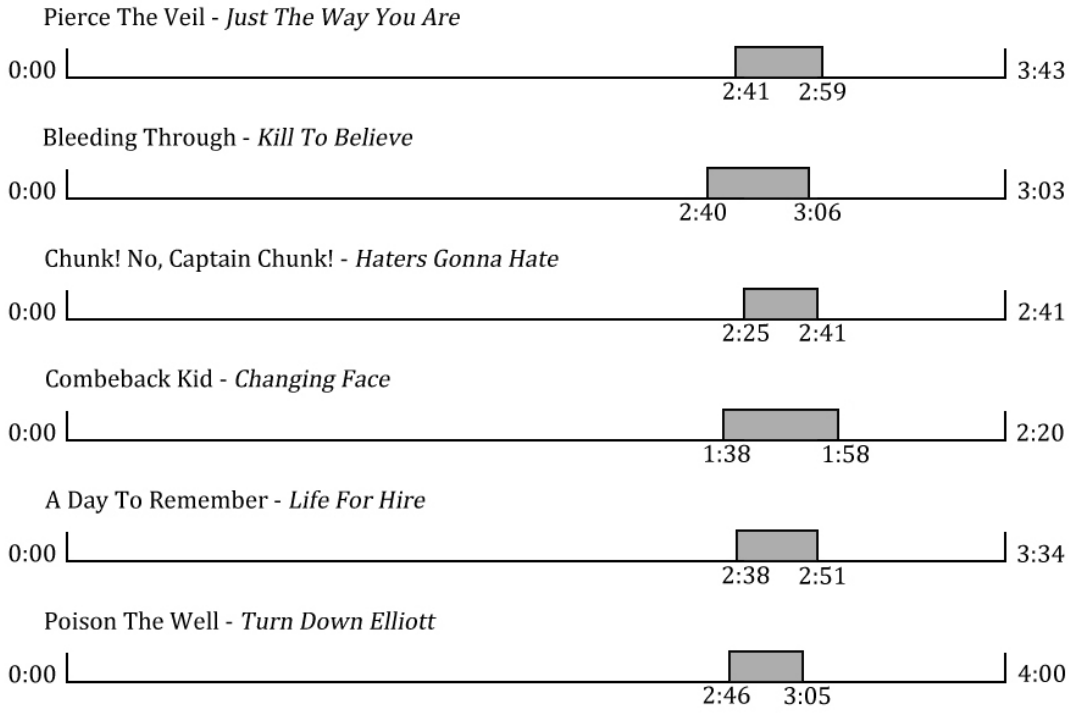


Fig. 4-34: Timeline analysis of *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil and other various metal-core tracks, drawing attention to formal layout and location of breakdown section

Note how all these tracks share a similar formal layout. Not only do Pierce The Veil project gestures typical to the metal-core style, but they do so at a point when audiences will be expecting them.

The gestural interpretation of these breakdown sections is connected to the pacing and rhythmic augmentation previously examined. Where the rhythmic augmentation of the snare backbeat should imply a further halving of the perceived tactus to crotchet = 54, the above transcriptions follow the prominent 108 beats per minute pulse (hence the quasi-quarter time terminology used above): a preference following the research detailed in Justin London's *Hearing In Time*.[35] Yet where London discusses the effect of tempo in relation to the listener perception of tactus (for instance, sufficiently changing the speed of a performance will alter what type of note is considered the pulse), the tempo shift in *Just The Way You Are* moves between different rhythmic divisions chiefly regulated by the snare drum backbeat. As noted throughout this analysis, this one percussive element is central to controlling the listener's entraining of tempo. Such a modification of the rhythmic framework has a significant effect on the gestural interpretation of the musical phrases. This has been discussed in relation to the guitar phrase in section one of verse one (the difference in perceptual-imaginative response when understanding the repeating octaves as either semiquavers or quavers); the crucial difference here is that the backbeat does not strictly tally to the interpreted tactus. In verse one, the shifting backbeat resulted in a movement between a relaxed 108bpm and an energised double-time 216bpm; the crucial difference here is that the shifting of the tactus does not alter the perceived tactus, yet it does transform the gestural interpretation of the other instruments. Comparisons can be made to other stylistically related tracks, where the

[35] London, *Hearing In Time* (2004), pp. 27 - 47

performance nuances present in an instrumental phrase do not change despite the presence of a heavily disruptive drum set repeatedly shifting tactus. This is frequently used by punk-rock band Every Time I Die: although the melodic elements of tracks such as *Godspeed Us To Sea* (2003) and *I've Been Gone A Long Time* (2003) may seem intially confusing and gesturally unpredictable, closer inspection reveals how the melodic instruments repeat their phrases while a relatively straightforward change in drumbeat (the snare drum in particular) causes a significant shift in the gestural interpretation.
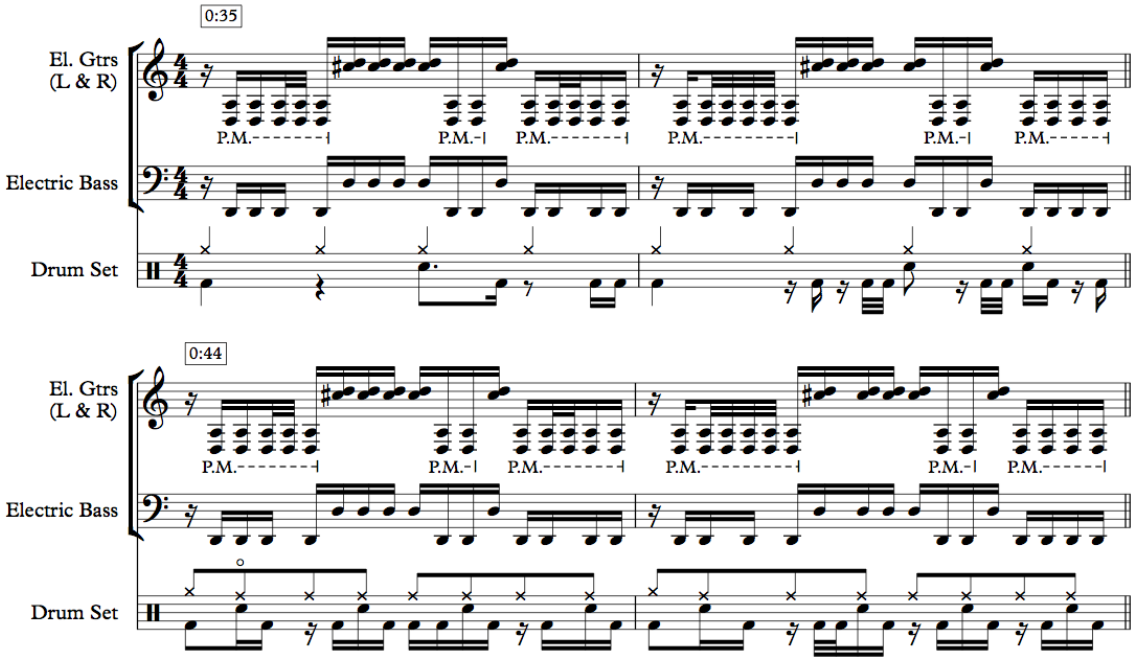


Fig. 4-35: Reduction of *Godspeed Us To Sea* by Every Time I Die (0:35 – 0:49), demonstrating shift in drum phrase

In these passages, the augmented drumbeat alters the interpreted gestures of the other instruments. The marked augmentation of the backbeat alters the metanymic size of the gestures, with the performers not necessarily playing with more force or energy, but the sum of their parts combining to become greater and in some cases overwhelming. It is a marked increase of metaphorical force garnered from the broader tempo of the drummer, rather than any change in the other instruments. In *Just The Way You Are*, none of the instruments change timbre

or dynamic from earlier in the song, yet the incessant pounding of the bass drum, driving bass guitar and unyielding electric guitar all seem to be at their energetic peak at this point. It is this energy that finally breaks Vic Fuentes's vocal obstinacy. This manifestation of extra performance energy matches the vocal grain that coarsens with tension so as to be heard over the wall of sound created by the instruments.

4.3 AUTHENTICITY AS PRACTICE

Musicological studies of style and authenticity usually focus on how an artist or track adheres to defining features in terms of musical material (harmony, instrumentation, tempo, etc.). This investigation of *Punk Goes…* cover-versions reframes musical style by moving beyond aspects of *what* is played to incorporate a listener's interpretation of *how* the music is performed. The two main analyses included in this section continue the central argument of this thesis, and conclude that a listener's perceptual-imaginative response (interpretation of performative gestures) is of central significance in determining the style of a track. Where Woe, Is Me's cover-version of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* uses a readily identifiable stylistic token from a 'pre-commercial' exemplar of their style, it is the interpreted gestural manner or character of the gestural cough that enhances the link between their cover-version and A Day To Remember's *I'm Made Of Wax Larry.*[36] As witnessed in the analysis of *Just The Way You Are*, the movement to typical rock-band instrumentation forms the basis of a stylistic shift from Bruno Mars's original 'breezy' R'nB pop to a rock style adaptation.[37] Pierce The Veil's performative

[36] Analysis of *I'm Made Of Wax Larry* contained within chapter 4.1.1
[37] Vick, 'Review: Bruno Mars – "Just The Way You Are"', *Billboard*: non-scholarly reference #13

gestures, which transform Bruno Mars's original track, are crucial to understanding the various rock sub-styles at play.

Reframing the discussion of musical style to focus on an interpretation of gesture affects the listener's ascription of authenticity. Woe, Is Me and Pierce The Veil provide two contrasting examples of not only how the interpretation of gesture is central to the interpretation of style, but also how it is central in shaping the idea of *authenticity as practice* in the mind of a listener. I favour Kivy's term, rather than alternative labels such as Timothy Taylor's *primality* (1997) or Allan F. Moore's *authenticity of execution* (2013), because my emphasis on gesture follows most directly from Kivy's work on *Authenticities* (1995). In *Last Friday Night*, Woe, Is Me incorporate a token from a well-known exemplar of a contemporaneous band, but perform it in a manner and place within the track that has clear links to the pre-commercial archetype. The act creates a lineage between their cover-version and the band A Day To Remember; a band many fans would view as the *non plus ultra* of both the pop-core style of Woe, Is Me and the *Punk Goes…* genre as a whole. Thus, the inclusion of the gesturally similar token can be viewed as a deliberate attempt by Woe, Is Me to lay claim to style-based authenticity.

Taylor, Bohlman (1988) and Redhead (1989) concentrate their investigations into musical style on the relationship between a particular artist and one musical style. My examination of *Just The Way You Are* demonstrates that Pierce The Veil reference a number of different rock music styles in their effort to garner style-based authenticity. This is achieved primarily through a mode of performance that aligns gestural characters with the musical material, rather than by incorporating specific musical phrases associated with different styles. Those familiar with Pierce The Veil will not be surprised by the numerous references to punk-rock styles in their recording of *Just The Way You Are*. Their record-label

classification as a pop-core band tells the listener to expect references to pop-punk and metal-core, each with its own plethora of influences. Yet where aspects of these influences are blended together in their self-composed tracks, of interest in *Just The Way You Are* is the overt and marked manner in which distinct stylistic references are juxtaposed and encountered. The analysis beginning in section 4.2.1 highlights several of the stylistic references, including stadium rock, punk-rock and metal-core. The Fig. 4-36 timeline plots the various styles heard in Pierce The Veil's adaptation of *Just The Way You Are*, including key stylistic tokens of both a compositional and gestural nature.

I regard these references to different musical styles as an innovative method of garnering listener-ascribed authenticity. The explicit references to a multitude of punk-rock music styles are a clear, though not necessarily conscious, attempt to expresses those styles and bands that have influenced Pierce The Veil, contributing to the band's "sound", evident in their self-composed tracks. This suggests that Pierce The Veil express influences as if "fans" of the music they reference. This sets up a post-subcultural communication between band and audience, which goes against earlier subcultural theories. As a majority of these stylistic references are likely to resonate sympathetically with the listening audience, the band reap post-subcultural capital. They present themselves not just as mere producers of the music, but as central constituents of a dynamic musical scene.

This conclusion is supported by a consideration of when, where and how the Pierce The Veil recording was released. *Just The Way You Are* appears on the *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 4* compilation album, released shortly after their poorly received second album, *Selfish Machines* (2010). The central cause for the lukewarm reviews was the overzealous use of auto-tuned vocals, which

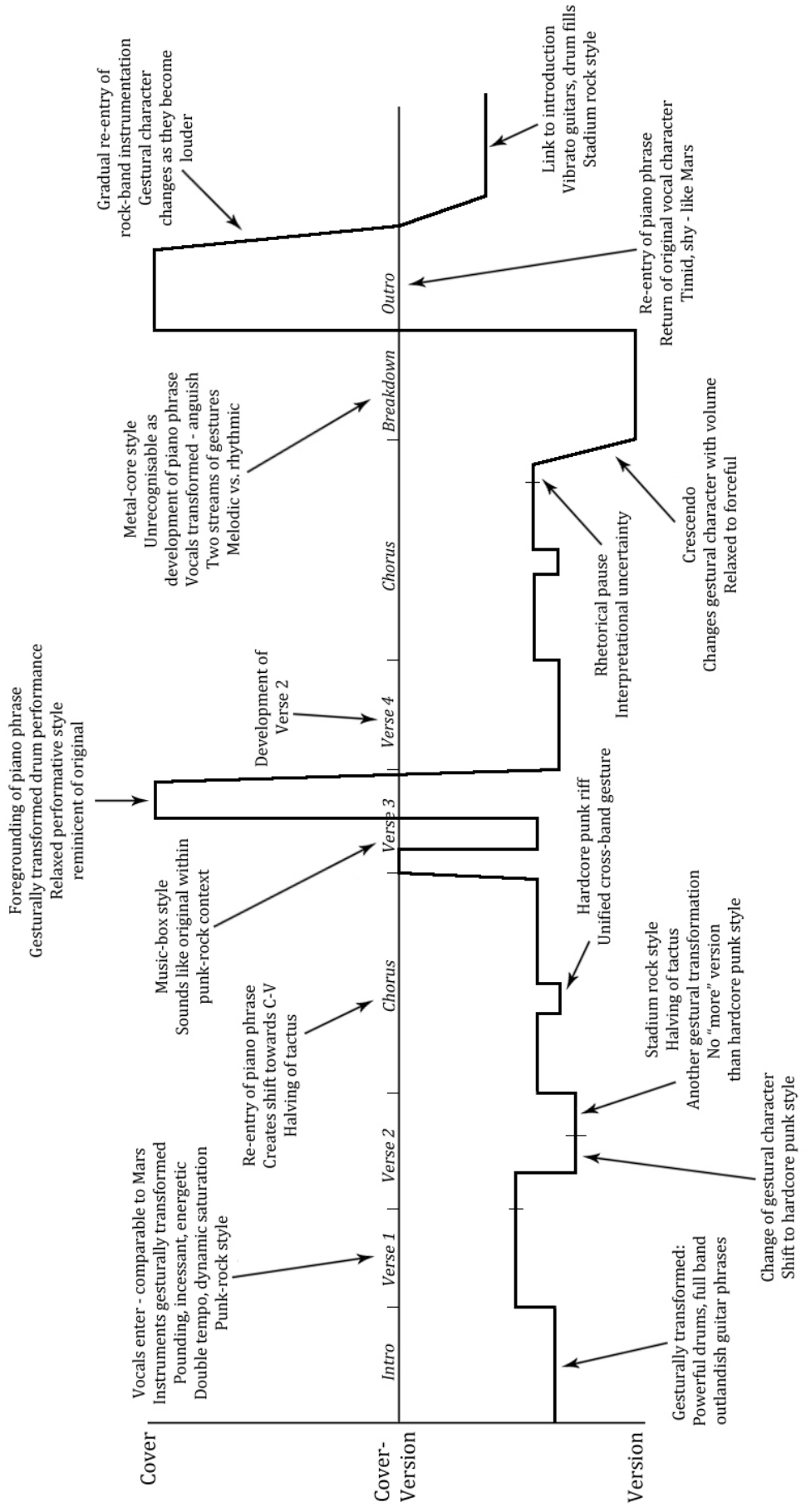


Fig. 4-36: Cover-version spectrum of *Just The Way You Are* as recorded by Pierce The Veil with stylistic references and key stylistic tokens labelled

subsequently lead to charges of inauthenticity from an underground punk-rock audience. For example, *Rocksound*'s Amy Bagg cited the auto-tune as giving 'the impression of something to hide':[38] online-zine *Under The Gun* commented that the auto-tune makes the vocals 'sound a little forced'.[39] For those who knew Pierce The Veil's previous albums, the removal of obvious auto-tune must have seemed a deliberate effort to address accusations of inauthenticity. It is more likely, however, that a new audience encountered Pierce The Veil for the first time in *Just The Way You Are.* This places the track as a highly effective promotional tool, which introduced fans of the more established bands and artists that appeared on *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 4* to Pierce The Veil.

The listener's ascription of authenticity is not wholly dependent on enjoying the styles or bands referenced. Punk-rock music fans place great value on artists who understand and acknowledge – not copy – the heritage of their work. This contributes to a sense of ascribed authenticity. Although an experienced listener may gain pleasure in understanding the nuanced differences between distinct styles, it is crucial that listeners believe in the sincerity of the performer's actions. The listener's perceptual-imaginative response plays a central role. As will be discussed in connection to positionality (chapter 5.2), a listener with experience of the punk-rock music styles referenced in *Just The Way You Are* will have cultivated an ability to decipher artificial or insincere gestures. In the positionality analyses of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me and *Got Your Money* by Say Anything, I present my gestural interpretations from the recorded track, and discuss how the gestural transformations relate to their respective originals as a listener encounters the tracks.

[38] Bangs, 'Pierce The Veil – Selfish Machines', *Rocksound*: non-scholarly reference #35
[39] Shotwell, 'Review: Selfish Machines', *Under The Gun*: non-scholarly reference #44

The gestural transformations at play in *Just The Way You Are* project sincerity in Pierce The Veil's track. My perceptual-imaginative response interprets the numerous gestural characters not as copying but paying homage to the bands and styles referenced within the analysis. My overriding impression is that these distinct musical styles have been assimilated into the performative style of the individual members of Pierce The Veil. Given the typical method of learning a rock instrument, this is likely to have occurred through practice and performance of the musicians' favourites at a formative age.[40] The result is a gamut of performative gestures that counter the notion of a 'fake heritage' put forward by Roger Scruton (1998).

This is not to say that this interpreted sincerity leaves no room for irony. Pierce The Veil must have felt that Bruno Mars's recording was not complete "Just The Way It Is". The referencing of Bruno Mars's original chart-pop style in verse four reveals a witty and wry engagement with both Bruno Mars's original track and their audience's preconceptions of pop music and the *Punk Goes...* genre as a whole. *Just The Way You Are* is a knowing and self-referential communication between band and audience that projects musical styles as a device to lay claim to listener-ascribed authenticity. While Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are* does include a brief allusion to the Mars original, this example (and others, including A Day To Remember's *Over My Head (Cable Car)* and Sleeping With Sirens' *Fuck You*) is distinct from examples where rock music styles are repeatedly juxtaposed in stark contrast against replications of the chart-music original. In those examples (e.g., Issues's *Boyfriend*) the emphasis is on generating personal authenticity through the projection of positionality.

[40] Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002)

5. PERSONAL AUTHENTICITY

Where Kivy's examination of authenticity in Western art music suggests a commercially-inflated importance on historical authenticities, I agree with Taylor (1997), Moore (2013), Cutler (2014), and a majority of popular musicologists who posit that the type of authenticity central to popular music is that of *personal authenticity*. Furthermore, non-scholarly writings also support this claim.[1]

Personal authenticity is a closely related to artistic authenticity, insofar as it is tied to the interpretation of musicians-as-performers and producers of sound. My definition of personal authenticity centres on the perceived expressions and interpreted gestures garnered from a particular track. Redhead and Street allude to this gauge of personal authenticity when they state that the 'honesty of a musician is measured more by gestures and/or appearances than by any form of direct cross examination'.[2] This corresponds to Kivy's definition of personal authenticity as a 'faithfulness to the performer's own self, original, not derivative or an aping of someone else's way of playing').[3] Kivy's position can be viewed as a development of Lionel Trilling's (1969) more general definition of authenticity as a 'sincerity or fidelity to a true self.'[4]

Yet how should we define a performer's 'true self'? The following section on *persona* in popular music expands upon this question. Further questions arise in the multitude of ways in which a performer can be interpreted as being "faithful" or "sincere". Being considered faithful to a musical style is commonly tied to whether or not an artist is understood to have appropriated tokens from a style

[1] See p.127 for quotes relating to the interpreted authenticity of Macklemore
[2] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right?' (1989) p. 180
[3] Kivy, *Authenticities*, (1995) p. 7
[4] Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, (1969)

alien to them, and their subsequent application as being subversive or serious. The sheer presence of particular stylistic tokens is not enough to render an artist authentic or otherwise; significance lies in the way that token is delivered. Taylor (1997) alludes to this latter point. He claims that the act of being 'true to the emotions represented in the work' generates the perception of personal authenticity.[5] This is developed from Frith's *authenticity of emotionality* (1983), in which personal authenticity was understood as 'a demonstration of one's own emotional experience'.[6] Thus, a punk-rock artist appropriating the stylistic token of an R&B original for their cover is unlikely to be interpreted as having much "emotional experience". Although Taylor's extended theoretical discussion exposes the insinuation that the author defines the emotions in his or her own work (similar to Trilling and Kivy suggesting that the author defines his or her own "true self"), it does lead towards a reframing of personal authenticity. Therefore, rather than equating personal authenticity to whether a track is faithful or sincere to the performer or to an emotion, the ascription of personal authenticity more likely equates to whether an audience *believes* the performer's communication in a recorded track. This is a central concern for Moore (2013), whose *authenticity of expression* relates personal authenticity to whether or not we believe the artist's attempts to authenticate their projected selves. Moore's brief example of this approach looks at the John Lee Hooker track *In The Mood* (1990), and questions whether or not the listener believes Hooker to be honest and/or sincere when he states that he's *In The Mood.* My discussion below of Say Anything's *Got Your Money* (2008) highlights a subversion of personal authenticity through the act of being overtly and perceptibly insincere.

[5] Taylor, *Global Pop,* (1997) p. 21
[6] Taylor, *Global Pop,* (1997) p. 23; even though the quote is from Taylor's *Global Pop*, Taylor paraphrases Frith, *Sound Effects*, (1983) p. 12

5.1.1 VOCAL PERSONA

My analysis of personal authenticity draws upon the importance of the *persona*. Though a comprehensive unpacking of the persona phenomenon is beyond the remit of this authenticity-specific inquiry, this study builds upon the tripartite schemas of Allan Moore and Philip Auslander (1997).[7] Where their persona structures are constructed with vocalists in mind (not only is the concept of persona most readily explicable in the clear embodiment of vocalists, but the credibility of the vocalist commonly underpins any ascription of authenticity), the theory will be of particular use for the discussion of instrumental gestures and authenticity later in the chapter.

Developing Auslander, Moore gives the following definitions in relation to vocalists:

- Performer *(Moore) is the listener interpreted construct of the musician as a real person (Auslander) away from their musical endeavours, which 'we can become cognisant of should we choose'.*[8] *The image of the performer is commonly created via social media, interviews and other non-musical interactions*
- Persona *is the listener-created construction of the performing musician on record performing as themselves, shaped through the synthesis of, amongst other aspects, lyrics, melody, timbre (i.e. interpreted gestures) and their perception within their sonic*

[7] Auslander's scheme quoted in Moore, *Song Means*, (2013) pp. 180-181. I am skeptical of Moore's claim that the two schemas are distinct.
[8] ibid.

environment. Persona *can occur on a number of spectra, including between realistic or fictional, involved or observing*

- Protagonist *is a character depicted in the song by the* persona

Stan (1999) by Eminem (featuring Dido) is a clear example of how vocalists fit into this tripartite division. Within there are a number of subject positions taken up by both Eminem and Dido. In the track, Eminem lyrically depicts a fictional correspondence back and forth between himself and an obsessed fan. In the opening verse, vocalist Eminem recites letters written by the eponymous Stan to Slim Shady (a mischievous alter ego protagonist created by the persona Eminem), and in so doing takes on the character of the obsessed fan. By means of reply, Eminem responds in the second verse as "himself": not in terms of Eminem-acting-as-the-protagonist-Slim-Shady or Eminem-acting-as-the-persona, but as Marshall-Mathers-the-performer-away-from-the-stage. Through this act of speaking for himself (rather than through his persona), Eminem conflates the roles of performer, involved-persona and protagonist and in doing so, projects personal authenticity. The audience gets to hear "the real human" behind the Eminem persona. Dido's chorus hook provides another viewpoint, as it is interpreted as the internalised thoughts of Eminem's protagonist Stan. Whether this is understood as an observer-persona or observer-protagonist are brought into question by the presence of this hook in Dido's own song, *Thank You* (1999).

Ascription of personal authenticity commonly concerns the absence of any division between a persona or protagonist and the performer, such as that described above. A prime example relates to gangsta-rap vocalists from the turn of the early twenty-first century. Through interviews with fans of the style, Cecelia Cutler (2014) highlights the prestige bestowed upon rappers who are successfully

perceived to be 'keeping it real' (whether by 'being true to yourself' or actively participating in the street culture in which they are perceived to have grown up).[9] Despite the fact that Cutler steers away from specifically investigating the construction of persona in hip-hop, her interviews highlight the challenging issue of for whom these rappers are "keeping it real". For Cutler's interviewees, "authentic" rappers are those whose persona and performer are near-identical; i.e., the perception that an artist is "staying in character" regardless of whether they are on-stage or away from it.

Even though the musical examples brought up in Cutler's interviews date her investigation, the dependence of gangsta rap authenticity on an absence of persona/performer schism is still widespread, despite more recent investigations. Subsequent studies have dismissed the simplistic structure used in Cutler's inquiry, using social media to reveal that the interpreted off-stage performer is as much a promotional construct as the on-stage persona. Such developments have led to a rejection of the one-dimensional link between anti-hegemonic behaviour and personal authenticity in a number of rock music subcultures, despite a similar dependence on a persona/performer conflation in hardcore punk and heavy metal. Witnessed in autobiographies, the ascription of personal authenticity to figures like Henry Rollins (*Get In The Van*, 2004) Al Jourgensen (Ministry, 2013) and Johnny Cash (*Cash*, 2000) are no less reliant upon the artist being outwardly true to their self. The construction of personal authenticity in these varied subcultures entail different principles and measures, including an alignment with left-wing politics and a problematic rejection of capitalism.[10]

[9] Cutler, *White Hip Hoppers, Language and Identity in Post-Modern America* (2014), pp. 50-57

[10] This problematic relationship highlighted by the reliance on market forces to distribute a recorded product is discussed in Frith (1983) and Walser (1993)

Elizabeth Eva Leach's (2001) analysis of the interpreted authenticity of the Spice Girls develops persona-related authenticity in a different manner, considering their rejection of instrumental skill (and some might say talent) as an *authenticity of the ordinary*. While principally developed as type of personal authenticity and utilising the same perception of a persona/performer conflation, it is an excellent illustration of Moore's theory that an interpretation of personal authenticity will be commonly twinned with a second-person *authenticity of experience*. Through the lip-synced performances common to pop acts for example, a pop music singer mimics their audience who are similarly singing along, be it at their concert or at home. It is this act that generates the interpretation of an authenticity of the ordinary: such a collapsing of the persona/performer distinction subsequently creates the impression that the performer is 'one of us', or even that 'we could be one of them'; a premise previously developed by Nicola Dibben (1999), who observes the difference between rock bands speaking for an audience, and groups such as the Spice Girls who speak *as* the audience.

In the years following the ascent and unrivalled success of the Spice Girls, the pop music industry commandeered the authenticity of the ordinary. In a multitude of television talent shows (*Pop-Idol, X-Factor* et al.), the audience follows an "everyman" through his or her journey to brief fame and stardom. Such appropriation of authenticities (in this case, authenticity of the ordinary) is one example of what Emily Dolan (2010) labels the 'swinging pendulum' of authenticity, where new authenticities are asserted in the wake of old authenticities becoming standardised and losing their 'aura'.[11] It is no coincidence that the waning popularity of such overtly manufactured artists has coincided with

[11] Dolan, '"…This Little Ukulele Tells The Truth"', (2010) p. 465. Dolan's point of view is countered in my discussion on subculture, p. 139

a slow but steady moving of the goalposts in relation to authenticity of the ordinary.

Leach's investigation not only continues Kivy's legacy of multiple authenticities, but also suggests that contrasting demographic groups or communities will interpret individual markers of authenticity differently. To cite a more recent example, the popularity of the boy band One Direction can be rationalised by a claim to an authenticity of the ordinary, owing to their public manufacture on a television talent show. By being allowed behind the scenes, audiences were privy not only to the story of five young men chosen to form the group, but more importantly the pop-music industry processes that are commonly kept from view. But where this ordinariness can be construed as a positive for a particular demographic that feel included in the exponential rise to fame of "the boy next door", the typically Adornian response can support a grossly negative interpretation, according to which another community sees overt industry interference impact on the authenticity of the artists in question. This form of interpretational subjectivity in relation to authenticity discourse can complicate analyses that discuss whether or not a marker of authenticity successfully generates a desired effect; the idiosyncratic interpretation of every audience is unlikely to agree on one outcome. However, the general trend of authenticity discourse has moved away from this type of analysis, focussing on *how* a particular artist attempts to create a sense of authenticity (e.g. Kivy, Butler, and Moore), rather than whether or not it succeeds in doing so.

Discussion of persona in popular music is commonly limited to vocalists. This is exemplified in Moore (2013), yet instrumentalists are evaluated in a similar manner. The investigation of instrumental music performance by Naomi Cumming (2001) and Robert Walser's (1993) examination of heavy metal music 'Beyond The

Vocals' goes some way toward developing a framework. As instrumental sounds on record are often understood as products of conscious human effort, it stands to reason that instrumentalists can also be understood as *personas*. Regardless of their instrument, the performer in the studio may just sit and play, but their sonic output on record is mediated via recording technologies and studio-based processing, generating a persona for audiences. Beyond recordings, their on-stage persona may be marked by theatrical movements and embellished performance gestures, whereas the compulsion to over-dramatize mimed performative actions in promotional videos could be viewed as the musician-as-protagonist, playing the character of the highly energetic-rock music performer whilst not being bound to actually performing their music. Rock music is overflowing with examples of instrumentalist personas. The *This Is A Wasteland* (2013) documentary by Pierce The Veil presents a related case, highlighting the differences in performative gesture away from an audience, on stage and in promotional videos.

The separation of *protagonist*, *persona*, and *performer* is vital when discussing personal authenticity in the cover-version genre, even though the use of the persona model is problematic. Although the general popular music ascription of personal authenticity equating to a perceived persona/performer conflation applies in cover-versions, the spectre of a previously recorded version creates added ambiguity over the relationship between the protagonist, persona and performer, generating extra layers of interpretation and additional associations. For instance, in listening to a re-recording of a track, do we interpret the new performer channelling (in an esoteric mediumistic sense) the persona of the original recording? If a guitarist were to perform a phrase like the original performer, is their performance interpreted as emanating from a protagonist rather than a persona? If the new vocalist is interpreted as singing in their own

style in the re-recording, does this reframe our interpretation of the pop original owing to the fact that an audience now has to deal with two personas? Does this make either account more-or-less convincing? What about a change of vocalist gender? To seek answers, I shall use two examples: *Hot N Cold* originally recorded by Katy Perry (2008) and re-recorded by Woe, Is Me (2010), and *Chocolate* originally by The 1975 (2013), and re-recorded by Knuckle Puck (2014).

5.1.1.1 *CHOCOLATE* BY THE 1975 / KNUCKLE PUCK

Regarding the cover, the distinct lack of gestural transformation in the vocal part (and the instrumental parts) creates a comparatively straightforward movement from persona in the original towards protagonist in the cover. The use of 'chocolate' in the original track is a metaphor for cannabis, and the song details the lead singer's practice of driving around his hometown to find secluded locations to smoke the drug so as to avoid the attention of local law enforcement.[12] Following presumptions elicited by the indie-rock musical style, an audience will speculate that the band have written the song themselves, with the vocalist singing from personal experience.

This is not the only way that we interpret the vocalist as a realistic persona. Significant is the distinctive vocal style of Matthew Healy (vocalist of The 1975), which encourages the inference that the persona closely correlates with the performer. Healy's pronounced English accent is key for the generation of authenticity for a number of contemporaneous UK-based indie-rock acts, such as Arctic Monkeys, The Cribs and The Vaccines. The lack of any obvious vocal

[12] Although the vocal style of The 1975 singer Matthew Healy makes the lyrics ambiguous, his commentary on the correct lyrics can be found at 'Chocolate, The 1975', *Lyrics Genius*: non-scholarly reference #21

training, combined with a quasi-conversational character that frequently utilises a glottal stop (in the dropping of the t consonant) implies a certain commonality or ordinariness to English natives.

Knuckle Puck imitate this accent in their cover, despite the fact that their Knuckle Puck's (like the rest of the band) is from Chicago. The vocalist slips out of the English accent at various points, creating unease regarding the interpretation of the persona. Occurring most noticeably in the bridge sections (at 1:27, "Now, you're never gonna quit it"), conviction in the persona starts to deteriorate, and we perceive Knuckle Puck's lead vocal accent as being predominantly false. At best, the cover vocal is most closely characterised as an unbelievable persona, but more likely an unbelievable protagonist, with the lead singer taking on the character of the original vocalist. The lapses by Knuckle Puck's vocalist could be forgiven owing to the distinctive nature of Matthew Healy's vocal, yet the repeated intermittent slips of accent cause the listener to question the authority of the cover persona. In attempting to replicate the performance gestures of the original The 1975 track, Knuckle Puck's performance is heard as trying to sound like the original. For this reason, their cover is likely to be conceived as inauthentic.

Indeed, evidence via listener judgements marks the importance of gestures in these matters. Statements such as 'It's not as good as the original…I think [the vocalist is] trying a little hard in this' relate not only to Knuckle Puck's cover, but also to other *Punk Goes…* vocalists.[13] Listeners to other *Punk Goes…* recordings, such as *Gangsta's Paradise* by Falling In Reverse, are not impressed by a rock

[13] 'Punk Goes 90s Vol. 2 - Falling In Reverse "Gangsta's Paradise'", *YouTube*: non-scholarly reference #50

vocalist's (evidently failed) attempts at rapping, and the impression that the vocalist is '…merely appropriating symbols or modes of expression'.[14]

5.1.1.2 *HOT N COLD* BY KATY PERRY / WOE, IS ME

Woe, Is Me's version of *Hot N Cold* (2010) presents another example of the problems encountered in interpreting persona in cover-versions. Sung in the first person, the lyrics question the narrator's lover who is prone to 'change [their] mind like a girl changes clothes.'[15] Although the synthesizer-heavy, loop-based backing is key to the track's stylistic interpretation as pop music, Perry's emotionally charged vocals mark a gestural division between herself and the acousmatic musical environment. This is not to say that Perry's persona is unbelievable. The varying grain of her vocal corresponds to the spectrum of emotions depicted in the lyrics, leading us to believe that she is, at the very least, able to sympathise with the emotions she portrays.

Woe, Is Me take the spectrum of vocal emotions to extremes in their cover-version. Their radical gestural transformations render any references to the original track initially unclear. The lack of clear associations until 0:22 (when the allosonic imitation of Perry's vocal is initially interpreted as an obscure autosonic reference) affords the listener a clean slate for interpretation. Personal anecdotal evidence has left me convinced that the opening verse of this track is commonly mistaken for an original composition by Woe, Is Me.[16] Obvious changes occur in all instrumental parts, but most noticeable is the transformation of Perry's opening

[14] Roche, 'Authenticity: Keeping It Real And Then Some', *Philosophy Now* (Accessed 17th March 2015)

[15] 'Hot n Cold – Katy Perry', *Lyrics Genius*: non-scholarly reference #23

[16] Although anecdotal, my work as a DJ at Nottingham's Rock City has cemented this personal view, with a majority of audiences unsure as to what the track is until 0:22, despite plays on a weekly basis

breathy irritation into a two-part screamed fury by the Woe, Is Me vocalist Tyler Carter.

Where Perry's expressed frustration is mediated by melodic singing, the anger for Carter is visceral and corporeal. Even though the lyrics are nearly indecipherable (which masks any links to the original Perry track), the emotion and related musical meaning are easily identifiable from Carter's vocalised representations of anger. The semiotic links between anger and shouting are obvious and are significant in creating the impression of Carter's believable persona. In rejecting the typical sung medium, we understand that the fury is viscerally real for Carter.

Listeners are given a further glimpse of his persona though the splitting of his vocals into a two-part arrangement, transforming Perry's original lyric into a conscious/subconscious divide. In this particular track, the lower growl acts as a sinister inner monologue that explodes past Carter's teeth into the corporeal higher screamed vocal part. The addition of the lower vocal part is of particular interest to the movement from Perry's persona to Carter's persona. Being privy to the subconscious workings of Carter's persona invests his expression with added sincerity. It gives the impression that Carter is saying what comes to mind without thinking about it – the sense that he has little regard for the way his vocalisations come across, or who overhears it. Through the simple act of screaming the lyrics, we interpret that Carter's anger was felt at that moment. The heavily distorted guitar and gated drum set contribute to Carter's ferocity – he wants to be heard over the din. The depiction of fury directed at a romantic interest by Woe, Is Me certainly causes us subsequently to reinterpret Perry's persona as mediated (both by means of the sung medium and the studio-based pop track), and tame by comparison.

The altered gender of the persona has striking repercussions for the gestural transformation and musical meaning. Despite the fact that the lyrics lack clarity and are likely to be understood either by reading the lyrics or retrospectively (after the subsequent chorus makes clear that the song *is* a cover-version of the Katy Perry track), their male-narrated depiction of anger towards a romantic interest does carry with it connotations of antagonism and domestic violence. It should be uneasy listening, but the indecipherable nature of the lyrical content restricts understanding. By the time a listener is able retrospectively to reinterpret the lyrics, the illusion of Carter's aggressive persona has been shattered via the introduction of a highly convincing allosonic imitation of Perry's vocal style in the chorus. Such a swift shift of vocal style borders on the comedic, and a subsequent retrospective reinterpretation of the Woe, Is Me track as a cover-version of *Hot N Cold* rather than a different song with the same name takes place, with Carter's extreme anger understood as a histrionic caricature of Perry's persona, rather than his own.

5.1.2 Instrumental Persona

Scholarly discussions of *persona* often focus on vocalists, as in the studies by Auslander (1997) and Moore (2013). This is not without reason. A listener's propensity to interpret the sound of a singer as embodied enables a relatively straightforward analysis. But the concept of persona can be readily transferred to instrumental recordings and their performers. If the concepts of embodiment and mimesis lay the critical foundation for describing musical sounds as gestural, it follows that the instrumental sounds heard in musical recordings can be understood under the related concept of persona. My definition of vocal persona

('the listener-created construction of the performing musician on record performing as themselves, shaped through the interpretation of gestures') can undoubtedly be applied to instrumentalists.

This opinion pre-dates the work of Auslander et al. Although not linked to persona explicitly, Robert Walser's brief consideration of guitar timbre alludes to the significance of a guitarist's "sound" as establishing a link 'between sound quality and the music's desired effects', as well as describing how experienced listeners of heavy metal are able to recognise a guitarist through their "sound", in a manner often reserved for vocalists.[17]

There are a wealth of examples throughout the *Punk Goes...* catalogue where the gestural interpretation of an instrumental part or phrase is understood to project an embodied performer playing in a certain character or demeanour that is distinct from 'the interpreted construct of the musician as a real person'. Comparing the instrumental introductions of tracks such as Go Radio's adaptation of *Rolling In The Deep* (2011), *Gin And Juice* by Hot Rod Circuit (2008) and *In My Head* by Mayday Parade (2010) to their respective originals reveal how each gestural transformation results in the interpretation of a distinct persona. While the overriding male-centricity of the punk-rock genre suggests that this change is highly unlikely to be of sex or gender, changes of age, personality and demeanour are apt to occur.

