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Fascinating Rhythms: Music Programming, Memory and Materiality in Visual Culture

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television Studies

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I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father. Dad, I hope I made you proud.

Declaration of Inclusion of Published Work

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university. Chapter One, 'The Afterlife of Music Television' draws on, but expands significantly, observations on television and nostalgia made in 'The Box Set and the Afterlife of Television', Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Film and Television, University of Warwick, 2015. As the dissertation formed the theoretical basis of thesis, some repetition of material is therefore unavoidable.

Parts of the Introduction, Chapter One and Conclusion of this thesis were published by the author as "“Everybody Needs A Place To Think” Or Do They?: The End of BBC Four, Arts Programming and Precarity'. *CST Online*, 22 May 2020.

Further Parts of the Introduction, Chapter Two and Conclusion will be published by the author as '(Re)Writing Music History: Television, Memory and Nostalgia in *The People's History of Pop*', in a forthcoming issue of *Velvet Light Trap*.

Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which music programming can participate in discourses of music heritage, and popular and visual cultures. It contributes to a growing body of work that seeks to redress the dominance of US-centric scholarship on MTV and music videos. Much of this writing is defined by an approach that relies on descriptive rather than close textual analysis, which this thesis addresses.

One intention of this interdisciplinary research is to challenge scholarship on nostalgia and cultural memory to complicate readings of nostalgia and nostalgic behaviours beyond their conception as commercially-motivated and politically regressive acts. Another is the intention to challenge the traditionally 'low' cultural status of music programming.

Chapter One examines the role of DVD, iPlayer, and YouTube in preserving music programming, and maintaining its cultural afterlife. This is framed by a discussion of the scheduling strategies of BBC Four. It is also concerned with issues of availability and the aesthetic experience of watching (or re-watching) such programming online.

Chapter Two analyses the relationship between memory, materiality, and the representation of music heritage. It considers the affective and haptic potential of such programming (Marks, 1998-2015), and explores how they challenge institutionalised historical accounts through their attention to the tactile objects of music culture. The memory work they perform is reflected in their integration of 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1979) and 'unofficial knowledge' (Samuel, 1994).

Chapter Three considers feature-length music documentaries. The analysis focusses on how these films aestheticise nostalgia and pastness and how they complicate the audience's sense of 'now-ness' (Highmore, 2013). Finally, it examines the impact of documentary features on the perception of music artists, and how they are remembered.

The thesis illustrates how music and memory work together, and the importance of this relationship to understanding what nostalgia is and how it functions within visual culture.

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Introduction: Musical Encounters in Visual Culture

‘[W]hat does it mean to live amongst the spectral traces of the past?’¹

This thesis explores an answer to this question – one of numerous questions posed by Rodney Harrison in *Heritage: Critical Approaches* – through its examination of the relationship between memory and materiality and related discourses of nostalgia in music programming. The increasing multiplicity of ways we can re-encounter and re-engage with music and music culture of the past, and re-experience it through film and television texts has created a generative site for Harrison’s ‘spectral traces’. They are evidentiary proof of what he calls ‘the heterogeneous piling up of historic materials in the present.’²

As referenced by the title of this thesis, the ‘fascinating rhythms’ explored within relate to the melodic and the spatiotemporal. First, it is concerned with the rhythms and circulations of the programming itself – which examples of music programming survive, what form does that survival take, and how has it changed over time? Second, it considers the rhythms and circulations of the music that features within music programming, which genres feature heavily, and which are maligned or otherwise excluded. Third, it is concerned with the rhythms and circulations of memory and nostalgia, or in Daniel Marcus’ terms, the nostalgic ‘cycles’ or ‘loops’ that define when, where, and how we encounter these programmes in visual culture, and what it means for our spectatorial experience.³ Fourth, I am interested in the rhythms and circulations of aesthetic tendencies within the programmes – the identifiable patterns of stylistic choice, such as the use of captions or aging effects. For Harrison, heritage is ‘everywhere’ and so too,

¹ Harrison, Rodney. *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. Routledge, 2013, p. 2.

² Ibid.

³ Marcus, Daniel. *Happy Days and Wonder Years: The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Cultural Politics*. Rutgers University Press, 2004. This work is discussed in more detail in the Review of Literature. Throughout the thesis, I use the phrase ‘visual culture’ as opposed to ‘audiovisual’ to place emphasis on aesthetics. However, this should not be taken to mean I am uninterested in the sonic aspects of the texts under discussion.

I argue, are the opportunities for positive nostalgic engagement, expressed within the wide range of media texts discussed in the work that follows.⁴

Throughout, I argue that the texts under discussion illustrate a significantly changed relationship to materiality, time, memory, and nostalgia that has hitherto been underexamined in scholarship on music in film or television, or indeed, music television – a critical lacuna that is discussed throughout the Review of Literature. Functioning as a sociohistorical document, the corpus texts explored across this thesis are unified by their privileging of the complex relationships between music, music culture, and the memory objects connected to that culture. For example, as Chapter Two's analysis of *The People's History of Pop* demonstrates, attention to music ephemera such as tickets, posters and lyric sheets or amateur audio and video recordings, can be transformed through recontextualization, where items are lent a more nuanced understanding of their cultural and emotional value, borne out in Sarah Baker and Alison Huber's ethnographic research into the preservation of music's material culture. They note that items typically considered and/or characterised by respondents as "rubbish", "junk" or "trash" in traditional museal and archival contexts are transformed and imbued with a greater significance in Do-It-Yourself contexts, through the process of preservation and recontextualization.⁵

These objects become what Marion Leonard calls, a 'silent witness' to 'the sonic and bodily experience of music, and the emotional and social ways in which it is experienced in time and space',⁶ or in Harrison's terms, 'the spectral traces

⁴ Harrison discusses the omnipresence of heritage in these terms. See Harrison, *Heritage: Critical approaches*, pp. 1-12.

⁵ Baker, Sarah, and Alison Huber. 'Saving "Rubbish": Popular Music's Material Culture in Amateur Archives and Museums'. *Sites of Popular Music Heritage: Memories, Histories, Places*, edited by Sara Cohen et al., Routledge, 2015, pp. 112–24. For further discussion of music and archival practice, see Collins, Jez, and Paul Long. "'Fillin' in Any Blanks I Can," Online Archival Practice and Virtual Sites of Musical Memory'. *Sites of Popular Music Heritage: Memories, Histories, Places*, edited by Sara Cohen et al., Routledge, 2015, pp. 81–96; Henning, Michele, and Rehan Hyder. 'Locating the "Bristol Sound": Archiving Music as Everyday Life'. *Sites of Popular Music Heritage: Memories, Histories, Places*, edited by Sara Cohen et al., Routledge, 2015, pp. 97–111; and Withers, Deborah M. 'Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Women's Liberation Music Archive'. *Sites of Popular Music Heritage: Memories, Histories, Places*, edited by Sara Cohen et al., Routledge, 2015, pp. 97–111.

⁶ Leonard, Marion. 'Constructing Histories Through Material Culture: Popular Music, Museums and Collecting'. *Popular Music History*, vol. 2, no. 2, Nov. 2007, p. 148.

of the past'. They also embody our interactions with memory objects of music culture, either tangible ephemera, or, as this thesis will go on to examine, the film and television texts related to documenting that culture. Their status as collectible artefacts with an indexical, material link to the real world also reinscribes them with the cultural value and worth they have typically been denied. This is echoed by the "low" cultural status traditionally ascribed to music programming itself, which subsequently undergoes a process of transformation concerning its perceived cultural value. Its value is restored or reinscribed either through the process of archiving and/or the act of sustained critical and scholarly attention. Similarly, the aesthetics of this programming elevates the material traces of music culture. Therefore, the work undertaken by this thesis can be seen as an act of preservation, encapsulating music programming at a particular time and place in visual and popular cultures.

The omnipresence of heritage that Harrison describes, in combination with the textual longevity and cultural endurance facilitated through home viewing formats, on-demand and streaming access, means that we can easily and consistently return to the past and re-engage with it, often in new and different contexts. Media texts circulate and endure in what Lynn Spigel and Henry Jenkins call 'transformed states', disappearing and reappearing in new forms or formats, such as YouTube clips, DVDs, or television repeats and specials, where familiar footage is reframed and recontextualised as archive.⁷ Re-experiencing media purposefully encourages us to call upon memories and re-engage nostalgically with them. During this process, memories can also be overwritten, whereby our understanding of them as memories is also changed, with "new" and "old" experiences blurring together. Our continuous interactions with texts from different times also illustrates a changed relationship with memory and pastness, which this thesis will go on to examine.

⁷ Spigel, Lynn, and Henry Jenkins. 'Same Bat Channel, Different Bat Times: Mass Culture and Popular Memory'. *The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and His Media*, Routledge: BFI Publishing, 1991, p.144.

Structure and Research Questions

The body of the thesis is divided into four sections. It begins with a Review of Literature, broken down into two areas of scholarship: nostalgia and memory, and music. The first area is concerned with definitions of nostalgia, structures of memory, and the complex interactions between the two, while the second is concerned with the discussion of music television and popular music. In combination, this literature provides much of the scholarly basis for the work that follows. The nature of this project means it is neither possible nor productive to produce an exhaustive overview of the scholarship which informs its writing. To avoid significant repetition, each subsequent chapter is contextualised by scholarship that engages with concepts or ideas that are pertinent to its particular themes.

The thesis is informed by the following research questions:

1. How does the re-experience of music television contribute to discourses of music heritage and the preservation of screen culture?
2. How do re-experienced texts appeal to their audience, what aesthetic strategies are used to directly address them when re-packaged for home viewing release?
3. What is the relationship between re-experienced texts and discourses of nostalgia?
4. What is the relationship between memory and materiality and related discourses of nostalgia?

The first research question – concerned with wider related issues of access, availability, and value, as I have touched upon in this introduction – is a connective thread throughout the thesis, informing all areas of the project, including methodology and corpus selection, which will be discussed later. The second research question is explored primarily in Chapter One: The Afterlife of Music Television, which, as its title suggests, is concerned with the survival of

music television outside the boundaries of its original broadcast, and the multiplicity of mediums and modes of delivery this can encompass. The chapter examines four different viewing technologies – DVD, the broadcast flow of BBC Four, BBC iPlayer, and YouTube – to explore their respective roles in the provision and preservation of non-contemporary music programming in the post-broadcast environment. The featured texts include *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (BBC Two, 1971-1988), *Ready Steady Go!* (ITV, 1963-1996), and *Juke Box Jury* (BBC One, 1959-1967; 1979; BBC Two, 1989-1990), which are discussed alongside the less well-known regional series, *Something Else* (BBC Two, 1978-1982) to consider how this television circulates, in what form, and the implications of these textual re-encounters upon how these programmes are read and understood.

The second and fourth questions are explored throughout Chapter Two and Chapter Three. Chapter Two: Music Television, Celebration and Material Culture explores the complex relationships between music programming, memory and materiality over the last two decades through three interlinked case studies on *The People's History of Pop* (BBC Four/7Wonder, UK, 2016-2017), *Classic Albums* (various, 1997–), and *Live from Abbey Road* (Channel 4, 2007-2012).⁸ The chapter is unified by its attention to the affective and auratic qualities of such programmes and their exploration of the ways in which music culture narrativizes and historicises itself. It is concerned with the foregrounding of tangible memory objects, their role in the revision of music history, and by extension, how these programmes generate nostalgia. The chapter also explores sites of musical memory and cultural tourism, focusing on the mythos surrounding Abbey Road to encompass the differences and similarities between private and public forms of memory.

Chapter Three: Music Features, Nostalgia and Memorialisation moves away from the project's basis in television in an acknowledgment of the

⁸ The series has been broadcast on various channels during its lifetime: BBC One (1997), BBC Two (2003-2006, 2008), ITV (1999-2003), (VH1: 2001-2007), VH1 Classic (2003-2007), BBC Four (2006-2021). Since April 23, 2021, new episodes began transmitting on Sky Arts, and earlier series were added to their on-demand offerings.

increasingly blurred boundaries between film and television, informed by the increase in production of and interest in music documentary features, or ‘rock docs’, that has occurred during the writing of this thesis. Their inclusion is in recognition of their status as a primary site of engagement (and re-engagement) with music culture and heritage, functioning as a social document-turned memory object. Examining music feature documentaries also offers the opportunity to discuss further the changed relationship between time and memory that is reflected throughout the thesis. Through this, connections can be made between the shared thematic and aesthetic tendencies that exist across music programming, irrespective of medium. The analysis of *Supersonic* (Mat Whitecross, 2016), *Amy* (Asif Kapadia, 2016), and *What Happened, Miss Simone?* (Liz Garbus, 2015) is organised around three central themes: aestheticization, narrativization, and memorialisation, attending to their use of archive, the effects and affects of re-experiencing material that is familiar once recontextualised in new ways. Often, this concerns the re-use of archive television that is then recontextualised and re-experienced as film. Such remediation emphasizes not only the connection between film and television texts, but also the slipperiness of the formerly hard distinctions made between both mediums.

First, it analyses how *Supersonic* and *Amy* aestheticize nostalgia. Second, it considers how *Amy* and *What Happened, Miss Simone?* narrativize and memorialise their subjects, with attention to how this impacts the ways in which their lives and work are understood. The chapter also contextualises the history of documentary features and changes to its style, from the observational *Dont Look Back* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967) to the personal, in *Kate Nash: Underestimate the Girl* (Amy Goldstein, 2018) and *Fleetwood Mac’s Songbird: Christine McVie* (Matt O’Casey, 2019).⁹

As suggested by this brief outline, the third research question is a unifying thread across the thesis and is articulated by two core concerns. First, that

⁹ The omission of the apostrophe in the title of *Dont Look Back* is a deliberate choice by Pennebaker. As Richard Wallace notes, this spelling is also adopted when the film is discussed by others. For further details see Wallace, Richard. *Mockumentary Comedy: Performing Authenticity*. Palgrave Macmillan US, 2018, p. 31.

nostalgic engagement can be read as positive, productive and, in some cases, even beneficial, when understood outside the boundaries of commodification and conservatism. Second, that the approach to the historicization and narrativization of music culture and music heritage impacts upon how and why we are nostalgic. Our understanding of the musical past, and the lives of significant figures within it, is directly affected by the availability of material that facilitates nostalgic engagement. Historical and cultural meaning is restricted or closed down irrespective of whether there is too little material available, or indeed, as the analysis of *Amy* illustrates, too much.

Methodology

The primary methodology of this thesis is close textual analysis – implemented as a direct challenge to the lack of scholarly attention placed on the aesthetics of music television and music programming, their mode of address, and relationship to nostalgia – in order to illustrate the interrelation between public and private memory and popular and visual cultures. The thesis seeks to intervene in the debates around nostalgia and nostalgic engagement as a passive, politically regressive act that is solely motivated by capitalist consumption.

The analysis is attentive to the medium-specific qualities of both film and television, engaging in the same methodology for each form. In doing so, it treats both mediums equally, without hierarchical or cultural bias. The discussion of their historical perception as ‘bad’ or ‘good’ cultural objects is presented here to indicate how and why gaps in scholarship occur, and to illustrate why the dual focus approach of this thesis is both valuable and productive. This analysis is undertaken with the intention of emphasizing the value of music programming and the cultural work it performs, in acknowledgment of the function and value of such texts as social documents-turned-artefacts, which are also sometimes representative of particular moments in national and cultural life. The research draws upon an interdisciplinary framework from numerous fields, including television studies, cultural studies, music heritage, popular music, musicology and sociology, often reappropriating scholarship on other genres of television,

namely, Misha Kavka's work on reality television, and applying it in the new context of music programming, thereby illustrating the portability of its arguments.¹⁰ This interdisciplinarity is a reflection of my own research practice as a scholar of both film and television, and the roots of this project in the televisual, which echo the 'disparate disciplinary and discursive strands' that have come to define television studies as a whole.¹¹ Where appropriate, this analysis is expanded to include paratextual material, which provides further sociocultural and sociohistorical context for corpus texts. Such paratextual material includes press releases and official commissioning and programme pages, blogs, and marketing materials such as posters and trailers.

Below, I outline the merits of this approach and offer further discussion of scholarly concepts around value, pastness and history, which inform the writing of the thesis, before finally detailing the reasons behind the corpus selection.

Textual Analysis and the Value of Close Reading

In line with the structure of this thesis, I will now outline the methodological usefulness of textual analysis from the vantage point of both television and film studies. This is not to reinstate medium-specific hierarchies but rather to illustrate the similar theoretical positioning of close reading as a methodology and its critical value to both disciplines. In 'The Joy of Text?' Glen Creeber outlines the origins of textual analysis in television studies, noting its valuable roots in semiotics, which he deems 'crucial to its gradual acceptance into the academy' by giving television studies 'some greatly needed academic credibility' to further its significance and validity as a worthy object of study.¹²

This of course raises the question of television's status as art. T.C. Worsley, among others, sought to challenge the position of television as a "bad"

¹⁰ Kavka's work is explored in more detail in Chapter Two.

¹¹ Hartley, John. 'Textual Analysis'. *Television Studies*, edited by Toby Miller, BFI Publishing, 2002, p. 33.

¹² Creeber, Glen. 'The Joy of Text?: Television and Textual Analysis'. *Critical Studies in Television*, vol. 1, no. 1, Mar. 2006, p. 81.

cultural object in relation to the “good” of cinema, which arguably defined the discipline and its consistent desire to reinvestigate and legitimate itself.¹³ As Kay Richardson and Ulrike H. Meinhof so succinctly put it: ‘The equation of television with “bad culture” is almost as old as the medium itself.’¹⁴ Acknowledging the importance of television as a medium, Worsley explored its positive and negative aspects while identifying the need for television to be discussed using ‘an adequate critical approach.’¹⁵ One such approach is close reading, highlighted by Creeber’s overview of significant texts which advocate for its use in relation to television, including John Fiske and John Hartley’s seminal *Reading Television*, which, as referenced in its title, approaches the televisual text in a similar manner to a work of literature – an approach this thesis also adopts.¹⁶

In *Film as Film*, V.F. Perkins reflects similarly on the credibility and validity of film as an art, describing the difficulties film also experienced to become recognised in comparison to older art forms – such as literature, music – as a ‘battle for prestige’ won due to the conversion of ‘cultural establishments.’¹⁷ However, he notes that the recognition of film as the Seventh Art, and the scholarly attention this afforded resulted in it being judged by the same criteria as other established art forms rather than on the basis of its own ‘unique properties,’ without attention to or consideration of a film’s *mise-en-scène* and how they function to produce meaning.¹⁸ As the title of *Film as Film* makes clear, for Perkins, a film must be judged *as film* on its own terms, with ‘attention to the movie as it is *seen*.’¹⁹ For the purposes of this thesis, each text is judged or read on its own merits, with emphasis on what is seen and, of course, heard attending to medium-specificity. However, where necessary, the analysis also acknowledges the slippage or blurring of boundaries between what is (or is not) understood as film or television, where texts and related paratexts can be defined

¹³ Worsley, T. C. *Television: The Ephemeral Art*. Ross, 1970.

¹⁴ Richardson, Kay, and Ulrike H. Meinhof. *Worlds in Common? Television Discourse in a Changing Europe*. Routledge, 1999, p. 121.

¹⁵ Worsley, *The Ephemeral Art*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Fiske, John, and John Hartley. *Reading Television*. Methuen, 1978.

¹⁷ Perkins, V. F. *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies*. Penguin, 1972, pp. 9-11.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27. Emphasis in original.

variously as ‘media’ and ‘content’ due to their circulation patterns and modes of delivery.

Following Richard Dyer, I wish to emphasize that the film or television text under discussion remains central to my analysis, and does not risk, as he observed, ‘doing film studies without films.’²⁰ Rather, the inclusion of paratexts in my analysis is an acknowledgment that the text cannot be understood in isolation. Our interpretation of the text exists within a wider framework of popular, cultural, and in some cases, scholarly meanings. Take, for example, the stylistic use of black and white photography as a signifier of pastness, which carries its own embedded cultural history. Knowledge of this style can enrich the analysis the text generates, and, as illustrated in Chapter Three, is informed by the formal properties of the text under analysis. However, in adopting such a methodology, significant questions are raised regarding the contested status of textual analysis and, conversely, as Dyer has noted, its continued persistence as a methodology.²¹ Further questions are also prompted concerning the validity of interpretive practice – the mechanics of *doing* textual analysis – and the wider implications of what Stuart Hall terms the ‘preferred meanings’ that are encoded into the text.²² As Creeber notes, there are limits to the certainty of a text’s meaning, and there remains an equal danger in attempting to apply a singular, closed reading to that text.²³ If a reading is presented as definitive, it implies all readers will interpret the text in the same manner, producing a construction akin to Umberto Eco’s ‘model reader,’ or more pertinently to this thesis, Helen Wheatley’s later evocation of the ‘model viewer.’²⁴ While it is clear that the texts and paratexts discussed throughout this thesis are constructed to appeal to a

²⁰ Dyer qtd. in Grant, Catherine, and Jaap Kooijman. ‘Pleasure | Obvious | Queer: A Conversation with Richard Dyer’. *NECSUS*, 11 July 2016, <https://necsus-ejms.org/pleasure-obvious-queer-conversation-richard-dyer/>. Accessed 11 Feb. 2021.

²¹ Dyer, Richard. ‘Richard Dyer: The Persistence of Textual Analysis’. *Kracauer Lectures in Film and Media Theory*, Winter 2015/2016, <https://www.kracauer-lectures.de/en/winter-2015-2016/richard-dyer/>. Accessed 02 Feb. 2021.

²² Hall, Stuart. ‘Encoding/Decoding’. 1980. *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, edited by Stuart Hall et al., Routledge, 2005, pp. 107–16.

²³ Creeber, ‘The Joy of Text?’, p. 83.

²⁴ Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Indiana University Press, 1979; Eco, Umberto. *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Harvard University Press, 1994; Wheatley, Helen. *Gothic Television*. Manchester University Press, 2017, pp. 18-19.

particular viewer, and contain their own specific genre pleasures, it is not the intention for the analysis within this thesis to speak definitively as to what these texts mean.²⁵ Rather, it seeks to open up readings, rather than close them down. This analysis remains an act of interpretation, one that offers a possible way in which these texts *can* be read by using memory and nostalgia as guiding foci to examine how the text functions and where these elements are located within the various aspects of its *mise-en-scène*, or in Perkins' terms, its 'unique properties', to gain a sense of what constitutes its visual style. The ultimate goal of this analysis or close reading is to consider how and why these particular elements – for example, the use of close-ups and the pace of editing – interact to generate affective potential and/or facilitate an affective response in the audience.²⁶

The value of textual analysis is particularly important in the context of this thesis and is a central motivating factor for its writing. As I have touched upon, the rareness of surviving and/or available examples of music programming means that giving attention to what this programming looks like and assessing its aesthetics, rather than just providing a description of that programming, takes on much greater significance. Since so much material remains *unseen*, sometimes the ability to undertake textual analysis is compromised, particularly when texts exist at best as fragmented clips online, and at worst, only in the memory of audiences and scholars, impacting on corpus selection, which I will outline later. These difficulties mean the method itself becomes just as valuable as the analysis it produces.

Beyond the implementation of textual analysis, the structure and content of the thesis is underpinned and informed by two interrelated scholarly contexts concerning value and history that are central to the methodological approach and the core concerns of this project. The first relates to hierarchical structures of

²⁵ Creeber notes that 'extra-textual' material such as DVD extras 'made textual analysis frustratingly unsure of its object of study,' and obfuscated rather than clarified textual meaning. Such materials are used here in support of the text itself, to deepen the understanding of how the main (primary) text produces meaning. See Creeber, 'The Joy of Text?', p. 83.

²⁶ I use the term "audience" to move away from characterisations of the viewer in singular terms, as "model" or "ideal." Equally, I do not wish to imply that the audience should be understood as a homogenous mass, but instead, as an individuated group with its own tastes and desires.

value within television studies, while the second is concerned with the changing cultural perceptions of pastness and heritage. Working through these paradigmatic shifts in cultural meanings helps to determine their impact upon how we read and understand our relationship with memory and nostalgia.

Genre and Hierarchies of Value

The work is anchored by the study of music programming on television and expands outwards to include feature film as an acknowledgment of its changed centrality in visual and popular cultures, particularly in relation to documentary features (explored in more detail in Chapter Three). The significant sociocultural and sociohistorical, and – as Paul Long and Tim Wall have noted – subcultural relationship with music was created on television.²⁷ Exemplified by the work of pioneering producer Jack Good, including *Six-Five Special* (BBC, 1957-1958) and *Oh Boy!* (ITV, 1958-1959), this early programming appealed to burgeoning youth audiences and youth culture, exploring the potential of the genre and the medium.²⁸ The foundation for the symbiotic and ultimately longstanding relationship between television and music began following the abolition of the ‘toddlers’ truce’ in 1957, where the termination of service between 6:00pm and 7:00pm came to an end.²⁹ This led to the introduction of dedicated programming for youth audiences, which in turn created a defined space for music on television, typified by *Top of the Pops* (BBC, 1964-2005; 2006–) and *Ready Steady Go!*.³⁰ In *The Restless Generation*, Pete Frame observes that ‘[n]ew youth and

²⁷ Long, Paul, and Tim Wall. *Friday on My Mind: Public Service Television and The Place of Popular Music Heritage*. 2017, pp. 1–33, https://www.academia.edu/3836569/Friday_on_My_Mind_Public_Service_Television_and_The_Place_of_Popular_Music_Heritage. Accessed 12 July 2017. Unpublished chapter. Cited with permission of the authors.

²⁸ Norma Coates’ work on Jack Good and his contribution to early music television is explored in more detail in the Review of Literature.

²⁹ For more on this see Sendall, Bernard. ‘The End of the “Toddlers’ Truce”’. *Independent Television in Britain. Vol.1: Origin and Foundation 1946-62*, Macmillan, 1982, pp. 243–47; and Briggs, Asa. ‘In the News’. *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Volume V: Competition*, OUP Oxford, 1995, pp. 159-160.

³⁰ It should be noted that the programme in its original form of a weekly chart rundown ended in 2005. It now exists in brand name only as a festive specials broadcast on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Its presence on television is maintained through repeat airings of archival holdings.

musical movements fused together in celebration and a generation gap opened.³¹ This explosion of culture is something which *Ready Steady Go!* in particular sought to capture and reflect. Jeff Evans writes similarly of his own relationship with music on television, acknowledging the difference of *Oh Boy!* and *Ready Steady Go!* to predecessors such as *Hit Parade* (BBC, 1952; 1955-1956).³² For Evans, '[t]elevision – far from being a visual add-on to the tunes we've listened to on the radio, on records, on CDs or via downloads – has been fundamental to the very development of popular music.'³³ Television then, is just as important to Evans' experience of music as the music itself, an assertion contrary to those of Simon Frith, who deemed television to be a 'poor' medium for the coverage of music.³⁴ In contrast, Evans further advocates for the value and significance of television to music and music culture, detailing the virtue of the medium. With echoes of Marshall McLuhan, he notes that, 'it carried the message much faster and more effectively than any medium before it,' making connections between television appearances and accelerated career success for featured artists.³⁵ As will become evident across the thesis, the work is underpinned by Evans' position on the medium and its qualities, rather than Frith's. Restoring the value and significance of music programming to television historiography remains the central motivating factor for undertaking this research.

The significance of music programming to television as a form and a culture sits in tension with various forms of precarity. First, this stems from the nature of the content, defined by the very ephemerality of capturing what is often a live event, and second, in the lack of surviving material.³⁶ As Chris Perry and Simon Coward of television heritage organisation Kaleidoscope observe, '[i]n

³¹ Frame, Pete. *The Restless Generation: How Rock Music Changed the Face of 1950s Britain*. 1st edition, e-book, Rogan House, 2007 (n.p).

³² Not to be confused with *Your Hit Parade* (NBC, 1950–1958; CBS, 1958–1959) upon which the BBC series was based.

³³ Evans, Jeff. *Rock & Pop on British TV: The Story of Rock and Pop on British Television*. 1st edition, e-book, Omnibus Press, 2017, (n.p). Ian Inglis discusses the medium in similar terms in the introduction to *Popular Music and Television in Britain* (2010).

³⁴ Frith's writings and their significance are discussed in more detail in the Review of Literature.

³⁵ Evans, *Rock & Pop on British TV*, (n.p).

³⁶ This is also explored in Chapter One.

its early history, the television industry paid *scant regard to preservation*. As is well-known, this is in part due to the lack of recording technologies and partly that, until 1955, the majority of material was transmitted live.³⁷ Their ongoing work, embodied by the high-profile ‘Missing Believed Wiped’ initiative, forms part of a wider culture of institutional and fan activities also undertaken by the BBC and the National Film and Television Archive and others to reinstate television’s cultural position and value by archiving, restoring, and tracing lost episodes, and in turn, reverse the damage of the ‘scant attention to preservation’ that defines television production.³⁸

In the case of music programming, the damage is particularly acute, owing to the widespread practices of tape wiping, where the then expensive tape was reused to record new material rather than archive copies of existing broadcasts, revealing the effects of a double stigma concerning television (as culture, as object) and music television (as genre) as “low” cultural objects, that are throwaway, and lacking in value.³⁹ As Paul Long and Tim Wall observe, the decisions regarding the recording and preservation of television are based on genre and merit (and by extension, circulations of taste), and are thus value-laden and deeply hierarchical. For instance, news reports and literary adaptations have typically been privileged over that of pop culture and music programming. This occurred irrespective of the popularity of the programme, music genre, or even the featured artist, where, Long and Wall go on to describe, programming was not only ‘dismissed as unworthy to be recorded for repeat viewing,’ but also ‘often the first to be discarded when tapes were wiped to be reused,’ which ultimately led to the loss of multiple episodes, and in some cases, entire series from archives.⁴⁰ According to Kaleidoscope’s own records detailed at *TVBrain*,

³⁷ Perry, Chris, and Simon Coward. ‘Swiped or Wiped? Kaleidoscope’s Part in the Recovery of Lost Television Programmes’. *Critical Studies in Television*, vol. 5, no. 2, Sept. 2010, p. 49. My emphasis.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ It is possible that there exists a third stigma in the continued critical valorisation of music feature films (both fiction and non-fiction) over that of the same forms in the context of television.

⁴⁰ Long, Paul, and Tim Wall. ‘Constructing the Histories of Popular Music: The *Britannia* Series’. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, p. 16.

Top of the Pops has over 300 missing episodes (from 1964 to 1985) while over 170 editions of *Ready Steady Go!* have been lost.⁴¹

The desire to recover and restore such programming, and to narrativize and historicise that process, is evident in the continued success of 'Missing Believed Wiped' and in particular its music special, 'Music Believed Wiped', held at the BFI in 2019, underlining the significance of the genre to television history by illustrating the loss it has endured. The event featured episodes from *Cilla* (BBC One, 1968-1976) and various clips, including a rare performance of the Beatles' 'Paperback Writer' on *Top of the Pops* from 1966, which generated press and television coverage for the event.⁴² The reaction indicates the change in attitude and understanding toward television and music history that is echoed in the BFI press release, which reinforced the rareness of the Beatles footage and thus, the value it has accrued in the intervening years, declared to be '11 seconds of pure pop magic' captured on 8mm film.⁴³

The lack of availability and the quality of extant material goes some way, along with the US MTV-centric dominance of scholarship, to explain how and why the critical gaps in relation to music programming have arisen, and why efforts to fill in these gaps remain so important to scholars of television historiography.⁴⁴ Consequently, this thesis is concerned with contributing to the closure of gaps in historiography, by detailing the scarcity of music programming, and its survival, both as a programme and in the genre's precarious position within the wider

⁴¹ Part of Kaleidoscope's site allows visitors to search for lost programmes; these figures are a summation of the results the site returns. See Kaleidoscope. *TVBrain*, <https://www.tvbrain.info/>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2021.

⁴² The BBC News coverage is exemplary of this. See: BBC News. 'Clip of "Lost" Beatles *Top of the Pops* Performance Unearthed'. *BBC News*, 8 Apr. 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-47854806>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2021.

⁴³ BFI. 'Missing Believed Wiped Music Special to Premiere Magical "Lost" TV Performances From The Beatles, Elton John, Fleetwood Mac, T.Rex, Slade Plus A Celebration of Cilla Black'. *BFI*, 9 Apr. 2019, <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-press-release-missing-believed-wiped-music-special-premiere-tv-performances-from-the-beatles-elton-john-fleetwood-mac-t-rex-slade-cilla-black-2019-04-09.pdf>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2021.

⁴⁴ Music television is largely referred to within institutional histories in relation to sound or as music on television but is not discussed in terms of a genre. See Briggs, Asa. *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Volume IV: Sound and Vision*. Oxford University Press, 1979; and Briggs, Asa. *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Volume V: Competition*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

output of arts and culture programming. It is also about the negotiation of lack and the role of technology in making television – and early television in particular – into a restorable and, increasingly, consumable product.⁴⁵ This transformation began with the arrival of stable recording formats and the increased affordability of VHS, followed by analogue to digital transfer and restoration practices, then DVD and Blu-ray uptake, and finally, fan archivists editing and uploading collections to YouTube and other video sharing sites. These affordances help to make this programming more *visible* and stimulate interest in non-contemporary television, and in so doing, they make the writing of thesis (and its methodology) possible.

Pastness and the 'Historiographic Turn'

The range of texts explored through this thesis are also defined by a different sense of pastness, or rather, are indicative of a changed sense of the past that is qualified by a different relationship to that past. To evoke Harrison once more, if heritage is 'everywhere', it follows that pastness and our encounters with it have become equally ubiquitous. As I argue in Chapter Three, in relation to *Supersonic* and *Amy*, the strategies used to aestheticize nostalgia and pastness complicate our understanding of the past by either maintaining the established cultural link of black and white photography as a signifier of pastness, or by consciously breaking that link by appropriating other coloured and analogue forms – in particular, the mimicry of Super 8 or Hi-8 film. In closing the distance between the past and present, the texts create the conditions for what I term 'temporal instability', whereby our sense of what is 'then' or 'now' – what Ben Highmore calls our sense of 'now-ness' – generated by our interactions and experiences with media texts are called into question.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Although the archive status of television and its availability after broadcast has increased – largely due to the critical and scholarly valorisation of TV drama, the DVD, and the box-set – little music programming outside that of specially-filmed concerts or documentary series is made commercially available. Releases by Network in the UK and Shout Factory and Videobeat in the US remain the exception rather than the rule.

⁴⁶ Highmore, Ben. 'TV Times: Archive, Mood, Media'. *Keywords: A Journal of Cultural Materialism*, no. 11, Oct. 2013, p. 40.

Often, events depicted within them appear to feel much closer to the present time than they actually are. However, the consequences of temporal instability may not always be defined as negative. Re-encountering or re-experiencing the past through media texts can, as John Corner has suggested, offer '[a]n enriched sense of "then" [which] produces, in its differences and commonalities combined, a stronger, imaginative and analytically energized sense of "now".'⁴⁷ The model of temporality that Corner's observations set up itself produces a sense of the past that is dynamic or is *made* dynamic, recalling Janelle L. Wilson's arguments regarding nostalgia's potential as a 'dynamic vehicle.'⁴⁸ Both senses of dynamism offer an explanation as to *where* the desire to re-engage with and re-experience the past may originate, but also *why* we are compelled to consistently return to it through interactions with media texts, through the visual pleasure, or 'enrichment' they offer the audience.

This thesis examines how that enrichment and visual pleasure operates within music programming on aesthetic and affective levels. It contributes to an ongoing body of work which addresses how we understand nostalgia and nostalgic engagement. It seeks to emphasize the importance of viewing nostalgia and nostalgic engagement as positive, highlighting the significance of media texts in this shifting perception. Nostalgia, and what it means to be nostalgic, has generated a multiplicity of meanings and definitions that have changed over time, but are unified by their associations with various kinds of physical and emotional pain: whether in its 17th century origins as an acute malady in homesick soldiers, broader 19th century articulations of longing and loss, or a commodified object of critique in the 20th and 21st centuries.⁴⁹ This progression tells us much about the construction and narrativization of history, and, as Michael Hviid Jacobsen observes, the impact of nostalgia upon how 'humans

⁴⁷ Corner, John. 'Finding Data, Reading Patterns, Telling Stories: Issues in the Historiography of Television'. *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 25, no. 2, Mar. 2003, p. 275.

⁴⁸ Wilson, Janelle Lynn. 'Here and Now, There and Then: Nostalgia as a Time and Space Phenomenon: Here Now, There and Then'. *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 38, no. 4, Nov. 2015, p.490.

⁴⁹ Cross, Gary. *Consumed Nostalgia: Memory in the Age of Fast Capitalism*. Columbia University Press, 2015. A more detailed overview of the origins and numerous definitions of nostalgia and their implications is explored in the Review of Literature.

connect the present and the future with the past,' and the role media texts occupy in this process.⁵⁰

Following Ryan Lizardi, nostalgia will be defined here as 'a yearning for the past or some past state.'⁵¹ Considering nostalgia's relationship to time, as Elisabeth Wesseling does in her work on childhood nostalgia, a different temporal relationship emerges. In this context, she argues that nostalgia is less concerned with 'longing for a particular type of place' but rather, is more concerned with 'the desire for a particular period in life.'⁵² This opens up the potential for a model of nostalgia that encompasses the pleasurable potential of returning to our past, and in particular the musical past, as our engagement with it also coincides with adolescence. A more nuanced understanding of nostalgia and modes of engagement eschews entrenched connotations of longing and loss, while acknowledging the significant components of time and pleasure to the nostalgic experience, an aspect that has, until recently, been underexplored in scholarship. Such a model allows for readings of nostalgia and nostalgic engagement through media series like *The People's History of Pop* or *Classic Albums*, to be read as positive and productive experiences, exemplary of what Lizardi calls 'mediated nostalgia.' He frames this within the broader context of hypermediation (and by implication, remediation) and technological affordance, which create a readily available 'playlist past' constructed by downloads and boxsets, forming part of a wider collective yet still individuated understanding of the past.⁵³

I argue in Chapter Two that media texts (and their related products) provide a valuable point of access to, or offer a pathway to re-engage with, the past. Similarly, Katharina Niemeyer argues that media can not only produce nostalgia for the audience, but also trigger it within them, providing an outlet for nostalgic expression and engagement in popular and visual cultures.⁵⁴ For José

⁵⁰ Jacobsen, Michael Hviid, editor. *Nostalgia Now: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on the Past in the Present*. Routledge, 2020, p.1.

⁵¹ Lizardi, Ryan. *Mediated Nostalgia: Individual Memory and Contemporary Mass Media*. Lexington Books, 2015, p.2.

⁵² Wesseling, Elisabeth, editor. *Reinventing Childhood Nostalgia: Books, Toys, and Contemporary Media Culture*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2017, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid., p.3.

⁵⁴ Niemeyer, Katharina. 'Introduction: Media and Nostalgia'. *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.7.

van Dijck, the relationship between media and memory is constitutive, forming part of ‘our everyday experiences.’⁵⁵ Memory and nostalgia are not just mediated by our daily encounters with media texts, however, they can also – as this thesis articulates – ‘inscribe and transform each other.’⁵⁶ The impact of this idea resonates throughout the case studies in this thesis. They make clear the capacity of media texts to generate and reshape meaning; whether this is in changing forms of knowledge, visual style or grammar, and modes of representation and narrativization, which interact to facilitate a particular affective response in the audience.

The ubiquity and dailiness of our encounters with media texts which encourage nostalgia and nostalgic engagement forms part of a wider cultural tendency to look back and reflect, and as the corpus of this thesis illustrates, occupies a significant position within music programming’s output. Over the last ten to fifteen years, an increasing number of contemporary music feature documentaries and series have sought to historicise and recontextualise music heritage and music culture to better articulate its own past. This intensified backwards gaze – aimed at reframing and recontextualising the musical past – is, as Alison Huber describes, emblematic of an ongoing ‘historiographical turn’ visible in the study of popular music and, I suggest, popular and visual cultures.⁵⁷ Following Andy Bennett, Huber argues that this turn is facilitated by the ubiquity of popular music heritage and its changed cultural position as an ‘identifiable trope in the *everyday practices* of consumers and institution,’⁵⁸ reflected in the wealth of products relating to music culture, most notably album re-issues. This tendency is by no means new, however; as Bennett observes in his own discussion of heritage rock discourses: both film and television have ‘played their part in serving up and reinforcing critical canons through which baby-boomer

⁵⁵ van Dijck, José. ‘Mediated Memories: A Snapshot of Remembered Experience’. *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, edited by Jaap Kooijman et al., Amsterdam University Press, 2008, p. 76.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Huber, Alison. ‘Remembering Popular Music, Documentary Style: Tony Palmer’s History in *All You Need Is Love*’. *Television & New Media*, vol. 12, no. 6, 6, Nov. 2011, p. 514.

⁵⁸ Ibid. My emphasis.

audiences have come to re-classify rock as an aspect of late 20th century heritage.’⁵⁹

The desire to narrativize and historicise music’s past is derived from several interrelated and intersecting cultural and scholarly moves which have precipitated a change in the way music and its history are perceived and understood as cultural forms (and forms of culture) in the Anglo-American context. On the one hand, there is the perspectival shift towards taking music seriously in the academy, arising from cultural studies and adjacent fields of musicology and sociology.⁶⁰ These are constituent parts of a broader cultural change dedicated to the serious discussion of music, coinciding with the rise of the music press, music journalism – through *Rolling Stone*, *Melody Maker*, and others – and the increased attention upon album-led music culture throughout the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, there is the concurrent rise of the discussion and classification of heritage and culture, and the overlapping booms in memory and nostalgia studies.

This thesis is a product of these sociocultural and sociohistorical changes. It is itself exemplary of the intensification of mediated nostalgia and the impact of the historiographic turn that has taken place over the course of its writing.

Corpus Selection

The term “programming” is used throughout the thesis in its broadest sense, to encompass a range of outputs and/or formats across visual culture, to delineate it against other taxonomies such as “content” or “media.” While primarily based in television and the discussion of its medium-specific qualities, the texts which feature throughout the thesis also reflect the changing nature of visual culture. This is particularly evident in Chapters One and Three, where discussion gives consideration to the changed and transformed states of the texts we encounter, to acknowledge the shifting or blurring of distinctions that obfuscates or elides

⁵⁹ Bennett, Andy. “‘Heritage Rock’: Rock Music, Representation and Heritage Discourse’. *Poetics*, vol. 37, no. 5–6, Dec. 2009, p. 478.

⁶⁰In particular, the study of class and youth culture at Birmingham University’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies from the early 1970s onwards.

the complexities of formally hard medium-specific distinctions of film and television. The same texts can now consistently appear and reappear in numerous forms, as fragmentary clips, single episodes, full series, or feature-length documentaries. They also appear in different formats, cyclically over time on television, DVD, or streaming platforms such as YouTube and Netflix.

The corpus texts are a conscious blend of the non-contemporary and contemporary, which – as I argue above – is a reflection of the increased interest in the history of music culture itself. It is also constructed to counteract the dominance of MTV and music videos within scholarship, and the research contributes – as the Review of Literature attests – to the growing body of work which seeks to close down the critical lacuna around historical and non-American music programming, while also making a case for the value of contemporary music programming within the precarious context of arts provision in visual culture. The case study texts are also characteristic of a particular visual grammar that can be said to contain what I define as a transferrable aesthetic that travels across media forms, and is indicative of numerous aesthetic influences, appropriating the grammar of film, television, and the vlog to create a hybridised post-millennial visual style. The feature documentaries in particular illustrate both representational and ideological shifts, while also responding to a critical lacuna that restores the historical, aesthetic, and affective significance of music programming past and present.

Due to the nature of this project and its focus on aesthetics, there are some notable omissions from the corpus. As I touched upon earlier, this is governed most obviously by availability, then by the formal qualities of the text itself (aesthetics, tone, mode of address), the wider argument being made, and finally, the scope of the thesis. Corpus gaps are the most obvious in relation to later examples of music programming on television, such as *The Tube* (Channel 4, 1982-1987) and *The Word* (Channel 4, 1990-1995), which are more widely understood as youth programming, and as such, were felt to be beyond the scope of the thesis. However, this does allow for such programmes to be returned to in the future as part of an extended project.

In the case of contemporary music heritage documentaries, the interest generated by the outputs of BBC Four and Sky Arts is such that there is also too *much* material to be included, meaning it has been necessary to limit discussion to texts made between 2015-2019 (though reference is made to texts made/released after this time). Initial drafts of Chapter One included a comparative study of BBC Four and Sky Arts, placed to counter the unavoidable BBC bias within the corpus selection due to accessibility and scale of arts provision as a public service broadcaster. It was the intention to include Sky Arts output following its similar scheduling patterns and similar commitment to music provision. Ultimately, this fell outside the thesis scope, and I felt that a comparative study of output would place emphasis on arts rather than music, emphasizing the competing tensions between the channels themselves. However, following Sky Arts' move from a subscription model to a free-to-air model, this is also something to revisit in later work.

While the majority of the corpus texts conform to the dominant conceptualisation of heritage rock: white, male, and guitar-oriented (which is another reflection of what is deemed worthy of being made available to view), Chapters Two and Three offer a corrective to this. First in its discussion of the fan experiences of BAME fans of The Smiths within *The People's History of Pop*, and second, through its discussion of women in music, with attention to the life and work of Nina Simone and the impact of the Civil Rights Movement in *What Happened, Miss Simone?*

Related to this, I have made a concerted effort to discuss texts which, with the exception of *Dont Look Back*, have little or no scholarly work already dedicated to them, so as to increase the original contribution made by this thesis, and to avoid significant repetition. This corpus is also constructed to examine music programming as a serious object, and therefore does not engage with mockumentaries such as *This is Spinal Tap* (Rob Reiner, 1984). Omitting this genre is not to suggest that parodic texts are less worthy of study, but rather that they

exist outside the scope of the thesis, despite their complementarity in regard to themes of authenticity and musicianship.⁶¹

It is my intention to show that music programming is a valuable sociohistorical document. The texts analysed throughout this thesis display a clearly defined aesthetic that illustrates a relationship to materiality and affectivity which has yet to be fully explored. The work presented is not meant to be an exhaustive account of memory and materiality in music programming or a history of the genre, but rather, is representative of a particular cultural moment. It begins a dialogue about how memory and materiality operate *within* music programming to provoke an affective response. There is obvious potential to expand this dialogue to work beyond the current scope of the project to consider other genres of television programming and cinema, to provide extended discussion of singing competition formats such as *Fame Academy* (BBC One/BBC Three, 2002-2003), concert films, pop cinema such as *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, 1964), and/or explorations of celebrity stardom, whether in mainstream biopics like *Judy* (Rupert Goold, 2019), or satires such as *Wild in the Streets* (Barry Sheer, 1968) and *Privilege* (Peter Watkins, 1967). Discussion within this thesis is also pertinent to media forms that use music and nostalgia as part of their *mise-en-scène*, including videogames and advertising. It is also possible to expand this work beyond the text itself to undertake empirical audience research to examine their response to music programming as an object of memory and a site of nostalgic engagement, and its subsequent affects.⁶²

In the next chapter, I explore the existing debates on nostalgia and memory and how they have typically been defined, before turning to consider the ways in which music and music heritage have also been discussed in scholarship.

⁶¹ Wallace's *Mockumentary Comedy* is significant study in this regard. It offers something of a counterargument to the discussion of performance presented in Chapter Three.

⁶² Lauren Istvandy's *The Lifetime Soundtrack: Music and Autobiographical Memory*. Equinox, 2019, is exemplary of the form such work could take.

Review of Literature

This review brings into focus two areas of scholarship which form the underlying critical framework of this thesis. The first section is concerned with nostalgia and memory, in order to understand the complex relationship between music programming, nostalgia and memory, and the ways in which an important component of that relationship, nostalgia, has been defined. The second section attends to the various ways music and music heritage have been theorised, explored from three different perspectives: musicology, music television, and popular music histories. The review is structured to illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of this scholarship and the project as a whole.

Nostalgia and Memory

This section will first consider attempts to define nostalgia both as a mode and as a feeling. Then, it considers work dedicated to the role of nostalgia in media and discourses of memory. Finally, it considers broader literature that assesses the impact of nostalgia and memory in a socio-cultural context, to determine its effect upon the construction of popular music history. These interrelated bodies of work will be returned to, and elaborated on, throughout the thesis. As such, this section serves as a starting point from which to analyse music programming and to begin to gain a sense of its underlying cultural significance.

Nostalgia, derived from the Greek – *nostos*, meaning to return home, and *algia*, meaning longing in the form of an ache or pain – is defined by Svetlana Boym as ‘a longing for a home that no longer exists, or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy.’¹ The origins of the term are based in medicine, found in the work of Swiss doctor Johannes Hofner, used to describe the anxieties of soldiers (and later immigrants and students) living away from their homeland, experiencing a longing so acute that it manifested physical symptoms in the

¹ Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. Basic Books, 2001, p. xiii.

sufferer, including nausea, palpitations, fever, and a general dissociation with their present surroundings, ultimately becoming an obsessive paranoia which pervaded all aspects of their life.

In order to gauge a sense of the scholarship dedicated to nostalgia, I felt it important to understand the historical genesis of the term and perceptions of it. As outlined by Boym and others, nostalgia was historically viewed as a curable disease, with the nostalgic sent on restorative trips before their condition could worsen.² Though the meaning of nostalgia, and what it means to be nostalgic for something, has shifted since the origins of its discussion in the work of Hofer and throughout the medical establishment in the 17th century, the emotive longing that those patients felt remains.³ Nostalgia's common contemporary associations with the past came into use during the 19th century, and relate specifically to longing 'for former times and spaces.'⁴ This has created demand for media that appeals to and sates the longing, in much the same manner as soldiers sought restorative cures.

According to Niemeyer, media not only produces nostalgia for the audience, but also triggers nostalgia *in* the audience, as well as being an outlet of expression *for* nostalgia in popular culture.⁵ This cycle of production, triggering, and expression has therefore changed the nature of nostalgia from a curable disease into an incurable affliction that perpetuates itself. Such a model is consistent with Frederic Jameson's conceptualisation of nostalgia, which has come to dominate scholarship. For Jameson, nostalgia is defined as a series of inauthentic pastiches, derived from a lack of historical understanding. Nostalgia therefore becomes and/or creates a 'cultural fantasy' that obfuscates global

² See Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, pp. 3-18. Many others have traced the term to its medical root. See, for example, Vallee, Mickey. 'From Disease to Desire: The Afflicted Amalgamation of Music and Nostalgia'. *Ecologies of Affect: Placing Nostalgia, Desire and Hope*, edited by Rob Shields et al., Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011, pp. 85-101.

³ For other overviews of the changing conceptualisation of nostalgia and its implementation see May, Vanessa. 'Belonging from Afar: Nostalgia, Time and Memory'. *The Sociological Review*, vol. 65, no. 2, May 2017, pp. 401-15. Klein, Kerwin Lee. 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse'. *Representations*, no. 69, 2000, pp. 127-50, is notable for an antithetical stance toward the memory boom.

⁴ Niemeyer, 'Introduction'. *Media and Nostalgia*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7

capitalism.⁶ He goes on to argue that cultural production has ‘nowhere to turn but the past’ and relies upon imitation of ‘dead styles,’ themselves brought up from store in ‘the imaginary museum of a now global culture.’⁷ Following Jameson and Niemeyer, it could be argued that nostalgic objects not only create nostalgia but also stimulate it in a constant cycle.

Nostalgia then, is not only a feeling, but also a mode, with texts specifically created to appeal to an audience member with nostalgic tendencies that fulfil their immediate desire, but can never truly satisfy their underlying longing. In this sense, nostalgia is a natural site for commodification, as Andrew Higson’s body of work in relation to heritage film illustrates. In ‘Nostalgia is Not What it Used to Be,’ Higson reflects upon his own writings, the changing nature of nostalgia, and its relationship to history and the consumer.⁸ He notes that the nostalgic experience has been ‘flattened out,’ and therefore changed, by the availability of nostalgic texts – or in Higson’s terms, nostalgic objects. He goes on to argue that ‘the experience of wistfulness is fleeting, precisely because one is no longer trying to reach the unattainable or recover the irrecoverable.’⁹ This form of what Higson calls ‘post-modern nostalgia’ means the past is not only consistently returned to, but consistently attainable, supported by the Internet, video and file sharing, e-commerce, and fan culture, which will be explored later. While work on nostalgia does recognise the importance of these technologies to nostalgia, there remains a gap in scholarship concerning how these technologies function to change nostalgia.

The proliferation of commodified nostalgia and its objects has also been highlighted by Simon Reynolds, who suggests a further relational change that has impacted upon the ways in which nostalgia is experienced. For Reynolds, the latter half of the twentieth century is defined by a nostalgia for the popular culture of the recent past. This perspectival shift – where the meaning of the

⁶ Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1991, p. 170.

⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁸ Higson, Andrew. ‘Nostalgia Is Not What It Used to Be: Heritage Films, Nostalgia Websites and Contemporary Consumers’. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2014, pp. 120–42.