[17] Walser, *Running With The Devil* (1993), p. 44

5.1.2.1 *I KNEW YOU WERE TROUBLE* BY TAYLOR SWIFT / WE CAME AS ROMANS

These changes of persona relate to the projection of authenticity. Comparing the opening guitar passage of Taylor Swift's *I Knew You Were Trouble* against the cover-version by We Came As Romans (2014) reveals two distinct personas that are the direct result of a gestural transformation. In addition to performance nuances, Swift's original is highly polished, featuring a dynamically loud instrument that reaches out to a virtual public performance space. We Came As Romans's cover-version is produced with intentional imperfections. A quiet instrument with little-to-no reverberation implies performance within a simulated private space such as a bedroom. This gestural transformation has consequences for the interpreted personas. The following analysis compares the two recordings, demonstrating changes in the We Came As Romans adaptation that both amplify the confident persona interpreted from the Swift original and the projection of an uneasy and amateur musician.

The differing personas have significant effects for the subsequent ascription of authenticity by a listener. The projection of a nervous, aspiring amateur directly relates to a personal *authenticity of the ordinary*, though distinct from the examples pertaining to chart pop described by Leach (2001). The introduction to the *I Knew You Were Trouble* cover-version communicates an experience familiar to the majority of We Came As Romans's core audience – of the aspiring professional musician who learns through imitating their favourite songs on low-budget equipment in the comfort of their own home.[18] Although Pierce The Veil may have expressed this sentiment vicariously through their assimilation and

[18] Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002)

projection of numerous rock music styles in *Just The Way You Are*, We Came As Romans attempt to generate this authenticity in a more candid manner, hoping to convince listeners that they can be trusted and that they are sincere in their assertions.

In a number of respects, We Came As Romans's cover-version of Taylor Swift's *I Knew You Were Trouble* is comparable with A Day To Remember's recording of *Since U Been Gone* (2009). Both tracks contain a similar play between the poles of 'cover' and 'version', whereby the *Punk Goes…* artists begin with a unmistakable imitation of the original before introducing more radical gestural transformations and new elements that are part of the gestural gamut of the *Punk Goes…* artists at formal changes of section.

Although We Came As Romans's adaption of *I Knew You Were Trouble* is clearly based on Swift's earlier recording, extra-musical testimony provides further evidence that substantiates this view. For instance, not only do We Came As Romans acknowledge the prior existence of Swift's recording in interviews, but they also actively endorse Swift's perceived ownership of *I Knew You Were Trouble* despite the song writing and production credits being shared between herself and Swedish songwriters and producers Max Martin and Karl Johan Schuster.[19] Additionally, We Came As Romans's vocalists Dave Stephens and Kyle Pavone discuss how they 'did the typical We Came As Romans thing' and 'had a vision of how to make [*I Knew You Were Trouble*] in our own style'; a compositional method comparable to A Day To Remember's cover-version of *Since U Been Gone*.[20]

Both recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble* commence with a near identical syncopated chord phrase played on amplified (but non-distorted) electric guitars.

[19] Fearless Records, 'Punk Goes Pop Vol. 6 - We Came As Romans Studio Update', *YouTube*: non-scholarly reference #48

[20] Henne, 'We Came As Romans Cover Swift's Trouble' *Metal Hammer*: non-scholarly reference #25

Theories of embodiment (Lakoff and Johnson) and mimesis (Cox) lay the psychological and physiological foundation for a listener, upon hearing the distinctive timbre of the electric guitars, being prone to identifying these opening phrases as being performed with conscious human movement. This sense of movement is fostered by nuanced inconsistencies of rhythm, chord balance and texture in both the percussive muted strums and the sounding non-muted chords that constitute each opening introductory phrase. Consider Fig. 5-1, the transcription in the official Hal Leonard publication:

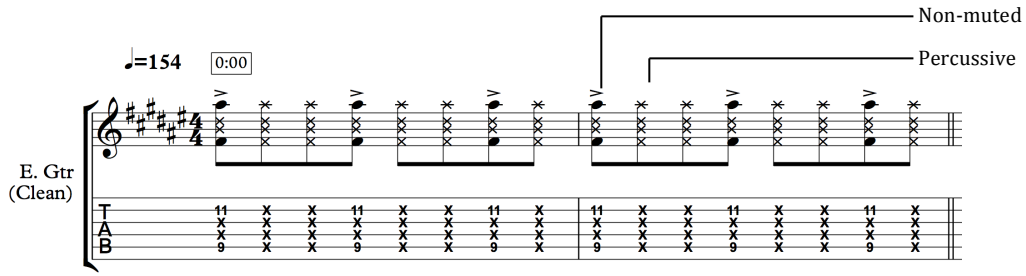


Fig. 5-1: 'Official' Transcription of electric guitar introduction to *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03); taken from *Taylor Swift: Red – Guitar Recorded Versions* (2012)

This transcription is equally applicable to the Swift and We Came As Romans recordings, thus confirming that the introduction to both tracks share a number of notated musical elements, including tempo, pitch, and rhythm. There are, however, discernible differences between the two recordings of the above phrase as realised in their respective recordings. A number of these differences are highlighted in Fig. 5-2 and Fig. 5-3:

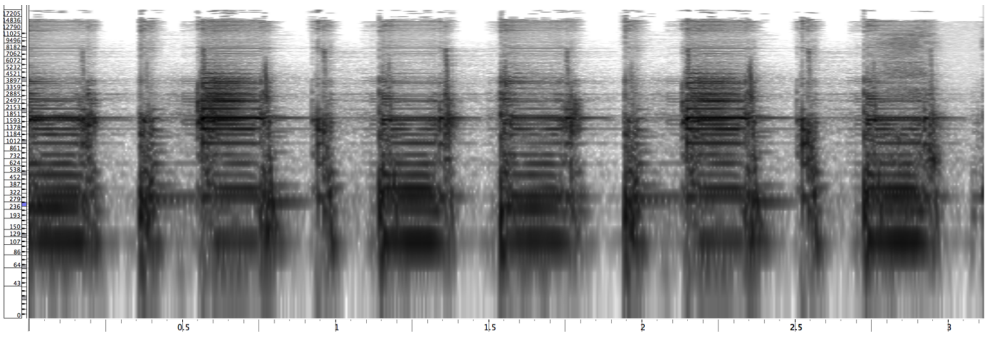


Fig. 5-2: Spectrogram analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by Taylor Swift

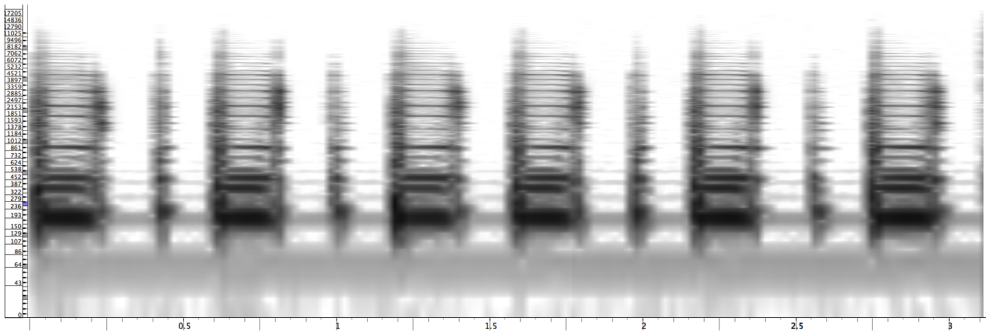


Fig. 5-3: Spectrogram analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by We Came As Romans

The two spectrograms highlight a number of dynamic, timbral and textural discrepancies between the tracks, diagrammatically illustrating the audible differences that will alter their interpretation. While theories of embodiment and mimesis go some way to explain how both versions are interpreted and understood as being performed with conscious human movement, these differences illustrated within the spectrograms create, within the listener, differing gestural images of how an imagined musician is performing the phrase. This gestural transformation, fashioned by both distinct and nuanced differences in the We Came As Romans recording, are caused by a complex synthesis of: differing physical gestures made by the individual guitarists in each performance; the use of dissimilar equipment; and a differing approach to studio-based production post-recording.

Although both recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble* could be considered alike when heard discretely, directly comparing the two opening musical phrases renders the ineffable qualities of Swift's recording more readily identifiable. A number of these characteristics are affected by how many guitars the listener hears in Swift's introduction. It is difficult to discern how many guitars are present. Establishing how many instruments are perceived is of vital importance in relation to any analysis of the implied gestures and their subsequent interpretation.

However, it is my contention that only one guitar was present during the recording, evidence taken from the track can be used to support the interpretation that one, two, or even multiple instruments are present.

5.1.2.1.1 PANNING

When the track is heard through headphones, the panning on the recording creates the image of multiple guitarists performing the opening phrase (Fig. 5-4). This is a consequence of the syncopated non-muted chords of Taylor Swift's introductory guitar, which can be heard to originate from a single point panned slightly left-of-centre, whereas the interspersed quaver-length percussive strums can be understood to emanate from both extreme edges of the stereo image. This creates the possibility of interpreting the track as having three guitarists present at various positions within the imagined stereo. This reading is illustrated in the Fig. 5-4 sound-box diagram and accompanying Fig. 5-5 transcription:

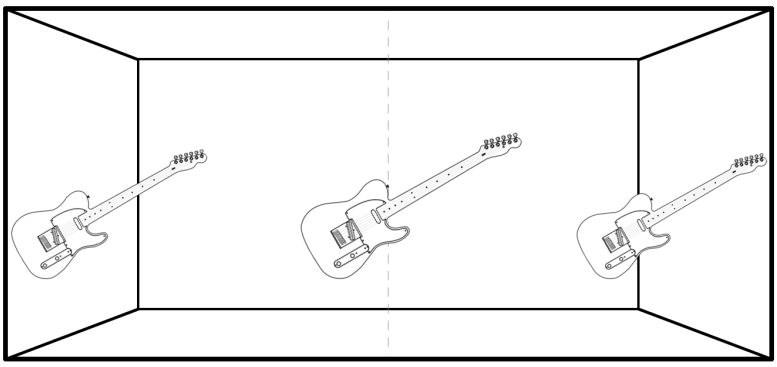


Fig. 5-4: Sound box illustration of *I Knew You Were Trouble* by Taylor Swift

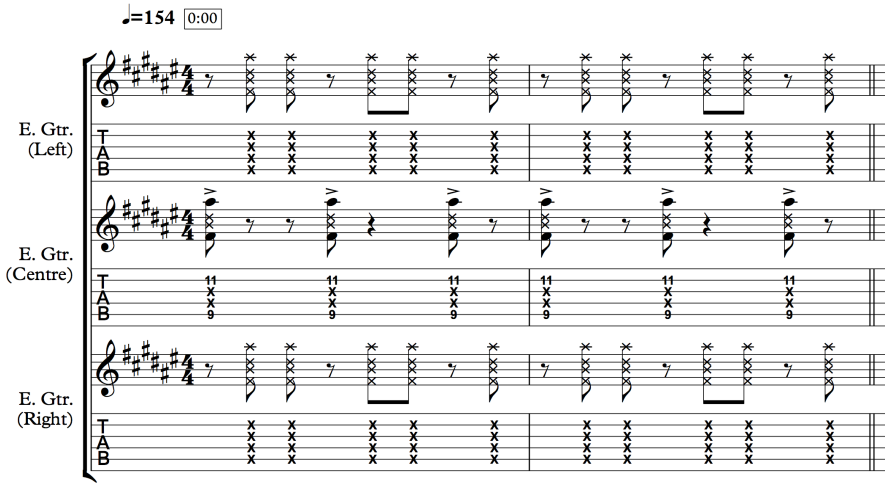


Fig. 5-5: Modified three-guitar transcription relating to Fig. 5-4

The Taylor Swift recording contains a number of characteristics that contradict this image of a three-guitar introduction and support the argument that only one singular guitar performance was recorded for the track. Firstly, there are no nuanced discrepancies between the outer-placed percussive strums at any point in the introductory guitar phrase; rhythmic and chord balance discrepancies would occur if the recorded phrase was created with multiple musicians performing concurrently or by overlaying numerous individual performances. Detailed comparison of these panned guitars reveals an identical note-to-note balance and a near-indistinguishable rhythmic spread of the notes as the guitarist moves the plectrum across the strings. The near-central guitar that strums the non-muted chords creates little confusion, yet these outer guitars generate suspicion. The improbability of two individual performers being able to play the same musical phrase with no nuanced differences creates a gestural unease that will confuse an experienced listener. This gestural uncertainty is likely to have been born from studio-based production techniques. For example, one recorded guitar performance could have been separated by means of a stereo spread procedure applied post-recording, or a single amplified source could have been recorded via two or more microphones, which allows the resultant signals to be split and placed

at various points within the sound box.[21] Although knowledge of the likely recording techniques can allow for a retrospective scrutiny of how the effect was produced, it does not distinguish a probable interpretation cited above – three guitars perceived around the stereo image.

This complicating panning issue is diminished when the track is heard over hi-fi speakers, because the effect of the panning element is weakened and becomes less influential to the interpretation. When listening over speakers, not only do the three distinctly panned streams of reified gestures blend together to form the image of a singular guitarist performing the opening introductory phrase, but the lack of any rhythmic nuance overrides the weakened panning effect and further encourages the listener to understand the passage as though a single agent were performing the introduction. As the interpretation of multiple instruments requires one specific criterion to be in place (listening over headphones), I would argue that the latter single-instrument reading is far more likely. The different equipment creates a new gestural reading. With the instrument spread across the entire stereo width, the instrument surrounds the listener as if at a performance amplified through a public address system in a concert hall. Such an interpretation confidently commands the attention of the audience.

Regardless of the interpretation resulting from the panning uncertainties in Taylor Swift's recording, there is a panning discrepancy between Swift's recording and the We Came As Romans cover-version. This creates consequences for the perceptual-imaginative response. An obvious alteration has been made to the panning quality of the We Came As Romans guitar. Here, the unequivocal sound of a centrally placed single instrument is perceived. Where Swift's guitar surrounds

[21] For a description of how a stereo spread works and the affects, see 'Logic 9: Stereo Spread', *Apple Inc.*: non-scholarly reference #7 This process further explains why the percussive strums are relatively erratic in their stereo location

the listener via post-recording production methods, We Came As Romans aim their singular guitar directly at the listener. By these means, their version possesses a sense of intimacy not captured in Taylor Swift's recording. Where the application of panning on Swift's performance surrounds the listener and sounds as though it is being played through an amplification system in a live performance venue, the image garnered from the We Came As Romans recording is one of friendly inclusion. It is a one-on-one personalised performance setting that is familiar, yet particular at the same time.

5.1.2.1.2 REVERB

The quality of the reverb also contributes to the interpretation of the opening guitar phrase. Fig. 5-6 presents a transcription and waveform analyses for the first three strums of each recording.

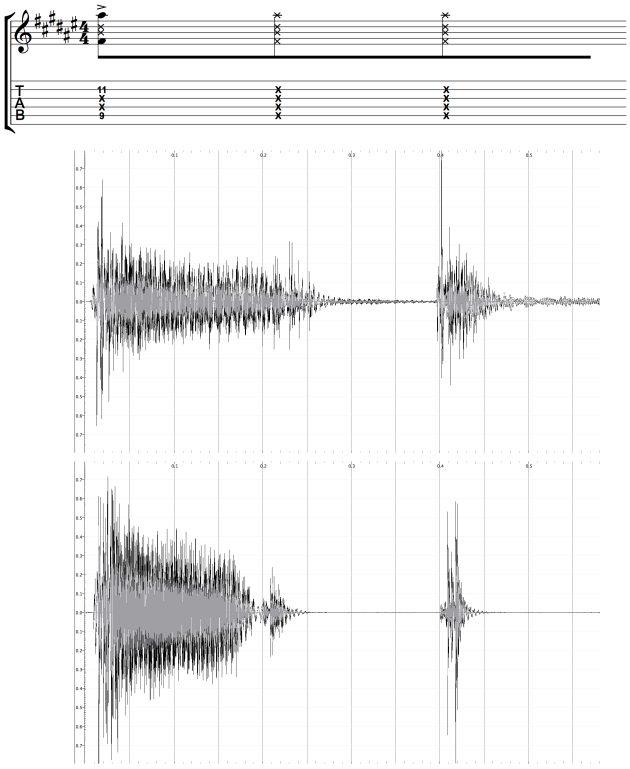


Fig. 5-6: Waveform analysis of first three strums to *I Knew You Were Trouble* as recorded by Taylor Swift (upper) and We Came As Romans (upper)

The above waveforms demonstrate differences between each recording. Even though the perceived sustained length of each opening non-muted chord is near identical, the ensuing 'tail' of the each chord is vastly different. Witness the much shallower rate of decay in the Taylor Swift version in comparison to the sudden fall-off revealed in the We Came As Romans analysis (at approximately 0.18 seconds). As a consequence, witness the lack of silence between the opening non-muted chord and the subsequent percussive strum. Yet there is a distinguishable break in the We Came As Romans recording.

The analysis also displays a differing shape to the decay of the two percussive strums, whereby We Came As Romans's guitar has a very sudden falloff (approximately 75ms between chord onset to silence). This is much shallower in the Taylor Swift version where the reverberation of a chord bleeds into the next chord some 200ms afterwards. These differing decay rates are a consequence of reverb. Whether the reverb audible in these tracks is a result of different recording methods or applied through post-recording production, both versions of *I Knew You Were Trouble* differ in their perceptible saturation of reverb. As such, both versions support alternative interpretations of the implied performance space.

The reverb that shadows each individual guitar strum in Swift's original recording also contributes to the image of a larger performance space (such as a stage in a concert hall). Conversely, the lack of reverberation emanating from We Came As Romans's introductory guitar not only contributes to the interpretation of the guitarist performing in close proximity to the listener, but of a performance in a small and confined performance space. Such differences give rise to conflicting gestural interpretations. Where the reverb present in Swift's recording indicates a performer playing loudly enough owing to, perhaps, a heightened sense of performer self-assurance to generate the reverb that echoes from the chords, the

lack of reverb in the We Came As Romans recording would suggest a guitarist using relatively smaller, inhibited or tentative movements so as to not generate any reverberations in and around the small virtual performance space.

5.1.2.1.3 TIMBRE

Beyond the differences in the application of reverb and panning between the versions, the differing timbre of the electric guitars is equally noticeable. The timbre variance (owing to differing personnel in performance as well as differing instruments, amplification, recording techniques, and post-recording equalisation) further assists the sense of introverted intimacy projected by the We Came As Romans recording and the confident public performance in the Taylor Swift track. The difference in instrumental timbre is diagrammatically evident in the spectrogram analyses at the beginning of this case study (Fig. 5-2 and Fig. 5-3), yet a more detailed and informative representation of the differences in timbre can be garnered from a cross section of the frequencies present in those spectrograms at 0.1 seconds; a point midway through the first non-muted chord.

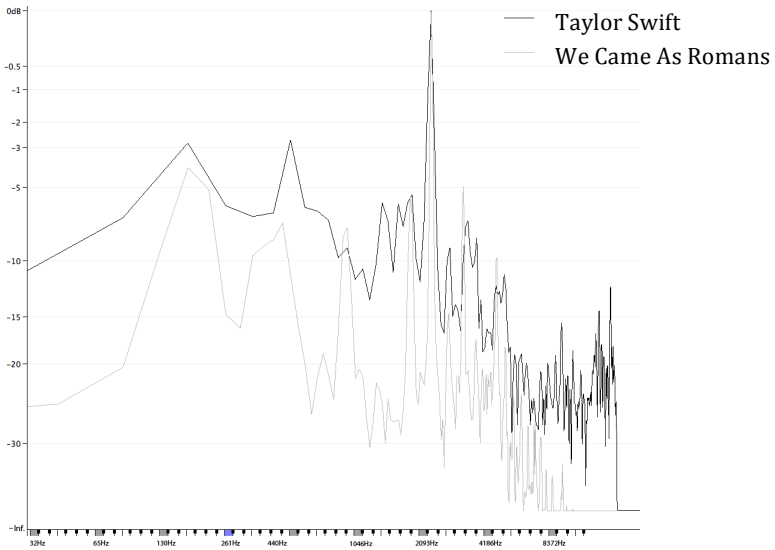


Fig. 5-7: Cross section of frequencies present in spectrograms (Fig. 5-2 and Fig. 5-3) at 0.1 seconds in *I Knew You Were Trouble* as recorded by Taylor Swift (black) and We Came As Romans (grey)

There are two obvious differences between the readings taken. There is both a disparity in the frequency range and the number of peak frequencies present in their respective tracks. These two observable discrepancies are key to understanding the dissimilar timbres encountered in the two recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble.* The relative lack of any audio activity below approximately 100Hz and above approximately 5kHz in the We Came As Romans recording is typical for this particular introduction and correlates with the thinner sound heard in comparison to the fuller sounding Taylor Swift recording. In addition, every guitar chord of the Swift recording utilises frequencies above and below the frequency range of the We Came As Romans recording illustrated above.

Secondly, the number of peak frequencies present in the spectrogram identifies differing equalisation 'shape' to each guitar. Witness the lack of relative amplitude in the We Came As Romans track between the 600-1500Hz frequency spectrum (with the exception of the peak around 932Hz, correlating to the fundamental frequency of the performed A#5). This characteristic is colloquially labelled as a "scooped" guitar sound and is a feature of a majority of metal and punk tracks. The effect can be the result of using an instrument with a single-coil pickup, as found on most Fender models (as opposed to a guitar with humbuckers), but is more likely created by turning down the 'mid' dial on the guitar amplifier, which results in the 'scooping' of the mid-range frequencies around the 700-800Hz mark. Although commonly used to increase definition, depth and percussiveness of heavily distorted electric guitars, it does result in the thinner timbre witnessed here when utilised on non-distorted electric guitars. The timbrally 'fuller' or 'thicker' Taylor Swift guitar could be the result of leaving the equalisation levels fairly flat. Here, the mid-range frequencies combine with the rest of the sound spectrum, compounding harmonics above the fundamental frequencies and

boosting combination tones (often referred to as resultant tones), resulting in the perception of a thicker timbre in the Taylor Swift recording.

The effect of the characteristic punk/metal guitar sound heard in the We Came As Romans recording is of a guitarist performing with an inferior amplifier or through a smaller speaker system; the type of low-budget system used by amateur performers practicing at home. The effect of this thinner timbre also contributes to the image of the phrase being performed on a physically smaller instrument. While this is a possible scenario with, for example, a drum set or string instrument, it is not applicable to the standardised sizing of electric guitars.[22] What results is the gestural image of a hesitant or anxious performance. The notion of a "smaller instrument" could be reapplied to the imagined physical motions of the guitarist, especially when heard in combination with the little-to-no reverb emanating from a single, centrally panned instrument. The spectrum observed in Fig. 5-7 illustrates how Taylor Swift's guitar has a much flatter frequency profile. The peaks and troughs are much less pronounced. This enhances the mid-range frequencies around the 600-800Hz spectrum and results in a texturally thicker sounding instrument. This timbre characteristic cannot be entirely separated from the aspect of reverb that will compound the sense textural thickening, yet both contribute to the impression that the guitar is being attended to in a comparatively more confident manner through a professional amplifier system, rather than being played on a bigger instrument.

[22] Although they can be differing sizes, they are commonly limited to being between 25½ inches (Fender) and 24¾ inches (Gibson)

5.1.2.1.4 CHORDAL BALANCE

The differing perceptual-imaginative responses are further supported by the chord-to-chord dynamics of each guitar phrase. Although the transcription of the guitar phrase (Fig. 5-1) makes use of the accent symbol to highlight the dynamic phrasing apparent in both recordings, it is clear that nuanced chord-to-chord dynamics of each guitar phrase result in highly contrasting interpretations. Waveform analyses of both the Taylor Swift introduction and the We Came As Romans introduction are presented in Fig. 5-8 and Fig. 5-9.

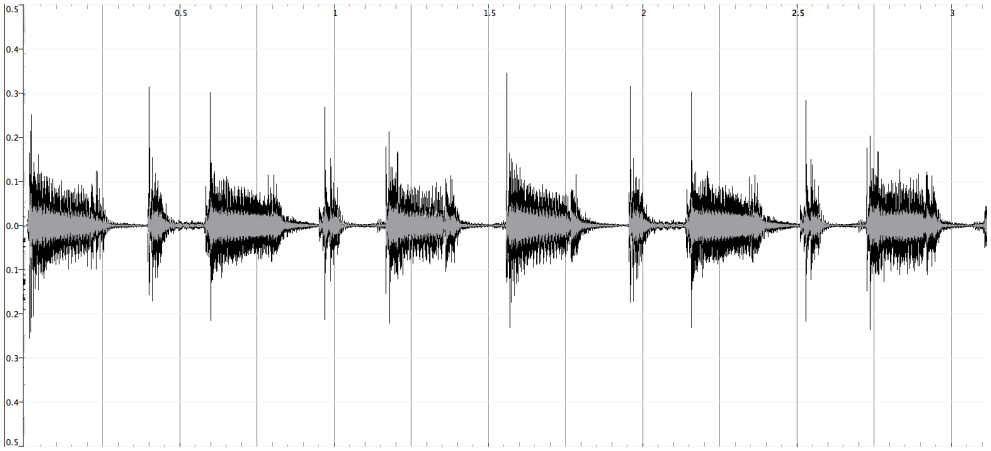


Fig. 5-8: Waveform analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by Taylor Swift

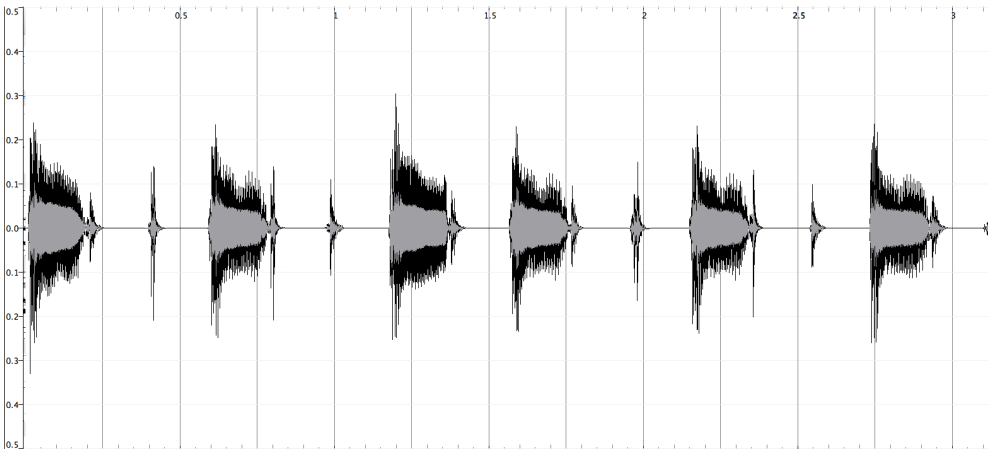


Fig. 5-9: Waveform analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by We Came As Romans

The above waveforms highlight the relative differences in volume between the muted and non-muted chords. In the Swift recording (Fig. 5-8), the relative dynamic levels of the percussive chords and non-muted chords are more evenly balanced, with some percussive strums reading louder than the non-muted chords. This is partly due to the instrumental setup (combining two streams of percussive chords panned to stereo extremes), yet it is also attributable to the recorded performer physically strumming the percussive chords with as much vigour and enthusiasm as the non-muted chords. Conversely, the analysis of the We Came As Romans recording (Fig. 5-9) reveals a distinct dynamic contrast between those chords that are non-muted and those that are percussive strums. The percussive, muted strums that pepper the non-muted chords are much quieter than the non-muted chords, resulting in a faintness that seems vague and uncertain. These contribute to the predominant sense of unease and inhibition garnered from the We Came As Romans introduction.

These gestural readings of Swift's energetic movements and We Came As Romans's anxiety are also manifest in the performance nuances relating to imperfections in the recorded performances. The presence of a higher range of frequencies in the Taylor Swift introduction is not only a characteristic of the instrumental timbre, but also a result of the number of strings struck on each strum. When listening closely, a listener can distinguish a differing number of notes present in a strum (including non-muted chords), as a result of the number of strings being struck.

Although any note can be located in a number of positions up and down a guitar fret board, it is not feasible to fret the particular F# and A# notes that comprise the opening chord of *I Knew You Were Trouble* on adjacent strings. Thus, as the strumming hand strikes the strings to play the chord, percussive "clicks" will

emanate from those strings between the fretted notes, because it is not possible for a guitarist to strum a chord whilst omitting a single string within the middle of the chord. Although a majority of official transcriptions may omit this performative nuance (as is the case in Hal Leonard's transcriptions of *Use Your Illusion I & II* by Guns 'n Roses for instance), the Fig. 5-5 centre guitar transcription includes the x's between the fret numbers. Yet evidence from both recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble* reveals that this 'official transcription' does not adequately correspond with the tracks, despite being a 'guitar recorded version' that is intended to mirror closely what occurs on the recording.[23] Beyond the unavoidable non-fretted percussive tones as highlighted in Fig. 5-1, Swift's recording contains extra non-fretted notes beyond the two transcribed fretted notes. Conversely, the muted strums in the We Came As Romans cover-version contain only two individual tones rather than the four implied by the transcription. Transcriptions Fig. 5-10, Fig. 5-11, and Fig. 5-12 illustrate the differences between the official published transcription and the recorded outcome.

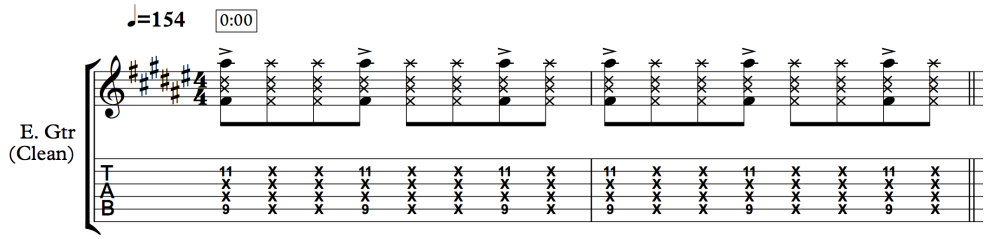


Fig. 5-10: 'Official' published transcription of *I Knew You Were Trouble*

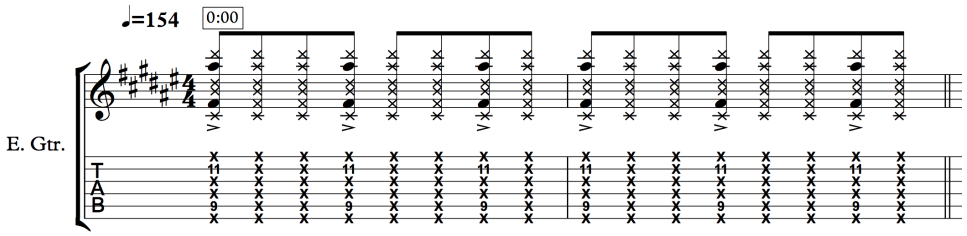


Fig. 5-11: Transcription of what is actually heard in the introduction to *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by Taylor Swift

[23] Swift, *Red – Guitar Recorded Versions* (2012)

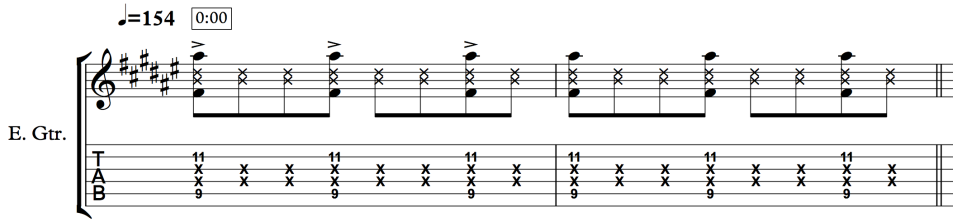


Fig. 5-12: Transcription of what is actually heard in the introduction to *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by We Came As Romans

This anomaly supports the different gestural interpretations. Where the higher number of strummed strings in Swift's introduction can be interpreted as a guitarist strumming with a wider arc of motion, We Came As Romans minimise the number of caught strings as a result of utilising a narrower strumming arm motion. Thus, not only does the Swift recording suggest a more exuberant and perhaps more confident live performance through reverb, timbre and dynamics, but also through the relative number of percussive non-fretted tones present in each chord. The We Came As Romans cover-version is its antithesis; it projects studious accuracy through the precision of the muted strums and the consistency of dynamic between each percussive chord. This accuracy projects the amateuristic emphasis on "getting it right" above musicality or feel.

The specific strumming motion can be quantified further by a closer inspection of the chord balance in each track. As described in the analysis of A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone* and Pierce The Veil's *Just The Way You Are,* playing the same chord with a different direction of the strumming arm (either up or down) will result in different chord balances. These manifest in the two recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble*. They help to develop a clearer understanding of the imagined physical gestures interpreted from each recording, and are significant in identifying the contrasting instrumental personas. The nuanced differences in intra-chord balance within each track and between the two recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble* are a major characteristic in determining

the physical action utilised by the performer whilst recording. Beyond their previous function to assist in the understanding of the timbre of the performing instruments, the spectrograms used in this case study also detail the balance of the individual chords.

In the Taylor Swift spectrogram (Fig. 5-2), consider the nuanced shading for each of the chords across the two bars: there is darker shading of the lower notes in the 1st, 3rd, 5th etc. chords and darker shading of the upper notes in the interspersing even numbered chords. This regular lower-then-upper intra-chordal emphasis pattern is manifest in both the non-muted and the percussive chords, though the emphases are more perceptible in the three sustained non-muted chords. The direct correlation between the chord balance and the underlying projected pulse of the music (low emphasis on the beat, high emphasis off the beat) creates the image of a perpetually flowing strumming motion alternating between the down stroke on the beat and an up stroke. This strumming pattern is illustrated in Fig. 5-13:

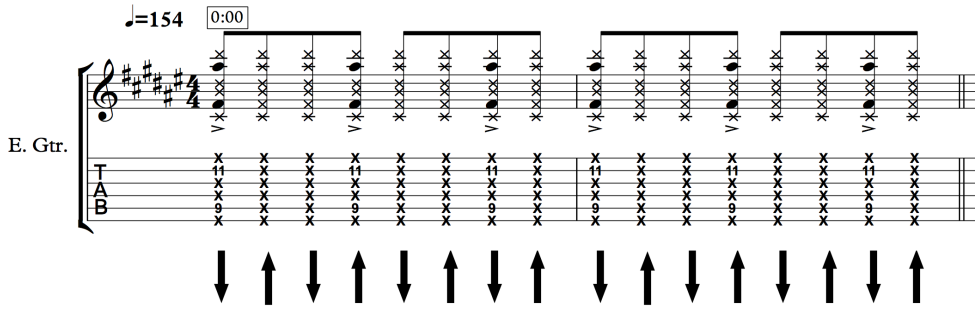


Fig. 5-13: Transcription of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by Taylor Swift, with inferred strumming pattern beneath

The We Came As Romans spectrogram (Fig. 5-3) illustrates a different intra-chordal balance pattern. Here, the fluctuating textures of the chords do not directly correlate to the projected pulse in the manner perceived whilst listening to the opening of the Taylor Swift recording. In the We Came As Romans track, witness how all the non-muted chords are shaded in a similar manner. The lowest

frequencies of the non-muted chords are the darkest part. Thus, the lower notes of the non-muted chords are emphasised each time, regardless of their location on or off the projected pulse.

The punctuating percussive chords are more ambiguously balanced, yet a sequence can be interpreted. The balance pattern of the percussive chords emphasises the upper notes after a non-muted chord and subsequently continues in an alternating higher-then-lower pattern until the next non-muted chord, when the alternating strumming sequences starts afresh. The repeated emphasis of the lower notes in the non-muted chords produces a textural uniformity that implies a repeated gesture associated with a guitarist performing each non-muted chord with a down-stroke movement. On the evidence of the spectrogram, the percussive chords that immediately follow each of these non-muted chords trace a short-lived alternating strumming pattern detailed in Fig. 5-14:

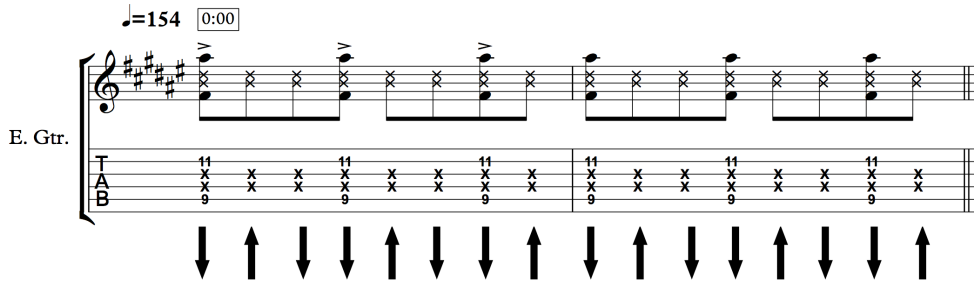


Fig. 5-14: Transcription of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:03) as recorded by We Came As Romans, with implied strumming pattern beneath

Note how the implied alternating down-up strum pattern is regularly aborted on quavers 4 and 7. This particular execution of the opening phrase by We Came As Romans generates an image in which they repeatedly curtail the gestural flow of the alternating strumming pattern through re-launching the phrase at every non-muted chord (at quavers 1, 4 and 7). This particular aspect of the gestural transformation apparent in the We Came As Romans track contradicts the image projected by the audio of Swift's introductory guitar. In the original, the gestural

interpretation is one of a guitarist performing the phrase in a free-flowing, alternating down-up movement. The lack of any prolonged synchronicity between the projected pulse and the chord balance perceived in the cover-version results in a gestural image of a less fluent performance. Even when the spectral evidence suggests a flowing stream of gestures 'over the bar-line' between quavers seven through to three, the association of the non-muted chord as a 'gestural cut and re-launch' as fostered by the prior abandonment of perceived gestural flow, overrides any sense of gestural flow or perpetuation.

So far, I have examined the relative dynamics and chord balance between the non-muted and percussive chords. I will turn now to the relative amounts of chord-to-chord nuance present in each strum. This matter relates not only to the discussion involving chord balance and strumming action, but also to the number of strummed strings and dynamics. The differing amounts of chord-to-chord nuance can be observed between waveform analyses (Fig. 5-8 and Fig. 5-9) as well as the spectrogram analyses (Fig. 5-2 and Fig. 5-3).

In the We Came As Romans spectrogram analysis, note how the readings are very similar for each related chord. All six sustained non-muted chords exhibit near identical characteristics. Each of the six percussive chords that follow a non-muted chord (implied up stroke) have matching qualities and the four percussive chords that follow with an implied down stroke action can be seen to have very similar chord balance. Yet the spectrogram taken of Taylor Swift's recording shows much more variance in the chord balance. The third and fourth non-muted chords (the two chords surrounding the 0.5 second mark) differ noticeably, even though previous investigation of nuances suggest that both were performed with a down stroke action. Similar conclusions can be drawn from Fig. 5-8 and Fig. 5-9. In Taylor Swift's recording, the percussive chords display differences in relation to the

amplitude, whereas those heard in We Came As Romans have a fairly uniform dynamic.