⁹ Ibid., p.128.

terms ‘past’ and ‘history’ equate to times that are increasingly more familiar – and nostalgia itself has become a part of popular culture; Reynolds argues that this has led to nostalgia becoming ‘thoroughly entwined with the consumer-entertainment complex.’¹⁰ This view is supported by Boym, who describes these easily purchasable and always within reach nostalgic objects as indicative of ‘the souvenirisation of the past.’¹¹ Such commodification and souvenirisation fits into a broader framework of what Higson terms, ‘a kind of cultural tourism.’¹²

The impact of this is felt both in *actual* tourism to sites of importance – such as stately homes or filming locations – itself a component of a larger discourse concerning the (re-)conceptualisation of what heritage (and Heritage) is or is not, exemplified by Rodney Harrison’s work on heritage, which outlines a comparable pattern of accessibility and ubiquity to Higson and Boym in relation to nostalgia.¹³ The similarities between the two fields, the difficulties in defining them, and the frequent overlap in the scholarship dedicated to them, serves to highlight the fluidity between the two concepts. Nostalgia, heritage, and, additionally, memory are in dialogue with each other – reflected in the interdisciplinary work referenced throughout this review. Taken together, they form a complex trifecta that contributes to our understanding of the past, but they are also sustained by a creative cultural industry that is built around their commodification and souvenirisation that further complicates our conception of and relationship with the past.

The turn toward commodification has the biggest ramifications for the discussion and characterisation of nostalgia and memory, with Gary Cross suggesting that nostalgia and the memory work associated with it have been reduced to little more than novelty due to the ease with which the past can be accessed and nostalgic longing assuaged through the act of purchase.¹⁴ However, while Cross’ observations are relevant to this thesis and are important to bear in

¹⁰ Reynolds, Simon. *Retromania: Pop Culture’s Addiction to its Own Past*. Faber and Faber, 2011, p. xxix.

¹¹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 38.

¹² Higson, ‘Nostalgia is Not What It Used to Be,’ p. 125.

¹³ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*.

¹⁴ Cross, *Consumed Nostalgia*.

mind, the work that follows will instead focus on cultural industry built around nostalgia. This has resulted in a different type of commodified output, which remains dedicated to the preservation of literature, music, fashion, and, most importantly, screen culture. Consequently, this thesis is not concerned with the discussion of nostalgic objects as a site of novelty or frivolity, but rather their status as a socio-historical document that allows for music television and related artefacts of popular culture to be discussed and disseminated. Furthermore, it is also interested in the development and impact of physical and digital archiving practices undertaken by fans to preserve music television and its related ephemera for the future. Such practices offer an avenue through which to engage *in* nostalgic behaviour and engage *with* nostalgic objects.

Nostalgic objects and commodities afford us the opportunity to consistently return to our cultural and national past.¹⁵ The underlying, often deeply personal imperative behind this is another important component for understanding the effect, and also the *affect*, at work in the nostalgic experience. Nostalgia, as various scholars have argued, is a response to several crises. In the broadest sense, as Boym observes, these relate to the speed of modernisation and technological progress, which in turn impact on pre-existing economic and social frameworks.¹⁶ If this is the cause of nostalgia and the nostalgia boom, then nostalgia itself is the side effect. However, Niemeyer suggests there is a more specific reason behind nostalgic behaviour and the consistent creation of nostalgic works, relating to our perception of time. Drawing on the work of Robert Boyer, Niemeyer calls this a ‘crisis of temporality.’¹⁷ This definition brings together concerns raised in the philosophical writings of Pierre Nora, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Baudelaire, and Walter Benjamin regarding the nature of time, its reversibility and irreversibility, and our changing perception of its passing

¹⁵ I use the word ‘commodity’ as an umbrella term to encompass nostalgic products and other forms of merchandise such as DVDs, books or clothing connected to media texts.

¹⁶ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p.8.

¹⁷ Niemeyer, ‘Introduction’. *Media and Nostalgia*, p.2; Boyer, Robert. ‘Financial Crises as Conflicts of Temporalities’. *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*, translated by Cadenza Academic Translations, vol. 117, no. 1, 2013, pp. 69–88, <http://www.cairn-int.info/journal-vingtieme-siecle-revue-d-histoire-2013-1-page-69.htm>. Accessed December 7, 2016.

speed.¹⁸ These enduring observations have grown into a key area of scholarship in psychology and neurology that have been brought into the contemporary consciousness through the work of James Gleick.¹⁹ The consequence of the perceived acceleration is to engage in nostalgia for an earlier time, thereby retreating to a position of temporal stability through the consumption of nostalgic works.

The stability offered by nostalgia means it has often been considered to embody conservative ideologies, arising in reactions to times of social unrest. This is one of many connections made by sociologist Fred Davis in his landmark study, *Yearning for Yesterday*.²⁰ Davis argues that nostalgia 'occurs in the context of present fears, discontents, anxieties, or uncertainties,'²¹ and engaging in nostalgic behaviour is a coping mechanism, and is a means of 'holding onto and reaffirming identities which [have] been badly bruised by the turmoil of the times.'²² This notion is reflected throughout much of the scholarship on nostalgia, but is most closely aligned with Higson's work on heritage films of the 1980s and 1990s, which supports Davis' argument.²³ Similar conservative and revisionist connotations also recur in Jameson's assessment of nostalgia films as a renunciation of history, which abandon the representation of historical content in favour of 'conveying "pastness" through the glossy qualities of the image,' sentiments that underpin Higson's later assessment regarding 'flattening' of the

¹⁸ Nora, Pierre. 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire'. *Representations*, no. 26, 1989, pp. 7–24; Nietzsche, Friedrich. 'The Riddle and the Enigma'. 1884. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, edited & translated by R. J. Hollingsworth, Penguin, 1969, pp. 176–80; Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. 1863. Edited & translated by Jonathan Mayne, Da Capo Press, 1964; Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. 1928. Translated by John Osborne, Verso, 1998. For further discussion of Benjamin's and Nietzsche's writings on temporality, see McFarland, James. *Constellation: Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin in the Now-Time of History*. Fordham University Press, 2013.

¹⁹ Gleick, James. *Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything*. Hachette, 1999.

²⁰ Davis, Fred. *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*. Free Press, 1979.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²³ See Higson, Andrew. *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980*. Oxford University Press, 2003 as a starting point for this. For the origin of Higson's writing on heritage, see Higson, Andrew. 'Re-Presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film'. *British Cinema and Thatcherism: Fires Were Started*, edited by Lester Friedman, UCL Press, 1993, pp. 120–29.

nostalgic experience.²⁴ In the conceptions of nostalgia offered by Higson, Jameson, and to an extent, Davis, nostalgia is positioned in opposition to history: changing it, reducing it or, as explored later in this review, eliding it for commercial gain.

When viewed with this lens, Atia and Davies argue that nostalgia is personally dangerous and politically threatening, saying: '[n]ostalgia is always suspect. To give ourselves up to longing for a different time or place, no matter how admirable its qualities, is always to run the risk of constricting our ability to act in the present.'²⁵ Despite its clear historical, social, psychological, emotional, and commercial importance, it is perhaps this 'suspect' quality that Atia and Davies identify that underscores why historians in particular view both nostalgia and being nostalgic in similar critical terms. Nostalgia's connotations of sentimentality have resulted in nostalgia as a subject (and as an object), being viewed with scepticism, typified in the words of Charles Maier in his work on German national longing, when he suggests '[n]ostalgia is to memory as kitsch is to art.'²⁶ Similarly, Michael Kamen views nostalgia as being in opposition to heritage, lacking in its connotations of national and personal pride, terming it 'history without guilt.'²⁷ However, outside historical discourse, nostalgia has proven a rich and varied object of study that has generated (and continues to generate) a diverse, interdisciplinary body of work illustrated by the cross-disciplinary nature of Niemeyer's *Media and Nostalgia*, which is both a commentary upon and a product of the memory boom that necessitated and informed its writing. It engages with several perspectives and methodological approaches including sociology (Pickering and Keightley), history (Guesdon and Le Guern), cultural theory (Potts), heritage (Hoskins), and media epistemology (Schrey), which will be touched upon in more detail below, and throughout the work that follows.²⁸ Niemeyer's collection provides a thought-provoking

²⁴ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p.19.

²⁵ Atia, Nadia, and Jeremy Davies. 'Nostalgia and the Shapes of History: Editorial'. *Memory Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, July 2010, p. 181.

²⁶ Maier qtd. in Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xvi.

²⁷ Kamen qtd. in Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xvi.

²⁸ Pickering, Michael, and Emily Keightley. 'Retrotyping and the Marketing of Nostalgia'. *Media*

introduction both to common conceptions of nostalgia, but also to discussions of the relationship between nostalgia and media. The strength of the book lies in its discursive openness, with its contributors never suggesting a finite answer to the nature of the connection between media and nostalgia or its underpinnings. Thus, the book stimulates rather than negates further scholarship. Throughout my own research, I adopt a similar flexibility of approach, as called for in the work of Janelle L. Wilson. Following Boym and Samuel's observation that nostalgia carries Janus-faced qualities, Wilson highlights the inherent and obvious capacities of nostalgia for discursive richness:

This proposed conception of nostalgia is indeed quite distinct from its origin as disease and maladaptation. Nostalgia is not a mere passive longing for the past, but a potentially dynamic vehicle for (re)envisioning and (re)creating various pasts and futures.²⁹

Wilson's assertion underlines the changing perception of nostalgia, while further emphasising an important but often unexplored aspect – that nostalgia is concerned with both time *and* space, supporting Boym's contention that nostalgia can be *prospective* as well as *retrospective*. The multifaceted potential of nostalgia is outlined by Niemeyer when she argues that, 'nostalgia could be described as being a liminal, ambiguous phenomenon that migrates into deep emotional and psychological structures as well as into larger cultural, social, economic and political ones.'³⁰ Like Niemeyer, I believe the plausible liminality of nostalgia is essential to understanding the term in a manner that is more fully contextualised: to see it not as a fixed psychological state or mode, but something

and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 83–94; Guesdon, Maël, and Philippe Le Guern. 'Retromania: Crisis of the Progressive Ideal and Pop Music Spectrality'. *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 70–80; Potts, John. 'Journeys through the Past: Contempt, Nostalgia, Enigma'. *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 212–22; Hoskins, Andrew. 'Media and the Closure of the Memory Boom'. *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 118–25; Schrey, Dominik. 'Analogue Nostalgia and the Aesthetics of Digital Remediation'. *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the Past, Present and Future*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 27–38.

²⁹ Wilson, 'Nostalgia as a Time and Space Phenomenon,' p. 490.

³⁰ Niemeyer, 'Introduction', *Media and Nostalgia*, p.6.

that permeates all aspects of our cultural and national life that produces both positive and negative effects, which I will attempt to address through a combination of close reading and analysis in the following chapters.

In considering the relationship between media and nostalgia, we must also consider the relationship between nostalgia and memory. As referenced above, nostalgia discourse has been reinvigorated by the so-called memory boom. In its contemporary form, the boom has given rise to a proliferation of somewhat loaded terms to describe cultural movements (and related nostalgic behaviours), including Raphael Samuel's 'retrochic,' Simon Reynolds' 'retromania,' and Chris Wild's 'retronaut,' that sit alongside attempts to conceptualise the obsession with memory and remembering that seek to define it in several ways.³¹ Some choose to define it in terms of symptoms, as in Charles Panati's discussion of fevers, or David Lowenthal's dreams and nightmares.³² Others adopt notions related to temporality, with Higson and Marcus describing it in terms of cycles, while Davis talks of waves.³³ Of these, the simplest classification is Jameson's mode.³⁴ These descriptors label nostalgia as a passing trend or fad, rather than a set of behavioural practices that are emblematic of larger established discourses dedicated to memorialisation – relating a lost past rather than a lost person. However, Andrew Hoskins situates nostalgia differently, aligning it more closely with those cultures of memorialisation. Though related more specifically to news reportage of conflict and its subsequent remembrance, Hoskins raises important points regarding the value of memory and the possible devaluation that occurs through the constant availability of images – a tension that this thesis will also be required to negotiate.

³¹ Samuel, Raphael. *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*. 1994. Verso, 2012; Reynolds, *Retromania*; Wild, Chris. *Retronaut: The Photographic Time Machine*. National Geographic, 2014.

³² Panati, Charles. *Panati's Parade of Fads, Follies, and Manias: The Origins of Our Most Cherished Obsessions*. 1st ed, HarperPerennial, 1991; Lowenthal, David. 'Nostalgic Dreams and Nightmares'. *Change Over Time*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2013, pp. 28–54.

³³ Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*; Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years*; Davis, Fred. 'Nostalgia, Identity and the Current Nostalgia Wave'. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 11, no. 2, Fall 1977, pp. 414–24.

³⁴ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 20.

For Hoskins, the origin of the memory boom resides in two closely related events: the release of the VHS in America in 1977, and the English language translation of the publication of Maurice Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory* in 1980.³⁵ The increased affordability and availability of VHS technology not only saw the arrival of the opportunity to re-watch film and television texts, but it also marked the beginning of discussion and reflection upon the subject of memory and remembrance. In the years that followed, a significant volume of scholarship has been generated, typified by the writings of Andreas Huyssen, Jay Winter, Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin, Jan Assmann, and Joanne Garde-Hansen.³⁶ This work ranges from mapping out the discipline of memory studies to memory work itself, considering the importance of memory in our everyday lives, and the socio-cultural resonances within the memory objects – photographs, film, documents, and latterly, digital recordings – that make the past, and our experience of it, tangible. This emphasis on the tangible and the archive has led to memory studies filtering into adjacent disciplines, reflected in the large body of work related to subsequent home viewing technologies (Robert Alan Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus, Barbara Klinger, Paul McDonald, James Bennett and Tom Brown), television reruns (Derek Kompare), and Amy Holdsworth's seminal work on the subject of televisual memory.³⁷ The writings listed here are not only

³⁵ Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. 1980. Edited & translated by Lewis A. Coser, University of Chicago Press, 1992. At that time, Halbwachs' work was known as *The Collective Memory*. It was subsequently retitled *On Collective Memory*, as it is now widely known.

³⁶ Huyssen, Andreas. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. Routledge, 1995; Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford University Press, 2003; Winter, Jay. *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press, 2006; Hoskins, Andrew, and Ben O'Loughlin. *War and Media: The Emergence of Diffused War*. Polity, 2010; Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, 2011; Garde-Hansen, Joanne, et al., editors. *Save As... Digital Memories*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; and Garde-Hansen, Joanne. *Media and Memory*. Edinburgh University, 2011.

³⁷ Brookey, Robert Alan, and Robert Westerfelhaus. 'Hiding Homoeroticism in Plain View: The Fight Club DVD as Digital Closet'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 19, no. 1, Mar. 2002, pp. 21–43; Klinger, Barbara. *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and the Home*. University of California Press, 2006; McDonald, Paul. *Video and DVD Industries*. British Film Institute, 2007; Bennett, James, and Tom Brown, editors. *Film and Television After DVD*. Routledge, 2008; Kompare, Derek. 'Publishing Flow: DVD Boxsets and the Reconceptualization of Television'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 7, no. 4, Nov. 2006, pp. 335–60; Kompare, Derek. *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*. Routledge, 2005; Kompare, Derek

reflective of the strength of the relationship between nostalgia, media, memory, and critical discourse, but the impact of raised awareness of memory and cultures of remembering in the public consciousness. As Hoskins observes, '[b]y whatever measure, celebrated and derided, the turn to and on the past has been relentless.'³⁸ He cites the boom as 'anchoring and atomising debate around the nature, form and status of the remembering.'³⁹ Though still primarily concerned with the remembrance of conflict, these comments are equally applicable to both *how* and *why* certain cultural movements or moments are commemorated. The relentlessness Hoskins describes could also be driven by a desire to stabilise our public as well as our private pasts.

The stabilising and comforting effects of nostalgic works can also extend to the aesthetic qualities of the texts themselves and the equipment used to access them; Dominik Schrey's work highlights the technological aspect of nostalgia, concerned with exploring the impact of obsolescence and nostalgic behaviour within cycles of technological change. Schrey notes that media serves a dual function, both as a way to access the past, but also as an object of it,⁴⁰ and argues for medium specificity to be taken into account. This specificity has taken on a particular resonance in relation to nostalgia. Traits once deemed less desirable – for instance, static, crackles, and other forms of noise – and often eradicated or bettered by technological progression are now seen as points of interest and attraction. The 'analogue nostalgia' Schrey outlines is at once both a commemoration of so-called 'dead media,' but also a consolidation of it, echoing media preservation archival practice.⁴¹

'Reruns 2.0: Revising Repetition for Multiplatform Television Distribution'. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2010, pp. 79–83; Kompare, Derek. 'Streaming as Shelving: The Media Past in the Media Future'. *Flow*, vol. 19, Jan. 2014, <https://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/the-persistence-of-television/>. Accessed 13 July 2017; Holdsworth, Amy. "Television Resurrections": Television and Memory'. *Cinema Journal*, vol. 47, no. 3, Summer 2010, pp. 137–44; Holdsworth, Amy. *Television, Memory, and Nostalgia*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

³⁸ Hoskins, 'Media and the Closure of the Memory Boom', p. 118.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Schrey, 'Analogue Nostalgia', p. 29.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.28.

Schrey's work has interesting and important implications for my own research, particularly in relation to the re-experience of media texts and the discourses of value surrounding the fidelity of said experience (or indeed, the fidelity provided by the recording technology used to capture them). For instance, episodes of a programme viewed on YouTube are the same, reproducing the original broadcast, and yet, are different in that their aesthetic experience of viewing them has changed. Such texts stand out because of the longevity afforded to them by digital technology, but also because of their difference from contemporary digital video clips due to their aspect ratio, video noise, or other distortion that occurs. Such differences, as Schrey asserts, are both intriguing and desirable, which goes against promotional discourse that is founded on technological determinism, where the newest innovation is synonymous with being the best in audiovisual quality.

If nostalgia can resurrect and redefine media and media technology that is considered obsolete or "dead," Guesdon and Le Guern's work illustrates that nostalgia can also perform a resurrection of another kind: resurrection of the musical past, raising questions regarding the commercial imperative of nostalgia and its possible negative potential. Writing in relation to popular music, they suggest that alongside shaping and chronicling the cultural past, nostalgia is also self-reflexive and co-dependent on history, using it to remix or reinvent it to reappear in the present. For Guesdon and Le Guern, the manipulation of the past means that 'bygone days have become the raw material for novelty.'⁴² They question whether this constant drive toward self-reference – but not always celebration – means that popular culture more broadly is 'doomed for depletion.'⁴³ This in turn raises pertinent questions for this thesis regarding the ways in which we *consume* music within popular culture, but also the ways in which we *experience* music as a part of screen culture. This is most obviously reflected in the recontextualization of, and re-engagement with, music through cover songs. Such performances, given focus in popular culture by reality singing

⁴² Guesdon and Le Guern, 'Crisis of the Progressive Ideal,' p. 70.

⁴³ Ibid., p.73.

competition formats including *American Idol* (USA, Fox, 2002-2016; ABC, 2018–), change the relationship between the song, the performer, and the audience. In turn, this recontextualization can also impact upon personal and collective nostalgic experiences and cultural memory. A song and its performance can therefore have multiple affective attachments for the audience that are historically emotionally specific, and which co-exist alongside its original context. This capacity makes such performances and their subsequent commodification through the release of albums and DVDs an obvious outlet for nostalgic behaviour. Guesdon and Le Guern's work also clearly illustrates the potential for the relationship between media and nostalgia to be exploitative.

Following on from this, Pickering and Keightley turn their attention toward advertising and the practice of 'retrotyping,' where only certain elements of the past are celebrated, and anything else that doesn't fit with the tone is discarded, thereby ensuring the celebration of the past is neither compromised nor its commercial intent undermined.⁴⁴ The practice of retrotyping creates a climate of regressive rather than progressive nostalgia. Pickering and Keightley argue that this is not only an exploitation of memory for commercial gain, but also changes the ways in which people interact with the real, lived past, causing them to think about it less critically. Consequently, this creates cycles of consumption that increasingly distance people from it. In doing so, retrotyping closes off history and limits opportunities for alternative visions of the past to be explored or expressed. This results in the formation of a 'bespoke past' that is also largely unchallenged.⁴⁵

The distance that occurs through retrotyping could go some way to explaining the development of ironic distance and the level of derision, or in John Potts' terms, contempt for nostalgia that may have arisen as a reaction to the

⁴⁴ Pickering and Keightley, 'Retrotyping and the Marketing of Nostalgia', p.88.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.90. However, the pressures and difficulties of preserving and salvaging the televisual past must taken into account. Gorton and Garde-Hansen describe this in terms of 'the economies of memory' related to the television archive, and the dual pressures of time and money which impact upon how this material is accessed and disseminated, 'creating scarcity from plenty or potentially new value from detritus.' These competing tensions result in the same archival material being recirculated, creating the natural conditions for retrotyping to occur. See Gorton, Kristyn, and Joanne Garde-Hansen. *Remembering British Television: Audience, Archive and Industry*. BFI Publishing, 2019, p. 66.

memory boom, and practices such as retotyping that reduce interpretations of history. Potts argues that this contempt is derived from perceptions of the past as primitive or inferior, where the present is privileged and nostalgia functions within a 'particular emotional-economic circuitry.'⁴⁶ In Potts' model, nostalgia is part of a broader consumer system, where the value is placed in the commodification of the past. The past is only seen as useful when it is 'mythologised or waxworked as nostalgia, when it can be used to sell something.'⁴⁷

If meanings of the past are fixed by nostalgic practices and, as Potts suggests, 'waxworked' by nostalgia itself, what are the broader implications for the production, reproduction, and dissemination of images in popular culture and their place in written public historical accounts? One possible avenue of investigation is found in Jaimie Baron's work on the archive effect. Baron contextualises the professionalisation of history and the archival process, and observes that the 'distinctions between archives, libraries, collections, and other gatherings of objects, including virtual objects in digital archives, have increasingly blurred.'⁴⁸ This blurring has led to the authenticity of archive footage being challenged. Through her discussion of a broad range of sources – primarily from the documentary genre – Baron's work raises questions regarding the governance of archives, and who or what is missing from them. She argues that archives can change our sense of past by bringing us into direct contact with it, 'to offer us a glimpse of a world that existed but has been erased and overlaid with different faces, current fashions, and new technologies.'⁴⁹ The acknowledgement of history as changeable and rewriteable is an important one, and highlights the role of archive footage as a way to challenge closed accounts of history, but it is also an acknowledgement that the footage itself can be manipulated, whether through special effects, or editing it into different

⁴⁶ Potts, 'Journeys through the Past,' p. 212. For more discussion on privileging of the past and related behaviours, see, for Lev Manovich's contribution to 'Future Fictions'. *Frieze*, vol. 156, Jun-Aug. 2013, <https://frieze.com/article/future-fictions>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁷ Potts, 'Journeys through the Past,' p. 216.

⁴⁸ Baron, Jaimie. *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. Routledge, 2014, p. 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

contextual frameworks which impact upon its meaning. As Baron notes, '[t]he knowledge that the archival document can be simulated, manipulated, or "misused" renders the evidentiary authority and established meaning of even widely-authenticated meta-archival documents unstable.'⁵⁰

The relative instability of history and the archive highlighted by Baron is a challenge to the indexicality of any image, but it also reinforces the need to adopt critical thinking in addition to flexible methodology when researching the correlations between media, memory, and nostalgia. How then, does such an instability impact on the discussion of history and nostalgia outside of memory studies and adjacent fields? To gauge a sense of this, I now turn to my last strand of scholarship and detail some of the work found in cultural theory, and its attempts to explain and theorise the ways in which memory and nostalgia impact on our engagement with the past. An obvious starting point for this evaluation is Samuel's *Theatres of Memory*. This landmark discussion is an extended critique of conventional history and raises pertinent questions regarding the usefulness of such accounts. The open-ended nature of the book and its writing style is indicative of his desire for alternative interpretations of history, or, in Samuel's terms, 'unofficial knowledge,' to be embraced.⁵¹

In keeping with the work of Potts, Baron, and numerous other scholars mentioned through the course of this review, Samuel also recognised the existence of a lack of sentimentality regarding the past (perhaps an indicator of the beginnings of postmodernist theory), but also that memory and history alter over time. For Samuel, memory is historically conditioned, 'changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment.'⁵² In the foreword to the 2012 revised edition of *Theatres of Memory*, Bill Schwarz builds on the notion of history as malleable to offer a useful appraisal of Samuel's ideas regarding the nature of the connection between memory and history. Like Samuel, Schwarz suggests that there is not one singular account of either, but multiple accounts – he calls them 'histories of memories.' For Schwarz, the function of these histories

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

⁵¹ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, pp. 3-48.

⁵² Ibid., p. xxiii.

is 'not so much to unravel the mysteries of "the past" in the present, in its singular impossible entirety, as to uncover the role in the present of particular, determinate pasts.'⁵³

The multiplicity Samuel and Schwarz both identify provides a useful lens through which to investigate (or reinvestigate) patterns of memory, history, and nostalgia. These kinds of traceable patterns, as Marcus' *Happy Days and Wonder Years* highlights, can also be a way of interrogating *why*, and indeed *how*, certain images of a historical period are returned to over others, deemed to hold greater value and emotional resonance that is separate from their historical accuracy. Marcus' work shows, through discussion of the imagery and iconography used in US presidential campaigns, the ways in which nostalgia can not only interact with but also shape the past. Marcus argues that nostalgia is more than the act of looking back at the past, or, as suggested earlier, a simple reduction of historical interpretation. Instead, he emphasises how nostalgia can be used as a tool to create a narrative of post-World War Two America. He also suggests that the use of particular images as part of nostalgic cycles – for instance, referencing the popular culture of the 1950s in the 1970s – creates what he terms a 'cultural shorthand' which 'diffuses historical understandings' of memories within social groups that ultimately become part of public (or national) memory.⁵⁴ Here, Marcus underlines the power of nostalgia and the role archive material has in distorting the past and changing our conception of memory and historical record, but also draws attention to the co-dependent relationship between media and nostalgia.

⁵³ Schwarz, Bill. 'Foreword'. *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Revised paperback edition, Verso, 2012, p. xviii.

⁵⁴ Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years*, p. 3.

Music and Music Heritage

This section begins with a focus on interdisciplinary approaches applied to music television and popular music to gain a sense of its historical positioning and the rise of music, or musicology, as an object of study. Following this, I will explore work that relates to the reputation of music television and the impact of hierarchies of value upon its availability. Finally, I will consider the broader role of mainstream popular music histories, which increase the visibility of popular music and music culture. Their inclusion in this review relates to the frequent overlap of such writing into the autobiographical, in particular the retelling of personal experiences and/or memories tied to music and music programming. Reading such work will allow me to consider the discussion of creative and emotional labour that is a common convention of the music history programming that is discussed throughout this thesis from a different perspective.⁵⁵

Music television is a site of convergence for the cultivation and expression of cultural memory and nostalgia. Perhaps more than any other genre, it is deliberately constructed to recall and reflect, whilst simultaneously providing a record of the performance as it unfolds. This temporal duality is created by watching recordings of live performances – thereby making such programmes a product of both the past and the present. To attempt to address such complications, and further contextualise this thesis theoretically and methodologically, it is necessary not only to understand the ways in which both popular music and music television have been discussed and analysed throughout scholarship in the past, but also in the present. This is reflected in an emerging body of work from a variety of disciplines that seeks to reconsider music television in order to address gaps left by the dominance of US-centric strands of scholarship related to MTV, postmodernism, and the music video – a field to which this thesis will ultimately contribute. The body of work dedicated to MTV and the music video is a natural point of entry to discuss the range of

⁵⁵ See, for example, Gorton, Kristyn. 'A Sentimental Journey: Television, Meaning and Emotion'. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2006, pp. 72–81; and Gorton, Kristyn. "'There's No Place Like Home': Emotional Exposure, Excess and Empathy on TV'. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2008, pp. 3–15.

material related to music and music culture. Though MTV's output is not a direct concern of this thesis, the ways in which it has shaped and defined the televisual landscape, the music culture it represented, and the discussion of it means that the discourse surrounding it cannot be discounted. As such, this scholarship is a foundation for this project, providing access to different (and sometimes opposing) methodological and theoretical approaches that can be re-applied to the texts explored throughout this thesis.

In his retrospective discussion of the scholarly Anglo-American work on MTV, Steve Jones describes the initial influx of writing following the channel's successful launch in the US in 1981 as a 'flurry of research.'⁵⁶ This early work is largely concentrated on music videos, reflecting the desire to analyse the rapidly-expanding music video format, including consideration of music video aesthetics (Pat Aufderheide), historical context (Gary Burns and Robert Thompson), representations of gender and race (Jane D. Brown and Kenneth Campbell; Lisa A. Lewis), the adolescent audience (Se-Wen Sun and James Lull; James R. Walker), and genre (Joe Gow).⁵⁷ Following the network's expansion into other territories throughout the late 1980s and 1990s through satellite television the scholarship continued to grow, beginning to shift away from sole discussion of the music video and incorporating assessment of MTV's impact upon the television landscape.⁵⁸ This is reflected in landmark studies such as E. Ann Kaplan's *Rocking*

⁵⁶ Jones, Steve. 'MTV: The Medium Was the Message'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 22, no. 1, Mar. 2005, p.83.

⁵⁷ Aufderheide, Pat. 'The Look of the Sound'. *Journal of Communication*, vol. 36, no. 1, Winter 1986, pp. 57–77; Burns, Gary, and Robert Thompson. 'Music, Television, and Video: Historical and Aesthetic Considerations'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1987, pp. 11–25; Brown, Jane D, and Kenneth Campbell. 'Race and Gender in Music Videos: The Same Beat but a Different Drummer'. *Journal of Communication*, vol. 36, no. 1, Mar. 1986, pp. 94–106; Lewis, Lisa A. *Gender Politics and MTV: Voicing the Difference*. Temple University Press, 1991; Sun, Se-Wen, and James Lull. 'The Adolescent Audience for Music Videos and Why They Watch'. *Journal of Communication*, vol. 36, no. 1, Mar. 1986, pp. 115–25; Walker, James R. 'The Context of MTV: Adolescent Entertainment Media Use and Music Television'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1987, pp. 1–9; Gow, Joe. 'Music Video as Communication: Popular Formulas and Emerging Genres'. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 26, no. 2, Fall 1992, pp. 41–70.

⁵⁸ From 1987 to 1997, European countries were served by one channel, MTV Europe. The regionalisation of the network took place between 1997-2010. In the UK context, MTV UK and Ireland was the second localised version to launch in July 1997, following MTV Central, catering to Germany and Austria – now known as MTV Germany – in March 1997, with other launches continuing throughout the 1990s into the 2000s. As of 2016, MTV Europe continues to serve

Around the Clock, Andrew Goodwin's *Dancing in the Distraction Factory*, and Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin and Lawrence Grossberg's *Sound and Vision* which constitute a small part of the significant body of work that has established the network as a site of socio-historical, cultural, and scholarly importance.⁵⁹

Changes in direction at the network towards reality programming and latterly original scripted drama – initially brought about by the success of *The Real World* (MTV, Facebook Watch/Paramount+, USA, 1992–) – created, as Jones observes, a parallel decline in scholarship, noting that 'there is little evidence of sustained research on MTV.'⁶⁰ Jones cites multiple factors beyond programming changes, observing that research interests 'are often piqued, if not guided, by our participation as audience members, fans, and casual observers.'⁶¹ This results in work that is often directly related to particular trends and cultural phenomena – reflected in the sustained work detailed above in relation to nostalgia – but also work that is both time and context dependent. As Lawrence Grossberg argues, 'the dominant contexts within which popular music operates in the contemporary world can no longer be described as, or in the terms of, rock culture.'⁶² In the case of MTV, it appeared at a particular time and in a particular place, borne out of punk culture. For Jones, the network provided scholars with 'a site of study at a critical moment, a juncture, confluence,' which brought about advances in post-structuralism, feminist theory, postmodernism, cultural studies, and critical theory, in addition to its clear usefulness as a way to intervene in music and youth cultures.⁶³

Building on Jones and Grossberg, I suggest that changes in engagement with music and music culture throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s also

numerous countries, ranging from Albania to Ukraine, and is broadcast alongside localised versions in France, Portugal, and South Africa.

⁵⁹ Kaplan, E. Ann. *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture*. Methuen, 1987; Goodwin, Andrew. *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture*. Routledge, 1993; Frith, Simon, et al., editors. *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*. Routledge, 1993.

⁶⁰ Jones, 'MTV: The Medium was the Message,' p. 84.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.83.

⁶² Grossberg, Lawrence. 'The Media Economy of Rock Culture: Cinema, Postmodernity and Authenticity'. *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, edited by Simon Frith et al., Routledge, 1993, p. 207.

⁶³ Jones, 'MTV: The Medium was the Message,' p. 84.

impacted upon MTV's position within the popular consciousness, and consequently, on scholarship. This cultural shift can be traced to MTV's own success, with its influence consistently diluted by the appearance and availability of other music channels, Napster, iTunes, and other download services alongside YouTube and related video sharing platforms, and in recent years, music streaming through Spotify, Apple Music, and others. The changes within the global pop culture landscape have not only reinforced the original changes in programming made by MTV in the US, but also allowed for MTV's cultural status to change, resulting in, as Grossberg predicted in the closing chapter of *Sound and Vision*, 'new formations' within popular and visual culture that warranted further attention.

I argue that while the scholarship that continues to be generated on MTV is not as great as in its initial decade of broadcast, it is no less influential. Despite Jones' assertion regarding the lack of work on MTV in the musical sense, there have been numerous books and articles dedicated to the channel in its contemporary form. This work draws heavily on its output of reality television and the channel's move into scripted drama, including Mark Andrejevic, Jonathan Kraszewski, Danielle M. Stern, Misha Kavka, Tara Chittenden, and Faye Woods.⁶⁴ Interestingly, a third strand of writing has also appeared – of which Jones' article is a part – that is attentive to the cultural importance of the network and its own historical and industrial changes, such as Jack Banks, Paul Temporal, Rob Tannenbaum and Craig Marks, and Greg Prato.⁶⁵ This brief list highlights that MTV

⁶⁴ Andrejevic, Mark. 'The Kinder, Gentler Gaze of *Big Brother*: Reality TV in the Era of Digital Capitalism'. *New Media & Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 2002, pp. 251–70; Kraszewski, Jonathan. 'Country Hicks and Urban Cliques: Mediating Race, Reality, and Liberalism on MTV's *The Real World*'. 2004. *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, edited by Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette, 2nd ed, New York University Press, 2009, pp. 205–22; Stern, Danielle M. 'Consuming the Fractured Female: Lessons from MTV's *The Real World*'. *The Communication Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1, 2009, pp. 50–77; Kavka, Misha. *Reality TV*. Edinburgh University Press, 2012; Woods, Faye. 'Classed Femininity, Performativity, and Camp in British Structured Reality Programming'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 15, no. 3, Mar. 2014, pp. 197–214; Chittenden, Tara. "'Do You Understand What You're Accusing Me of?': Confrontational Conversation in MTV's *The Hills* as a Means of Identity Construction and Social Positioning in Young Female Adults'. *Popular Communication*, vol. 9, no. 3, Sept. 2011, pp. 196–211; Woods, Faye. 'Structured Reality: Designer Clothes, Fake Tans, Real Drama'. *British Youth Television: Transnational Teens, Industry, Genre*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 185–224.

⁶⁵ Banks, Jack. 'Keeping "Abreast" of MTV and Viacom: The Growing Power of a Media

remains an important 'site of study,' whilst newer scholarship is also indicative of the 'new formations' outlined above.

Of this more contemporary output, Kevin Williams' *Why I (Still) Want My MTV* is an exception, one omitted from Jones' assessment of the scholarship. Williams uses a phenomenological approach rather than close textual analysis, and is concerned with the role of music video as a tool that is part of wider structures of communication rather than its aesthetic or inherent visual pleasures.⁶⁶ Returning to consider why audiences remain drawn to MTV, Williams adopts the semiotic principles of Charles Sanders Peirce's 'theory of signs' to suggest a deeper meaning to the relationship between music and lyrics, and the ways in which this is transposed into the music video form.⁶⁷ As such, Williams' book is a natural complement to the work of Andrew Goodwin, particularly *Dancing in the Distraction Factory*. Throughout his analyses, Williams considers the 'presentational value' of the music video, and the relationship between technology, expression, and perception.⁶⁸ In doing so, he highlights that the music video is both a product of the culture it represents and a reflection of it. In watching music videos, Williams declares himself to be a 'witness to a specific aesthetic, *a musical visuality*.'⁶⁹ This mode of expression and his observations regarding the 'hypercoded' body of the musical performer – where visual echoes of one artist are visible in the performance of another – raise important questions regarding how we interpret performance in music programming.⁷⁰ Furthermore, Williams' approach is a useful lens through which to view and further critique both the music video and related music programming that is built around

Conglomerate'. *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 256–69; Temporal, Paul. *The Branding of MTV: Will Internet Kill the Video Star?* John Wiley & Sons, 2008; Tannenbaum, Rob, and Craig Marks. *I Want My MTV the Uncensored Story of the Music Video Revolution*. Dutton, 2011; Prato, Greg. *MTV Ruled the World: The Early Years of Music Video*. Greg Prato, 2010.

⁶⁶ Williams, Kevin. *Why I (Still) Want My MTV: Music Video and Aesthetic Communication*. Hampton Press, 2003, p. 8.

⁶⁷ Peirce, Charles S. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Edited by Charles Hartshorne et al., IntelLex Corporation, 1994.

⁶⁸ Williams, *Why I (Still) Want My MTV*, p.11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.154. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169. Williams uses the example of Jimi Hendrix and Lenny Kravitz, suggesting that they are echoes of each other.

performance.

Beyond discussion of MTV, writing on popular music is drawn from a wide-range of disciplines, reflected in the work referenced throughout this review section, drawn from communications and cultural theory to youth culture.⁷¹ A large proportion of this scholarship is borne from sociology, with the most notable example found in the work of sociologist Simon Frith, including *Performing Rites*, regarded as foundational texts in music studies, or musicology, which are a constituent part of a broader cultural shift dedicated to the serious discussion of music.⁷² This drive for respect and seriousness is reflected in the essay collection *Taking Music Seriously*.⁷³

Bringing together articles published between 1978-2004, the book provides a broad introduction to both Frith's working method and approaches, along with his changing attitude toward music and music culture. Of the numerous essays featured, 'Look! Hear! The Uneasy Relationship of Music and Television'⁷⁴ is the most pertinent to this thesis due to its discussion of early television texts such as *Oh Boy!* (ITV, UK, 1958-1959), and its exploration of the links between music and memory. The essay itself is also a product of memory work, as much of the analytical context of his work during this period is written from memory only. By Frith's own admission in the accompanying essay notes, this was due to the lack of availability of much music television; an issue that will be introduced below and elaborated upon in later parts of this thesis. However, the widespread popularity of Frith's work has led to its repeated citation and distribution, thereby impacting upon both academic and music histories, and creating misconceived perceptions of *Oh Boy!* and its aesthetic. Frith's initial comments regarding the series are positive, noting its importance to understanding and expressing the emergent youth culture at the time.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Lury, Karen. *British Youth Television: Cynicism and Enchantment*. Clarendon Press, 2001; and Davis, Glyn, and Kay Dickinson, editors. *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption, Identity*. British Film Institute, 2004, are exemplary of this scholarship.

⁷² Frith, Simon. *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

⁷³ Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays*. Ashgate, 2007.

⁷⁴ Frith, 'Look! Hear! The Uneasy Relationship of Music and Television'. 2002. *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays*, Ashgate, 2007, pp. 183–96.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

However, his analysis of the series' style is much more critical. Dismissive of its attempts to mimic the energy of live performance through fast-paced editing, he argues that the programme's style can be summarised as 'what you see is what there is,' believing it to be lacking in deeper meaning and operating at a surface level.⁷⁶ He goes on to state that the lack of cut-aways to the in-theatre audience (a convention that was later reversed in *Ready Steady Go!*), means that those present are 'in no sense privileged.'⁷⁷

In line with Norma Coates, I suggest a more complex reading can be put forward: the lack of in-theatre audience privilege allows for such subjectivity to be transferred to the at-home audience, thereby giving them "ownership" of the performance experience, as if they were present in real life. Despite the obvious merits and importance of Frith's work in regard to both the production and consumption of music, and the lack of a 'detailed history of popular music and television in Britain,' I argue that his work related to television, and his observations on *Ready Steady Go!*, particularly *Oh Boy!*, are reductive.⁷⁸ The origin of such bias could, in part, be a product of when the article was written: during the beginnings of now commonplace competition-based reality music shows – in this case *Pop Idol* (ITV, UK, 2001-2003) – where the credibility of both popular music and music programming was under scrutiny. However, Frith's work also expresses further bias related to the positive medium-specific attributes found in television that lend well to showcasing music, both live and recorded. His assertion that television has several 'limitations as a music medium' is not only highly contentious, but also highly gendered, revealing that he is inattentive to the historical and technological changes that have taken place in regard to the advancement of sound quality in television and specificity of the intimate, affective relationships audiences have with television.⁷⁹ Such comments remain prevalent within discussion of television texts that are written by scholars outside

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 191. It is equally plausible however, that Frith's assertions regarding *Oh Boy!* lacking in value stems from his perspective as a musicologist, informed by the double bias of television and pop music as "bad" cultural objects.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 195.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 185.

the field of film and television studies, and can also be traced back to the historical reputation of television as a ‘bad’ cultural object.

Notwithstanding the links identified by Inglis and others regarding music and the obvious strong links between music and television, it is surprising to find that much of the writing on popular music has chosen to focus instead on the relationship between music and film. This significant body of work includes John Mundy’s *Popular Music On Screen*, Ian Inglis’ *Popular Music and Film*, Ian Conrich and Estella Tincknell’s *Film’s Musical Moments*, Kay Dickinson’s *Off Key: When Film and Music Won’t Work Together*, and David Neumeyer’s *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*.⁸⁰ This illustrative list makes clear the disparity between music and film discussion versus music and television discussion, which are not only a result of generalisations like Frith’s, but also because of the continued debates surrounding hierarchies of value within film and television studies, and the scholarly dominance of other television genres – for instance, writing on quality television and television drama.

Consequently, such trends, or to borrow from Steve Jones, ‘phenomena’, impact upon what is and is not given repeat broadcasts, released on home viewing formats, or viewable on video-on-demand streaming. For television studies in particular, this lack of availability also means a lack of *visibility*. If a programme cannot be seen, it can also not be *read*, which ultimately leads to the canonisation of certain texts and genres to the exclusion of others, thereby creating greater gaps in scholarship, or, as Norma Coates suggests in relation to influential music producer Jack Good, a ‘critical lacuna.’⁸¹ The lacuna Coates identifies sparked my own scholarly interest in early music television, and the desire to engage with and contribute to the growing literature dedicated to the rediscovery and reassessment of this genre is the catalyst behind the writing of

⁸⁰ Mundy, John. *Popular Music on Screen: From the Hollywood Musical to Music Video*. Manchester University Press, 1999; Inglis, Ian, editor. *Popular Music and Film*. Wallflower Press, 2003; Conrich, Ian, and Estella Tincknell, editors. *Film’s Musical Moments*. Edinburgh University Press, 2006; Dickinson, Kay. *Off Key: When Film and Music Won’t Work Together*. Oxford University Press, 2008; Neumeyer, David, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁸¹ Coates, Norma. ‘Excitement Is Made, Not Born: Jack Good, Television, and Rock and Roll.’ *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, Sept. 2013, pp. 301–25, p. 302. The impact of gaps in scholarship and hierarchies of value will be discussed further in Chapter One.

this thesis.

Over the course of the last two decades, work dedicated to music and television and music *on* television, has been steadily building to close the gaps in British television historiography that have arisen due to the dominance of other types of writing on popular music. A major contributor to this change is Ashgate's Popular and Folk Music Series edited by Stan Hawkins and Lori Burns.⁸² The series began in 2000 with Peter Hawkins' work on French singer-songwriters.⁸³ At the time of writing, the series includes over 140 titles dedicated to various aspects of music culture, expanding scholarship beyond its Anglo-American dominance.⁸⁴ The diverse range of subjects covered includes the music output of different countries, music genres and specific artists, alongside the presentation of gender and race. A small but influential number of volumes are specifically dedicated to music television, beginning with Ian Inglis' first edited collection, *Performance and Popular Music*.⁸⁵

In his editor's preface for the book, Derek B. Scott notes the rapid changes within musicology and identifies how this has 'created a new urgency for the study of popular music alongside the development of new critical and theoretical models.'⁸⁶ Scott's observations are not only a reflection of the changes within the discussion of music and music culture, but also in the ways in which it is analysed and discussed as an object of study, reflected in the growth of musicology courses in higher education, which continues to open up and diversify scholarship, and in the numerous publications dedicated to various music genres and the socio-

⁸² The current series catalogue for Ashgate's Popular and Folk Music Series is viewable at <https://www.routledge.com/Ashgate-Popular-and-Folk-Music-Series/book-series/APFM?page=3&page=1>. Accessed 17 January 2017.

⁸³ Hawkins, Peter. *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day*. Ashgate, 2000.

⁸⁴ Similarly, Routledge's Music and Screen Media Series, edited by Neil Lerner, is also notable for its exploration of how music is used in television and the production of meaning. However, the series is primarily concerned with music used *in* television and not music *on* television. The current series catalogue is viewable at <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Music-and-Screen-Media-Series/book-series/RMSM>. Accessed 17 January 2017.

⁸⁵ Inglis, Ian, editor. *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time*. Ashgate, 2006.

⁸⁶ Scott, Derek B. 'General Editor's Preface'. *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2006, p. xi.

cultural influence of specific artists.⁸⁷ Scott's words are repeated in the preface to the follow-up, *Popular Music and Television in Britain* – a foundational reference point of this thesis. For Inglis, the purpose of the book is to 'provide indicative contributions to what remains a somewhat sparse academic literature and may stimulate further investigations.'⁸⁸

The newer scholarship reflected in the collection can be roughly divided into two often overlapping subject areas. The first of these is work relating to rock heritage and rock history, such as the writings of Paul Long and Tim Wall, and Andy Bennett and Sarah Baker, that undertakes discussion of particular examples of programming. This is illustrated throughout Long and Wall's sustained work on the music history series *Britannia* (BBC Four, 2005-2012), Bennett and Baker's discussion of *Classic Albums*, and Peter Mills' analysis of *The Old Grey Whistle Test*.⁸⁹ These examples are notable for their attempts to establish the socio-cultural importance of each text under discussion. For Bennett and Baker and Long and Wall, this also requires them to analyse the contributions that *Britannia* and *Classic Albums* make towards creating and maintaining a sense of rock heritage, and the kind of history – or the version of history – each programme presents to its audience.

In the case of *Britannia*, Long and Wall draw upon the work of John Corner to highlight the propensity of such programming to create 'closed narratives' of history borne out of the desire to present a unified, singular, and authoritarian perspective.⁹⁰ They summarise *Britannia* and its editorial imperative as being

⁸⁷ Womack, Kenneth, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*. Cambridge University Press, 2009, is a good example of this kind of scholarship. Furthermore, it illustrates the clear and sustained level of academic interest in the band, and the contribution of such writing to the study of popular culture and popular music more broadly.

⁸⁸ Inglis, Ian. 'Introduction'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, p.2

⁸⁹ Long, Paul, and Tim Wall. 'Constructing the Histories of Popular Music: The *Britannia* Series'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 11–26; Bennett, Andy, and Sarah Baker. 'Classic Albums: The Re-Presentation of the Rock Album on British Television'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 41–54; Mills, Peter. 'Stone Fox Chase: *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and the Rise of High Pop Television'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 55–67.

⁹⁰ Long and Wall, 'Constructing The Histories of Popular Music', p. 25. This is derived from Corner, John. 'Epilogue: Sense and Perspective'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, Feb. 2007, p. 137, concerning the reduction of complexity in historical narratives.

guided by ‘the truths, feelings, dispositions and actions of players, industry personnel and consumers,’ but also point out that the series is reductive, in a manner that ‘tend[s] to obscure an exploration of aspects of the wider terrain of the story related.’⁹¹ Bennett and Baker consider the impact of *Classic Albums* in several ways. Firstly, they address the importance of ‘the cultural work’ performed by such programming, highlighting its contribution to the growing industry based around rock heritage.⁹² However, like Long and Wall, they also acknowledge the limitations of the programme and the version of history it presents. They suggest that album selections presented throughout the series – each one framed in terms of their status as an influential record, and thus a historical artefact – allow the repetition and reinforcement of popular canons that are featured in the music press, which forms another kind of ‘closed narrative,’ limiting discussion of albums outside what David Hayes terms ‘the *Rolling Stone* version of music history.’⁹³

The obfuscation and limiting of history is reflected in a very different manner throughout Peter Mills’ work on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. While he employs a similar historiographic approach to that adopted by both Bennett and Baker and Long and Wall, he also takes time to underline that the series’ legacy and importance has been stultified by the lack of repeat transmission of full episodes on television (or any other medium), instead presented in a reduced form, as part of general music compilations or performance volumes of the series when released on DVD. This in turn, Mills argues, has led to the series’ identity being ‘somewhat eviscerated, and yet the story of the programme is close to the pulsebeat of British popular music, and to its representation on British television.’⁹⁴

In this context, Mills’ work can also be seen as an antidote to the closed narratives outlined above but that are also indicative of the opening out of scholarship created through collections such as *Popular Music and Television in*

⁹¹ Ibid., p.21.

⁹² Bennett and Baker, ‘*Classic Albums*’, p. 41.

⁹³ Hayes, David. “‘Take Those Old Records off the Shelf’: Youth and Music Consumption in the Postmodern Age’. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, Feb. 2006, pp. 51–68.

⁹⁴ Mills, ‘Stone Fox Chase,’ p. 55.

Britain. However, it is notable that – with rare exceptions – while this work does call for the reassessment of music television, the analyses undertaken rely on description rather than close textual analyses, which will be the primary methodology used in this thesis. Moreover, while much of this existing scholarship also relies on memory work and working from memory to complete it, few scholars employ discussion of memory and nostalgia beyond introducing their work through the use of personal anecdotes.⁹⁵ The critical inattention to the relationship between music television, memory, and nostalgia is something which the thesis that follows will attempt to address.

The desire to rewrite, expand, and create a more inclusive account of music history is a prominent feature of the second strand of scholarship, which is dedicated to well-known examples of British music television such as *Oh Boy!* and *Ready Steady Go!*, choosing to approach them from an underwritten or unknown vantage point in order to deepen understanding of their significance and/or challenge preconceived ideas regarding their reputation. Interestingly, this is achieved through a combination of approaches, employing elements of close textual analysis. As referenced above, this is in contrast to the prevalence of analyses solely based in description – coupled with specific focus on influential figures from throughout each series' history. In the case of Adrienne Lowy's exploration of *Ready Steady Go!*, the career and star personae of performers including Dusty Springfield, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw, and Lulu are mapped against discussion of the televisual style and aesthetic of the programme.⁹⁶ Through Lowy, a reciprocity between the popularity of such figures and the popularity of the programmes in which they perform is revealed, and in some cases, one becomes synonymous with the other. This is reiterated in Inglis' introduction to *Popular Music Television in Britain*, when he asserts that television is 'a principal source of contact between audiences and performers.'⁹⁷ This is not only because

⁹⁵ The work of Sheila Whiteley uses anecdotes to great effect, enriching her analyses beyond the descriptive. See Whiteley, Sheila. *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity, and Subjectivity*. Routledge, 2000.

⁹⁶ Lowy, Adrienne. 'Ready Steady Go! Televisual Pop Style and the Careers of Dusty Springfield, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw and Lulu'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, edited by Ian Inglis, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 71–84.

⁹⁷ Inglis, 'Introduction'. *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, p. 2.

the careers of many performers were 'made' by their inclusion in such programmes, but also because, as Inglis emphasises, music television was often the first point of contact for performers. For pre-existing fans of their music, exposed through radio, music television was also the first *visual* point of contact between performers and audiences – allowing them to see and hear their favourite artists outside the setting of a concert performance and in their own home.

An exemplary case of both underwritten and unknown aspects of music history can be found in Norma Coates' work on Jack Good. Coates' article is methodologically and theoretically closest to the kind of work undertaken throughout this thesis. Coates' work outlines the importance of Good's work and his legacy in regard to both music and television historiography, noting that this omission has led to the dominance and repetition of discourse regarding performance and authenticity in relation to music television, as emphasised by the comments of Frith in relation to *Oh Boy!* Using a variety of sources – including memoirs, interviews, reviews, and other audio-visual material – she details the trajectory of Good's life and career. Alongside this, Coates attempts to establish Good's 'telemusical style' through detailed analysis of *Oh Boy!*, *Shindig!* (ABC, USA, 1963-1964), and other examples from Good's output.⁹⁸ In doing so, Coates hopes to restore his contribution to 'rock and roll and transnational television history.'⁹⁹

Throughout, Coates highlights the visual complexity of this early television. In stark contrast to Frith, she argues that music and camera worked together to propel songs forward, with each setup planned in advance to make it feel and look organic, rather than being a simple recording of the performance.¹⁰⁰ Coates' observations are not only proven by interviews, letters and other

⁹⁸ Coates, 'Excitement is Made, Not Born', p. 301.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 302. Coates' observations are supported by practice-led research undertaken by Nicolas Pillai and Vanessa Jackson's on re-enacting *Jazz 625*. Upon comparing the production processes of the original series and their re-enactment, they note that 'despite advances in technology, the practices and processes of television production are remarkably similar between the 1960s and the early twenty-first century.' Pillai, Nicolas, and Vanessa Jackson. 'How Television Works: Discourses, Determinants and Dynamics Arising from the Re-Enactment of *Jazz 625*'. *Journal of Popular Television*, vol. 9, no. 1, Mar. 2021, pp. 139–57.

correspondence with Good, but they also reflect a deeper understanding of the relationship between television, music, and music culture that exists beyond the commercial and the inauthentic – a view purported by Frith and Kevin Dettmar.¹⁰¹

In her efforts to reinstate Good's legacy in music and television history, Coates also engages in self-reflection to discuss the inherent difficulties of researching early television due to its lack of availability, which is a direct concern of this thesis that has impacted upon corpus selection. However, Coates also highlights the positive attributes of video sharing platforms such as YouTube, where clips of extant *Oh Boy!* episodes can be seen and shared, allowing such historical research. The survival of such television on the platform speaks to the perceived value and cultural worth of music television as a genre – an issue that will be returned to throughout this thesis. The prevalence of patterns of inclusion and exclusion that Coates identifies are not solely relegated to academic discussion of music history. Popular music history books both adds to the ways in which music, memory, and history work together, but also detracts from them by repeating well-established patterns through the narratives – or the versions of history they present to their readership. Continued work by Peter Doggett, Howard Goodall, Jon Savage, Bob Stanley, and others raises the profile of music and music culture in the public consciousness and provides a perspective on music history that is wider in scope due to its engagement with the personal, that is often set against other industry-led historical accounts.¹⁰² This in turn, can also offer greater insight into the depth of our relationships – both public and private – with music and music culture. The limit of such works lies in their reliance on what Long and Wall term 'a teleology of "rupture" and discovery in the origination of music.'¹⁰³ The entrenchment of rupture theory, where music is discovered through innovation, is either based in technological change or in

¹⁰¹ Frith, 'Look! Hear!'; Dettmar, Kevin. *Is Rock Dead?* Routledge, 2006.