5.1.2.1.5 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE ORDINARY

When heard separately, the two recordings of *I Knew You Were Trouble* seem indistinguishable. The notated similarities of pitch, rhythm, and pace highlighted in Fig. 5-1 supports this view. Yet a direct comparison of the recordings reveals nuanced differences, which contribute to the gestural transformations produced by We Came As Romans. Crucially, interpretation of the recordings needs the other version to draw out and give emphasis to the sonic character of each. Both introductions set up listener expectations that are either confirmed or confounded as the song progresses. The guitar introduction to Swift's track is dynamically loud, reverberant and contains nuances that project the sense of a confident performance in a live concert setting. This character permeates into the vocals of the ensuing first verse and beyond. Although the differences are relatively subtle, the We Came As Romans introduction contrasts markedly. It boasts a dry reverb, which emphasises a particular chord balance that repeatedly expunges a considered sense of gestural flow, and precise strumming that gives the impression of a misplaced emphasis on perfection or "getting it right" above feel or musicality. This combination results in a projected persona of an inhibited, nervous, amateurish nature.

While the guitar phrase in the *Punk Goes…* cover-version may initially be thought of as a persona, it is retrospectively reinterpreted as a protagonist due to the radical changes of gestural character across the entire band at 0:28. These changes are significant in introducing what is understood as the typical musical

style of We Came As Romans. At this point, they are understood to be performing "as themselves" rather than imitating another style or another performer. The lack of a stylistic change in the Swift guitar part means that this switch to a protagonist does not occur. The guitar part retains its status as an earnest performance by a performer, rather than a performer acting out a character role.

Listeners can be left in little doubt that We Came As Romans deliberately engendered this amateurish protagonist. The band are more than capable of manufacturing a polished production sound for their own back catalogue. My analysis therefore questions the motivation for their intentional imperfections and concludes that they sought to give a perceptual-imaginative impression of an amateur music maker. I believe the attempted projection of numerous authenticities plays a central role. In producing the tracks to include traits of amateur music making, We Came As Romans have created a protagonist that is not only identifiable but also relatable to a majority of their own and the *Punk Goes…* audience, who are themselves likely to be amateur players who learn by imitating of their favourites. This attempt to lay claim to the *authenticity of the ordinary* is distinct from the examples cited in Leach (2001), yet at their collective core is an effort made by the recording artist to appear like their audience. Where this manifests as lip-syncing and dancing in chart pop music, rock musicians draw upon their experiences as beginners practicing in their bedrooms on basic equipment.

These traits associated with amateur music making (lack of reverb, stunted phrasing, etc.), not only tie into personal authenticity but also help garner the ascription of style-based authenticity (as detailed in the section 4) by amplifying the eventual shift into the metal-core style demonstrably typical of We Came As Romans. The additional instruments that are introduced in the first verse of the We Came As Romans recording (0:03 – 0:28) continue in the same gestural character

as the opening two-bar guitar phrase. The absence of reverb for the drums and vocals conveys a small room location and clean vocalist Kyle Pavone sings in a slightly awkward quasi-falsetto fashion that carries on the impression of amateur music recording. Thus, the introduction of heavily distorted guitars, a highly reverberant drum set and screaming vocalist Dave Stephens signals a sudden and marked change in gestural character, in direct contrast to the introduction. This change moves the band from the restricting confines of the private practice room setting onto a virtual stage. The juxtaposition in gestural character helps the emphasised change into what vocalists Dave Stephens and Kyle Pavone call 'the typical We Came As Romans thing'.[24] This abrupt and marked movement from cover to version changes the attempted garnering of one form of authenticity (personal) for another (stylistic). It also signifies the band's recent transition from garage to stadium. Even though the performative nuances are key to constructing a perceptual-imaginative response, this style of style-based authenticity is discussed further in the following section on production-based gestural transformations.

This analysis of the gestural transformation manifest in *I Knew You Were Trouble* documents a different experience to the one described in the chorus from A Day To Remember's *Since U Been Gone*.[25] Where the latter highlighted how a differing musical foreground could imply the same imagined physical movements, this analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* shows how similar (but not identical) musical foregrounds can elicit very different perceptual-imaginative responses.

[24] Henne, 'We Came As Romans Cover Swift's Trouble', *MetalHammer*: non-scholarly references #25
[25] Analysis of *Since U Been Gone* in chapter 2.4.2.1

5.2 POSITIONALITY

The case studies in chapter 4 seek to uncover evidence of a direct lineage between a relatively contemporary recording and a particular musical style. They apply the tool of gestural transformation to highlight gestural connections between a cover-version and the punk-rock style in general. The issue of musical style undoubtedly informs the projection of authenticity in *Punk Goes*… genre, but not just through a direct connection to the myriad of rock music styles. As witnessed elsewhere in this chapter, the perception that a band is using its own performance gestures to play another artist's track feeds into a form of personal authenticity. However, the use of musical styles and the common cover-version practice of contrasting the musical style of the pop original against the punk-rock style of the *Punk Goes...* artist can also be viewed as a way of highlighting the *positionality* of the *Punk Goes*… artist.

The concept of positionality developed out of Kivy's (1995) personal authenticity. Taylor (1997) describes it as the ideological stance of a musical artist positioned against a perceived inauthentic other. Where Taylor implies that positionality is an inherent quality, it is more accurate to describe it as created through the audience's interpretation of an artist's projected persona in relation to an inauthentic other (itself reliant upon a listener's interpretation and values). While it is presented as a distinct theoretical construct, Taylor stresses the close links to other types of authenticity. Beyond his own tripartite scheme, clear associations can be made with Grossberg's (1992) social authenticity and Moore's (2013) authenticity of expression. For example, the ideological positioning of an artist requires a judgement of his or her musical communication (expression) from within a particular subculture or musical community (social). Although the use of

distinct authenticity categories is useful for a theoretical analysis, the construction of authenticity is more akin to a constellation: the numerous theoretical authenticities are linked, but it is the act of interpretation by an audience that brings them into sharp focus.

Positionality has significance throughout popular music, with foundations that can be traced back to popular music journalism in the 1960s. As noted by Frith (1983), concerted attempts were made to reverse the Adornian criticism of popular music as a product of the culture industry.[26] Where Max Paddison's analysis of rock music culture (1982) highlights the lack of nuance in Adorno's categorisation (i.e. the spectrum between mass-culture and high art), Paddison's examination reinforces Adorno's critique of popular music, supporting the view that rock music is actually part of the mass-produced popular culture that rock artists generally attempt to position themselves against, and exhibits traits of the pseudo-individuality that it commonly strives to counter.

Different manifestations of positionality are linked to particular popular music subcultures. For instance, Redhead and Street (1989) discuss the political positionality of folk and its 1980s revival as exemplified in the lyrics of artists Woodie Guthrie and Billy Bragg. In relation to hardcore punk, the widespread opposition to formal music education is frequently interpreted via the simplistic song forms and lack of functional harmonic language.[27] An Adornian anti-popular culture positionality was generated by progressive rock acts such as Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and Yes, who incorporated Western art music practices in their works. Robert Walser's (1993) repeated references to "authenticity" in heavy metal music (his permanent use of double inverted commas underscore his

[26] Frith, *Sound Effects* (1983), p. 39-50

[27] I would posit that this anti-educational positionality is founded more specifically in the interpreted gestures of the performers, rather than the chords and rhythms they use: an aspect that corresponds to the overarching theory presented in this thesis

insistence that authenticity is a construct) are related to this positionality. Walser's analysis of Steve Vai's self-professed musical autonomy highlights the prevailing rock music positionality against commercial interests, which subsequently creates a highly romanticised view of the musician as a 'self-torturing artist' – itself a self-absorbed attempt to be viewed on a par with composers of the Western art music tradition.[28] Guitar-based indie music is a notable example of this form of anti-commercial positionality, with social-media driven propulsion to prominence of acts like The Libertines and Arctic Monkeys's commonly cited as an exemplar of an anti-commercial positionality.[29] The simplistic 'no synthesizers' dogma of Queen's early albums created positionality against electronically sequenced dance music, commonly viewed as the antithesis of the performing rock musician (despite a subsequent relaxing and eventual dismissal of that policy by their 1982 *Hot Space* album).

Conversely, the first half of Mark Butler's (2003) investigation into the intertextuality and authenticity ascribed to two covers by the Pet Shop Boys develops pop music positionality through an ecological approach. Although the closing analysis of Pet Shop Boys's *Go West* chiefly concerns Thornton's notion of community authenticity (or Lawrence Grossberg's precursor of *social authenticity*), Butler's examination of *Where The Streets Have No Name* (originally by U2) principally alludes to positionality. Butler concludes that this particular cover exemplifies the Pet Shop Boys's perceived authenticity, created through an ideological stance that contradicts the prevailing notion of what signifies authenticity in rock music: the type exemplified in U2's original recording. In lyrically, stylistically and formally undermining U2's authenticity of expression, Pet

[28] Walser, *Running With The Devil* (1993), p. 100. A view that follows from the common Beethoven trope of 'artist-as-hero'; a model not applicable to the Bach, Mozart and Haydn, to whom music was a primary source of income

[29] Gibson, 'Arctic Monkeys Climbing High', *The Guardian*: non-scholarly reference #17

Shop Boys create a subversive critique of the original track, replacing U2's 'signifiers of the serious' with their trademark straight-faced, synthesizer-driven pop style.[30]

These examples highlight the different ways in which an artist can establish their positionality so as to appear authentic to a particular community or subculture. Yet all artists risk losing their authenticity 'by an apparent desertion of principles' in favour of fame and/or fortune.[31] Taylor labels this the 'discourse of selloutism'.[32] At this point where positionality is tied to social authenticity. The interpreted rejection of authenticity is 'measured in terms of some crude theory of representation' to a particular audience or community.[33] Bob Dylan's use of electric instrumentation is a prime instance of this perceived abandonment of the particular folk music positionality. Similar criticisms were directed at Bruce Springsteen and Metallica for their heavy use of studio-based audio processing on *Born To Run* (1975) and *Metallica (The Black Album)* (1991).[34]

The problematic nature of this anti-commercial positionality is alluded to by Kruse (2003), Moore, and in Taylor's closing statement. Beyond the fundamental need for a mainstream against which to position ideologically, rock musicians are reliant on the commercial practices of the music industry that they outwardly challenge. It is these grey areas that motivated Roy Shuker (1998), Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (2000) to claim that the issue of authenticity is of no use for the discussion of a pop/rock dichotomy. I dispute these conclusions, though I agree that a measure of authenticity based on the commercial practices by rock bands is too simplistic, if not deceptive. A better

[30] Butler, 'Taking It Seriously' (2003), p. 2
[31] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right' (1989), p. 179
[32] Taylor, *Global Pop* (1997), p. 23
[33] Redhead & Street, 'Have I The Right?' (1989), p. 180
[34] Springsteen example taken from Redhead, *End Of The Century Party* (1990), p. 52

measure of positionality would not relate to a rock musician's use of music industry logistics and practices, but should relate to whether they sound as though they are 'selling-out' by trying to appeal to a larger audience: a factor that is revealed through gestural analysis. This 'betrayal of music and place, not of anti-commercial values' lends support to the arguments employed against Dylan, Springsteen and Metallica cited above.[35] These artists are examples of an ever-growing number who are perceived (by the particular communities they appeal to or are associated with) to have included sonic tokens or gestures of a supposed inauthentic other and, thus, have attempted to appeal to a larger mainstream audience for monetary gain.

Any positionality interpreted in rock music is generally produced at a distance. This is to say that any rock music understood to play upon the supposed inauthenticity of commercial pop music often does so independently, seldom interacting with pop music in a direct manner. Such methods of generating an anti-commercial, anti-pop music positionality are commonly achieved through lyrically confronting the inauthentic other (the lyrics of *Sell Out* by Reel Big Fish (1996) is a prime example), yet the *Punk Goes…* catalogue eliminates this distance by actively engaging with pop music compositions and their musical styles. Thus, the projection of positionality in the *Punk Goes*… genre is generated by a number of different devices.

Firstly, it can be exhibited in an oblique manner. In caricaturing the hip-hop style that is unfamiliar to their own for instance, Set Your Goals in *Put Your Hood Up* (2008) and Say Anything in *Got Your Money* (2008) assert a punk-rock positionality by undermining the authenticity of the original track. Conversely, the positionality can be exhibited in an obviously direct manner. A majority of *Punk*

[35] Taylor, *Global Pop*, (1997) p. 23

Goes… artists who produce cover-versions exhibit their positionality through the marked juxtaposition of the original pop style against a style perceived to be "typical" of the *Punk Goes…* artist. This latter application of divergent stylistic practices has implications for the projection of positionality.

The above claims of Shuker, Born and Hesmondhalgh may be true with reference to the simplistic positing of authenticity to a rock artist and inauthenticity to a pop artist, they do not stand up to scrutiny when set against the authenticities generated within the *Punk Goes…* catalogue.

5.2.1 POSITIONALITY IN COVER-VERSIONS

The use of contrasting styles to foster a sense of positionality is prevalent throughout the history of the *Punk Goes*…series. From the opening track of the first *Punk Goes…Pop* (2002, a cover-version of *I Want It That Way* recorded by Dynamite Boy) to the closing track on the latest incarnation *…Pop Vol. 6* some sixteen years later (*Happy* by Palisades), a majority of *Punk Goes…* tracks utilise the extremes of the original track's style and what is perceived to be the artist's own punk-rock style. It is especially emphasised in those *Punk Goes*… cases where the musical style of a pop original and that of the *Punk Goes*… artist are set up as a dichotomy: where an initial imitation of the original pop track is marked against a directly juxtaposed presentation of the *Punk Goes*… artist's own style, creating a dialogue between the two. This type of cover-version is exemplified in tracks such as *Glad You Came* originally by The Wanted (2011) and re-recorded by We Came As Romans (2012), *We R Who We R* originally by K$sha (2010) and re-recorded by Chunk! No, Captain Chunk! (2011) and Woe, Is Me's cover-version of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* (2011) originally recorded with Katy Perry (2010).

Other formal arrangements do occur. For instance, the repeated movement between the original pop style and the band's own style is demonstrated in *Boyfriend* by Issues (2014) and *Problem* by Set It Off (2014). An unprepared presentation of a pop style at a point partway through a *Punk Goes…* cover-version, though less frequent, is exhibited in tracks such as *Love Song* by Four Year Strong (2009) and *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (2014). While the formal arrangement of the styles may differ, I believe that they occur with the same objective. By directly juxtaposing their own musical style against an imitation of the original track, I argue that this juxtaposition attempts not only to amplify the *Punk Goes…* artist's authenticity as determined by stylistic practice, but also to draw attention to the broader assumptions of the *Punk Goes…* artist in regard to their own (and their audience's) position and attitudes to punk-rock music and to the pop music mainstream. The juxtaposition of the pop original against a stylistic other attempts to generate positionality and inform the efforts to generate authenticity. Although the imitation of the original pop style will still contain gestural transformations (as autosonic reproduction of the pop original is not practiced in the *Punk Goes…* catalogue), the juxtaposed imitation of the original pop style acts as a straw man, to be knocked down by the overtly and radically transformed punk-rock version. Despite the success of such positionality does vary, the stylistic juxtaposition and its form within the cover-version acts as a platform to highlight the differences between the two styles, underlining the highly embodied perceptual-imaginative response to the punk-rock version against the studio processed, often acousmatic version of the original.

5.2.1.1 LAST FRIDAY NIGHT (T.G.I.F.) BY KATY PERRY / WOE, IS ME

The introductions of the three cover-version tracks cited above are often confused with their respective original pop recording. Although this is clearly evident through analytical comparison, it is also witnessed in practice. I have personally seen the confusion that occurs when a rock club audience hears the introduction to *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me. Due to a familiarity with the original, a majority of the listeners assume that the track is in fact Katy Perry's original played out of context, rather than initially assuming that it is the Woe, Is Me cover-version. The central cause of this listener uncertainty is due to the band's exceptional impersonation of Perry and her instrumental backing. Remarkable is the ability of Woe, Is Me vocalist Tyler Carter who closely imitates Katy Perry's vocal gestures: the rhythmic inflections, pitch, and pronunciation can easily be mistaken for the original. The presence of numerous subtle gestural transformations reveals that the introduction is in fact an allosonic quotation of Perry recorded by Woe, Is Me, rather than an autosonic sample of Perry's original *Last Friday Night*.

Released in 2011, Katy Perry's *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* was written and produced by Dr. Luke and Max Martin. The lyrics follow the narrator's (Perry's) attempts to reconstruct the previous night's drunken events from vague recollections. The track opens with a three-part ensemble that loops every four bars. The texturally thin drum machine percussion, slapped electric bass and ionian mode electric guitar chord sequence emphasise a generally happy and carefree character, which helps to project a sense of fun and merriment.

Where Perry's track begins with a brief four-bar introduction by the three instrument ensemble, the Woe, Is Me recording opens with the sound of an

unidentified person pressing play on a cassette tape player before the immediate vocal entry, 'There's a stranger in my bed…' at 0:05. While meticulous direct comparison between the Woe, Is Me and Perry recordings does reveal a number of gestural transformations, there are a considerable number of similarities between the two introductions that complicates the analysis. Beyond the accuracy and foregrounding of Carter's vocal imitation (central and loudest), The Woe, Is Me instruments ostensibly play the original instrumental parts at the same pitch. Furthermore, the instruments are placed in near-identical locations across the stereo image and, on first impressions, are all timbrally alike. The guitars are clean and timbrally rounded, the bass appears to be played with a slap technique with identical phrasing, and the drums are synthesized. Throughout the twenty-one second Woe, Is Me introduction, these similarities distract listeners away from any gestural transformations and reinforce the listener's initial deduction that this *is* the Katy Perry version of the song.

The changes made to the introduction by Woe, Is Me are a shrewd attempt to undermine the authenticity of non-rock music by caricaturing popular music. The most likely source of the observed gestural transformations within the introduction comes from the Burroughs 'cut-up method'; a precursor to the studio-produced rhythmic 'glitches' that occur throughout the Woe, Is Me introduction.[36] Yet their ubiquity within the contemporaneous pop style renders them transparent in this new setting. Indeed, their lack of markedness is astonishing given their abundance. By including such a production-based transformation, Woe, Is Me create an exaggerated caricature of Perry's pop-style introduction and throw

[36] Musical application of the 'cut-up method' from Reed, *Assimilate* (2014), pp. 33-42

into relief assumptions underpinning the aesthetic of contemporary pop tracks fashioned by producers such as Dr. Luke, Shellback, and Mike Will Make It.[37]

The slow shift in aesthetic treatment applied to the Woe, Is Me introduction is as imperceptible as the glitches described above. Observant listeners will perceive the steady, near-undetectable expansion of the sonic envelope through application of equalisation filters. Fig. 5-15 diagrammatically highlights this relinquishing of the frequency filtering:

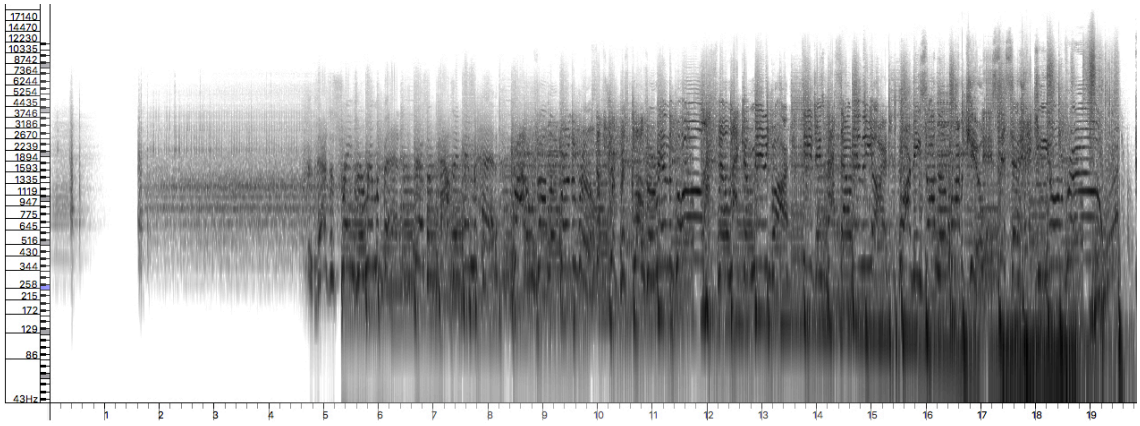


Fig. 5-15: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me

Combined with the opening tape player sample, this equalisation filtering is an attempt to create an analogue recording aesthetic within the introduction. Yet when listening to this track from the beginning, the lack of any preceding audio acting as a foil diminishes the effect. Although something does not sound quite right, any listener would be forgiven for missing the compressed dynamic and equalisation – sonic references to the analogue aesthetic that are rendered obvious only once the first verse begins.

The extent to which this analogue aesthetic treatment has been applied is not fully comprehended until the sudden and highly surprising stylistic juxtaposition that occurs at 0:21. The stylistic juxtaposition, severe in its brevity

[37] These three producers use the glitch technique in tracks such as Miley Cyrus's *We Can't Stop* (2013) and Ke$ha's *Tik Tok* (2010). Details of their work can be found at 'Sound Selectors', *Billboard*: non-scholarly reference #11

and extremity, is marked by rhetorical vocal and instrumental gestures, which emphasise the considerable change in style between the pop-style introduction and an alternative metal style. Fig. 5-16 concentrates around the rhetorical gesture, highlighting the difference in sonic aesthetic.

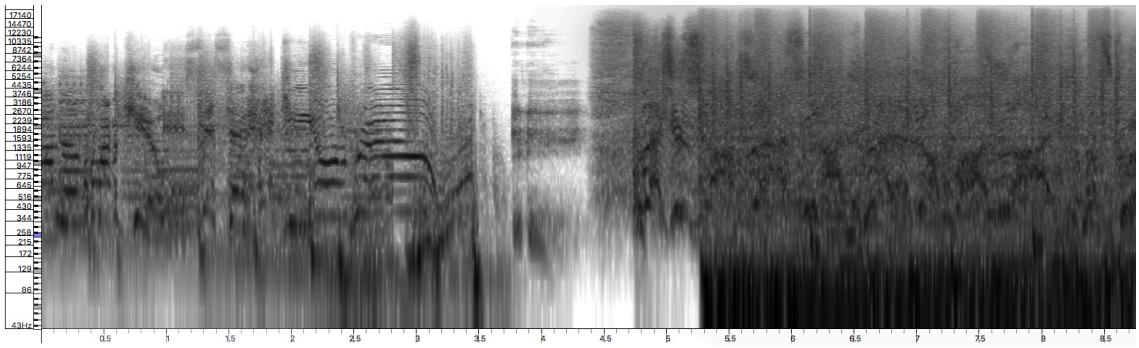


Fig. 5-16: Spectrogram analysis of *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me (0:15 – 0:25)

The original Katy Perry pop style and Woe, Is Me metal style are directly juxtaposed across this rhetorical break at 0:19. Here, an audio sample of a vinyl record being scratched to a standstill (incongruent with the opening cassette tape sample) abruptly halts the track. Note the way that this sonic curtailing is applied across the entire track. All the instruments, including the vocalist, are cut short at exactly the same moment (observe how the word 'bruise' is interrupted). Again, this implies that a recording has been stopped (be it from a cassette or vinyl,) rather than individual performers being interrupted.

Rather than exhibiting surprise at the sudden stop, the vocalist's cough reinforces the rhetorical break before a brief silent pause and the subsequent screamed vocals introduce a new metal style that continues for the remainder of the song.[38] The cough and silence provide both a sonic and gestural barrier. They separate the introductory pop style from the subsequent metal style. This change in gestural character is highly conspicuous. The cough (a sound rarely heard in popular music) draws attention to the awkwardness of the rhetorical pause and is

[38] The rhetorical gestural cough is examined in relation to stylistic authenticity beginning at p. 144

central in modifying the interpreted meaning of the introduction. From what might be interpreted as an act of musical homage (a painstaking replication of Perry's original) or a signpost to highlight the fact that a previous version of the track exists, the introduction is retrospectively reinterpreted as a joke. The vocalist apologises for the previous nineteen seconds and clears his throat before commencing with a full-throated scream.

At the point where Woe, Is Me introduce their own metal style at 0:21, retrospective reinterpretation of the introduction reveals the full extent to which audio constraints had been applied to the preceding section and how the individual gestural transformations all contribute to a projected analogue aesthetic. The sound of someone pressing play on a cassette deck, the compressed dynamic range, the application of equalisation to restrict frequency response, the sonic glitches that imply some form of machine malfunction, and the vinyl recording scratch that draws the pop style to a close generate the impression that the listener was hearing a recording of a recording.

The launch of the Woe, Is Me style also contributes to a revision of how the introduction was produced. The subtle gestural transformations that may have been missed are retrospectively brought into focus. The steady coarsening of Carter's vocal throughout the introduction which slowly reveals his gender, and the blink-and-you'll-miss-it re-wording of the lyrics from 'Pink flamingos in the pool' to 'Some stripper's clothes are in the pool' portray a very different type of party to that described in Perry's version. The initial interpretation that the introduction was an autosonic sample is replaced by the likelihood that the introduction was in fact an allosonic quotation performed by Woe, Is Me. This confuses matters of gestural transformation. With Woe, Is Me performing the introduction, no longer does the cover-version project the straightforward image

of Perry's recording being heard. Are we listening to Woe, Is Me imitating Perry's recording, or are we listening to Woe, Is Me listening to Woe, Is Me imitating Perry's original? Although they successfully reproduce the persona of Perry, the gestural presence of Woe, Is Me in their own introduction seems incongruent to the analogue record aesthetic used in the section. Where this can cause interpretational issues at a deeper level, the most significant aspect remains unaffected. The production aesthetic is significant in encouraging listeners to understand the introduction as though it is an acousmatic analogue recording from an indirect source.

The production of the introduction emphasises the attitudes of Woe, Is Me towards pop music and functions as a commentary on the pop style in general terms. Beyond highlighting the reliance of pop music on studio-based effects, the introduction is produced in a specific manner so as to highlight the mass-produced inferences of the pop style. Not only do Woe, Is Me undermine Perry's original through the analogue aesthetic, but they do so by means of their convincing abilities to impersonate both Perry's backing and her persona. Woe, Is Me seek to remind the listener that Perry, though recognisable, is not irreplaceable. The sheer number of similarities masks the gestural transformations that are only rendered discernible once Woe, Is Me begin to play in their own style. For twenty-one seconds, Woe, Is Me become Perry and her backing band, with the listener's gestural interpretation matching that of Perry's original.

The change in musical style that occurs at 0:21 is constructed from changes to the musical phrases and instrumentation (what is played), their acoustic treatment (how they sound), which combines to create an interpreted difference in performance gestures (the listener-centric interpretation of how they are played). To say that these particular changes relate to a positionality of the metal style

typical of Woe, Is Me would constitute a redefinition of positionality: these changes more specifically relate to the creation of a projected authenticity of practice. This is not to say that the positionality manifest in the introduction does not affect the interpretation of the metal style once it is launched. In providing a highly contrasting stylistic foil against which the Woe, Is Me style is placed, the overt change in style emphasises the band's attempts to generate authenticity as practice, including a rejection of all the prior musical material and a projection of an unmediated live performance. The absolute rejection and pokerfaced undermining of the pop style (a style that Woe, Is Me are obviously more than capable of replicating) in favour of an embodied, guitar-based metal style can be understood beyond following the well-trod path of eschewing of fame and popularity for 'their own style'. Fundamental to any interpretation of the entire song is the interpretation of gestures and their relationship between the two styles. Indeed, the radical shift in contrasting style makes the Woe, Is Me envisaged performance seem even more energetic, thrilling and extreme than would perhaps be interpreted without the introduction and its explicit links to the original *Last Friday Night.*

5.2.2 POSITIONALITY IN COVERS

In cover-versions, the explicit contrasting of a pop style against what is understood to be the *Punk Goes…* artist's own style has been shown to establish a positionality. In all of the cover-versions discussed above, the *Punk Goes…* artists have juxtaposed their musical style against a supposed inauthentic other to project a positionality, which generates a heightened sense of personal and stylistic authenticity. However, complications arise in covers.

Even though stylistically straightforward, the lack of contrast witnessed in covers such as Say Anything's cover of *Got Your Money* (2008), Lorene Drive's cover of *Hey Ya* (2008), and other versions is relatively problematic in regard to the analysis of positionality. The lack of a direct juxtaposition blurs comparisons between the *Punk Goes*… track and the original recording, which complicates matters relating to interpretation of musical meaning and perceived projection of authenticity. In covers where the listener has no direct comparison of style, I propose that the ascription of positionality is heavily reliant on the listener's perceptual-imaginative response. The ability to distinguish between performative gestures of reverence or of parody is especially important in the case of covers, where assumptions are made regarding the stylistic norms of the *Punk Goes…* artist. In the following case studies I will examine *Punk Goes…* covers in which gestural transformations are central to the listener's interpretation regardless of their familiarity with the original track. The final example examines a novel way in which Say Anything use parody and caricature indirectly to reinforce their stylistic and personal authenticity.

Particular aspects of *Punk Goes…* covers could lead to the assumption that a recorded cover is unable to exhibit positionality. The ability to choose their cover track (though loosely limited by Fearless Records who publish the compilation albums), the lack of contractual obligation and the allosonic imitation of the original track's musical performance gestures through retention of style and musical material all reinforce the notion that the *Punk Goes…* artist is exhibiting their own influences and musical preferences. Why bother faithfully covering another artist's track if you do not like it or them? For Breathe Carolina (who have contributed to a large number of the *Punk Goes…* series), their covers lend weight to this hypothesis. In an interview with Westword online magazine, Kyle Evens

(half of the Breathe Carolina duo) stated that, 'We wouldn't cover a song that we didn't like or listen to.'[39] Where the *Punk Goes…* tracks *Airplanes* by The Ready Set (2010), Lorene Drive's *Hey Ya* and *Yeah 3X* by Allstar Weekend (2011) could be described as covers, their own style is exceptionally similar to the track they are covering. For certain audiences, this merely highlights the similarities between their pop original and their music, which is promoted as being 'punk' by Fearless Records. Even though gestural transformations are apparent due to the allosonic nature of the imitation, the stylistic similarity between their own material and the cover doesn't present any obvious positionality. It reinforces the musical preferences of the artist. This feeds into notions of stylistic authenticity covered previously in this chapter.

Conversely, both Say Anything's cover of *Got Your Money* and *Put Yo Hood Up* by Set Your Goals are primary examples of how positionality can be not only construed in covers, but also how it is contingent on the interpretation of gestures. Although a musical meaning can be interpreted just from the performance gestures, a more thorough understanding of these tracks can be obtained when analysing them within the context of the respective *Punk Goes…* artist's back catalogue. These two hip-hop covers are stylistically unlike the guitar-based punk-rock typical to Set Your Goals and Say Anything, leading us to question the motive behind their inception and production.

5.2.2.1 *GOT YOUR MONEY* BY OL' DIRTY BASTARD / SAY ANYTHING

Lyrically inspired by gangsta-rap, *Got Your Money* (1999) is a hip-hop track whose central narrator Ol' Dirty Bastard (performed by Russell Tyrone Jones) provides a

[39] Roberts, 'Q&A With Kyle Evans Of Breathe Carolina', *Westword*: non-scholarly reference #46

first person account of collecting pimp money from his harem whilst negotiating the associated dangers of such an occupation (such as federal enforcement tails and territory feuds).[40] In the original recording, Ol' Dirty Bastard's rapped verses are punctuated by a female protagonist (sung by Kelis) whose chorus hook assures Ol' Dirty Bastard that she has his money, though listeners are left to assume that it is not currently on her person ('baby, I've got your money, don't you worry').

Recorded and released some nine years later, Say Anything's cover of *Got Your Money* was arranged, recorded and produced by Max Bemis (the multi-instrumentalist songwriter and vocalist who is synonymous to Say Anything) and included on *Punk Goes Crunk* (2008). While the retention of the rap-style vocal and hip-hop aesthetic facilitate the understanding that Say Anything track is a cover, different musical meanings are garnered from the instrumental timbres, their production and crucially from the vocal gestures. These differences are essential to the interpretation of positionality, and the projection of Say Anything's own punk-rock stylistic authenticity.

5.2.2.1.1 INSTRUMENTAL BACKING TRACK

Although the two recordings are nearly identical in terms of those qualities that can be notated (an obvious exception being the syncopated bass drum in the percussion loop), a listener will note how both recordings share a similar computer-composed loop-based aesthetic typical to hip-hop. Even though different aspects of this aesthetic are emphasised in each track, the aesthetic is evidenced in all the instrumental parts and most keenly perceived in the percussion. Fig. 5-17

[40] See 'Got Your Money – Ol' Dirty Bastard', *Lyric Genius:* non-scholarly reference #22 for lyrics

and Fig. 5-18 present the percussion introduction of the Ol' Dirty Bastard recording in transcription and spectrogram:
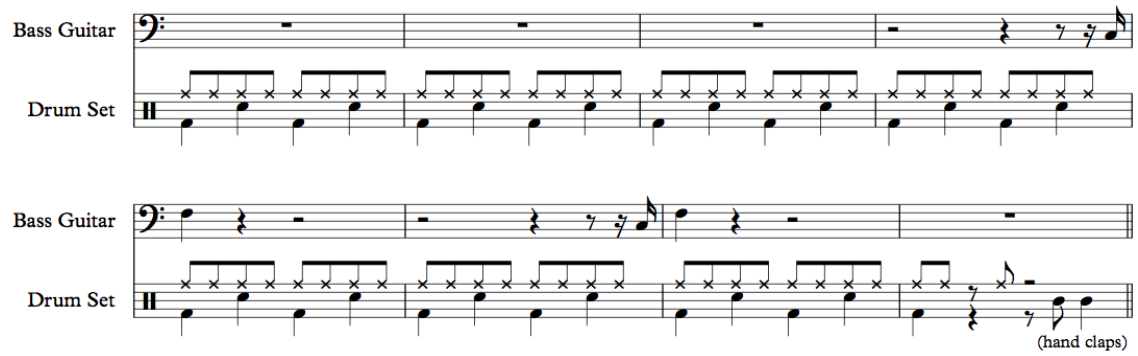


Fig. 5-17: Transcription of introduction to *Got Your Money* by Ol' Dirty Bastard

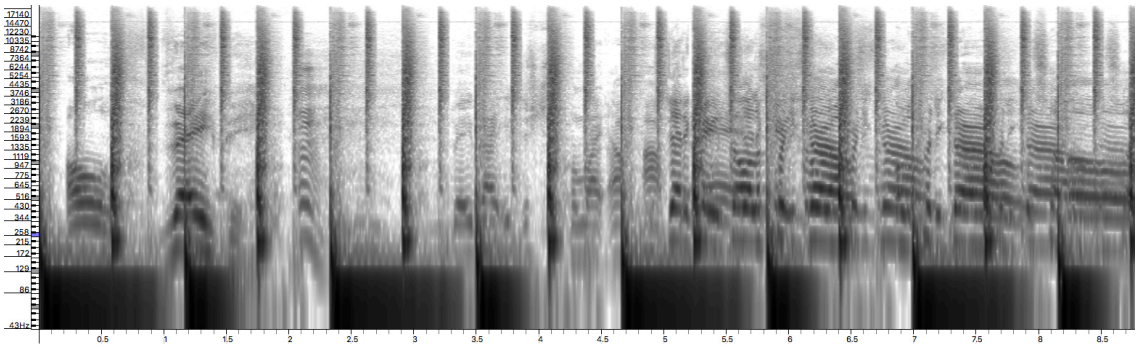


Fig. 5-18: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Got Your Money* by Ol' Dirty Bastard; note the uniform drum textures and dynamics

Despite the fact that the disparities in the above spectrogram analysis can be accounted for by the vocal gestures, it highlights the perceived uniformity of the drumbeats within their one-bar loop. This invariance is demonstrated not only in terms of rhythm, but also dynamics and timbre. When combined with a dearth of reverb and the absolute central panning of all the percussion elements, sensitivity to such consistency leaves the listener in little doubt that this drumbeat is not performed with conscious human movement, but sequenced from digitally manipulated samples. This interpretation of loop-based percussion is maintained throughout the Ol' Dirty Bastard original, despite two of the three percussion samples sounding as though they are recorded from an acoustic drum set (and only the synthetic nature of the bass drum is understood when heard on speakers

that have a good low frequency response). Interviews with Chad Hugo and Pharrell Williams (the producers who created the instrumental track) refer to their sampling and looping of the opening bar to Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* (1982).[41]

At first glance, the use of acoustic percussion samples to project a looped aesthetic appears to contradict the gestural transformation analysis of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt.[42] However, these contrary interpretational outcomes arise from the differing performance gestures interpreted from the *Royals* cover-version and the original *Got Your Money*. The uniformity perceived in *Royals* differs insomuch that it is caused by dynamic saturation. With the drum set reaching its peak dynamic threshold, the implication is that the uniformity is generated by a drummer playing with excessively energetic, forceful performance gestures so as to generate as loud a sound as humanly possible. Here, the quieter volume, thin texture and lack of reverb do not generate the impression of such high-octane performances gestures. The consistent volumes and textures of the *Got Your Money* drum set implies a synthesized composition.

Further evidence of the loop-based aesthetic is exhibited across all the instrument parts and across the entire track. Specifically related to the drum set is the looping of the electric bass guitar part. Although the looped nature of the opening percussion heavily influences any interpretation regarding the bass, the application of compression limits any dynamic nuances and the presence of rhythmic nuances (for instance, the consistent hesitation of the final note) can be heard to loop at bar-length intervals.

[41] 'Beat Drop: The Neptunes', *Metal Lungies*: non-scholarly reference #26
[42] Analysis of *Royals* in chapter 2.3.2.1

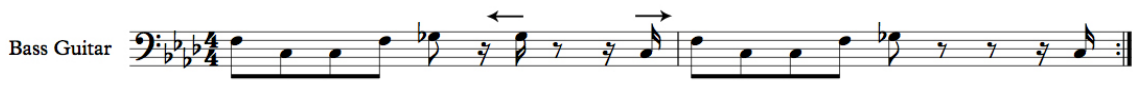


Fig. 5-19: Transcription of bass line heard in verse of *Got Your Money* by Ol' Dirty Bastard; rhythmic nuances diagrammatically indicated by arrows

Instrumental loops such as the percussion part (Fig. 5-17) and the bass line (Fig. 5-19) predictably drop out and re-enter in correspondence with hypermetric boundaries, augmenting the initial loop-based interpretation generated from the opening measures. Such musical forms (where looped instrumental parts appear in hypermetric blocks) are common to musical styles that predominantly use computers to aid composition: hip-hop, RnB, and pop are three such styles. Fig. 5-20 diagrammatically demonstrates the loop-based form of the Ol' Dirty Bastard track, with each block equating to one occurrence of an instrumental loop.