¹⁰² Doggett, Peter. *Electric Shock: From the Gramophone to the iPhone – 125 Years of Pop Music.*, Vintage, 2015; Goodall, Howard. *The Story of Music.* Vintage Books, 2013; Savage, Jon. *1966: The Year the Decade Exploded.* Faber & Faber, 2015; Stanley, Bob. *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Story of Modern Pop.* Faber and Faber, 2013.

¹⁰³ Long and Wall, 'Constructing the Histories of Popular Music', p. 18.

creative genius.¹⁰⁴ Such accounts further serve to simplify or limit written music history in the same manner as their televisual equivalent. Ultimately, this impacts on what is heard or not heard, seen or not seen, and as David K. Blake's discussion of teaching popular music illustrates, what is read or not read.¹⁰⁵

However, one way in which the linear, closed nature of public or authorised history can be negated is through the rediscovery and remediation of music through scholarly contexts such as those referenced throughout this review. Another is through media texts themselves, and the impact of the digital turn on viewing modes and cultures, which has changed the ways in which we consume non-contemporary television in particular. Digital culture has not only changed the ways in which such television is accessed by audiences, but also how it maintains an afterlife in popular and visual cultures.

With the scholarly framework of the thesis established, the thesis will now turn toward the discussion of how non-contemporary music television survives in the post-broadcast mediascape.

¹⁰⁴ See McGuigan, Jim. *Rethinking Cultural Policy*. Open University, 2004; and Wall, Tim. *Studying Popular Music Culture*. 2003. 2nd edition, Hodder & Stoughton Educational, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Blake, David K. 'Between a Rock and a Popular Music Survey Course: Technological Frames and Historical Narratives in Rock Music'. *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, vol. 5, no. 1, Fall 2014, pp. 103–15.

Chapter One: The Afterlife of Music Television

Introduction

The life of a television programme no longer stops when an episodic series ends. In the post-broadcast environment, there are an increasing number of ways to watch television that extend its life beyond the confines of its original broadcast. Rooted in and supported by the rise of home viewing technologies, the arrival of video, DVD, and latterly video-on-demand services has not only changed the way television is perceived, disseminated, and received by the audience, but also its materiality, leading to questions surrounding what television is and is not. These longstanding debates, and the technological and sociocultural shifts that have perpetuated them are the foundations for the work that follows.

This chapter explores the intersecting roles of DVD, the broadcast schedule of BBC Four, iPlayer, and YouTube in preserving and reinvigorating appreciation for music programming in the post-broadcast environment. It examines their role in creating a cultural afterlife for music programming, and in particular, non-contemporary music programming. These programmes reappear and recirculate in new viewing contexts and avenues, often in altered or otherwise fragmented states, distinctly different from original broadcast form.

By discussing several significant examples of non-contemporary music programming, such as *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and *Ready Steady Go!* alongside lesser known, regional examples like *Something Else* (BBC, 1978-1982), I consider the impact of availability, the experience of watching (and re-watching), and the implications of these textual re-encounters for the ways in which programmes are remembered and discussed in popular culture. The corpus of programmes featured has been shaped in response to the increasingly significant position that music programming maintains across the BBC's contemporary output, much of which is built upon its own archive holdings. The commissioning and scheduling decisions undertaken by the Corporation illustrates a desire to make a defined space for and displays a long-term commitment to producing music programming that has yet to be fully recognised and explored.

The impact of BBC Four's cultural work can already be felt in the changes made by Sky Arts to their own music provision, responding to position it with a similar degree of centrality within their own music provision. Furthermore, the longevity of the BBC as an institution means the development of BBC Four's programming flow, and the continuity of its music provision, can be traced over time. The broadcaster's presence throughout the significant socio-cultural, technological, conceptual, and material shifts that have taken place for television as a culture, form, and object over time makes it ideally suited to a longview of music programming on television. Analysing its rich history, encompassing programming that spans across multiple decades, formats, *and* platforms offers the opportunity to create a more inclusive picture of the ways in which music programming is consumed and engaged with, to highlight the relationship these diverse viewing practices have to broader nostalgic trends in popular and screen cultures.

The Afterlife of Television

How then, can the afterlife of television be defined, and what do such definitions mean? To begin unpacking this, it is necessary to trace the origin of what constitutes an afterlife, and the specific implications of such for music programming. My use of the term afterlife is drawn from Barbara Klinger's notion that home viewing technologies expand the life of a text beyond its original lifespan, which she calls its 'textual afterlife.'¹ While Klinger's use of the term afterlife is concerned with the post-theatrical exhibition of films, this concept is equally applicable to television. This takes on particular resonance in cases where television is the only avenue through which to view the programme in question, since it is no longer broadcasting or is otherwise unavailable. Television released in this way is gifted an afterlife through its reappearance on a new format, such as DVD or related home viewing technologies.

¹ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, p 8.

While it could be argued that all forms of television are impacted by the convergent, or in Jamie Sexton's terms, 'leaky,' nature of visual culture, increased access to television texts plays a particularly important role in the survival of music television, enabling it to recirculate as an artefact of music heritage, and maintain its presence in visual culture.² Continued access to this television is underpinned by hierarchies of value, judgements of taste, and a deeply personal mode of engagement that challenges the perception of music television as throwaway. The reappearance of television imbues it with a degree of endurance that belies the traditional conception of television as ephemeral, underlining the inherent appeal of and visual pleasure derived from the televisual past to (re)discover something lost or forgotten.

The large, generative body of work on home viewing technologies – in particular work dedicated to tape collecting following the widespread take-up of VHS – are fundamental to understanding the value of *having* and *keeping* television in a tangible format, how the circulation of television texts occurs, and the impact of this upon viewing cultures. Though usurped by later technologies, the continued relevance of VHS and its scholarship cannot be overstated, shown by the longevity of Ann Gray's seminal study *Video Playtime*, and its influence on later work by Uma Dinsmore, Kim Bjarkman, and others.³ Ethnographic studies such as these, which explore the materiality of videotape and the intensely personalised rituals based around video collecting and personal archiving, offer useful context to the different and often, as Gray's work illustrates, highly gendered 'viewing modalities' that have long characterised the television viewing experience.⁴

The desire to see and experience more through the use of home viewing technologies that began with VHS has grown exponentially with the arrival and

² Sexton, Jamie. 'Case Study: Television and Convergence'. *Tele-Visions: An Introduction to Studying Television*, edited by Glen Creeber, BFI, 2006, pp. 160-168.

³ Gray, Ann. *Video Playtime: The Gendering of a Leisure Technology*. Routledge, 1992; Dinsmore, Uma. 'Chaos, Order and Plastic Boxes: The Significance of Videotapes for the People Who Collect Them'. *The Television Studies Book*, edited by Christine Geraghty and David Lusted, Arnold, 1998, pp. 315–26; Bjarkman, Kim. 'To Have and to Hold'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 5, no. 3, Aug. 2004, pp. 217–46.

⁴ Gray, *Video Playtime*, p. 77.

uptake of its successor, DVD. The market saturation of the format during the mid-2000s rose in concert with the rapid growth of intensely private and personal viewing experiences, thereby establishing the basis for niche or ‘narrowcasting’ programming and channel provision.⁵ As Derek Kompare’s work on reruns illustrates, the textual longevity afforded to television that was previously acquired through repeated broadcasts and syndication has been increased by their availability on DVD, and in more recent years, on streaming platforms such as Netflix.⁶

This reappearance therefore changes the definition of what can be termed “new” and “old” television, since such static definitions do not take account of how we engage with television as a culture and a form.⁷ What may be ‘old’ in terms of its production year can still be made “new” to a viewer by their experience of encountering it for the first time, in a similar matter to encountering non-contemporary music for the first time through streaming or download. Textual longevity and endurance can encompass several modes and forms of viewing, that differs from the original viewing context, and are re-encountered in ‘transformed states.’ New fans encounter this material *as new*, whereas long-time fans encounter the same material through re-experiencing it, making it *new once more*. As Spigel and Jenkins note:

[W]e are now encountering texts that endure, in transformed states, for multiple generations. These texts provide clues to a shared, collective past that runs parallel to and often intersects with our own histories.⁸

⁵ I borrow this term and its implementation from Lisa Parks. The implications of this will be explored later in relation to streaming content provision.

⁶ Kompare, Derek. *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*. Routledge, 2005; Kompare, Derek. ‘Publishing Flow: DVD Box Sets and the Reconception of Television’. *Television & New Media*, vol. 7, no. 4, Nov. 2006, pp. 335–60; Kompare, Derek. ‘Reruns 2.0: Revising Repetition for Multiplatform Television Distribution’. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2010, pp. 79–83; Kompare, Derek. ‘Streaming as Shelving: The Media Past in the Media Future’. *Flow*, vol. 19, Jan. 2014, <https://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/the-persistence-of-television/>. Accessed 13 July 2017.

⁷ Brunsdon describes this push and pull as the simultaneous lure of ‘the new’ and ‘the same.’ See ‘Bingeing on Box-Sets: The National and the Digital in Television Crime Drama’. *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, edited by Jostein Gripsrud, Routledge, 2010, pp. 63–75, p. 66.

⁸ Spigel and Jenkins. ‘Same Bat Channel, Different Bat Times’, p. 144.

Following Spigel and Jenkins, I suggest that their concepts of textual endurance and transformation have gained even greater relevance in the post-broadcast mediascape. Furthermore, they are key to understanding how the afterlife of television works, and the ways in which it can intersect with personal memory and history as distinct from public or shared memory. This latter aspect is particularly relevant when considering the endurance of texts that are released on DVD, and the impact of supplemental material on the audience. Many of these features, as I will explore below, are constructed around personal experiences and memory. Moreover, they foreground personal reflection and emotional labour, highlighting the production of television in terms of its status as memory work, but also as a creative and cultural artefact. These qualities take on an extra significance in relation to music television, where these features often negotiate the lack of surviving episodes and/or other relevant interstitial material.

DVD and Music Television

In beginning to construct a picture of the afterlife of music television, DVD is a natural starting point. The reasons behind this are numerous, not least due to the importance of DVD to television scholarship, historiography, and as an object of study, reflected in work by Matt Hills and Charlotte Brunsdon, among others on the value of DVD box sets to television studies.⁹ It is equally important to acknowledge the centrality of DVD during the evolution of the current multichannel environment, and its role in changing the conception of television and the television audience.

The viewing experience came to be defined in terms of the shared and collective, no longer viewed as a homogenous mass, and instead as individuals who form pockets or clusters, drawn to sites of their interest correlated to their own tastes. In such a model, the DVD can be easily positioned as a tangible object embodying those interests and tastes. As Lucas Hilderbrand, Matt Hills, and others have noted, increased access to film and television on DVD have

⁹ Hills, Matt. 'From the Box in the Corner to the Boxset on the Shelf'. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2007, pp. 41–60; Brunsdon, 'Bingeing on Box-Sets'.

democratised their respective mediums, while DVD as a format and a tangible object has become the subject of much critical valorisation, particularly in relation to television and the box set.¹⁰

While it could be persuasively argued that the rise of streaming and other video-on-demand services renders any such discussion superfluous – since disc technology, once considered ‘new’ is now effectively ‘old’ – to exclude DVD here would not only deny its powerful impact upon music culture and heritage, but would also deny its role in giving access, affording value to, and maintaining the cultural longevity and the pleasure of collecting music television. The value of DVD in the post-broadcast mediascape, its inherent visual pleasure, and its capacity to legitimate television remains significant since little of this material survives officially in any other format.¹¹

Matt Hills, and Aaron Barlow, among others, have persuasively argued that the DVD offers the opportunity to revisit television texts to re-read them, but also to re-claim them. Derek Kompare argues that, ‘DVD box sets provide the content of television without the “noise” and limitations of the institution of television.’¹² This assertion not only reinforces television’s physical and material shift from, as Hills describes, the corner of the room to a box on the shelf, but also the highly-prized and commoditised qualities of purity and isolation that have come to characterise both DVD culture and the experience of viewing. Hills goes on to state that DVD culture also works to ‘activate and sustain discourses of aesthetic value,’¹³ in a manner analogous to the academic valorisation of specific television texts or genres, which maintains both hierarchies of value and circulations of taste, which can lead to genres that are deemed less valuable being overlooked.

¹⁰ Hilderbrand, Lucas. ‘Cinematic Promiscuity: Cinephilia after Videophilia’. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, vol. 50, no. 1/2, Spring & Fall 2009, pp. 214–17; Hills, ‘From the Box in the Corner.’; Bennett, James, and Tom Brown, editors. *Film and Television After DVD*. Routledge, 2008. Bennett and Brown also recognise and contextualise the complex history of home viewing technologies and DVD’s place within a continuum of evolution.

¹¹ It is notable that Netflix still releases some but not all its Originals on DVD and Blu-ray, such as *The Crown* (Netflix, 2016 –) and *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix, 2013-2019), emphasizing the continued desire for physical formats in certain contexts.

¹² Kompare, ‘Publishing Flow’, p. 352.

¹³ Hills, ‘Box in the Corner’, p.47.

However, in the case of music programming, critical inattention has only served to stimulate the appeal of box sets to music fans, creating a culture of commercial desire based around the inherent pleasures of collecting. These established qualities are underlined in the work of Charles Tashiro, echoing Benjamin's earlier discussion of 'thrill of acquisition,' around book collecting, which has been taken up by various scholars writing on DVD, reinforcing the similarities between collecting cultures across different formats.¹⁴ DVD collecting is also motivated by the desire to preserve and keep, but motivated and mobilised by the capacity of DVD to recover and return film and television to the audience (largely in relation to its role in restoration).¹⁵

In the case of older material, such technologies can 'revivify' texts through their reappearance in visual culture. Through this process, they can also be 'reactivated,' not only in the Foucauldian sense, whereby they can be re-read and reinterpreted but also in terms of (re-)stimulating interest in the subjects presented.¹⁶ In television, this is illustrated by a diverse range of work dedicated to the impact upon television of the then new media form in various contexts. These include Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore's ethnographic comparative study of comedy audiences in Britain and Norway; the ongoing work of DVD publishing labels such as Kaleidoscope and Network; or the critical attention afforded to the restoration of early *Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963-1989; 2005-) episodes for home viewing release.¹⁷ Similar patterns of accessibility and restoration are also

¹⁴ Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt, Translated by Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 60; Tashiro, Charles. 'The Contradictions of Video Collecting'. *Film Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 2, Dec. 1996, pp. 11-18.

¹⁵ For an indication of the DVD's value in historic film restoration see Carroll, Nathan. 'Mitchell and Kenyon, Archival Contingency, and the Cultural Production of Historical License'. *The Moving Image*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2006, pp. 52-73; and Ricci, Steven. 'Saving, Rebuilding, or Making: Archival (Re) Constructions in Moving Image Archives'. *The American Archivist*, vol. 71, no. 2, Sept. 2008, pp. 433-55.

¹⁶ Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Pantheon, 1972, p. 123.

¹⁷ Kalviknes Bore, Inger-Lise. 'TV Comedy Audiences and Media Technology: A Comparative Study of Britain and Norway'. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, vol. 16, no. 2, May 2010, pp. 185-200; Richards, Denzell. 'Old SF, New FX: Exploring the Reception of Replacement Special Effects for Older Episodes of *Doctor Who* and *Star Trek*'. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, Nov. 2013, pp. 47-64; and Wallace, Richard. 'Joint Ventures and Loose Cannons: Reconstructing *Doctor Who*'s Missing Past'. *Fan Phenomena: Doctor Who*, edited by Paul Booth,

replicated in relation to film DVDs, particularly in relation to high-end labels such as Criterion Tartan, and Third Window Films, who specialise in Japanese horror cinema.¹⁸ In all these contexts, the DVD is a site of interest and a point of access that enables producers to offer an enriched experience for their audience.¹⁹

This experience is founded upon a greater understanding of the collaborative emotional labour within, and creative processes of, DVD production. For music television, this capacity is particularly important, and is amongst the reasons why DVD remains a key mode of delivery and consumption in the face of a vast array of choices. To collect and to keep is at the heart of fan culture and defines fannish behaviour.²⁰ It directly equates to the seriousness of the fan, and their own worth within the community. Possession of boxsets is a display of their loyalty in concrete terms – a quality that intensifies if the fan object in question is largely defined by its ephemerality and/or absence. Building

Intellect Books, 2013, pp. 26–37, for discussion on this in relation to *Doctor Who*, and the fan appropriation of such material. In addition, the relationship between new media and audience pleasure is explored in Kerr, Aphra, et al. 'New Media – New Pleasures?' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, Mar. 2006, pp. 63–82.

¹⁸ For further discussion on Criterion and DVD publishing in relation to quality see Kendrick, James. 'Aspect Ratios and Joe Six-Packs: Home Theater Enthusiasts Battle to Legitimize the DVD Experience'. *The Velvet Light Trap*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2005, pp. 58–70; Schauer, Bradley. 'The Warner Archive and DVD Collecting in the New Home Video Market'. *The Velvet Light Trap*, University of Texas Press, Aug. 2012, pp. 35–48; and Carroll, Nathan. 'Unwrapping Archives: DVD Restoration Demonstrations and the Marketing of Authenticity'. *The Velvet Light Trap*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2005, pp. 18–31.

¹⁹ For more on this see Wroot, Jonathan. 'DVD Special Features and Stage Greetings: Whose Promotional Material Is It Anyway?'. *Frames Cinema Journal*, no. 3, May 2013, <http://framescinemajournal.com/article/dvd-special-features-and-stage-greetings-whose-promotional-material-is-it-anyway-2/>. Accessed 22 Nov. 2017; Wroot, Jonathan. 'Reviewing Distinctive DVD Experiences: Neo Magazine and the Critical Reception of Asian Media Distributors'. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, May 2015, pp. 82–101; Wroot, Jonathan, and Andy Willis, editors. *Cult Media: Re-Packaged, Re-Released and Restored*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; and Wroot, Jonathan, and Andy Willis, editors. *DVD, Blu-Ray and Beyond: Navigating Formats and Platforms Within Media Consumption*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

²⁰ The participatory aspects of fandom have been documented by numerous scholars including Bainbridge, Caroline, and Candida Yates. 'On Not Being a Fan: Masculine Identity, DVD Culture and the Accidental Collector'. *Wide Screen*, vol. 2, no. 1, May 2010, pp. 1–22, <http://widescreenjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/41>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2021; Geraghty, Lincoln. 'It's Not All About the Music: Online Fan Communities and Collecting Hard Rock Café Pins'. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 16, June 2014, <https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/492>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2021; and Jenkins, Henry. *Comics and Stuff*. New York University Press, 2020, pp. 83–118. Scholarship of this type typically relates to DVDs, and in more recent years, comic books and related memorabilia.

upon the writings of Andreas Huyssen, Amy Holdsworth has discussed the importance of memory to the experience of watching television and the changes in our relationship towards it. She highlights the malleable relationship between the past and the present, that is created by the recirculation of non-contemporary television. For Holdsworth, television memory is:

[An] experience formed over time within the patterns of the every day. Here, television is remembered and felt as a significant experience that can illuminate histories and memories of the self and the family. The reflections that take place in the black mirror and the television cannot escape the residues of memory – *they both bring forth and they look back*.²¹

Holdsworth's evocation of the 'black mirror' refers exclusively to the reflective qualities of the television set, but this image is equally applicable to the DVD and image culture as a whole. The disc surface too, reflects. DVD also brings forth and looks back, enabling the ephemeral and absent to maintain a physical, tangible presence in the life (and the memory) of the audience. In such a context, the *knowledge* of a DVD's existence – and ergo, the possibility of return – is just as important as the *purchase* and *possession* of it. In contrast to the wider discourse surrounding DVD and its marketing as a space for restoration and improvement of audiovisual quality, and accompanying connotations of specialness, the relative rareness of early music television means such releases are largely marketed based around their rarefied status.

The qualities of existence and survival become especially valuable in relation to non-contemporary television more broadly, but they attain an extra significance for music programming. This is due to the value judgements surrounding the value and worth of such programming, and its perceived status as a "low," throwaway, and ephemeral cultural object. Such attitudes ensured music programming's precarity in the face of the BBC's widespread tape wiping policies prior to the arrival of less expensive alternatives, home viewing technologies, and stable recording and storage formats. For instance, the rarefied

²¹ Holdsworth, *Memory, and Nostalgia*, p. 15. My emphasis.

status of the extant early examples of music programming such as *The Six-Five Special* (BBC, 1957-1958) or *Oh Boy!* due to their recirculation and reappearance on DVD and online illustrates the importance of availability and visibility in relation to television texts, and the opening up of opportunities for its longevity, legitimating its position for television historiography, scholarship, and as a site of nostalgia for fans.

Writing on special edition DVDs, Barlow argues that such box sets 'strive to bring back what may be (for some) a *remembered public event*, returning the viewer to the *vanished experience*, even in the privacy of home.'²² While Barlow's assertion is largely in line with the return/loss rhetoric previously established, what is of interest in relation to music television is the idea that material on a DVD can be both a remembered event, but also a vanished experience. Though somewhat diametrically opposed, for fans of such television, the two states can be one and the same. The 'remembered public event' could refer to their attendance in the audience, at the time of recording, or their shared viewing experience of the broadcast. The lack of availability of music television reinforces what Holdsworth terms 'the vanishing act' of television, both in terms of the medium and the genre of music television, which has come to be defined by lack of availability of texts prior to the arrival to DVD and related home viewing technologies.²³

In this context, the DVD in particular is the tangible embodiment of, and the mechanism through which the 'vanished experience' Barlow describes can be returned or restored. Prior to the arrival of home viewing technologies, audiences lacked proof of its existence outside of their own memory.²⁴ The result for the contemporary audience is ultimately only ever an approximation of that

²² Barlow, Aaron. *The DVD Revolution: Movies, Culture, and Technology*. Praeger, 2005, p.75. My emphasis.

²³ Holdsworth, "Television Resurrections", p. 139.

²⁴ This accepted, it is important to acknowledge the importance of fan trading and bootleg or unofficial releases in both the recirculation and survival of all forms of television. For insights of provide insight into such practices and their cultural value in cinema see Hilderbrand, Lucas. 'Grainy Days and Mondays: Superstar and Bootleg Aesthetics'. *Camera Obscura*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2004, pp. 56–91; Hilderbrand, Lucas. *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright*. Duke University Press, 2009; and Lobato, Ramon. *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution*. British Film Institute, 2012.

experience, that is built upon the tension between the two states that Barlow describes. The promise of return offered by the technologies featured throughout this chapter are neither literal nor complete, with the programmes under discussion often featuring in fragmented excerpts. Consequently, they reappear and recirculate as parts of their former whole, lacking in the wider context of their original broadcasts, including the presence of interstitial material such as presenter links, and, where applicable, advertisements.

The Old Grey Whistle Test and DVD

To consider these ideas in more detail, this chapter will now turn towards discussion of *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, and in particular, its 30th anniversary DVD set. While there have been subsequent disc releases, these celebratory discs warrant further attention, due to their consistent mobilisation of archival terms and practices, and the overriding function of DVD itself as a self-contained archive – a characteristic that is both reinforced and exploited throughout their menu design architecture and the supplemental features created for it.

Produced by Michael Appleton, *The Old Grey Whistle Test* originally aired on BBC Two from 1971 to 1988, taking over the slot previously occupied by *Colour Me Pop* (BBC Two, 1968-1969) and *Disco 2* (BBC Two, 1970-1971). The established late-night scheduling and its album-focused coverage of non-chart music set *Whistle Test* apart from the mainstream chart-based music offered by *Top of the Pops* on BBC One. Following its final episode, the series has maintained a presence in the popular consciousness through its reappearance as archive clips, in performance compilations, documentaries, or on DVD and YouTube. It remains an important sociocultural touchstone, standing as an arbiter of good musical taste, and an exemplar of high art music television. Its longstanding cultural identity is largely informed by what Ian Inglis describes as ‘cultural connoisseurship,’ whereby it ‘succeeded unequivocally in establishing itself as the “serious” face of popular music on television in Britain.’²⁵ This reflects the creative and musical maturity that developed before, during, and after the series,

²⁵ Inglis, *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, p. 4.

coupled with the simultaneous recognition of the need to take music seriously as a cultural object.²⁶

These interrelated artistic and cultural shifts feed into the series' broader associations with music television, aligning it with notions surrounding seriousness, authenticity and live performance, antithetical to the lip-synched and polished performances that came to typify the later years of *Top of the Pops*, and subsequent chart-based series such as *The Chart Show* (Channel 4/ITV, 1989-1998) and *CD:UK* (ITV, 1998-2006).²⁷ *Whistle Test* and its surrounding discourse can therefore be considered, both musically and televisually, as the origin point for several binaries centring on value and worth that continue to exist within music culture: authenticity versus inauthenticity; musicianship versus star appeal; and perhaps most divisive of all, performance as art versus performance as spectacle. These binaries are reflected in and reinforced by the presentation of the series itself and the supplemental material featured in its DVD releases.

My analysis of the set will be concerned with the presence of material rather than the absence, focusing on its menu design and supplemental material. The former illustrates how the experience and ethos of the series can be reflected and repeated in its design, reproducing the feel of *Whistle Test* for the audience, tying into associations with honesty, authenticity, and its mobilisation of the analogue. The latter is an indication of what can be added to the viewing experience through the medium of DVD, beyond the presentation of the programme itself. In this way, the DVD can be said to contain a dual address that speaks to both the dedicated fan and the newcomer simultaneously.

DVD Menus, Series Identity, and Designing Nostalgia

For *Whistle Test*, this dual address is reflected throughout the anniversary DVD's menu design. Nostalgia is encoded and authenticity inscribed throughout, built

²⁶ *Jazz 625* (BBC, 1964-1966) *Omnibus* (BBC, 1967-2003), and to an extent, *Arena* (BBC, 1975-) also contribute to the serious treatment of music and programming on television.

²⁷ *Countdown: United Kingdom*, stylised as CD:UK, was originally run alongside ITV's Saturday morning magazine programme, *SMTV Live* (ITV, 1998-2003), as the broadcast rival to *Live & Kicking* (BBC One, 1993-2001). *CD:UK* became the replacement programme for its predecessor *The Chart Show* (Channel 4, 1986-1989; ITV, 1989-1996).

upon the framework set out in the visual style of the menu, reinforcing the ‘aura of quality’ that Paul McDonald argues DVDs have attained through their packaging and menu design.²⁸ The *Whistle Test* set embodies McDonald’s criterion of quality through the attention to detail in the design of its menus. Created by Abbey Road Interactive, the combination of sound and image work together in the interactive menus to replicate the recording environment – both musical and televisual – combining both outputs of *Whistle Test*’s performative roots. The experience is both emotive and immersive, using the familiar iconography of the studio space to tie into the series’ associations with honesty and authenticity – a self-mythologising quality that is reflected throughout the release. This is particularly foregrounded in its mobilisation of analogue technology and related iconography, through the use of handwritten fonts (rendered in chalk and marker pen), masking tape labels, amplifier/and or headphone jacks, and Polaroid photographs, placed as points of anchor across the menu screens (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1: Menu screens of the Whistle Test 30th Anniversary DVD set

Navigational elements are represented in two ways. Firstly, and most explicitly this is achieved in its familiar star-kicker badge, standing in for the back arrow, and the microphone, used here to offer further information. Secondly, this is

²⁸ McDonald, *Video and DVD Industries*, p. 57.

done through the use of dials and switches attached to the various choices offered up to the viewer. As they would in real-life, the switches can alternate between red (off) and green (on), to signify their activation (Figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2: Close-up of disc menu navigation

This simulacral quality is repeated through the moving of the large sound metre dial once a choice is made, spiking along with the buzz of guitar feedback to signal that a selection has been made. This is interrupted by a voice declaring “studio stand by,” itself interrupting an unseen band’s soundcheck – guitar-tuning, drum rolls, mic checks – that serves as the menu music, running on a loop, until the intervention of the viewer, re-creating the atmosphere of the studio experience, and, aesthetically at least, the experience of watching the series.

Abbey Road Interactive’s design is one that has been created within specific degrees of awareness. This is first and foremost an awareness of the series’ core identity and message – honesty, authenticity, musicianship – but it is also an awareness that acknowledges the viewing audience and their personal connection to and engagement with *Whistle Test* and its associated iconography *because* of the aforementioned identity and message of the series. When taken in combination, these attributes afford *Whistle Test* an elevated position within television history but also within the music culture and music heritage to which it has contributed. DVD maintains a dual address, and this too is reflected in the

menu design, appealing to the appetite for analogue nostalgia in older members of the audience, and for retro-futurism in younger ones. As a product of the digital turn, DVD is the bridge between these two desires. It facilitates access to a text whose demographic is comprised of those who engage with the pleasures of analogue nostalgia, and those who are drawn by the appeal of retro-futurism. In doing so, DVD offers the audience the opportunity to discover and rediscover the televisual past simultaneously.

DVD, Remembrance, and Canonisation

Whistle Test is one music series amongst many currently available on DVD. Their presence offers the opportunity for audiences to (re-)engage with the musical past. However, it is important to note *how* and *why* the series is remembered by that audience, which greatly impacts upon the perception of the series in both popular and visual cultures, and the legacy it maintains. The afterlife of *Whistle Test* is constructed around a narrative of loss. Its official presence within screen culture is entirely in fragmentary form, recirculating in clips, either as part of thematic programming blocks, in music documentaries or in the celebratory DVDs such as the anniversary set.²⁹ Here, the true impact of the *loss* of full episodes being commercially available is made clear, and its ramifications for how the series is discussed and understood are far-reaching, not least as an incomplete record of the aesthetic of music television in this period, and the construction of such programming.

In his writing on the history of *Whistle Test* and its value to music television, Peter Mills laments that the memory of the series' 'fuller identity' has ultimately been lost through the lack of full extant episodes. Describing this as an 'evisceration,' he notes that full programmes, where all of the interstitial material, including presenter links between performances, interviews, and

²⁹ This is separate from episodes that survive through unofficial means, shared through trading, or more recently, YouTube channels such as 'Whistle Test Archive,' which are not officially endorsed. Following this reappearance and recirculation, other series clips are also frequently uploaded to streaming sites such as YouTube, another aspect of television's afterlife explored later in this chapter.

references to earlier episodes – which Mills terms its ‘magazine/information network contexts’ – left intact are rarely if ever seen.³⁰ The evisceration of *Whistle Test*’s identity echoes broader practices within music history programming concerning narrativization and representation. The series’ distinctive magazine style can be said to visually replicate the function of print magazines, tying the series to music culture and music heritage more broadly, while contributing to a particular strand of music journalism that emanated from music weekly *Melody Maker* (and latterly *NME*) predicated on the values of seriousness, musicianship, and authenticity, qualities central to *Whistle Test*’s identity and to the way it has been remembered in popular culture.³¹ The series’ ties to music journalism are not solely relegated to its visual style and magazine rhetoric. While it is difficult to talk about the specifics of loss in terms of performances, loss is more easily articulated in wider terms relating to the loss of contextual meaning. The loss of this material impacts both our understanding of *Whistle Test*’s identity and music culture during its lifetime.

Original presenter and journalist Richard Williams continued to write for *Melody Maker* while presenting the programme. His presence tied the series to music culture, and a particular strand of music journalism emanating from Williams and others at the magazine. Predicated on the values of seriousness, musicianship, and authenticity, these qualities became central tenets of *Whistle Test*’s brand and identity, shaping the ways in which it is remembered and narrativized. Positioned as an authority and a cultural intermediary Williams established a feedback loop between *Whistle Test*, the music press, musicians,

³⁰ Mills, ‘Stone Fox Chase,’ p. 55. It should be noted that this treatment is not relegated solely to *Whistle Test*. DVD releases of *The Word* also discards surrounding contextual material to leave behind the performances. Organised into volumes, these releases strip away the wider identity of the series in a similar manner.

³¹ This is supported by the comments of producer Mike Appleton on the anniversary DVD regarding his concept for the series, citing both magazines as inspiration for its style. See also: Mills, ‘Stone Fox Chase,’ pp. 58-60. Both magazines were published by Time Inc, *Melody Maker* (1926-2000) and *The New Musical Express* or *NME* (1952 –) were rivals until they merged in 2000. While both magazines influenced each other in terms of coverage and style, *Melody Maker* is more commonly defined by its seriousness and artfulness, focusing on emergent genres of rock, blues, and singer-songwriters, distinct from *NME*’s earlier focus on pop until its own shift into associations with gonzo and post-punk in the late 1970s and early 1980s. *NME* ended its print run in March 2018, and now operates in an online only iteration.

and fans, which was maintained by his successors.³² The loss of presenter links from much of the extant recordings of *Whistle Test* also means a loss of contextual meaning. Without this interstitial material, *Whistle Test* becomes solely about the sum of its performances. This once more reduces its complexity, and changes how the programme is perceived and experienced. The privileging of performance taking place in these cases – part over whole – does open up the archive potential for the footage, making it more portable and simpler to reframe as belonging to the archive, but does so at the expense of its embedded historical links to music culture.

While the *Whistle Test* DVDs *do* retain some interstitial elements, including main titles and theme, and the particular visual grammar and style of the series remains intact in the surviving performance footage – largely static three-camera setup, slower cutting, use of dissolves and emphasis on close-ups to foreground musicianship – this is at the expense of its wider continuity, detrimental to its sense of intimacy and the preservation of original programme flow.³³ Mills' assessment of this loss, and discussion throughout the course of this chapter underlines the fact that there is potential for the afterlife of television to be something other than positive. While there is obvious value and importance in celebrating and preserving the series, its largely fragmentary form calls into question the usefulness of such work, since it is not a true reflection of *Whistle Test* as broadcast. However, the scarcity of the series, and music programming in general is such that its survival – even in this greatly reduced form – can be justified. The existence and recirculation of the series through its performances ultimately matters more than the quality of the footage and its ability (or inability) to represent *Whistle Test* as a whole, and/or music television during the 1970s and 1980s.

The survival of a text through home viewing technologies does not ensure

³² Maguire, Jennifer Smith, and Julian Matthews. *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*. Sage, 2014.

³³ Earlier performances are defined by a reliance on static camera setups, necessitated by the small studio size and lack of space for movement. In later years, the premises were larger, reflected in the shift to incorporate movement. See for example the clear stylistic differences in the filming of Alice Cooper's 'Under My Wheels' (1971) and Talking Heads' 'Psycho Killer' (1978) for a representative example of the changes in aesthetic.

a legacy that is equitable to the value of its original reputation, historical value, or how it is remembered in the memories of its audience. Mills persuasively argues that ‘the programme is close to the pulsebeat of British popular music, and to its representation on British television.’³⁴ The connotations of the value and worth in Mills’ statement are implicit, yet obvious, and emphasise the common disparity that is created between cultural value and cultural identity when the historical context of a series is lost. A similar analogy can be drawn between this and other forms of television that recirculate as part of compilation programmes dedicated to specific genres or decades of television. In other cases, this leads to an incomplete historical picture that is often, through its reappearance and repetition, accepted into larger narratives of history, despite its incomplete nature, which in turn leads to reductive historical and visual accounts of both the televisual and musical past.³⁵

DVD, Interactivity, and the Illusion of Choice

Thus far, the analysis offered of the *Whistle Test* DVD has been largely concerned with its aesthetic experience. While this will remain the primary motivation behind such close reading, it is also important to acknowledge the structure of the DVD itself, and the opportunities it affords the audience for interaction. In an attempt to map out the DVD experience, Tom Brown’s work mobilises the notion of an ‘aesthetic of attractions’ present within the DVD structure, using it as an heuristic tool for close reading.³⁶ For Brown, the DVD and its interactivity are akin to a digital theme park, which provides ‘organisational logic’ to, and links the space between, the physical and the digital.³⁷ In other words, while the structure of the DVD, or, to follow Brown’s analogy, the theme park, is fixed and cannot be

³⁴ Mills, ‘Stone Fox Chase’, p. 55.

³⁵ The implications for this in constructing and creating music history programming are explored in Chapter Two.

³⁶ Brown, Tom. “‘The DVD of Attractions?’: The Lion King and the Digital Theme Park’. *Film and Television After DVD*, edited by James Bennett and Tom Brown, Routledge, 2008, pp. 81–100. Brown’s model, as the name suggests, builds on Tom Gunning’s earlier concept of early cinema narrative and spectatorship, “the cinema of attractions,” and is predicated on similar understandings of visual spectacle. See Gunning, Tom. ‘The Cinema of Attractions: Early Cinema, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde’. *Wide Angle*, vol. 8, no. 3–4, Fall 1986, pp. 63–70.

³⁷ Brown “‘The DVD of Attractions?’”, p. 81.

changed – no rides or options can be added or removed – the way in which it is *accessed* and *experienced* changes with the choices made by the user whenever they play the disc[s], or choose their route around the park. Brown's analogy is a useful one that holds particular relevance for the *Whistle Test* DVD, where the potential for visual pleasure and immersion takes on an emotive and affective dimension.

Writing on temporality and audience engagement in the DVD space, Rob Cover discusses the DVD space in rather different terms. Considering the role of input in the experience, he suggests that '[t]he DVD is a media audio-visual format and a media practice that not only invites, but often requires, the active engagement of the user.'³⁸ Though articulated in very different terminology, both Brown's and Cover's work defines the DVD experience as a space of interactivity, immersion, and choice. Furthermore, they offer up concepts that can help us to understand how the DVD space can be navigated and contextualised. Or, how the DVD offers up the illusion of choice through options that are already predetermined, such as the way the disc is navigated or playback options that change *how* the content on the disc is viewed. While the available options are numerous, they also remain limited, both by the structure of the disc itself and the content within it. Over the course of several viewings, the user will eventually reach the capacity of the options available to them. In the case of a disc such as *Whistle Test*, this familiarity could bring its own pleasure and comfort, but also breed frustration, that can only be alleviated by purchasing and viewing another DVD set.

Thus, there remains an obvious sense of reciprocity between the DVD, the text, and the viewer, or in Cover's terms 'coparticipation.'³⁹ Relating this to user desire, Cover suggests that DVD space offers up ways to experience its content differently, and such experience means the DVD is not viewed in totality, but rather in smaller fragments centred on what they wish to view (or not). He goes

³⁸ Cover, Rob. 'DVD Time: Temporality, Audience Engagement and the New TV Culture of Digital Video'. *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy*, vol. 117, no. 1, Nov. 2005, p. 139.

³⁹ Ibid.

on to define these viewing behaviours as ‘resequencing, reconfiguration or reauthorship of the narrative.’⁴⁰ Following Cover, this can also clearly be related to the audience re-exerting their control over or reclaiming their lost television and the terms of its return to them. However, this is complicated by the fact that any reclamation occurs in the same limited, predefined manner as outlined above. The *Whistle Test* DVD offers the opportunity to ‘re-sequence’ the series in several ways. Of these, the most notable is the ability to play the performances featured by year, thereby acknowledging that the series – like the music culture it strove to represent – had particular phases of development, which in turn, have differing degrees of appeal for fans.⁴¹

DVD Extras, Authority, and the Restoration of Value

One of several ways in which the supplementary material in the anniversary set attempts to restore the series’ value is through the audio commentary given by *Whistle Test* producer Mike Appleton, who, along with presenter Bob Harris, has maintained a longstanding relationship with the series, and the contributions of both men have become subsumed into *Whistle Test*’s identity and inextricably linked to it. Their reappearance as part of the supplemental features reasserts not only their authority, but also their cultural and emotional resonance for the audience.

In contrast to audio commentaries for film releases, which are in the majority screen-specific, Appleton’s is defined instead by its overarching nature. Rather than reflecting upon specific performances, he focuses on featured artists from the programme’s history, such as Bruce Springsteen. However, notable is Appleton’s attention to detail regarding the genesis of the series and the technical limitations of its production, which draw attention to the creative and

⁴⁰ Ibid. See also Cover, Rob. ‘Interactivity: Reconceiving the Audience in the Struggle for Textual “Control”’. *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2004, pp. 107–20, for the origins of this discussion on interactivity, participation, and choice. For insights regarding the social aspects of DVDs concerning art and control, see Smith, Jo T. ‘DVD Technologies and the Art of Control’. *Film and Television After DVD*, edited by James Bennett and Tom Brown, Routledge, 2008, pp. 129–48.

⁴¹ Other re-sequencing options include random choice and presenter’s choice. The implications of the latter will be explored later.

emotional labour undertaken to make the series. Appleton's comments become part of attempts to restore the series' value and identity, while also revealing one of DVD's primary functions: to offer up new information and insight. Positioned as an authority and an expert on the programme, its history and production, Appleton acts as an authorial voice, and a point of access and identification for the audience, offering them 'access to the previously mystified workings of media production.'⁴² This function is also indicative of what Bennett and Brown describe as the 'knowledge transfer' that occurs between 'the academy, the canon, and the general public.'⁴³ Though raised in relation to the BFI's DVD collection and the role of the academic commentary in facilitating and promoting screen education, Bennett and Brown's assertion is equally applicable here. Appleton too is educating his audience on music television production, while both the series and the disc sets can be said to promote their own kind of canon – an element that will be reflected upon shortly.

The *Whistle Test* anniversary DVD has clearly been created with an awareness of its audience, music heritage, and nostalgia for the past, as evidenced in my earlier discussion of its menu design. Of the supplemental material present on the release, the 'OGWT Museum' photo gallery warrants further discussion because it amplifies this awareness to new levels, while reasserting the series as a site of socio-cultural and historical value. The features in the set can be said to draw upon the audience's memories and the familiarity of their knowledge, the museum feature, perhaps more than any other, recognises both the value of the series to music heritage, but also the value it holds for the audience, explicitly displaying the series as worthy of attention *and* worthy of preservation (Figure 1.3).

⁴² Brown, "The DVD of Attractions?", p. 81.

⁴³ Bennett, James, and Tom Brown. "The Place, Purpose and Practice of the BFI's DVD Collection and the Academic Commentary: An Interview with Caroline Millar and Ginette Vincendeau". *Film and Television After DVD*, p. 118.



Figure 1.3: Screens from the Whistle Test 'Museum' feature

The museum details key moments, influential figures, and accolades from the series' history, and displays a range of artefacts and ephemera. These range from images of producer Mike Appleton and programme researcher Alma Player, awards from *NME* (1971-1973) and *Melody Maker* (1976), and several examples of gold and silver discs from influential featured artists including The Police and Paul Simon. Finally, there are significant references to the series' legacy, detailing its position in the BFI's year 2000 'TV 100' poll at number 33 – the highest ranked music television programme.⁴⁴ Each photograph is presented both as a historical snapshot and an artefact-turned-social document. The feature is the simplest but most overt example of the series celebrating itself.

The gallery's design continues with the overarching aesthetic themes of the set, which maintains the pre-established links between the past and the present, *and* the digital and the analogue. For instance, the gallery is navigated by clicking on thumbnails organised by the page rather than the more commonplace auto-play slideshow, replicating flipping through a photo album or

⁴⁴ The rankings for other examples of music television are as follows: *Top of the Pops*, 41; *Live Aid*, 58; *Ready Steady Go!*, 62; *Later... with Jools Holland*, 81; and *The Tube*, 96. Given the dominance of drama and single plays within the list, these programmes inclusion and rankings are an important indicator of the changed critical opinion of music programming. Data drawn from an archived copy of the feature on the BFI's website. BFI. *TV 100 List of Lists*. 30 Nov. 2005, <https://web.archive.org/web/20051130005501/http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/tv/100/list/list.php>. Archived 5 Sept. 2005. Accessed 13 Feb. 2018.

scrapbook.⁴⁵ Beyond this unified aesthetic, the gallery borrows several visual uses from the display conventions found in the museum setting. This is particularly evident in the use of detailed captions that include a range of biographical and contextual information placed next to the photographs being presented. The experience mimics that of visiting a museum exhibit, albeit on a much smaller scale.

These practices echo the wider musealization of popular culture where museums have been created for specific artists, including the Beatles and ABBA, contributing to broader cultures of heritage and tourism, but also to specialised historic collections of musical instruments, records, and other ephemera – reflected in collections held by the Royal Academy of Music, the Coventry Music Museum, and others. They reflect community and crowd-sourced archive projects, and the preservation measures undertaken by fans to keep the series ‘alive’ in their memories, either through sharing material and ephemera they own, or discussing the series on social media or within fan communities and message boards,⁴⁶ maintaining its visibility within the popular consciousness.⁴⁷ Moreover, they situate the series in a discourse surrounding worth and value, by underlining the need to move away from the idea of music television as ephemeral and inconsequential, while reasserting that *Whistle Test* and its related ephemera carry value and worth in their own right. Most importantly, they also explicitly refer back to the function of DVD as a self-contained archive, while also drawing attention to the continued significance of the format in the preservation of screen heritage and the musical past.

⁴⁵ A scrapbook aesthetic is also present within several contemporary music documentary series exploring music heritage. This is discussed in more detail in relation to *The People's History of Pop* in Chapter Two.

⁴⁶ These are usually communities for fans of specific bands and artists, calling attention to forthcoming reappearances on television.

⁴⁷ For more on the intersecting relationship between community and online archives, and the changing status of differing types of ephemera see Baker and Huber ‘Saving “Rubbish”’; Collins and Long, ‘“Fillin’ in Any Blanks I Can,”’; and Saber, Dima, and Paul Long. ‘“I Will Not Leave, My Freedom Is More Precious than My Blood.” From Affect to Precarity: Crowd-Sourced Citizen Archives as Memories of the Syrian War’. *Archives and Records*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2017, pp. 80–99.

Self-Mythologising and the Limits of Canonisation

If the makers of *Whistle Test* are aware of its own value, worth, and position as an arbiter of taste, what are the consequences for the kind of material it presents and re-presents to its audience on DVD? This question can be partially answered by the last supplemental feature I will draw upon from the *Whistle Test* anniversary set, called 'Presenter Choice.' This second example of re-sequenced material offers filmed introductions by various presenters, revealing the reasons behind their performance choices, peppered with production anecdotes. Filmed against various backdrops, including their extensive CD and vinyl collections, these sequences reaffirm the status of the presenters as authorities, speaking from a place of knowledge – as with the Mike Appleton commentary discussed above.

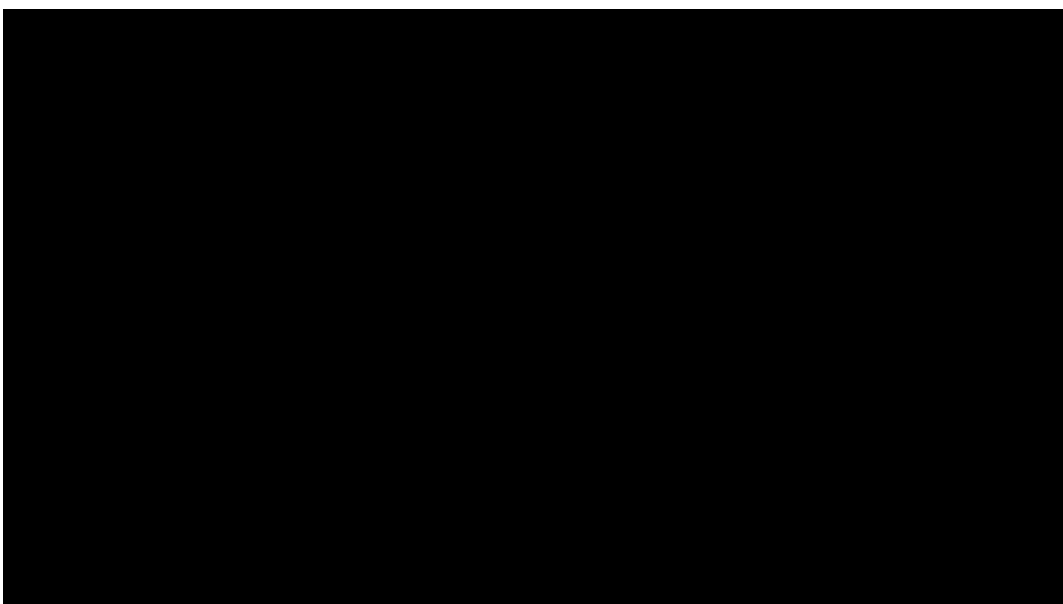


Figure 1.4: (L-R) Bob Harris, Richard Williams, Andy Kershaw, David Hepworth, and Mark Ellen share their favourite performances in 'Presenter Choice'

While it is important to recognise that their choices are impacted by the availability of performance footage, there remains an obvious degree of overlap, with David Hepworth and Mark Ellen in particular choosing many of the same artists. The Hepworth and Ellen introductions also emphasize their shared tastes through repetition, but also through visual style (Figure 1.4). Of all the presenters

featured, only they are shot together, briefly interchanged with close-up cut-ins when either one of them is speaking. Shown on a sofa in a music room, their discussions create a sense of music culture and their time on *Whistle Test* as being a shared and collaborative creative experience, but one that is particular to them. Taken in sum, the repetition of performances can therefore be said to form their own kind of canon. In this case, it articulates the best of *Whistle Test*'s history, creating a canon defined by the parameters of taste rather than popularity.

As I have suggested throughout, the series is defined by, and remembered for, showcasing music beyond the mainstream. The appearance of artists on *Whistle Test* lent their music an air of credibility, exclusivity, and superiority. This, coupled with the existence of the self-made canon of performances, is the most influential part of the DVD's work to construct, reassert, and ultimately restore the value of the series, to reduce and perhaps overcome the impact of evisceration identified by Peter Mills. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the potential reattribution of value offered by the DVD set is offset by its function as a promotional tool, made with an awareness of the series' cultural status. Comments made during the filmed introductions serve to reinforce rather than challenge the taste culture that surrounds *Whistle Test*, but also the mythological narrative of its production, creating a kind of cultural feedback loop. When considered in these terms, it is entirely possible to view *Whistle Test* as a brand, one that is bolstered by the release of CDs and DVDs that tie into the series, thereby helping to maintain its cultural longevity, or its afterlife.⁴⁸

The importance of tangible and tactile objects from *Whistle Test*'s history emphasises the degree to which the loss of the series' original form has also become part of how it is remembered. The increased availability of merchandise appeals to the fannish desire to collect and keep, which, on some level, reduces the impact of the programme's multiple forms of loss. Though it could be argued that the presence of these products encourages the commodification of nostalgia and the past, it is also important to acknowledge the value of such products as a

⁴⁸ See Gillan's *Television Brandcasting: The Return of the Content-Promotion Hybrid*. Routledge, 2015, pp. 191-244, for similar patterns of self-mythologising in the DVD output of the Disney company.

pathway to *re-engage* with that past.

The Endurance of Flow in Post-broadcast

Thus far, discussion of music programming's cultural afterlife has been concerned with watching programmes on DVD that exist largely outside the boundaries of the broadcast schedule. Now, I wish to turn toward a consideration of flow in the post-broadcast environment, and its importance in the recirculation of music programming. The discussion will be roughly divided into exploring two distinct but increasingly overlapping forms of flow. The first is scheduled flow or broadcast flow, following Williams' original conception of the term, and adopting his methodology to explore the scheduling practices of BBC Four. The second is what Derek Kompare terms 'published flow,' here applied to the on-demand provision offered by BBC iPlayer.⁴⁹ This approach allows consideration of the significance of the broadcast schedule, and the inherent value of the live, shared viewing experiences that typify music culture, while also acknowledging the importance of on-demand and its role in increasing access to such material.

It may seem redundant to structure discussion around traditional ideas of scheduling and flow when such concepts appear distant from the contemporary viewing experience. Similarly, it is feasible to argue that the kind of televisual landscape Williams describes and his experience of it no longer exists, and therefore his work no longer holds the degree of relevance it once attained. However, following Catherine Johnson, Mimi White, and others, I argue that despite the multiple socio-historical, cultural, technological, and material shifts that have taken place for television as an object since the publication of *Television*

⁴⁹ Kompare, Derek. 'Publishing Flow: DVD Box Sets and the Reconception of Television'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 7, no. 4, Nov. 2006, p 335-360. The term originates from Bernard Miège's influential work, *The Capitalization of Cultural Production*, wherein Miège outlines three different models or logics of cultural production: publishing, flow, and the written press. Kompare takes up two of these – flow and publishing – and highlights their usefulness in the context of film and television. See Miège, Bernard. *The Capitalization of Cultural Production*. International General, 1989, pp. 133-59.

as *Cultural Form*, Williams' work continues to hold relevance, and flow endures as a concept and methodology within television scholarship.⁵⁰

The contemporary experience of television retains significant elements of its pre-digital life and is still predominantly structured around the broadcast schedule (and by implication liveness), reflected by the continued prominence of broadcast schedules in the cultural lives of the majority of UK viewers, and the ongoing publication of listings magazines such as *Radio Times*. This complicates widespread conceptualisations of television as being *less* structured, built instead around the freedom of time-shifted content. The increased availability of television in the post-broadcast, multichannel environment allows for pre-digital, linear forms to co-exist alongside digital and non-linear forms, contained within a broader, more complex viewing schema.

Before considering the programming flow of BBC Four more closely, it is important to contextualise how the recirculation of music programming within the schedule maintains and contributes to its cultural afterlife, and how this intersects with the historical position of music programming within broader arts provision, to provide a clearer understanding of the conditions that have facilitated the genre's changed position in the contemporary television landscape. Ben Highmore's arguments regarding the *longue durée*/long term of television as a 'dynamic cultural form' are particularly resonant here, and usefully draw together the connections between television as a medium, flow, and channel identity.⁵¹ *Longue durée* – the long view or deep perspective on the historical past – also offers the scope to consider how particular genres of

⁵⁰ Johnson, Catherine. 'The Continuity of "Continuity": Flow and the Changing Experience of Watching Broadcast Television'. *Keywords: A Journal of Cultural Materialism*, no. 11, Oct. 2013, pp. 22–39; White, Mimi. 'Flows and Other Close Encounters with Television'. *Planet TV: A Global Television Reader*, edited by Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar, New York University Press, 2003, pp. 94–110. White's work also provides a useful overview of how television flow and its components have been structured throughout the development of television studies. Williams, Raymond. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. Fontana, 1974.

⁵¹ Highmore, 'TV Times', p.40.

television endure and/or decline across television history, and the impact of increased access to the televisual past.⁵²

BBC Four: Culture, Competition, and Choice

BBC Four launched on 2nd March 2002 as a replacement for education and culture channel BBC Knowledge, under the leadership of controller Roly Keating, immediately prior to the inception of its youth-oriented channel, BBC Three. Its launch was simulcast on BBC Two, making clear links between the former channel's association with arts and culture programming *and* situating BBC Four's role in BBC's expansion into free-to-air digital television. Press releases prior to launch describe the channel's potential and diversity, positioning it as a space for a 'rich mix of intelligent, enriching and diverse programming.'⁵³ This initial rhetoric highlights the BBC's desire to emphasise the change and innovation the channel would offer during this early period, reflective of related surrounding discourses on the digital turn, its potential, and the increased programming choices it would afford the audience.

From its inception, BBC Four has offered a wide variety of arts programming, including opera, ballet, theatre, photography, and painting. However, in recent years, it has devoted an increasingly significant amount of scheduling time to music, and in particular, rock and pop. Its repositioning as a primary site for music programming has also become a central facet of the channel's branding and contemporary identity. While these gradual shifts could be, as John Ellis has suggested, 'market-led,' they are also a response to a concurrent shift within the arts.⁵⁴ This is signified by the continued breakdown of hierarchies of value, culture, and circulations of taste that have taken place over

⁵² The expression was used by the French Annales School to describe their approach to historical writing, predicated on structures of slow evolution. It was originated by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, in opposition to the short-term scope of what François Simiand termed '*histoire événementielle*,' or eventual history.

⁵³ BBC Press Office. *BBC Press Office - BBC Four - Prepares to Launch*. 14 Feb. 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2002/02_february/14/fourlaunch.shtml. Archived. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018.

⁵⁴ Ellis, John. 'Television and the Arts: Another Fine Mess'. *Modern Painters*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring 1991, pp. 60–61.

the last two decades, which have resulted in the purposeful mixing of high and low cultural forms.⁵⁵

The latest available service licence (April 2016) suggests that BBC Four ‘should provide an ambitious range of innovative, high quality programming that is intellectually and culturally enriching, taking an expert and in-depth approach to a wide range of subjects.’⁵⁶ However, the increased presence of archive programming on the channel, particularly music programming, may seem at odds with this remit, reflective of the need to fill schedule slots *and* be seen to meet the wider stipulations set out within the licence conditions regarding total hours of music programming.

The licence terms and the underlying public service imperatives therein were reflected throughout BBC Press Office material and reinforced by the comments of the channel’s various controllers, which sought to centre the channel as a site of socio-cultural significance. For instance, former controller Richard Klein spoke repeatedly of his ambitions and desires for the channel, calling it the ‘[g]oldcard channel for the Arts.’⁵⁷ Following this assessment, Klein went on to state what amounts to the cultural work undertaken by the channel, saying, ‘[w]e seek to unpack, give context and explain about a wide range of art and artists.’⁵⁸ The combination of depth and range Klein articulated in relation to both UK and international arts programming on BBC Four has ultimately led to the channel becoming, in Jeremy Tunstall’s words, ‘the main Arts TV provider.’⁵⁹ He notes that across BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5, BBC Four airs the

⁵⁵ See Walker, John A. ‘British Arts Television in the 1990s’. *Arts TV: A History of Arts Television in Britain*, John Libbey/Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993, pp. 185–91, for reflection on these debates and their influence on later programming. For more contemporary discussion see *Vision On: Film, Television and the Arts in Britain*, Wallflower, 2007, pp. 47–90.

⁵⁶ BBC Trust. *BBC Four*. Apr. 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/services/television/service_licences/bbc_four.html. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018. Access and availability to policy documents such as this are limited by the closure of the BBC Trust and changes to the online presence relating to the broadcaster’s governance.

⁵⁷ Klein qtd. in Tunstall, Jeremy. ‘Traditional Public Service BBC Genres in Decline: Education, Natural History, Science, Arts, Children’s and Religion’. *BBC and Television Genres in Jeopardy*, Peter Lang, 2015, pp. 224–225.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* This description (and variations thereof) was emphasised repeatedly throughout his tenure as controller between 2008–2013.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

majority of arts content, which would seem to validate Klein's earlier claims. However, it is important to acknowledge that alongside its success, its survival has also been the subject of continued debate.

Throughout 2015, the future of the channel was the source of much speculation due to increasing financial pressure on the BBC and cutbacks, requiring savings of £550 million.⁶⁰ These measures placed both BBC Four and BBC News under threat, leading to reports of reduced hours and/or reverting to online only.⁶¹ While the historical threat to both channels remains significant, BBC Four's precarity holds particular relevance in relation to the treatment of certain genres of television and their perceived cultural worth. The channel's move toward incorporating high and low cultural forms with music as the lynchpin can be read as a strategy to secure its survival, as well as a response to changes in taste shaped by the democratisation of arts provision.⁶² Concern surrounding the channel's survival reiterates the damaging impact of hierarchies of value and judgement, and mapping of cultural value against economic gains, which ultimately impacts upon what can and cannot be seen by the viewer. Such discourses also unconsciously reassert the dominance of drama and comedy as bankable and exportable products over that of music or arts.

⁶⁰ Patrick Forster's coverage for *The Guardian's* media section is one of numerous examples of writing during a lengthy period of uncertainty for the channel. See Foster, Patrick. *BBC Four and News Channel Facing Axe as BBC Eyes Cuts of £550m*. 18 Nov. 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/bbc/12004246/BBC-Four-and-News-Channel-facing-axe-as-BBC-eyes-cuts-of-550m.html>. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018.

⁶¹ Ultimately, this solution saw BBC Three reverting to an online-only iteration in February 2016.

⁶² While shifts in schedule are generally indicative of overlapping changes in channel identity, it is important to note that in the case of BBC Four, the provision and breakdown of arts genres are guided by the terms of its remit/licence. As of April 2016, the BBC Trust stipulated the following: in regard to music programming, BBC Four should 'Broadcast at least 150 hours of new arts and music programmes each year.' See: BBC Trust. *BBC Four*. Apr. 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/services/television/service_licences/bbc_four.html. Archived. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018. This is a 40-hour increase on the previous licence issued in February 2011.

Channels, Branding, and Authorship

Thus far, this discussion has focused on BBC Four in terms of its position in television culture, remit, and cultural work. The clear continuity between these elements can be read as constituents of the channel's brand. Branding is essential to understand the application and function of flow within the schedule. It directly expresses the familiarity, intimacy, and continuity created by its scheduled flow in a symbiotic relationship, whereby the repetition of flow works to build the channel's brand, and the brand then feeds back into programming flow, and so on, in synergy, with brand-influencing flow, and vice versa. Branding of flow is supported by, and reflected within, themed blocks of programming and specially-commissioned seasons; their placement within the channel's schedule extends the cultural longevity and endurance of all television, but specifically, non-contemporary programming.

Julie Light argues that channels 'exist alongside programmes and genres as a way that television organises its content and its relationship with its audiences.'⁶³ Catherine Johnson draws upon this idea throughout her discussion of a channel's authorial function, exploring several sites of conflict across television – regional and local, broadcaster and programming, ownership and authority – that are central to the construction of a channel's identity, branding, and its authorial function. These sites of conflict are generated by the intersectional position occupied by the channel as the intermediary between 'the broadcaster and the programme.'⁶⁴ Channels, Johnson argues, author 'the experience of watching television.'⁶⁵ This authoring is achieved in several ways, 'through the commissioning and scheduling of programs, through the use of interstitials, logos, and idents, and through promotion and branding.'⁶⁶ Of these elements, Johnson omits channel mottos, which, I argue, reveal much in regard

⁶³ Light, Julie. *Television Channel Identity: The Role of Channels in the Delivery of Public Service Television in Britain, 1996–2002*. University of Glasgow, 2004, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Johnson, Catherine. 'The Authorial Function of the Television Channel: Augmentation and Identity'. *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, Wiley Blackwell, 2013, p. 276.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 275.

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 275–276.

to the way the channel is designed, constructed, and perceived by its intended target audience. The successfulness of flow and its endurance stems from the strength of a channel's brand identity. In knowing the identity of the channel and its remit, the audience also knows what to expect from its scheduled flow, and vice versa.

The changes that have taken place within the lifespan of BBC Four as a channel and a brand are key to understanding its cultural worth and determining both *how* and *why* the cultural afterlife of music programming is maintained. Moreover, we can also begin to map out the space where music programming exists within the channel's scheduled flow. In doing so, we can gain an insight into how these changes have taken place, and the structures within the channel that support these shifts, beyond lifestyle and/or taste-making. Following its launch, BBC Four's identity became intrinsically linked to its initial motto: 'Everyone Needs a Place to Think,' used across its launch branding, and print ads designed by Ben Friend, which featured various figures from the arts, including composer Philip Glass (Figure 1.5).⁶⁷ The motto clearly illustrates the BBC's intent to establish the channel as brand, author, and cultural site, differentiating itself in a crowded and competitive televisual landscape dominated by comedy and drama, while also reasserting the value of arts programming within it.

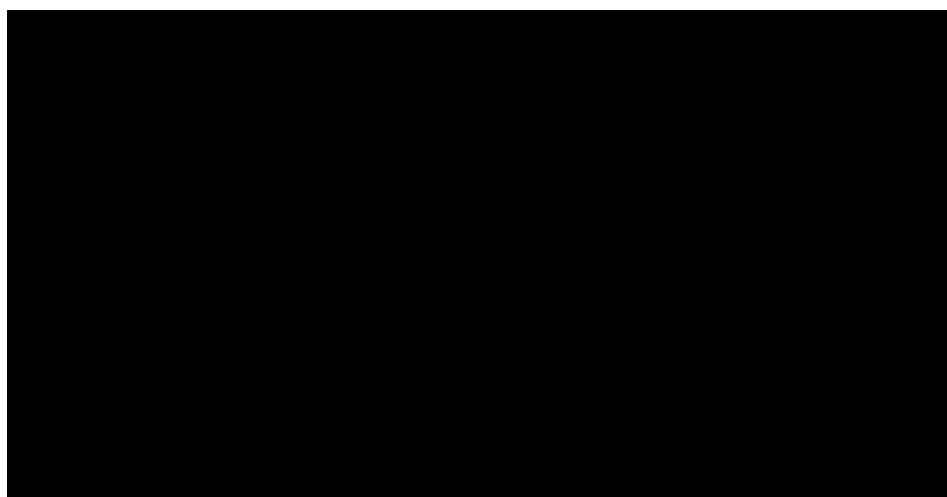


Figure 1.5: Composer Phillip Glass in a print ad for BBC Four's launch

⁶⁷ Other figures in the campaign were director and artist Sam Taylor-Wood (now Sam Taylor-Johnson), writer Ian McEwan, and actor Dennis Hopper. See Friend, Ben. 'BBC Four Posters'. *Ben Friend*, <https://www.friendicus.com>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2021.

In recent years, however, BBC Four's identity has undergone a large shift. The motto that once defined the channel remains part of its identity but is expressed in a much less overt manner. Since 2016, a sizable part of its marketing, branding, and identity has almost entirely been defined by its association with music, unofficially described as "The Musician's Channel," reinforced by its consistent scheduling of music programming on Friday nights. Branded BBC Four images including a smoking amp, were used across social media to reinforce their engagement with its programming flow, making links between musicianship and authenticity through its mobilisation of analogue technology (Figure 1.6).



Figure 1.6: BBC Four branded amp promoting Friday Night Music

By making a dedicated space for popular music and allowing it to become a more visible constituent of the channel's identity by placing more music within its scheduled flow, it has repositioned itself as a 'cultural intermediary' that maintains the cultural afterlife of music programming on television.⁶⁸ In so doing, it could be argued that this is to the detriment of other arts and has led to its formerly complex identity being reduced in the same manner as HBO and its associations with quality American drama.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Maguire, Jennifer Smith, and Julian Matthews. *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*. Sage, 2014.

⁶⁹ This longstanding association stems from the network's slogan 'It's not TV, it's HBO,' first used during ad campaigns in the 1990s that set it apart from other 'ordinary' television. See McCabe, Janet, and Kim Akass, editors. *Quality TV Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. I.B. Tauris, 2007; Edgerton, Gary R., and Jeffrey P. Jones, editors. *The Essential HBO Reader*. University Press of Kentucky, 2008; and Leverette, Marc, et al., editors. *It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era*. Routledge, 2008.

While music has always been part of the channel's flow, Wall and Long note that 'music programming is where BBC Four's distinctiveness is most clearly established.'⁷⁰ Here, as with the channel's alignment towards difference and quality, distinctiveness can be read as a positive trait, and clearly ties into the underlying imperatives of the public service, reflected in Corner and Lee's assertion that BBC Four is 'a channel whose brand development is strategically central to BBC policy on arts broadcasting, with implications for the range of other BBC output.'⁷¹ Their assessment not only resonates with the arguments made regarding the flow of the channel, but also the channel's branding and identity.

Throughout the tenures of controllers Janice Hadlow and Kim Shillinglaw, alongside continuing channel editor Cassian Harrison, BBC Four has drawn upon its own considerable archive resources, scheduling repeats of well-known examples of its music programming, including *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, *Top of the Pops*, and its spin-off, *Top of the Pops 2* (BBC Two, 1994 –). In doing so, the controllers have been repositioning the channel as a cultural site for music culture of the past – a site which holds dual appeal, reaching out to nostalgic fans, while attracting new, younger ones – creating a space to engage with music culture *and* music heritage. The appearance of this material in the BBC Four context maintains the socio-historical and cultural value of such programming, whereby it is explicitly framed as an important part of historical, cultural, and ultimately, national life.

⁷⁰ Long and Wall, 'Friday on My Mind', p. 5.

⁷¹ Lee, David, and John Corner. 'Situating *The South Bank Show*: Continuity and Transition in British Arts Television'. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, vol. 12, no. 3, July 2015, pp. 379-380.



Figure 1.7: BBC Four branded guitar promoting Friday Night Music

The centrality of music programming to the contemporary identity of BBC Four is also expressed throughout its online presence, and most obviously in its social media profiles. For instance, in February 2018, the header image for the channel's Twitter account showed the headstock of a guitar emblazoned with the words 'the home of Friday night music,' to promote its dedicated schedule space for music on Fridays (Figure 1.7), where the 'f' of Friday mimics that of guitar brand Fender. Like the amp, it once again aligns the branded programming with the tastes and desires of a music-literate audience. The branding reinforced the channel's consistent block scheduling of music on Friday evenings, placing it in direct competition with the similar content provided by Sky Arts across Friday and Saturday evening slots. BBC Four's commitment to this new brand continuity is inbuilt, beginning at the level of programme commissioning. The guidelines for prospective programme makers consistently assert the importance of original programming *and* music to the channel's identity.⁷² They are also testament to the cultural work of the channel through repeated and familiar scheduling practices that build the channel's flow, which has consolidated its position as the BBC's 'leading music channel and the home of music on the BBC.'⁷³

A defining feature of the channel's schedule is its mix of nostalgia and newness, which is also present within the music commissioning guide, describing its audience as 'key music fans with an expert understanding of the music they

⁷² The guidelines cover several genres, but it is interesting to note that arts and music are each given their own detailed pages. For more details see: BBC. *Commissioning - Music on BBC Four*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/tv/articles/music-bbc-four>. Accessed 19 Feb. 2018. Commissioning information and audiovisual material last updated 2 May 2017.

⁷³ Ibid.

love. They love to look back and be nostalgic.’⁷⁴ Of particular interest are the comments of Commissioning Editor for music, Jan Younghusband, during a video discussing programming commissions. She suggests that BBC Four is ‘the musicians’ channel.’⁷⁵ This aligns with the channel’s branding and broader cultural work, showing a clear commitment to exploring and valuing music within its wider arts programming provision. Perhaps the most intriguing feature of the page is the admitted desire to ‘reach out to younger viewers through a new approach to music history on Four and who are interested in subjects that will appeal to a slightly younger audience.’⁷⁶ This move is reflected in newer commissions such as *Hits, Hype & Hustle: An Insider's Guide to the Music Business* (BBC Four, 2018). The three-part series was broadcast on Friday nights, with each episode following a particular industry figure – music agent Emma Banks, promoter John Giddings, and publicist Alan Edwards – to ‘reveal how the business really works.’⁷⁷ Its address replicates the channel’s mix of high/low cultural forms, and the dual appeal of nostalgia and newness that characterises the channel’s output. New programming forms like *Hits, Hype, and Hustle* offer the potential for a more complex reading of BBC Four’s address, and raises questions regarding *who* may be watching and *what* they are nostalgic for. Moreover, it points toward a diversification of address that acknowledges the value of nostalgia to the television experience, while contributing to the ongoing democratisation of music heritage, and the opening out of the ways in which its history is presented and narrativized.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ BBC, ‘BBC Four - Hits, Hype & Hustle: An Insider’s Guide to the Music Business’. *BBC*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09nxs1k>. Accessed 7 May 2018.

⁷⁸ This aspect of BBC Four’s music provision is explored during my discussion of music heritage documentaries in Chapter Three.

Flow, Scheduling, and Identity

The importance of the broadcast schedule to specific television genres and their longevity within popular culture has yet to undergo the level of discussion reflected in the significant body of work related to television, gender, and domesticity. Furthermore, no concrete links have been made between the genre of music television and the wider implications of flow in relation to its capacity as a structurer of identity – both in the life of the audience and/or the broadcaster itself. Music programming as an exploratory framework offers the potential to consider not only how identity, flow, and the authorial functions of a channel operate, but also how these elements influence each other. By exploring schedule listings across the channel's history, it is also possible to see evidence of changes made to the channel, remit, and branding in response to changes within popular and screen cultures, and circulation of taste.

The natural place to begin is to consider how flow can be constructed within the schedule – whether in specific blocks, longer themed seasons, or in specific nights dedicated to certain genres of programming.⁷⁹ John Ellis describes scheduling as television's last creative act,⁸⁰ lamenting the lack of scholarship that takes account of its capacities beyond discussions of the relationship between television and time. Instead, Ellis approaches scheduling from the perspective of mechanics and function, likening television programmes to building blocks and the schedule itself as architecture. The analogy is a useful one that takes account of the idea that scheduling is a creative, constructed act that becomes a central structure within the socio-cultural lives and identities of the audience. Following Ellis, Wall and Long argue that scheduling can be considered a kind of narrative, where the organisation of the channel occurs 'at a meta level aim to combine both variety, originality and repetition.'⁸¹ The elements identified by Wall and Long can be applied to channel identity, whereby the characteristics of the channel's schedule or flow can be used within interstitial material and channel

⁷⁹ Scheduled flow of this type is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

⁸⁰ Ellis, John. 'Scheduling: The Last Creative Act in Television?' *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 22, no. 1, Jan. 2000, pp. 25–38.

⁸¹ Long and Wall, *'Friday on My Mind'*, p. 6.

marketing as the basis of its brand. Over time, this creates another kind of narrative, whereby the channel's identity and the focus of its cultural work throughout its lifespan are explicitly traceable. It is here that quality of repetition takes on a greater degree of importance.

For the audience, repetition in the schedule creates the space for habits and rituals to form, creating a dedicated audience who engage in 'compulsive viewing practices,' while also creating their own schedules or flows around the appearance of favourite programmes or genres in the broadcast schedule.⁸² Though discussed in relation to cult television, Jancovich and Lyons' comments are equally applicable to music fans who seek out texts that explore and/or celebrate music culture and heritage, and the musical past. For the broadcaster, repetition guides loyal audiences toward content that is both familiar and favoured, making the channel (and ergo its brand identity) stand out. This can potentially lead to a collapse of the relationship between channel, schedule, identity, and brand, reducing the complexity of the channel's entire output due to its association with certain genres, styles, or audience demographics.

Music in the Schedule

The wider ramifications of scheduled flow, branding, channel identity, and their impact upon the afterlife of music programming – what circulates, how, when, and why (or why not) – are illustrated within the schedule listings, offering a different lens through which to examine the building blocks of scheduling as outlined by Ellis and the narrative model posed by Long and Wall. To map the changes in music provision offered by BBC Four, I gathered listings data using the Television and Radio Index for Learning and Teaching (TRILT) from across the channel's lifespan on the same day of the week, beginning with its launch night in March 2002 and ending in February 2018.⁸³ Additionally, data for January 2008

⁸² Jancovich, Mark, and James Lyons. *Quality Popular Television: Cult TV, the Industry and Fans*. British Film Institute, 2003, p. 2.

⁸³ British Universities Film & Video Council. *TRILT · TRILT – Broadcast Listings · British Universities Film & Video Council*. <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/trilt/>. Accessed 24 Mar. 2018.

was collected as an exemplar of when programming patterns were well-established, and experimentation with schedule structure and programming genres was less common.⁸⁴ Clear patterns emerge which highlight the prominence and centrality of music programming in BBC Four's schedule, particularly on Friday nights, which is the focus of the analysis that follows.

Typically, BBC Four's dedicated music coverage begins at 7:30pm, extending through primetime into the early hours of the morning. This scheduling is an obvious acknowledgment of both the established historical position of music programming in the UK television schedule and the wider subcultural significance of Friday nights to music culture. While it could be argued that the niche status of BBC Four as a specialist arts provider exemplifies Jeremy Tunstall's point that music, and particularly pop music, has 'retreated to the fringes of the schedule,' context is key.⁸⁵ The space for live music performance on television has indeed diminished, precipitated initially by the rise of MTV, music video, and latterly by YouTube. It is important to acknowledge the role of non-contemporary music television in maintaining a presence of music on television, that forms part of a wider culture of engagement with music culture, including a rise in streaming and vinyl purchasing and continued concert-going.

Archive music programming, the BBC Four schedule, and the wider music provision across the BBC all have a role to play in stimulating interest in and celebrating music culture and heritage. These imperatives are most evident in BBC Four specials including *Friday Night Jukebox Live!: The BBC Four Request Show* (BBC Four, 2018), a 90-minute live request show based on viewers' selections of BBC archival clips and the stories and memories connected to them, united by theme.⁸⁶ Elsewhere on the BBC, *Sounds Like Friday Night* (BBC One, 2017-2018), offers performance-led, youth-oriented programming that continues

Searches for listings prior to 2018 can be made by the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUVFC) only. This was used as an alternative to searching traditional print listings to access the necessary data more easily and efficiently.

⁸⁴ TRILT database accessed 29 Jan. 2018 to 15 Feb. 2018, using the advanced search in all fields. Detailed viewing results are limited to the first 1,000.

⁸⁵ Tunstall, 'Genres in Decline,' p. 223.

⁸⁶ Presented by Phill Jupitus and Clare Grogan, the programme focused on the theme of friendship. Viewers could request or dedicate clips by email. Archive clips included John Lennon, Dionne Warwick, and Supergrass.

in the tradition of *Top of the Pops*, while also self-reflexively engaging with and showing an awareness of, music and heritage cultures.⁸⁷ BBC Four maintains a central position within this overall strategy. Through its scheduling, the channel has created an avenue of engagement that positions pop (and the popular) as an entry point to exploring arts and culture programming, that also offers up questions regarding how the channel and the genre of arts programming more broadly are perceived by the general public. This challenges entrenched notions regarding the form and content of cultural heritage, and what is (or is not) permitted to hold cultural worth or value. Moreover, it also reaffirms BBC Four's status as a cultural intermediary, whereby its schedule can be seen as a guide that contributes to the definition and reshaping of cultural thought, reflected across the Corporation.⁸⁸

Patterns and Rhythms in Scheduled Flow

The brand identity BBC Four has built in recent years has arisen as a direct result of the consistency and coherence that exists within its scheduled flow. Listings can also shed light on the influence and impact of the close relationships between music culture and heritage, popular culture, and television, particularly when viewed over several years, reflecting and responding to changes in circulations of taste and hierarchies of value. On the next page, I present three of BBC Four's Friday evening schedules to illustrate the changes to the structure of its broadcast flow and the increasing dominance of music in the schedule (Table 1.1):

⁸⁷ Placed in the familiar 7:30pm slot on BBC One, the longstanding schedule position of numerous music programmes including *Ready Steady Go!* and *Top of The Pops*, the programme's branding, set, and editing style, offers clear echoes of music past, in *Top of the Pops*, *Oh Boy!* and *Whistle Test*, while acknowledging the influence and importance of YouTube and social media in music's present.

⁸⁸ Though audio-focused, the replacement for iPlayer Radio, the BBC Sounds app, which integrates and aggregates personalised content from across the BBC – including music, radio, podcasts, and other audio forms – is indicative of this.

FRI MAR 8 2002		FRI JAN 11 2008		FRI FEB 16 2018	
19:00	<i>Blood of the Vikings</i> <i>First Blood</i> (50 mins)	19:00	<i>World News Today</i> (30 mins)	19:00	<i>World News Today</i> (30 mins)
19:50	<i>Veterans: The Last</i> <i>Survivors of the Great</i> <i>War</i> (10 mins)	19:30	<i>Sounds of the Sixties</i> <i>1964-6: The Beat</i> <i>Room</i> (10 mins)	19:30	<i>Top of the Pops:</i> <i>1985</i> (30 mins) [Repeat]
20:00	<i>BBC Four News and</i> <i>Weather</i> (30 mins)	19:40	<i>Beat Girl</i> (90 mins)	20:00	<i>Winter Olympics</i> <i>Extra</i> (60 mins)
20:30	<i>Readers and Writers</i> <i>Roadshow</i> (30 mins)	21:10	<i>Classic Albums: Pink</i> <i>Floyd - Dark Side of the</i> <i>Moon</i> (50 mins)	21:00	<i>The Story of</i> <i>Skinhead with Don</i> <i>Letts</i> (60 mins) [Repeat]
21:00	<i>Britart</i> (50 mins)	22:00	<i>Pop Britannia: A Well</i> <i>Respected Man</i> (60 mins)	22:00	<i>Boogie Fever: A</i> <i>TOTP2 Disco Special</i> (90 mins) [Repeat]
21:50	<i>BBC Four Preview</i> (10 mins)	23:00	<i>Ziggy Stardust and the</i> <i>Spiders from Mars</i> (90 mins)	23:30	<i>Bruno Mars: Live in</i> <i>Harlem</i> (45 mins) [Repeat]
22:00	<i>The Making of Adolf</i> <i>Hitler – Timewatch</i> (50 mins)	00:30	<i>Cracked Actor: David</i> <i>Bowie</i> (55 mins)	00:15	<i>The Story of</i> <i>Skinhead with Don</i> <i>Letts</i> (60 mins) [Repeat]
21:50	<i>Tanks: Wonder</i> <i>Weapon of WWI –</i> <i>Timewatch</i> (45 mins)	01:25	<i>Pop Britannia: A Well</i> <i>Respected Man</i> (60 mins) [Repeat]	00:50	<i>Top of the Pops 1985</i> (35 mins) [Repeat]
23:35	<i>The DVD Collection</i> (30 mins)	02:25	<i>Pop! What is it Good</i> <i>For?</i> (60 mins)		
01:20	<i>The Readers and</i> <i>Writers Roadshow</i> (30 mins)	03:25	<i>Pop Britannia: A Well</i> <i>Respected Man</i> (60 mins) [Repeat]		
01:50	Channel Sign-off (1030 mins)	04:25	Channel Sign-off (875 mins)		Channel Sign-off (810 mins)

Table 1.1: BBC Four schedule listings 2002-2018

The listings reveal much about how broadcast flow is constructed and changes over time. In the contemporary schedule, programming blocks have become shorter, no longer constructed or chained in 60-minute segments. The move toward a more digestible scheduling blocks originates in the 2008 schedule, signalled by the introduction of hourly documentary series such as *Pop Britannia*

(and its subsequent repeats). Such changes are also emblematic of changes in televisual form. Shorter segments allow more content to be delivered to the audience but are also a reflection of that audience's fragmented attention, split between different devices and screens.⁸⁹

Changes to channel content and the structure of flow are particularly stark when the schedule of 2002 is compared to that of 2018. Though the launch night presentation displays unique patterns of scheduling, it also sets up elements of flow and segmentation that remain a consistent feature for at least the first half of the channel's history. At launch, these short segments are 10-minute previews. Later they become edited programming of the same duration. These 'repeats and re-versions' – as with *Sounds of the Sixties* (BBC, 1991), and most commonly with *Top of the Pops* – are representative of several factors which characterise both the flow found within the contemporary television schedule *and* increased presence of archive programming that characterises the televisual experience.⁹⁰

The 2008 schedule is also notable for its experimentation within scheduled flow in terms of the duration of scheduling blocks, and the genres of programming. For instance, the scheduling of *Beat Girl* (Edmond T. Gréville, 1959) with *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (D. A. Pennebaker, 1973) illustrates an attempt to expand content types, while also engaging with wider youth, music, and music heritage cultures. The contrast between 2008 and the 2018 iteration is the most revealing, displaying an increased 'dependence on its archive as a cheap source of programming' to fill its hours.⁹¹ The archival resources of the BBC hold a particular historical and sociocultural resonance due to the broadcaster's public service imperatives, but do need to be considered within broader cultures of television nostalgia and recirculation of archival programming. Opportunities to encounter this material exist in several forms.

⁸⁹ This fragmented or diverted attention echoes the influence of YouTube and the Internet, constructed around short-form clips and the introduction of multiple screens in the home.

⁹⁰ Aust, Rowan, and Amy Holdsworth. 'The BBC Archive Post Jimmy Savile: Irreparable Damage or Recoverable Ground?' *The Past in Visual Culture: Essays on Memory, Nostalgia and the Media*, edited by Jilly Boyce Kay et al., McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2016, p. 175.

⁹¹ Ibid.

First, appearing within normal programming flow; on catch-up channels like ITV Encore or 4seven, which replicate the ethos of catch-up and VOD services.⁹² Second, appearing on specialist channels dedicated to specific genres, such as Yesterday and Talking Pictures TV.⁹³ The availability of such channels contributes to the recirculation of non-contemporary television, thereby broadening its appeal and potentially increasing audience demand.

Flow and Subcultural Meaning

The cultural resonances and meanings behind scheduled flow, and their influence upon the ways in which it functions, are intensified through repetition. The patterns within BBC Four's scheduling reflect taste circulations within popular culture, and the needs and desires of the audience it targets, illustrating an awareness of the subcultural significance of Fridays and the weekend to the audience. As Wall and Long note, Friday 'is a day that resonates in the title and subject matter of many songs and the wider subcultures associated with popular music.'⁹⁴ However, the cultural resonance within flow is not limited to its subcultural associations. Friday nights also carry equal significance for music programming and television history.

Adrienne Lowy's work on *Ready Steady Go!* outlines the origins of this significance, describing the relationship between the programme, its identity,

⁹² Pay-TV drama channel ITV Encore launched on 9th June 2004 and ceased broadcasting on 9th May 2018. The channel was exclusive to Sky and its related digital services, Sky Go, Now TV and Sky Store. It is now an on-demand only service, available on Sky, Virgin and BT Talk platforms, continuing 'as a box set brand.' See: Gill, James. 'ITV Encore to Close as a Channel and Move on Demand Only'. *Radio Times*, 10 Nov. 2017, <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/on-demand/2017-11-10/itv-encore-to-close-as-a-channel-and-move-on-demand-only/>. Accessed 15 Feb. 2019. Though built around ITV drama repeats, the channel diversified into creating original content, including *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015-2017), and the Hulu co-production, *Harlots* (2017-2019). 4Seven is a free-to-air channel, launched on 4th July 2012. Created in response to viewer demand, it broadcasts 20 hours of content per day. As the name suggests, it repeats the most 'popular and talked about' programmes from the last seven days. It can be viewed live or via Channel Four's video-on-demand catch-up service, All4. Content is available for 28 days.

⁹³ Formerly known as UK History, Yesterday is part of the UKTV channel network available through Sky and Freesat services. It was rebranded as Yesterday and launched in its current format on 2nd March 2009, continuing to broadcast a schedule of history and documentary programming. Talking Pictures TV, launched on 26th May 2015, is a free-to-air archive film and television channel, broadcasting both British and American content.

⁹⁴ Long and Wall, *'Friday on My Mind'*, p. 6.

popular and youth cultures, and how the series is remembered. Via journalist Richard Williams and writer Jonathon Green, Lowy situates the nostalgic cultural resonance of its subtitle, “The Weekend Starts Here,” as being both a ‘cherished slogan,’ and ‘the rallying cry of a generation,’ which has since become large part of the series’ identity and legacy.⁹⁵ The notion of the programmes as cultural rallying points is a useful one that emphasises their importance to youth and music subcultures. For *Ready Steady Go!* it also illustrates the role of television in making the series a site of socio-cultural significance that frames music as a valuable cultural object, defined by its terms as a lived, collective, shared experience facilitated by broadcast flow. At that moment in television history, its form and medium specificities take on an extra degree of importance. Liveness in particular enhances the sense of co-presence brought about by television itself, thereby echoing the togetherness facilitated by music culture that *Ready Steady Go!* sought to reflect and represent.

Music Television On-Demand

Central to the discussion that follows is the idea that on-demand content offers several affordances for audiences and programme-makers alike to expand flow beyond the limits of the broadcast schedule, allowing audiences to build their own programming flows. Built around ease of access, choice, and flexibility, these are defining features of nonlinear television, described by Tara McPherson as ‘experiential lures.’⁹⁶ The extensions or lures offered by on-demand spaces such as iPlayer and its flow can take several forms and fulfil several functions. First, they offer the opportunity for audiences to catch up with what they may have missed. Second, they create space for content that cannot be built into the traditional schedule and/or increase the visibility of programming broadcast in

⁹⁵ Lowy, ‘*Ready Steady Go!*’, p.71; Williams, Richard. ‘The Birth of Cool’. *The Guardian*, 13 Feb. 2006, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2006/feb/13/popandrock>. Accessed 12 Apr. 2018; Green, Jonathon. *All Dressed up: The Sixties and the Counterculture*. Pimlico, 1998, p. 93. Long and Wall speak of the programme in similar terms in ‘*Friday on My Mind*’, p. 20.

⁹⁶ McPherson, Tara. ‘Reload: Liveness, Mobility, and the Web’. *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, edited by Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan, Routledge, 2006, p. 201.

recent years. Third, they are an access point for material that can now only be seen through the platform, including several BBC Four single documentaries and series, such as *Play it Loud: The Story of the Marshall Amp* (Brian Marshall and David Rust, 2018) and *Rock 'n' Roll America* (Matt O'Casey and John Williams, 2017). In each case, they offer the potential for the concept of flow to be more flexible and personalised, where it can now be considered less a singular yet traceable sequence as in Newcomb and Hirsch's 'viewing strip' or even Nick Browne's later model of flow, the 'super-text'.⁹⁷ Instead, the flow of on-demand space might be better understood as something more like a matrix, taking account of the connections between the texts that make up flow first, rather than the duration and content of the flow itself.⁹⁸ This more nuanced understanding of flow expands it beyond conceptions of linearity and/or singularity to encompass what Kompare describes as 'the aggregate experience of television over time,' that is drawn from multiple platforms and/or may occupy more than one screen.⁹⁹ Through this, the audience produces what James Bennett calls 'user flows' that are unique to the tastes and pleasures of their creator.¹⁰⁰ However, the realities of the on-demand experience are often at odds with the mythic and illusory position of such platforms, namely, their ability to offer (or at least appear to offer) endless choice.¹⁰¹ The availability of material is often time-limited, in

⁹⁷ Newcomb, Horace M., and Paul M. Hirsch. 'Television as a Cultural Forum: Implications for Research'. *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, Summer 1983, p. 50; Browne, Nick. 'The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text'. *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, June 1984, pp. 174–82.

⁹⁸ Both Michael Curtin and Mareike Jenner describe post-broadcast television as a matrix, distinct from network era television that preceded it. For Jenner, subscription services like Netflix form part of television's matrix. Both evocations of the word highlight the expansive, interconnected nature of the contemporary television landscape. See Curtin, Michael. 'Matrix Media'. *Television Studies After TV: Understanding Television in the Post-Broadcast Era*, edited by Jinna Tay and Graeme Turner, Routledge, 2009, pp. 9–19; and Jenner, Mareike. 'Is This TVIV? On Netflix, TV8 and Binge-Watching'. *New Media & Society*, vol. 18, no. 2, Feb. 2016, pp. 257–73.

⁹⁹ Kompare, 'Publishing Flow', p. 340.

¹⁰⁰ Bennett, James. 'From Flow to User Flows: Understanding "Good Science" Programming in the UK Digital Television Landscape'. *Investigating Science Communication in the Information Age: Implications for Public Engagement and Popular Media*, edited by Richard Holliman et al., OUP Oxford, 2009, pp. 183–205.

¹⁰¹ This aspect of on-demand is an ongoing source of debate. Roderik Smit's work concerning on-demand in relation to cinema and distribution offers an interesting lens through which to consider the impact of media availability (or lack thereof) in relation to other forms of screen

order to make way for new content, thereby increasing the exclusivity of the material and the imperative to watch, enforcing something approaching the traditional rigidity of broadcast flow.¹⁰²

Organising On-Demand Space

The on-demand interface fulfils an additional role beyond its function as a point of access or gateway to programming of the past and present – it creates the synergy between different content flows. Steven A. Johnson argues that interfaces are a ‘form that works in the interest of synthesis, bringing disparate elements together into a cohesive whole.’¹⁰³ Within iPlayer, this sense of cohesion is aided by how content is presented, categorised and organised, an echo of printed television guides and the familiar graphic interface of electronic programme guides (EPGs) in TVs, set-top boxes, and online platforms (Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9).

culture. See: Smits, Roderik. ‘Video-on-Demand and the Myth of “Endless Choice”’. *The Conversation*, 16 Aug. 2018, <http://theconversation.com/video-on-demand-and-the-myth-of-endless-choice-100116>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2020.

¹⁰² It is worth noting that the BBC has since entered into a public consultation regarding the availability of iPlayer content with a view to extending its longevity on the platform and bring it into line with its competitors. See: BBC Media Centre. *BBC Opens Public Consultation Around Improvements to Programme Availability so That iPlayer Catches up with Wider VOD Market*. 7 Jan. 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2019/iplayer-consultation>.

¹⁰³ Johnson, Steven A. *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate*. 1997. New edition, Basic Books, 1999, p. 237.

		3.00pm	3.30pm	4.00pm	4.30pm	5.00pm
one	101	Escape to the Country		Ready Steady Cook	The Repair Shop	Pointless
two	102	An Inspector Calls	Nigel Slater's...	Best House in Town	Best House in Town	Flog It!
itv	103	ITV Racing: Cheltenham Festival Live				New: Tipping Point: Best... The Chase
4	104	A Place in the Sun		A New Life in the Sun: Where...		Four in a Bed
5	105	Lethal Beauty		Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts		5 News at 5
sky one HD	106	MacGyver		Modern Family	Modern Family	The Simpsons
sky witness HD	107	The Real A & E		999 Frontline	999 Frontline	Nothing To Declare
sky atlantic HD	108	CSI: Crime Scene Investi...	Boardwalk Empire			Boardwalk Empire

Figure 1.8: Electronic Programme Guide of the Sky Go app

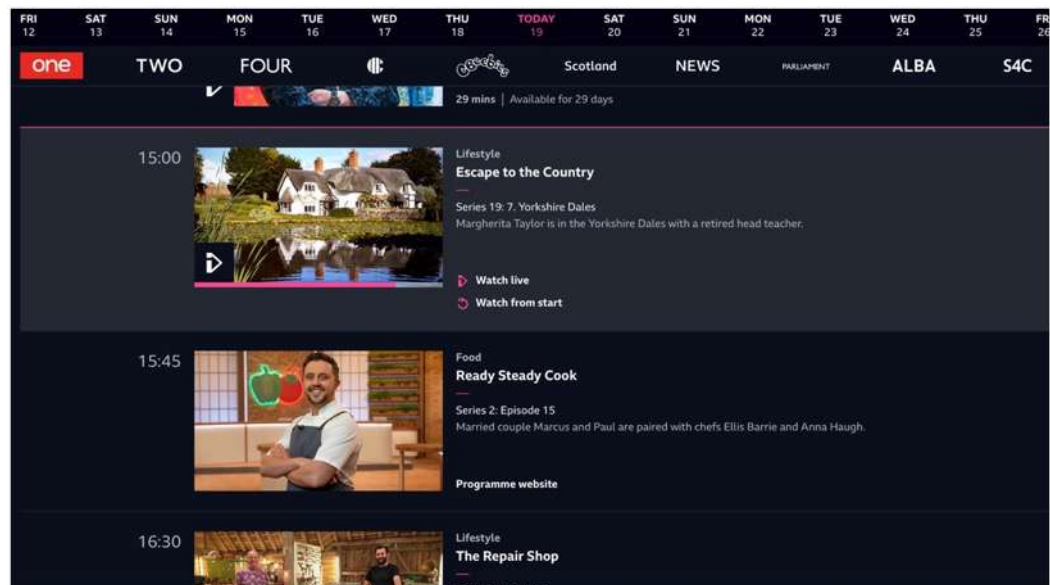


Figure 1.9: Electronic Programme Guide of iPlayer's website

The mobilisation of familiar pre-digital iconography to delimit the expansiveness of on-demand spaces extends to include DVDs and boxsets on the shelf, and/or the constant evocation of libraries and catalogues to encourage image-based searching, with the thumbnail image replacing the spine of a book.¹⁰⁴ In iPlayer's website and app iterations, following a click or tap the user is then given several options to change the content's display order; where 'featured' is the default

¹⁰⁴ iPlayer's image-led design is augmented by text labelling – short phrases relating to the genre of the assembled content – which categorises and indexes it for ease of access, with the ability to sort and narrow what is available offered on the next screen.

setting, followed by 'A-Z', and finally, 'most recent.'¹⁰⁵ Scrolling further down the page reveals, to follow the library analogy, other collections, such as 'BBC Proms'.

The layout of these collections – consciously styled after the equally familiar playlist – encourages horizontal navigation, with programming groups accessed by tapping or clicking directional arrows, similar to Netflix's rolling carousel design. The effect on screen is the equivalent to turning a page in a book, flipping through a stack of records, or even a reference catalogue, like those found in libraries or exhibitions. In addition to maintaining links with the real, physical world, these allusions also tie into material cultures of collecting, curation, and display, recalling the similar curational imperatives of the *Whistle Test* Anniversary DVD.

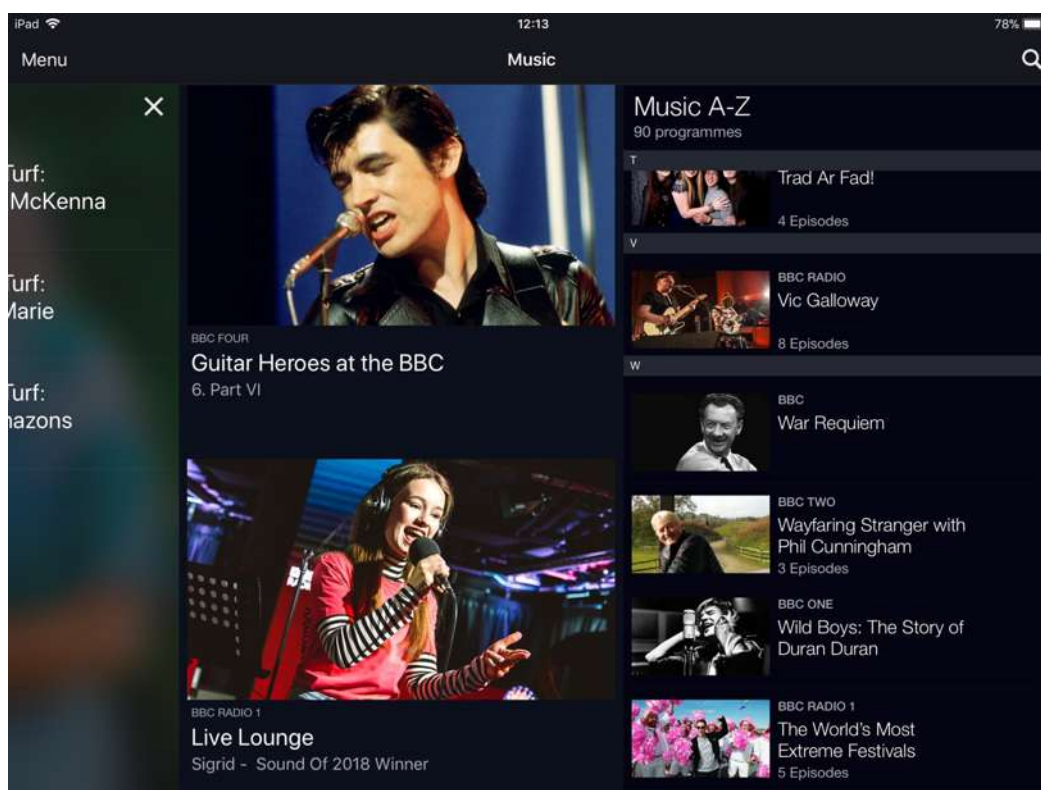


Figure 1.10: iPlayer app close-up with a selection of available music content

¹⁰⁵ Content labelled as music also appears in the arts category, meaning that some crossover can occur. The discussion focuses on the presentation of programmes labelled as music for the sake of clarity.

Music on iPlayer

The primary function of curation is to display and to make visible, but it can also clarify what content is available and help guide decision-making. The secondary function, exemplified by 'featured' collections, is to shape taste. Much like that of key paintings or precious artefacts in museum and archival settings, this reinscribes value and worth, implicitly canonising certain forms and genres through their inclusion. The potential of curation as a promotional tool is reflected throughout iPlayer, meaning that the on-demand space is also a *branded* space, that feeds back into the channel's identity, remit, and commissioning strategies, and can be seen as another articulation of its authorial function, while also being another iteration of branded flow, reflected in the way programming is organised into different categories and collections.

This takes on a particular significance for iPlayer, and its public service imperatives. The platform also includes curated collections that emphasize the broadcaster's position as a global cultural institution. Of these collections, 'From the Archive,' 'Music Stories,' and 'Top of the Pops'¹⁰⁶ are the most overt examples of the broadcaster positioning itself as a site of cultural worth. The 'From the Archive' collection is large enough for additional sub-collections, grouped by genre and/or interest. Documentary series, history, and lifestyle (primarily cooking) programming dominate, but there are exceptions relating to landmark series, single dramas,¹⁰⁷ or national calendar events, such as the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Music is in a standalone category, appearing largely within the context of arts programming, featured in the current holdings of *Arena* (BBC Two, 1975-2011; BBC Four, 2003-) *Omnibus* (BBC One, 1967-2001; BBC Two, 2001-2003), or

¹⁰⁶ BBC. 'From the Archive. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/archive/a-z>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018; BBC. 'Music Stories'. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p02mp7z3>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018. At the time of writing, the archive covered six pages of content, featuring an average of 32 programme thumbnails. BBC. 'Top of the Pops'. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/b00704hg>.

¹⁰⁷ Exemplary of this are the recent additions of *Doctor Who* series 1-10, and Andrew Davies' adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (BBC, 1995), both of which feature prominently in their own right, and within themed sub-collections under 'Classic Drama.'

archive BBC Proms coverage.¹⁰⁸ Outside of these sub-collections, other documentaries, series, and concerts are present. These include series on modern classic composers, such as *The Sound and the Fury in Concert* (BBC, 2013), *Music Masters* (BBC, 2001), and American blues series *The Devil's Music* (BBC One, 1979).¹⁰⁹ Also featured are celebratory concerts, such as *Boulez at 80* (David Stevens, 2005), and single documentaries, such as *Bad Meaning Good* (Tim Westwood, 1987), exploring rap, DJ and graffiti culture in late 1980s Britain.¹¹⁰ The lack of rock and pop within the 'From the Archive' collection, and the exclusion of high-profile series like *Top of the Pops* or *Whistle Test*, for example, reiterates entrenched attitudes regarding the cultural value of these genres, but the dynamic nature of iPlayer and this collection means that may change.

The BBC's status as a cultural institution and intermediary can be likened to that of the Smithsonian, large enough, both culturally and socio-historically, to warrant sharing its own archive holdings. Despite the broadcaster's public service status, gatekeeping still takes place, which allows it to maintain authority over its content by limiting availability and restricting use.¹¹¹ This impacts upon what programming is seen, discussed, and how it can (or cannot) be historicised. From this perspective, iPlayer cannot *actually* be termed as an archive nor can it be

¹⁰⁸ The phrase 'current holdings' is used to specify availability at the time of writing. For the purposes of the chapter, the provision provided by BBC iPlayer encompassed looking at the broadcast schedule and on-demand content spanning early January to late August 2018.

¹⁰⁹ BBC. 'The Sound and the Fury in Concert'. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p014slcc>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018; BBC. 'Music Masters'. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p013lcw6>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018; BBC. 'The Devil's Music'. *BBC iPlayer*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p00lfs2m>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018.

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that Tim Westwood's documentary was originally part of the *Open Space* (BBC Two, 1983-1995) documentary strand, the replacement for the earlier series *Open Door* (BBC Two, 1973-1983), both made by the BBC's Community Programming Unit (CPU). However, *Bad Meaning Good* is frequently shown and considered in its own right, as is the case here. For more on the work of the CPU and its history, see Oakley, Giles, and Peter Lee-Wright. 'Opening Doors: The BBC's Community Programme Unit 1973-2002'. *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 82, no. 1, Oct. 2016, pp. 213-34.

¹¹¹ This primarily refers to time limits on content, but also applies to the inability to download it via the BBC Downloads app. However, it is also important to note that availability of content on iPlayer is governed by numerous factors beyond genre and value that restrict its availability in digital forms, such as clearance rights for music.

considered a replacement for the now defunct BBC Store platform.¹¹² There are collections on iPlayer with archive-like potential. To expand the museum analogy, these sub-collections, constructed around specific themes or genres, are similar to a travelling exhibit.

One such example is the 'Music Stories' collection (Figure 1.11), which contains several forms of music programming reframed from the perspective of cultural work and emotional labour – a common feature of the music heritage documentary. This makes explicit the connections between public and private memory, and positions music programming as a valuable cultural object worthy of being archived to ensure its survival and continued recirculation in visual culture.