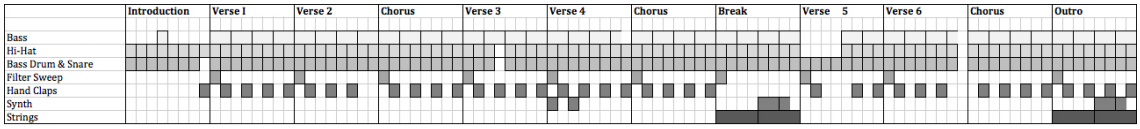


Fig. 5-20: Diagrammatic illustration of form in *Got Your Money* by Ol' Dirty Bastard, highlighting the loop-based construction

The methods detailed above are used in the Say Anything cover, yet the projection of a computer-composed loop-based aesthetic is emphasised through different means. Where the aesthetic in the Ol' Dirty Bastard recording is reliant on a perceived uniformity within and across the looped phrases, most significant to the identically inferred aesthetic in the Say Anything cover is the interpretation of synthetic timbres. This is especially the case in the percussion. Even though a similar percussion arrangement is used (bass drum, snare drum and hi-hat configuration), there are obvious differences in the instrumental timbres between the two recordings. The Fig. 5-21 spectrogram analysis extracts the drumbeat from Say Anything's recording of *Got Your Money*:

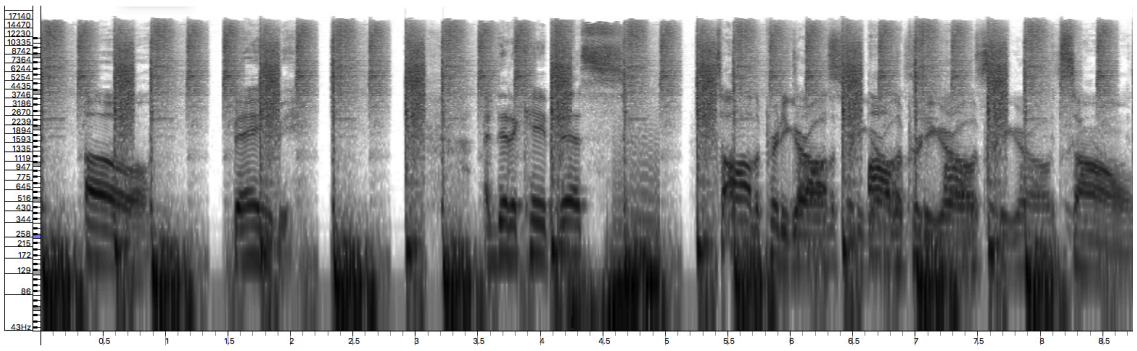


Fig. 5-21: Spectrogram analysis of introduction to *Got Your Money* by Say Anything

These percussion sounds communicate an impression of being computer generated, even without direct comparison to the Ol' Dirty Bastard original. The unnatural decay of both the hi-hats and the snare drum provides enough information to reach this judgement. The probable explanation for the curt decay of these two percussion elements is the application of gated-reverb. Witness the manner in which the spectrogram readings of both these percussion elements stop abruptly rather than progressively tail away. This is more noticeable with the snare drum than the hi-hat.

The effect on the hi-hat is comparable to the The Police example previously cited.[43] Whilst it is less discernible here, it is of no less consequence. Where the final mixed version of The Police's *Roxanne* features a cross-band gestural schism in the projected live-performance framework, due to a palpable edited join between two different takes (at 0:48), the Say Anything drumbeat repeatedly generates this gestural rupture. The drumbeat sounds mechanical. The abrupt quality of the reverb is manifest across all the instruments and has consequences for the sonic environment in which listeners interpret the Say Anything track to have taken place. The apparent lack of natural reverb in the Say Anything track (including the vocals) reinforces the synthesized aesthetic initially perceived from the percussion timbres. And though the entirely central panning of the percussion

[43] Discussion of *Roxanne* by The Police on p. 14

elements would not emphasise the acousmatic nature of the drumbeat on its own, a lack of panning does correspond with the overarching synthetic aesthetic.

The synthetic percussion sounds emphasise the looped form of the Say Anything recording. Where the synthetic percussion sounds are central to the interpretation of a retained computer-based aesthetic, the subsequent use of looping maintains the aesthetic and thus, the interpretation that the Say Anything recording is a cover. Where the intra-loop uniformity of the percussion timbres is clearly observable in the original (as highlighted in Fig. 5-18), such uniformity of the Say Anything percussion elements is initially brought into question by an uneven hi-hat, observed in Fig. 5-21. However, a repeating of the nuanced hi-hat textures at bar-length intervals counteracts any interpretation that casts doubt as to whether the Say Anything recording has retained the original's synthesized aesthetic. At a point where the listener perceives the loop-based form, the listener will be left in little doubt that Say Anything's *Got Your Money* is a cover, rather than a version of, the Ol' Dirty Bastard original. Although listening reveals the bar-length looping of the percussion and general loop-based form evidenced across all instrumental parts, anomalies do occur in the percussion part. At the end of the introduction, unanticipated interruptions occur in the percussion part. Where the seeming irregularity that is apparent here at 0:14 – 0:18 could imply conscious human attendance to a drum set, closer analysis reveals a continuation of the loop-based aesthetic and an oblique reference to human attendance. Although the dominating volume and central panning of the lead vocal complicates any related spectrogram analysis, Fig. 5-22 illustrates how the interrupted drum beat is likely to have been created:

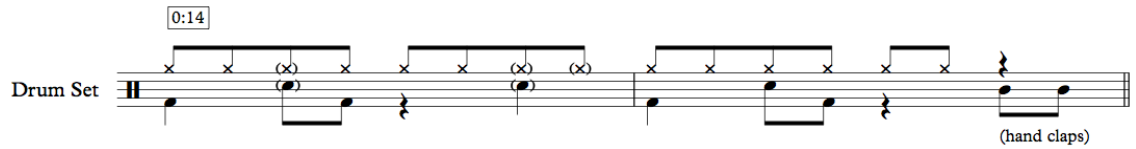


Fig. 5-22: Transcription of drum phrase in *Got Your Money* by Say Anything (0:14 – 0:18), including 'muted' noted bracketed

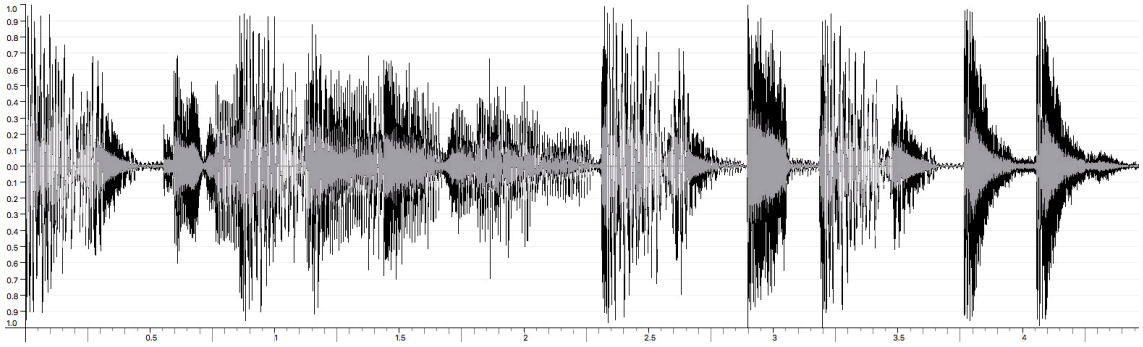


Fig. 5-23: Waveform analysis of *Got Your Money* by Say Anything (0:14 – 0:18)

While the beat stops and restarts at two surprising places, the previous pattern of hi-hat nuances continues on despite the silences. The most obvious method to generate such a pattern is to mute the percussion track whilst it loops. This does not affect the pattern of the drumbeat, but merely silences it at selected points. Such an irregular pattern of muting generates not only a stuttering sensation, but also implies agency – the conscious human effort to silence the track at different points within the loop. This can be achieved via a number of technologically based methods. I personally envisage a producer pressing a button on a DJ mixer or drum machine to quieten the percussion track: an implicit reference to performance gestures indirectly projected via an acousmatic sound world. Despite clear evidence to the contrary, this short section could be interpreted as a stopping and restarting of the drum loop. This is illustrated in Fig. 5-24.

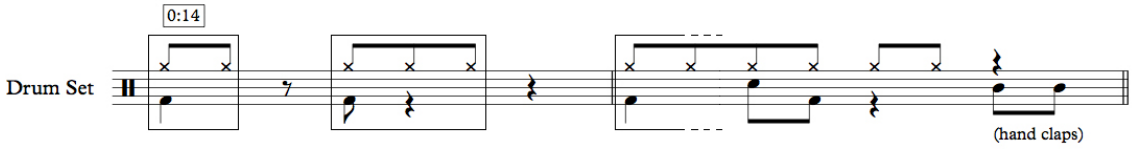


Fig. 5-24: Revised transcription of the drum phrase in *Got Your Money* by Say Anything (0:14 – 0:18) to accommodate different gestural interpretation

Although a gestural interpretation of this process matches that above (the pressing of a button to stop and then again to restart the percussion loop), it does exaggerate the simplistic compositional style of the original. The more juvenile interpretation of a child exploring the drum machine features on an unsophisticated keyboard. This sense of exaggeration is the overriding feature garnered from the Say Anything instrumental backing. Whether it is done through dynamics and texture (noticeable in the drum beat), applied studio effects (reverb amplifying sampled nature of the original), or highlighting the incongruences inherent in the original (string orchestra in bridge), the Say Anything recording sets out of overstate the loop-based compositional process and synthetic instrumental parts.

5.2.2.1.2 VOCALS

The instrumental timbres and the looping form are both significant in generating the interpretation of the hip-hop style. This is furthered by the anticipated rap-style vocals that enter at the beginning of the first verse.[44] Most listeners would be able to interpret the emotional content of quasi-speech gestures by means of the prosodic cues that they would encounter in everyday vocal communication. Vocal cues that are also crucial to the projection of authenticity, albeit differing modes of authenticity created by differing means in each recording of *Got Your Money*. As noted in Cutler (2014) and Williams (2011), the anti-authoritarian pimp lifestyle projected by Ol' Dirty Bastard in *Got Your Money* is typical for gangsta-rap inspired hip-hop and central to his ascribed authenticity is his depiction of the protagonist.

[44] Rap-style vocals are synonymous with hip-hop music. Where scholarship such as Richardson & Scott, 'Rap Music and Its Violent Progeny', (2002) pp. 175-192 confuses the two terms, I distinguish 'rap' as a style of vocal delivery, and not a style in itself

The authenticity of Say Anything is established via the undermining of Ol' Dirty Bastard's particular mode of authenticity. In doing so, Bemis additionally challenges the modes of authenticity common to hip-hop, creating a commentary on both the track itself and hip-hop in more general terms.

Whilst Ol' Dirty Bastard (the performer Russell Tyrone Jones) was not known to have operated as a pimp in his lifetime, listeners are unlikely to question his authority on the subject. Here, the ascription of authenticity is generated through the archetypal projected conflation of the performer (Jones) and his Ol' Dirty Bastard pimp persona through gestural references to Blaxploitation films of the 1970s. It is likely that extra-musical matters would dominate the perception of Ol' Dirty Bastard's performer-persona union essential to generating hip-hop authenticity. Well documented are F.B.I. led investigations into Jones's personal affairs, as well as his incarceration for misdemeanours (including various gun crimes, fraud and drugs offences). Yet ascription of authenticity is likely to be granted to Ol' Dirty Bastard in *Got Your Money* by listeners unaware of the transgressions by Jones. It is not merely the understanding of the lyrics themselves but the interpretation of Ol' Dirty Bastard's vocal gestures that are of central importance in relation to the ascription of authenticity.

The vocal gestures of Ol' Dirty Bastard heavily reference those common to the portrayal of pimp characters in Blaxploitation films such as *Dolemite* (1975), *The Mack* (1973), and more specifically in the 'Pimp Council' scene from *Willie Dynamite* (1974) and its more recent parody *Black Dynamite* (2009). The substantial use of *Dolemite* in the promotional video further alludes to the heritage of African-American urban culture that follow Williams's theories regarding generation of authenticity in hip-hop culture.

A number of gestural inflections can be observed in both these film portrayals of pimps and Ol' Dirty Bastard's pimp persona. Beyond the motion picture pimps commonly conversing in rhyming couplets that are comparable to a prototypal rap style, the deliberate elongation of phonetic vowels is prevalent ('I'll cripple your style' at 0:44 and 'help me solve my problem, I'mma get this money and rob them' at 2:40), as is a seemingly arbitrary movement between the chest and falsetto vocal registers, evocative of the cracking of a male voice during puberty. This vocal inflection can be heard during the opening verse ('Baby you know I'll take care of you, 'cause you say you got my baby and I know it ain't true' at 0:28). The combination of the quasi-baby talk and the adoption of adolescent vocal gestures create the impression of innocence, despite the clear lyrical references to more insalubrious subject matter.

This juxtaposition of context and vocal gestures generates a sinister undertone that is not only underpinned by the chromatic bass line (perpetually finishing on a flattened second, see Fig. 5-19) but enhanced through erratic swings of extreme vocalised emotions that orbit around a central projection of arrogance. The spectrum of emotion that is projected throughout *Got Your Money* is not only evidenced in the above Blaxploitation films, but has clear associations to the stereotypical effects of cocaine. It should be considered no coincidence that the erratic spectrum of heightened emotionality employed by Blaxploitation generally corresponds to their extensive use of the drug.[45] The arrogance exhibited by Ol' Dirty Bastard is manifest in the nonchalant humming throughout the first chorus (between 0:56 – 1:12, despite it following the lyrical depiction of a gun showdown) as well as the self-righteous belief that he is doing God's work ('God made Dirt and Dirt'll bust your ass' at 2:54) and the hostility targeted directly towards federal law

[45] 'What Are The Short Term Effects Of Cocaine?', *DrugAbuse.gov*: non-scholarly reference #16

enforcement (‘F.B.I. don't you be watching me’ at 1:31). Secondly, prominent examples of the volatile and extreme swings of heightened emotional states include a cheerful demeanour (‘look pretty though, in my video’ at 1:19) swiftly followed by annoyed irritation (‘If you stop I'mma put the killer ants in your pants’ at 1:25), onwards to antagonistic rage (‘Just shake it right now!!’ at 1:58) and retreating to softly spoken praise (‘that’s how I like you girl’ at 2:04). Ol’ Dirty Bastard’s vocal gestures alone are effective in generating clear associations with the occupation of procurer, and convincing in their depiction of a cocaine user. Although an experienced listener could be aware of Jones’s drug-related criminality, it serves to substantiate ascriptions of personal authenticity and interpretations garnered from the recording. Familiarity with his indiscretions will only confirm the interpretation given from Ol’ Dirty Bastard’s vocal gestures.

Even though the instrumental backing is an important part in understanding the projected style of the Say Anything cover, it is the vocal gestures that render the positionality explicit. The sarcastic and self-aware qualities of Bemis’s delivery are evident without comparison to the Ol’ Dirty Bastard recording, yet direct comparison to the original highlights Bemis’s act of caricaturing Ol’ Dirty Bastard’s pimp persona. This play serves to undermine the authenticity generated in the original by the typical persona-performer conflation. Although the melodramatic and histrionic vocal gestures used by Bemis are likely to be interpreted as insincere and inauthentic, their overt delivery causes the listener to question the motives for such a vocal delivery. To whom or what is Bemis being surreptitiously authentic?

The overriding impression derived from Bemis’s vocal gestural transformations is that he is performing in a comical manner. Bemis is not unaware of the comedy. Evidence on record reveals how it is consciously

generated through numerous methods such as satire, juxtaposition and sarcasm. Initially, sarcasm is generated through pronounced enunciation manifest in the attempts taken to overtly articulate a majority of the lyrics. For instance, the opening couplet (that finishes on an enunciated 'interrupt' between 0:18 and 0:23) is one amongst the majority that projects a well-educated protagonist. This impression contradicts not only the pimp persona but also the otherwise blasé manner of the vocal delivery. Such a nonchalant vocal character is rife throughout the Say Anything recording and is evident in the monotonous qualities of the vocal dynamic and pitch and evening-out of the vocal rhythm. Considering the delivery of the lyrics 'You give me your number, I call you up' at 0:18 and 'Baby, you know I'll take care of you' at 0:28, the unvaried dynamic and pitch gives the impression of boredom, whilst a normalising of the vocal rhythm pushes and pulls against the instrumental backing in a manner that contradicts late twentieth-century hip-hop stylistic norms.

Effort is made by Bemis to not rush any of the syllables, allowing time and space for each word. He eschews rapping with typically heightened speech, instead choosing to talk casually to the listener, irrespective of the musical backing. This vocal character results in a schism between the protagonist and the lyrical content. The blasé manner of the pimp protagonist is emotionally disconnected from the first-person lyrical depiction of their occupation. Furthermore, the gestures give the impression that Bemis is trying "too hard" to generate a laid-back demeanour. Thus, the indifferent manner in which Bemis describes how he would deal with someone who opposes him ('Bitch, I'll cripple your style' at 0:48 and 'I don't want no problems because I'll put you down, in the ground where you cannot be found' at 1:32) is unlikely to be believed by a listener. The contradictions between lyrical content and gestural interpretation results in an unconvincing protagonist whose

affectations and gestures, on the face of it, come across as insincere and inauthentic.

This interpretation of an inauthentic performer colours the rest of the performance. Even when Bemis's pimp protagonist breaks away from general disinterest, the sheer extremity and brevity of the emotional juxtapositions merely contribute to the comedic aspect. A majority of these gestures can be described as expressively zealous, and their momentary nature is commonly twinned with an immediate return to the customary aloof character. Such marked comedic juxtapositions are exemplified from the final verse onwards. Jarring gestural eruptions are understood at the point where Bemis describes how he would steal money to solve a shortfall in income (at 2:38). Consider the performance of the words 'problem' and 'rob them'. Their opposing pithy gestural character results in a markedness against the prevailing disinterested demeanour. Heard within the generally blasé context, these vocal outbursts are perceived as histrionic. Such over-the-top gesturing maintains the comedic tone. Even when the gestural flare-ups grow in duration, frequency and ferocity towards the end of the track, and can be said to more readily match the lyrical content (demonstrated in the repeated exclamation of 'My money!' at 3:48), their comedic aspect is not diminished. The vocals are understood as a comedic infantile tantrum. The inability for such an outburst to alter the unwavering excuses from his "female" antagonists lends weight to the insincerity of the protagonist – not even these backing vocalists are swayed by his histrionics.[46] To the listener, the repeated projection of satire has irreparably damaged the pimp protagonist's ability to be interpreted as sincere, even when there is a case to be made for Bemis's performance gestures projecting a sense of personal authenticity.

[46] "Female" in double-quotation marks because they are Bemis singing in falsetto voice; such an imitation of a female duo (split left and right in the stereo image) also generates satire

Finally, Say Anything generates comedy through numerous methods of self-awareness. Beyond the typical lyrical projection of a first person protagonist, particular vocal gestures result in an interpreted shift in Bemis's subject position. At particular points in the track, Bemis is not interpreted as the pimp protagonist but as an outside observer, both directly and implicitly opining on the track's content. Firstly, the "accidental" spluttering at the end of the second chorus (2:10) and the deadpan delivery of closing lyric ('I think you understand what I want by this point in the song; it's just some money, give it to me' at 4:01) shatters the illusion of the pimp protagonist and reminds the listener that Bemis is a vocalist recording a song. Secondly, consider the upward inflection at the end of the phrase 'Ran up on my car for carrying rollo' (2:45). This highly marked comical gesture signifies confusion as to what the lyric actually means and highlights the fact that Bemis doesn't fully understand the words he is saying.[47] The impression given is that he is merely reciting the words of another person, thus casting further doubt as to his personal authenticity. Finally, Bemis's replacing of the word 'nigga' with 'n-word' highlights a sociological self-awareness. Use of the former by Bemis could be seen as inappropriate and serve to undermine his otherwise clear capacity for introspection.

The above comic aspects of Say Anything's pimp character can be concluded through listening to the cover alone, yet their overt nature implies that the projected inauthenticity is intended. The gestures described above are amongst many that highlight the supposed inauthenticity of *Got Your Money* by Say Anything. Such premeditated acts of performance cause the listener to question why this is the case. For what purpose is Bemis consciously gesturing in a manner that will be superficially rejected by listeners? Direct comparison to the original

[47] This lyric depicts the pimp protagonist being pulled over by police for smoking marijuana whilst driving

recording of *Got Your Money* draws attention to possible reasons for such inauthenticity whilst also uncovering further aspects of the comedic play.

A cursory analysis will highlight a number of gestural similarities between the original and Say Anything cover. For instance, there are obvious gestural resemblances that link performance of the lyrics 'Now give me my money!' (at 1:51), the interjections in the second verse (between 1:51 and 2:10) and 'Well you better help me solve my problem, Or I'm gonna get this money and rob them' (at 2:38). Yet a more detailed investigation reveals how all of the Say Anything vocal gestures are exaggerated transformations of the vocal gestures heard in the original. This melodramatic exaggeration is applied across the entire emotional spectrum. The transformation of Ol' Dirty Bastard's laid-back candour into one of an uninterested, blasé disposition (observed in the majority of the opening verse), and the transformation of the original irate gestures into an uncontrollable tantrum (such as '…just sing it right now!' at 1:59) are two examples from either end of the spectrum. Bemis is not strictly imitating Ol' Dirty Bastard, but the gestural transformations result in a comedic caricature of his pimp persona.

5.2.2.1.3 CONCLUSIONS

Bemis's over-the-top vocal delivery results in empty gestures that are rejected by the listener and thus perceived as inauthentic. But to achieve a fully rounded interpretation of *Got Your Money*, the investigation should take into account how a listener may hear the track in relation to the rest of the *Punk Goes…Crunk* compilation album and to Say Anything's prior recorded output. Indeed, it is easy to overlook the subversive aspects of the track. One reviewer (who indicates he has not heard any Say Anything originals) states:

> [Say Anything's] contribution to this disc sounds like some band dorks in a junior high found a drum machine and thought it would be kinda funny and cool to recite the dirty rap lyrics to the beat.[48]

While Say Anything have recorded a hip-hop inspired track (*Wow, I Can Get Sexual Too* (2004), a bonus track added to the repressing of their debut studio album), the schism between their identification as a punk band and their use of the hip-hop style is likely to bring into question ascriptions of stylistic or personal authenticity. If Say Anything are to be considered a punk band, it stands to reason that any attempt on their part to record a hip-hop style track will be perceived as inauthentic. Reviews of the album and of this track in particular highlight such a hypothesis:

> I can't really tell if Punk Goes Crunk is serious attempt at covering rap and R&B songs, or some peddling attempt for a couple of weary laughs.[49]

And:

> Singing lyrics meant to be rapped enfeebles the poetry and neutralizes its rhythmic underpinnings, while bastardizing production styles to mimic samples is simply sonic chicanery that doesn't fool the ear…If Say Anything's intention was to lampoon Ol'

[48] 'Emo for K-Feds (a.k.a Punk Goes Crunk) Review', *Antimusic*: non-scholarly reference #6
[49] 'Various Artists (Punk): Punk Goes Crunk', *Sputnik Music*: non-scholarly reference #40

> Dirty Bastard's Got My [sic] Money, they succeeded marvellously, trashing both the song and the concept of a punk band covering it.[50]

Not only is the above prediction confirmed through their use of overtly unsophisticated synthetic timbres (similar to those found on cheap digital keyboards), but through Bemis's clever caricaturing of a typical rap vocalist. The histrionic performance gestures of Bemis do not correspond to a serious attempt to portray his life as a pimp. At no point in the track do we believe Bemis's pimp persona; the overt nature of this caricaturing causes the listener to question the motives for such a performance.

Such uncertainty is not without precedence. Comparisons can be drawn to Ben Folds's deadpan delivery in his version of *Bitches Ain't Shit* (2005) originally by Dr. Dre – a possible inspiration for some of the gestural transformations that occur in the Say Anything cover. Such an overtly subversive play on the original track generates two related forms of authenticity. In doing a "bad job" of a hip-hop track, Say Anything assert a positionality against the gangsta-rap inspired hip-hop style in general, and indirectly reinforce their own punk-rock stylistic authenticity. We understand that Say Anything are performing their cover not by pretending to be Ol' Dirty Bastard but 'as themselves'; as a band who employ witty self-aware gestures and have a penchant for post-modern appropriation of styles. This much can be observed in Bemis's assimilation of Randy Newman's musical gestures in *Night's Song* (2012), and self-aware gesturing that alters his assumed first-person subject-position in *Admit It!!* (2004) and *Mara And Me* (2009). Interpreting *Got Your Money* in relation to the Say Anything back catalogue not only heightens the

[50] Mercer, 'Various Artists: Punk Goes Crunk', *AllMusic:* non-scholarly reference #2

comedic aspects of the track, but also makes clear the creation of authenticity through positionality.

Similar positionality is exhibited by Set Your Goals in their cover of *Put Yo Hood Up*. Originally released by Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz in 2001, the crunk-style track features a number of stylistic tokens that are comically subverted by Set Your Goals through gestural transformation. Where different types of comedy are employed here (the surreal nature of incorporating numerous Star Wars references throughout will cause bewilderment and laughs in equal measure), central to the track is the undermining of the crunk style through the caricaturing of stylistic tokens. Although satirising a different style, Attack! Attack!'s rendition of *I Kissed A Girl* (2010) originally with Katy Perry (2008) uses a profusion of chart-pop stylistic tokens that results in a parody of the original track and chart-pop music as a whole. Digitally synthesized keyboard timbres and drum machine sounds, instrumental tracks with no performance nuance and an overtly processed vocal track all direct their satirical aim towards contemporary chart-pop music.

The positionality understood in *Put Yo Hood Up, Got Your Money*, and *I Kissed A Girl* stands in contrast to other covers that appear in the *Punk Goes…* compilation series. Tracks such as *Down* by Breathe Carolina (2010), My American Heart's version of *California Love* (2008) and *Airplanes* by The Ready Set, appear to reject subversion and are interpreted as earnest renditions of the original. These generate a generally negative response:

> Obviously, the gigantic, glaring problem of this album is when bands pass over the attempt to be funny and quirky and instead halfass [sic] an attempt to make a serious cover. Genuine, authentic renditions like My American Heart's cover of *California Love*,

> Emanuel's *Kryptonite* and Scary Kids Scaring Kids take of *Notorious Thugs* are so painstaking terrible that it's hard to get through them.[51]

The above three tracks are amongst other covers on the *Punk Goes…* albums in which the covering artist is understood to be imitating the performance gestures of the original artist. Gestures that are interpreted as inauthentic and crucially without the comedic connotations of the Say Anything cover. Note the appearance of the word 'authentic' in the above quotation to indicate a cover with no sense of a subversive positionality.

This kind of positionality relates to Michelle Phillipov's (2012) research into the study of pleasure in popular music. Phillipov's central inquiry examines the historical trend of popular music studies to concentrate on questions of a political nature. In demonstrating how such a framework limits the understanding of popular music, she reveals an issue relevant to positionality. Thanks to the tendency to push political programmes, musicological inquiry has abstained from investigating musical styles in relation to non-target demographics of little-to-no socio-political connection. Although her study focuses on the previously disregarded female interaction with and enjoyment of death metal (a style and subculture commonly viewed as misogynist and sexist), the enjoyment of and interaction with hip-hop and gangsta-rap by white and middle-class audiences have been similarly disregarded due to a lack of political, economic or racial correlation between the artist and the non-target audience.

The theory of gestural transformation offers an innovative framework with which to examine authenticity. Although it amplifies the problematic issue of multiple authenticities, it does lay a theoretical foundation that links multiple

[51] 'Various Artists (Punk): Punk Goes Crunk', *Sputnik Music*: non-scholarly reference #40

modes of authenticity in opposition to prior scholarship such as Kivy (1994). Applying the theory of gestural transformation goes beyond readily quantifiable aspects of pitch and rhythm. Analysis of a listener's perceptual-imaginative impression of a performer requires the combination of many sonic aspects, including timbre, rhythm-as-performed, textural nuance, and vocal grain. These qualities reveal previously concealed musical meanings and give us insight into whether an audience finds the musician believable or not.

This research ties into recent analyses conducted by Greenberg, Kosinski et al. (2016) who examine an audience's propensity to assign musical preferences based on musical genres. Their analyses of musical pieces in terms of the interpreted energy of a recording (arousal), the interpreted emotion of recording (valence), and the interpreted sophistication of the recording (depth) has clear links to gestural analysis. Examining authenticity through the theory of gestural transformation incorporates this interpretive framework, but goes further to question whether the audience believes the performer's portrayal. The types of value (Levinson, 2015) at play in judging a performer's credibility will vary between genres, styles and audiences, but the theory of gestural transformation is one solution to assessing authenticity. The final Say Anything analysis (chapter 5.2.2.1) demonstrates the problematic nature in assessing covers in terms of authenticity. The theory of gestural transformation goes beyond superficial readings, revealing deeper musical meanings tied to subversive commentaries of popular music and to notions of personal authenticity and positionality.

6. GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND RECORD PRODUCTION

The interpretation of rock music authenticity is heavily contingent on interpreting musical sound as embodied. Record production (centred around the studio-based adjustment of mixing and mastering) can vastly alter the sonic qualities and, consequently, the gestural interpretation and perceived authenticity of a track.[1] Therefore, gestural analysis of studio-based tracks needs to take into account methods of record production that are central to creating the finished sonic artefact. This is especially the case in the production of rock tracks, where both the production and ascription of authenticity share an objective – the belief in and projection of the artist performing their own instrumental parts in a live concert setting.

In chapter 6.1, I develop previous research to examine how the production of a track is heavily dependent on the style and function of the music being produced. Previous investigation of popular music production typically assumes a consistent approach to production throughout a track. Although *Punk Goes*… covers and versions generally support this view, dynamic cover-versions challenge this notion. Distinct production styles are perceived in dynamic cover-versions. Changes between production styles are linked to the gestural play previously examined in chapter 2.4.2. In sections of dynamic cover-versions where the musical style places significant value on the performer's ability to perform live (including Western art music, folk and rock for instance), the record production assists in projecting the sound of a live public performance. These contrast with

[1] For an in-depth analysis of mixing and mastering, see McDonald, 'The Difference Between Mixing And Mastering', *The Balance*: non-scholarly reference #9

sections of dynamic cover-versions that are understood to gesturally mimic the original where styles such as electronic dance music, hip-hop and, to a great extent, studio-based pop music are heard. In these sections, emphasis is placed upon the sonic aesthetic rather than the projection of a live performance.

I will use the tool of gestural transformation to demonstrate how the ascribed authenticity of a *Punk Goes…* track is shaped by production. In chapters 6.2 and 6.3, I examine how panning and equalisation affect the gestural transformation and perceived authenticity. This occurs in two ways: not only where the production of punk-rock sections reinforces the interpretation of embodied performance gestures, but where the production style of the contrasting pop style is used as a foil to amplify the embodied perceptual-imaginative response to the punk-rock style.

6.1 FUNCTIONAL RECORD PRODUCTION

Functional production is significant to the ascription of authenticity of rock music tracks due to their shared concerns. Thornton (1995) lends weight to this hypothesis, stating that 'The essence or truth of music was located in its performance by musicians in front of an audience' rather than through a recording of a performance.[2] To draw upon this form of eliciting authenticity, recordings began to appropriate the authenticity of live performance through particular production techniques – a development that can be further linked to the decline of live performances throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. This change in production values is highlighted in Dockwray and Moore's (2010) 'sound-box'

[2] Thornton, *Club Cultures* (1995), p. 26

analyses. Their investigation of 1970s rock music production observes how idiosyncratic sound designs are replaced by standardised production techniques that replicate a live performance setup. Zagorski-Thomas (2010) also highlights the change but across many popular music styles. Emphasising the link between the function of the record and its production reveals consequences for the projection and perception of authenticity in those styles of music that have flourished within and away from the live arena.

The appropriation of live performance authenticities by rock music producers is one example of the 'swinging pendulum' of authenticity.[3] As musical subcultures develop, ways to create and measures of authenticity become standardised and lose their aura. Linked to ever-shifting modes of production and consumption, recent rock music practices highlight the swings where practitioners assert and audiences crave new authenticities. Following the adoption of live performance idealism in recordings, for instance, performing musicians have sought to re-appropriate live performance authenticity through emphasising the uniqueness of each performance and elaborating on the performance to create a spectacle – an aspect rendered comical in Rob Reiner's *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984). As this newer form of authenticity was affirmed in live performances, recordings began to usurp the newly garnered sense of live performance authenticity. Examples include the introduction of spontaneous musical gestures (such as the inclusion of guitar feedback and vocal enticements to imaginary crowds) and the deliberate introduction of imperfections to generate the impression of an unmediated musical performance more readily associated with the actual sound of a live performance. This latter example is heard in the guitar solo of *Californication* by Red Hot Chili Peppers. Between 3:23 and 4:01, the marked rhythmic blemishes

[3] Dolan, '"…This Little Ukulele Tells The Truth" (2010), p. 465

and imperfect pitch bends combine to conjure a pronounced actual, rather than ideal, performance. Recent developments have seen bands and artists subvert the notion of recorded authenticity by performing entire albums from start-to-finish live. Commonly done to celebrate the anniversary of a landmark album, rock artists as varied as Bruce Springsteen, Muse, and Metallica have all toured performing seminal albums in their entirety.

Zagorski-Thomas notes that the production of multitracked rock recordings has become increasingly functional due to the growing tendency to project the impression of a live musical performance in a concert setting. Although light on case studies, his description of how multitracked studio recordings of rock songs attempt to manufacture the *ideal* sound of a live music performance is convincing. This sonic ideal varies between sub-styles and even tracks by the same artist, yet fundamental to all are their projection of a live performance.

This ideal sound of a live performance differs from the *actual* sound of a live performance, a position Frith labels the 'primary mode of music consumption'.[4] This schism is a result of record producers diminishing the negative effects a live performance environment can have upon the sound. For instance, locations may create undesirable reverberation and echoes can conflict with the attempts made by sound engineers to deliver a relatively uncompromised recording of the band. As such, the construction of an ideal live performance can be viewed as an acoustic cartooning; the manipulation of the individual instrumental tracks to project the impression that the listener is front row and centre of a live performance.

[4] Frith, *Sound Effects* (1983), p. 65

There are many ways the ideal sound of a live rock music performance is generated through post-recording production.[5] The use of panning for instance, spaces the instruments across a virtual space in accordance to their in-the-real-world counterparts. For a standard rock band set up, drums are slightly spread from the centre according to their typical physical arrangement, with electric bass and vocals slightly offset from centre and electric guitars placed at either side of the stereo image. Fig. 6-1 demonstrates the location of instruments heard on A Day To Remember's album *What Separates Me From You* (2010). The album is typical of contemporary rock albums in that it was recorded using a multitracking technique in a recording studio.[6] Note the similarities between the positioning of the instruments on the album and the image of their standard live set-up in Fig. 6-1 and Fig. 6-2:

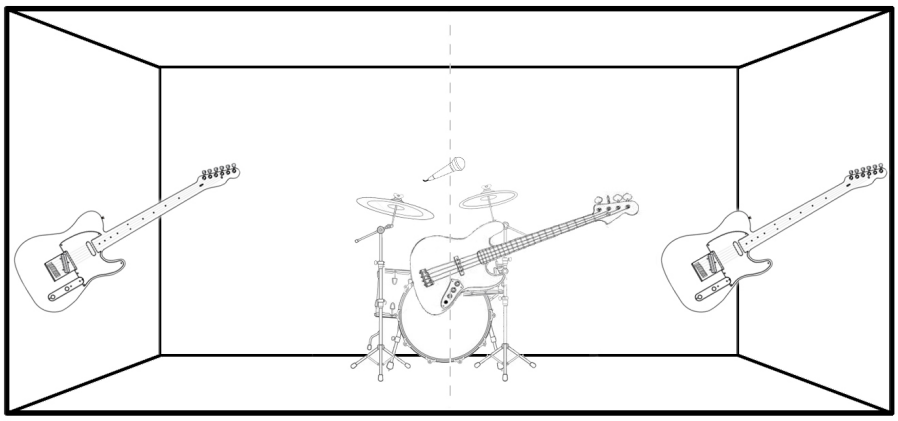


Fig. 6-1: Sound-box analysis illustrating the common stereo placement of the instruments heard on the A Day To Remember album *What Separates Me From You* (2010)

[5] Beyond this brief overview, see Mynett, 'Mixing Metal', *Sound On Sound*: non-scholarly reference #39 gives an more thorough investigation of mastering and mixing techniques including compression, equalisation and panning

[6] 'A Day To Remember Talk New Album', *Rocksound*: non-scholarly reference #34



Fig. 6-2: Image of A Day To Remember live concert; unknown source

The location of the instruments in-the-real-world corresponds to the location of their counterpart heard on the recording.[7] Yet such functional production of rock tracks does not always correlate to the band's live layout in this way. Fig. 6-3 is an image of Pierce The Veil performing live:



Fig. 6-3: Image of Pierce The Veil live concert at House Of Blues, Orlando FL.[8]

Although the stereo spread of the Pierce The Veil album *Collide With The Sky* (2012) is identical to that of A Day To Remember album (Fig. 6-1), the image of

[7] Objections can be raised regarding the common setup at rock music venues. Even though the majority of the sound at a live concert would emanate from the public address system and effectively surround any audience member, sound engineers commonly pan the instruments to their approximate stereo locations. This is discussed in Mellor, 'Why Pan In Live Sound When It Only Makes The Audience Experience Worse', *Audio Masterclass*: non-scholarly reference #8

[8] Photograph owned by Martin, C., http://www.grizzleemartin.com/ (Accessed 14th April 2016)

their live performance displays a number of differences. In panning the two electric guitar tracks to the extreme sides of the virtual performance, it separates the Pierce The Veil frontman Vic Fuentes into a central lead vocalist and an offset electric guitarist. Furthermore, the stage-right bassist does not correspond to the production on their *Collide The Sky* album. This latter example highlights how functional recording production can create a schism between the gestural interpretation of an *actual* of a live performance and a cartooned ideal mode of music consumption.

This is not the limit of the studio-based procedures used to emulate an ideal live performance in a recorded track. Bringing a live concert into a personal environment requires a number of effects that affect the gestural interpretation of the recorded audio. These effects include, but are not restricted to compression, the addition of reverb, and the use of equalisation. For instance, the projection of a live performance combines the previously described panning with a 'large hall' reverb. Witnessed in the analysis of *Royals* (chapter 2.3.2.1), this is a reverb of around 3 seconds in length with a relatively swift high-frequency roll-off to mimic the reverb character encountered in a large performance space.[9] This recorded 'lie of live' presents the listener with the impression that they are front row and centre of a concert rather than listening to a chronologically displaced multi-tracked recording.[10]

The significance of functional production in relation to authenticity is highlighted in that it affects numerous modes of authenticity simultaneously. The projection of a live performance influences the stylistic authenticity of practice and the performer-related personal authenticity. Regarding authenticity of practice

[9] For a thorough description of the types of reverb commonly employed in record production, see Staub, J., 'The Five Main Types Of Reverb And How To Mix With Them', *Sonic Scoop*: non-scholarly reference #37

[10] The "Lie Of Live" examined in chapter 1.4

(chapter 4), the production of a track to sound live is an attempt to generate authenticity of the artist according to the broader traditions of the rock music style as a whole. To develop this notion further, the interpretation that each individual musician has performed his or her own part of the track fosters a sense of personal authenticity: that the musician is the sole author of that particular nuanced recording.

In addition, the projection of a live performance setting also links to Moore's listener-based *authenticity of experience*.[11] Where Moore describes the generation of such authenticity through the use of the word 'us' in lyrics, the production of a recorded track not only elicits the recording artists performing live, but also that the listener is central in the front row of a live concert. This focus on creating a specific subject position authenticates the listener and their engagement with the music in a virtual live arena; an "it felt like I was there" response to the recorded track.

As the majority of the *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions feature a marked opposition between the punk-rock and chart-pop styles, examining the effects of production on gestural transformation and authenticity must take into account the distinct production used in sections of dynamic cover-versions that gesturally mimic the dance-music based chart-pop originals. Zagorski-Thomas's functional model is equally applicable to styles of a non-live genesis, despite the differing primary mode of consumption (over public address systems in large dance halls and venues) and function (to dance to) of styles such as electronic dance music and chart-pop music. These styles generate different standards and practices for functional production. Zagorski-Thomas notes a fundamental split between

[11] Moore, *Song Means* (2013), p. 269. Moore's authenticity of experience mode is commonly misinterpreted as relating to the veracity of a performer's personal experience in their musical communication, i.e. whether or not a listener believes that they have experienced what they are communicating

functional production in rock music and dance music. He describes how the emphasis on percussion sounds and a lack of reverberation in dance music assists in the function of creating music that is easy to dance to.