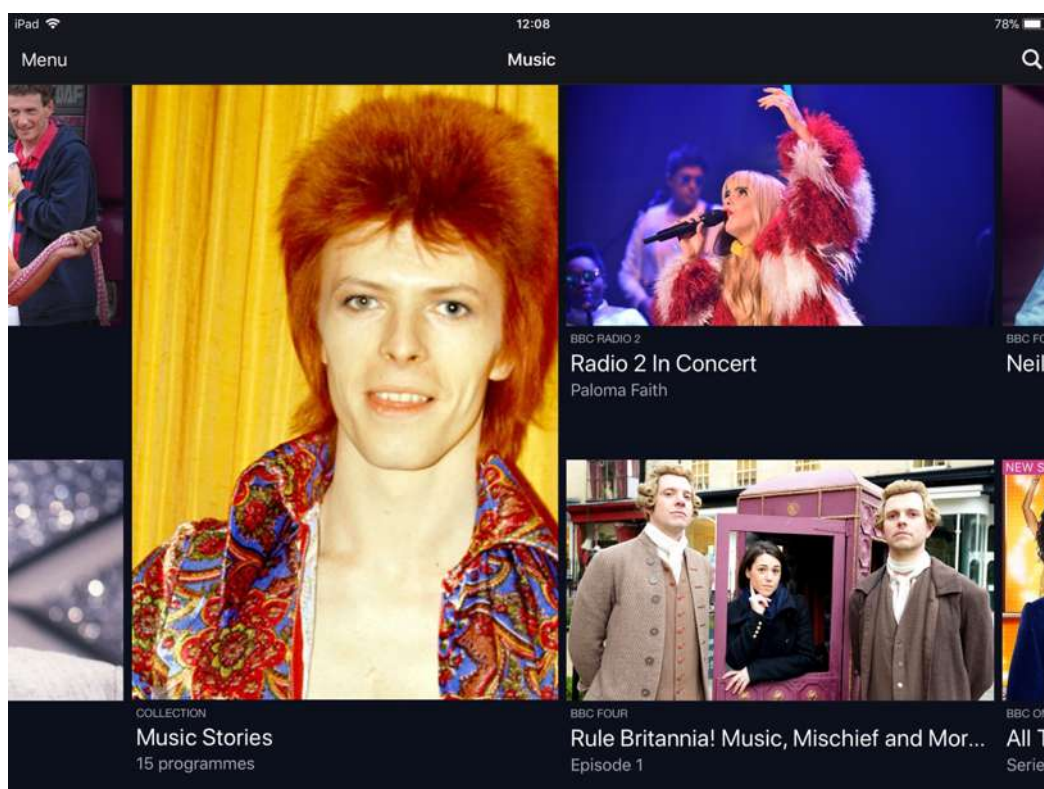


Figure 1.11: iPlayer app close-up with focus on the 'Music Stories' collection

¹¹² BBC Store, a buy-to-keep platform launched on 5th November 2015, opening up the BBC archive and making its content available for purchase and download via the BBC Store app. Funded by BBC Worldwide, it was first available as a standalone site (<https://store.bbc.com/>), and then integrated into the iPlayer platform. The service closed on 1st November 2017, citing low uptake and pressure from commercial rivals Amazon and Netflix. See BBC Trust. 'BBC Store Regulatory Approval'. *BBC Trust*, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/bbc_store/bbc_store.pdf. Accessed 16 Feb. 2019, for details of its structure and intent.

Throughout this discussion of music television on DVD, in the broadcast flow of BBC Four, and the online spaces of iPlayer, I have illustrated the changes to how flow is understood and operates, demonstrating why flow as a model and a concept endures, and why it is a useful way to trace not only *how* non-contemporary music programming survives but also *why* it survives. Flow allows us to explore how television is structured, organised, and viewed, which, I argue, structures changes in channel content, branding, and identity. The branding and scheduling strategies undertaken by BBC Four display a particular understanding of music culture, its historicity, and cultural significance, coupled with an awareness of the effective and affective potential of branded flow for the audience. They also highlight the mutually reinforcing relationship between content, flow, channel branding, identity, and mode of address. Flow is both continuous and linked, often directly responding to broader synergies between music culture and heritage, programming, television as an object, and circulations of taste.

YouTube and/as Television

In this final section, the discussion will turn toward the last component of music television's cultural afterlife: YouTube. The site has a complex relationship to time, pastness, memory, and nostalgia, which is reflected in the content uploaded to it, and the viewing cultures within it. Consequently, YouTube has a surprisingly significant role to play in the continued survival of numerous media forms but particularly non-contemporary television and most importantly, music programming. Its survival on the platform, like the other forms of cultural afterlife described throughout this chapter, extends the textual longevity of such television far beyond the boundaries of its original broadcast. However, unlike those earlier forms, the appearance of music programming on YouTube also has the potential to be disseminated more quickly, with a greater reach than the original broadcast could ever attain. Since its inception in 2005, the video-sharing community has developed into a significant online presence and continues to be

a generative source of scholarship.¹¹³ At once an outlet for self-expression *and* an avenue of cultural curation, its enduring popularity online, as well as within popular and scholarly discourses can be linked to its multifaceted nature and the cultural work undertaken by its global users, which now reaches in excess of 1.8 billion.¹¹⁴

Alongside its primary function as a space for the uploading of original user-generated content (primarily in the form of vlogs) over the course of the last thirteen years, the form of content added to the site has diversified, resulting in the development of a number of secondary and perhaps even tertiary functions which extend beyond this initial remit.¹¹⁵ These functions include YouTube's use as a promotional tool for multiple forms of media and/or products, appearing most often in the form of trailers for films and television texts.¹¹⁶ Connected to this, YouTube's use as a promotional tool is its unlikely yet increasingly important function as a source for archival television. Within this content type, there are numerous genres uploaded with more frequency, resulting in their dominance on the platform, including children's television, documentary, and music

¹¹³ The origins of this can be found within the context of new media discourses, see Burgess, Jean, and Joshua Green. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. Polity, 2009; and Snickars, Pelle, and Patrick Vonderau, editors. *The YouTube Reader*. National Library of Sweden, 2009. Since that time, work has built steadily, which considers YouTube from a number of perspectives, including marketing, user-generated content, politics, community and memorialisation. Almost all this work acknowledges the platform's acquisition by Google completed on 13th November 2006 as a landmark moment and dividing line in regard to the uses of YouTube, its forms of content, and the proliferation of that content.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert, Ben. 'YouTube Now Has Over 1.8 Billion Users Every Month, Within Spitting Distance of Facebook's 2 Billion'. *Business Insider*, 4 May 2018, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/youtube-user-statistics-2018-5>. It should be noted that this figure does not include users who browse the site without logging in or visit without ever holding an account.

¹¹⁵ This stems from the site's tagline, 'Broadcast Yourself,' and the site's association with the practice of vlogging, which makes up a large percentage of the site's content. Vlogging is described as the video equivalent of a blog, itself a written form of Internet post that can be likened to a diary. Discussions of this kind of content can be found in Strangelove, Michael. *Watching YouTube: Extraordinary Videos by Ordinary People*. University of Toronto Press, 2010; and Burgess, Jean. 'User-Created Content and Everyday Cultural Practice: Lessons from YouTube'. *Television as Digital Media*, edited by James Bennett and Niki Strange, Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 311–31, among many others, who consider the community and civic aspects of the site in detail.

¹¹⁶ For instance, the site is used as an official platform by broadcasters such as the BBC, Channel Four, and in the US context, HBO, for the release of trailers and other marketing clips.

videos.¹¹⁷ In recent years, however, there has also been an increased presence for music programming, which will be the focus of the discussion that follows.

What is YouTube?

Before discussing YouTube's archival capacities for music programming, it is important to set out how YouTube is seen within scholarship; this informs how the platform will be analysed here. The expansiveness of the platform is such that it is neither feasible nor useful to try and encompass the entire experience of watching YouTube and its archival capacities. Consequently, this section will be divided into three areas: first, the theorisation of YouTube as an archive in terms of preservation;¹¹⁸ second, the specific aesthetics of the YouTube viewing experience; third, the presence of archival music programming on the platform.

Evident with the wide-ranging scholarship on YouTube is its multifaceted, polysemic nature. It is described variously as an archive, a repository, and to borrow from Urrichio – a site of 'cultural aggregation.'¹¹⁹ Similarly, in her discussion of YouTube as archive, Giovanna Fossati observes that 'YouTube can be used for serving many different aims and by different user groups.'¹²⁰ Fossati's assessment resonates with Urrichio's extended description of a hybrid, dynamic, seamless space for audiovisual material.¹²¹ The question of what YouTube *is* may be better assessed by understanding what YouTube is *not*. By thinking less about definitions and limits and thinking more about the platform's capacity for

¹¹⁷ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, p. 87.

¹¹⁸ YouTube's archival capacity is also often considered from the perspective of its legal ramifications and issues of copyright. For an indicator of this strand of scholarship, see for example, Keen, Andrew. *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture and Assaulting Our Economy*. Nicholas Brealey, 2007; and Newman, Michael Z. 'Free TV: File-Sharing and the Value of Television'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 13, no. 6, Nov. 2012, pp. 463–79. See Strangelove, Michael. *The Empire of Mind: Digital Piracy and the Anti-Capitalist Movement*. University of Toronto Press, 2005; and Gillespie, Tarleton. *Wired Shut: Copyright and the Shape of Digital Culture*. Reprint edition, The MIT Press, 2009, for discussion of the sociocultural shifts brought about by those same practices brought about by these practices in online communities.

¹¹⁹ Urrichio, William. 'The Future of a Medium Once Known as Television'. *The YouTube Reader*, edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 24.

¹²⁰ Fossati, Giovanna. 'YouTube as a Mirror Maze'. *The YouTube Reader*, edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 460.

¹²¹ Urrichio, 'The Future of a Medium Once Known as Television', p. 24.

limitlessness we may better understand why its usage as an archival site of preservation has become popular.

Discussing the concept of the archival cloud, Pelle Snickars underlines that the flexibility and shareability YouTube provides to users and audiences alike goes some way to explaining why the site has retained its dominant status.¹²² Video sharing, Snickars argues, has become central to the Internet experience, in terms of the dissemination of both entertainment *and* information. For Snickars, the archival impulse and its application within the YouTube space is symptomatic of a broader cultural shift in the contemporary consciousness, noting that ‘the “archive” has appeared as a kind of guiding metaphor for the contemporary digital media landscape.’¹²³ The ‘guiding metaphor’ Snickars proposes deftly illustrates how changes to our daily cultural lives, and the ways in which we perceive storage, can naturally lead to the reconceptualization of what we see as an archive, and the position of that archive in relation to the media we consume. When considered from this perspective, the relationship between YouTube, music programming, and the archive is both natural and reciprocal – a relationship based around similar cultures of taste and shareability, which are also intrinsically linked to the nostalgic, emotive, and affective capacities of screen culture.

YouTube and Archive

Rick Prelinger argues that in both nature and design – limitless, in flux, and thus, unstable and ephemeral – YouTube’s capacity to preserve ‘is neither its mission nor its practice.’¹²⁴ Prelinger, is correct, but only partially. YouTube was *not* created with the primary intent of being an audiovisual archive. This capacity evolved over time, perhaps as a reaction to, or consequence of, the increasingly ephemeral and unstable nature of video material following the digital turn.

¹²² Snickars, Pelle. ‘The Archival Cloud’. *The YouTube Reader*, edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 293.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹²⁴ Prelinger, Rick. ‘The Appearance of Archives’. *The YouTube Reader*, edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 268.

However, this should be considered less in terms of notions surrounding the affordances of media and technology related to agency and control, and more with the desire to collate and keep being facilitated by those technological affordances. Once considered in terms of the *potential to preserve* media within what is ostensibly branded as limitless online space, thereby making them available to a mass, global audience, YouTube's archival capacity makes more sense. The underlying archival imperatives of YouTube – particularly as a television archive – are brought into greater focus when we consider the kinds of material uploaded and how this translates into its archival dominance on the site.

Archival television on YouTube appears in various types and forms, ranging from trailers and interstitial material (adverts, bumpers, and continuity announcements), to programme clips and full episodes from a wide range of genres. All of these are clearly uploaded with the *intention to preserve*. In their discussion of YouTube's cultural politics, Burgess and Green draw specific attention to the hidden labour within the archival work 'undertaken by the amateur collectors and curators of television', beginning with digitisation and editing material for upload, followed by tagging, description and arrangement into playlists.¹²⁵ YouTube's link to amateur cultural production is a part of its founding ethos, but the particular strand defined by Burgess and Green, and its relationship to the archival, offers a different perspective as to *how* and *why* the platform can be considered as an archive, or rather, a new iteration of one. YouTube's cultural work ties into notions surrounding user-generated, collaborative local archiving initiatives that are the foundation of many traditional physical archive spaces.

Such work, Urrichio argues, is 'part of a much longer amateur trajectory', making links between do-it-yourself initiatives such as amateur film festivals and screenings.¹²⁶ Most intriguingly, he emphasizes the point that YouTube and its archival imperatives offer much more than the artefact itself. Moreover, he notes that often, the videos uploaded do not even *include* the central memory-object-

¹²⁵ Burgess and Green, 'YouTube's Cultural Politics', p. 88.

¹²⁶ Urrichio, 'The Future of a Medium Once Known as Television', p. 30.

turned-artefact under discussion.¹²⁷ Just as the ways to archive material and what constitutes an archive have changed over time, the form archival objects can take has also expanded, shifting from the tangible and the material, to the digital and the audiovisual. The obvious similarities between YouTube and a traditional archive are increased, when considered within the context of the clear synergies between traditional archival practice and the interface that informs how videos are uploaded. Key to this procedure is user participation. As Robert Gehl notes in his discussion of YouTube in comparison to professional (and by implication non-digital and/or physical) archives, 'the YouTube service only provides the storage, placing the media objects on its servers.'¹²⁸ Moreover, Gehl sees the users of YouTube as 'the true curators' of the site, suggesting it would not exist without them.¹²⁹ While Gehl's claim may seem bold, the work undertaken to describe, tag, and categorise videos at the point of upload are central to the site's infrastructure and how it functions, including YouTube's search capabilities and algorithms, used to generate playlists and populate the 'up next' sidebar of content which refreshes based on the content being viewed within the main video player on the left of the screen.¹³⁰ Without the invention and the labour on the part of the user, YouTube as we know it would not work, and the content within it would be unsearchable, and thus, invisible.

YouTube and Flow

In the broader landscape of the YouTube viewing experience, how might the concept of flow work within this environment and how does this impact upon the re-experiencing of non-contemporary music programming? Considering this idea opens up several interrelated questions concerning the role and functioning of the site's algorithmic structures versus user-generated playlists. Unpacking the

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Gehl, Robert. 'YouTube as Archive: Who Will Curate This Digital Wunderkammer?' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, Jan. 2009, pp. 46-47.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

¹³⁰ This element of the YouTube interface was previously known as 'related videos' but fulfils the same purpose.

potential answers to such questions reveals much about the ways in which YouTube's content can be filtered and shaped to change what is or is not seen.

A useful way to begin the application of flow in the context of YouTube is to consider it in terms of how types of flow can co-exist. For instance, Gehl suggests that YouTube's flow can be conceived in terms of the people who 'flow through any other library or collection.'¹³¹ Gehl's observation is a useful one, which correlates to the site's sociocultural centrality. While it might seem counterproductive to conflate flows of people with flows of viewing content, the relationship between the two is a co-dependent one. With greater flow of people – reflected in site and viewing traffic – comes the potential for an increase in the flow of content, assuming they also *add* content to the site. Furthermore, the material added to YouTube either by creators of original content or uploaders-turned-archivists is often done on a scheduled basis.¹³² Adding content in this way is an echo of the broadcast schedule; reinforcing the regimentation of visiting a specific YouTube channel at a specific date and time. This fixity is reiterated in reminders within videos to subscribe to channels and/or switch on upload notifications. In either case, both options allow the viewer to be informed when new content has been uploaded, recreating traditional notions of the schedule and shared viewing experiences, albeit in a different context.

The conditions of flow within YouTube are characterised by the tension between the potentially endless flow of any given visit to the site versus the regimentation of knowing when a video will be uploaded to a channel. This tension makes the already unfixed, ephemeral status of YouTube even more unstable. From this vantage, YouTube's cultural centrality may seem surprising, but when considered in relation to the characteristics it shares with television, it becomes considerably less so. Burgess and Green outline many of these similarities in their assessment of YouTube's cultural value:

¹³¹ Gehl, 'YouTube as Archive', p. 46.

¹³² Adding content is commonly completed on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. While this largely depends on the profile of the channel, it is common practice for vloggers but also longer form web series channels that adhere to a specific release schedule.

YouTube, even more than television, is a particularly unstable object of study, marked by dynamic change (both in terms of videos and organization), a diversity of content (which moves with a different rhythm to television but likewise flows through, and often disappears from, the service), and a similar quotidian frequency, or “everydayness.”¹³³

Of the shared qualities they identify, rhythm and dailiness are significant since they are also found within the function of flow, illustrating how it could work in relation to YouTube. Release schedules on YouTube perform a similar function to the ritualised or habituated viewing practices created by the broadcast schedule, and can be used as a way into analysing the potentially borderless state of YouTube’s flow. However, there are also significant and clear differences between the units that make up the flow of television and the flow of YouTube. The building blocks of its flow are almost always defined as a clip rather than a programme, irrespective of their running time. Whether derived from a larger whole, a standalone short-form video, the clip, and YouTube itself has changed the way audiovisual material circulates online.¹³⁴ Clips hold a value and capital of their own, generated by their sharable nature, and speed and ease of access, ‘which outpaces cinema and television.’¹³⁵ The accelerated nature of clip culture is key to understanding how flow operates within YouTube, since it feeds directly into how time is experienced and media consumed. This is supported by Hilderbrand’s notion that YouTube offers ‘new and remediating relationships to texts that indicate changes in, *and acceleration of, spectatorial consumption.*’¹³⁶

¹³³ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, p. 6.

¹³⁴ In support of this, YouTube scholars largely cite the viral success of OK Go’s music video for ‘Here It Goes Again’ as seminal, positioning it within the beginnings of the site’s establishment as a central focus for the consumption and dissemination of audiovisual material within popular and Internet cultures. See OK Go. *OK Go - Here It Goes Again (Official Music Video)*. 2006. 2009. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTAAsCNK7RA>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2021. For an indication of scholarly discussion see Edmond, Maura. ‘Here We Go Again: Music Videos after YouTube’. *Television & New Media*, vol. 15, no. 4, Nov. 2012, pp. 305–20. Edmond argues that the video’s success also realigned YouTube as the new cultural site for music videos, usurping the cultural dominance of MTV.

¹³⁵ Snickars and Vonderau, *The YouTube Reader*, p. 11.

¹³⁶ Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*, p. 227. My emphasis.

The influence of this accelerated consumption is visibly and obviously reflected throughout contemporary screen culture. First, via the ways in which many long-running television programmes revived on DVD are edited performances, making them YouTube ready. Second, in the manner in which contemporary music programmes like *Sounds Like Friday Night* maintain a cultural presence on YouTube in clip form only – already reduced to the sum of its (isolated) performances after a brief life on the iPlayer platform.

Watching YouTube

When contextualised within the traditional hour of scheduling, viewing clips on YouTube for the same amount of time can yield seeing more content, and more quickly, but how can the viewing experience of YouTube be described? Often, scholars use analogies that are familiar, such as the frequent evocation of the library or the archive. However, other attempts to conceptualise the experience present allegories that provide visceral and tangible hooks to aid understanding of a platform defined by its speed, ephemerality, and transience.

In his exploration of music on YouTube, Reynolds describes the platform not in terms of a neatly ordered and categorised archive, but rather, as a space characterised by its disorderly nature. Reynolds frames the experience not as flow produced by the site interface in collaboration with the user's choices – clicking links or typing phrases into the search box – but rather, as drifting from one video to another, describing the platform as being 'more like a jumbled attic than an archive, only laxly framed and annotated.'¹³⁷ Reynolds' assessment, though cutting, offers useful insight into how flow may be experienced by some (though not all) users. His use of the word 'drift' is an evocative one, which expresses how the experiential flow of YouTube ties into the general conception of YouTube as a borderless space, both in terms of global reach and the continued blurring of distinctions between new and old media formats, and most

¹³⁷ Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. 62.

importantly, between the past and present, reinforcing the perception of its expansiveness.¹³⁸

The blurring or bending of spatiotemporal boundaries is also reflected in other attempts to define and describe watching YouTube, which often reinforce the platform's expansiveness and limitless potential. As Carol Vernallis observes, '[w]e can't see the edges of YouTube; the site is in a state of constant flux.'¹³⁹ The edgelessness and lack of fixity Vernallis identifies not only makes for a viewing experience that means YouTube is unlike any media format or platform that came before it, but also an aesthetic experience unlike any other, that is potentially without end.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, for Robert Gehl, YouTube is 'a sort of digital *Wunderkammer*' or, a closet of wonders, 'where many of the artifacts of digital empire sit on shelves, waiting either to overwhelm a visitor or to be utilized by savvy new entrepreneurs.'¹⁴¹ The potential for YouTube to overwhelm the viewer is an obvious, but not widely acknowledged, component of the viewing experience. This is often a consequence of remaining on the site, searching for and watching specific content, such as *Top of the Pops* for instance, over a lengthy period of time. For every video viewed, new ones appear in the 'up next' playlist. Both videos within the main player and the constantly regenerating sidebar content are set to auto-play, unless cancelled by user intervention – either by clicking to activate the 'cancel' button or toggling the sidebar auto-play switch to off. The design of YouTube's interface is such that it consciously facilitates prolonged usage and viewership – much like the now commonplace practice of extended binge-watching of television either via DVD box sets on-demand series

¹³⁸ The user will, however, come up against certain roadblocks that interrupt the drift or flow of the experience, particularly when looking for music and/or music programming. This is frequently due to issues of rights clearance, which means some record companies and broadcasters block content in certain countries. In such cases, a black screen replaces the video player with a notice detailing the reason behind the content block.

¹³⁹ Vernallis, Carol. *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema*, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 127–54.

¹⁴⁰ Television does maintain a similar kind of endlessness, but is, in some cases, still governed by the close down of a channel following the end of its broadcast hours, in a way that YouTube is not as lock as the Internet connection accessing it remains stable.

¹⁴¹ Gehl, 'YouTube as Archive', p. 45.

equivalents, or, in its dominant contemporary application in reference to streaming shows on Netflix.

Such models of consumption are often aligned with a passive, unengaged viewer, echoing early media theory of the hypodermic needle, with YouTube either 'drip-feeding' or, worse still, 'mainlining' content to the viewer hooked to the screen. Hilderbrand argues that the hyperlinking of related content in the 'up next' sidebar 'effectively replicates channel-surfing.'¹⁴² While the *potential* for a passive viewer remains, the community elements of YouTube counteract this, evidenced by active comment threads left by users, detailing their thoughts on the videos they watch. When featured on music programming content, YouTube comments and/or comment threads can provide a particularly rich vein of sociocultural exchange between users.

The Aesthetics of YouTube

The general aesthetic of YouTube is defined by the familiar overlay of its interface, with the video player on the left, the 'up next' sidebar on the right, and the search box roughly in the centre. YouTube branding features on the top left. For users logged in, the top right features function icons, uploading, related YouTube apps, messaging, and other account access functions. However, the video player itself is the central object within the design of the interface and thus the focus of users' attention.

Phil Benson describes the layout of YouTube pages as 'strikingly multimodal',¹⁴³ an acknowledgement of the multiple uses and aesthetic layers within the interface. Much like the on-demand platforms discussed earlier in this chapter, YouTube is also designed with specific and familiar referents in mind. Throughout *The Discourse of YouTube*, Benson describes the design of YouTube and its consumption through several analogous references to familiar technologies of playback, such as DVD and video cassette players.¹⁴⁴ In both

¹⁴² Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*, p. 227.

¹⁴³ Benson, Phil. *The Discourse of YouTube: Multimodal Text in a Global Context*, Routledge, 2017, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

cases, Benson uses physical, tangible objects as a frame of reference, thereby creating links between how media has been consumed and personalised prior to YouTube. Through its mobilisation of these familiar aesthetics, the YouTube interface acknowledges its position in this continued personalisation.¹⁴⁵ Whether consciously or unconsciously, in recalling the recording technologies of the past, Benson also aligns YouTube with these earlier forms of media archiving, and reinforces the intermedial position it occupies as a technology of the digital present, which is increasingly used to showcase the analogue past.

Consequently, the aesthetic experience of YouTube provides its users with the potential for, as Vernallis argues, 'intense media experiences.'¹⁴⁶ While Vernallis does not mean this in the affective sense, this capacity is clear, particularly in relation to broader cultures of memory and nostalgia, reflected in the videos that are uploaded with defects and video artefacts – such as grain, jumpiness, and lines – that signal both their age and the transfer process between analogue and digital, which is particularly evident when watching music television from different decades. Vernallis goes on to describe a specific kind of 'intensified audiovisual aesthetics.'¹⁴⁷ Originally applied to the visual style of post-millennial cinema and the influence of music video, this concept is equally applicable to watching television clips on YouTube. Following Vernallis, aesthetic intensity is derived from the brevity of clips as opposed to the rapidity of editing. However, this intensity and the affective consequences of it can also be felt in relation to audiovisual material originally recorded and/or broadcast in an earlier time, re-encountered in the present, such as early episodes of *Ready Steady Go!* (Figure 1.12).

The current design of YouTube's interface clearly acknowledges its own status as a multimedia platform. When playing videos in standard screen mode, the video player window resizes relative to the original ratio of the uploaded video. When playing in full screen, the original ratio is maintained by the use of

¹⁴⁵ It is worth noting that in all iterations of the site's design, the layout of the player buttons remains unchanged, keeping all controls in a single line, as they would be commonly found on the machines Benson describes, maintaining continuity between media forms past and present.

¹⁴⁶ Vernallis, *Unruly Media*, p. 149.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

black bars, drawing the eye into the ratio of the image, and its associated connotations of pastness. Over time, this switching of ratios means the viewer becomes aware of their expedited and intensified journey back and forth between the past and the present. This is particularly evident in clips of long-running series like *Top of the Pops*, when viewed in the automated flow of the 'up next' sidebar, the differences in the show's visual style – ratio, colour processes, effects, the shift from black and white to colour film – become more overt and in turn hold greater affective potential as signifiers of pastness, and how music programming once looked.



Figure 1.12: YouTube clip of The Beach Boys on *Ready Steady Go!*

Related to the intensified aesthetics of YouTube is the different sense of time – both as time spent *and* time experienced – within the platform. Reynolds' work picks up on this quality, noting that the Internet makes 'the past and the present commingle in a way that makes time itself mushy and spongiform.'¹⁴⁸ This sense relates to both the time passing onscreen *and* the distance between the original broadcasting of the clip versus re-encountering and re-experiencing it on YouTube. Daniel Chamberlain terms this awareness of time 'temporal conspicuity' where the viewer is conscious of time passing due to the visible nature of time within the player window in the form of its progress bar or ads

¹⁴⁸ Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. 63.

which enforce waiting between clips.¹⁴⁹ Chamberlain goes on to note the shift in how time is experienced on television, saying:

Watching time is now part of watching television. Once a structuring element in the presentation of television, time is now directly made part of the image through the media interfaces that govern access to content.¹⁵⁰

The relationship to temporality Chamberlain identifies can also be applied to the temporal relations between videos, or rather, how they are consciously displayed as being *from the past* in their aesthetic or in the condition of the footage. For instance, within the lifespan of a programme like *Top of the Pops*, the user can travel across decades in a single click. Key to understanding how this conceptualisation of time works is the influence of nostalgia and memorialisation, two interrelated drives that feed into both the positioning of YouTube as an archive, and the imperative to contribute *to* that archive.

YouTube as Archive

In this section, I will consider YouTube's function as an archive by looking at the presence of three series on the site: *Ready Steady Go!*; *Juke Box Jury*; and *Something Else*. This discussion will be illustrative rather than exhaustive, exploring how YouTube as an archival space changes our relationship to media *and* archival forms. In particular, how non-contemporary music television survives, the forms this can take – as part of dedicated channels or playlists, for example, and how this informs the ways in which the programmes are received and discussed within popular and visual cultures.

Hilderbrand argues that the site holds a 'rich spectrum' of material and 'suggests potential democratisation of media memory and flows,' and views YouTube archival work as a form of digital bootlegging, and as central to the

¹⁴⁹ Chamberlain, Daniel. 'Watching Time on Television'. *Flow*, vol. 6, no. 4, July 2007, <http://flowtv.org/2007/07/watching-time-on-television>. Accessed 11 July 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

conception of YouTube as archive.¹⁵¹ In transferring material to the site, the uploader makes it visible, transferring their experiences, memories, and knowledge with it. Michael Strangelove argues that this economy of knowledge transfer has a transformative effect within 'our media-saturated culture.'¹⁵² The transformation, he argues, 'is both simple and profound in its consequences. This is the transformation of *who is saying what to whom*.'¹⁵³ In the context of YouTube as an archive, and particularly in relation to music television, the transfer of knowledge and power takes on greater meaning, due to the increased imperative to both preserve, share, and re-engage with the musical past.

The conditions of this cultural transfer within YouTube are shaped by two related components of the platform's function and operation: its curatorial modes and curatorial materials. Fossati argues that the differing, but ultimately reinforcing, curatorial modes can be defined as the individual and traditional curator who oversees their own channel, versus the wider online community of YouTube. Fossati notes that users can then follow two divergent paths, either 'guided to some unexpected aesthetic revelation and then decide to follow their own streams of thought and association for finding new trails,' or to 'ignore the expert's suggestions.'¹⁵⁴ The implicit circulations of taste, judgement and worth within these curatorial modes ultimately impacts what material is viewed on YouTube, what remains visible, and in turn, how this shapes opportunities to re-encounter archive material on the platform.

¹⁵¹ Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*, p. 255. Hilderbrand's discussion of YouTube in relation to democratisation is a common feature of scholarship on the platform, and ties into its community and civic imperatives. See also Spigel, Lynn. 'My TV Studies . . . Now Playing on a YouTube Site Near You'. *Television & New Media*, vol. 10, no. 1, Jan. 2009, pp. 149–53; Kim, Jin. 'The Institutionalization of YouTube: From User-Generated Content to Professionally Generated Content'. *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 34, no. 1, Jan. 2012, pp. 53–67; and Shuker, Roy. *Understanding Popular Music Culture*. 5th edition, Routledge, 2016 for discussion in similar terms.

¹⁵² Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, p. 9.

¹⁵³ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁴ Fossati, Giovanna. 'YouTube as a Mirror Maze'. *The YouTube Reader*, edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 459.

Archive Music Television on YouTube

The archival position of music programming on YouTube is reflective of the multimodal multi-media rich platform. As Roy Shuker notes in his appraisal of music within popular culture, YouTube occupies a specific function, primarily to enable ‘access to a wide range of music in all its previous audiovisual forms.’¹⁵⁵ While Shuker’s long view of music’s screen history also includes MTV, biopics, and videogames, his assessment of YouTube is an important one that reflects the diversity of the content available, and the significance YouTube has attained in relation to music content over time. The presence of music programming on YouTube can be roughly divided into three categories: full episodes; performance clips; and specific music edits (both official and fan made). These clips contribute to a wider culture of remediation and recirculation – fundamental components to maintaining the visibility and the continued survival of music programming within screen culture.

The archival impulse is not only reflected in the desire to upload and share music programming, but also to curate it in the form of playlists (Figure 1.13). This tool can be used to organise content, but also to showcase it, and is particularly evident on channels with a large number of videos, clearly created for the purpose of being an audiovisual archive. For instance, clips from *Ready Steady Go!* and *Juke Box Jury* feature in multiple playlists, collated according to different curatorial desires. These lists express different, often complex curatorial relationships, which reframe the content in a number of ways. In the broadest sense, these relate to various collections dedicated to the 1960s, positioned variously as an exemplar of the culture of the period and/or the ‘swinging sixties.’ However, they also feature in other more specific lists, representing other forms of remediation, alongside other genres of archival television.

¹⁵⁵ Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, p. 145.

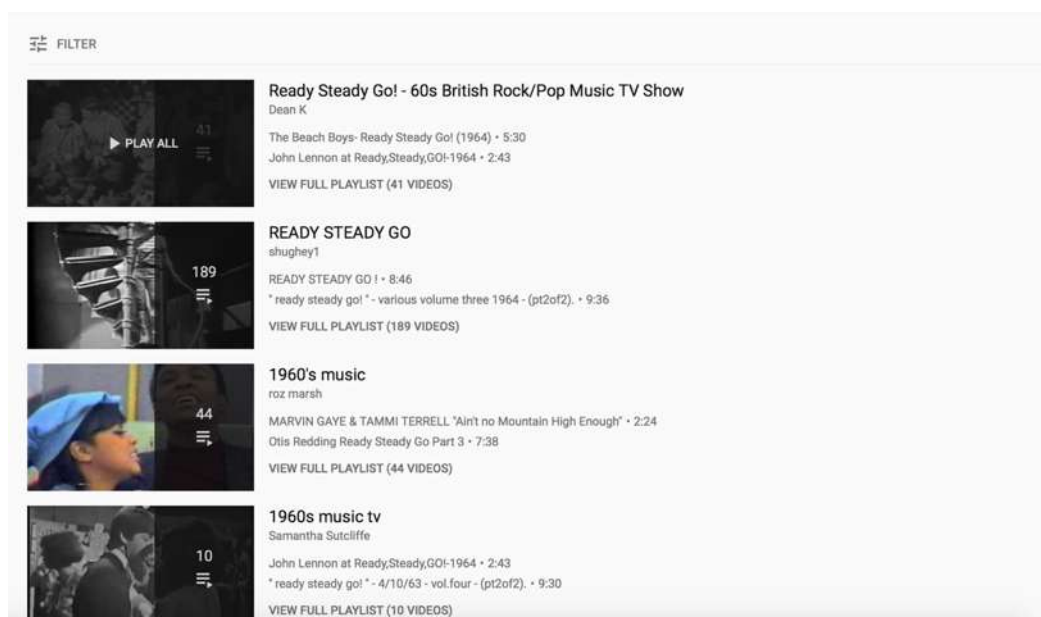


Figure 1.13: A selection of 1960s themed YouTube playlists

Curated playlists can also perform a similar function to a greatest hits compilation, chronicling a programme's history, and a summation of its memorable moments.¹⁵⁶ Often, this is due to the subsequent fame of the artist, such clips of as The Beatles' debut appearance on *Ready Steady Go!* or the Sex Pistols' John Lydon's infamous turn as a panellist on *Juke Box Jury* following its first revival in 1979.¹⁵⁷ Here, the viral nature of YouTube reveals its significance in regard to stimulating interest in archival programming. The ease of access and shareability of its content enables the clips to transcend the boundaries of their original socio-historical context, which facilitates the continued survival of a particular programme (or excerpt from it) through their recirculation, due to the cultural worth and value subsequently ascribed to the performer(s) featured within them. For instance, both The Beatles performance clip and Lydon's appearance are excerpted from other sources. The Lydon clip is evidently from a

¹⁵⁶ Dean K. *Ready Steady Go! - 60s British Rock/Pop Music TV Show* - YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0PvATFQmFzltQinQ-Wl4tMV6Mnv97-xQ>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2021. This playlist, last updated in 2016, is indicative of such curation, with its title designed to maximise potential views.

¹⁵⁷ See for example, Rios, Kildare. "*The Beatles I'll Get You RARE TV PERFORM.*" 1963. 2015. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-K65wYAx-0Y>. Accessed 27 July 2021; LiquidLifeTV. "*John Lydon on Jukebox Jury (1979).*" 1979. 2009. YouTube, <https://youtu.be/vXQ-CzyMyCg>. Accessed 27 Aug 2018.

documentary, shown in the briefly visible commentary by music journalist (and fan) Paul Morley (Figure 1.14).



Figure 1.14: YouTube clip of John Lydon's appearance on *Juke Box Jury*

The reappearance of this clip illustrates the relative scarcity and rarity of the programme in its original form – a reflection of both the lack of home recording technologies and/or the ability to turn analogue recordings into digital. This treatment is also indicative of Elodie A. Roy's description of YouTube's remediation capacities. Roy observes that YouTube 'fulfils a lack,' describing the editing and transfer process that remediates television as a kind of audiovisual quoting, that is 'selectively broadcast' by YouTube users, drawn from pre-existing audio-visual culture, arranging them according to their own taste.¹⁵⁸ Taste cultures remain a key component of YouTube's cultural politics and its archival imperatives, reinforced by the playlist function and the decision to upload anything *other* than original content.

The presence of music programming on the platform is not solely limited to remediated clips. There are numerous examples of full episodes available, particularly specials, uploaded by fans of particular music genres and/or artists. These often provide evidence of the ways in which programming deviated from

¹⁵⁸ Roy, Elodie A. *Media, Materiality and Memory: Grounding the Groove*, Routledge, 2016, p. 156.

dominant modes of representation within their period of production. Amongst several significant examples are two *Ready Steady Go!* specials. The first is a Motown special, broadcast in November 1965 and presented by Dusty Springfield and the Earl Dyke Band.¹⁵⁹ The second, broadcast the following year in September 1966, is dedicated to Otis Redding (Figure 1.15).¹⁶⁰

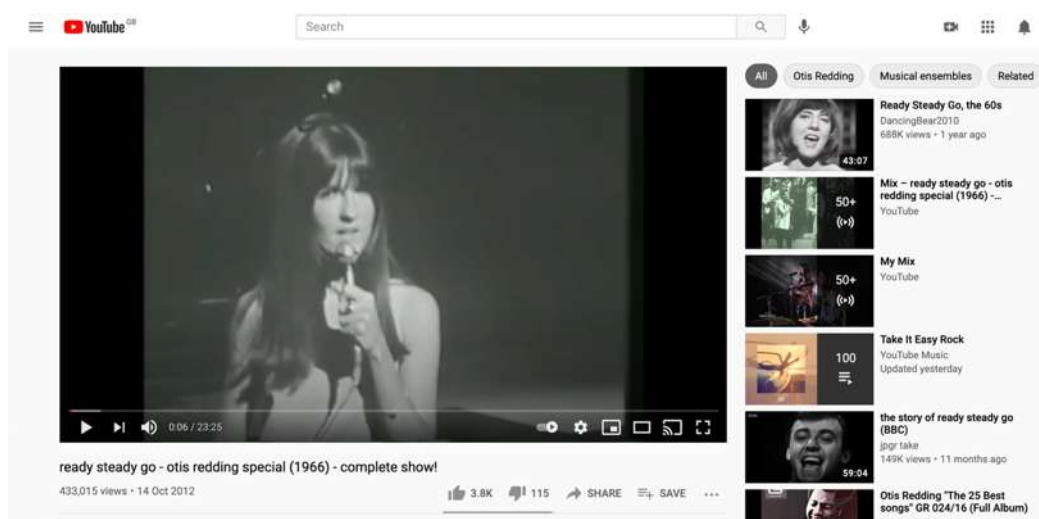


Figure 1.15: YouTube clip of *Ready Steady Go!* 1965 Otis Redding special

In showcasing artists such as Otis Redding, Smokey Robinson, and Martha and the Vandellas, the series helped to “break” acts on the Motown label, and increase their popularity in the UK, at a time when few black artists were featured on television.¹⁶¹ The survival of both specials indicates the importance of this representation, and the subsequent fame of the featured performers, which increases the potential for viewership and lends the survival of the episodes themselves a greater value and cultural longevity due the rarity of the footage.

¹⁵⁹ Time Signature Music Concerts & More. “‘READY STEADY GO: The Sounds Of Motown’ - (March 18, 1965).” 2021. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eB12w74cLds>. Accessed 27 July 2021.

¹⁶⁰ northern soulie. “Ready Steady Go - Otis Redding Special (1966) - Complete Show!.” 2012. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVU3JYcQS0&frags=pl%2Cwn>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2018.

¹⁶¹ As Martin Cloonan and Matt Brennan note, the limit or ban on foreign musicians in the UK meant there were few opportunities for them to be visible on television. For more on this, see Cloonan, Martin, and Matt Brennan. ‘Alien Invasions: The British Musicians’ Union and Foreign Musicians’. *Popular Music*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2013, pp. 277–95.

Here, the clip culture that has come to define how much of music programming survives can be understood in more concrete terms. As I discussed earlier in relation to *Whistle Test*, the cultural evisceration performed by editing programmes down to their performances – as in the conscious reframing of the 1982 *Something Else* ‘Just the Music’ special – is merely symptomatic of the origins of the cultural acceleration and increased choice that began following the introduction of satellite television in the 1980s.¹⁶² Furthermore, this celebration of the music performances from the show’s first three years is also indicative of the beginnings of the nostalgic turn that would continue over the course of the decade.¹⁶³ This mode of presentation has become so familiar that it has been adopted by fans to edit together favourite bands and performers, evident in an upload from a broadcast edited down to showcase performances by The Jam and Joy Division, to the exclusion of much of the programme’s broader magazine contexts, replicating the treatment of *Whistle Test* and *Top of the Pops*.¹⁶⁴

The desire to edit and remediate this material reinforces Chamberlain’s notion of temporal conspicuity. Though expressed in a very different manner, it conforms to broader arguments surrounding the post-broadcast environment and its characterisation as being content rich but time poor. While it could be argued that full extant episodes are harder to find, they are also longer, making them less attractive to viewers used to the short cycles of time associated with the culture of the clip. Equally plausible is the episode length, making the video more liable to copyright takedown, evidenced by the frequent appearance of

¹⁶² Hammond, Graham. “*Something Else - Just The Music BBC*.” 1982. 2016. *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/ysJMhbXGRvA>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2020.

¹⁶³ The 1989 *Arena* episode dedicated to the centenary of the jukebox, which also included panellists from *Juke Box Jury*, can be read as an early example of this kind of commemorative programming. Its inclusion is particularly interesting given the fact that *Juke Box Jury* would be broadcast until late September 1990.

¹⁶⁴ Guinarte, Manu. “*THE JAM & JOY DIVISION - Something Else 1979 (HQ)*.” 1979. 2011. *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/5xrRkLl9Q>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2020.

While some of the presenter links remain, the broader discussion segments, often based around issues and concerns of young people at the time, are excised. For a point of comparison, see the earlier full episode from Birmingham broadcast in 1979. See Urbansnug. “*SOMETHINGELSE 1979 Youth TV Programme*.” 1979. 2011. *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/0erxMEwGfIQ>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2020.

deleted video placeholders left behind in user-curated playlists, reiterating both the dynamism of the YouTube platform, and its fragile, ephemeral state.

Recirculation and remediation within YouTube turns archival television into a different kind of commodity, whose worth is often confined to the visibility and popularity of both the performer *and* the performance. These forms are also reflected in the types of official and unofficial archival sources. Official channels, such as The Huntley Archive, use YouTube to present some of their holdings to a wider audience. The branding and catalogue numbers can clearly be seen on a 22 second advertisement for *Ready Steady Go!* that promotes its liveness.¹⁶⁵ The visible nature of the branding and cataloguing adopted by the channel signals a desire to differentiate and legitimate itself against the unofficial channels that post programme clips and episodes. The rarity of the Huntley Archive footage is also exemplary of the cultural work that underpins all forms of archiving: to reinscribe value and cultural worth.¹⁶⁶ The comment sections and/or threads that accompany the videos discussed in this section are particularly revealing, due to their shared common features, and the ways in which they echo the wider discourses of music culture and music heritage, while also contributing to them. The comment threads show an awareness of the clip as an archival object, while also acknowledging its status as an object of memory and a site of nostalgia. Often, these interactions lead to comment threads, containing several – largely positive – conversational interactions between the same two or three users.

Martin Pogačar calls this type of interaction ‘proactive nostalgia.’¹⁶⁷ For Pogačar, the act of commenting is part of a larger process of remembering that is enacted through the ‘tele-intimate’ relation with content and the users who have left a ‘mark of their presence.’¹⁶⁸ He goes on to state that commenting is also a tool of ‘defragmenting affect,’ which can engender fellow users to engage

¹⁶⁵ HuntleyFilmArchives. “*Ready Steady Go! TV Advert. Archive Film 61130.*” 2018. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=io82dwSiNTc>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2020.

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that the presence of official archive channels like the Huntley Archives are the exception rather than the rule. Fans undertake the vast majority of music programming uploaded to YouTube. The closest equivalent to this is the YouTube presence of The Criterion Collection.

¹⁶⁷ Pogačar, Martin. ‘Memory in Audiovision’. *Media Archaeologies, Micro-Archives and Storytelling: Re-Presenting the Past*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 174.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

(or not engage) in similar acts by adding their own comments.¹⁶⁹ Though related to a specific form of YouTube content – the memorial video – Pogačar's observations hold equal relevance for viewers of non-contemporary music programming, since this also involves engaging in several acts of memorialisation and remembrance. The tele-intimate relationship that Pogačar puts forward is further reflected in the content-specific nature of the comments left behind on videos, which almost always directly relate to the original function of the programme itself.

Comments on *Ready Steady Go!*, the oldest text within this sampling, are largely based around the programme's retrospective pleasures, where the clip is used as a focal point for the nostalgia of the commenter, and as an entry-point to re-engagement with the musical past. The most frequently commented phrase concerns how 'good' the music presented within the clip is in comparison to contemporary music offerings. In contrast, the comments on the *Juke Box Jury* and *Something Else* videos operate at a more critical distance. Comments on the former clips are concerned with the perceived 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of the panellists' predictions, often drawing out the humour in their reasoning.

Finally, commenters on the *Something Else* clips engage in a mixture of nostalgic closeness and critical distance. Some lament the passing of featured musicians and reflect on their youth, while others express a more distanced tone, focusing on the archival work being undertaken and the quality of the clip. The focus of these commenters is based around a different kind of remembrance, concerned instead with the inherent pleasures of listening, the quality of the performance, and/or the display of musicianship. Such comments are often augmented with lengthy descriptions that present what amounts to a track list, identifying songs and performers alongside numerical timestamps, enabling their fellow viewers to skip to their favourite part and ignore what they are not interested in, once more fragmenting the viewing experience.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁷⁰ The fan edit of *Something Else* with performances by The Jam and Joy Division mentioned earlier is exemplary of such detailed video descriptions, featuring both a track list and timestamps for ease of viewing: A similar practice is undertaken by a commenter rather than

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the video description for another clip from *Something Else*. Siouxsie and the Banshees' appearance in 1979, performing 'Love in a Void', offers scant information in its description box but *does* state that the video was recorded from a VHS tape prior to upload (Figure 1.16).¹⁷¹

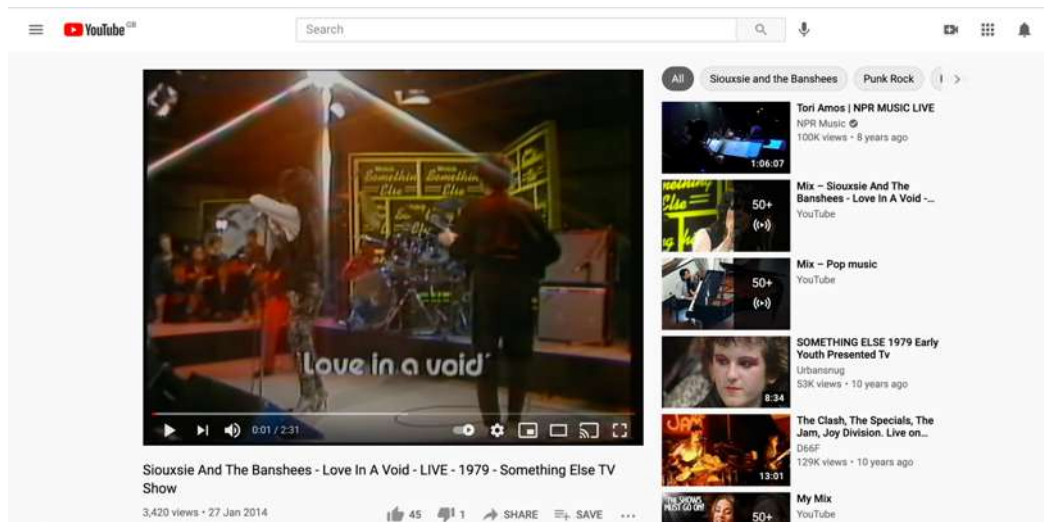


Figure 1.16: YouTube clip of Siouxsie and the Banshees' 'Love in a Void'

This acknowledgment is brief, but telling, openly acknowledging two important aspects of any given clip's cultural afterlife: the hidden labour that is generated in the upload process and the archival status of the clip, reinforced by the image quality, lines and other visible distortion common to analogue to digital transfer. The fact the uploader chose not to correct what may be viewed as 'imperfections' in the digital era are, following Schrey, transformed into positive, desirable traits – making visible the aesthetic conditions of the clip's textual and material former life, bound up with the connotations of pastness such traits have come to signify and embody. It is notable however, that even in cases of older material where the image quality is poor in relation to current viewing standards, most commenters choose to thank the uploader rather than reference footage quality.

the uploader on the 'Just the Music' edit of *Something Else*, using their comment to list the tracks featured within the video, without the addition of timestamps.

¹⁷¹ kentoxymoron. "Siouxsie And The Banshees - Love In A Void - LIVE - 1979 - Something Else TV Show." 1979. 2014. YouTube, https://youtu.be/6udEl_DD_oA. Accessed 27 Aug. 2020.

Within the YouTube space, cultural value and fidelity of the source are weighted and operate differently. The relative low quality of the footage is disregarded in favour of its existence on the site. Its re-appearance allows the song, and a moment thought lost to be returned, carrying an emotional and affective worth that outweighs the aesthetic clarity of the clip itself.

The continued presence of archival music programming and objects of music culture and heritage on YouTube blurs the distinctions between private and personal memories, changing them into public, shared experiences. While this move may signal, as Elodie A. Roy puts it, the ‘erasure of a certain materiality, and therefore emplacement and material fixity of the *archive*’ and the videos within YouTube’s limitless, always on, always available and forever in flux space may only be able to approximate the aura of the original objects of memory they represent.¹⁷² The increased visibility of this material created by its reappearance on YouTube holds deep emotional and affective resonance for the global community of users and viewers engaging with it. While the future of YouTube and the degree to which it can maintain its position as cultural repository and archive is uncertain, the contribution the platform has made to the cultural afterlife of both music programming and music culture as a whole is too significant and too far reaching to ignore in the present.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the ways in which non-contemporary music programming continues to endure, the many avenues which contribute to its survival or cultural afterlife, and the varied forms that this survival can take. In the post-broadcast environment, music programming – particularly non-contemporary music programming – has developed a changed and significant position, surviving in both full and fragmentary forms. Its endurance is characterised by continued changes in *what* television is accessed, *how* it is accessed, and *when* it is accessed.

¹⁷² Roy, *Media, Materiality and Memory*, p. 149.

Through discussion of music television on DVD, broadcast schedule of BBC Four, and the online spaces of iPlayer and YouTube, I illustrate how flow remains a useful way of tracing not only *how* non-contemporary music programming survives, but also *why* it survives, due in part to the longevity of featured artists. Flow allows us to explore how television is structured, organised, and viewed, which I argue informs changes in channel content, branding, and identity. The branding and scheduling strategies undertaken by BBC Four display a particular understanding of music culture, its historicity, and cultural significance, coupled with an awareness of the effective and affective potential of branded flow for the audience. They also highlight the mutually reinforcing relationship between content, flow, channel branding, identity, and mode of address. Flow is both continuous and linked, often directly responding to broader synergies between music culture and heritage, programming, television as an object, and circulations of taste.

The textual re-encounters explored throughout this chapter intervene in current debates regarding flow in the post-broadcast mediascape, and its endurance as a term. The recirculation of music television through these distinct but overlapping kinds of flow contributes to their continued presence in popular culture and memory. Moreover, they contribute to the textual longevity of non-contemporary music programming and help to maintain its cultural afterlife. The increased presence of such programming signals a shift in arts television towards the popular, but also a broadening of how arts television is categorised and perceived. The reappearance of non-contemporary music programming within these new viewing contexts and avenues also reinscribes it with value and worth, while challenging long-held views surrounding its status as a 'low,' ephemeral, and throwaway cultural object. The cultural work performed by BBC Four directly impacts upon which elements of the musical past are remembered, and how they are remembered.

However, as the discussion on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* underlines, the texts that contribute to the series' cultural afterlife, and the strategies used to maintain it, are not without issue. On one hand, the texts demonstrate an understanding of music culture, its historicity, and significance, coupled with an

awareness of nostalgia's affective potential for its audience. On the other, they demonstrate the impact of shaping historical narratives upon a programme's cultural legacy, and the dangers of reducing its historical complexity, which impacts on how these series are remembered.

The cultural afterlife and endurance of music programming is further complicated by a changed relationship between the audience, the text, and time. This is most obvious in the context of YouTube and its use as a space for archival television that is largely curated by ordinary people who wish to share their collections while actively engaging in their musical past. Here, the nostalgic viewer is no longer simply *passive*, but can also be *active*, working as a contributor to the recirculation of the musical past, while engaged in the pleasures of reconnecting with it. The presence of non-contemporary music programming and related interstitial material on the platform illustrates the changed position of what is considered valuable enough to archive, while also underlining the inherent tensions between official and unofficial archival sources, and material and immaterial objects of memory when transferred to the digital. Whether on television, on DVD or online, the increased visibility of music programming creates space for engagement with music culture, stimulating further demand by turning it into a familiar and consistent presence, within its own historical significance.

In the next chapter, discussion turns towards how music programming narrativizes and celebrates its own history.

Chapter Two: Music Television, Celebration, and Material Culture

Introduction

This chapter explores the increasingly complex relationships between music television, memory, and materiality through close analysis of three series made over the last two decades. The case studies have been chosen for their shared aesthetic, material qualities, with particular attention paid to their capacity to express and elicit emotional affectivity in their audience and contributors. The first case study is *The People's History of Pop*, and is primarily focused on the relationship between personal and institutionalised history, and the importance of tangible memory objects to how such history is revised through television documentary to become more inclusive. The second case study focuses on long-running series *Classic Albums* and discusses the ways in which such programming can have a different relationship to memory, exploring its impact on closed historical narratives and canonisation. The third and final study, *Live from Abbey Road*, examines the specificity of the relationships between space, place, and cultural tourism, moving discussion of materiality into public, shared spaces.