One limitation with Zagorski-Thomas's dance music examples is that they are heavily tied to notions of embodiment and the spectacle of live performance. He favours examples of performed dance music such as funk (James Brown) and early disco (Earth, Wind & Fire and Kool And The Gang). However, I consider contemporary electronic dance music and studio-based pop music as providing a better example of the freer sonic aesthetic Zagorski-Thomas describes. A cursory examination of any dance music compilation (such as Ministry Of Sound's yearly *The Annual* compilation) demonstrates an extreme rendering of Zagorski-Thomas's hypothesis. The bass drum, backbeat component (be it a snare drum, hand clap, or other percussive element) and any vocal appear centrally and dominate dynamically and texturally. Placing the percussive elements centrally correlates with the function of the music; any reveller will be able to hear the beat regardless of his or her position within the dance hall. However, there appears no overarching strategy with regards to the synthesised melodic parts. This is due to the producer's concern with the sonic aesthetic above notions of replicating a live performance setting.

These contrasting types of record production are witnessed in many *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions. In tracks such as *I'm Real* by The Starting Line, *Beautiful Girls* by Bayside, and *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire, allosonic references to the original track are juxtaposed against the *Punk Goes…* artist's punk-rock style. Through such unambiguous contrasting, listeners are able to directly compare the change in applied production that not only corresponds to

the assumed function of the different styles, but to sections that imitate the original track's style and that of the gesturally transformed punk-rock style.

The differences in production that are linked to the stylistic juxtapositions consequently feed into notions of the *Punk Goes…* artist's authenticity. In assuming that the *Punk Goes…* artist is attempting to generate rock music authenticity to a rock music audience, the suppression of embodiment in sections of cover-versions that mimic the original recording can be viewed as an attempt to emphasise and amplify the projection of unmediated live performance in sections of the cover-version that are understood to have been performed by the *Punk Goes…* artist in their own style.

In chapters 6.2 and 6.3, I examine shifts in record production that occur in the *Punk Goes…* series. Case studies include record productions that both replicate the original or acoustically cartoon the functional chart-pop production. Placing the rock style functional production in direct contrast to another form of production can be shown to enhance the embodied perceptual-imaginative response to the punk-rock style. Examples will demonstrate how shifts in production have implications for the gestural transformation and the interpreted authenticity of both the punk-rock style of the *Punk Goes…* artist and the pop original the band is engaging with. Although neither musical or production style is intrinsically "more authentic" than the other, the differences emphasise gestural transformations and create an amplified sense of the *Punk Goes…* artist's authenticity.

6.2 PANNING

In *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions, panning is used to help foster an embodied live performance response to the *Punk Goes…* artist's punk-rock style. Comparing cover and version sections of the tracks, there lies a distinction in the application of panning. In cover sections often at the beginning of the cover-version, the application of panning commonly projects a narrow and sometimes entirely central stereo spread. In version sections, the application of panning is unfailingly wide, with the extremes of the stereo image used to aid in the projection of a live performance.

The juxtaposition of these production methods contributes to the embodied perceptual-imaginative response to the *Punk Goes…* artist's punk-rock style. The placement of each individual instrument to mimic a typical live rock concert stage layout elicits the gestural imagery of a live band performance. In contrast, the narrow stereo placement in cover sections not only appears acousmatic in origin, but also augments the stereo width of the opposing punk-rock style.

The perceived contrast between the two types of applied panning is dependent on the listening apparatus. Although all my analyses are conducted with in-ear headphones, different equipment can change gestural interpretations and meanings. Any applied panning is most noticeable over headphones where the two audio sources (left speaker and right speaker) are heard in isolation. This magnifies the perception of stereo width, as there is no bleed between the two sides of the stereo recording. The width is lessened when the same track is heard over hi-fi speakers because the two audio sources bleed into each other. Where this has little-to-no effect on any centrally placed instrument, the effect can be significant to a gestural interpretation of the drum set.

Some rock music producers are prone to spreading the tom-toms to stereo extremes. This creates what I consider to be a gesturally unsettling image when the recorded audio is heard over headphones As witnessed in *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (2014), the tom-toms are panned to the extreme edges of the stereo image. When listening over headphones, they are cast to the furthest reaches of the imaged live performance environment (Fig. 6-4) yet when heard over speakers, the audio of the tom-toms is no longer insulated, tempering their radical spread (Fig. 6-5):

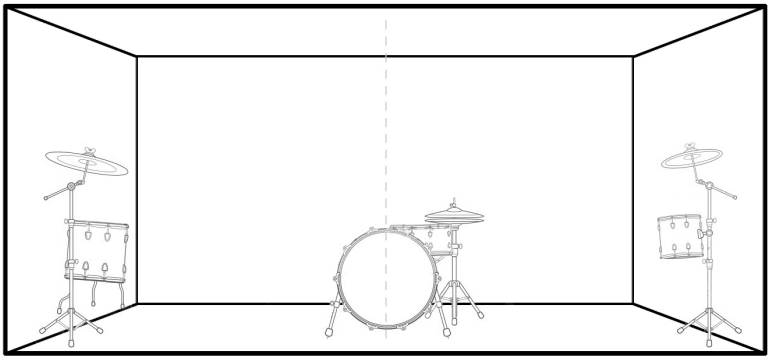


Fig. 6-4: Sound-box analysis of a spatially exaggerated drum set heard over headphones

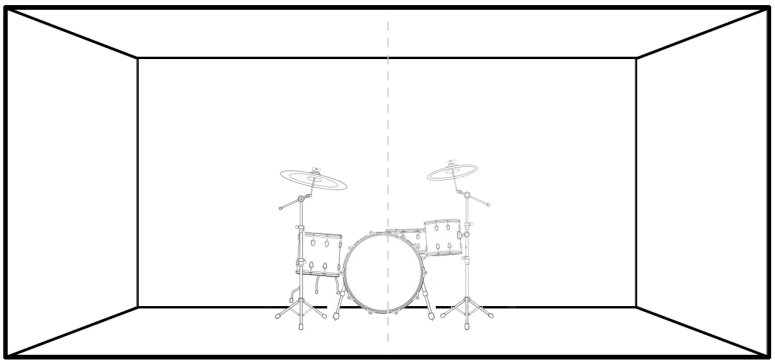


Fig. 6-5: Sound-box analysis of a spatially exaggerated drum set heard over speakers directly in front of listener

In Fig. 6-4, the tom-toms are understood as being positioned away from the rest of the drum set. This causes gestural issues; are the jettisoned tom-toms understood as part of the drum set or as being performed by a secondary (and

tertiary) performer at three distinct locations? Guitars are often placed at these stereo extremes, yet the propensity to hear them as individual performers does not create gestural unease in the manner observed with the drum set.

A further distinction must be made between the stereo placement of an instrumental track and the use of stereo reverb. Where the former relates to the left-to-right location of an instrument, the use of stereo reverb is used to generate the impression that the aforementioned instruments are located within a virtual acoustic space. Even though an instrument may be placed centrally for example, the algorithms used to generate stereo reverb will create nuanced differences between the left and right channel reverberations, simulating the asymmetry of a physical space. The application of stereo reverb can cause confusion as to whether an instrument has been placed centrally or not. In the following analyses of *Beautiful Girls* by Bayside (chapter 6.2.1.1), *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans (chapter6.2.1.2), and *Wrecking Ball* by August Burns Red (chapter 6.2.1.3), I use phase inversion to remove any centrally placed audio. This technique facilitates distinguishing between a centrally placed instrumental track and its stereo reverberation.

6.2.1.1 *BEAUTIFUL GIRLS* BY SEAN KINGSTON / BAYSIDE

Punk-rock band Bayside use panning to amplify the impression of an unmediated live performance in their punk-rock style sections of their *Beautiful Girls* cover-version (2009), originally by Sean Kingston (2007). Considering this track from the point of view of their intended rock-music audience, the centralised monophonic panning of the Motown-style introduction opposes the typical layout of a rock music performance. Coming from an entirely centralised cover amplifies the

movement into a panning arrangement representative of a live rock music performance. Occurring in tandem with the launch of the punk-rock style, the amplified shift affects the notions of authenticity tied to the presentation of an unmediated, embodied live-performance.

As also witnessed in other tracks such as The Starting Line's cover of *I'm Real* (2002), *Beautiful Girls* by Bayside opens with entirely centralised, quasi-mono production. Following this introduction, the launch of a punk-rock style typical to Bayside at 0:13 is marked by a sudden widening of the stereo image. This change in panning is one of many important changes that occur between the first half of the introduction (an imitation of Sean Kingston's original) and the second half of the introduction (performed in a gesturally distinct punk-rock style).

The centralised panning of the track is clearly perceptible and evidenced in the following waveform analyses. Consider the differences between Fig. 6-6 and Fig. 6-7 where any centrally placed audio has been removed:

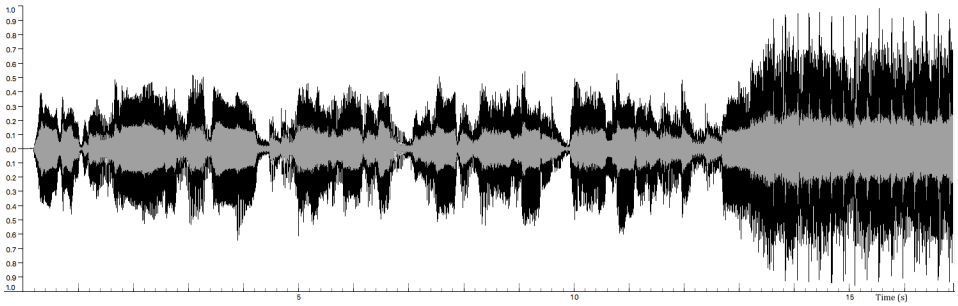


Fig. 6-6: Waveform analysis of *Beautiful Girls* (0:00 – 0:17) as recorded by Bayside

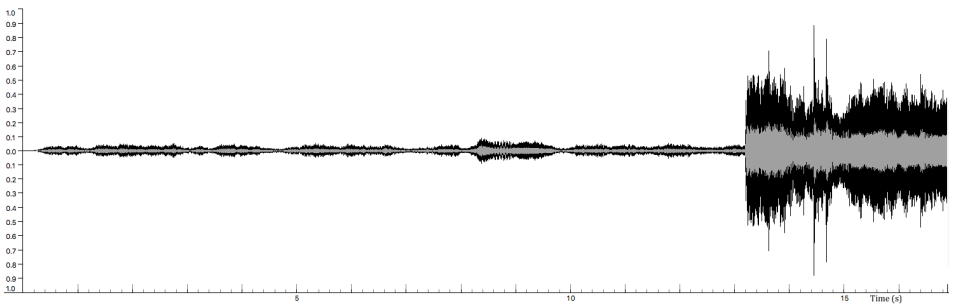


Fig. 6-7: Waveform analysis of *Beautiful Girls* (0:00 – 0:17) as recorded by Bayside with centrally-placed audio removed

With any centrally located audio removed, a significantly reduced audio output is revealed. There is still sound heard away from the centre, yet the relatively smooth contours of Fig. 6-7 reveal that it these non-central sounds are attributable to the application of stereo reverb. Thus, the double bass, clean electric guitar and lead vocal that are placed centrally in the stereo image are not heard when the centre audio is removed.

Coinciding with the change in musical style at thirteen seconds, Fig. 6-7 lends weight to the clear shift in panning. A substantial amount of the track's audio emanates from either side of the stereo image, which results in a sudden widening of the stereo image onwards from thirteen seconds. Assigning the loud and rhythmically consistent peaks that occur in Fig. 6-6 every 0.2 seconds to the prominent bass drum, the remaining audio signal can be seen to closely match that observed in Fig. 6-7. This is a result of the texturally dense distorted electric rhythm guitars and particular elements of the drum set (the cymbals and tom toms are noticeably spread) being dynamically prominent in the mix. This panning arrangement assists in fostering the image of a band performing the track in a live concert setting. From thirteen seconds onwards, the stereo placement of the instruments and the perceived spread of the individual drum set components correlate to a live performance layout of a typical punk-rock band: the Fig. 6-8 sound-box diagram illustrates this application of functional production in relation to panning.

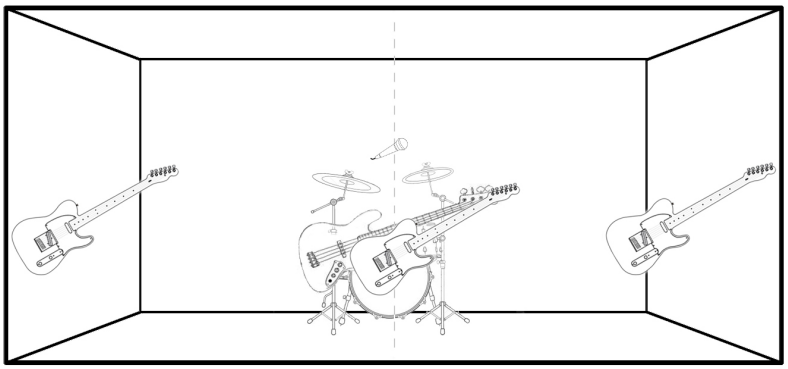


Fig. 6-8: Sound-box analysis of *Beautiful Girls* by Bayside following stylistic shift to punk-rock style at 0:13

Where the addition of a centrally placed guitar may raise initial concerns, its reiteration of the opening vocal melody is understood as taking over the lead role from the principal vocalist. The application of this stereo spread in accordance to a typical live performance arrangement encourages the interpretation of the track as being performed in front of the listener. This fosters the listener's visualisation of performance gestures in a concert setting, which ties into notions of stylistic authenticity according to the customs of rock music as a whole.

However, the opening quasi-mono section amplifies the interpretation of an embodied, unmediated live performance. The listener is initially drawn into a narrowly panned audio context, which suddenly shifts into stereo as the punk-rock style is launched at 0:13. This shift is exaggerated by the entry of the punk-rock instrumentation. Supplemented with discernible reverb following the stylistic shift, the listener is transported to a virtual live performance venue – a concert space where the performers take their positions on a stage in front of the listener attending to their instruments in a manner gesturally distinct from the relaxed Motown-style opening. The bind between the panning arrangements and musical styles is of central importance to the gestural transformation and subsequent ascriptions of authenticity in *Beautiful Girls*.

6.2.1.2 *I KNEW YOU WERE TROUBLE* BY TAYLOR SWIFT / WE CAME AS ROMANS

Where the introduction of the punk-rock style typical to Bayside is sudden and marked against a preceding quasi-mono soundworld, the widening of the stereo environment in tracks such as *I Knew You Were Trouble* (2014) and *Glad You Came* (2012) by We Came As Romans, and *Wrecking Ball* by August Burns Red (2014) follows a stepwise progression. Despite the differing approach to panning, these tracks by We Came As Romans and August Burns Red also demonstrate the link between production and musical style understood in *Beautiful Girls*. In all these tracks, there is an absolute link between the initial quasi-mono aesthetic to the imitation of the original track as well as the full stereo image to the presentation of their own punk-rock style. These stepwise progressions have implications for the markedness of the punk-rock production – an affect that has clear implications for the projection of authenticity.

It should be considered no coincidence that the progressive movement from cover to version in *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans corresponds to a stepwise widening of the stereo image. The form of the panning expansion is illustrated in Fig. 6-9 and Fig. 6-10:

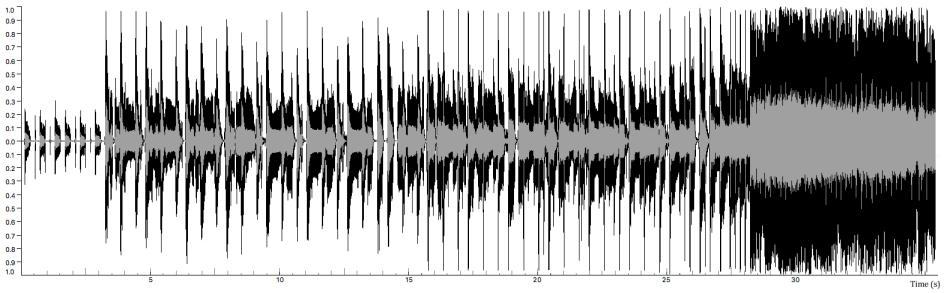


Fig. 6-9: Waveform analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:35) as recorded by We Came As Romans

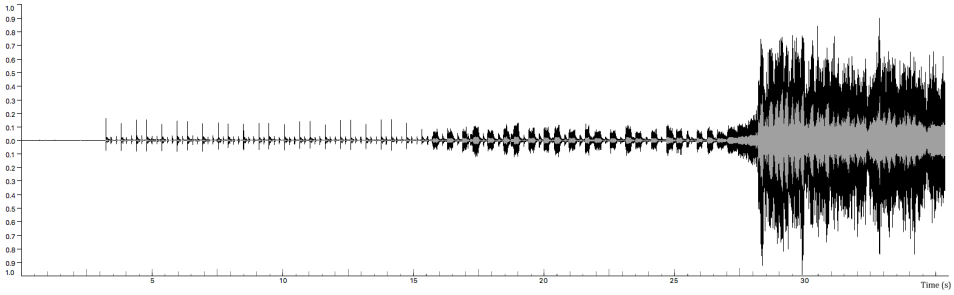


Fig. 6-10: Waveform analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:00 – 0:35) as recorded by We Came As Romans with centrally-placed audio removed

Both analyses highlight four distinct formal sections, with Fig. 6-9 presenting a stepped dynamic crescendo and textural thickening and Fig. 6-10 highlighting the exponential manner in which the track utilises ever more of the stereo space.

Beginning with a centrally placed and texturally thin electric guitar, the entry of the drum machine instigates the near imperceptible stereo widening of the track. In comparison to the overall dynamic demonstrated in Fig. 6-9, the relative dynamics of the drum machine bass drum and hi-hat in Fig. 6-10 implies that both are located in the same stereo position. Indeed, they are both slightly left of centre, contradicting the typical functional production layout of a drum set. Further widening of the stereo image correlates with the steady introduction of the rest of the band and the introduction of gestural characters alien to the Taylor Swift original. Although Fig. 6-9 illustrates stepwise dynamic and texture increases associated with the introduction of new instrumental parts (at 0:16), Fig. 6-10

illustrates how more of the stereo space is used by the acoustic drum set and the slightly offset electric bass guitar. Approached with a swift exponential expansion of the stereo image at 0:27, the remnants of any resemblance to Taylor Swift's pop original are cast aside with the launch of the distorted electric guitars panned to stereo extremes. It is this point (0:28) that a full stereo effect is finally reached.

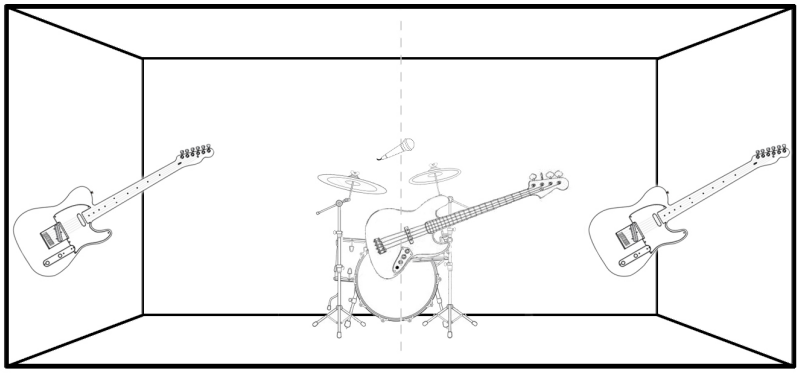


Fig. 6-11: Sound-box analysis for *I Knew You Were Trouble* (0:28) as recorded by We Came As Romans

Even though the approach to 0:28 is stepwise, the final shift to a full stereo width illustrated in Fig. 6-11 is still relatively marked. This is because the final shift into full stereo is relatively perceptible (as opposed to the smaller expansions witnessed at 0:03 and 0:16). This analysis is supported by the sudden increase in dynamic created by the introduction of the non-central instruments illustrated in Fig. 6-11.

It is at this point where the perceptual-imaginative response shifts from a hesitant performance in an intimate setting into a confident public performance context with We Came As Romans interpreted to be performing the song live (a conclusion drawn from 5.1.2.1). The instruments are panned so as to imitate the appearance of a stage setup: the vocals and bass are central, with the drum set narrowly spread (hi-hat and snare on the left, crash cymbal on the right) and the distorted electric guitars placed at extreme sides of the stereo image.

Multiple modes of authenticity are at play in *I Knew You Were Trouble*. Beyond the second-person authenticity of experience discussed in chapter 5, the preceding narrow stereo design amplifies the eventual shift into a wide stereo image, ensuring that the listener equates the stereo layout as akin to that heard in a live concert performance.[12] Thus, the punk-rock style of We Came As Romans is projected as being performed in front of the listener, opposing the central placement of their Taylor Swift imitation that does not project the unmediated live performance context as successfully.

6.2.1.3 *WRECKING BALL* BY MILEY CYRUS / AUGUST BURNS RED

Panning in *Wrecking Ball* by August Burns Red (2014) matches the stepwise shift witnessed in *I Knew You Were Trouble.* Where other tracks are successful in using panning to amplify the eventual full stereo, the shift in *Wrecking Ball* is not as clear as other tracks. There are two critical differences that result in the comparatively weak shift into rock music functional production. Firstly, the stepwise changes from mono to stereo are small and even in contrast to the exponentially shaped panning contour witnessed in *I Knew You Were Trouble*. The consistent widening of the stereo environment in *Wrecking Ball* undermines the eventual use of the full stereo image in a way that is not present in *I Knew You Were Trouble* where the exponential contour creates a palpable burst into full stereo sound. Secondly, the electric guitars that complete the transformation in production enter in a gesturally unnatural way. This diverts attention away from the shift in production aesthetic.

[12] Discussion of *I Knew You Were Trouble* in relation to authenticity of experience in chapter 5.1.2.1

Wrecking Ball shares the approach to panning witnessed in *I Knew You Were Trouble* and *Beautiful Girls*. In all these tracks, a narrow stereo spread that corresponds to an imitation of the original recording is transformed into a wide stereo image associated with rock style functional production when a contrasting punk-rock style is launched. Furthermore, the instrument entries follow the arrangement previously discussed in *I Knew You Were Trouble*; a centrally placed non-distorted electric guitar is supplemented by a electric bass guitar and wider drum set, before the final jolt into a fully exploited stereo space is established by two distorted electric guitars.

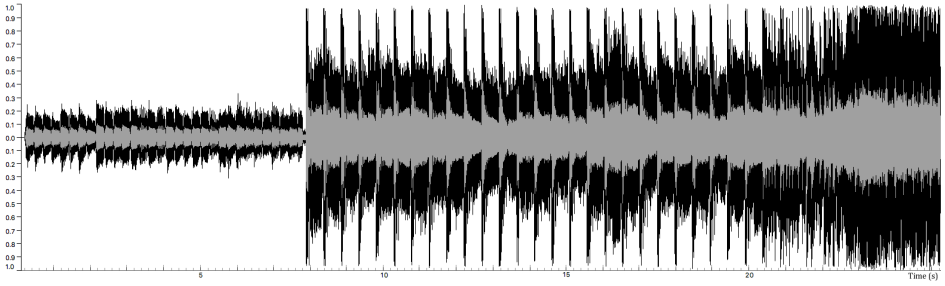


Fig. 6-12: Waveform analysis of *Wrecking Ball* (0:00 – 0:25) as recorded by August Burns Red

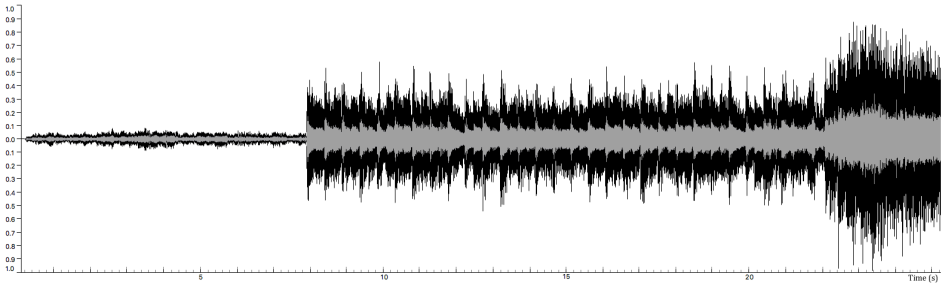


Fig. 6-13: Waveform analysis of *Wrecking Ball* (0:00 – 0:25) as recorded by August Burns Red with centrally placed audio removed

The track begins with a gesturally transformed imitation of the Miley Cyrus recording of *Wrecking Ball*. In attempting to recreate Cyrus's distinctive synthesizer chord phrase, August Burns Red mimic the delay effect applied to

Cyrus's original by strumming each occurrence of the chord, regardless of whether it is an echo or otherwise.
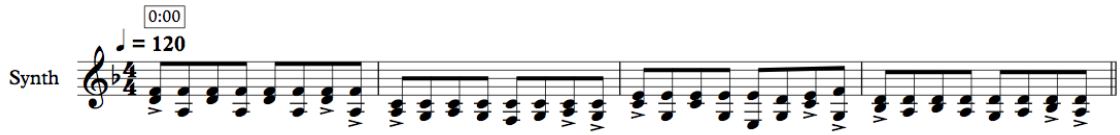


Fig. 6-14: Transcription of introduction to *Wrecking Ball* as recorded by Miley Cyrus

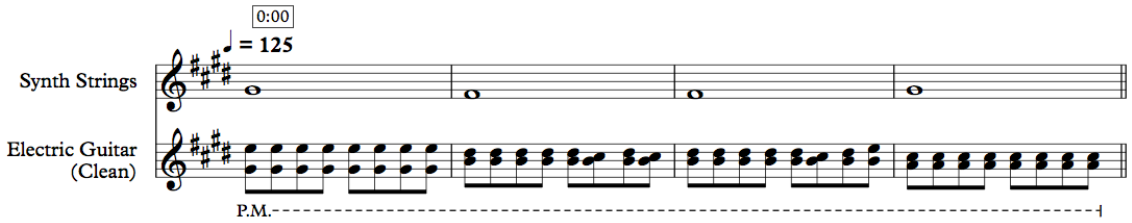


Fig. 6-15: Transcription of introduction to *Wrecking Ball* as recorded by August Burns Red

Not only does the dynamically and texturally consistent guitar performance alter the perceived tempo of the track (following Justin London's guidelines regarding grouping sensitivity at differing speeds), but also it completely alters the gestural reading of the track.[13] Where the lack of reverb and attacking instrumental timbres of Cyrus's synth imply an agitated and curt character, a texturally thin palm-muted electric guitar swamped in reverb endorses an embodied, more literal sense of resigned isolation and solitude.

August Burn Red follows Cyrus in locating this opening phrase centrally. Although readings are registered in the above no-centre waveform analysis (Fig. 6-13), the lack of any distinct peaks and the relative smoothness of the output can be attributed to the liberal application of stereo reverb, similar to that understood in the previous analysis of *Beautiful Girls* (chapter 6.2.1.1).

The initial widening of the stereo image is generated by the introduction of the drum set at 0:08. This stereo broadening can be observed in Fig. 6-13, where

[13] London, *Hearing In Time* (2004), pp. 48-65

the increase in output signals audio emanating from a non-central source. However, there are significant differences in Fig. 6-12 and Fig. 6-13 between 0:08 and 0:22. Fig. 6-12 has pronounced peaks that are compressed when the centrally located audio is removed in Fig. 6-13. The prominent peaks can be attributed to the centrally placed bass drum, yet there is still a significant amount of audio away from the centre. These readings illustrate the dynamic and textural prominence of the panned ride, splash and hi-hat cymbals at locations that elicit a drum set of exaggerated width.

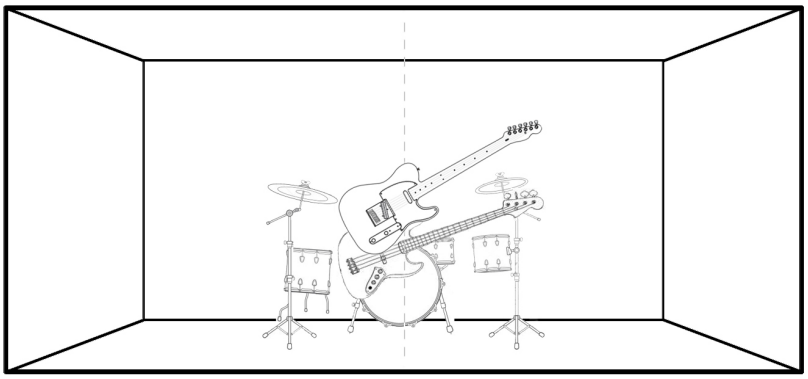


Fig. 6-16: Sound-box analysis of *Wrecking Ball* (0:08) by August Burns Red

This initial widening of the stereo spectrum at 0:08 correlates with the preliminary movements away from an imitation of the synthesized pop style of the Cyrus original and further gestural transformations triggered by the sudden redrawing of the virtual performance space. The sudden introduction of other band members (lead electric guitar, electric bass and drum set) and the expansion of the stereo width stands in contrast to the initial perception of a single performing guitarist with acousmatic accompaniment. Combined with an ostensible reduction in stereo reverb, the introduction of other band members shifts the gestural interpretation from a desolate electric guitarist into a virtual public performance space with his companions.

Where the initial movements into a stereo soundworld are small in the We Came As Romans recording of *I Knew You Were Trouble*, the sizeable shift in the *Wrecking Ball* stereo width at 0:08 is marked against the quasi-mono opening. This stereo expansion has connotations for the gestural and stylistic context against which any further changes that may occur will be compared as the track progresses. One such change that transpires is the eventual launch of two heavily distorted electric guitars that are panned to opposing extremes, completing the ideal image of a live performance setup.

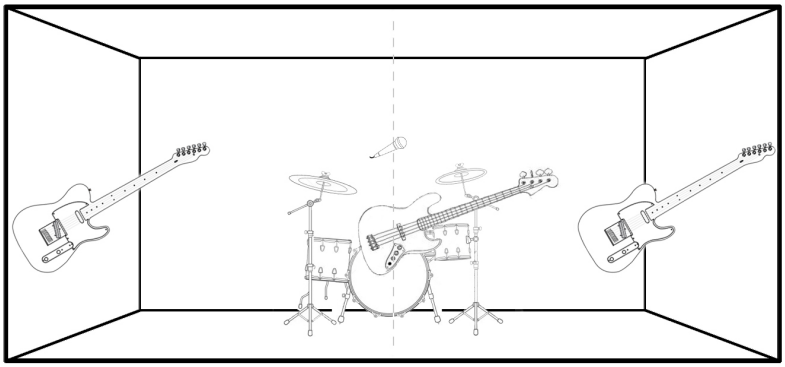


Fig. 6-17: Sound-box analysis for *Wrecking Ball* (0:23) by August Burns Red

While this final leap into a full stereo spectrum (illustrated in Fig. 6-17) coincides with the eventual presentation of what is understood as the typical metal-core style of August Burns Red, the perception of this final stereo expansion is tempered by the previous marked shift at 0:08. It is quite clear that the differing application of panning (and functional staging as a whole) is being used to assist in projecting a heightened sense of stylistic, listener-centric and personal authenticity, yet the listener does not feel the full effectiveness of the change in panning at the point where the two distorted electric guitars enter. While the sudden movement to a wide stereo image in *Beautiful Girls* (at 0:13) amplifies the use of functional staging production and the projection of rock music authenticity relating to the perception of a live performance, the stepwise movement in

Wrecking Ball does not create the same impact. Even though a centrally panned introduction is followed by a stereo depiction of a live performance, the gesturally confusing exaggerated width of the drum set blurs the boundary between the quasi-mono pop imitation and the eventual presentation of August Burns Red's punk-rock style. The August Burns Red drum set creates a transitional section, affecting the intensity of the eventual movement to a full stereo width and their attempts to elicit authenticity.

Although the influence of panning in amplifying the projection of live performance and related authenticities is diminished in *Wrecking Ball*, it does not explain fully why the second expansion at 0:23 into a production aesthetic that uses the full width of the stereo spectrum is less distinct and less effective than the first shift at 0:08. I believe the production change at 0:23 is undermined by the gesturally confusing entry of the distorted electric guitars – the instrumental elements that provide the final thrust into a full stereo width from 0:23 onwards.

The opposing distorted guitars swell from silence to dynamic prominence in beats three and four of bar twelve, providing a structural gesture that hints at the movement into a new hypermetric section.[14] The textural and dynamic nuances that can be discerned throughout this two-beat entry imply that J.B. Brubaker and Brent Rambler (guitarists for August Burns Red) strum their opening chords with a quaver pulse. This interpretation is transcribed in Fig. 6-18:

[14] Structural gesture from Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures* (2004)
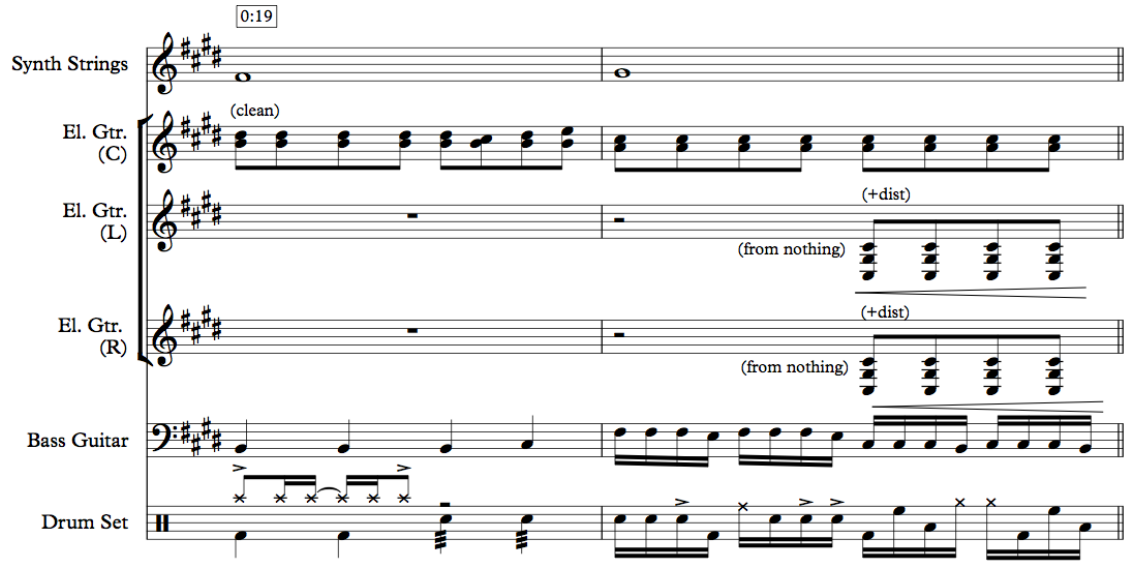


Fig. 6-18: Transcription of *Wrecking Ball* by August Burns Red, bb. 11 – 12

However, this interpreted performance action is gesturally incongruent with the swift and smooth dynamic crescendo of the guitars. The crescendo gives the impression of being manufactured as the consistent distortion timbre implies a post-production fade-in as opposed to the turning up of the guitar, which would create an intensification of distortion not observed here.[15] The entry of the distorted electric guitars is conspicuous. Non-feedback guitar fade-ins fused with the image of a strumming guitarist creates gestural confusion. Where the retrospective interpretation of the typically unprepared and sudden entrance of the drum set and electric bass at 0:08 implies that the performers were "on-stage" waiting to begin, the unusual guitar entry creates no such gestural interpretation. There is no obvious interpretation that produces the successful projection of a live performance.

The artificial guitar entry undermines the enlarging of the stereo image that should amplify the live performance interpretation. The guitar entry briefly

[15] The differences in sonic character between these two types of guitar crescendo is discussed in chapter 6.3.1.2.1

destabilises August Burns Red's functional staging, bringing into question the ideal live performance that is central to ascriptions of authenticity in rock music.

6.3 EQUALISATION

The manipulation of equalisation is also used in *Punk Goes…* cover-versions to assist in the projection of authenticity. In this section, I will use the theory of gestural transformation to examine the relationship between equalisation and authenticity. I will investigate examples where equalisation is engineered to generate an "AM-radio special effect" in the *Punk Goes…* series. The effect does not remove all sense of embodied performance, but relocates them to a position not directly in front of the listener. I label parts of the track that are understood as having been created through human attendance to musical instruments but crucially understood as emanating from an AM-radio broadcast as being *gesturally displaced*.

The AM-radio effect is a recurring trait in *Punk Goes…* cover-versions. The effect requires particular manipulation of equalisation and is applied in parts of the track that mimic the musical style of the original. In these cover sections, the track is made to sound as though it is being transmitted over and listened to on a transistor radio. The effect is commonly marked and has clear implications for gestural character. Firstly, the drastic alteration of the frequency balance in itself will modify the timbres of the performed instrumental parts, altering their gestural interpretation. Secondly, the embodied perceptual-imaginative response to the *Punk Goes…* artist's own punk-rock style is augmented by the juxtaposition of this aesthetic antithesis. These AM-radio sections are commonly juxtaposed against punk-rock style sections where the equalisation restrictions are lifted, allowing a

relatively larger (conceivably full) range of the available frequency spectrum to be heard. Juxtaposing a sonically muffled and stylistically imitative section directly against the broader frequency range of the punk-rock sections heightens the sense of unmediated performance that rock music functional production aims to construct. The lifting of a literal sonic restriction can be interpreted as a lifting of a metaphorical shroud that obscuring the listener from clearly hearing and virtually seeing the artists perform. The following case studies draw attention to shifts of production that alter the gestural interpretation. Using the tool of gestural transformation, I examine the differences between the juxtaposed production styles to describe the way in which the equalisation shifts affect the projection and ascription of authenticity.

Considering the use of equalisation as a special effect is distinct from previous discussions of equalisation in gestural transformation. These have inevitably included discussion of equalisation, albeit only implied, via the consideration of recorded instrumental timbre, for it is very rare for any recorded instrument to have not been doctored in this way. Equalisation is a central element of production. When discussed in relation to functional production, equalisation is commonly described in relation to mixing and mastering and as having two main functions. Firstly, it is used to adjust the timbre of each instrumental track according to the personal preference of the producer and artist. Secondly, it is used to attenuate or boost specific areas of the frequency spectrum from each of the individual recorded parts, so as to allow each instrument to be heard.[16] For instance, it has recently become common practice for producers of commercial pop tracks to temper particular frequency ranges of the entire backing tracks so as to leave space for the star vocalist. This practice is used extensively on Taylor Swift's

[16] For an in-depth discussion, see White & Houghton, 'Using EQ', *Sound On Sound*: non-scholarly reference #38

1989 album (2014). Here, the producers scoop away frequencies between 200Hz and 400Hz in a majority of the tracks (in particular *Shake It Off* and *Blank Space*), which corresponds to the fundamental frequencies of sung female vocals. Such frequency attenuation results in Swift's vocals not clashing against other instrumental parts and encouraging the vocals to be understood as the primary focus of the track.

6.3.1 AM-Radio Special Effect

Although equalisation plays a central role in the production of any recorded track, its use as a special effect in the *Punk Goes…* cover-versions is striking. In the introduction of tracks such as *Payphone* by Crown The Empire (2012), *I'm Real* by The Starting Line (2002) and *Over My Head (Cable Car)* by A Day To Remember (2009), the listener perceives a production aesthetic unusual for contemporary studio recordings. It is instantly clear that an effect has been applied that makes these tracks sound as though they are coming from a small transistor radio. This interpretation results in a tempering of any embodied interpretation. This is opposed to the typical high fidelity sound modern rock music listeners have become accustomed to.

Manipulation of the overall equalisation is central to the creation of this effect. The AM-radio special effect is created by applying a combination of particular low-pass and high-pass frequency filters to significantly temper high and low frequency ranges above 5kHz and below 300Hz. Fig. 6-19 diagrammatically illustrates a typical parametric equaliser setup used to apply the effect:

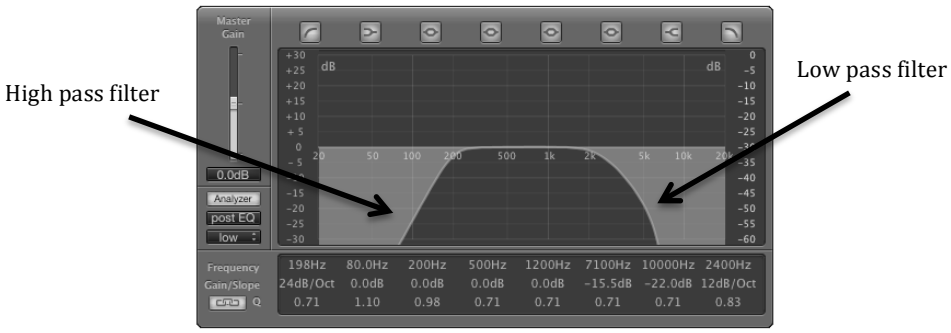


Fig. 6-19: Screenshot of parametric equaliser from Logic Pro, with high-pass and low-pass filters (labelled) applied to create a typical AM-radio effect

When applied to audio, the low-pass filter attenuates frequencies above the 2kHz mark culminating in silence upwards from 5kHz and the high-pass filter functions from around 300Hz capping at an infinite attenuation around 75Hz. That the application of this equalisation curve sounds like an AM transmission heard over a personal radio is no coincidence. AM transmissions are generally limited to a 5kHz bandwidth, which results in heavy attenuation above that figure. A low-pass filter to cut off frequencies above that 5kHz mark is used to mimic this technological characteristic. Similarly, the high-pass filter to screen the low-end frequencies is used to mimic the poor bass response of the small speaker systems that are usually associated with the outmoded AM technology. To further imply the AM-radio source, the above equalisation curve is often applied in conjunction with a narrow panning to replicate hearing the sound from single source; in this case, a small radio set.

Whilst the filtering witnessed in Fig. 6-19 does not tend to significantly affect the voice, it does compromise the broadcasting of music to a much greater degree. This is particularly relevant in rock music as the discernible frequencies of drum set percussion and distorted electric guitars (instruments that are central to the style) exceed the range affected by the AM-radio special effect. The equalisation curve shown in Fig. 6-19 was applied to the opening four measures of

All I Want by A Day To Remember (2010). Fig. 6-20 and Fig. 6-21 demonstrates the differences the application of equalisation makes to the audio:

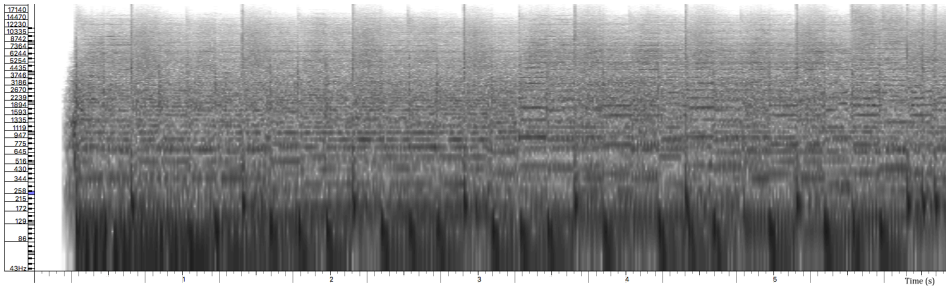


Fig. 6-20: Spectrogram analysis of *All I Want* (0:00 – 0:06) as recorded by A Day To Remember

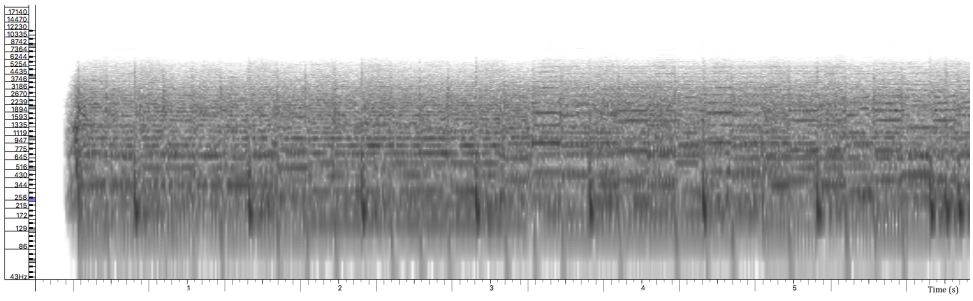


Fig. 6-21: Spectrogram analysis of *All I Want* (0:00 – 0:06) as recorded by A Day To Remember with equalisation filters seen in Fig. 6-19 applied

The application of the equalisation filter significantly affects the upper and lower frequency response, whilst the central spectrum of frequencies goes unaltered. Regarding the upper frequencies, note the manner in which Fig. 6-20 has activity up to and beyond the 18kHz mark, whereas the application of a low-pass filter in Fig. 6-21 begins to temper the readings from 2.5kHz ultimately culminating in silence from approximately 5kHz upwards. Use of a high-pass filter affects the output of the lower frequencies. There is a substantial lightening of the Fig. 6-21 spectrogram below 258Hz, which is a result of the applied equalisation filters reducing the volume of the lower frequencies to the point where some transitory silences appear around the 50Hz mark.

Examples taken from the *Punk Goes...* albums may not result in the exact results seen in Fig. 6-21, but this example does demonstrate the general tendency of such an equalisation-based effect to heavily attenuate frequencies outside the 300Hz to 5kHz frequency spectrum. As such, only a restricted, narrow band of frequencies is heard in those sections of those *Punk Goes…* cover-versions that use this style of radio effect as opposed to an unrestricted frequency spectrum where the effect is not used.

These equalisation-based allusions to AM-radio transmissions are a form of acoustic cartooning. This is despite the fact that it does not sound little like a typical encounter with the original track over a radio (most modern broadcasts are digital), nor does it sound like an *actual* AM transmission, as it can be described as an ideal one with no signal interference for instance.

In the three cover-versions examined at the beginning of this section on equalisation (*Payphone, I'm Real* and *Over My Head (Cable Car)*), the recording artists use the radio broadcast aesthetic to highlight their act of imitating the song's original recording. Even though the cover sections are created through allosonic imitation, the use of the equalisation filters to produce the radio sound fosters a gesturally displaced interpretation for the listener. Without the equalisation filter applied, the production and inherent performance nuances would foster an embodied and unmediated live concert interpretation, yet the application of the AM-radio style effect encourages the interpretation that the sound has come from a gesturally displaced source. The AM-radio production aesthetic tempers any sense of direct, unmediated perceptual-imaginative interpretation. The application of an equalisation filter gesturally transformeds the performed instrumental parts. Where previous analyses have highlighted the common trend to transform synthesized or acousmatic elements into gesturally

rich interpretations (as witnessed in *Royals* by Youth In Revolt), the application of the AM-radio special effect has reversed the transformation back to what is interpreted as gesturally devoid or displaced sound. In *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* for instance, Woe, Is Me recreate Katy Perry's recording. Yet where the Perry's track is created by looping phrases and a prominent drum machine timbre that brings into question the embodied quality of the other instruments, Woe, Is Me generate a non-performed interpretation via the AM-radio aesthetic. The effect reverses the embodied interpretation that would be present in their allosonic reproduction.

In *Punk Goes...* tracks, the radio effect is married to an imitation of the original track's style and contrasts against functionally produced punk-rock sections. *Punk Goes...* artists assume a level of familiarity between the listener and the original recording, the central purpose of the AM-radio aesthetic in these cover-versions is to serve as a discreet reference for the experienced listener, reminding them of how they likely encountered the original track for the first time. This assumption is supported in the following excerpt from an interview with Bert Ponchet, vocalist with Chunk! No, Captain Chunk!;

> I mean, that is the advantage to making a cover; people will know the song, the basis, and they'll enjoy the thing that they already know, but you bring some more stuff so that they can enjoy it even more.[17]

The AM-radio aesthetic sections make explicit the notion that there is another recording of the track, even for those listeners that may not have heard or even be aware of an original recording.

[17] Quote taken from author conducted interview with Bert Ponchet, Rock City, Nottingham, 13th September 2013. See Appendix for transcription of interview.

Through either route, listeners are encouraged to infer meaning between the equalisation-based special effect being overtly connected to the stylistic imitation of the original track. The link most obviously implies that these AM-radio sections are a reproduction, both literally and metaphorically. Firstly, they are a literal reproduction as the *Punk Goes…* artist has covered the original track through rerecording the parts themselves. Even in the those cases of cover-versions where the imitation is gesturally transformed and results in a markedly different recording, such as *Payphone* by Crown The Empire and *Grenade* by Memphis May Fire (2012). The subsequent presentation of the *Punk Goes…* artist's own style retrospectively highlights the similarities to the original and reinforces the notion that it is an imitation. Secondly, these AM-radio sections are metaphorical reproductions through the insinuation that these tracks are heard on the radio – a medium that creates programming around recordings. From the point of view of punk-rock artists and fans, popular music radio programming implies assumed commercialised motives, pseudo-individuality and mass market replication, which ties into notions of positionality. Beyond the projection of personal positionality authenticity by the *Punk Goes…* artists, the listener is also authenticated through an authenticity of experience. In opposition to the manner commonly projected in rock music, the AM-radio aesthetic tied to an imitation of the original track captures the manner in which the original version is likely to have been encountered on the radio. The *Punk Goes…* artist is clearly demonstrating knowledge and understanding of their audience by demonstrating and sonically replicating how they would encounter specific types of music. Be that the punk-rock style in a live performance setting or the radio-friendly pop chart style over the radio.

The AM-radio special effect also manipulates the projection and ascription of authenticity relating to the functionally staged punk-rock sections. Even though the broad frequency range is typical for rock music functional production, the construction of an AM-radio context augments the use of a broader frequency spectrum. The shift into the functionally produced section is marked and subsequently assists in augmenting the embodied response for the punk-rock style sections. Where the application of the equalisation filters makes the instruments in the imitative sections sound stifled and mediated, the lifting of the equalisation effect for the punk-rock style amplifies the projection of an unmediated musical presentation. This projection is tied to notions of authenticity of expression.

Each instrumental part is given a presence, sonically and gesturally. 'Presence' in discussion of equalisation relates to an increase of the upper-mid frequencies that commonly corresponds to upper partials of vocals and a majority of instruments – an effect that is commonly referred to as making the instrument in question sound more "present" in a metaphorical gestural sense.[18] The functional staging encourages the listener to understand the shift into the punk-rock section as the band beginning their performance, even though this interpretation contradicts evidence on record. The band have already started performing in a literal sense, yet the AM-radio aesthetic gesturally transforms any embodied interpretation into gesturally displaced sound.

Directly juxtaposing an imitation of the original track against the performed punk-rock version amplifies ascriptions of authenticity. The interpretation that a musician has performed their own parts in a concert setting is likely to be interpreted as having more value than its quasi-acousmatic counterpart for rock music audiences. Beyond notions of positionality and listener authenticity

[18] Jackson, *Ultimate Bench Warrior,* (2008) p. 75: non-scholarly reference #42

previously cited, a stylistic authenticity is generated in producing the stylistic "other" in a manner that opposes an authentic rock music performance (narrow, restricted, indirect gestures, pop style heard over a radio).

However, this is not to say that all instances of this special effect are used to invite comment upon or generate authenticity. It is difficult to assign any sense of authenticity projection or commentary in relate self-composed tracks such as Four Year Strong's *Catastrophe* (2008), *Identity Crisis* by Thrice (2000) and *Taking Chances* by Chunk! No, Captain Chunk (2013) – all artists who have appeared on various *Punk Goes…* compilation albums. These three tracks are amongst many where the effect is applied to sections of tracks that are understood to have been performed by the artists in their own musical style. As stated, significant in the *Punk Goes…* cover-versions is that the use of the radio aesthetic is tied to a musical style understood as being foreign to the *Punk Goes…* artist. This is not the case in the three examples cited here. The use of the effect in these three tracks primarily masks the repetitive nature of the track's form, generating aesthetic interest between hypermetric sections. Similarly, the use of the effect on vocals alone (leaving the rest of the instrumental backing unaffected) can result in a shift of narrative voice, commonly from public to private as demonstrated in the My Chemical Romance track *Give 'Em Hell, Kid* (2004).

6.3.1.1 *I'M REAL* BY JENNIFER LOPEZ / THE STARTING LINE

The switch from AM-radio aesthetic to a production design can vary between gradual to abrupt. In *Grenade* by Memphis May Fire (2012), *Call Me Maybe* by Upon This Dawning (2012) and *You Belong With Me* by For All Those Sleeping (2011), a sudden and distinct shift from filtered opening to functionally staged live

performance occurs when the band switch from cover to version. A similar arrangement occurs in *I'm Real* by The Starting Line (2002). In this track, the switch in production corresponds to a switch in style, amplifying both the embodied and unmediated live performance interpretation of the punk-rock section and the identification of an imitative cover introduction – despite the fact that it relies little on Jennifer Lopez's original (2001).

An equalisation filter comparable to that demonstrated in Fig. 6-19 is used for the opening nine seconds. Its application results in the listener understanding the introduction as emanating from an AM-radio, as opposed to an unmediated live performance in front of the listener. Although the change of instrumental timbre is most significant in relation to the gestural transformation, panning every instrument to the centre assists in projecting the AM-radio aesthetic. The centralised instrumentation generates the impression that the sound is coming from a single source in front of the listener, rather than coming from a set of musicians spread across a stage.

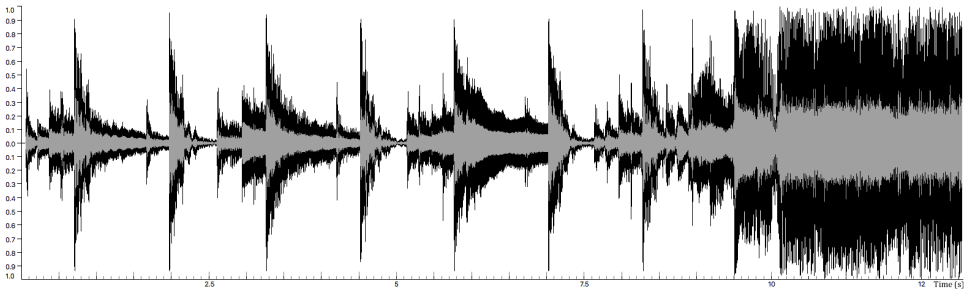


Fig. 6-22: Waveform analysis of *I'm Real* (0:00 – 0:12) by The Starting Line

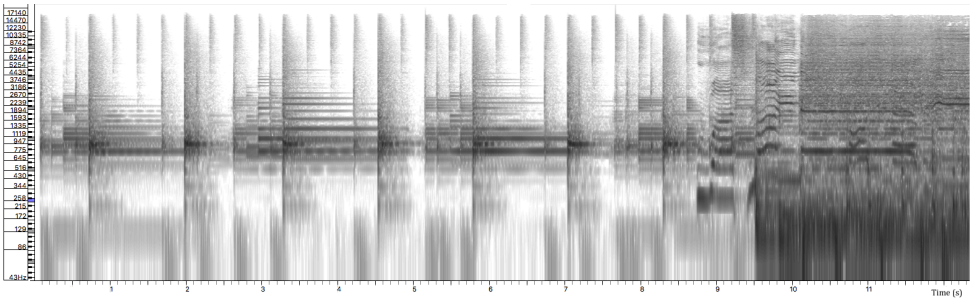


Fig. 6-23: Spectrogram analysis of *I'm Real* (0:00 – 0:12) by The Starting Line

Fig. 6-23 illustrates the application of the equalisation filters. In the introduction section (0:00 – 0:09), witness how the shading of the spectrogram is focussed between 400Hz and 4kHz. This narrow range of heard frequencies is consistent with the AM-radio special effect. The effect implies the presence of a previous version. In alluding to the fact that this track is emanating from a radio, The Starting Line create the impression that the introduction is a recording of a recording – that this introduction has been taken from a previously released recording.

Both the waveform and spectrogram highlight a change in the sonic texture which occurs between 0:09 – 0:10. Such a change denotes when the equalisation filters are lifted. Although the spectrogram implies that the change in production aesthetic occurs over the course of two beats, the listener interprets the switch as being entirely instant and occurring at 9.5 seconds, beat four of bar four.
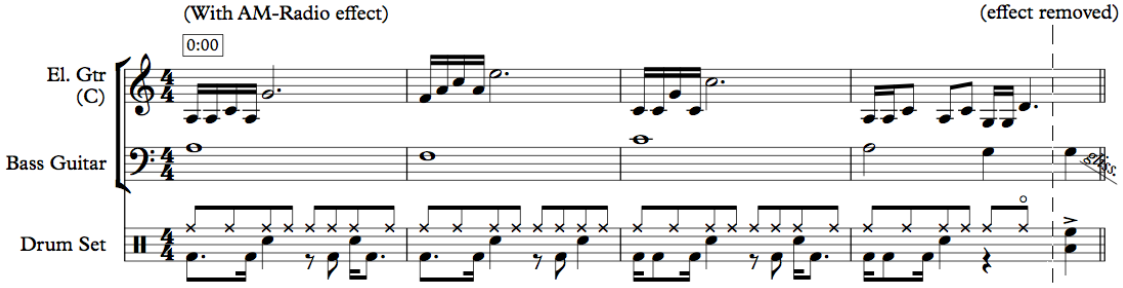


Fig. 6-24: Transcription of introduction to *I'm Real* as recorded by The Starting Line

The spectrogram shows a small change in texture at 9 seconds (beat three of bar four), marked by a dark patch between 258Hz and 430Hz and increased activity around 10kHz. This marks the introduction of the dominant lead vocal. Where the launch of the central and principal vocal could be interpreted as the moment when the gesturally displaced introduction is abandoned, the switch actually occurs at 9.5 seconds (beat four of bar four) as highlighted by the point when the frequencies below 200Hz suddenly darken. This most readily noticeable

change in sonic texture marks the moment when the listener perceived that the equalisation filter has been removed.

The lifting of the AM-radio aesthetic at beat four is signalled by the sudden change in percussion timbres (synchronised bass drum, floor tom and snare drum). While the vocals enter a beat prior, these are not significant in the gestural transformation from radio broadcast to embodied live performance. This is because the listener has no prior vocals with which to compare and the filters do not affect the sonic attributes (the frequency range) of the vocal. The spectrogram captures the fundamental and harmonic frequencies inherent in Kenny Vasoli's voice (lead singer of The Starting Line) – understood as being unaffected by the equalisation filter. It is the percussion timbres that are most readily affected with the sudden and unexpected change in percussion timbres. These are marked against the preceding percussion sounds that are heavily affected by the equalisation filters. This clear distinction marks the moment when the gestural interpretation changes.

Even though a listener understands the acoustic cartooning as listening to a radio broadcast, this introduction has been clearly performed by the band. The presence of performance nuance in the electric guitar phrase (dynamic and rhythmic are most observable) should imply an interpretation of a live performance, yet the application of the equalisation filter is pivotal in fostering the interpretation that the introduction is emanating from a radio, rather than an unmediated live performance directly before the listener. Where other cover-versions such as the Asking Alexandria cover-version of Nine Inch Nails's *Closer* (2014), or the reworking of Katy Perry's *Hot N Cold* by Woe, Is Me (2010) may be understood as completely lacking an embodied element and as such be considered acousmatic in genesis, the application of the radio transmission production style

on recorded performance causes a gestural transformation that renders the introduction gesturally displaced.

The shift of production aesthetic also corresponds with a shift in performative gestures. Although the shift from AM-radio to projected live performance is one central aspect, I suggest that listeners are able to listen "past" the equalisation effects to reconstruct the performative gestures of the musicians. If we understand the introduction as having been performed (albeit displaced and we're hearing a recording of a recording), interpretation of the performative gestures will occur. Examined in detail in chapter 6.3.1.2 (analysis of *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire), the introduction to *I'm Real* features texturally thin electric guitar, rhythmic uncertainty, thin drum textures, and an overarching quiet dynamic. These characteristics all support the interpretation of relaxed, nonchalant performative gestures.

A sudden shift in gestural character occurs when the AM-radio effect is rescinded. Although augmented by the change of production, the introductory gestural character is replaced by an agitated, boisterous, and unsettling performative style. Though this occurs across the entire band, it is most clearly perceived in the drum set. The relaxed attendance to the drum set in the introduction is replaced by a forceful performance style, supported by uniformly loud and dense drum timbres, rhythmic anticipation (striking notes before the projected pulse), and the sudden lift in dynamic.

Although The Starting Line may have performed and recorded the introduction, the AM-radio aesthetic diminishes the immediate virtual presence of the band in relation to a listener's perceptual-imaginative response. It should be considered no coincidence that this gestural displacement is in opposition to the general objective of rock music functional record production in which an

unmediated live performance is projected. Where rock music functional staging attempts to conceal the studio-based method of a recorded track, the acoustic cartooning of a radio transmission draws attention to the recorded medium. The listener perceives that they are not only listening to a radio, but they are listening to a recorded version of the track on a radio programme. Even though references to the musical material of the original are unclear, retrospective interpretation following the introduction highlights a projected authenticity of experience on behalf of the listener, whereby The Starting Line have alluded the listener's encounters with the original Jennifer Lopez track, and the assumptions regarding chart music made for radio audiences. Taking positionality into consideration, the creation of an overtly mediated performance that musically references the Jennifer Lopez original could be understood as a satirical swipe at the digitally sampled, loop-based aesthetic garnered from Jennifer Lopez's original version of the song, and of most RnB style chart music.

With the production and ascription of authenticity in rock music tracks bound to an interpreted live performance perceptual-imaginative response, any production component that comments upon or alters this sense can be viewed as an attempt to generate authenticity by the *Punk Goes...* artist. In *I'm Real*, the application of equalisation filters in the introduction (combined with an absolutely centralised panning and next-to-no reverb) creates a sonic foil against which a functionally produced punk-rock style is posited. The sudden expansion of the frequency spectrum that occurs at 9.5 seconds heightens the embodied perceptual-imaginative response typically garnered from functional production and amplifies the change in interpreted gestural character.

6.3.1.2 *INTERSTATE LOVE SONG* BY STONE TEMPLE PILOTS / MEMPHIS MAY FIRE

Where the analysis of *I'm Real* demonstrates an abrupt shift away from the AM-radio aesthetic, other tracks exhibit a more gradual movement. Gradual shifts of production style occur in a number of ways. A stepwise change occurs in tracks such as *Glad You Came* by We Came As Romans (which corresponds with the stepwise widening of the stereo image discussed in chapter 6.2.1.2), whereas a more continual change transpires in tracks such as *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me, *Payphone* by Crown The Empire, and *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire (2014). A slow and continual relinquishing of the equalisation filters has consequences for the gestural transformation. The gradual change of aesthetic can diminish the power of a definitive shift into an embodied live performance as witnessed in *I'm Real*. To combat this, tracks combine the gradual change of production style with rhetorical gestures that generate a quasi-stepwise leap into the functional staging production style, retaining the intensity of gestural shift.

The use of the AM-radio aesthetic in *Interstate Love Song* is similar to many *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions in that the effect is used in the introduction of the Memphis May Fire recording (0:00 – 0:17) and it is tied to an imitation of the original Stone Temple Pilots recording. Where an abrupt juxtaposition of production styles amplifies the change of gestural character in tracks such as *I'm Real, Grenade*, *Call Me Maybe,* and *You Belong With Me*, the gradual change of production in *Interstate Love Song* should result in a slow, measured shift into an embodied perceptual-imaginative response. However, the shift into a perceived live performance is no less conclusive thanks to the use of a rhetorical pause and a profound shift from a laid-back gestural style and more intense, enthusiastic, and

forceful gestural character. The retention of the laid-back gestural character is also intrinsic to retaining the AM-radio aesthetic despite its gradual relinquishing.

In imitating the style of the original Stone Temple Pilots recording (1994), great efforts have been made by Memphis May Fire to retain the interpreted gestural character of the original *Interstate Love Song* introduction. In spite of that, the overt application of equalisation filters causes confusion not only in relation to which band's recording is being heard, but also as to how and whether a gestural transformation has been generated at all. Although on one hand it is clear that the radio effect diminishes the immediate virtual presence of the musicians in relation to the perceptual-imaginative response (and thus, is a gestural transformation), the confusion regarding as to which band we are listening to implies that Memphis May Fire have somehow retained the gestural character of the Stone Temple Pilots original. In the following analysis, I examine how the application of the AM-radio special effect masks the nuanced differences between the recordings and how it is possible for the listener to hear "past" the radio style aesthetic, reconstructing the Memphis May Fire performance as would be heard without the equalisation filters. This results in a performance that is understood as gesturally comparable to the Stone Temple Pilots recording.

6.3.1.2.1 ORIGINAL STONE TEMPLE PILOTS RECORDING

Interstate Love Song is a MOR rock track written and originally recorded by Stone Temple Pilots. The third single release from their album *Purple* (1994), the track peaked at number eighteen in the United States Billboard charts and was the best selling rock single in the United States for a fifteen week period between September 1994 and January 1995. The lyrics ambiguously portray Scott

Weiland's (lead vocalist of Stone Temple Pilots) struggles with heroin addiction and the effects it had on personal relationships at that time.[19] The song begins with a two-part introduction. The first half is performed in a quiet and gesturally relaxed manner (0:00 – 0:18), with an electric bass guitar, acoustic drum set and acoustic rhythm guitar (placed to the right of the stereo image) backing a left-sided electric guitar that plays a slow melodic lead with a fuzz effect added.
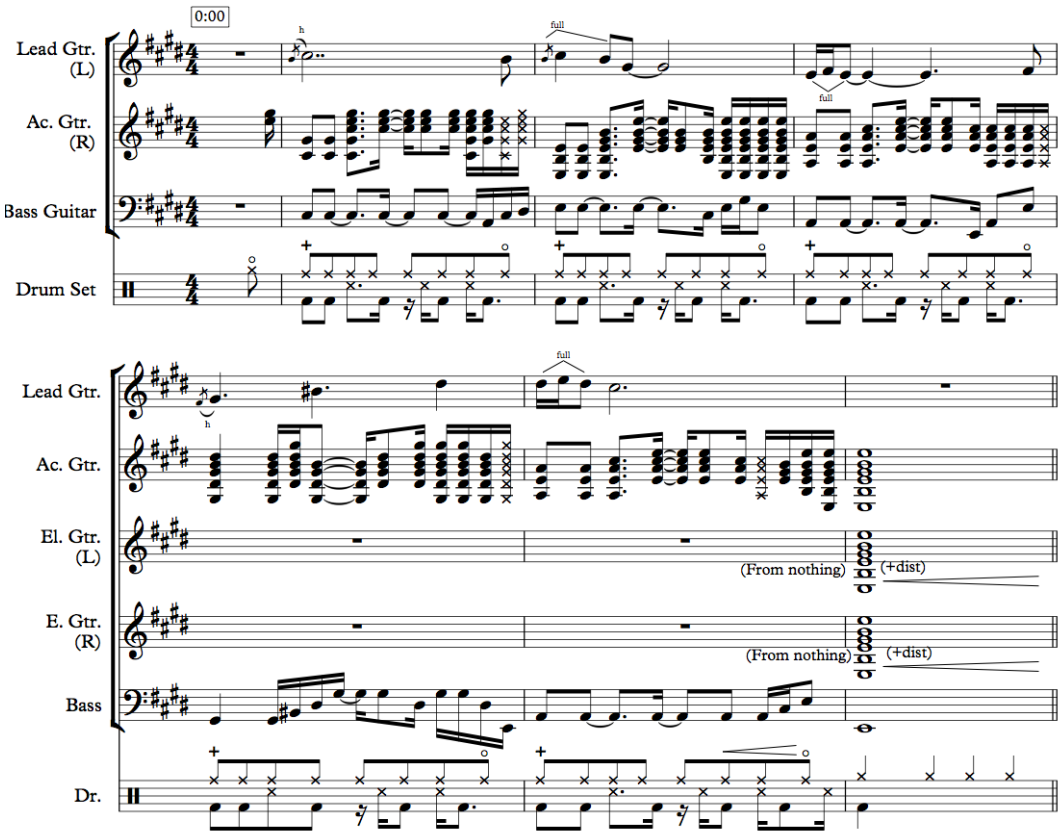


Fig. 6-25: Transcription of introduction to *Interstate Love Song* as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots

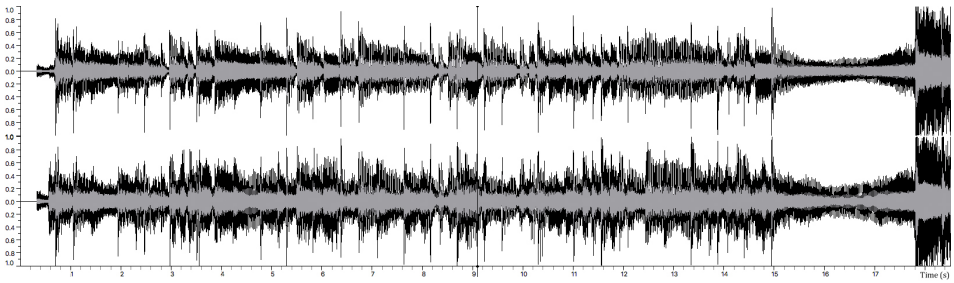


Fig. 6-26: Waveform analysis of introduction to *Interstate Love Song* as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots

[19] For full lyrics, see 'Interstate Love Song – Stone Temple Pilots', *Lyrics Genius*: non-scholarly reference #24

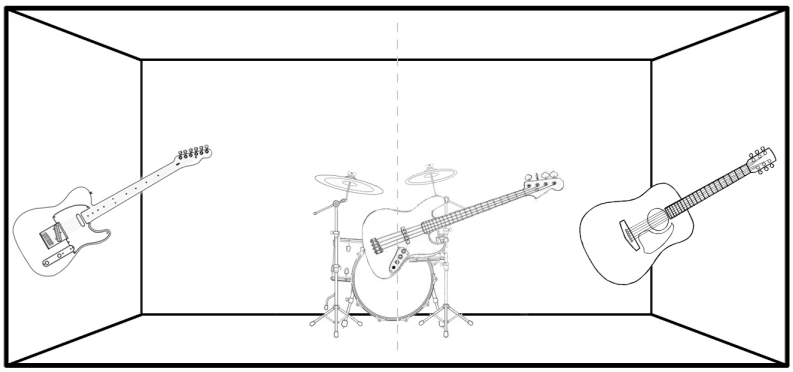


Fig. 6-27: Soundbox analysis of introduction to *Interstate Love Song* as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots

The instrumental timbres, a quiet dynamic with a distinct lack of dynamic uniformity and a perceived rhythmic instability elicit the gesturally relaxed nature of this introduction. Most significant are the texturally thin instrumental timbres. As concluded in the gestural analysis of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (chapter 2.3.2.1), a relatively thin sound emanating from a percussion instrument is often the result of a gentle physical contact with the instrument in question. In attending to the instrument in a physically soft manner, not only does the performer produce a relatively quieter dynamic, but also induce fewer harmonic overtones resulting in a relatively thinner instrumental texture.

These qualities are fostered across the entire ensemble. The dynamically uneven guitar tallies with this gestural interpretation. An even dynamic and uniform chordal balance would occur if the performer had attended to their instruments in a forceful manner.[20] These characteristics are in evidence across a majority of the *Interstate Love Song* instruments (especially so in the drum set and acoustic rhythm guitar). Although the instrumental timbre is key to this interpretation, considering the texturally thin quality of the instruments in isolation could lead to the track being interpreted as being sinister or ominous in

[20] For detailed explanation for this correlation, see the analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans (Chapter 5.1.2.1)

character – the noticeable rhythmic imprecision of the instrumental performances undermines this interpretation. Even though the rhythms are notated in the above transcription, such a reduction does not reveal the plethora of rhythmic nuances that are evident in the recording. The rhythmic nuances are most observable in the left-sided electric guitar part. The melodic lead constantly pushes ahead and falls behind the projected pulse. The novice-like inability to perform the melody with rhythmic accuracy (or in a legato fashion) projects the impression of carefree indifference, as if the performers are playing not for an audience but for their own pleasure.

The second half of the introduction is no less rhythmically relaxed, yet a number of changes cause a significant alteration to the gestural interpretation. The thicker instrumental timbres and increased dynamic are integral in shifting the interpretation into a public performance, more typical of functionally staged rock recordings. Linking the two interpreted states of performance (personal and public) is a dynamic and textural crescendo particular to the rock music style. It occurs over the course of the sixth measure following the closing chord of the quiet introduction.

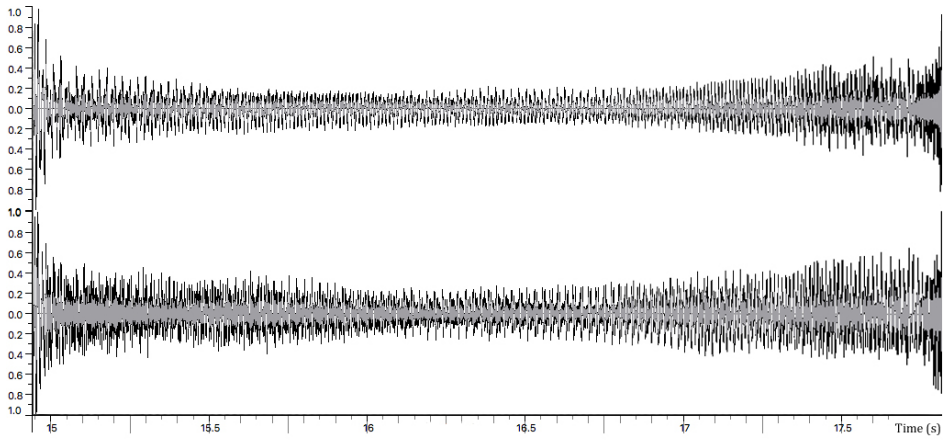


Fig. 6-28: Waveform analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (b.6) as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots

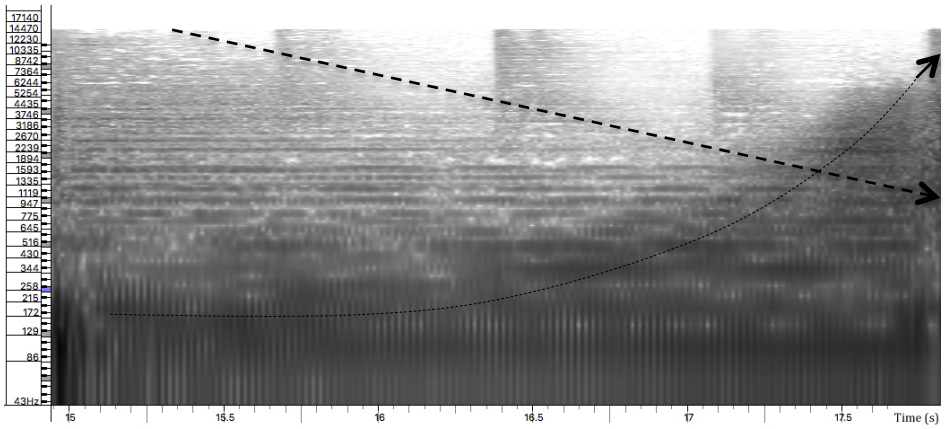


Fig. 6-29: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (b.6) as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots [21]

Where the percussive instruments (including guitars) decay from their onset (signified by the descending line in Fig. 6-29), the two guitars at either side of the *Interstate Love Song* stereo image become rapidly louder and increasingly distorted (signified by the curved ascending line), blending the clean timbres of the guitars from the first half into to the distorted guitars in the second half of the introduction – this is particularly the case in relation to the acoustic rhythm guitar.

The character of this particular crescendo is the consequence of the guitarist turning up the volume on the guitar as opposed to the amplifier. Where a volume change in the latter would result in a relatively uniform timbre regardless of the amplifier being quiet or loud, the increasing output from the electric guitar affects the timbre of the amplified output. Demonstrated in Fig. 6-30 and Fig. 6-31, increasing the input from the electric guitar changes the character of the distortion that is emitted from the amplifier. As the volume level of the electric guitar increases, the timbre of the amplified output changes due to the differing amounts of signal clipping that occur:

[21] Straight decreasing line plots the diminishing sustain of the semibreve chord; ascending curve plots the thickening of the texture created by the electric guitars

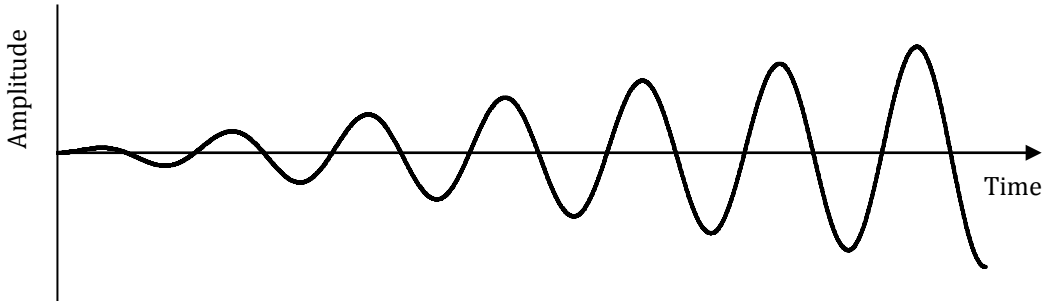


Fig. 6-30: Diagrammatic example of increasing output from guitar/increasing input into amplifier (single frequency)

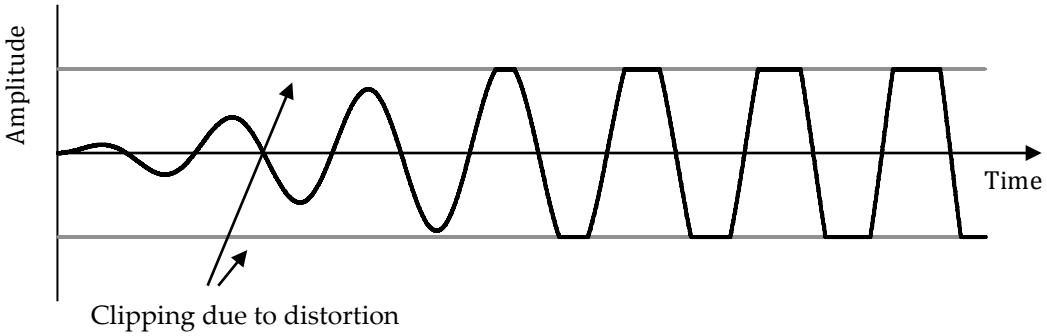


Fig. 6-31: Diagrammatic example highlighting clipping of Fig. 6-30 signal, resulting in gradual increase of distortion

Witness the gradual change of the wave in Fig. 6-31. As the input becomes louder, the more clipping and saturation of the original signal occurs. As more clipping occurs, the waveform contains a higher percentage of clipping, becoming progressively more distorted. Although the above figure demonstrates the effect with one constant frequency, the same effect occurs when applied to an electric guitar tone that is playing multiple notes, each with numerous overtones and/or resultant tones.