I argue that these programmes are characterised by an approach to the representation and re-presentation of history, memory, and nostalgia that complicates much of the pre-existing writing concerning the construction and reconstruction of history on television, the reputation and value of music programming, and the conceptualisation of nostalgia. The BBC's *My Generation* season offers important context for how music programming, memory, and nostalgia work together in the current mediascape, and will be used as a way into the themes presented throughout this chapter. Created under the BBC Music umbrella, the season explored music history spanning from the 1950s to the 1990s.¹ Running from April 2016 to March 2017, the season featured across BBC television and radio at two-month intervals, with each decade given a dedicated

¹ BBC Music is the branding used for all the BBC's music output. Though part of BBC Radio, it also includes content created for television and online.

weekend.² The television strand included specially commissioned series, such as *The People's History of Pop*; one-off documentaries like *The Story of Skinhead with Don Letts* (BBC, 2016); and repeat airings of *Classic Albums* episodes.³ Incorporating the perspectives of both fans and musicians, the season was constructed directly around memory, and the shared but often deeply personal experiences of music culture. The season also served to highlight the ways in which the celebration and commemoration of music history is greatly influenced by its broadcast context, namely the process of re-framing and re-presentation that occurs within specialised themed programming cyclical flows.⁴ The impact of such strategies is reflected upon throughout the analysis that follows.

The People's History of Pop

Contextualising *The People's History of Pop*

The cornerstone of the *My Generation* season is *The People's History of Pop*, a five-part exploration of Britain's musical and cultural past.⁵ Each episode is dedicated to a decade, based around a theme drawn from fan stories and ephemera related to the events they experienced, such as posters, flyers, or tickets. For instance, the first episode, '1955-1965: The Birth of the Fan', details the nascent years of popular music, and its rise in parallel with youth culture. Themes from subsequent episodes include the exploration of the album-led music culture of the 1960s and 1970s in '1966-1976: The Love Affair,' and the role

² Programming officially began on 15th April 2016, with the final programmes of the season airing across 10th and 11th March 2017. At the time of writing, programming originally featured as part of the season continues to be repeated on BBC Four and some content is available on BBC iPlayer.

³ The episodes dedicated to the Wailers' *Catch a Fire* and the Beach Boy's *Pet Sounds* – the latter of which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter – were aired during the 1960s and 1970s sections respectively.

⁴ I borrow the term 'cyclical flows' and its implementation from John Thornton Caldwell. See Caldwell, John Thornton. 'Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity and User Flows'. *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, edited by Anna Everett and John Thornton Caldwell, Routledge, 2003, pp. 127–44.

⁵ It should be noted that initial BBC press releases described the series as containing four parts, later extended to five. See BBC Media Centre. 'BBC Announces Major Music Season - BBC Music: My Generation'. *BBC Media Centre*, 10 Mar. 2016, bbc.com/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/bbc-music-my-generation. Accessed Apr. 2016.

of politics and youth subcultures in the music of the late 1970s to the mid-1980s in '1976-1985: Tribal Gatherings.' The series follows earlier BBC Four music history and music heritage documentary series such as *Britannia* (BBC Four, 2005-2012),⁶ and *Pop! What is it Good For?* (BBC Four, 2008). Of these, *Britannia* shares many aesthetic and formal qualities with *The People's History of Pop*, drawing on a wide range of sources, including archive footage and press clippings to contextualise its history and bring it to life for the audience.⁷

Before discussing *The People's History of Pop* in more detail, it is useful to contextualise its transmission and the relationship between BBC Four and music programming; more specifically, its role in preserving and celebrating music culture history, and where *The People's History of Pop* fits in relation to the rest of the channel's schedule. Its appearance on the channel is significant in several interrelated ways that reveal much about who the series addresses. Firstly, the reputation of BBC Four itself – as the BBC's dedicated digital channel for arts and culture programming – is such that it implies an engaged, knowledgeable and media literate audience. This in turn elevates the series, designating it as arts programming, distinct from popular music programming. Its transmission underlines the BBC Four remit, its public service ethos, and continued commitment to showing music programming.⁸

The inclusion of *The People's History of Pop* alongside other repeated airings of 'classic' episodes of flagship programming, such as *Top of the Pops* and newer *At the BBC* (2004 –) performance compilations highlights the ease with which contemporary and historical television programmes are scheduled alongside each other in the channel's flow, but also that the channel sees the

⁶ Here, my use of the word 'series' is an umbrella term, adopted from similar usage in the writings of Paul Long and Tim Wall. The *Britannia* series of histories began with *Jazz Britannia* in 2005. This was used as the template for later series dedicated to different genres of music including folk (2006), pop (2008), blues (2009), and reggae (2012).

⁷ For further discussion of *Britannia*, see Wall, Tim. *Studying Popular Music Culture*, pp. 69; Long and Wall, 'Connecting the Histories of Popular Music': and Long and Wall 'Friday on My Mind.'

⁸ Outlined by the BBC Trust, the channel's remit is as follows: 'BBC Four's primary role is to reflect a range of UK and international arts, music and culture.' Under the conditions of its latest (April 2016) license, it is also required to broadcast at least 150 hours of new arts and music programmes each year. See BBC Trust. 'BBC Four'. Apr. 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/services/television/service_licences/bbc_four.html. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018.

value in such formats.⁹ The continuity between the programming is reinforced by their similar aesthetic properties – primarily in their collage format, use of archive material and captioning. Consistently broadcasting this programming signals an awareness of the need to preserve, celebrate, and commemorate music culture. This is exemplary of what Bennett and Baker term the ‘cultural work performed by television,’ and further illustrates the potency of nostalgia and the ubiquity of heritage discourses they describe.¹⁰ The proliferation of choice and ease of access provided by the post-broadcast landscape means that the way in which audiences interact with and view television has changed, with less opportunity for – as Amanda D. Lotz observes in relation to post-network television context in the US – shared programme knowledge or simultaneous viewing. She argues that this creates a culture of uncertainty that ‘often instigates a nostalgia for past norms that imagines the past differently than it was experienced.’¹¹

Such nostalgic drives are, in part, why BBC Four schedules these historical programming blocks or cycles. However, it should be noted that Lotz’s account does not allow for discussion of programming via social media platforms, which are, I suggest, the contemporary equivalent of a shared, simultaneous viewing experience.¹² I also argue that the specificity of programming that Lotz laments has been eliminated in the US landscape remains prevalent in the UK through channels such as BBC Four and Sky Arts. In her own definition of narrowcasting (or flexible microcasting), Lisa Parks suggests that this kind of targeted

⁹ These include compilations of soul, jazz, disco, and country music alongside episodes for specific artists and cover versions of popular genres and/or artists collected under the ‘sings’ banner. These should not be confused with the filmed concert performances of the same name shown throughout the decades. However, these performances are often repeated in the same kind of grouped nostalgia-oriented scheduling.

¹⁰ Bennett and Baker, ‘*Classic Albums*’, p.41.

¹¹ Lotz, Amanda D. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, 2nd edition, New York University Press, 2014. p.40.

¹² This work includes Gentikow, Barbara. ‘Television Use in New Media Environments’. *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, edited by Jostein Gripsrud, Routledge, 2010, pp. 141–55; Larsen, Peter. ‘The Grey Area. A Rough Guide: Television Fans, Internet Forums, and the Cultural Public Sphere’. *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, edited by Jostein Gripsrud, Routledge, 2010, pp. 156–167; and Jerslev, Anne. ‘X Factor Viewers: Debate on an Internet Forum’. *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, edited by Jostein Gripsrud, Routledge, 2010, pp. 168–82. In addition, work on Twitter and television is particularly useful in this context, see Harrington, Stephen, et al. ‘More than a Backchannel: Twitter and Television’. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, May 2013, pp. 405–09.

programming is created to appeal directly to ‘the individual cultural tastes of the viewer/consumer,’ underlining the fact that the relationship between the broadcaster and the audience remains a reciprocal one, maintained by an increasing array of social media and delivery platforms.¹³ Though defined by the circulations of cultural and personal taste, the relationship remains centred on supply and demand. In this context, it is clear to see that the BBC’s work adds to the general momentum of, and appetite for, such historical music and arts programming, but it also reinforces the strength of the channel’s own branding by offering audiences content – as the channel remit reiterates – that is outside the offerings of the mainstream.

Creating History

If *The People’s History of Pop* can be considered a different kind of music documentary, it can also be considered as offering a different kind of history to its audience by reconceptualising music history and music heritage. Rather than taking its interest from the industry, or the artists working within it, the series is interested in the stories of music fans and their own, often deeply personal reflections on their experiences of music culture and its impact upon their lives – the embodiment of Marxist historian E.P. Thompson’s oft-cited concept of ‘history from below.’¹⁴ This approach is a useful lens through which to consider the difficult relationship between music and history, and the role series like *The People’s History of Pop* have in changing preconceived ideas concerning pre-existing narratives of music history within the public domain. Via John Corner Paul Long and Tim Wall argue that such histories are typically authoritarian, closed narrative accounts that have ‘a tendency to reduce complexity to the simple and single viewpoint.’¹⁵ Though factually accurate, these histories often

¹³ Parks, Lisa. ‘Flexible Microcasting: Gender, Generation, and Television-Internet Convergence’. *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, edited by Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson, Duke University Press, 2004, pp. 134-135.

¹⁴ Thompson, E. P. ‘History from Below’. *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 Apr. 1966, pp. 279–80.

¹⁵ Long and Wall, ‘Constructing the Histories of Popular Music’, p. 25. For more in relation to the discursive weaknesses of televised history see Corner, ‘Sense and Perspective’.

present an incomplete picture of music culture. Writing and television of this kind often perpetuates constructions of history that are linear, and remain dominated by oversimplified Aristotelian 'Great Man' narratives to the exclusion of alternative interpretations and perspectives. The critique of television history's integrity has arisen in tandem with its growing popularity as a genre, reflected in the work of Erin Bell, David Cannadine, Graham Roberts and Philip M. Taylor.¹⁶

However, it is important to note that music history in particular offers challenges when attempting to create an accurate and representative picture of what occurred, how, when, and why. The balance of these elements varies greatly, but there is also the matter of perspective: the what, how, when, and why of creating a television series. During his discussion of television's relationship with music, Simon Frith notes that: 'the history of music and television told from the perspective of music is rather different from the history told from the perspective of television.'¹⁷ In *Using History*, Jeremy Black echoes these sentiments and argues that the chronicling of history always engenders disappointment in the audience. This is due to the inherent and obvious disparity between audience expectations and fan canons versus that of established scholarly canons, or historical correctness. Black observes:

[F]ilm and television present history as answers, necessarily so, as the amount of time available for verbal elucidation is limited. Film and television also present history as narrative, preferably with a beginning, a middle, and an end, rather than as social process.¹⁸

The statements referenced above are an acknowledgement that there are multiple ways to approach history on television, and also multiple ways to present the history of the subject itself. Key to the success of *The People's History of Pop* as a piece of history and as a piece of television (the two are not always

¹⁶ Bell, Erin. 'Televising History: The Past(s) On the Small Screen'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, Feb. 2007, pp. 5–12; Cannadine, David, editor. *History and the Media*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; and Roberts, Graham, and Philip M. Taylor, editors. *The Historian, Television and Television History*. University of Luton Press, 2001.

¹⁷ Frith, 'Look! Hear!', p. 193.

¹⁸ Black, Jeremy. *Using History*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2005, p. 33.

mutually exclusive) is not to follow the tendency to present its contents *as* history – a failing that Long and Wall underline in relation to *Britannia. The People's History of Pop* is constructed around an awareness of fan culture, and the potential diversity of its audience.

Expressing Alternate Histories

Rather than disappointing their audience by not meeting their expectations, the series actively subverts them in a number of ways. Firstly, this is reflected in the editorial policy within episodes. The second and third episodes in particular chart a great deal of socio-historical and musical change, and as such, the pace of these episodes compared to the opening one is markedly more rapid. While segments on Northern Soul and its surrounding culture are shorter than the screen time offered to, for instance, fans of the Beatles or David Bowie, there is no suggestion that one fan group is better than the other, or that the output from them has more cultural value. There is, however, a strong sense that those fans' experiences were all part of the same, shared, broader music history. Everyone has an opportunity to share the music and memories that are important to them. Though many of the experiences shared are different, and appear at different times throughout these shared histories, their emotional impact is often reflected upon in similar terms, relating to the positive benefits of engaging with music culture and the comfort, safety, and confidence that it brought to the individuals involved, often helping them to negotiate feelings of isolation and loneliness or confusion concerning their own identity.

For many, the social aspects of music culture gave them access to an identity and a subculture that would come to define the rest of their lives, for instance, mods and teddy boys. Building upon my previous point, the series also dedicates time and space to the perspective of ethnic minority groups. This is felt most obviously in the exploration of the role of blue beat in fostering cross-cultural relations during the 1960s and 1970s, but most interestingly, in the stories of three fans of the Smiths, following a band who, Pauline Black's narration tells us, appealed to 'teens who felt a bit out of step with the world.'

Following this, we are introduced to three fans – Raju Vaidyanathan, Sultana Qureshi, and Angie Cooke – who share their stories and memorabilia (Figure 2.1). They reflect upon their outsider status as British Asian and Black teenagers, but also on their difference from other fans of the band – based around dominant preconceived notions of what a ‘typical’ fan may look or sound like.

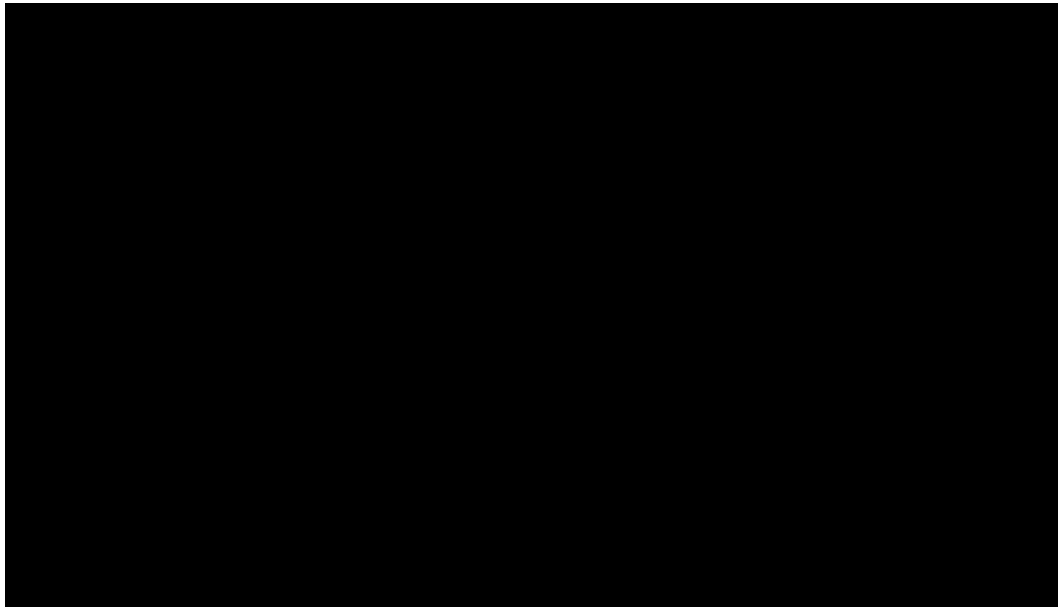


Figure 2.1: BAME Smiths fans share stories and memorabilia

Ultimately, they note how the music made them feel less isolated and marginalised, growing in confidence through their experiences.¹⁹ Their perceived difference, along with the specialness and uniqueness of their memories, is what drew the programme makers to them in the first instance. Their eventual inclusion in the programme highlights the important attempts *The People’s History of Pop* makes to revise and reconceptualise history, by allowing voices that would be eradicated or otherwise omitted from mainstream accounts to be heard. While by no means an exhaustive picture of British music history, it is a more complete one; something recognised in the repeated opening narration, reminding us that it is ‘the story of British pop music as you’ve never heard it

¹⁹ Stories of fans being ‘changed for the better’ by discovering a band and its surrounding culture are a common feature of the series, not least because many contributors are looking back on their youth. However, the emotional component and sense of belonging takes on extra relevance and poignancy during the segments featuring Raja, Sultana, and Angie.

before.'

The People's History of Pop is a series that celebrates cultural, social, and political differences to create a multifaceted view of history. The tone of its narration is like reminiscing with a friend, rather than the cool, often aloof, authoritarian voice-of-God narration common to documentary, reinforced through the use of well-known public figures such as Twiggy, Danny Baker, Pauline Black, and Lauren Laverne as presenter-narrators. This accepted, the position of authority present within the series is generally taken up by the fans themselves, keen archivists of their own collections, with their knowledge drawn from direct lived experience underlining that their perspective is unique. In her work on the complex relationship between media and memory, Joanne Garde-Hansen highlights the existence of a natural binary opposition that exists within memory discourse, where media is established as "mass," "popular," and "artificial," and memory as 'lived, authentic, and experienced.'²⁰ The presentation of that relationship within *The People's History of Pop* is based on the same qualities but the series deconstructs the binaries Garde-Hansen sets up, showing instead that the two can exist in a free-flowing relationship by celebrating popular culture, its deep emotional resonances and the knowledge exchange that enriches the level of engagement *with* that culture. The depth of that knowledge is such that they would fall into Matt Hills' characterisation of the 'fan-scholar' and in some cases its reversal, the 'scholar fan.'²¹ Their presence is, again, a validation of both alternate forms of knowledge and their own, often hitherto formally unrecognised. Beyond their contributions, the form of the episodes are shaped in two ways by the presenter, who acts as a bridge, or as James Bennett has described in his work on television personalities, 'an intermediary,' between the fans and their culture.²²

²⁰ Garde-Hansen, Joanne, *Media and Memory*, p. 26.

²¹ The differences between both terms and the application of their use relates to *how* fans identify first, as a scholar or a fan. It should be noted however, that some, but not all, fan-scholars possess academic knowledge. For further discussion, see Hills, Matt. *Fan Cultures*. Routledge, 2002.

²² Bennett, James. 'The Television Personality System: Televisual Stardom Revisited After Film Theory'. *Screen*, vol. 49, no. 1, Spring 2008, p. 36.

Presenters, Knowledge, and Performance

This connective role of intermediary is achieved firstly through narration and secondly in onscreen presence. The onscreen segments are used to weave together one story and the next, in a similar manner to a museum or local history tour guide. The internal flow of *The People's History of Pop* is characterised by its multi-directional, open narrative approach to history, which is in contrast to the linear, closed approach more commonly adopted by the other music history programmes presented throughout this chapter.²³ For instance, on several occasions, the presenters talk to contributors themselves – contributors otherwise talk to an off-screen member of the production team – and become more involved in the story being told. Whom they speak to is often dictated by their own personal connection to the period under discussion, and a small amount of time is also given for them to share their own story, which is then related to the next piece of music history evidence and special object to be revealed. Their presence within the series often blurs the boundary between presenter and fan, but also highlights the lack of fixedness in the roles fulfilled by television personalities.²⁴ Their functions onscreen encapsulate James Bennett's classifications of the vocationally skilled performer (known primarily for and validated by their pre-existing professional skills), and a televisually skilled performer (known primarily for their skill as a presenter only. At different times within the episode, they embody either one or both 'modes of performance' frequently overlapping between the two.²⁵

While the presenters involved do attract a certain amount of attention, there is no sense that their involvement is perfunctory or, conversely, that they

²³ I use the phrase 'internal flow' to denote the construction of flow within the programme as opposed to the flow of its position in the broadcast schedule, which might be termed 'external flow.'

²⁴ For further work on television presenters and performance, see Dyer, Richard. 'A Star Is Born and the Construction of Authenticity'. *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, edited by Christine Gledhill, Routledge, 1991, pp. 132–4; Lury, Karen. 'Television Performance: Being, Acting and "Corpsing"'. *New Formations*, vol. 27, Winter 1995, pp. 114–31; Brunsdon, Charlotte. 'Lifestyling Britain: The 8-9 Slot on British Television'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, Mar. 2003, pp. 5–23; and Bonner, Frances. *Personality Presenters: Television's Intermediaries with Viewers*. Ashgate, 2011.

²⁵ Bennett, 'The Television Personality System,' p. 35.

are taking over the programme – they are as much a part of the story, of creating the history of pop, as the fans who take part. During episode one, Twiggy shares her early memories of becoming a dancer on *Ready Steady Go!*, meeting with its choreographer Theresa Kerr at a dance studio to discuss the dance culture that went along with the series. In episode two, Danny Baker relives his time working in a record shop as a teenager and his meeting with Marc Bolan, followed by visiting musician Danielz of T. Rexasy (a T. Rex tribute band). In episode three, Pauline Black recalls her beginnings in the folk scene, and her time as lead singer of the Selecter, and meets with a music promoter to see his collection of rare punk posters. Similarly, episode four, '1986-1996: All Together Now', opens with Lauren Laverne reading back issues of *Smash Hits* in a café, reminiscing on her time as a teenage reader. Later in the episode, she discusses her own entrance into the history of pop as the founder and lead singer of pop punk band Kenickie, prior to her career in broadcasting.

In the promotion and discussion of the series by the BBC, there is particular attention paid to both the importance of personal memories and recollection, but also to collecting and preserving related ephemera. Often, these are fragile paper products, such as magazine clippings, tickets, and flyers, or more personal items such as photographs taken on key dates, or personal diaries written at the time. Their relationship to the fan and to music history therefore imbues these mundane items that are typically overlooked, often lost, or simply discarded over time with a deep-seated emotional and cultural resonance that belies their face value. Building upon the reputational value of the BBC and BBC Music, press releases and episode descriptions for the series use language that is commonly used in relation to archaeology, or a mythological quest such as 'uncovered' or 'unearthed,' along with consistent references to the existence of 'pop treasures,' turning the music fans into treasure seekers-turned-archivists who preserve and protect their prized relics.²⁶

²⁶ BBC Media Centre, 'BBC Announces Major Music Season'; BBC. 'BBC Four - *The People's History of Pop, 1976-1985 Tribal Gatherings*'. BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07ycbr8>. Accessed 8 July 2016; BBC. 'BBC Four - *The People's History of Pop, 1966-1976: The Love Affair*'. BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07l24rf>. Accessed 8 Oct. 2016.

This kind of speech, Jamie Baron argues, is purposefully evocative, and draws in the audience using the ‘lure’ of the found document and its ‘promise of revelation.’²⁷ Baron suggests that such found documents and objects speak to the audience’s desire for historical meaning, but also for what she terms ‘historical presence.’²⁸ The primary function of historical presence is not to provide a revelation or a large historical revision, but instead, to provide the audience with a ‘revelatory affective experience.’²⁹ The series expands on the lure of this experience and the established connotations of treasure and hunting through repeated references in the narration to the unique, rare, or otherwise special nature of the featured objects, showing awareness of its status as a site of cultural (and national) importance, and the role of the series in wider discourses relating to the practice of media archaeology.³⁰

While the series itself presents various kinds of personal archives – with contributors keen to show just how large their collections are and provide context for the items within them – the series itself can be seen as an archive. The inspiration for the series is derived from a crowdsourcing project, also called The People’s History of Pop, created in partnership with HistoryPin.³¹ They appealed to music fans to upload and share, as the website states, ‘[their] stories and [their] stuff from the music of the 1950s to the noughties,’ in order to create an online visual archive, primarily devoted to photographs and/or scanned images of documents and objects to present as evidence or “proof” of their memories and experiences. Selections from these uploads were made and fans contacted to appear and contribute to television series that followed. The

²⁷ Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 49.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ The origins of this interdisciplinary work originate in the writings of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. For an example of more contemporary scholarship in this field see Zielinski, Siegfried. *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*. MIT Press, 2008; Huhtamo, Erkki, and Jussi Parikka, editors. *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*. University of California Press, 2011; Parikka, Jussi. *What Is Media Archaeology?* Polity Press, 2012; and Ernst, Wolfgang, and Jussi Parikka. *Digital Memory and the Archive*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

³¹ *The People’s History of Pop*. <https://phop.co.uk/>. Accessed 8 Oct. 2016. HistoryPin, a collaborative archive dedicated to sharing and connecting people with local history, is where the archive framework of The People’s History of Pop project originates. ‘Historypin’. *Historypin*, <https://www.historypin.org/en/>. Accessed 21 Jan. 2017.

informal tone of the website call in turn generates a feeling of shared experiences and memories that is central to the crowdsourcing principle – a history of people, not of media institutions, even if its production is overseen by one of the largest examples of the latter.

The Archive Aesthetic

The concept of the project as an archive is reflected in the aesthetic of the series by consciously mimicking established archival practices. Principally, this occurs through the act of referencing, through regular captions, to designate the origin of archive footage, similar to the captioning mentioned above in relation to *Top of the Pops* and *At the BBC*. However, *The People's History of Pop* expands such captioning by also including details about the speaker currently onscreen, their name and profession (Figure 2.2).

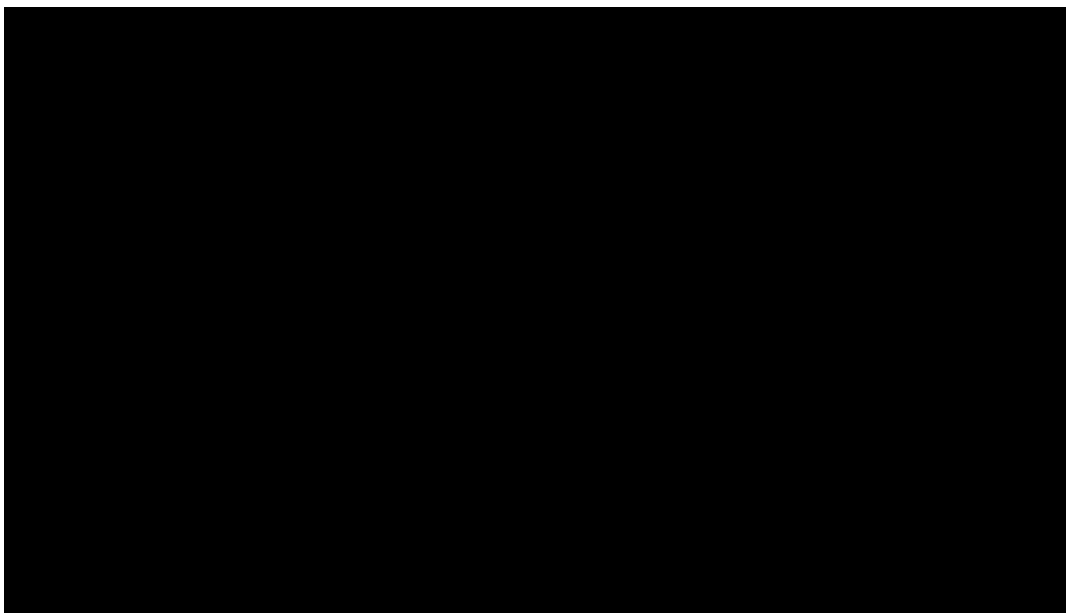


Figure 2.2: Captions used throughout *The People's History of Pop*

This attention to detail is also reminiscent of museum exhibit information cards and serves to reiterate once again that this is a historical journey created by people from all walks of life. Featured contributors include teachers, journalists, artists, DJs, and musicians alongside plumbers and removal men. Taking the time to reveal this information to the audience also allows for it to be absorbed,

creating a sense of trust between them and the programme, and a fixed point of identification (and emotional connection) that is quite separate from the feelings stirred by seeing the tangible evidence of music history onscreen. The diversity of the people involved reiterates the series' commitment to history from below, but it also signals a return to the kind of personalised, 'empathic human history,' that Paul Ricoeur feared would be lost in the turn away from material traces in favour of scientific data.³² While the series does embrace technology, it strives to actively work against depersonalised historical accounts, primarily through its use of oral history and testimony, where each fan is also positioned as a witness to history, and the materiality – the contact with documents – that Ricoeur wished to maintain.

This archival impulse, the drive to preserve material traces of the past over empirical data is a reflection of the 'musealization' of the past as theorised by Hermann Lübke, in which he argues that museums are 'rescue institutions for cultural remains from the process of destruction.'³³ Building on this idea, Andreas Huyssen suggests that this musealization works in conjunction with memory – and by extension the tangible ephemera, the objects of memory – as a line of defence against 'obsolescence and disappearance to counter our deep anxiety about the speed of change and the ever-shrinking horizons of time and space.'³⁴ While the anxiety Huyssen points to is not foregrounded overtly within the programme, it is noticeable, and could be interpreted as being symptomatic of that anxiety. This is particularly evident when the age of the ephemera being shown is obvious, for instance, in the curling of paper documents or fading inks of posters and photographs.

However, the programme also shows contributors' own efforts to musealize their own collections, by keeping them in scrapbooks, diaries, or in the case of Marc Bolan fan Ruth Chambers, preserving stickers and clippings with sticky-backed plastic (Figure 2.3). Danny Baker's narration emphasises this

³² Ricoeur, Paul. 'Archives, Documents, Traces'. 1978. *The Archive*, edited by Charles Merewether, Whitechapel, 2008, pp. 66–69.

³³ Lübke, qtd. in Fayet, Robert. 'Out of Neverland: Towards a Consequentialist Ethics of Alienation'. *Deaccession and Return of Cultural Heritage: A New Global Ethic*, 2010, p. 53.

³⁴ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p. 23.

preservation, explaining Chambers' mother had 'kept the room like a pop time capsule,' and consequently it has been left largely untouched since Chambers' adolescence. A short sequence follows where Chambers proceeds to show us around the room, much like other kinds of guided tours shown throughout the series discussed below. Practices such as these are another reflection of the measures and anxieties both Lübke and Huyssen describe. Returning to the concept of musealization in 'Memory Things and Their Temporality', Huyssen recognises the value of these kinds of protective measures, noting that while musealization can be dangerous for objects of memory, and distance people from the past – contributing to the well-recognised trope of a museum as a mausoleum – the museum space (and museum-like) structures can 'go a long way in keeping memory alive precisely through the representation of objects.'³⁵

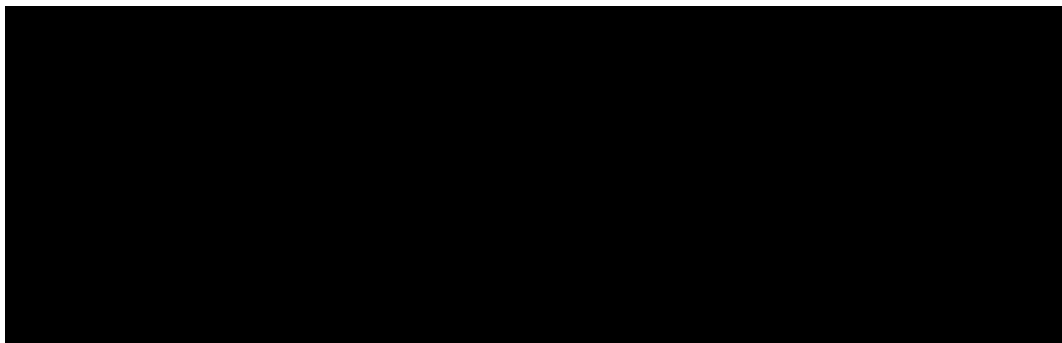


Figure 2.3: The DIY preservation practices of T. Rextasy fan Ruth Chambers

Memory Objects and Materiality

The importance of objects, the materiality, and tangibility of the ephemera shown throughout the series is reflected in its title sequence (Figure 2.4). The sequence acts as a preview for the contents of the episode, teasing the audience. In amongst glimpses of records, archive and contemporary footage is framed against layers of close-up photographs, both in colour and black and white, echoing the collaged layout of a scrapbook. This creates the sense of history as a living, open, and constantly shifting narrative as opposed to the static, closed

³⁵ Huyssen, Andreas. 'Memory Things and Their Temporality'. *Memory Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan. 2016, p. 108.

nature of written historical records. The enormity and scale of the project – and the expanse of history it explores – is emphasized in the title card design, when the scale of the photo wall is revealed at the same time as the episode’s title, each rendered in thematically appropriate fonts according to the period.³⁶

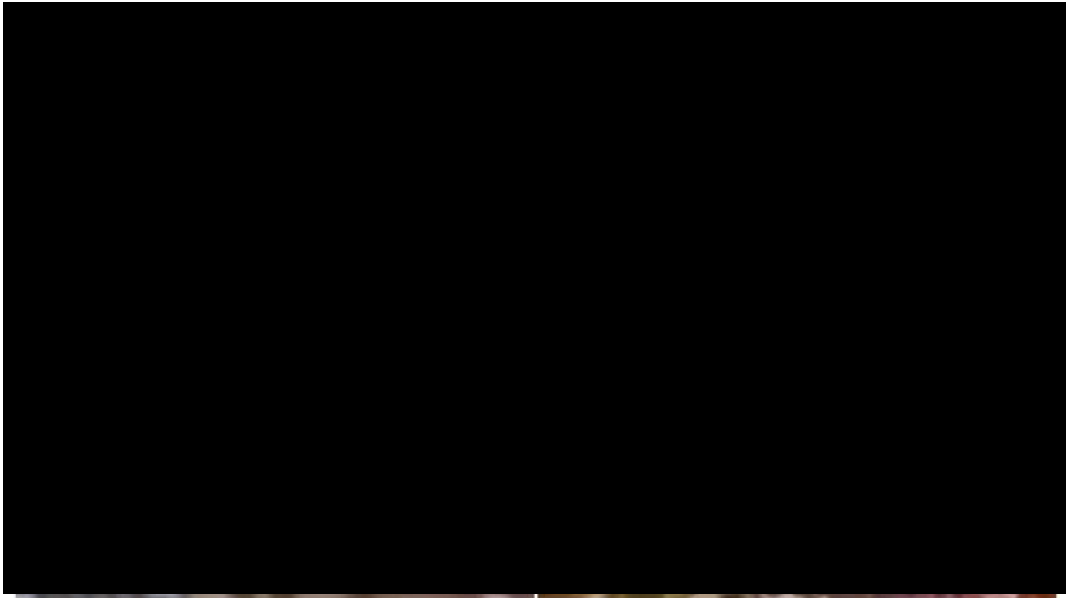


Figure 2.4: Title sequence of *The People's History of Pop*, episode one

The scrapbook aesthetic is expanded upon in later episodes, where each story is prefaced by a title card modelled on the page of a scrapbook or auction and gallery catalogue (Figure 2.5). These cards contextualise both the incoming speaker(s) and object(s). The relationship between memory and object is reiterated, and obvious correlations can also be drawn between scrapbooking as a memory craft, with the practice of creating them often referred to as “making memories.”

³⁶ While the photographs remain largely unchanged, some alterations are made to their colour hues as the series progresses, making it easy to “find” the fan stories that have already been shared and anticipate the ones to come.



Figure 2.5: Scrapbook-style title cards introducing segments

The primary function of scrapbooks is to be an *aide-mémoire* for the future, but also a commemoration of life events, usually those deemed momentous, such as birthdays, family gatherings, or as writings on scrapbooking and bereavement attest, memorialisation.³⁷ In all of these cases, links can be made between an object, temporality, and remembrance, with the scrapbook functioning, like Lübke's and Huyssen's discussion of the museum, as another form of safeguard against loss (or as a way to cope with it), whether loss of time or loss of a loved one. To keep a record of these objects, the people, and the places related to them is to remember them.

This kind of embedded attention to detail extends into the visual style of the series as a whole. Archive footage in the series is placed to give a sense of the 'historical presence' articulated by Baron, to root and contextualise the public images of the period we may already be familiar with in order to understand the new and private images we are seeing for the first time. The material featured is

³⁷ For a sense of this field see Kuhn, Annette. *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*. Verso, 1995; Tamas, Sophie. 'Scared Kitless: Scrapbooking Spaces of Trauma'. *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 10, Feb. 2014, pp. 87–94; Phillips, Barbara J. 'The Scrapbook as an Autobiographical Memory Tool'. *Marketing Theory*, vol. 16, no. 3, Sept. 2016, pp. 325–46; and Medley-Rath, Stephanie. "'Tell Something About the Pictures": The Content and the Process of Autobiographical Work Among Scrapbookers: Tell Something About the Pictures'. *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 39, no. 1, Feb. 2016, pp. 86–105.

in keeping with the broader themes of the series, with the footage frequently focusing on the expression of emotion – screaming, laughter, tears – occurring in public and shared spaces. This emotional register and intimate mode is also reflected in the original footage and its frequent use of close-ups, reinforcing Samuel's idea that the origin of what he termed 'the art of memory' was in the visual and pictorial.³⁸ Close-ups serve multiple purposes within the episodes, all of which relate to different kinds of visual pleasure. Firstly, there are close-ups of the ephemera being held by the fan, held for several seconds in order to appreciate them fully. This is most obvious during the close-ups of photographs, allowing us to *look* at them, rather than just *see* them. In these moments the focus is not on the story being told, but in the aura on the object itself. Walter Benjamin's notion of aura first appears in his 1931 writings on photography, outlining the high quality and aesthetic merit of such works, and extended in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' According to Benjamin, the prized quality of aura of a photograph (or material object) makes it unique – this uniqueness is lost through reproducibility. He goes on to state that:

Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former.³⁹

Benjamin's association of aura with uniqueness is precisely what makes an object and the memories we associate with it more memorable.⁴⁰ The memory objects showcased within *The People's History of Pop* retain rather than lose their aura; their uniqueness is maintained through rarefied status, or following Benjamin, their *lack* of reproducibility. This is because they are often the lone example of a particular object or the only visual or sonorous recording of a particular event.

³⁸ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. xxi.

³⁹ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ For more regarding the aura of objects, memory, and the auratic experience see Schlunke, Katrina. 'Memory and Materiality'. *Memory Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, July 2013, pp. 253–61.

For Benjamin, these objects and the stories associated with them would create an auratic experience for the audience purely because of their investment in the presence of the original; he argues that 'the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity.'⁴¹ I argue that television can approximate aura. This approximation is directly linked to the archive aesthetic and is expressed through the use of close-ups which not only fetishize the object contained within them, but as referenced earlier, these objects are shown in the frame along with the hand that is holding and inspecting them. This lends the objects a tangibility and tactility, and therefore an authenticity that is specific to, and facilitated by, the televisual medium and its association with intimacy. While the television image is a mechanical reproduction, it is this reproduction which gives us access to the original, and in doing so approximates the aura of that object.

Aura and Authenticity

The correlation between aura, authenticity and intimacy is reflected in the use of close-ups of the contributors, often cut in from wider shots, so we can see the effect of retelling and reliving their story on their faces – smile lines, tears in their eyes, wistful reverence – as they look again at their memorabilia: turning pages, arranging photographs, or listening to records. Close-ups also show the analogue technologies used to listen to the recordings featured throughout the series. The process of finding this equipment and its associated ephemera is documented from the moment the contributors search it out – with the camera following their journeys as they ascend staircases to dedicated rooms, or climb ladders to loft spaces, or crawl under beds to retrieve them – right up until they turn them on.

The deep affection and high regard the contributors and the series have for these analogue technologies is exemplified in one moment during the first episode when fan Ernie Sealey finds and sets up his Dansette record player. Standing next to it, he declares with fondness, 'Unfortunately, there is now a wait for the valves to warm up!' clearly amused by the fact that hearing his treasured

⁴¹ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 3.

favourite record – an import of The Contours’ ‘Do You Love Me’ – will *not* happen instantaneously. Ernie’s nostalgic engagement is proudly displayed, fitting with Schrey’s work on the positive traits found within analogue nostalgia, and lacking in any hints of the shame outlined by Boym. Such expressions of nostalgia fit neither of Boym’s definitions of nostalgia as restorative or reflective. Restorative nostalgia seeks to recreate what has been lost, while reflective nostalgia takes enjoyment in remembering times gone by, and in appreciating its cultural output, but without a referential basis (lived experience).⁴²

While it could be argued that the series itself engenders reflective nostalgia in the audience, it is also engaging in a kind of nostalgia that complicates Boym’s binary by existing somewhere in the space between restorative and reflective nostalgia, since the past and present lives of contributors are shown to happily co-exist. This is abundantly clear in the sequence with Ernie, his expression of amusement is an acknowledgement that time and technology have changed how music is created and shared, but pivotally, *not* Ernie’s enjoyment of the music itself. The pleasure of listening remains the same, regardless of how it is delivered, underlining that while the fans are nostalgic for their past, they are not consumed by it. Ernie’s reaction to listening – or rather re-listening to ‘Do You Love Me?’ – highlights the complexity of the nostalgic experience, exemplary of Mickey Vallee’s notion of nostalgia as ‘[a]n affective state entwined somewhere between emotion, memory, and identity’, which he likens to a faded snapshot of an experience rather than the totality of it.⁴³ Vallee’s conception of nostalgia is particularly useful here, because it argues that nostalgia is a multifaceted and affective experience rooted in materiality. His evocation of the ‘faded snapshot’ is particularly apt in the case of *The People’s History of Pop*, where many of the memory objects shown are indeed faded – a partial reminder of the event they depict, but not the *complete* rendering of it. The colour and vibrancy that is absent from Vallee’s faded photographs is added by the rememberer themselves, with their recollections expressing the fullness of their nostalgic experience.

⁴² Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, pp. 41-55.

⁴³ Vallee, ‘From Disease to Desire’, p. 85.

However, it is important to note that while the faded photo carries inherent connotations of aging and loss, reflections of longing within *The People's History of Pop* are largely presented as positive. The overriding tone of the series is one of celebration. However, part of the project is, by its very nature, also an act of commemoration.

The People's History of Pop actively encourages the audience to begin sharing their stories, reflected in the continued calls for uploads to the website, expanding the series' conception of history further with each new addition. In this sense, the project could be seen both as a celebration and as a memorialisation of important people and places in the broader arc of public music history. Writing on television nostalgia and recall programming, Jerome De Groot states that the personal memories of the audience can become conflated with those of the contributors. He argues that through this process, such programmes establish 'cultural archive and a canon of experience' and that they 'construct imagined communities bound not by factual events but by shared cultural experience.'⁴⁴ De Groot's argument would seem to resonate with Huyssen's notion of imagined memory and Alison Landsberg's prosthetic memory and related terminology for false memory experiences.⁴⁵ For Landsberg, prosthetic memory occurs at an 'interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, [or] at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum,' which allows the viewer to 'suture' themselves into history.'⁴⁶ Rather than generating a false memory, these prosthetic memories are socially (and culturally) constructed, allowing people to share memories while having no other common ground. *The People's History of Pop* provides the space for the social experience of memory, contributing to the shared experience De Groot also puts forward.

The People's History of Pop is unique in its inclusion of material that marries archive and contemporary footage in a way that allows it to be a

⁴⁴ De Groot, Jerome. *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*. Routledge, 2009, p. 164.

⁴⁵ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*; Landsberg, Alison. *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*. Columbia University Press, 2004.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

celebration of both the past and the present, with neither period of time being denied. This occurs most often when contributors (and presenters) share photographs of themselves and hold it so that the two ‘versions’ of them can be seen in the same frame. However, there is one standout moment during the first episode involving choreographer Theresa Kerr. Archive footage of her younger self on *Ready Steady Go!* is shown, intercut with her present-day self in a dance studio (Figure 2.6). The past and present merge when both sequences of footage are intercut, with the two “versions” of Kerr teaching the hitchhike to assembled groups of dancers separated by over five decades. This moment is exemplary of Baron’s notion of ‘temporal disparity’, where ‘a “then” and a “now” [is] generated within a single text.’⁴⁷ In the case of *The People’s History of Pop* this disparity exists within a single, albeit split, frame. This produces both the archive effect, but also the archive *affect*.⁴⁸ Here, the temporal disparity is made visible, and a direct connection is made between the past and the present.

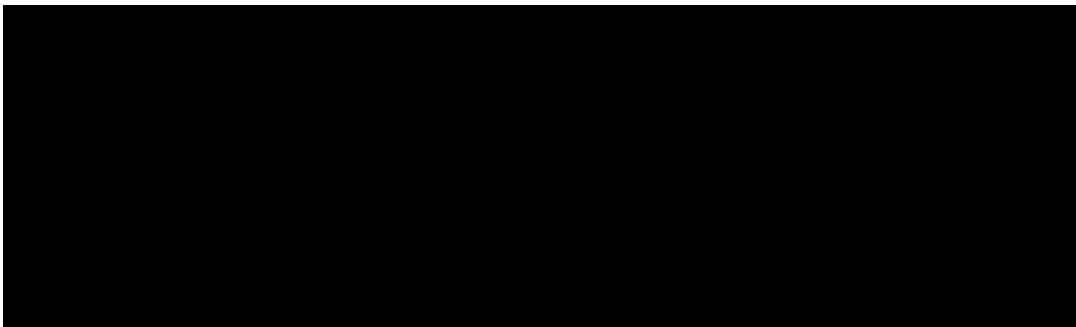


Figure 2.6: Two dancing “versions” of choreographer Theresa Kerr

During this process, Baron suggests, ‘not only do we invest archival documents with the authority of the “real” past, but also with the feeling of loss.’⁴⁹ However, I argue that *The People’s History of Pop* complicates this. While loss and sadness are inherent, its presence is negotiated through juxtaposition of past and present. The passage of time between the two states is presented in terms of its difference, for instance, the obvious changes in Kerr’s appearance through age, but also its similarity, highlighting Kerr’s continued skills and abilities as a

⁴⁷ Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p.17.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.21.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

choreographer. The juxtaposition is an incredibly powerful one, especially when placed in the context of Kerr's own declaration later in her segment: "We are the rock and roll generation, we are the people that don't grow old." While this may appear to be a denial of aging and a rejection of the past, Kerr's statement is merely a reflection of her own mindset, and not the series' attempts to present an idealised version of the aging process or narratives of history. However, it is notable that the series *allows* Kerr to assert that opinion, thereby providing the space to challenge preconceived ideas regarding how Kerr's generation (and older) are perceived by society.

The refusal to deny the relationship between the past and the present is evident in how the series addresses the subject of death. Though never explicitly referred to, there is one poignant moment of reflection in the second episode, when David Bowie fan Linda Saunders tearfully acknowledges that her 'special relationship' with him as a fan of his music continued all the way through her life until Bowie's death in 2016. Her realisation of this fact is captured, unfolding, and unedited. The cut to the next sequence finally occurs as she looks into the distance, still standing in front of her scrapbook of press clippings, her hand curled around its edge. This moment could be seen to exemplify Samuel's memory work, but more specifically it underlines that memory is an active and not a passive process. In *The Making of Memory*, biologist Steven Rose argues that in the act of remembering the memory is being recreated and 'not simply being called up from store.'⁵⁰ Linda's reaction after commenting on Bowie's passing supports this. In acknowledging his loss (and her own), her perspective upon her memories of him (and consequently her own life) is changed – both in the act of recall that took place when she first spoke on camera, during the experience, and after her realisation. The combination of archive footage, combined with Linda's recollections, could be seen to reflect Rose's idea of memory processing, reflecting what is going on in Linda's own mind.

In this unique instance, *The People's History of Pop* is not only revising the history of British music culture, but also making history in its own right by

⁵⁰ Rose, Steven. *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Memory*. Bantam, 1992, p. 91.

showing these objects of memory and social documents on screen. In doing so, they progress through the kinds of memory outlined by Marcus.⁵¹ They begin with the rememberer, as individualised or personal memory. Next, they move to group memory, when specific memories are shared with the rememberers' social group. In the case of *The People's History of Pop's* contributors, these collective experiences are entered into public or national memory by being transmitted on television.

At various points, the series creates links between these distinctions of memory through its use of a diverse range of locations. In the majority, the acts of remembering take place in the intimate, domestic space of the home – a reflection of many contributors' time spent listening to music in their bedroom. However, there are also instances where the resonance of public, shared space is foregrounded: visiting pubs, record shops, and other sites of importance, like the location of the Isle of Wight Festival. Through the eyes of fan Roger Simmonds, a vast empty field is imbued with deep emotional resonance and meaning. Though the entirety of *The People's History of Pop* can be considered a performance of memory, this is one of the series' most overt expressions of it. Through his own storytelling, Simmonds also creates a link between private and public, personal and institutionalised memory. Annette Kuhn highlights the importance of narrative to cultural memory, not only in terms of their content, but also in 'the activity of recounting or telling memory-stories, in both private and public contexts – in other words, of *performances of memory*.'⁵² Functioning as a tour guide to his own experience, Simmonds' story also reaffirms the cultural work at the heart of *The People's History of Pop*: retelling history from a new perspective, using new voices, but most importantly, using the space of television to share that new history.

⁵¹ Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years*, p. 4.

⁵² Kuhn, Annette. 'Memory Texts and Memory Work: Performances of Memory in and with Visual Media'. *Memory Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 4, Oct. 2010, p. 298. Emphasis in original. For further discussion of memory as performance see Kidd, Jenny. 'Digital Storytelling and the Performance of Memory'. *Save As ... Digital Memories*, edited by Joanne Garde-Hansen et al., Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009, pp. 167–83.

Inglis argues that television remains ‘a principal source of contact between audiences and performers.’⁵³ The complexity of the relationship between television, memory, and music that is articulated through *The People’s History of Pop* stands in direct conflict with the writings of Simon Frith, who argues that television has several limitations in regard to its presentation of music, chiefly that it is not a sound medium.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Frith states that the relationship between music and television is purely transactional, saying it ‘is not organic but a matter of branding.’⁵⁵ While Frith’s comments are clearly supported by the branding of BBC Four as a site of music programming (explored in Chapter One), to suggest that this is the *only* facet of the relationship between music and television not only reduces the cultural importance of music and music television to visual culture, but also ignores the obvious, deeply personal, emotional connection felt by those invested in music culture. In the multi-channel, post-broadcast environment, this connection, as shown throughout this analysis, is stronger than ever before and underlines the importance of television as a way to re-present and disseminate history that challenges preconceived notions of our national past.

Nostalgia and History

The programme’s relationship to and with nostalgia is complex. Programmes like *The People’s History of Pop* require greater flexibility in terms of *how* nostalgia is perceived in scholarship, *why* it remains such an important component of memory work, and the consumption of visual and music culture. While the contributors to the programme *are* engaging in nostalgia, as Janelle L. Wilson observes, this engagement is *not* a passive act, and is instead one that allows for the past to be (re)envisioned and (re)created.⁵⁶ When framed in this context, nostalgia can be seen as one of several emotive and affective strategies for socio-

⁵³ Inglis, *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, p. 2.

⁵⁴ John Ellis’ writing on the televisual form directly contests this when he rightly asserts that television is a sound-led medium See *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*. 1982. Rev. edition, Routledge, 1992, p. 162.

⁵⁵ Frith, ‘Look! Hear!’, p. 189.

⁵⁶ Wilson, ‘Nostalgia as a Time and Space Phenomenon,’ p. 490.

historical engagement with popular culture.

As Vallee's writing on music and nostalgia highlights, popular music allows the listener 'access to the affects associated with the bygone.'⁵⁷ Vallee's assertion that music acts as a point of access can be further extended to consider reciprocal flow and cultural exchange between the audience, the text, the screen, and the objects of memory. In doing so, the function of television and popular music as cultural intermediaries is revealed, alongside an obvious synergy between the two mediums as regards to the ways in which they are, as Jennifer Maguire Smith notes, 'involved with the construction of meaning.'⁵⁸ For instance, Charles Fairchild's assertion that popular music 'acts as a kind of socially organizing medium that helps people structure, share, and make sense of their social experiences,' is equally applicable to television. Following on from this, I argue that both mediums can both *transmit* and *transfer* meaning in addition to constructing and organising it.⁵⁹ For music television and the memory work explored within it, this intermediary function takes on particular importance, since both television and popular music can also *produce* meaning, and as a consequence, impact on their audience on an affective level.

Before exploring the capacity of *The People's History of Pop* and music television more broadly to provide the audience with an affective experience in more detail, I would first like to return to the idea of the series as a site of cultural exchange that actively encourages nostalgic engagement. This role is embedded within the construction of the programme, not only because of the series' origins as the product of crowdsourcing, but also because the objects presented in the episodes are tangible. In each episode, they can be seen, heard, and most importantly, they can be held in the hand, allowing the audience to re-access or revisit the past rather than return to it completely.

Though it may appear that the series exemplifies Jamesonian conceptualisations of nostalgia by using it as a way to approach the past, the

⁵⁷ Vallee, 'From Disease to Desire', p. 89.

⁵⁸ Smith Maguire, Jennifer. 'Introduction: Thinking with Cultural Intermediaries'. *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*, edited by Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews, Sage, 2014, p. 1

⁵⁹ Fairchild, Charles. 'Popular Music'. *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*, edited by Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews, p. 126.

series' aesthetic and emotive strategies work together to reveal that *The People's History of Pop* is telling a different kind of history. I argue that the series is purposefully constructed to present, reveal, and ultimately challenge preconceived ideas surrounding received public history, nostalgia, cultures of collecting, and fandom. On the surface, the series appears to support the ideas of Jameson and others that nostalgia is a regressive, indulgent retreat from the instability of the present for the safety of the past.⁶⁰ While it may be true that the series *does* offer its audience engagement with the present, it *does not* treat the past as a novelty or trivialise the importance of music culture and its memory objects for those within the programme or, indeed, those watching.

To borrow once more from Jameson, the 'glossy qualities of the image' of *The People's History of Pop* are expressed with the series' title sequence.⁶¹ These collages of still and moving archive audiovisual material are used to celebrate national shared history and are a way *into* history from the present. The found items become an affective and emotive lure for the audience, which are given cohesion by theme music, other examples of archive video, and presenter narration.⁶²

A better term for *The People's History of Pop*'s aesthetic may be found via a modification of Kim Newman's phrase, 'veneer of nostalgia.'⁶³ Writing in relation to film scoring and Raymond Chandler adaptations, Newman suggests their jazz scores create 'a veneer of nostalgia.' While the concept of 'veneer' carries similar connotations to Jameson's 'gloss,' the usefulness of the term comes in its application. For Newman, the veneer addition reduces the effectiveness of the source material, but in *The People's History of Pop*, the veneer has the opposite effect and *increases* its effectiveness. Here, the purpose of nostalgic veneer is not, as Newman implies, to obscure the true meaning of the text to which it is applied. Instead, the chipping away of that veneer throughout the episode reveals new and often unexpected information. *The*

⁶⁰ See, for example, Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*.