This change is important, as a louder version of the non-distorted timbre perceived in the opening eighteen seconds would not give the same gestural impression as the dynamic increase combined with a more coarse texture detected here. It is this form of timbral change that is apparent in Fig. 6-29. If the amplifier were turned up, a cross-frequency darkening would occur. As the textural density

builds from the lower frequencies, it implies that the guitarist has turned up their guitar. This timbral quality is key for the interpretation that the performer is moving from a personal to public performance. The implication is that the performer has exerted additional physical effort to generate sound that will reach beyond their personal space. This extra energy should not be misconstrued as anger. The presence of dynamic nuance and rhythmic imperfections retains the laid-back quality garnered from the opening passage.

These changes to the dynamic and timbre of both the distinctly panned guitars have a curious effect. Despite close examination of the crescendo revealing two distinctly recorded and panned guitar tracks, they gradually blend into one centrally placed guitar as the two guitars (performing identical musical material) become increasingly alike in terms of timbre. What were interpreted as two peripheral instrumental streams develops into a singular guitar that becomes a dominant part of the track in terms of location, dynamics and metaphorical size.

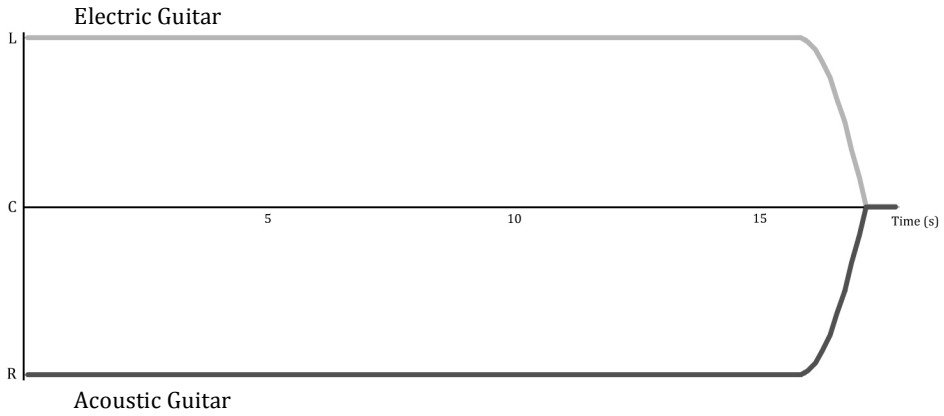


Fig. 6-32 – Diagrammatic illustration highlighting the implied movement of the guitars during the crescendo; witness how they move from the periphery of the stereo image to the focal centre as the distortion increases

However, the presence of performance nuance does disturb this absolute centrality. Where the two guitar parts are absolutely identical, their combination results in their positioning at a phantom centre. Where nuanced differences occur (be they rhythmic, dynamic or timbral), parts of the guitar phrase appear slightly

off centre. The nuances that appear to either side of the central position are not enough to displace the image of one central guitarist, yet they do make the guitar appear metaphorically broader than a singular recorded track placed centrally. In this instance, the prevailing perceptual-imaginative response is distinct from the evidence on record.

The guitar is not the only instrument that changes timbre over the two introductory sections. Although more subtle, the dynamic of the electric bass becomes more uniform (the loudest volume doesn't increase, but any sense of dynamic nuance is greatly diminished), which is interpreted as a more gesturally forceful performance as the player repeatedly matches the dynamic threshold of their instrument. The same applies to the acoustic drum set. Replacing the side-stick with a snare drum strike results in an obvious increase of volume and dynamic, but it is the texturally thicker drum timbres combined with a relative consistency of the individual drum set elements (the bass drum and snare drum in particular) that implies a more forceful attendance to the drum set in relation to the opening eighteen seconds of performance. The instrument can only attain a certain level of dynamic and textural intensity. Although the performer may be able to strike the instrument with more force, the threshold of the instrument dictates a consistent output despite possible fluctuations in the performer's attendance to the instrument.

6.3.1.2.2 MEMPHIS MAY FIRE COVER-VERSION

The opening moments of *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire are clearly understood as being both heavily indebted to the Stone Temple Pilots original and affected by an equalisation filter; the type demonstrated in Fig. 6-19. The

frequency response at the beginning of the track is restricted to a narrow range between 100Hz and 4kHz, with negligible sound emanating from above 2.5kHz and below 400Hz.

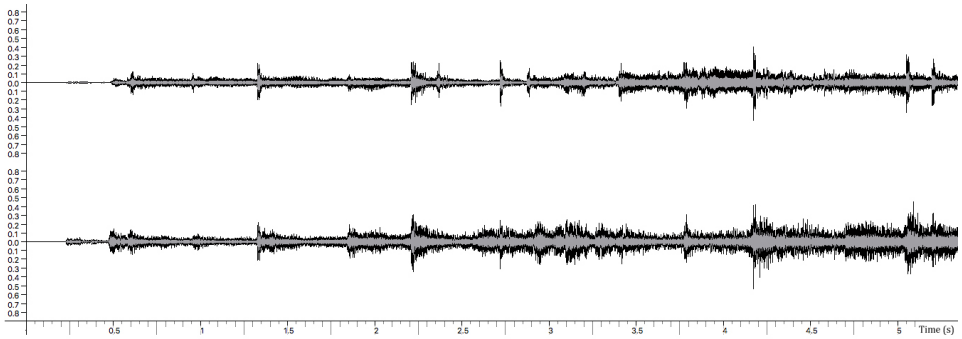


Fig. 6-33: Waveform analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:00 – 0:05) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

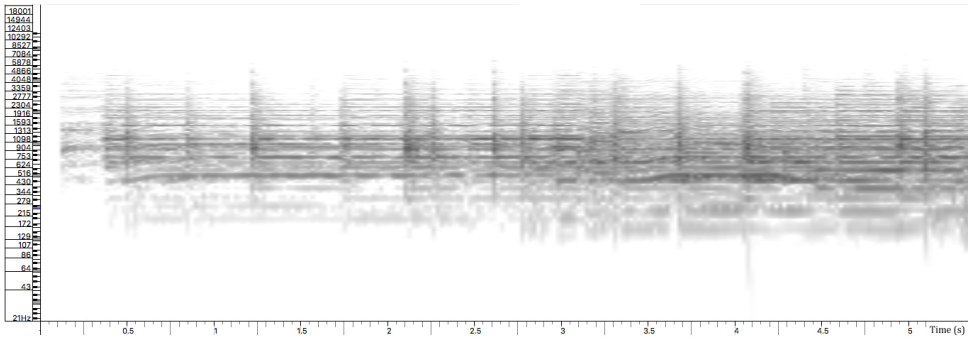


Fig. 6-34: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:00 – 0:05) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

This sonic character is typical of an AM-radio and has similar results to previously cited case studies. Even though the presence of performance nuance makes clear the interpretation that the introduction to *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire has been created by human attendance to musical instruments, the perceptual-imaginative response is not of an unmediated live performance directly in front of the listener.[22] As discussed in the analysis of *I'm Real* (chapter 6.3.1.1), the track's opening is understood as gesturally displaced – a recorded

[22] However, as Memphis May Fire has undeniably recreated the gestural character of the original Stone Temple Pilots track, the listener's confusion regarding which set of performers we imagine problematizes this gestural transformation. This aspect is examined towards the end of this case study.

reproduction of the song emanating from a radio set. Where the Stone Temple Pilots introduction is understood as performed (be it in a non-public space), the performance gestures interpreted from the Memphis May Fire recording are heard as one step removed. The listener hears them as through a fabricated radio broadcast, rather than understanding them as being part of an unmediated performance directly in front. Considering that the AM-radio aesthetic diminishes the immediate virtual presence of the band in relation to a listener's perceptual-imaginative response, the application of equalisation filters undoubtedly informs the gestural transformation. This interpretation is in spite of the application of panning and reverb in accordance to typical functional staging production practices. It is the timbres of the recorded instruments, affected by the equalisation filters applied to the audio, that are fundamental in fostering the interpretation that the opening measures of the introduction are understood as originating from a radio broadcast.

As with the opening moments of *I'm Real*, the acoustic cartooning of a radio transmission draws attention to the recorded medium thanks to the inclination to understand the music broadcasted via radio programming as being a studio-based recording. This is in opposition to the general objective of rock music functional record production and the particular projection of the Stone Temple Pilots introduction, in which an unmediated live performance is projected and thus functions to conceal the studio-based medium of a recorded track.

When the AM-radio special effect is finally relinquished at bar seven of the Memphis May Fire cover-version (0:18), a contrasting gestural interpretation is garnered. Where the opening eighteen seconds are understood as a gesturally displaced radio broadcast, a change in the record production generates a shift to an embodied live performance typical of rock music recordings. The widening of

the frequency spectrum is significant in supporting such a change. The use of the full frequency range available to the recorded medium stands in contrast to the narrow range of frequencies permitted by the application of the AM-radio special effect. Fig. 6-35 and Fig. 6-36 reveal the sonic differences between the cover-version introduction and the second part of the introduction that follows the guitar-led crescendo:

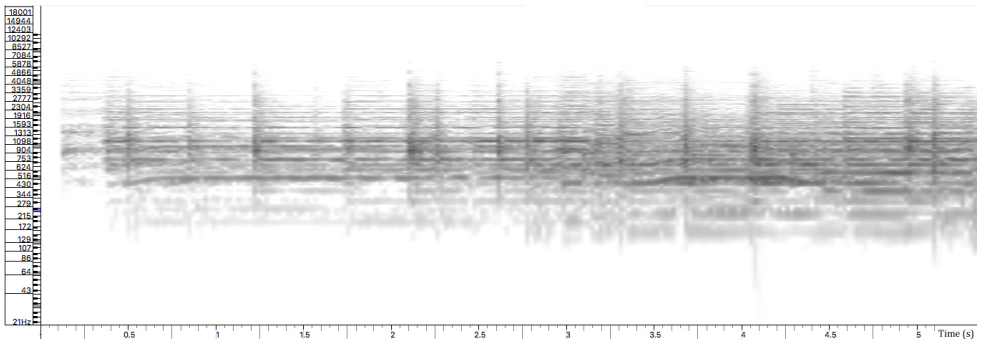


Fig. 6-35: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:00 – 0:05) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

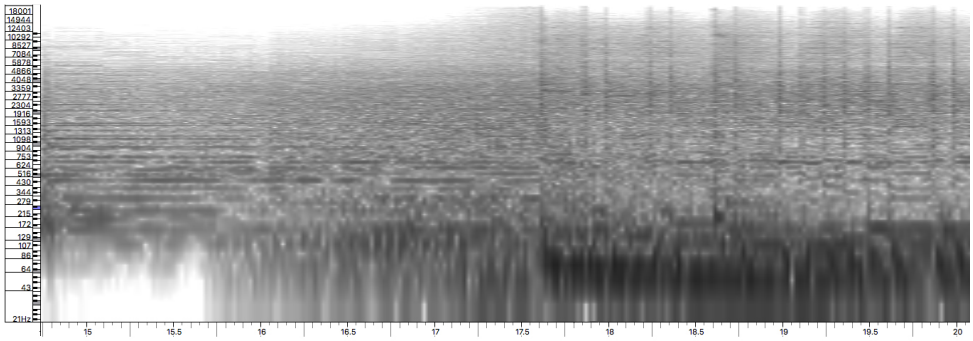


Fig. 6-36: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:15 – 0:20) as recorded by Memphis May Fire, beginning at crescendo (b.6)

On its own, this change of production style does not necessarily relate to the projection or ascription of authenticity. However, it is the change of production in combination with a gestural shift that brings authenticity into play. The gesturally displaced AM-radio aesthetic that occurs in conjunction with a gestural imitation of the original *Interstate Love Song* by Stone Temple Pilots is juxtaposed against the projection of an unmediated embodied live performance that begins the moment the punk-rock style typical to Memphis May Fire is launched. This shift

into a live performance framework can be viewed as an attempt by Memphis May Fire to assert an authenticity linked to their own musical performance. Where the musical style associated with the AM-radio aesthetic (the style of Stone Temple Pilots) is understood as mediated through ties to radio programming and reproduction previously discussed, the punk-rock style projects the perceptual-imaginative appearance that Memphis May Fire are performing the track before the listener. This interpretation holds value to rock music audiences.

The equalisation-based attempts made here to foster authenticity by Memphis May Fire relate to a number of different authenticity modes. The projection of an unmediated live performance has clear links to both personal and stylistic authenticity. Memphis May Fire are promoting the interpretation that they are playing the track in a live performance setting and that their way of playing it is unmediated. Beyond these two modes of authenticity, the use of the AM-radio aesthetic has further links to authenticity of experience. Firstly in a direct manner in terms of Memphis May Fire re-enacting the listener's probable first encounter with the original *Interstate Love Song* and secondly, as a sonic contrast that amplifies the subsequent functional staging production which generates the perceptual-imaginative response that the listener is front-row-and-centre at a Memphis May Fire performance. Finally, the link between the musical style of the original recording to the mediated communication of popular radio broadcasting relates to positionality, whereby recordings and popular music radio play are tied to mediated communication and assumptions of music business complicity. Such endeavours are also made by Woe, Is Me (*Last Friday Night*), Crown The Empire (*Payphone*) and as previously discussed in the analysis of *I'm Real* by The Starting Line.

While the effect is still bound to a stylistic imitation of the original track (as is the case in every application of the effect within the *Punk Goes...* catalogue), the AM-radio effect used in *Interstate Love Song* is applied in a manner distinct from the application described in the previous examination of *I'm Real*. In tracks such as *I'm Real*, *Call Me Maybe* by Upon This Dawning, and *You Belong With Me* by For All Those Sleeping, the AM-radio effect is applied in a consistent manner until an abrupt change to typical functional staging production that corresponds with a shift in musical style. In *Interstate Love Song* and other cover-versions such as *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* and *Payphone*, the AM-radio special effect is gradually relinquished. Fig. 6-37 express the change diagrammatically:

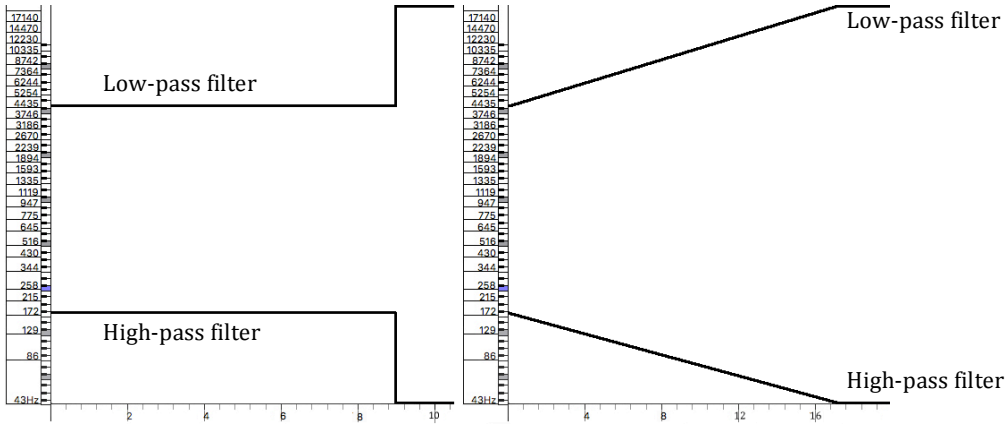


Fig. 6-37: Diagrammatic illustration of differing approaches to equalisation change. Left: Abrupt change as witnessed in *I'm Real*. Right: gradual change witnessed in *Interstate Love Song*

This gradual lessening of the equalisation filters affects the potency of the shift between the gesturally displaced imitative sections and the unmediated, embodied live performance. For instance, where the abrupt (though mostly anticipated) production shift in *I'm Real* creates a gestural juxtaposition that amplifies the live performance interpretation, a steady relinquishing of the equalisation filters causes the listener to slowly drift into the new production aesthetic, weakening the potential for a conclusive gestural shift. As evidenced in

Glad You Came by We Came As Romans (2010), the inability to detect the exact moment when the frequency spectrum is fully exploited leads to confusion as to where "the band begins" following the radio broadcast. Diminishing the potency of the gestural shift has clear and obvious consequences for the ascription of authenticity. However, listening to tracks such as *Payphone* and *Interstate Love Song* suggests that a slow and steady relinquishing of the AM-radio aesthetic does not necessarily render the perceptual-imaginative movement into an unmediated live performance any less effective or definitive than that previously described in *I'm Real*. In *Interstate Love Song,* retaining the gestural character throughout the introduction is significant in maintaining the perception of the effect despite its steady reduction. In addition, the use of rhetorical gestures creates a gestural pause that intensifies the shift into a live performance interpretation.

Many *Punk Goes…* tracks use rhetorical pauses to imply a distinct production shift. In *Interstate Love Song*, this counteracts the slow receding of the AM-radio special effect. The rhetorical gesture takes the form of a held chord immediately prior to the eventual arrival at full frequency:
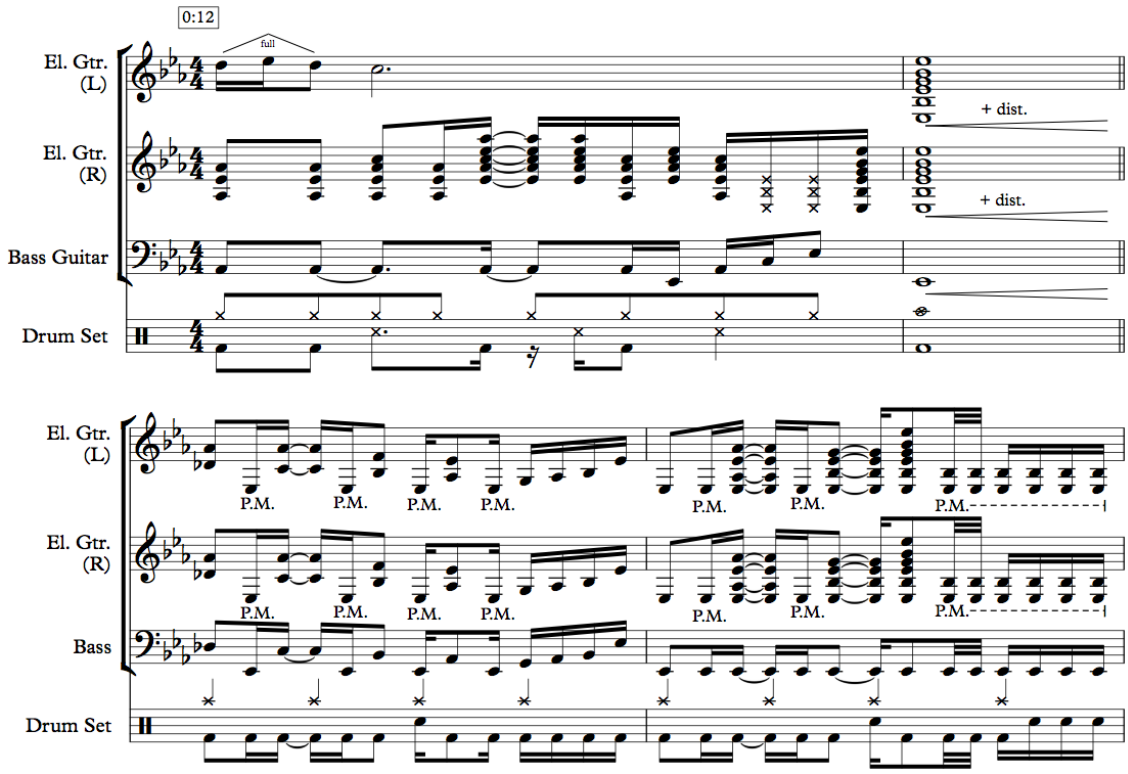


Fig. 6-38: Transcription of *Interstate Love Song* (0:12 – 0:21) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

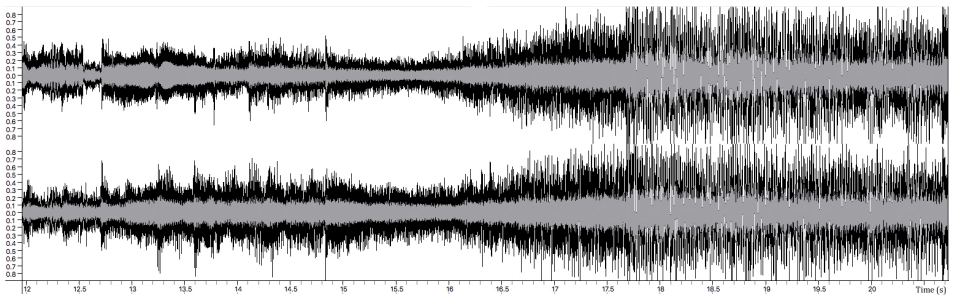


Fig. 6-39: Waveform analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:12 – 0:21) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

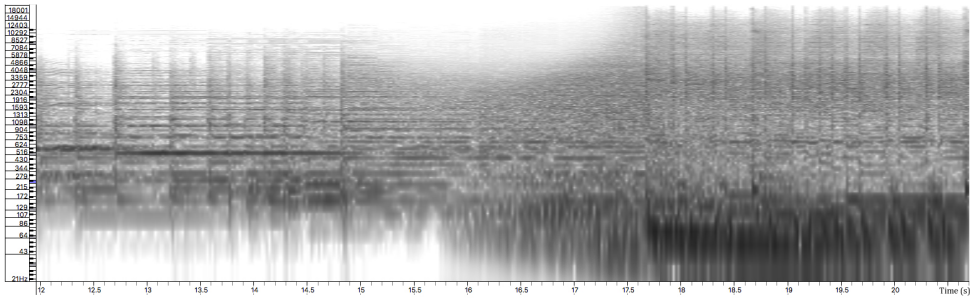


Fig. 6-40: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:12 – 0:21) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

This rhetorical gesture provides an interruption to the continual and consistent widening of the frequency spectrum. After the instruments are left to

briefly ring, the launch of the punk-rock style coincides with the eventual use of the full frequency spectrum. The use of rhetorical gestures is also evident in *Payphone* and *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)*. Although the use of a vinyl record and cassette tape sample at the beginning of these tracks alters the interpretation of the inferred medium, these two cover-versions use a rhetorical pause to create a silence between the gesturally displaced introduction and a subsequent unmediated live performance section that utilises the full frequency spectrum available to the recorded medium.

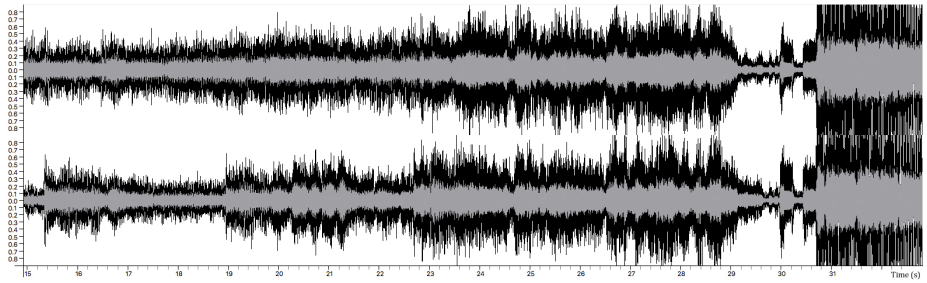


Fig. 6-41: Waveform analysis of *Payphone* (0:00 – 0:33) as recorded by Crown The Empire

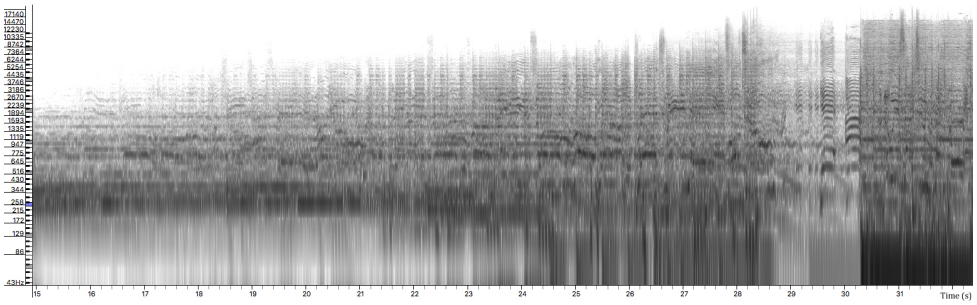


Fig. 6-42: Spectrogram analysis of *Payphone* (0:00 – 0:33) as recorded by Crown The Empire

Projecting the steady relinquishing of the equalisation filters through the silence, Fig. 6-42 reveals how the widening frequency spectrum reaches a maximal point at the instant the musical style switches (30 seconds). This supports the hypothesis that the equalisation filters continue to recede through the rhetorical pause. These rhetorical gestures are highly effective in generating the perception that the overarching equalisation characteristics between the cover section and the version section are more distinct than they witnessed in analysis of the audio.

Although the AM-radio special effect recedes throughout the introduction, it does not affect the intensity of the shift from gesturally displaced radio aesthetic to unmediated live performance. Even though the frequency range steadily increases throughout the course of the opening eighteen seconds, the perceptual-imaginative movement to an embodied live performance is no less effective or definite than that understood in *I'm Real* by The Starting Line – a track where the AM-radio special effect is abruptly turned off. This interpretation is reliant on the perception that the final moments of these introductions are still understood as emanating from an AM-radio transmission, despite Fig. 6-44 revealing a relinquishing of the effect:

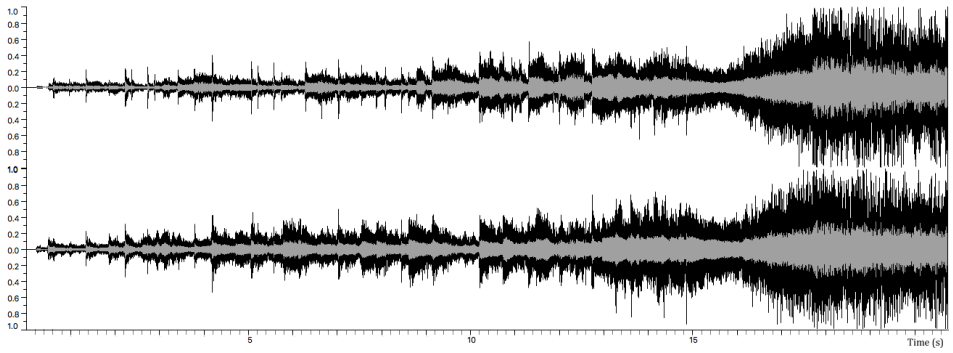


Fig. 6-43: Waveform analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:00 – 0:20) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

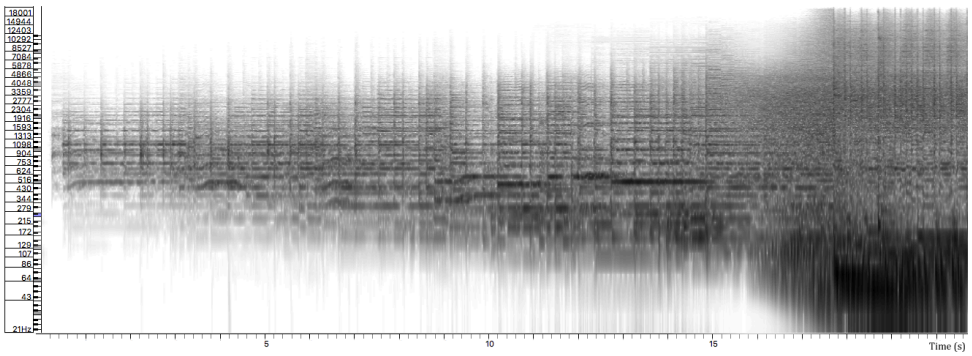


Fig. 6-44: Spectrogram analysis of *Interstate Love Song* (0:00 – 0:20) as recorded by Memphis May Fire

Even though the equalisation filters are slowly relinquished throughout the course of the eighteen-second introduction, the final notes of the introduction (including the rhetorical gesture in bar six) are still understood as though emanating from a radio broadcast. Fig. 6-44 highlights the slow yet steady widening of the frequency spectrum up until a maximum point at 17.25 seconds (end of bar six). This is the point at which the highest 18kHz band becomes active and the low frequencies up to 100Hz become fully saturated and show as black on the spectrogram analysis. These blacked out frequency bins correspond to the bass drum strike on the first beat of bar seven. It is at this point that the punk-rock style typical to Memphis May Fire is launched.

For the entire opening eighteen seconds of the Memphis May Fire cover-version to be understood as gesturally displaced despite the changes in instrumental timbre, some character or quality of the opening moments where the AM-radio aesthetic is explicit must be retained throughout the introduction. A number of characteristics do, yet critical is the sustained style of performance, itself contingent on the interpreted performance gestures. The recorded performance of the Memphis May Fire cover-version can be described as successfully retaining the generally laid back and relaxed character of the original Stone Temple Pilots recording, despite the slow relinquishing of the equalisation filters that causes changes to all the instrumental timbres. In *Interstate Love Song*, the introduction is understood as though emanating from a radio until the point when the punk-rock style typical to Memphis May Fire is launched. In utilising a rhetorical gesture and maintaining the initial gestural character, the transformation between the gesturally displaced section that imitates the original track and the functionally staged punk-rock style section that immediately follows is heightened.

6.3.1.2.3 AUTO/ALLOSONIC REPRODUCTION

A consequence of the AM-radio special effect drawing attention to the recorded medium combined with Memphis May Fire's successful retention of the Stone Temple Pilots gestural character is that the introduction to the Memphis May Fire cover-version is commonly understood as an autosonic sample of the Stone Temple Pilots original rather than an allosonic reproduction created by Memphis May Fire. This confusion as to which set of performers are understood to be playing the *Interstate Love Song* cover-version introduction has far reaching implications for the gestural interpretation. For a listener to mistake the Memphis May Fire performance as the Stone Temple Pilots original implies that Memphis May Fire have retained the performative gestures of the Stone Temple Pilots original. This raises questions concerning whether a gestural transformation has taken place and whether one is always equated to a different set of performers or a different performance. I argue that any perceived differences between the two recordings would be overshadowed by or accredited to the application of equalisation filters, rather than understood as having been generated by different performers or performances.

Following the general assumption made by *Punk Goes…* artists, a majority of their audience will fall into the bracket of experienced listeners who know the original and will hear the multitude of similarities between the cover-version and the Stone Temple Pilots original. Experienced listeners are likely to interpret a similar sonic environment (with regards to panning and reverb), identical instrumentation (drum set, electric bass guitar, acoustic guitar and distorted electric guitar) and vicarious retention of the original's laid back gestural character (chiefly garnered through interpretation of the quiet dynamic, thin instrumental

textures and loose rhythm) as fostering the impression that the introduction is a sample of the original Stone Temple Pilots recording rather than, what in actuality is, a heavily processed Memphis May Fire performance. Inexperienced listeners may not immediately interpret the similarities, but their propensity to understand the AM-radio aesthetic as a recording of a recording implies that they are as likely to assume the AM-radio introduction as belonging to a previous recording. This interpretation is aided by a lack of vocal. With no vocal, the listener's reading is dependent on the instrumental parts whose subtle differences are, though not necessarily as hard to mimic, more challenging and specialist to interpret than those of vocal nuances with which humans have constant interaction with.

However, close inspection of the two *Interstate Love Song* introductions reveals some nuanced differences that cannot be attributed to the application of the AM-radio effect. These nuances contradict my previous assertion that Memphis May Fire have retained 'the original's gestural character' and are central to the confusion regarding which set of musicians performed the cover-version introduction. Beyond the palpable changes in instrumental timbres due to the AM-radio production style, there are rhythmic alterations most keenly observed in the Memphis May Fire acoustic rhythm guitar part (including the spreading of the individual chords), and changes in chordal balance that would imply a gestural transformation and subsequent alteration of meaning should be observed. Despite these nuanced differences, I maintain that the introduction to the *Interstate Love Song* cover-version is understood as a sample of the original Stone Temple Pilots recording as opposed to being interpreted as Memphis May Fire recreating the original track convincingly enough for it to be interpreted as the original. The nuanced differences between the two recordings listed above would either be overshadowed by the substantial alterations made to the instrumental timbres

(differences such as the nuanced differences in rhythm), or differences such as instrumental tone and chord balance are simply accredited to the equalisation filters rather than interpreted as being generated by different performers or performances.

However, differences in the instrumental tone caused by the equalisation filters should result in a change of interpreted performative gesture. Although the AM-radio effect removes the tendency to understand the introduction as an unmediated live performance, the laid-back and relaxed performative gestures of Stone Temple Pilots remains in the Memphis May Fire introduction. As the AM-radio aesthetic is a commonly understood sonic schema and encountered both in the real world and acoustically cartooned in recordings, I propose that listeners are able to listen "past" the effect, reconstructing the sonic character of the track with no AM-radio special effect applied. In attempting to reconstruct what the track would sound like before being broadcast over an AM transmission (by approximately refilling the frequencies scooped away by the equalisation filters), the listener conceives of a track that sounds highly similar to the original.

Memphis May Fire have clearly attempted to capture the laidback gestural character of their respective Stone Temple Pilots counterpart, and the use of an AM-radio special effect masks any nuanced gestural transformations. For instance, Memphis May Fire retain the general gestural character of the original through a combination of near-identical musical material, thin instrumental textures, generally quiet dynamics, and a loose rhythmic feel. This notion that there has been a retention of the original's gestural character contradicts my previous assertion that a gestural transformation has occurred (unmediated live performance of Stone Temple Pilots against the gesturally displaced radio broadcast of Memphis May Fire), but that both a gestural transformation can be

understood but lead to an unchanged performative interpretation highlights an issue in relation to gestural transformation on record – the listener's ability to separate the initial performative actions of the musicians whilst recording and the gestures projected by the post-production mastered audio output. This is also evidenced in *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me, where any nuances that occur despite the best efforts of Woe, Is Me to imitate the performance gestures of the original are masked by the equalisation filters.

6.3.1.2.4 PRODUCTION BASED GESTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The construction of a radio broadcast context significantly influences gestural interpretations of subsequent music. The use of equalisation to amplify the sense of live performance that occurs with the functionally staged punk-rock section has been discussed, yet the preceding AM-radio context is central in gesturally transforming the Memphis May Fire rhetorical crescendo (b.6, 0:18). Where differences in timbre and texture are apparent, listening to each crescendo away from its musical context yields similar perceptual-imaginative responses that correspond to how the crescendos were created. In both recordings, the crescendo is interpreted as being created by the act of physically turning up the two guitars, generating increasing distortion, dynamic, and texture (as previously shown in Fig. 6-30 and Fig. 6-31). Yet when heard with the preceding AM-radio introduction, the timbral and textural character of the Memphis May Fire crescendo gives the impression of malfunctioning radio machinery, clearly related to the preceding radio aesthetic. Although highly similar performative gestures were executed whilst recording, the differing preceding context (embodied/gesturally displaced) from each recording is central in fostering alternative interpretations. The radio

aesthetic ultimately culminates in removing the performer, as the simulated medium (the imagined radio set) overpowers any growing sense of embodiment generated by the gradual widening of the frequency spectrum. This is a factor in amplifying the sense of embodied, unmediated live performance that directly follows.

Fig. 6-45 and Fig. 6-46 highlight the similarities between the waveform and spectrogram analyses of the Stone Temple Pilots recording of *Interstate Love Song* and those of the Memphis May Fire recording.

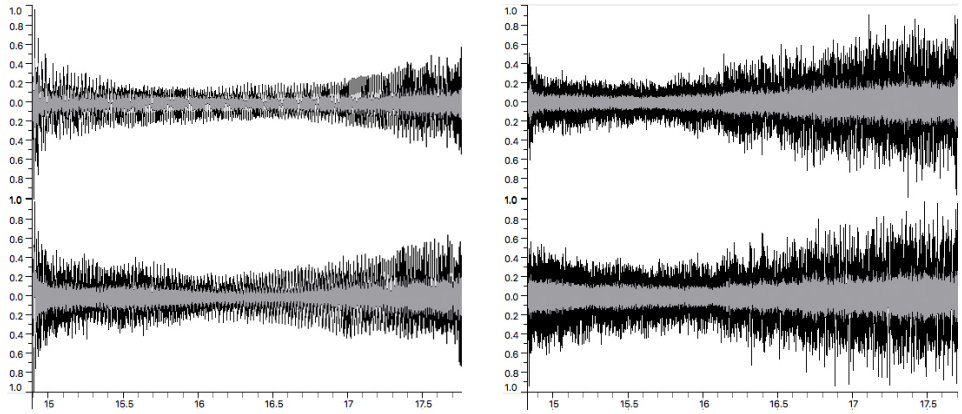


Fig. 6-45: Waveform analyses of *Interstate Love Song* (0:15 – 0:18) as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots (left) and Memphis May Fire (right)

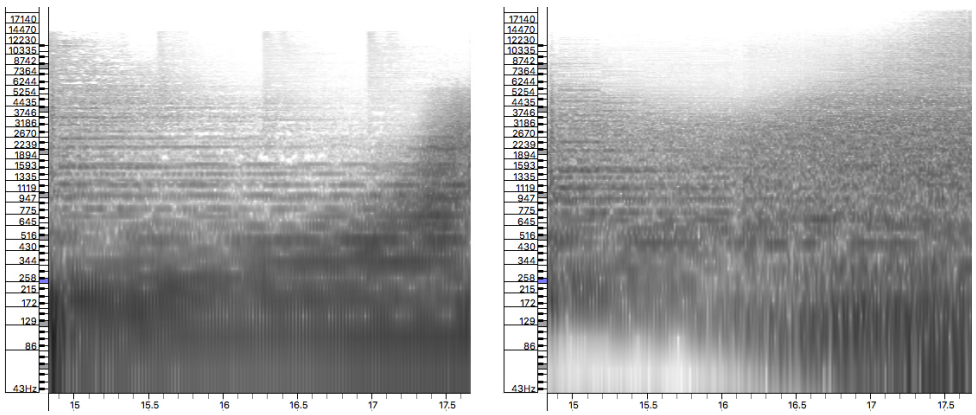


Fig. 6-46: Spectrogram analyses of *Interstate Love Song* (015 – 0:18) as recorded by Stone Temple Pilots (left) and Memphis May Fire (right)

Memphis May Fire have reused the musical material of the original track, further emphasising how this section of their cover-version is based on the Stone Temple Pilots recording. Although the general trend for a dynamic crescendo and increasing textural intensity can be viewed in the spectrogram and waveform analyses, these two latter figures uncover a number of differences that can be attributed to the means by which the crescendo has been created. The Stone Temple Pilots crescendo is solely reliant on the changing guitar sound whereas the Memphis May Fire crescendo is augmented by both a more modern, heavier distortion sound and the relinquishing of the AM-radio aesthetic. Firstly, the dynamic crescendo happens at different rates, which results in differing dynamic levels. Where the Stone Temple Pilots crescendo occurs with a shallow gradient, the Memphis May Fire analysis highlights a much steeper gradient that results in a much louder dynamic just prior to the shift in musical style at bar seven. And with regards to the texture of the Stone Temple Pilots recording, a darkening of the spectrogram analysis is seen to grow initially from the lower frequencies just before the fourth beat, up towards a 6kHz threshold at the end of the bar.

This change corresponds to the steady increase in guitar level, with the lowest frequencies saturating the output of the amplifier first. Where this is the limit of the textural crescendo in the Stone Temple Pilots recording, the Memphis May Fire recording contains a textural crescendo across the entire frequency spectrum, as well as a continual increasing of the frequency range that concludes with a full high-fidelity range of frequencies perceived at the moment the new musical style is launched in bar seven. Furthermore, where the spectrogram of the Stone Temple Pilots crescendo demonstrates a low-frequency emphasis, the Memphis May Fire spectrogram shows fairly uniform shading across the entire frequency spectrum at 17.25 seconds; evidence of the white-noise character of the

sound. The timbral character of the sound in the crescendo is linked to both a modern style of distortion applied to the guitars and to the relinquishing equalisation filters. These filters augment the textural crescendo, as the reduction in equalisation filters not only allows a larger range of frequencies to be unaffected and thus heard, but also increases the overall dynamic as the presence of more frequencies contributes to the amassed louder volume.

The interpreted meaning of this white-noise sound is highly dependent on the prior musical context. When listening directly from the start of bar six (from the held guitar chord), the timbre of the crescendo is attributed to a guitar being played through a high-gain amplifier typical for modern heavy rock and metal styles.[23] With the diminished influence of the AM-radio aesthetic at the start of the crescendo, the relinquishing equalisation filters are heavily stifled, resulting in the held guitar chord being interpreted as having been played as though in an unmediated live performance. When listening from the beginning of the track however, the maintenance of the performance gestural character helps in retaining the AM-radio aesthetic up to the beginning of the held chord. As the final chord (understood as though coming from a radio broadcast) gains in volume and texture, the crescendo gives the impression of malfunctioning radio machinery. The radio aesthetic ultimately culminates in the removal of the performer, as the gathering noise generated by the virtual medium (the imagined radio set) overpowers any possible sense of embodiment generated by the gradual widening of the frequency spectrum.

While the individual crescendos were made by the same means (the turning up of the guitar), the sonic environment has a great effect on its interpretation.

[23] The Mesa Boogie 'Dual Rectifier' and Peavey 5150 are commonly referred to as the first generation of these amplifiers, with recent models by companies such as Engl, Diezel and Hughes & Kettner sponsoring bands featured in the *Punk Goes...* compilations

Removal of the AM-radio context results in an interpretation that matches its creation; hearing the Memphis May Fire crescendo as emanating from a radio broadcast has a profound effect on the sense of embodiment garnered from the track.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN MUSIC

Over the course of my academic studies, I became increasingly dissatisfied with studies of popular music that did not tally with my listening experience. Most scholarship focussed on socio-political concerns and thus downplayed the analysis of the recorded musical artefacts (for instance Hall (1976), Hebdige (1979), and McRobbie (1989)). Investigations that did engage with the recorded music tended to overemphasise the importance of readily quantifiable aspects such as pitch, harmony, and lyrics (for instance, Brackett (2000), Keightley (2001), and Covach (2006)).

These two approaches dominate research into the cover-version genre. Although informative, the studies conducted by Prato (2007), Schiffer (2010), and Weinstein (1998 & 2010) are just some that overstated the changes made in the cover-versions as the ends, rather than the means, to interpreting differing musical meanings from the same song. In addition, the multiplicity of approaches has led to a confusing proliferation of terminology, which further hinders research into the genre.

Building upon the listener-centric method put forward by Brown (2012) and Philipov (2014), this thesis attempts to lay foundations for a change in the direction of popular music criticism. Rejecting conventional formalist methods of analysis as inadequate to deal with the complexity of recorded music as-heard, I was drawn to post-semiotic theories of gesture in music. As my experience of music is geared more towards perceptual-imaginative responses (Levinson, 2015) than to socio-political concerns, I wanted to find a way to describe and explain the

musical processes that contributed to the richness of musical meaning in cover-versions.

In this thesis, I develop the semiotic theories of Lidov (1987 & 2005), Hatten (1998 & 2004) and Cumming (2001), in combination with concepts of embodiment (Lakoff and Johnson (1981 & 1999)) and mimesis (Cox (2011)) to put forward a new theory of *gestural transformation*, together with an associated analytical method. Despite a steady increase in interest in the study of musical gesture, it has until now been restricted to common-practice Western art music. As Hooper (2013) points out, this type of music seems ill-suited for gestural analysis, given its subordination to a prevailing ideology of *Werktreue* (fidelity to the Work), which limits the way that a musical score can be realised and separates the idea of composition from bodily practices. Popular music would seem to provide a more fertile ground for insight into musical gestures, yet few scholars have applied the theories beyond the classical cannon. Walser (1993), Koozin (2013), and Moore (2013) touch upon the notion that a listener's perception of performative gesture in recorded popular music can assist interpretation, but they offer only superficial analyses that rely on anecdotal evidence. Their foregrounding of other concerns goes against my experience as a listener.

The wholesale adoption of theories of embodiment and mimesis is problematic, yet they are crucial for providing psychological and philosophical foundations for perceiving and describing sonic gestures. Regardless of disagreements between an audience's adverbial descriptions, we can conclude that our listening practices are highly developed: as Cumming states, we understand music on record as expressive human movement without the need for visual clues.[1]

[1] Cumming, *The Sonic Self* (2001), p. 15

While the prevalence of computer-aided composition and recording may sometimes marginalise the role of the body in music, it remains crucial for our understanding.

In placing gesture at the forefront of musical meaning, my research contradicts the views of Gracyk (1997 & 1999) and Godlovitch (1998), who assert tangible differences between recorded music and "live performance". Their strict definition of what constitutes a performance overlooks the human propensity to understand recorded music as embodied and gestural. I contend that chronologically displaced studio-produced music is interpreted in the same way as music performed live, in the traditional sense intended by Gracyk and Godlovitch.

In addition, viewing these tracks as gestural (the dynamic synthesis of sonic characteristics interpreted from an audio recording) establishes a bottom-up approach to musical meaning. The characteristics include, but are not restricted to, instrumental timbre, vocal grain, textural nuance, pitch, rhythm-as-performed, phrasing, dynamics, balance, panning, and reverb. Taking rhythm as an example, my analyses follow Hasty's (1997) view of rhythm from a 'processive perspective' where pulse is more obviously understood through its productive origins in conscious human movement. More generally, popular music can be considered as a drastic praxis - one that resists the easy classifications of gnostic theories like pulse, metre, tonality, etc., and contradicts the view of Lidov and Hatten who view pulse as creating movement.[2]

7.2 *PUNK GOES...*

By expanding the interpretation of gesture to encompass embodied, perceptual-imaginative responses to audio recordings, the theory of gestural transformation

[2] Gnostic/Drastic dualism taken from Abbate, 'Music – Drastic or Gnostic?' (2004), pp. 505 - 536

allows for a close reading of musical meaning in popular music. In this thesis, its scope has been limited to comparison between multiple recordings of the same song. Conventional forms of analysis would treat the musical meaning of a cover-version as effectively the same as the original, overlooking the profound changes in meaning that reside in the gestural nuances. Gestural transformation seeks to explain these new meanings as the result of performed gestures. These are defined as dynamic syntheses of sonic characteristics interpreted from an audio recording, yet the process of gestural transformation is not reducible to these characteristics. Central to the theory is the examination of performance nuances captured in an audio artefact. These generate embodied interpretations and create differences of interpretation between two recordings of the same song. By closely examining these differences, it is possible to discern how sonic and musical characteristics affect our perceptual-imaginative responses to recorded music.

This method is not, however, without difficulties. Do the sonic characteristics listed above, for instance, affect the gestural interpretation equally or through some form of hierarchy? Applying the theory of gestural transformation to the *Punk Goes…* series of albums in chapters 2 – 6 exposed new insights into the importance of musical characteristics. My analyses reveal timbre to be the most significant sonic quality to a gestural analysis. This is demonstrated in my examinations of *Royals* (2012), *Since U Been Gone* and *Gin And Juice* (2008). Beyond this hierarchy, other sonic and musical characteristics act like a dynamic constellation. For instance, although Roholt (2012) cites rhythmic nuance as important to an embodied interpretation, the lack of rhythmic nuance in the introduction to *Royals* by Youth In Revolt does not affect the embodied interpretation; the interpretation here is built upon the acoustic drum timbres. Similarly, the changed character of reverb in We Came As Roman's *I Knew You Were Trouble* is not as integral to the

projection of an amateur musician persona as the altered guitar timbres. While some changes are not comprehended without direct comparison to the original recording (witnessed in the analyses of *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans (2012), *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me (2011), and *Since U Been Gone* by A Day To Remember (2009)), gestural transformation makes previously ineffable gestural interpretations effable.

7.3 THE COVER-VERSION SPECTRUM

The theory of gestural transformation provides an innovative foundation for reframing analysis and discussion of the cover-version genre. Plasketes's (2010) edited collection highlights a number of issues relating to this debate. Within Plasketes's volume alone, numerous definitions and contradicting nomenclature appear, revealing a confusing foundation upon which to base further research. Although I agree with a majority of the conclusions, I found the theories and methodology used simply did not match my listening experience. This is demonstrated in the dichotomy implied by labelling examples of the genre as either a "cover" or a "version". Not only do I oppose this dichotomy, but also the theoretical basis for these labels was seldom offered: it gave the impression that these labels were often applied arbitrarily and indiscriminately despite the distinct connotations associated with both terms.

In chapter two, I demonstrated that the theory of gestural transformation reveals a direct correlation between particular gestural interpretations and the classification of a track as a cover or a version. In addition, applying the theory of gestural transformation to the cover-version genre also exposes how the dichotomy

is outmoded. I propose that classification be reframed so the terms “cover” and “version” be used as extreme poles of a cover-version spectrum.

I demonstrated tracks that I initially classified as a cover to predominantly consist of gestures replicated from the original recording. This conclusion is supported by the analysis of *Paper Planes* by This Century (2010) in chapter 2.3.1.1, *Today* by Yellowcard (2014) in chapter 2.3.1.2, and in a related analyses of *Chocolate* by Knuckle Puck (2014) in chapter 5.1.1.1 and *Got Your Money* by Say Anything (2008) in chapter 5.2.2.1. Conversely, I showed that a version is a re-recording of a previously released track, but where a majority of the song is understood to have been performed with the new artist’s own gamut of gestures. This conclusion is supported in the analyses of *Royals* by Youth In Revolt (2014) in chapter 2.3.2.1, *Umbrella* by All Time Low (2008) in chapter 2.3.2.2 and the related analysis of *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (2010) in chapter 4.2.1.

Gestural analyses of *Punk Goes…* tracks confirmed that a re-recording of a track will always contain sonic differences, but that these may not amount to a shift in the meaning arising from a gestural transformation. This is evidenced in tracks such as *Paper Planes* by This Century and *Chocolate* by Knuckle Puck in which the *Punk Goes…* artists go to great lengths to recreate the gestural characters interpreted from the original recordings. In *Today* by Yellowcard (chapter 2.3.1.2), I made the case that playing a song on a different set of instruments does not necessarily result in gestural transformations. In *Today*, a violinist recreates the uncertain, hesitant gestural character of the original Smashing Pumpkins guitar introduction, albeit with a different set of performative nuances. Where the gestural character of the original guitar phrase was created through specific instrumental timbres and protracted sound decay, the violinist employed *détaché*

phrasing crucially without attacking each note – each one takes a moment to sound fully, communicating a sense of timidity and uncertainty.

My investigation into the *Punk Goes…* series brought to light two issues that had not been considered before. In chapter 2.4, I demonstrate how re-recordings of existing popular music tracks sit between these gestural extremes of cover and version. In chapter 2.4.1 I examine *static cover-versions* such as *Gin And Juice* by Hot Rod Circuit and *Put Yo Hood Up* by Set Your Goals (2008). It is noteworthy that these two tracks, like other *Punk Goes…* static cover-versions, depend upon loop-based compositional practices. However, they digitally loop phrases sourced from acoustic instruments, which create a gestural schism between an embodied interpretation typical to punk-rock music and an acousmatic backing common to a majority of loop-based musics.

In chapter 2.4.2, I examine a number of *Punk Goes…* tracks that move beyond the static cover-version model presented in chapter 2.4.1. Initiating what I label a gestural play, these *dynamic cover-versions* freely move between the extremes of cover and version: a phenomenon not witnessed or investigated in previous studies. I noted a marked correlation between the movements across the cover-version spectrum and an interpreted gestural transformation. This movement is common in a majority of *Punk Goes…* tracks and is demonstrated in the analyses of *Hot And Cold* by Woe, Is Me (chapter 2.4.2.2), *Boyfriend* by Issues (chapter 2.4.2.3), and in a related analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* by We Came As Romans (chapter 5.1.2.1). These tracks include sections of cover and version that correspond to the *Punk Goes…* artist trying to imitate the original or develop an abstract form of the song through their own gestures respectively. In chapter 2.4.2.3, I discussed the additional trend of introducing a song with a gestural imitation (a cover) before switching to a version.

Interpreting the movement across the cover-version spectrum is relative not only within the context of the *Punk Goes…* cover-version but with reference to the original recording. Where the original recording is relatively gesturally static (often corresponding to stylistic stasis), any movement across the cover-version spectrum is created by interpretation of the *Punk Goes…* artist's approach to the realisation. Even though this is generally the case, the opposite occurs in *Since U Been Gone* by A Day To Remember. Although an overarching switch occurs between tense and restricted performative gestures in the verses to free and relaxed ones in the choruses of both recordings, the interpreted movements across the spectrum in the A Day To Remember cover-version are primarily caused by a changed gestural character occurring in the original. Chapter 2.4.2.1.4 concluded that the choruses, understood as covers, are gesturally similar to the Kelly Clarkson original (2004) due to the interpreted performative gestures in the Clarkson recording closing up with gestural transformations that are interpreted from the A Day To Remember recording, rather than any changes made by A Day To Remember.

7.4 AUTHENTICITY

In chapters three through six, I examined the interactions between gestural transformation and three forms of authenticity. I first examined stylistic authenticity in chapter 4. This concerns the interpretation that an artist is performing a particular style of music faithfully and genuinely, rather than aping the gestures of other performers or appropriating symbols and modes of expression.

Chapter 4 showed that the most overt projection of stylistic authenticity can be found in dynamic cover-versions. In these tracks, the *Punk Goes…* artist places a gestural imitation of the original recording (often assumed by rock music fans to be inauthentic, due to connotations of commercialism and pseudo-individualism) in direct juxtaposition with a reworking of the original track, which is understood to have been performed with their own gamut of performative gestures. This form of stylistic authenticity comes to the fore in tracks such as *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me (chapter 4.1.1), *Just The Way You Are* by Pierce The Veil (chapter 4.2.1), and additionally in tracks such as *Fuck You* by Sleeping With Sirens (2010), and *Some Nights* by Like Moths To Flames (2011).

In chapter 4.1.1, I reveal how the newly formed and relatively unknown Woe, Is Me also incorporate gestures from other artists associated with their pop-core style. In keeping with theories of hip-hop set out by Cutler (2014) and Williams (2011), Woe, Is Me use iconic gestures associated with the band A Day To Remember, and other stylistic markers, to project stylistic authenticity. I concluded that Woe, Is Me attempt to assign themselves a place within the cannon of their own contemporary punk-rock style. Where Woe, Is Me appear to have been successful in this endeavour, social media commentary and gestural analyses suggest that Knuckle Puck and Falling In Reverse are two acts whose *Punk Goes…* recordings fail to generate stylistic authenticity.

In chapter 5, the concepts of embodiment and mimesis are critical to my examination of personal authenticity. This relates to whether or not listeners believe in the persona that is presented to them. Just as our trust and belief in others is not solely based upon the words, chapter 5 showed that the interpretation of performative gesture is crucial to the authenticity ascribed to a musical persona. Although Kivy (1994), Moore (2013), and others have identified

the perceptual-imaginative response and the interpretation of *how* a musical phrase is performed as being of central importance to the ascription of personal authenticity in music, they offer no detailed analyses to support the argument.

In chapter 5.1.2, I expanded upon theories of persona set out by Moore and Auslander (1997). Where they restrict their analyses to vocalists – because the notions of embodiment and mimesis are most readily applicable and decipherable in vocals – I apply their persona models to instrumental phrases. The theory of gestural transformation helps to ascertain how *Punk Goes…* artists create a sense of personal authenticity. In my detailed analysis of *I Knew You Were Trouble* (chapter 5.1.2.1), I discuss the differences between the guitar introductions to the original Taylor Swift recording (2012) and the We Came As Romans cover-version (2014). Even though the two guitar introductions are clearly related, differences in the sonic artefact create two very distinct personas. Subtle changes in instrumental timbre, panning and reverb – though not obvious in isolation – are made effable when directly compared. Where Swift's original recording sets up the image of a confident, public performance, the gesturally transformed We Came As Romans recording is interpreted as being hesitant and private. Their performance comes across as precise and sanitised in contrast to the flowing performative gestures garnered from the Taylor Swift recording. My analysis concludes that We Came As Romans create a gesturally transformed image of an amateur performer practicing the introductory guitar phrase. As this scene is likely to have been encountered, if not acted out, by their target audience, We Came As Romans project a personal authenticity akin to the *authenticity of the ordinary* described by Dibben (1999) and Leach (2001).

In section 5.2, the theory of gestural transformation confronts problematic interpretations of personal authenticity. Where Moore and Taylor (1997) examine

more obvious examples of *positionality* that are based upon the overt ideologies of rock music (the authenticity of live performance, anti-commercialisation etc.), I discovered that positionality reveals a more nuanced and considered interpretation of the cover-version genre – especially in relation to tracks that project sarcasm and irony. This position is most readily revealed in chapter 5.2.2.1 where I focus on *Got Your Money* recorded by Say Anything (2008). Where reviews and social media commentary supports the view that Say Anything's cover is an inauthentic attempt to project Ol' Dirty Bastard's pimp protagonist, a more thorough reading of the track exposes the sarcasm and irony employed throughout. This is not only revealed in Max Bemis's hyperbolic vocal gestures that are exaggerated in both their over-zealousness and excessively laid-back caricaturing of Ol' Dirty Bastard's original vocal style (chapter 5.2.2.1.2), but it is also exposed in the instrumental backing track (chapter 5.2.2.1.1).

I conclude in section 5.2.2.1.3 that understanding the Say Anything recording within the context of their back-catalogue reveals a long-standing positionality against the commercialism and standardisation of popular music. This is evidenced in their lyrics and their penchant for appropriating musical styles. In *Got Your Money*, Say Anything projects a typical punk-rock positionality via the ironic caricaturing of hip-hop in general and Ol' Dirty Bastard in particular. We are not meant to believe Bemis's pimp persona; it is not so much an inauthentic hip-hop performance, as an authentic punk-rock performance of a hip-hop track. Bringing questions of gestural interpretation to the fore provided answers for these case studies that other theories do not deliver, or are deemed otherwise problematic.

In chapter 6, I examined the role of record production in creating gestural transformations. As asserted in the introduction, the way that an instrument

sounds is fundamental to its gestural interpretation: thus, it is clear that the production of a recording plays a crucial role. Although record production does permeate analyses elsewhere in the thesis (such as the discussion of reverb in chapter 2.3.2.1 and 5.1.2.1.2), these analyses centre on how the use of panning and equalisation affects the gestural transformation. In addition, my research suggests that the *Punk Goes…* catalogue provides a more suitable vehicle to examine production than those offered by Dockwray & Moore (2010) and Zagorski-Thomas (2010). Where Dockwray & Moore focus on panning and dynamics, Zagorski-Thomas chose recordings tied to an embodied, gestural performance – an attribute that will clearly limit and affect the function of the track and the production processes, notwithstanding Zagorski-Thomas's search for contrasting examples. A majority of the *Punk Goes…* dynamic cover-versions present directly juxtaposed approaches to record production. Sections of tracks that are understood as being in a style typical to the *Punk Goes…* artist exploit production practices more commonly associated with rock music occur. However, where sections of a track imitate the original recording, wholly contrary production values occur. It is clear that these juxtapositions are used to emphasise rock-style functional production, which filters into the projection of live performance occurring before the listener: this is central to the projection of authenticity in rock-style musics.

The dynamic use of panning is evident throughout *Punk Goes…* cover-versions. In chapter 6.2, I examined the tendency for artists to use a quasi-mono, centralised panning in sections that imitate the original recording. These sections are in contrast to a shift to the full width of stereo image when the *Punk Goes…* artist's own style begins. Where this is observed as a swift and sudden switch in *Beautiful Girls* by Bayside (chapter 6.2.1.1) and *I'm Real* by The Starting Line (chapter 6.3.1.1), the shift in panning is gradual in *Glad You Came* by We Came As

Romans (chapter 6.2.1.2) and *Wrecking Ball* by August Burns Red (chapter 6.2.1.3). The differing rates of switch directly correlate with the entry of the punk-rock style: where the former examples feature sudden gestural transformations, the latter examples slowly introduce numerous transformations from the pop original to the *Punk Goes…* artist's punk-rock style. In these tracks and many more, panning is used to emphasise the projection of a live performance, commonly heard in rock music tracks and linked to notions of authenticity in recorded music.

Chapter 6.3 also demonstrates that *Punk Goes…* tracks use equalisation to generate authenticity. Although equalisation is central a factor to all gestural transformations (it is intrinsic to the final instrumental timbre heard in the recording), a number of *Punk Goes…* tracks use equalisation to generate an 'AM-radio' special effect. I examine how the effect is applied to tracks such as *Payphone* by Crown The Empire (2012) and *Over My Head (Cable Car)* by A Day To Remember (2009) in Chapter 6.3.1. This special effect is a recognised trope of recorded popular music. It is used as a special effect across a number of styles and genres. Yet here it invokes listening habits, reminding the listener not only of the existence of an original recording of the cover-version, but also of where they may have heard it originally: for instance, on a radio broadcast. To rock music audiences, such an AM-radio aesthetic conjures notions of inauthenticity triggered by pseudo-individuality and the commercialisation of tracks popular enough to be played on radio stations.

My discussion centres on two distinct cases: *I'm Real* by The Starting Line (chapter 6.3.1.1) and *Interstate Love Song* by Memphis May Fire (chapter 6.3.1.2). Where the former employs a sudden switch from the AM-radio aesthetic to production values typical of the rock music style, *Interstate Love Song* and *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Woe, Is Me feature an imperceptible rescinding of the

effect. In all cases, the effect transforms the gestural interpretation of the recording. Despite the fact that the effect is used on an allosonic quotations created by the respective *Punk Goes…* artist, the effect displaces the embodied interpretation. Rather than being interpreted as having been performed in front of the listener in a traditional manner, the performative act occurs through the medium of an imagined radio broadcast. This is not to say that listeners cannot reconstruct the gestural character. These examples demonstrate how a listener can last "past" the AM-radio production aesthetic, reconstructing the gestural character of the assumed source audio. Regardless of this, it is clear that juxtaposing the two forms of production aesthetic (AM-radio against functional) emphasises and amplifies the live performance interpretation garnered from the production of the punk-rock style.

Analysis of the AM-radio special effect gave rise to some curious results. As detailed in chapter 6.3.1.2.2, the interpretation of a radio broadcast was retained even though the effect was gradually rescinded. Throughout the introduction of *Last Friday Night* and *Interstate Love Song*, the listener maintains their interpretation. I concluded that this is thanks to the retention of the opening gestural character. In these cases, the interpretation of an AM-radio effect is married to a gesturally imitative style regardless of whether the effect is present. The shift away from the AM-radio effect is only achieved when a gestural transformation is perceived. These case studies imply that the AM-radio effect not only affects the gestural interpretation, but its maintenance is reliant on the continuation of the accompanying gestural character.

7.5 GESTURAL TRANSFORMATION BEYOND *PUNK GOES…*

Investigation of gestural transformation does not stop here. This thesis seeks to lay foundations for further investigations of musical meaning and how it is understood in terms of style, agency, authenticity, social identity and emotional expression. The theory of gestural transformation could apply equally to other repertoires. My case studies concentrate on the *Punk Goes...* series because it contains a diverse range of realisations and a varied span of reference tracks, ranging from hip-hop, industrial metal, to chart pop. As gestural transformation is most clearly evidenced through different recordings of the same song, examples could be examined away from the *Punk Goes…* catalogue. Future investigations of gestural transformation could centre on alternative recorded versions of songs, the type commonly included on re-releases of albums as out-takes. Beyond the realms of popular music, the theory of gestural transformation can be readily applied to recordings of classical music.

Neither should the discussion of the *Punk Goes…* series cease here. I believe that further gestural analyses could answer the question as to why these tracks, containing diverse styles, could be considered punk-rock. I would argue that a majority of the tracks (especially those after the release of *Punk Goes…Pop* in 2002) do not share recognisable stylistic tokens with archetypal punk sounds of any geographical origin, whether UK-based acts (Buzzcocks, Sex Pistols, The Clash) or those originating from the United States (Descendents, Minor Threat, Black Flag).

Gestural transformation can provide additional justification for stylistic categorisation beyond socio-political and subcultural theories. The *Punk Goes…* series could be described as fitting with the socio-political theories set out by Laing (1978 & 2005), Street (1986), and Bennett (1999), as well as the sociological

commentaries by Blush (2001), Greenwald (2003), and Rollins (2004). These analyses impress the importance of cultural factors (such as fashion and political ideology) above an adherence to any musical style. However, I believe that gestural analysis could inform the punk ascription given to the diverse range of tracks within the *Punk Goes…* catalogue. Beyond those tracks that share more obvious instrumental and timbral characteristics with the punk musical style, gesture could provide answers for problematic cases such as Breathe Carolina's *Billie Jean* (2012) and Attack! Attack!'s *I Kissed A Girl* (2009). A superficial gestural analysis reveals emotions and attitudes common to these two particular tracks despite their reliance on the electronic dance music style. The tracks project an energetic, aggressive and antagonistic perceptual-imaginative response typical to punk-rock music – a character readily understood from the vocals, but also witnessed across the entire ensemble.

I hope that this thesis will make a contribution to future studies not only of popular music and recorded sound, but also of musical performance and musical taste. For instance, the theory of gestural transformation may enhance the findings of Greenberg, Kosinski et al. (2016) who question the tendency for audiences to assign musical preferences based on a framework of musical genre. Their coding of some 100 musical pieces via arousal (interpreted energy of the recording), valence (interpreted emotion of the recording), and depth (interpreted sophistication of the recording) has clear links to the post-semiotic theory of gestural transformation.

Having lived and worked with this music for nearly a decade, I have sought in this thesis to harness my 'insider's' knowledge – as performer, composer and ultimately enthusiast – to the task of constructing a theory and method that will explain to others what makes it worthwhile. Often dismissed out of hand as

simplistic, derivative, and unworthy of serious attention, the *Punk Goes...* series, and cover-versions in general, make use of sophisticated and throught-provoking musical processes. In re-working existing material, they exploit an array of techniques to alter interpreted meanings, sometimes radically. These gestural transformations, as I call them, can be analysed and defined, but not in terms of readily quantifiable notated features, such as pitch or metre. To understand why this music is so valued by its fans requires insights into performative gestures, instrumental techniques, vocal grain, projections and perceptions of authenticity, timbral, dynamic and textural nuances, rhythm-as-performed, and production processes. Only with this level of detail can we explain why two performances of the same track can provoke such divergent reactions among fan groups. The theory of gestural transformation determines that 'the same' musical material does not necessarily have the same meaning in performance.

8. APPENDIX

8.1 INTERVIEWS

8.1.1 INTERVIEW WITH DEXTER HUBBARD (FEARLESS RECORDS)

Conducted over e-mail: reply received 2nd April 2013

Robert Upton: I've read conflicting stories regarding the selection process for the *Punk Goes...* series; in general terms (I realise that there will be some odd cases), does Fearless invite bands to appear on the compilations or do bands come to Fearless with covers that they would like to be included?
Dexter Hubbard: The majority of the time Fearless would invite bands to be included. Due to nature of our work we have good relationships with whole host of bands regardless if they're on our label or not. Bands sharing management, touring / friends with fearless acts, people who work at the label being fans... it all comes pretty naturally.

RU: Furthermore (but less importantly for me), are there legal issues regarding publishing copyright for recording someone else's song? Does a band contracted to another label cause issues?
DH: There is actually no legal issue with recording a cover, as long as all publishing is paid on it. You don't permission from original songwriter / copyright / publishing holder. The only issue is when the lyrics are changed, and/or the structure of the music is drastically changed. Then you come into issues of weather something is being sampled rather than covered, which brings further complications.

RU: Following *Punk Goes...Pop* (2002) there was a 7-year gap to *Punk Goes...Pop Vol. 2* with the latter having a much more 'polished' and 'produced' sound combined with the tracks incorporating much heavier punk and metalcore elements: What, would you say, are the primary reasons for this change in sound?
DH: Primary reason would be how the 'scene' has changed, and this was simply reflected on the bands that were involved in the comp and the sound they have.

Would also have to note how Fearless' status in the industry and the music they were involved in changed and altered in those 7 years.

RU: I've heard a lot of grumblings (from an older generation!) that the music on the *Punk Goes…* series 'isn't punk' and I wouldn't necessarily disagree musically speaking: in your opinion, how do these bands tie-in to a 'punk' sound or ethic?
DH: I guess the first thing would be to note what exactly is a 'punk' sound and what does it mean these days. 'Punk' to a 16 year old mean something completely different to someone who is 21, and same to someone who is 31 / 41 / 51 etc. Think it's fair to say that it's a minority from this 'older generation' that holds concern and raises issues when it comes to these comps... but it's pretty fair to say that it really is just a brand name. While a few like to debate it's bigger meaning, *"Punk Goes..."* is a name that works and everyone immediately identifies with these comps.

RU: There seems to be 2 main approaches to the covers in the *Punk Goes*… series; covers that attempt to strictly adhere to the original as much as possible (e.g., Say Anything's cover of *Got Your Money* on *Punk Goes…Crunk*) or a creative re-casting the song in the band's own style (e.g., All Time Low's version of *Umbrella*) – is this decision left up to the band or will Fearless's selection process somehow dictate the outcome?
DH: Would probably say it's a mix of the two points you raised... Fearless pick a band knowing what qualities and interpretations they will bring to a particular track in question.

RU: In terms of sales, do subsequent releases boost the sales of previous editions? ie will Fearless see a spike in sales of *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 4* following the release and promotion of *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 5*?
DH: They do yes. That is also to do with price (reduction) campaigns we run with the 'Punk Goes...' catalogue around a release of new comp in the series.

RU: And finally, is there a demand for individual tracks or complete albums? Digital sales or physical copies?

DH: There is. About 30-40% of our income on a *Punk Goes…* comes from individual (digital) track sales. Digital makes up for about 80% for our album sales as well, this is substantially higher % than a standard artist album.

8.1.2 INTERVIEW WITH BERT PONCHET OF CHUNK! NO, CAPTAIN CHUNK!

Interview conducted at Rock City, Nottingham, 20th September 2013

Robert Upton: Just about you as a band, first of all, give me some influences, give me some bands that you grew up listening to or that you like now
Bert Ponchet: Well, first off, we start with, we started the band because we were a bunch of friends connected to the same kind of music. We were all listening to, like, actually, we started the band when we saw the studio video of the very first album of Four Year Strong and we were like 'Oh that's amazing!' So we started with that and we wanted to do something around that kind of music. It took like, maybe a year before we found our sound; and then, er yeah. So we started with Four Year Strong as I said, A Day To Remember…

RU: I noticed one of the band had a The Wonder Years t-shirt on in one of your videos
BP: Yeah, The Wonder Years, Set Your Goals too. Actually yeah, it was pretty much all of these bands and there was a genre called 'easycore' that grew up alongside the Four Year Strong and all of this kind of music and when we started the band, when we started to release songs and stuff like that, our band, it seems like our band was automatically associated to that kind of music.

RU: Because it's a very similar "sound"
BP: Yeah yeah…I'd say that right now, we've just released an album and we tried to make it a bit more unique actually. We tried to find something, like, we wanted to be like, more melodic and heavier at the same time. We like to be very contrasted.

RU: Which is what A Day To Remember said about their last album as well
BP: Yeah – I think the difference that we have between A Day To Remember right now and us right now; we try to mix the very, very very heavy stuff and very technical stuff: djent metal music

RU: So like Woe, Is Me
BP: Yeah – that's the same kind of thing

RU: That kind of explains why, although being French, you sound like an American band. Because when I started researching I was like 'are you sure!? Are they French!?'
BP: Yeah, we grew up with just like, American bands; punk-rock. We were like punk-rock kids; we grew up with Blink-182 and New Found Glory. So we started like this and have always been influenced by American bands.

RU: There's elements of the pop, kind of melodic stuff and the heavier stuff – there's punk, there's pop, there's metal – all these things; where do you feel as though you fit in, style wise? Because a lot of the bands we've talked about do split genres a lot - A Day To Remember can tour with New Found Glory or Dillinger Escape Plan and still fit in – do you feel in the middle or just are where you are and that's it?
BP: We are definitely not in the middle: The thing is for a band like us, it's hard to find the right bands to tour with because there's not a lot of bands like us actually. We toured with A Day To Remember back in March…that was amazing. We grew up…we toured a lot with metal bands.

RU: Such as?
BP: We've toured with Chelsea Grin, Miss May I…so pretty much, basically, very metal bands

RU: Do you find, as an aside, that you are slightly…the fans that turn up are very metal orientated and you've got this melodic element; do you feel a little unsure about it, or do you pick heavier songs to play with those bands?
BP: Well, when we are on that kind of tour, sometimes it's kinda awkward. Most of the time, since we have breakdowns and stuff like that, we try to make it even more heavier and try to do our best to say 'hey, we can be as heavy as the other band, you know? It's not because we have a little bit of singing, and we are in the major key, we can do pretty much, everything we want and actually, it works. Every time we play on the metal tours, we have kids that came to us and say 'hey, I never heard about your guys' music, I'm gonna buy the CD'

RU: Do you feel that that's how it's always worked with the punk and metal scene? It's a live, performance-led thing?
BP: Actually, there is one problem, which is that, in that kind of music, there are always purists, you know? So when you're on a tour with Chelsea Grin for example, which is very heavy, there's always people that are like 'oh, they've got singing…it's just crap'. That's the problem – we don't get the purist fan-base but you know…

RU:…do you want that fan-base?
BP: No, no – not really.

RU: So with your cover of Ke$ha's 'We R Who We R', how did that come about?
BP: With this cover, it was two years ago I guess with the *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 4* and the label told us 'hey, you guys are gonna do a cover for this CD and here's a list; you can pick the song the want and you can do whatever'

RU: So what other songs were on there?
BP: There were a lot of songs. We made a selection, there were a bunch of things like Bruno Mars…very pop music

RU: And Bruno Mars turned up on *Punk Goes…Pop Vol. 4*
BP: Yeah, Pierce The Veil were on there, Sleeping With Sirens were on there…in fact, there were some big bands

RU: So why that particular cover?
BP: There was a big list, we made a selection, and we came to like 3 songs at the end and we could not choose, so we asked the label their opinion on about, what they feel for us so there was this one, there was Avril Lavigne, *What The Hell*, and there was this third one which I can't remember, I think it was by Taylor Swift or something. And the label was like 'Ke$ha is very popular right now, you should do that'.

RU: So, would you call it a 'cover' or a 'version' of the original?
BP: When you listen to this CD, there is two kinds of songs: there is the bands who strain to play the actual song with not a lot of changes, but our goal was to make it

our own and er, there was another band called Woe, Is Me who did this song too; there is another cover which is on their album and actually, we both did the same thing like, we made our own version of the song. Actually, we just kept the chords and the vocal melody.

RU: Well, I was about to ask, you kept the lyrics or the vocal part, the chords and the little synth riff at the beginning/end. Why just those bits?
BP: Because this particular song isn't a very dense song, there is not to keep from the original version.

RU: So would you say that those bits were the core, the important bits?
BP: Yeah, I think that the there was not much to keep except these things

RU: So if you changed the chord sequence for instance, which you have a little bit I guess, would you feel as though it's the same song or would you feel as though you've taken it another step away?
BP: Well, actually, I remember how we did it. When we first listened to this song, what is the thing that people will remember the most? It's obviously the chorus and the 'ahh-ahh-ah-ahh' (chorus vocal glitches) so that makes the whole song, so obviously we need to keep that bit. Erm, the thing I really like about this song is that there was a kind of rap 'flow', it's not like rap, but it's kind-of, and it was the opportunity to do the screaming part. So for us it was great the rap flow, we were going to turn it into a screaming part, and the singing part would be the chorus part. So basically, there was all the elements for us to do our own thing.

RU: I guess the big change is the, other than the drums, the melodic elements in the guitars are the big thing that's drastically changed. So who came up with those? They're very similar to riffs from *Pardon My French* for instance, there's a lot of similarity between the riff [on the version] two years ago, and the new stuff.
BP: Yeah, because we couldn't keep all the synth sounds and the original drums, I think the bassline is basically the same, but yeah, we had to put some more melody in it; there is some guitar parts that I don't exactly know how they came about. But there is some melodic guitar, some riff guitar, there's some djent-y riff, but the

thing about this song is that this song is in a minor key; for us, we are used to playing in the major and…

RU: …it gives it a darker edge, a little bit
BP: Yeah…since it was in a minor key, we tried some stuff and it was too sad; the stuff in the major is like a happy band so we wanted to add some elements to make it happier. That's it

RU: Four Year Strong do the same thing; when people hear the version, do you expect them to know the original?
BP: Yeah, yeah

RU: So do you feel as though the people will refer to the original when they listen to yours, and perhaps take some different messages from it?
BP: I mean, that is the advantage to making a cover; people will know the song, the basis, and they'll enjoy the thing that they already know, but you bring some more stuff so that they can enjoy it even more…stuff like breakdowns, stuff like that. I really like doing covers, even if that sounds not very original, especially live, when we play this cover live the crowd reaction is always the best.

RU: With the *Punk Goes…* series, it's one way a lot of bands get known to an audience; with fourteen/fifteen bands on each CD, they buy it for A Day To Remember or whoever and then hear others and think 'oh I like this too, I'll check them out on YouTube and things' so you'd think that the cover would be the song they know the most
BP: Obviously, and that helps. When we released that song we were still a very small band who had just signed to Fearless and that helped us a lot, and I have a scoop for you, we are going to be on the next one – not *Punk Goes…Christmas*, but the one after that which is going to be released in January or February, which is going to be a *Punk Goes 90s*.

RU: Any word on what song, or is it hush hush?
BP: Yeah, I need to keep it quiet, but you know…

RU: One thing I did notice was that the songs on *Something For Nothing* have a certain "sound", then there's this cover and then *Pardon My French*; it seems as though a lot of the tokens from the cover have appeared on *Pardon My French* – things like the detuned guitars, the vocal glitches; is that development from working with the cover?
BP: Yeah, these releases are how we evolved as a band because the very first record was recorded like a long time ago; it got released in 2011 but the songs on it are very very old. Basically, it's a compilation of the first songs we wrote as a band. So when we listen to this album, we feel as though it sounds very old for us. So we released the record, toured a little bit in the States and we did this cover and we already knew that this is where we wanted to go; the cover was a little bit of a preview of what we were going to do [with *Pardon My French*].

RU: When you play it live, is there anything you have to change in comparison to the studio version?
BP: It's pretty much the same; I did a little bit of backing tracks for live. There's one thing, I sing one chorus line lower note…I don't know exactly what it is but there's one little thing like that.

RU: Because when Pierce The Veil play *Just The Way You Are*, they have to change so many guitar lines, pianos, strings – so many produced elements on there and when they play it live, it's still good, but it's not quite the full effect
BP: On the *Pardon My French*, we have a song called *Taking Chances* and this song, the tune is very low but with my voice I have to go very high so for example, for this song we have to detune a little bit because it's very rough on my voice

RU: When Mayday Parade, their songs on record are in Drop D, but live it's taken down another step
BP: Yeah, that happens – it happens a lot actually – we do this for just that one song because it's way too high but on all the other songs, we play them in the same tune and we try to make it sound exactly like the CD. I'm trying to be a producer so I know how to mix stuff and all the backing tracks that we have live, I work a lot so I want to make sure it's gonna sound great and sound like the CD

RU: Is that important to you? To sound like the CD?

BP: Yep!

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