⁶¹ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 19.

⁶² The lure of 'foundness' is discussed throughout Baron's *The Archive Effect*.

⁶³ Newman, Kim. 'The Last Seduction'. *Sight & Sound*, vol. 4, no. 8, Aug. 1994, p. 44.

People's History of Pop may begin as heavily coded nostalgia pastiche, but it ends as history decoded and expanded. The consistent pattern of revelatory climaxes used throughout the episodes where memory objects are revealed – looked at, listened to, lingered upon – is at the heart of the audience's affective experience. I argue that this experience is expressed through what I term affective register, drawn from Misha Kavka's notion of 'materialized affectivity' in her writings on the function of feeling within the genre of reality television.⁶⁴

The Materiality of Affect

The affective register of *The People's History of Pop* is achieved in its aesthetic and content. The editing style of the series, which implements slower beats, contrasts to the common rapid editing speed of most contemporary television. The impact of this extra time means the contributor and the audience are allowed time to reflect and remember; they can look back and talk back to each other with the screen as the intermediary, acting as a transmitter of, and for, affect. In *The Transmission of Affect*, Teresa Brennan argues that affective states are psychological in their origin and can be transmitted across boundaries. While Brennan does not directly address that the screen could be a boundary of affective transmission, she does offer the following in regard to audiovisual material, saying '[v]isual images, like auditory traces, also have a direct physical impact.'⁶⁵ Brennan's assertion not only draws attention to the affective potential of the screen, but also to its materiality, which supports Kavka's wider arguments regarding the characterisation of television as a 'technology of intimacy'⁶⁶ that also 'mobilises closeness.'⁶⁷

The qualities outlined by Brennan and Kavka are both reinforced by and reflected throughout *The People's History of Pop*. The longer takes allow for the memory objects under discussion to be *seen* through the use of close-ups that

⁶⁴ Kavka, Misha. 'A Matter of Feeling: Mediated Affect in Reality Television'. *A Companion to Reality Television*, edited by Laurie Ouellette, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, p. 464.

⁶⁵ Brennan, Teresa. *The Transmission of Affect*. Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 10.

⁶⁶ Kavka, Misha. *Reality Television, Affect and Intimacy: Reality Matters*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Kavka, 'A Matter of Feeling,' p. 469.

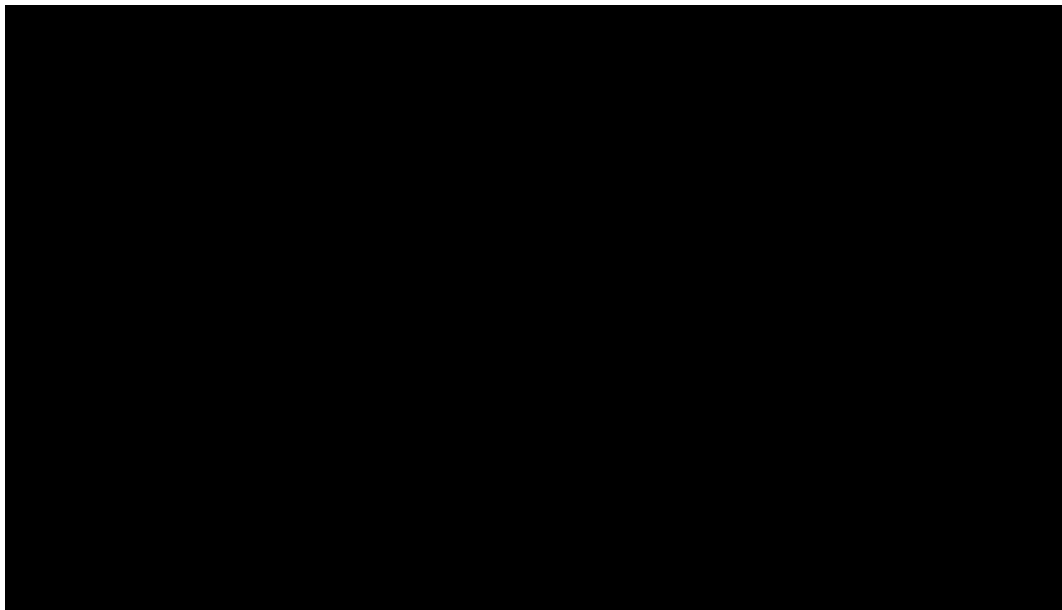
openly fetishize and amplify their auratic qualities, but this slowness also allows these objects to be *felt*. Here the spatial ‘closeness’ of television outlined by Kavka takes on a greater importance, facilitating, she suggests, the promise of several kinds of closeness: closeness of *things* and closeness of *people*.⁶⁸ I argue that *The People’s History of Pop* appeals to both of these qualities while offering another kind of closeness for its audience – affording a closeness to history and a closeness to memory that is rarely available. In *The People’s History of Pop*, private experiences and the remembrance of them are made public. The nostalgic act, therefore, is not isolated or reclusive, but a socialised, shared experience.

To illustrate this, I draw attention to two specific examples of moments and objects presented within the series beyond those already described. Both sequences and the items shown within them are representative of two different points in music history and in turn are treated differently within the programme. During episode two, Danny Baker is invited to see author Kevin Cann, a Bowie fan who maintains, Baker says, “the most exhaustive and valuable David Bowie collection in the world”. Amongst the collection is a vinyl pressing of an unreleased ‘Space Oddity’ demo recorded in 1968, which once belonged to Bowie himself. After Baker inspects the sleeve and the record – emphasised in close-up – Cann plays a small excerpt of the demo via his iMac computer, leaving the vinyl unplayed. Both Baker and Cann are shown in medium and close-up shots throughout their listening and comment upon that listening, capturing their reactions and, in particular, Baker’s joy at hearing it for the first time – echoing the experience of the viewing audience. In a similar vein, but with very different presentation, is the appearance of an Oasis demo tape in episode four. Presenter Lauren Laverne meets with Craig Gill, drummer for the Inspiral Carpets and tour guide.⁶⁹ Part of the collection Gill brings along is an Oasis demo tape (Figure 2.7), containing an early live performance of the song ‘Columbia,’ recorded in 1992,

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 468.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that this is a rare instance when a contributor’s status as a musician is not disclosed, choosing instead to highlight Gill’s work as a tour guide and unofficial historian of the Manchester music scene during the 1980-1990s. Throughout Gill’s segment, both he and Laverne refer to the band and its close links to Oasis and the Gallagher brothers.

given to him by Noel Gallagher. Its cassette and sleeve are written and decorated in Gallagher's own hand.



*Figure 2.7: Close-ups of an Oasis tape in *The People's History of Pop**

Intriguingly, the treatment of the Oasis tape is different to that of the Bowie vinyl. Both Laverne and Gill agree that the tape is 'too precious to play,' but like Baker, she removes it from the case while she and Gill continue to talk. Her inspection of it is shown again in close-up, emphasising the obvious reverence she and Gill have for the recording, echoing the earlier instance with Baker and Cann. The differing treatment of the two objects highlights the ways in which the series negotiates both the tangible and the nostalgic and raises important questions regarding the strength of the relationship between the past and the present in terms of our closeness to or distance from it. The fragility of the tape and the vinyl as tangible is firstly negotiated through digital transfer, and secondly through declining to play it at all. The newer object (the tape) is lent greater emotional resonance and stronger memory trace because it is unheard, relayed instead through Gill's own description. In each case, the memory objects featured are inscribed with loss, reframing their meaning, both directly and indirectly. For the Bowie demo, our direct link with the artist is lost as we are already aware of his passing, which only serves to heighten the auratic experience of listening. For

the Oasis demo, the loss is indirect, only revealed retrospectively, moments prior to the credits sequence, with a closing credit card dedicated to Gill's memory – a loss made all the more acute by the fact his appearance within the programme is still fresh in the mind.

The Value of Affect

Both sequences discussed above highlight, perhaps more than any other, the importance and the seriousness with which *The People's History of Pop* approaches its subject and the affective potential of the memory objects presented within it. The items presented throughout episodes four and five in particular would be classified as mass-marketed merchandise, such as books, mugs, t-shirts, or fashion dolls created in the likeness of the artists under discussion. Items that can be easily dismissed as novelty, exemplary of both the commodification of popular music – where artist, music, and image are conflated into a sellable product – would seem to resonate with the comments of Simon Frith, John Potts, and others pertaining to the commercial imperative of popular music and the capitalist underpinnings of what Gary Cross terms 'consumed nostalgia.'⁷⁰ Through this, the past is used to sell something else, meaning that nostalgia can be *bought*, thereby negating the authenticity of the lived experience, creating the conditions for what Arjun Appadurai terms 'nostalgia without memory or false nostalgia for something never experienced.'⁷¹

Buying the past and engaging in consumed nostalgia or experiencing false nostalgia is perpetuated by competition within cultures of collecting, e-commerce, and social networking platforms. Such spaces provide opportunities to share in personal experiences and memories, but they also facilitate the trading of items between fans – sometimes collected for collecting's sake, thereby stripping them of meaning. This is reinforced in wider heritage culture and what Svetlana Boym calls the 'souvenirisation of the past,' reflected in the

⁷⁰ Frith, 'Look! Hear!'; Potts, 'Journeys through the Past'; Cross, *Consumed Nostalgia*

⁷¹ Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

numerous companies specifically set up to source, promote, and sell memorabilia items with cultural significance, such as the, framed autographs and records that mimic the framing and presentation of genuine collector's items that are featured throughout *The People's History of Pop*.⁷² This facet of nostalgic engagement validates Jameson's claims by returning nostalgia to its connotations with the glossy and fake. Mass-marketed merchandising in particular offers a perspective that complicates Jameson's ideas and the modified Marxist readings often applied to music and music culture by Simon Frith. Items such as fashion dolls were once commonplace, flooding the market for fans with the means to purchase them. However, the passage of time, and the reputation of such merchandise as valueless and therefore disposable has led to many of these items being lost. Their relative rarity lends them a significance they would ordinarily lack.

The capacity for *The People's History of Pop* to stimulate sales of and interest in nostalgic objects related to music culture – whether merchandise purchased through online auctions, ready-made music compilations or streaming playlists created to coincide with the series – is obvious, but this is never presented as an option by the series itself. I argue that while *The People's History of Pop* does cater to and indulge nostalgia and nostalgic behaviours, it does so with commemorative awareness. If it compels the audience to do anything, it will be to rediscover and re-engage with their own past and experiences of music culture, searching in bedrooms, lofts, and garages to find their own music history. This is encouraged through showing these familiar spaces, mirroring setups found in the audience's own homes, creating a familiarity and sense of oneness that is gendered by the televisual space as 'a domestic, familial, and familiarizing medium.'⁷³ These qualities are implemented in a similar manner to that of reality television, for the properties and the purposes of 'scopic engagement rather than furtive voyeurism.'⁷⁴ There is no sense the camera (and its accompanying crew) are trespassing uninvited, but rather offer a greater sense of welcoming inclusion.

⁷² Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 38.

⁷³ Kavka, 'A Matter of Feeling,' p. 472.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

Contributors are proud to share their lives and spaces, which in turn act as a spark or hook for memory, supported by *The People's History of Pop's* own online presence. To reinforce this, digital technologies are shown throughout the series – tablets, laptops, digitising of analogue audio-visual material – particularly in later episodes. These new ancillary outlets for participation and memorialisation are presented as a way to preserve memory objects, but also as a way to re-present and re-engage with them that allows for a conceptualisation of nostalgia that is categorised in active and reciprocal terms, underlining the fact that nostalgic behaviour and the memories based upon them can further facilitate and even enrich those experiences when shared with others.

In reinforcing the idea that memories and experiences can be shared through screens – whether television or tablet – *The People's History of Pop* also challenges the notion that nostalgic behaviour is solitary, and the nostalgic themselves are isolated from the wider world, lost in their past. While it could be argued that the presence of technology further encourages the commodification of nostalgia, it is important to acknowledge the value of these technologies as a pathway to re-access memory objects, allowing fans to experience their musical past in ways that were previously unavailable to them. This happens, for instance, through the existence of remastered albums or DVDs and their supplemental material, as discussed in Chapter One. Releases such as these provide opportunities for the audience to re-visit their musical past but also to re-engage with it anew, thanks to the process of digitisation whereby sound (and vision) are often improved beyond that of the original. Such products also create a tangible link between the past and the present, making celebration of the past and nostalgic behaviour an important and positive part of the present-day lives of fans. This alternative conceptualisation of consumed nostalgia moves it away from the connotations of capitalist novelty outlined by Cross and furthermore raises important questions about the role of consumerism in facilitating nostalgic behaviour in positive ways. Buying albums, DVDs, or other products provide avenues of engagement through which to return to the past while remaining connected to the present through technology. This is a direct challenge to how nostalgia and being nostalgic has been traditionally perceived within scholarly

discourse and popular culture as a whole.

Classic Albums

Reframing Classic Albums

Through its mix of new commissioned programming and archive re-runs, the *My Generation* season is a unique showcase of the ways in which music culture is created for and recycled within the televisual flow. Screened as part of the 1960s phase of the season, *Pet Sounds* (BBC Four, 2016) is the newest episode of the long-running music series *Classic Albums*, following a four-year gap since the BBC Four transmission of the episode dedicated to Peter Gabriel's *So* (BBC Four, 2012). Each episode follows the same pattern, borrowed from the template set up in *The South Bank Show* (ITV, 1978-2010; Sky Arts, 2012–) special on *The Making of Sgt. Pepper* (ITV, 1992), produced by Nick de Grunwald (who would later produce *Classic Albums*). This format has been subsequently replicated by other music programmes, such as the similarly-themed *Ultimate Albums* (VH1, USA, 2002-2003), and *Behind the Music* (VH1, USA, 1997-2014).

The album under discussion is introduced through interviews with key personnel – technicians, producers, performers – alongside music journalists and, on occasion, other artists, who contribute to the discussion on the making of the album and its subsequent critical and cultural reception. Interviews with performers in particular are notable for their moments of self-disclosure. In their discussion of the series, Bennett and Baker highlight its reliance on the confessional mode, which provides the 'inner story' or as Bennett and Baker describe it, 'the emotional struggle' of the album's creation.⁷⁵ As Hochschild would call it, the 'emotional labour' of making the record is foregrounded by the prominence of highly personal material, including archive footage and candid photographs, alongside studio sequences of song playback, which are broken down into the minutiae of the vocal and instrumental tracks used to create

⁷⁵ Bennett and Baker, 'Classic Albums', p. 47.

them.⁷⁶ In this way, the series turns the album into a memory object, without it having any physical trace or tangible onscreen presence. Only the album cover – not the album itself – is ever shown.

Classic Albums and Heritage Rock Television

Before discussing the series' treatment of memory and memory objects in more detail, I will contextualise its production through the scholarship surrounding heritage rock series of this type, in order to highlight where *Classic Albums* is typical of such programming and also where it is atypical.⁷⁷

Since its inception, the series has appeared across an array of channels, but in the context of the UK broadcasting, is typically allied with the BBC. Its presence within scheduling flow has been consistent, both in the form of new episodes, and the re-presentation and re-circulation of many earlier ones on DVD, including Gabriel's *So*, Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Cream's *Disraeli Gears*, and Queen's *A Night at the Opera*, alongside the reappearance of others on television throughout the course of the *My Generation* season. The continued presence of *Classic Albums* on television, and in popular culture more broadly is testament to the desire for music (and, to a degree, television) to look back at itself. Though the history under discussion is almost always fairly recent, the rapid accumulation of that history makes the compulsion to document and evaluate, or sometimes re-evaluate, it understandable, particularly in light of the *lack* of availability of much music programming due to its dismissal as ephemera of low value.⁷⁸ This in turn has led, despite the series' longevity and critical reputation, to a gap in scholarship, both on music television more broadly, but also in the discussion of *Classic Albums*, with work by Bennett and Baker and Alan Williams standing as

⁷⁶ Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. 1979. University of California Press, 1983.

⁷⁷ I borrow the term 'heritage rock' from Andy Bennett as a catch-all for the ways in which *Classic Albums* and similar programming has been defined. Bennett's contributions to this scholarship will be addressed in more detail throughout this analysis. See Bennett, Andy. "'Heritage Rock': Rock Music, Representation and Heritage Discourse'. *Poetics*, vol. 37, no. 5–6, October–December 2009, pp. 474–89.

⁷⁸ See Fiddy, Dick. *Missing Believed Wiped: Searching for the Lost Treasures of British Television*. British Film Institute, 2001; and Perry and Coward, 'Swiped or Wiped?' for further discussion of the cultural and critical impact of lost television.

the only lengthy analyses of the series prior to its inclusion in this thesis.⁷⁹ In recent years, this gap in scholarship has begun to be addressed, typified by the work of Long and Wall, who evaluate both the historical context of this series (and related programming) and its impact upon screen and popular culture.⁸⁰

Williams' 'Man Behind the Curtain' examines similar issues surrounding the series' aesthetic, and the canonisation of certain music genres. I argue that the paradigm shift presented in this work is the result of a number of interrelated factors, including the rise of DVD and related home viewing technologies making programmes available, and fan culture, and the Internet increasing the interest in and discussion of such texts. This has arisen in concert with the emergence and growth of scholarly discourse surrounding nostalgia and the memory boom, itself facilitated by the popularity of DVD. As Chapter One highlighted, this has not only increased desire to re-evaluate the musical past, but also to use technologies that afford the opportunity to re-view and reconsider media texts from that past. This has ultimately led to a change in how such texts are discussed, engendering a greater understanding of the need to widely discuss and disseminate them for the preservation of screen culture.

When read in this context, the *existence of Classic Albums* is just as important as the music history it re-explores, and the resultant narratives of rock heritage it contributes to. In returning to these albums and the eras that defined their making, *Classic Albums* offers both the contributors and the audience an opportunity to re-engage with personal and private histories, as well as their collective shared experiences. Bennett and Baker situate the series within the broader context of cultural heritage surrounding the music industry, which has 'been gathering momentum for a number of years with regular contributions from television networks.'⁸¹ Drawing on the work of David Hayes, they suggest

⁷⁹ Williams, Alan. "'Pay Some Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain": Unsung Heroes and the Canonization of Process in the *Classic Albums* Documentary Series'. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, June 2010, pp. 166–79.

⁸⁰ For other work that engages similarly with music culture see van der Hoeven, Arno. 'Remembering the Popular Music of the 1990s: Dance Music and the Cultural Meanings of Decade-Based Nostalgia'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, Apr. 2014, pp. 316–30; and Jarman-Ivens, Freya. *Oh Boy!: Masculinities and Popular Music*. Routledge, 2013.

⁸¹ Bennett and Baker, '*Classic Albums*', p. 41.

the success of the series and its longevity relates to two distinct qualities.⁸² One quality already highlighted relates to its use of archive and interview footage, which work in tandem to 'situate each album in the socio-historical and technological context in which it was made.'⁸³ This is key to understanding both the creative and emotional labour that the series foregrounds, and is a central component of the confessional mode it has become associated with.⁸⁴ The second quality, relates to the series' adherence to what Hayes describes as the '*Rolling Stone* version of rock history' in terms of the albums it does (and does not) choose to cover.⁸⁵ As this has wider implications for the way in which music programming and its history is constructed, represented, and interpreted, I will now explore this in more detail.

Hayes' observation is in keeping with the canonisation of certain groups and genres over others, perpetuated by the popular music press and the particular brand of journalism found in *Rolling Stone* coverage. Williams shares this view: reiterating the *Rolling Stone* connection highlighted by Hayes, he goes further, suggesting the canon promoted by the series is 'notably conservative' and contains 'an inordinate number of titles fitting firmly into the rock genre.'⁸⁶ He goes on to highlight the dominance of white male performers within the *Classic Albums* canon. As this work makes clear, while it is important to note the valuable contribution *Classic Albums* makes to chronicling and raising awareness of the musical past, it is equally important to remember that the history presented within its episodes – though a well-informed and often deeply personal look back upon history – is also a particular *version* of history. In some contexts, adherence to canon is a useful and important way for programming to create links between music, the industry, and music culture, but the canon is ultimately a dangerous kind of co-dependency.

Williams emphasises that in reflecting and celebrating music culture in

⁸² Hayes, David. "'Take Those Old Records off the Shelf': Youth and Music Consumption in the Postmodern Age'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, Feb. 2006, pp. 51–68.

⁸³ Bennett and Baker, '*Classic Albums*', p. 41.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Hayes, 'Take Those Old Records Off the Shelf', p. 41.

⁸⁶ Williams, 'Man Behind the Curtain', p. 174.

this way, *Classic Albums* also creates a restricted view of music history and cultural memory. This is supported by Long and Wall, who argue that reliance on canonicity creates closed narrative accounts of music history.⁸⁷ Such accounts are further shaped – or restricted – by the prominence of ‘Great Man’ theories, constructions of certain figures as symbols of musical genius, and rupture theory.⁸⁸ This results in as David K. Blake describes, a music history that becomes ‘defined by systemic socio-cultural ruptures which stabilise for a given period and produce musical genres related to these new social and technological contexts.’⁸⁹ These narrowed representations of history and the discourses surrounding them are, once circulated and repeated, entered into collective memory. They are presented as the definitive, authoritative version of events and thus canons, like the one *Classic Albums* is made to promote and, by extension, reinforce.

Having contextualised the series within the frameworks of music canons and music history, I will now focus on the episode dedicated to *Pet Sounds* to illustrate the way the series uses the confessional mode, archive material, and the detailed analysis of songs to encompass what Annette Kuhn terms ‘a performance of memory.’⁹⁰ *Classic Albums* is overtly constructed around memory as performance in a way that is distinct from *The People’s History of Pop*. In *Classic Albums*, the album under consideration, and the series itself, becomes an artefact, with the recorded broadcast (and later the DVD or Blu-ray) standing in for the physical trace of the original music recording. Unlike *The People’s History of Pop*, *Classic Albums* is formulated around the negotiation of *lack* – of tangible memory objects, of people to share their memories – rather than existence.

⁸⁷ Long and Wall, ‘Constructing The Histories of Popular Music’, p. 25.

⁸⁸ Peterson, Richard A. ‘Why 1955? Explaining the Advent of Rock Music’. *Popular Music*, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan. 1990, pp. 97–116.

⁸⁹ Blake, David K. ‘Between a Rock and a Popular Music Survey Course: Technological Frames and Historical Narratives in Rock Music’. *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, vol. 5, no. 1, Fall 2014, p. 108.

⁹⁰ Kuhn, ‘Memory Texts and Memory Work’.

The *Classic Albums* Narrative

The choice of *Pet Sounds* stems from its uniqueness in the history of the series as a whole. This episode, perhaps more than any other, challenges and complicates the overlapping relationships between music and television, music and history, and media and memory. Framed within the output of the *My Generation* season, *Pet Sounds* is both of the past – a product of history – but also fixed in the present, looking back upon that past with a much larger degree of critical distance. On average, the historical gap these episodes bridge when they are transmitted is between twenty to thirty years, such as in the thirty-year gap between the release of Queen's *Night at the Opera* in 1975 and its *Classic Albums* episode in 2005, and the twenty years between the release of Peter Gabriel's *So* in 1986 and the episode transmitted in 2012. *Pet Sounds* is a notable exception to this, with the gap between the album's release and the broadcast of its episode spanning a period of fifty years. During this time, the Beach Boys and *Pet Sounds* itself have undergone critical reassessment, with the album held in greater regard than it ever was in the immediate years following its release – largely due to discussion in the music press and numerous re-releases.⁹¹

The narrative construction of the episode exemplifies both the Great Man and rupture theories explored by Long and Wall, Williams, and Peterson. Brian Wilson is installed as the locus of the group's creative genius. Much of the episode is dedicated to detailing the genesis of the band from its earliest days, right up until the recording and creation of *Pet Sounds*, detailing Wilson's personal and creative struggles, resulting in a master work, and therefore a 'classic.' In his discussion of *Classic Albums*, Williams describes its narrative structure in a similar manner to Joseph Campbell's 'The Heroes Journey' or the Monomyth:

⁹¹ As an indicator of this, despite its now elevated critical status, aided by several reissues, accolades, and discussion in the popular music press, *Pet Sounds* did not achieve RIAA Platinum status until 2000. This is corroborated within *Classic Albums* when referenced by band member Mike Love during the closing minutes of the episode.

Each narrative has an arc, the hero (the artist) along with his trusty companion (the technician) encounters obstacles (the technology) that must be overcome by cunning displays of skill and intelligence (the practices), finally triumphing (the resulting album) against all odds.⁹²

Classic Albums executes this by framing Wilson's difficulties in a similar manner to that of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, which ties the emotional turmoil of the band's interpersonal relationships to the high quality of the final record.⁹³ This results in both Fleetwood Mac and Brian Wilson being positioned at the height of their artistic powers during great emotional turmoil. This framing implies that the obstacles faced, or crises averted, by Wilson and others, resulted in a change and a work of artistic merit and worth *because* of their emotional and creative labour (and perhaps even in spite of it). Consequently, it is the creative force behind the album and not the album itself that becomes the focus of our attention.

Throughout its reappraisal of *Pet Sounds*, the series reaffirms established norms regarding musical aptitude and creative talent, and as such, rather than opening out history and expanding our perceptions of performers as shown throughout *The People's History of Pop*, instead, the series closes these avenues off, only detailing information that fans will already know. It is less likely they will experience something they have "never heard" as in *The People's History of Pop*. Therefore, the cultural work of *Classic Albums* is defined not by its ability to share something new (though this will be returned to below), but instead by its ability to memorialise and, as Williams suggests, to enshrine by entering the album into the canon.⁹⁴

The acts of memorialisation which take place during *Classic Albums* are particularly pronounced when related to the deaths of band members, such as the extended discussion of Freddie Mercury in *A Night at the Opera* and Kurt Cobain in *Nevermind*, with the episodes addressing their passing and legacy in a

⁹² Williams, 'Man Behind the Curtain', p. 170. For Campbell's analogous narrative model, see Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 1949. Fontana, 1993.

⁹³ For a more detailed analysis of this episode and its relationship to emotional labour, see Bennett and Baker, 'Classic Albums', pp. 49-50.

⁹⁴ Williams, 'Man Behind the Curtain', p.170.

manner that makes their lack or absence more important than those still present. However, *Pet Sounds* does not reinforce the loss or indeed the lack of Dennis Wilson. He appears in sparingly used archive footage, where his comments are restricted to the work of brother, Brian. Here, Dennis Wilson's cultural and creative worth to the wider project of *Pet Sounds*' enshrinement is valued as less than that of his brother or other frontmen, such as Mercury and Cobain. Williams defines this memorialising attention as a 'curious shift in focus,' that has occurred throughout the series, resulting in the role of producers, engineers and other technical personnel being reduced, in order to follow a 'more conservative approach' where the artists themselves are the focus of attention.⁹⁵ The result, Williams observes, is that 'many key "backstage" figures are nearly written out of the histories of the records they produced.'⁹⁶ Williams' lamentation not only raises important questions regarding how *Classic Albums* chooses to present and narrativize its history, but also the degree to which the target demographic has changed as much as the music culture it continues to celebrate.⁹⁷

The shift Williams highlights is indicative of broader changes in *Classic Albums* identified by Bennett and Baker, who suggest that, in agreement with Williams, they are part of the series' strategies to attract a wider audience – the impact of which will now be explored through close textual analysis of the series' aesthetic.

Aestheticizing *Classic Albums*

The general aesthetic and construction of each *Classic Albums* episode roughly adheres to the same pattern, using a combination of archive footage and photographs, alongside newly-filmed interviews. However, the same cannot be said of its title sequences. Acting as a visual introduction to the programme they preface, title sequences are a visual shorthand for the aesthetic of the series,

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.173.

⁹⁷ It could be argued that the increased presence of Brian Wilson in *Pet Sounds* is an attempt to renegotiate the roles of star and technician, since Wilson's extensive experience as a producer means he embodies both roles.

illuminating its central themes and concerns. As Jostein Gripsrud has suggested, such sequences are designed as ‘self-presentation and self-promotion.’⁹⁸ In the case of *Classic Albums*, the title sequence has undergone several redesigns that impact upon the ways in which the series is read and understood. Tracking these changes highlights the ways in which programmes such as *Classic Albums* can be seen as timeless – viewable in any period – while its overall aesthetic is time-bound, specific to the period in which it was first made and broadcast.

Each version of its title sequence has been created to reflect the evolution of music production and music culture, while showing an awareness of the programme’s place *within* that culture. When watching several episodes back-to-back, especially those from different eras, the changes in these sequences are more pronounced than when viewed chronologically. This is not least because the changed titles appeared roughly when a new series of episodes appeared. Following this rule, the changes can be outlined as follows: version one featured in episodes aired between 1997-2002 and version two featured in episodes aired between 2003-2012.

At the time of writing, the third version of the titles appeared on the latest episode of the programme, dedicated to *Pet Sounds*.⁹⁹ However, it is important to note that the stylistic shifts implemented throughout each redesign actually occur on a small scale without changing too much at one time. This strategy shows an awareness of the potential for such changes to compromise the identity of *Classic Albums* as a brand, reiterating how Frith’s comments regarding music, television, and branding can be applied to specific programmes as well as the schedules they are placed within.

The branding of *Classic Albums* also occurs on an aesthetic level. For instance, the logo and font has changed along with its theme music, but they have also retained a look and sound that is in keeping with its history and reflects

⁹⁸ Gripsrud, Jostein. *The Dynasty Years: Hollywood, Television and Critical Media Studies*. Routledge, 1995, p. 184. For further discussion of title sequences see, for example, Jacobs, Jason. *Body Trauma TV: The New Hospital Dramas*. British Film Institute, 2003; and Davison, Annette. ‘Title Sequences for Contemporary Television Series’. *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, edited by John Richardson et al., Oxford University Publications, 2015, pp. 146–67.

⁹⁹ This is a rough estimate, limited to the number of episodes available to view.

back upon it, interwoven with other consistent stylistic elements. The first of these is the presence of circles: a visual reminder that echoes the shape of the *Classic Albums* logo, but also the shape of a record, foregrounding the album as object. This is central to *Classic Albums*' presentation of the album as an artefact and an 'aural document' that is representative of the artistic and emotional labour that surrounds its creation.¹⁰⁰ The second retained element is the presence of the colour gold: signifying value, pastness, and evocations of a 'golden period' in music history, and 'golden oldies' music. The colour appears in varying degrees throughout all the title sequences and other design elements such as on-screen captions.¹⁰¹ This is another echo of the logo and the record, but also references gold record sales – one factor amongst many which leads to the critical (re)appraisal of albums, and ultimately, their inclusion in lists of classic albums.

The *Classic Albums* theme music, created by Just a Noise, follows this pattern of repetition with (slight) difference, by using similar melodic patterns featured in the original version that are translated into the newer version(s), reflecting the different sounds and styles of the changing music landscape. This is most obviously heard in the differences between the version one and version two title sequences. Version two's theme is a whole eight seconds shorter, with the familiar slap bass style, drum, and organ opening that references blues and funk excised. Instead, it flips the earlier theme into reverse, and begins instead of ending with a crash of cymbals. This is followed with the rock guitar sound that characterises the latter part of version one's theme. In place of the organ, harmonica and piano are added, building more complex layers of sound of bass and rhythm guitar, with a continuing percussion track. The dominant sound, however, is the lead guitar track, heavy with distortion. The closing moments of the theme return to echo its predecessor, with cymbal crash, returning to its

¹⁰⁰ Bennett and Baker, '*Classic Albums*', p. 41. This is most striking in the second title sequence, where the *Classic Albums* logo (and brand) features heavily throughout. This will be discussed in further detail below.

¹⁰¹ The use of gold is particularly evident in the second title sequence, where it dominates the sepia-hued colour palette, replacing the steely-blue hue that was a prominent feature of the first *Classic Albums* title sequence.

similar melody interpreted upon clavinet keyboard. This time, its final sustained note, echoing over the title card, is played on a piano and not a guitar as in the first theme.

As with the rest of *Classic Albums'* construction, there are clear references to music history through the inclusion of various musical styles throughout all the themes used on the title sequence over the years. The instrumentation not only references particular genres of music, including stadium rock in the guitar and drum tracks, and funk and blues in the bass guitar and keyboard tracks, but also influential artists such as Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Wonder, and The Beatles. In consciously referring to the musical past, *Classic Albums* presents itself as the curator of that past. It is implicit, therefore, that the series has a dual address, firstly appealing to the heavily-engaged music-literate audience who possess the cultural competency or, as Bourdieu defined it, the 'cultural capital' to interpret the many references in the series, and secondly, the appeal is to a general audience, curious to know more about music.¹⁰² The use of such familiar melodies that are identifiable affords the audience the opportunity to connect (or re-connect) with their musical past.

However, as Bennett and Baker and Williams have argued, the series has, to some degree, widened its remit and audience via a move away from 'accepted canon of classic albums,' which may, Bennett and Baker continue, 'offend rock "purists."' ¹⁰³ The series' shift to become more inclusive of genres outside of rock and metal is particularly evident in later series, illustrated in the episodes dedicated to Simply Red's *Stars* and Jay Z's *Reasonable Doubt* and its inclusion of albums by cross-genre artists such as Elton John and Elvis Presley, expanding both the meaning of the word "classic" but also the meaning of the "classic album" label.

¹⁰² Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. 1979. Translated by Richard Nice, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

¹⁰³ Bennett and Baker, '*Classic Albums*', p. 53.

Authenticity and Emotionality

The series' relationship to the authentic is a complex one and falls into two main categories: analytical authenticity and emotional authenticity. Emotional authenticity is largely expressed through the confessional mode identified by Bennett and Baker in the 'talking head' interviews. The segments combine storytelling and truth-telling, creating a sense of intimacy that increases in intensity as the episode progresses. However, the "confessions" detailed within these segments are highly mediated and rarely deviate from what is publicly known, such as Brian Wilson's widely documented mental health issues and his resignation from live touring prior to the making of *Pet Sounds*. The audience will see only what they are *allowed* to see. In contrast, the audience of *The People's History of Pop* were afforded an opening up of historical narrative, while *Classic Albums* maintains the closing down of historical narrative, that, like the title sequence that precedes it, is historically fixed.

Though *Classic Albums* episodes are marketed as definitive histories, the interview sequences in particular make clear that the series remains a *version of events*. This version is encapsulated during the time of the episode's creation, and perspectives on the events depicted within it change over time. These sequences are the most overt expression of Kuhn's performance of memory and Dean MacCannell's concept of 'staged authenticity,' in relation to the tourist setting and the staging of spaces, such as living museums.¹⁰⁴ In this context, *Classic Albums* can be seen as implementing a kind of staged authenticity. Williams suggests this relates solely to the recording studio sequences but I argue this can be extended to the series as a whole. Staging is particularly evident in the interview segments, where the interviewee is shown in specifically lit and composed spaces. In fact, many of the locations appear much like sets, built for the purpose, even if they are shot in a recording studio. For instance, Wilson and the other band members are framed in medium close-up, against a background of guitars or sitting next to a piano, ready to play – and on occasion, Wilson does

¹⁰⁴ MacCannell, Dean. 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings'. *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 79, no. 3, 1973, pp. 589–603.

augment his discussion by playing quick excerpts of familiar melodies. Where instruments are absent, the band members and other interviewees appear against blank backgrounds in non-descript spaces, which may (or may not) be recording studios. These spaces are rarely domestic, and unlike in *The People's History of Pop*, we are visiting these spaces as a cultural tourist, rather than being invited into them.

Traces of the Real

This tourist-like or museum-like approach is further reflected in the use of still photographs and archive throughout the series. As in *The People's History of Pop*, they are used as a contextual hook, but their function as memory objects is used differently. Rather than being fully integrated into the discussion, they are inserted between the interview and studio sequences, but are never commented upon directly. Still photographs in particular are presented as an evocation of the past and a replacement for moving images. Marita Sturken describes the cultural meaning of photography in the following terms:

As the quintessential modern medium, photography has been endowed with particular kinds of cultural meanings – *as a trace of the real, evidence of the past* and a harbinger of death – that exemplify modernity's ambivalent embrace of the new while holding onto a nostalgia for the past.¹⁰⁵

The status of the images within *Pet Sounds* (and *Classic Albums*) as traces of the real is reinforced by the fact that the images shown are often in black and white, which carries inscribed connotations of pastness, while being recontextualised as new and/or rare. These qualities are foregrounded in the BBC press release for *Pet Sounds*, where archive is given specific attention alongside studio recording outtakes, which 'allow viewers to eavesdrop on some of the most important

¹⁰⁵ Sturken, Marita. 'Memory, Consumerism and Media: Reflections on the Emergence of the Field'. *Memory Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 2008, pp. 73–78.

recording sessions in music history.’¹⁰⁶ The release foregrounds the specialness of these items, but also an intimacy and closeness in the use of the word ‘eavesdrop,’ which does not ultimately exist in the episode itself, but as identified earlier in relation to *The People’s History of Pop*, is afforded by the medium-specific qualities of television. Here, the sense of uniqueness and the possibility of new information or alternate perspectives that the programme offers up could be interpreted as branding affect. The wording of the press release means the affective potential of the programme is calibrated in advance. The reputation of the series, largely built around its confessional mode, therefore makes affect an inbuilt part of audience expectations.

The affectivity of *Classic Albums* is, on some level, engineered rather than organic. The loss of authentic affectivity can be traced to the lack of a tangible memory object to define or guide the emotional experience as in *The People’s History of Pop*. Consequently, there is little sense of the transmission of affect. Though there are obvious connections to be made here regarding the privileged and sacred space of the recording studio there is an underlying implication of secrecy, of trespassing.¹⁰⁷ Once again, the audience is framed as a cultural tourist, an onlooker in the process. As referenced earlier in relation to Dennis Wilson, its rare materials are also negotiating – as Bennett and Baker observe in regard to music television – evidentiary lack: what no longer exists cannot be shown. A similar strategy is used throughout American PBS history documentaries, where the lack of material and lack of moving images is overcome by zooming in and out of different portions of the image – an editing style and technique pioneered by filmmaker Ken Burns known as the Ken Burns effect.¹⁰⁸ Beyond this, these memory objects are never commented upon directly, with the exception of the audio outtakes, which are an obvious and important part of the *Classic Albums* experience. This is at odds with how the series is promoted and goes against its

¹⁰⁶ BBC Media Centre. *Classic Album - The Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds*.

bbc.com/mediacentre/proginfo/2016/30/classic-album-the-beach-boys-pet-sounds/. Accessed 3 Dec. 2016.

¹⁰⁷ See Gibson, Chris. ‘Recording Studios: Relational Spaces of Creativity in the City’. *Built Environment*, vol. 31, no. 3, June 2005, pp. 192–207.

¹⁰⁸ For more on this see Edgerton, Gary R. *Ken Burns’s America: Packaging the Past for Television*. Palgrave, 2001.

emotional and analytical authenticity. However, it is in keeping with the series' representational strategies. Photographs and archive footage stand as secondary memory objects, in deference to the album – as sound, song, and recording.

For *Classic Albums*, the album itself is the focal point, and the principal memory object. The superior position of audio and the analytical authenticity of *Classic Albums* is reflected in its studio-based sequences, which have come to define the series. These sections are devoted to an almost molecular approach, where specific songs are broken down into their individual voice and instrument tracks to be discussed and analysed by the various contributors – performers, producers, engineers and technicians – who worked to create the sounds we hear.¹⁰⁹ The focus on sound as all-important within the world of *Classic Albums* goes against Frith's comments regarding incompatibility of music and television, actively foregrounding discussion as well as singing. The dominance of sound ties the series back to the television documentary impulse found elsewhere in its aesthetic, making it inherently and naturally televisual. Often, the featured songs are influential in terms of the impact on the artist's career, such as the success of 'God Only Knows,' or their musical innovation, reflected in the Phil Spector-influenced, 'I Just Wasn't Made for These Times.' These dissections are the heart of the series' contribution to memory work and memorialisation through their engagement in analogue nostalgia.

The equipment used by Wilson and the band is presented in positive terms, as both a signifier of authenticity, relating to its use as a tool of 'real' music production – as opposed to computer-aided effects – and a creative challenge to be overcome that requires skill and aptitude on the part of the musician and technician, which is signposted in Williams' narrative structure model. Here, the close-up is primarily used for contextual purposes and fetishization of the analogue. Equipment such as mixing desks, tape decks, and instruments *do* have an auratic quality, but it is based around the user – the famous musician or renowned technician – and not the object itself, as in *The People's History of Pop*.

¹⁰⁹ Bennett and Baker's work on the series also discusses this implementation. See '*Classic Albums*', p.44.

The celebration of analogue and analytical authenticity is part of *Classic Albums'* broader project of enshrinement, which serves to reinforce the narrative conditions of mastery and genius. They are the evidentiary proof as to why the album should be entered into the canon. This evidence is not new or even revelatory, but the track-by-track isolation allows the audience to hear songs differently, and thus, anew. These sequences, more than any other, are directly aimed at music-literate fans, and are central to the cultural work the series undertakes (Figure 2.8).

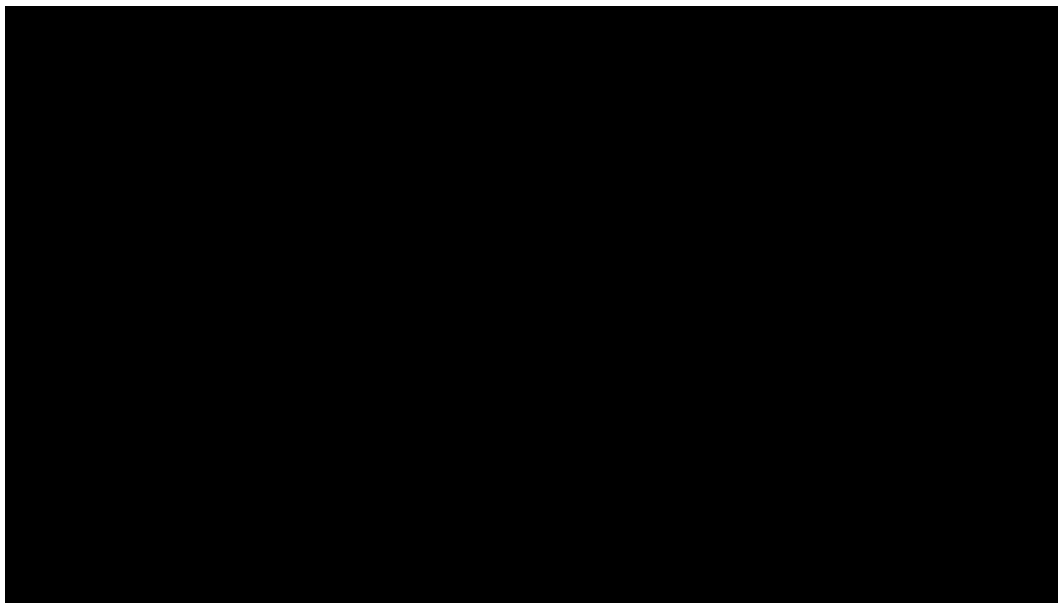


Figure 2.8: Fetishizing the artist's use of the analogue throughout *Classic Albums*

Classic Albums as Brand

The attention to detail regarding how an album is made is also reflected in the visual elements of the title sequences, which repeat the imagery of the studio space, reinforcing the behind-the-scenes, confessional nature of *Classic Albums*, but also the technical and collaborative process of creating an album that results in a physical object that can be owned (and consumed). This is achieved through a series of close-ups that focus in on – as in the song dissection sequences – specific elements of the album's production. The dominant imagery used throughout all three title sequences relates to either music recording equipment (mixing desks, reel-to-reel tape recorders, studio microphones) or musical

instruments (guitars, piano, drums).

Exceptions to this are the appearances of human intervention. In the first title sequence (Figure 2.9), this is reduced to the brief opening shot of hands sliding the controls on the mixing desk. In the second, the opening shot is replaced by a similar one of a hand turning up the dial on an amp (Figure 2.10). This is followed by a guitarist playing and a singer at the microphone; framing composition, lighting, and effects within these shots – dimly lit, blurred and distorted – purposefully obscure their identity, making them into an archetypal singer and musician, with no reference to the featured performers within the series aside from a brief appearance of album covers on display in a record shop. However, one element of the *mise-en-scène* is clear: the *Classic Albums* logo. No longer relegated to the end title card, it appears consistently throughout the sequence attached to the amp, the head of the guitar, and at the centre of the reel-to-reel spools, replacing the branding that would ordinarily exist on these products in real life.

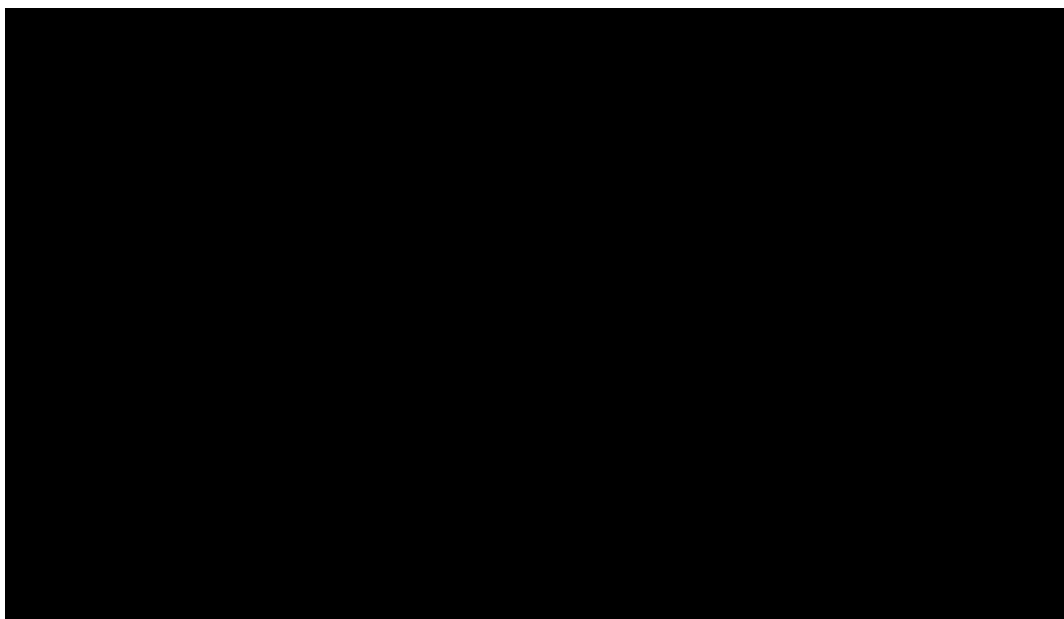


Figure 2.9: *Classic Albums*' first title sequence (1997)

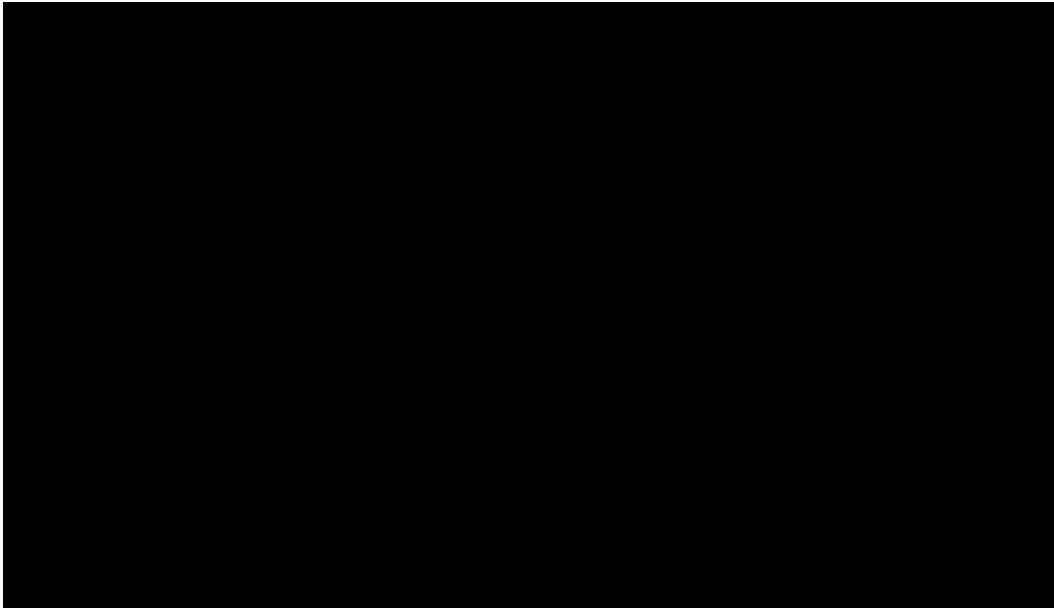


Figure 2.10: *Classic Albums'* second title sequence (2008)

The collapsing of *Classic Albums* as a brand into the music culture it celebrates is completed when featured on the awning of a store shop front – the first part of any title sequence outside of the studio setting. The logo also features on rows of product shelving inside the store. In place of the golden vinyl record from sequence one is a larger version of the now-familiar white CD case, the circular *Classic Albums* monochrome logo on the front, edged in gold. The saturated use of branding in the second title sequence and the changes to its theme music reveal changes to and within the music industry the series is referencing, with an abandonment of analogue technologies in favour of the new and the turn toward the digital – reflected in the presence of digitised recording equalisers and the CD as the music format of choice, which seems to express an anti-nostalgia and anti-analogue sentiment that is at odds with the rest of the programme, its remit, and its wider identity. One possible explanation for this can be found in the earlier suggestions of Bennett and Baker, and Williams in relation to the need to reach a wider audience, and the continued commodification of, and within, the series itself.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ In the later part of his analysis, Williams suggests that the series has become a product rather than a brand, directly correlating this to the change in its mode of address, re-constructed to appeal to the “casual” music fan. See Williams, ‘Man Behind the Curtain’, p. 173.

Beyond the needs of the audience, *Classic Albums* must also strive to represent the changes within music culture. The progressive, technology-driven nature of its production and consumption also includes the negotiation of loss. In this context, the changes within the second title sequence are illustrative of music consumption and engagement between 2003 and 2012 where CDs were preferred over vinyl, with much of the back catalogue of bands in particular being re-released in deluxe CD boxsets, to counteract the increasing dominance of downloading. The loss of vinyl is also the loss of the tangible and the album as artefact, which lends the series itself a sense of immediacy and a greater degree of importance. In this sense, *Classic Album* is set up as an arbiter of taste, but also as a gatekeeper of history, creating a museum of the musical past before it – and the people involved in creating it – disappear.

Following this logic, through a consideration of the use of CGI within the third title sequence (Figure 2.11), the sequence reflects a greater anti-nostalgia and anti-analogue sentiment, with the physical bodies of the performers replaced by close-ups and extreme close-ups of self-playing instruments, their output fed into a laptop, ready to be digitised. However, the new titles – designed by digital content creator Elyarch for the Spinnaker agency – were specifically created for the *Pet Sounds* episode; 3D design is implemented not to express solely what is new and reinforce its place within the digital, but also to express the ‘old.’ The sequence is a faithful, highly-detailed creation of the studio setting, which has by now come to define the *Classic Albums* experience, right down to the cork soundproof flooring, all rendered in CGI, in one single, fluid shot.

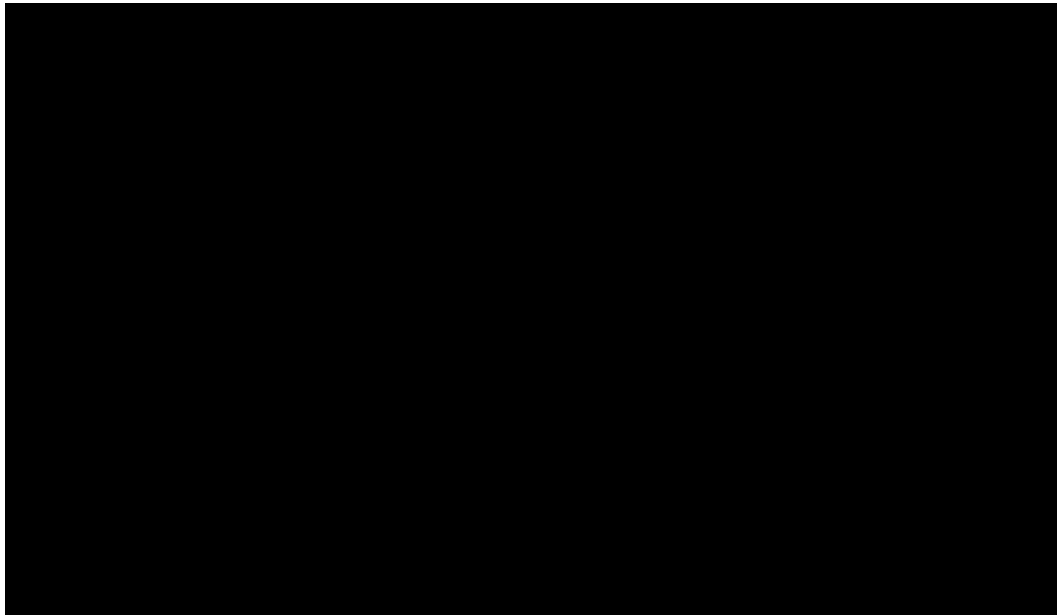


Figure 2.11: *Classic Albums'* third title sequence (2016)

These titles more than any other reflect music history and the history of the series itself. This is achieved through several intertextual references to earlier title sequences in the choice of instruments, all of which are connected by cord (to microphones, headphones, or amps), creating a sense of continuum and connection. The final moments of the sequence are the most overtly referential, choosing to end on another golden record bearing the *Classic Albums* name, recalling the original title card. In their discussion of the project on the company website, Spinnaker outlined the creative challenges of making the new sequence and complementary interstitial titles that introduce each song (these replace simple captions used in earlier episodes). They state that their design choices were based on wishing to give both sets of titles the appearance of being 'part of the classic film that had been discovered in the Beach Boys archive.'¹¹¹ This is achieved through the use of 3D and original archive images to recreate the studio desk, call sheets, and audiotape boxes upon which animated handwritten song titles appear (Figure 2.12). This attention to detail and use of skeuomorphism to recreate a recording studio circa 1960s using technology of the 2010s not only demonstrates knowledge of the series and its past, but also knowledge of the

¹¹¹ Spinnaker. 'News'. *Spinnaker*, <https://www.spinnakerlondon.co.uk/news>. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017.

album in both contexts: both as a (tangible) object and its (intangible) nostalgic resonance.

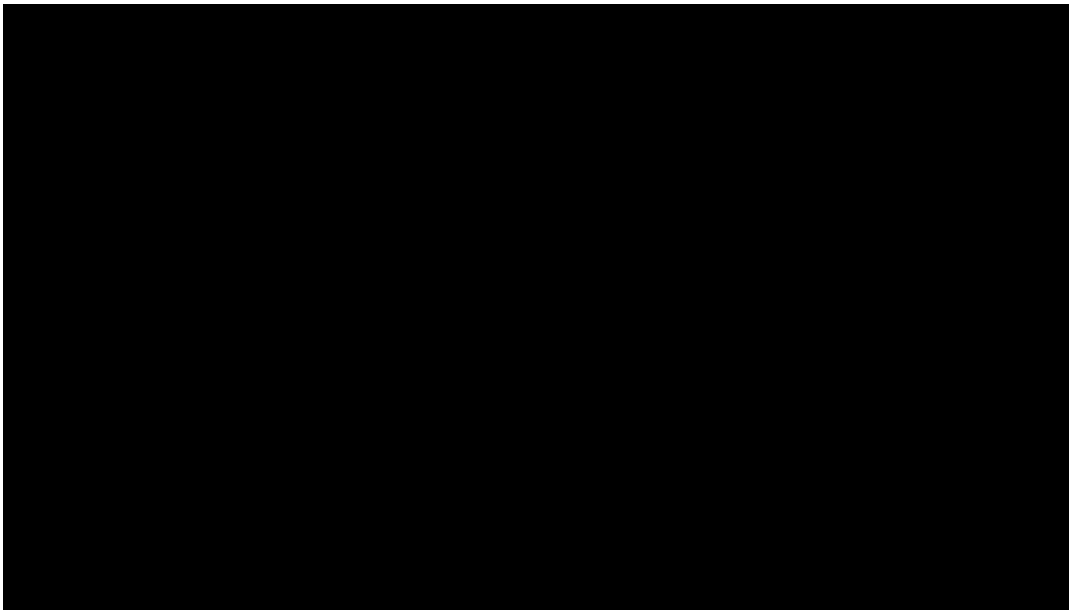


Figure 2.12: Interstitial title cards mimicking the 1960s recording process

The interstitial title cards create synergy between the two eras, reinforcing the idea of history as a continuum. Here, more than anywhere else in the history of the series – beyond the comments of the contributors during studio sequences – is an obvious indulgence in analogue nostalgia. This is both nostalgia for the format and its current renaissance, but also nostalgia for the programme itself, and what *Classic Albums* used to be. Though *Classic Albums* is primarily concerned with appreciating, celebrating, and often, reassessing the music of the past, it must also continue to engage with the music audience of the present. *Pet Sounds* illustrates how effective this mix of past and present can be and gives credence to the idea that the two can happily co-exist, operating in the same flexible nostalgia-positive space of other contemporary music history programming.

Live from Abbey Road

The final part of this chapter turns toward discussion of a programme that is a site of the complex relationships between history, memory, and nostalgia. *Live from Abbey Road* is another example of contemporary music television that looks back at and celebrates music culture of the past, through its mix of live performance of original and cover songs. While the programmes explored in earlier parts of this chapter were based around the discussion of tangible memory objects (or the lack of them), drawn from music culture and its surrounding ephemera, the focal memory object presented in *Live from Abbey Road* is not photographs, archive material or even the music being performed. Instead, it is the building itself: Abbey Road Studios, London – a site of great socio-historical importance, creative endeavour, and emotional resonance for music and music culture.

Abbey Road as Memory Object

As a shared, public space, Abbey Road is a *different kind* of memory object, one that is public and collective rather than personal – a status underlined by its primary function as a working studio. The presentation of the studio and live performance in *Live from Abbey Road* is also a *different kind* of performance of memory. The series represents a natural site to explore both the mythologised aura of the recording studio present throughout *Classic Albums*, and a physical, cultural touch point for the fan culture represented in *The People's History of Pop*. *Live from Abbey Road* is therefore a useful lens through which to consider the wider impact of cultural tourism on shared, collective, and global memory experiences, which has hitherto been unexplored in music television scholarship. Thus far, the only reference to the series in relation to Abbey Road's contemporary cultural heritage and output, is briefly mentioned in the revised edition of Southall et al.'s history of the studio, *Abbey Road: The Story of the*

World's Most Famous Recording Studios.¹¹²

Before turning towards a more detailed analysis of the series and its relationship to memory and performance, I will contextualise its production and aesthetic to give a broader understanding of its contribution to music television. Alongside this, I will also briefly outline its position as a constituent of the contemporary cultural output of Abbey Road Studios and its cultural identity that is distinct from its primary function as a recording studio.

Stylising Live from Abbey Road

Created by British rock drummer Peter Van Hooke, the series began broadcasting in 2007. Each series consists of twelve one-hour episodes filmed without a live audience. The show remains in syndication across Europe, Japan, and Australia, in addition to airings in Canada and the US on Much Music and The Sundance Channel respectively, which accounts for its predominantly Anglo-American focus. Like *Whistle Test* before it, the series is framed as art rather than entertainment, a quality further reflected in its aesthetic and approach.

Key to the identity of *Live from Abbey Road* is, like *Classic Albums*, its focus on creative and emotional labour, reinforced throughout the programme by its foregrounding of musicianship and tonal intimacy, emphasised in its consistent use of close-ups. Music is both artefact and art, echoed in the series' title card and logo, with its circular central image referring back to the psychedelic and pop art movements of the 1960s, but also, as noted in the design of *Classic Albums'* own title card, the grooves of the vinyl record (Figure 2.13). Taken from the third series, *Live from Abbey Road: A Tribute to the Beatles* (Channel 4, 2009) is thus far the first and only tribute episode, compiled from performances across the series in celebration of the *Abbey Road* album. These aesthetic choices align the series with nostalgia, musical pastness, and authenticity, with its spiral-turned-record imagery repeated throughout the series' aesthetic and promotional materials, qualities intensified within the tribute episode. This is shown most

¹¹² Southall, Brian, et al. *Abbey Road: The Story of the World's Most Famous Recording Studios*. 1982. Rev. and Updated ed., Omnibus, 2011.

overtly in its reappearance in the lighting scheme, projected on the studio walls, which are in stark contrast to the harsh, workman-style lights elsewhere that evoke the quasi-warehouse setting of *Whistle Test*.

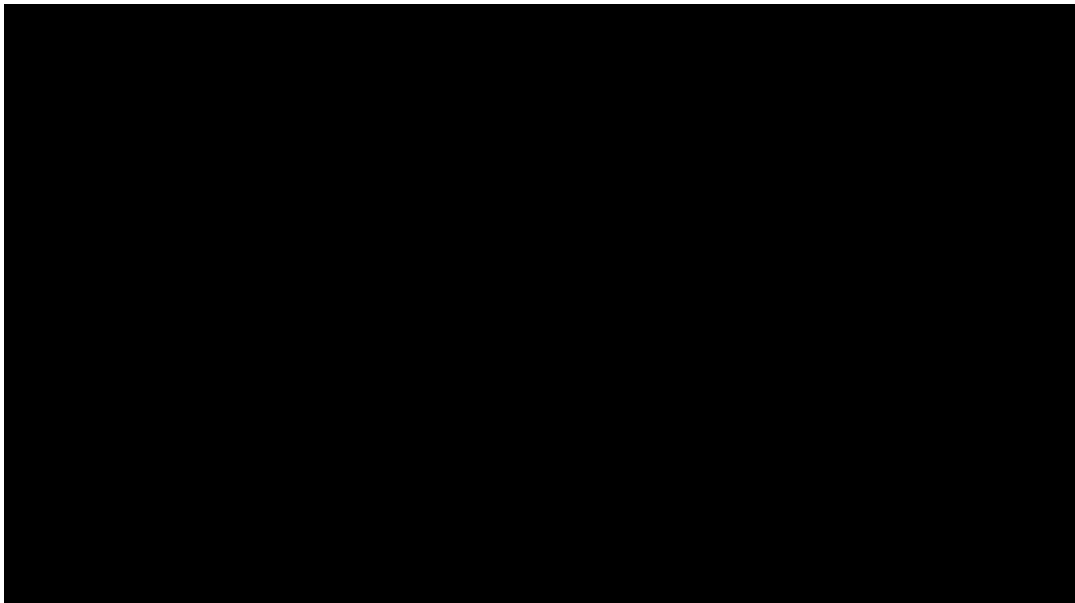


Figure 2.13: Title sequence of *Live from Abbey Road*'s tribute episode

These visual references form part of an elaborate and purposeful nostalgic aesthetic. Some of these elements are consistent to the *Live from Abbey Road* series as a whole, while others are specific to the Abbey Road setting and the Beatles themselves. The standard series style is articulated in various ways, including lighting cues and mobile camera work, which is combined with slower editing patterns to eschew the rapid-cut style which defined MTV and the music video era, in favour of a style that clearly – and perhaps purposefully – references much earlier examples of music television, such as *Whistle Test* and *Later...*. Through its aesthetic appropriation of earlier music programming, *Live from Abbey Road* is then a product of both musical and televisual memory.

The homage the series pays to the past is not only musical, but also televisual, something at odds with the comments of producer Michael Gleason in promotional material. Gleason suggests that the series aims for a scale and ambition that is outside the confines of the televisual, highlighting the use of 35mm film and HD interchangeably, to make *Live from Abbey Road*'s production

‘look like a movie and sound like a record.’¹¹³ At first, Gleason’s comments would seem to reject or disavow its televisual context. However, I argue that attempts to elevate its status can be tied into broader discussions around cinematic and quality television and the desire for *Live from Abbey Road* to be considered in similar terms.¹¹⁴ Gleason’s justification serves to reinforce Abbey Road’s sociocultural importance and the value of live music performance – and by extension, the artists performing them – that are captured within the studio space.

Live from Abbey Road, Memory, and the Canon

As an indicator of its own musical canon and further signifier of its prestige, *Live from Abbey Road*’s first episode featured performances from Snow Patrol, Madeleine Peyroux, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, setting the template for its cross-genre, international approach. Similarly, the latest episode, broadcast in November 2012, featured Ed Sheeran, Brian Wilson, Gnarlz Barkley, Paul Simon, and Michael Bublé.¹¹⁵ Their inclusion highlights the programme’s function as a performative space for both new and established artists, but also the programme’s shift towards including more artists, in contrast to previous years, where episodes typically featured two to three artists who performed up to five songs per session.

Like *Whistle Test*, performances are interspersed with brief interview segments where artists discuss their musical influences and/or the inspiration behind the songs they are about to play. Of these, the opening song is usually a current single – underlining the series’ function as a promotional tool – and the

¹¹³ Gleason’s comments appeared in video interview material hosted on the now defunct official website for the programme. However, this phrase was replicated throughout its pre and post transmission promotion. See, for example, Corvin, Ann-Marie. ‘The Magic of Abbey Road’. *Broadcast*, 4 Jan. 2007, <https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/the-magic-of-abbey-road/117848.article>. Accessed 31 July 2021.

¹¹⁴ There is a significant body of work dedicated to the quality television and cinematic television. However, Jacobs, Jason, and Steven Peacock, editors. *Television Aesthetics and Style*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, offers a good overview of these debates.

¹¹⁵ This refers to the original format of the series and does not include spinoffs broadcast later, including highlights series, *Live from Abbey Road: Classics* (2015) or *Abbey Road Studios: In Session* (2015).

final song is usually a cover that is purposefully rendered musically distinct from its original. This concept was first used in the short-lived series *Re:covered* (BBC Choice, 2002).¹¹⁶ Over time, this has become *Live from Abbey Road's* defining characteristic, signifying one of several ways in which its fuller identity has been lost. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to attempt to include an analysis of *Live from Abbey Road* that attempts to encompass the entire series, and to that end, the following analysis will focus upon its Beatles tribute episode in order to explore its relationship to memory and performance.

Its production is significant for several reasons, serving to reiterate the strong link between the studio and the band in popular culture and popular memory. This is due to the multi-layered significance of the Beatles, the studio building and the surrounding area of NW8, and the increasing commodification of nostalgia through cultural tourism. The depth of this significance is reflected in the large generative academic discourse that surrounds the band, which is, as Gary Burns notes, commensurate with both the change in scholarly attitude to popular music and the founding of popular music studies.¹¹⁷

In Abbey Road, place, product, and personal memories are collapsed into a singular cultural palimpsest that holds many and varied meanings. As Tara Brabazon observes in her work on Abbey Road and memory:

Abbey Road, as an album, crosswalk, street sign and studio, is a constituent element in visual memory. The crossing has gained a relevance and importance that extends beyond the rim of a vinyl album. *Traces of the Beatles are found on that road.*¹¹⁸

Live from Abbey Road works with (and sometimes against) these deep-rooted associations. Brabazon's use of the word 'traces' resonates with the

¹¹⁶ BBC Choice was the BBC's first exclusive digital channel, which launched on 23rd September 1998, transmitting until its close on 8th February 2003. Much of its content, style and demographic was carried over to its successor, BBC Three.

¹¹⁷ Burns, Gary. "'Beatles News: Product Line Extensions and the Rock Canon'". *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, edited by Kenneth Womack, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 217–29.

¹¹⁸ Brabazon, Tara. 'We're One Short for the Crossing: Abbey Road and Popular Memory'. *Transformations*, no. 3, May 2002, p. 5. My emphasis.

presentation of this episode in particular, tying into discussions of Abbey Road and the surrounding area as being special or containing its own aura. This quality is demonstrated not only through the many publications dedicated to the studio and the Beatles in the mainstream press, but also in academic writing, where it is depicted as the 'ultimate' place to record music.¹¹⁹ The covers performed throughout the tribute reiterate the cultural longevity of the Beatles catalogue, but they also fit into the broader context of musical appropriation that consistently re-presents and recirculates their music, across a variety of media, including *The X-Factor* (ITV, UK, 2004-2018) and *The Voice* (NBC, USA, 2011-).¹²⁰ Within music culture itself, such re-imagining is exemplary of the popularity of tribute and/or covers albums that have become, as Plasketes observes, a 'predominant cultural mode.'¹²¹ The power and profitability of such endeavours is underlined by several Beatles projects where their own music is reworked, or in Plasketes terms, 're-possessed,' most notably *Anthology* and *Love*.¹²²

Such projects are complemented by the constant (re-)appearance of their music in visual and popular cultures, but also of their songs' popularity as cover songs, expressed in the long-running series *MTV Unplugged* (MTV, 1989-), and similar radio segments based around music covers, such as Radio 1's Live Lounge and equivalents around the world, including Australian station Triple J's Like a Version, and Irish FM's Better than the Real Thing, all predicated on the common

¹¹⁹ For popular writing on Abbey Road Studios, see, for example, Lawrence, Alistair. *Abbey Road: The Best Studio in the World*. 2012. For academic work, see Bennett, Samantha. 'Behind the Magical Mystery Door: History, Mythology and the Aura of Abbey Road Studios'. *Popular Music*, vol. 35, no. 03, 2016, pp. 396–417; and Gibson, Chris, and John Connell. *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again*. Channel View Publications, 2005, pp. 43–92.

¹²⁰ References for this franchised programming reflect the country in which it aired first. However, the existence of Beatles covers exists across global iterations and is particularly prevalent in televised music competitions of this type.

¹²¹ Plasketes, George. 'Re-flections on the Cover Age: A Collage of Continuous Coverage in Popular Music'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2005, p. 151. For further scholarship on cover songs see Cusic, Don. 'In Defense of Cover Songs'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2005, pp. 171–77; and Solis, Gabriel. 'I Did It My Way: Rock and the Logic of Covers'. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 33, no. 3, July 2010, pp. 297–318.

¹²² Plasketes, 'Re-flections on the Cover Age', p. 153. It should be noted that while the roots of these projects are musical, they also involve numerous related products, including a documentary, book, and VHS/DVD release for *Anthology*, and a Cirque du Soleil stage show for *Love*. However, both projects are largely constructed around music as the central object of memory.

alteration practice of ‘bending’ or flipping genres.¹²³ This process makes the songs musically distinct from the original, and the choice of cover is usually a departure from the covering artist’s own output, such as country music duo Sugarland’s acoustic take on ‘Come Together’ that features in the *Live from Abbey Road* Beatles tribute episode.¹²⁴ The performance is both *like* and yet *unlike* the original in that it is immediately identifiable as a Sugarland performance through the distinctiveness of Jennifer Nettles’ and Kristian Hall’s singing and playing styles (a quality shared with the Counting Crows and Matchbox Twenty performances which also feature).

When placed in this context, *Live from Abbey Road*’s Beatles tribute may seem indicative of the commodification of nostalgia and the commercialisation of popular music. However, it is important to note that it does not cross into performances that are ironic or novelty based.¹²⁵ Instead they are defined by their honesty and authenticity. Artists’ discussions prior to their performance are typified by an attention to detail regarding musical approach, and the expression of the desire to get things ‘right’ – a compulsion which seems particularly acute in relation to covering the Beatles’ songbook. Therefore, I argue that *Live from Abbey Road* is an avenue for music television to return to its intimate, performative roots – where musicianship and song craft is foregrounded over that of star-led performances. This remains paramount irrespective of whether the artist is established and internationally known, like Seal and Counting Crows, or newer artists, such as Imelda May and Paloma Faith, who were then in the early stages of their career.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 151.

¹²⁴ A well-known example of this outside of the Beatles oeuvre is *If I Was a Carpenter*, an alternative rock tribute album that covers the music of soft rock/easy listening duo the Carpenters, released in 1994. It is widely recognised as the beginning of the group’s music being reconsidered in the music press.

¹²⁵ For more on the increasing popularity of the ironic rock cover, see Bailey, Steve. ‘Faithful or Foolish: The Emergence of the “Ironic Cover Album” and Rock Culture’. *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2003, pp. 141–59.

Abbey Road, Space, and Place

Just as the other programmes referenced in this chapter celebrate and commemorate history, part of the cultural work of *Live from Abbey Road* is to preserve its own history and is one of a number of strategies to maintain the studio's cultural presence. As outlined in Samantha Bennett's recent writing on the aura of the studio, this *does* include studio and Beatles-related merchandise, solidifying its relationship with the band while also forming a part of the 'successful commercialisation of its legacy,' thereby ensuring it remains open and working *without* solely becoming a tourist attraction – a function it has actively resisted by closing off the studio space to the general public.¹²⁶ However, this is problematised by its utilisation of a live camera feed of the crossing, which runs 24-hours-a-day, where visitors can find and share their photos re-creating the now famous image shot by Iain Macmillan for the cover of *Abbey Road*.¹²⁷ This is at odds with the graffiti-cleaning practices outlined in Brabazon's earlier work, which severs the deep-rooted interpersonal connections created between the studio, the band, and its global fanbase.¹²⁸ Such measures can be seen to deny what Chris Gibson calls the 'intimate relationship with music' that is forged between a recording studio and the city that surrounds it.¹²⁹ This intimacy is particularly evident in relation to the Beatles and Liverpool, but also in the position of London within the wider cultural and music tourism industries built around the band.

The complexity of the relationship between Abbey Road as place and Abbey Road as cultural site therefore lends *Live from Abbey Road* an air of uniqueness. The prestige identified by Michael Gleason in relation to the

¹²⁶ Bennett, 'Behind the Magical Mystery Door', p. 415. During the production of the series, the studio was subject to controversy surrounding its potential sale to address debts owed by EMI. Following this discussion, the studio and the crossing were awarded English Heritage Grade II listed status to protect the building from development and alteration in the future. As Bennett notes, there are opportunities that open up the space, but they are largely by invitation only, defined as both 'expensive' and 'rare.' See Bennett, 'Behind the Magical Mystery Door', p. 415.

¹²⁷ Abbey Road Studios. 'Crossing Hall of Fame'. *Abbey Road Studios*, <http://www.abbeyroad.com/crossing>. Accessed 4 Mar. 2017.

¹²⁸ Brabazon, 'We're One Short for the Crossing', pp. 9-13.

¹²⁹ Gibson, 'Recording Studios', pp. 192.

programme's aesthetic takes on a greater meaning, extending to include the privilege of *being* in the space of Abbey Road, both for the performer and the viewer. In her discussion of the *Live from Abbey Road* offshoot series, *Abbey Road Studios: In Session* (Channel 4, 2012) which shares much of the aesthetic and style of *Live from Abbey Road*.¹³⁰ Bennett draws out the importance of the studio location to the series aesthetic, saying that it places 'artists in a location of deep cultural heritage and meaning.'¹³¹ The depth of meaning identified by Bennett is reflected throughout the tribute episode, with interview segments relating the artists' awe and disbelief at being in the recording space, while reiterating its mythologised 'magical' and 'special' qualities.

Such conceptualisations feed into the presentation of space within *Live from Abbey Road*, appealing to what MacCannell describes as the 'back region' in relation to tourism.¹³² Though MacCannell's work is concerned with behind-the-scenes or set tours and the authenticity of such spaces, it is equally applicable to the experience of watching *Live from Abbey Road*, where the audience is afforded the opportunity to enter the 'back region' of a space that they have likely only previously known through mediated encounters – photographs, archive video footage, or seeing the crossing locale itself – and never as a live performance space. I argue that the series and the tribute episode in particular, are both a product (and a visual expression) of cultural tourism. As Gibson and Connell's extensive study of music tourism highlights, the motivating factor behind such tours is often deeply personal, based around nostalgia and pleasure, which results in experiences that resonate on emotional and affective levels.¹³³ The religious connotations that are frequently ascribed to such experiences – sacred spaces, rituals, and pilgrimage – are also inscribed within the aesthetic of *Live from Abbey Road*.

¹³⁰ I term this series an offshoot due to the fact that it was broadcast between seasons of *Live from Abbey Road*, produced by Channel 4, and is often listed as being part of its output. Each session focussed on a particular artist.

¹³¹ Bennett, 'Behind the Magical Mystery Door', p. 411.

¹³² MacCannell, 'Staged Authenticity'.

¹³³ Gibson and Connell, *Music and Tourism*, pp. 171-209.

Though the studio clearly does have an aura, it is not entirely in the Benjaminian sense. Abbey Road is a facilitator of the creation and production of art, it is not art in its own right – but it maintains a unique position in popular memory and popular culture. The specificities and the material properties of the space are specific, and ergo, have a lack of reproducibility, which could be constituted as aura. Eliot Bates’ writing on recording studios supports this, reiterating their place in music tourism and the uniqueness of the studio setting, while making specific reference to Abbey Road and its elevated cultural status:

Studios are unique. They have a sound, a vibe and even, in the case of legendary studios such as Abbey Road that become vacation destinations or pilgrimage sites, a transformative effect even on those who never professionally use the studios.¹³⁴

Following this, Setha Low’s arguments concerning emotion, affect and space in *Spatializing Culture* could be seen to recontextualise the qualities of aura in terms of the tangible and material are a particularly useful lens through which to view Abbey Road and the experiences that take place within it. Low states that ‘place and space are always embodied. Their materiality can be metaphoric and discursive, as well as physically located and thus carried about.’¹³⁵ To this end, the musical performance sequences in *Live from Abbey Road* are generally presented as if the audience are actually watching the song’s performance, with the camera angle and composition used to ground or embed the audience within the space. This quality is particularly evident in wider shots, where more members of the band can be seen, but also in the choice of shooting angle, with the camera frequently placed behind the backs of musicians or in between the lighting rigs, as if the audience is eavesdropping or even trespassing upon the performance (Figure 2.14).

¹³⁴ Bates, Eliot. ‘What Studios Do’. *Journal on the Art of Record Production*, no. 7, Nov. 2012, <https://www.arpjournal.com/asarpwp/what-studios-do>. Accessed 4 Mar. 2017.

¹³⁵ Low, Setha M. *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place*. Routledge, 2016, p.6.



Figure 2.14: Featured performers in *Live from Abbey Road*'s Beatles tribute

In *Live from Abbey Road*, this aesthetic immerses rather than isolates the audience, further reinforcing the sense of privilege reflected elsewhere in the aesthetic. However, the authenticity of these performances is called into question by the obvious fact that the performance is recorded – cameras and lighting equipment are clearly visible, drawing attention to its artifice. This highlights that the performance is practiced and thus perfected. Conversely, the presence of other equipment, such as a clapperboard, could be said to reinforce opposing connotations of authenticity. For instance, in not editing out Seal's request for another take when beginning to perform 'Something,' the series sheds further light on the labour within the creative process, including mistake making. Such moments make the performers seem more human, and the series as a whole seems more intimate in comparison to other programming of this type.

Abbey Road and Cultural Value

In blurring the lines between private and public, *Live from Abbey Road* also complicates the degree to which the public, tourist-driven fascination with Abbey Road can be said to ‘invade’ the private space of the recording studio. In blurring such lines, the notions of Abbey Road as place and Abbey Road as product are also lost. The tribute episode in particular foregrounds this kind of slippage or collapsing. The studio’s associations with the Beatles and their music are consistently referred to in its interstitial material. Between each performance segment, black and white footage of the next artist walking the Abbey Road crossing is shown (Figure 2.15). This is an obvious referent to Iain Macmillan’s album cover photograph and the numerous pop culture homages that have enshrined the image and the crossing in cultural memory.

The use of this footage is the most overt performance of memory. This is emphasised through the isolated use of black and white footage as a stylistic choice that is clearly constructed to evoke pastness, placing it in stark contrast to the colour – and thus ‘new’ – footage that constitutes the rest of the programme. As Paul Grainge’s work on memory and black and white images illustrates, the auratic qualities of black and white have ‘come to function and be sold as the aesthetic of memory.’¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Grainge, Paul. ‘Visualizing “Memory” in the Age of Global Capital: A Taste for Black and White: Visuality, Digital Culture, and the Anxieties of the Global’. *American Visual Cultures*, edited by David Holloway and John Beck, Continuum International Publishing, 2005, p. 252.

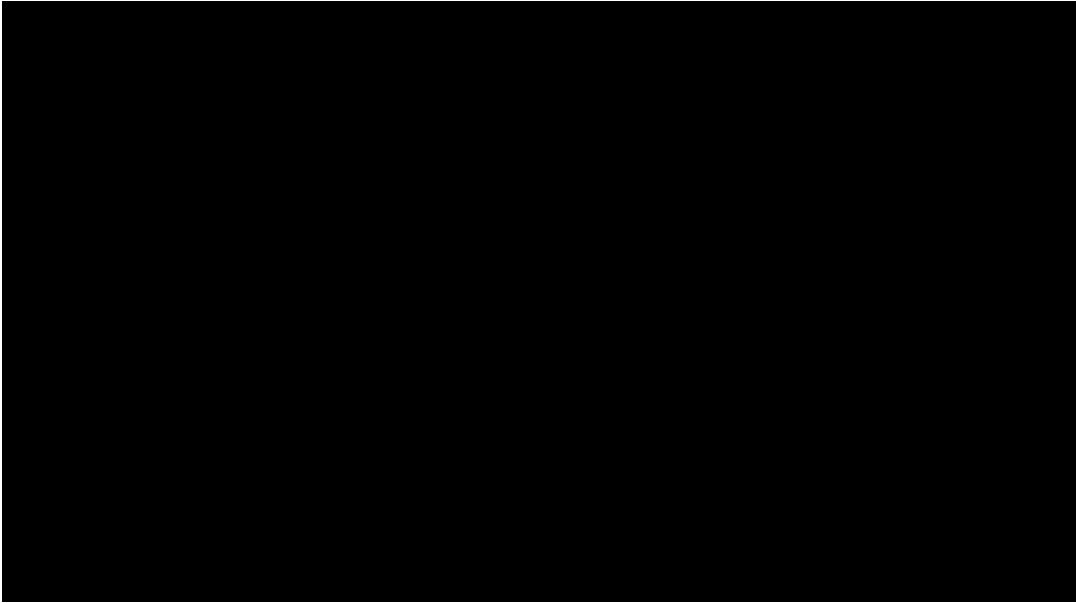


Figure 2.15: *Live from Abbey Road* artists walk the crossing

The invocation of such qualities in *Live from Abbey Road* is both effective and affecting. Alongside the memory work illustrated throughout the interview and performance segments, the interstitial material and its placement invites the audience of *Live from Abbey Road* to be nostalgic, both for the music and the studio space itself – a quality that is particularly heightened in the tribute episode. This episode more than any other exemplifies how the series is typically marketed, making connections to and with music history. For instance, the series' only DVD and Blu-ray release features various taglines calling it 'Up Close and Musical' in the US, and 'Live From Abbey Road – Making History' in the UK to attract the attention of buyers (Figure 2.16).

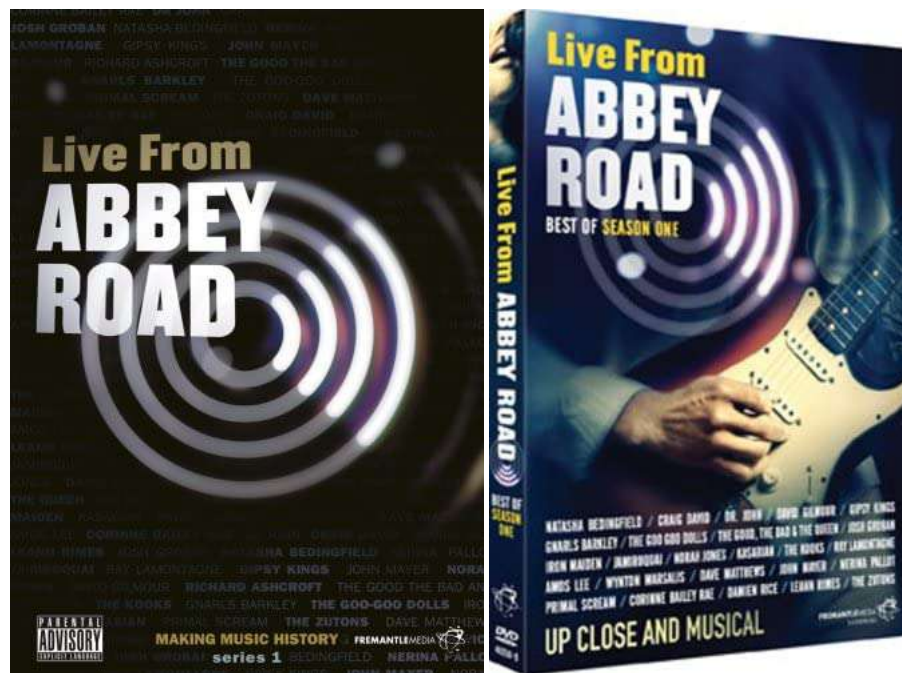


Figure 2.16: (L-R) The UK and US DVD covers of *Live from Abbey Road*

However, the series one release only includes performance compilations rather than full episodes. Given the value of Abbey Road as a cultural site, this decision is curious but commonplace. Replicating the treatment of *Whistle Test* explored in Chapter One, it also illustrates that the evisceration of a programme's wider identity is not restricted to non-contemporary television. The re-appearance of significant performances through the *Live from Abbey Road: Classics* (Channel 4, 2015-2018) series is framed as a celebration of its own history and value to music culture, but it can also be read as another form of evisceration. Constructed in the manner of *Classic Albums* and *Live from the Artists' Den* (American Public Television, USA, 2008), *Live from Abbey Road's* identity has not remained as dominant or as commodified, with its web presence having long since disappeared, and no other artist-specific CD or DVD releases befitting of its reputation and cultural value, as has been the case with other series. Instead, the survival of *Live from Abbey Road* is maintained by music fans, who upload clips of favourite artists and performances online, underlining that the value of music programming is both transitory and subjective. In spite of this, *Live from Abbey Road* is worthy of further discussion, and makes a significant contribution to the

history of music programming, by offering important insights into the construction of performance and memory within it. The series consciously makes and remakes music history by contributing creatively to the deeply-rooted significance of Abbey Road Studios. It is also an important and valuable constituent of its legacy in popular culture and popular memory that merits further critical attention.

Conclusion

This chapter's discussion of music television and its representation and re-representation of history and memory reveals a complex set of elements that can be said to create an aesthetic strategy that foregrounds, facilitates, and encourages participation with music culture that has hitherto been unrecognised. This culture encompasses, but also blurs, the boundaries between the dichotomies of private and public, personal, and shared, and past and present. As the work on affect and nostalgia referenced throughout illustrates, these programmes provide an experience of music culture that is deeply personal, emotionally resonant, and often transformative – exemplified by the BAME Smiths fans featured in *The People's History of Pop* who gained acceptance through the band's music. These programmes are products of memory work and illustrate the affective potential of the performance of memory on television.

Through their use of the mobility and intimacy that characterises televisual form, these programmes also foreground and facilitate a level of engagement with music culture that is defined by its *activity* – expressed in the online presence of archive projects such as *The People's History of Pop* and its archive aesthetic – but also by its *activeness*. Such activity creates a positive space for nostalgia and nostalgic behaviour that need not be solely defined by consumption or commodification. However, it is also important to acknowledge that such spaces are consciously created, such as in the use of black and white footage to express an aesthetic of nostalgia. This consciousness or awareness of nostalgia intensifies the strength of the relationship between memory, music television, and music culture. This is reflected in the various kinds of branding

strategies – primarily the branding of music television, as in *Classic Albums* and *Live from Abbey Road*, and the branding of affect, illustrated by press releases and promotional materials for the *My Generation* season, *The People's History of Pop*, and the role of BBC Four in creating a specific space for music television and scheduled flow built upon nostalgia, thereby facilitating its continued presence in popular culture and cultural memory. These strategies create space for nostalgic engagement and stimulate nostalgic behaviour, while also ensuring that such programming remains a significant part of visual culture.

The multifaceted exploration of nostalgia and fan culture that is expressed within these texts also highlights the need for flexibility regarding what nostalgia *is* for the television audience, what such television *does* for these audiences, and where that nostalgic engagement sits in relation to the conceptualisation of history and heritage. These texts illustrate that the nostalgic behaviour shown within them, and the memory work performed by them is as unique as the personal stories attached to the memory objects of musical history that they are structured around. The experience of music culture presented throughout this chapter reveals the similarities and also the differences of those experiences, whether shown from the perspective of the fan, artist, or producers and technicians who work together in the creative process of producing that culture.

The ways in which these texts write and consciously re-write music history is also a challenge to how that history is understood. They are also an important reminder of the socio-historical value of music programming, frequently dismissed as throwaway and lacking in worth, as transitory and ephemeral. These texts also illustrate that, just as there is more than one kind of history, there is also more than one kind of nostalgia. Efforts to deride, malign and otherwise eviscerate such programming and the memories related to them also denies the cultural work of television and its overriding function: to commemorate, celebrate, and preserve. The case studies presented within this chapter demonstrates how we live with the 'traces of the past', but also what occurs in the event of their loss. Moreover, it illustrates the significance of memory in the process of recuperation and renegotiation that occurs when fans are given the

opportunity to rewrite music history in their own words.

In the next chapter, discussion will turn toward how music documentary features represent the personal histories of some of its most significant figures.

Chapter Three: Music Features, Nostalgia, and Memorialisation

Introduction

This chapter directly responds to the increased production of and interest in the feature-length music documentary that has taken place over the course of writing this thesis. The chapter represents not a shift away from the discussion of music programming that exists on television, but rather, an acknowledgement of the music programming that exists beyond it, and the ever-blurring boundaries between the mediums of film and television. The significance of the music documentary feature in generating and maintaining the appetite for music programming cannot be underestimated and is evident in the increased presence of these films outside of traditional theatrical exhibition, whether within the programming flow of the broadcast schedule, anniversary screenings, or acquisitions for streaming services.¹ Moreover, its historical context and function as a site of engagement with music heritage and music culture cannot be ignored. Music documentary features contribute to shaping wider cultures of taste in regard to music programming, and their impact can be felt within the subject, aesthetic, and content discussed throughout this thesis. Both the television music documentary and its feature-length counterpart work in dialogue, offering similar themes, ideas, and concepts expressed across their different mediums.

Throughout the analysis that follows, specific reference will be made to the particular spaces music feature documentaries occupy within popular and visual cultures. I will examine how the circulation and subsequent recirculation of such documentaries has changed over time, considering the impact of shifts in access to such texts, and how this stimulates greater demand for similar content. The increased visibility of these texts expands and enriches the opportunities to engage with music culture. The success of the genre and its continued presence offers the opportunity to explore commonalities in aesthetics, subject and

¹ See Chapter One for a discussion of this in relation to the scheduling practices of BBC Four.

content, and to consider how the narrative shape and approach of the music documentary has also changed over time, with particular attention to what Steve Rose describes as the ‘tabloidification’ of the genre.²

The case studies presented attempt to offer a cross-section of musical genres and artists. While they differ in terms of filmic style, approach, and treatment of their subject, they are unified by their release period of 2015-2016, described by Phil Gallo as a ‘banner year’ for documentary.³ This limiting reflects the increased production, popularity, and critical discussion of music documentary features throughout this period, typified in the broadsheet press as a ‘golden age’ that continues unabated, exemplified by the success of the Aretha Franklin concert documentary, *Amazing Grace* (Alan Elliott and Sydney Pollack, 2018).⁴ The analyses will be constructed according to three central themes: aestheticization, narrativization and memorialisation. The first theme will be explored in relation to the Oasis documentary *Supersonic* (Mat Whitecross, 2016) discussed in relation to its aestheticization of nostalgia and evocation of pastness. For the purposes of this chapter, Whitecross’ film is positioned as a normative example of the contemporary music documentary feature, and reflects the dominance of white, guitar-led rock music in music culture and the canonicity of its heritage. The second and third themes will be explored in discussion of *Amy* (Asif Kapadia, 2016) and *What Happened, Miss Simone?* (Liz Garbus, 2015). I will examine how the lives (and afterlives) of Amy Winehouse and Nina Simone are narrativized and memorialised within the contemporary documentary feature,

² Rose, Steve. “‘What Killed Michael Hutchence?’: How Far Does the Rock Doc Need to Go in 2019?” *The Guardian*, 7 Oct. 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/oct/07/what-killed-michael-hutchence-how-far-does-the-rock-doc-need-to-go-in-2019-mystify-michael-hutchence>. Accessed 24 Oct. 2019.

Rose’s comments are made in relation to the documentary *Mystify: Michael Hutchence* (Richard Lowenstein, 2019), but they are also indicative of a broader prevalent trend within contemporary music documentary features.

³ Gallo, Phil. ‘2015 Repts Banner Year for Music Docs’. *Variety*, 3 Nov. 2015, <https://variety.com/2015/film/features/2015-reps-banner-year-for-music-docs-1201632580/>. Accessed 21 Mar. 2020.

⁴ See Allen, Jeremy. ‘Do Look Back: A New Golden Age for the Music Documentary’. *The Guardian*, 16 July 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jul/16/do-look-back-new-golden-age-music-documentary>. Accessed 24 Oct. 2019; Rittman, Alex. ‘After “Amy”, Chorus Grows for Hot Music Documentaries’. *The Hollywood Reporter*, 11 May 2015, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/music-documentaries-popular-amy-success-837375>. Accessed 24 Oct. 2019.

the impact of this upon the ways in which their contributions to music culture are understood, and how their images are recirculated in popular and visual cultures.

Before engaging with these texts in more detail, it is necessary to outline two contextual frameworks which inform how contemporary music documentaries are read and understood, with specific reference to how they recirculate within popular and visual cultures, and their position within the broader screen ecology of the post-broadcast mediascape.

Viewing Contemporary Music Documentary

The position occupied by contemporary documentary features encompasses several cultural spheres: the traditional and pre-digital space of theatrical cinema releases; and the post-theatrical, digital sites of prestige offered by streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. Increasingly, the music feature has become a valuable commodity for creation, acquisition, and exhibition. Features are now being created for and distributed by specific platforms where they are made exclusively available, such as *Gaga: Five Foot Two* (Chris Moukarbel, 2017) for Netflix, or *Coldplay: Head Full of Dreams* (Mat Whitecross, 2018) for Amazon Prime.

Through their acquisition practices, music documentaries from the festival circuit can bypass traditional theatrical release in favour of a premiere on the given platform, for example *Quincy* (Alan Hicks and Rashida Jones, 2018) on Netflix. Most interestingly, non-contemporary documentaries are also given a new mode of exhibition on streaming platforms, allowing the film to be encountered (or re-encountered) by viewing audiences. A high-profile example of this would be Netflix's acquisition of *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster* (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, 2004), an illustration of the interest in, and appetite for, such content that extends beyond the contemporary boom in documentary – and in particular music documentary – currently being experienced. The reappearance of older texts not only adds to the content offered by streaming platforms, but also contributes to cultures of taste and nostalgia by directly responding to the demands and desires of audiences.

The (re)appearance of music programming in this increasing array of avenues raises questions regarding how we can categorise such content in relation to film and television itself, and in turn, how it is typically described. The language used by audiences and within popular and scholarly discourses varies, illustrating the problematic nature of medium specificity within the post-broadcast environment. Medium specifics are discarded and obfuscated by the tendency to characterise the output of Netflix, Amazon Prime and others in the broadest terms, as ‘content,’ or ‘programming,’ where it is framed as a product or asset *before* an example of film or television. This is echoed in the language of audience viewership, where engagement is defined as, for example, ‘watching Netflix’ or ‘watching *on* Netflix.’ The lack of attention to specificity is complicated by the continued reliance on the medium-specific distinctions of film and television within the interfaces of the platforms, using the label of film (or movies) and TV to categorise *and* organise their content in a way that is both familiar and accessible, integrating rather than annexing content to echo the continued breakdown or blurring of media forms. This seemingly contradictory choice on the part of the streaming companies creates an underlying tension between the desire to categorise which reinstates medium-specific boundaries that increase the difficulty of categorising and discussing texts.

Music Documentary and *Dont Look Back*

The following discussion of *Dont Look Back* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967) will focus on contribution to the documentary genre, with attention to the film’s structure and style, and the legacy it has attained in the years since its release. It is positioned here as the origin point, or the blueprint for, the contemporary music documentary.

Historically framed and understood as a pioneering example of Direct Cinema, documentary, and experimental techniques, *Dont Look Back* is perhaps the most well-known of Pennebaker’s work, which concentrated on an array of political and musical subjects. The film follows a then relatively unknown Bob

Dylan on his 1965 tour of England. Still primarily a folk artist, the film predates Dylan's infamous move to electric guitar at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival.

Filmed using the observational style that would ultimately become Pennebaker's signature aesthetic in its use of hand-held camera with a 'starkly minimal visual vocabulary' (Figure 3.1).⁵ *Dont Look Back* captures, as many critics and scholars have observed, Bob Dylan the man *becoming* Dylan the artist, 'the unreachably cool, detached yet wired, lightning-in-a-bottle young genius.'⁶

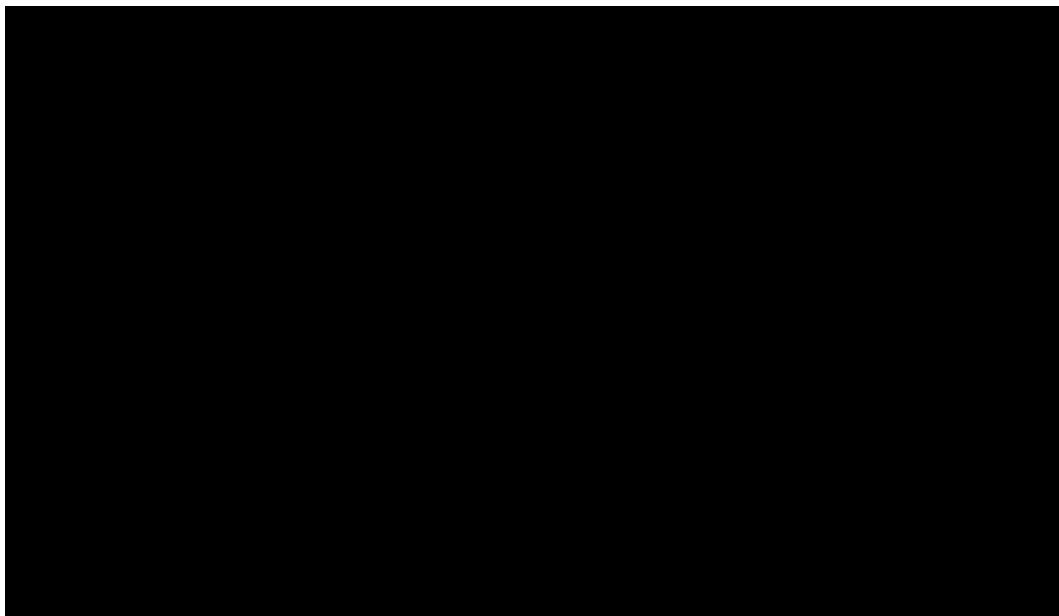


Figure 3.1: The signature aesthetics and spaces of *Dont Look Back*

This image of Dylan resonates with Benjamin J. Harbert's own ideas regarding how Pennebaker's films have also shaped musical canons, saying, 'Pennebaker has helped provided images of some of the most venerable rock stars, helping what "classic" meant in classic rock acts.'⁷ This allowed artists such as Dylan, Bowie, Hendrix, and others to be *seen* as well as *heard*, in new and/or different ways, often by combining their onstage and offstage lives in the same filmic space.

⁵ James, David E. *Rock 'n' Film: Cinema's Dance with Popular Music*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 202.

⁶ Bell, James. 'Don't Look Back'. *Sight and Sound*, vol. 24, no. 9, Sept. 2014, p. 27.

⁷ Harbert, Benjamin J. *American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-Ethnomusicology*, Wesleyan University Press, 2018, p. 156.

Jonathan Romney argues that backstage is the sacred fantasy space of music documentary (or as Romney defines it, rock documentary).⁸ For Romney, backstage is a potent space, where artist and fan are separated, but it is also 'a space of privacy, a world behind the curtain in which the real being, the ineffable precious essence of the performer's self, supposedly lies shielded from sight.'⁹ The most familiar convention of the music documentary, he goes on to state, is to 'offer tantalising glimpses of the reality behind the show.'¹⁰ While this remains true particularly in the context of concert documentaries, including *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and *Gimme Shelter* (Albert Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, David Maysles, 1970), among others, for other formats, the relationship between public and private spaces *and* public and private selves is less distinct. Beattie argues that truth within music documentary is 'located within and emerge[s] from the revelation of an authentic self within (onstage and backstage) performances, which are the core of rockumentary's documentary display.'¹¹ Key to Beattie's distinction is not *where* the authentic self is shown – as in onstage or offstage – but rather, *when* it is shown, and *how*.

Robert Polito compellingly argues that many of the film's moments feel 'illicit,' 'forbidden,' 'secret,' and 'shadowy,' recalling Romney's evocation of sacred space: '[n]o matter what the shifting cast, setting, or situation, we feel over and over that we were not meant to see or hear any of this.'¹² Entering into these spaces, ever nearer and ever more intimate, is perhaps the most important reason among many as to why *Dont Look Back* and the music documentaries that followed it have endured. For Polito, *Dont Look Back* is neither a concert film nor a documentary, but is perhaps somewhere between the two, and in this sense, has much more in common with the contemporary music documentary than may first appear. It is a film both of its time, reflecting the unfolding times for Dylan in the

⁸ Romney, Jonathan. 'Access All Areas: The Real Spaces of Rock Documentary'. *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies since the 50s*, edited by Jonathan Romney and Adrian Wootton, British Film Institute, 1995, p. 83.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Beattie, 'It's Not Only Rock and Roll', p. 27.

¹² Polito, Robert. 'Dont Look Back: Everybody Loves You for Your Black Eye'. *The Criterion Collection*, 24 Nov. 2015, <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/3809-dont-look-back-everybody-loves-you-for-your-black-eye>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2020.

music scene of the 1960s, and yet, also ahead of it, reflecting the concerns that would follow Dylan in the decades to come.

Reframing Contemporary Music Documentary

Perhaps the greatest change to the documentary, and by extension the music documentary, is its changed relationship to the performative. There are clear moments within *Dont Look Back* where Dylan displays an awareness (or lack thereof) regarding the camera, and similarly displays a clear degree of complicity within the creative process, as Beattie notes in regard to the film's now infamous 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' cue-card prologue sequence. In his extended analysis of *Dont Look Back*, William Rothman notes the complexities of the observational form, the tension between the objectivity of Pennebaker's style, the potential revelations presented by the camera, and the truthfulness of the events. Pivotaly, Rothman acknowledges that '[b]ehavior that seems candid, for example, may really be an act. Yet perceived *as* the act it is, it is nonetheless revealing.'¹³ For Rothman, all that matters is that those revelatory moments are captured with clarity.

These complexities coupled with the increasing desire for both the documentarian and the documentary form to engage ever more closely with their subject goes some way to explaining the perspectival and stylistic shift within the form that has occurred since the release of *Dont Look Back*. This is demonstrated by, as Stella Bruzzi has observed, the 'systematic rejection of the observational form,' and subsequent embrace of the performative.¹⁴ This shift is typified by the documentaries of Nick Broomfield and Michael Moore, where the filmmaker themselves has become a significant element of the documentary, with their presence – and that of the camera – no longer obfuscated. In some

¹³ Rothman, William. *Documentary Film Classics*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 156.

¹⁴ Bruzzi, Stella. *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. 2000. 2nd ed, Routledge, 2006, p. 222.

cases, the filmmaker themselves *becomes* the subject, as in *Super Size Me* (Morgan Spurlock, 2004).¹⁵

The roots of this, Bruzzi argues, are found in reality television and structured documentary formats, such as *Big Brother* (Channel 4, 2000-2010; Channel 5, 2011-2018).¹⁶ Embracing performativity aligns with an increased sense of closeness and intimacy that has come to characterise the genre, evident in later series, including *The Only Way is Essex* (ITV2/ITVBe, 2010–) and *Made in Chelsea* (E4, 2011–). Following Kavka, this closeness is both televisual *and* technological, facilitated by the rise of social media, and the increased contact (or the illusion of it) such platforms present for audiences, further contributing to a changed understanding of and engagement with celebrity culture and, most tellingly, the ongoing blurring of the boundaries between public and private.

The shift away from the observational toward the performative and the personal is perhaps more complex than the binaries of acceptance or rejection. While Beattie has described this shift as a ‘mutated’ form of the codes and conventions of direct cinema, I argue this is a natural *evolution* of the form, with those codes and conventions being mobilised into and adopted by other forms, most obviously in reality and constructed factual programming, and as Beattie rightly states, in the rockumentary.¹⁷ Contemporary music documentaries *do* look back, and are inward-looking rather than backwards looking, compelled to revisit and revise the past in light of new information and, increasingly, to reinvestigate and reinterrogate the past in order to offer new, often private perspectives on familiar, public events.

¹⁵ It could be argued that the authorial presence of a director extends to the promotion and press for films where they are not actually present on camera as in the case of Michael Moore or Morgan Spurlock.

¹⁶ Bruzzi, *New Documentary*, p. 222.

¹⁷ Beattie, Keith. ‘It’s Not Only Rock and Roll: “Rockumentary”, Direct Cinema and Performative Display’. *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, Dec. 2005, p. 22.

Kate Nash: Underestimate the Girl

New Music Documentary Aesthetics

The underlying purpose and function of documentary, and in particular music documentary, is to look back, and in so doing, promote nostalgic engagement by returning viewers to a specific time or place. *Kate Nash: Underestimate the Girl* follows singer-songwriter-turned-actress Kate Nash over the course of several years, as she tries to establish herself as an independent artist, during the making and touring of her fourth album, *Yesterday is Forever*. The film works to restore her position within the industry and build her own legacy, while also challenging assumptions around cultural forgetting, and tragic burnout narratives for artists who find fame quickly, as Nash did with her debut album, *Made of Bricks*. As the most recent example of new music documentary in this chapter, *Underestimate the Girl* is also the most indicative of Bruzzi's observations on changes to the form, and as such, offers a way into considering some of its significant aesthetic hallmarks, its relationship to materiality, and the ways in which these documentaries circulate in visual culture.

Viewing Contexts in the Post-broadcast Mediascape

Underestimate the Girl premiered at the LA Film Festival in September 2018, followed by later screenings at Miami's Pérez Art Museum and Sheffield's Doc/Fest prior to its release online in June 2015 as part of a new collaboration between the BBC's long-running international documentary strand *Storyville* (BBC, 1997-) and BBC Three entitled '*Storyville* on Three.'¹⁸

¹⁸ BBC. 'BBC - Storyville'. BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07dpfn7>. Accessed 15 Mar. 2021. It is notable that the only other music documentary in the collection is *Avicii: True Stories* (Levan Tsikurishvili, 2017), a profile of the late DJ and producer Avicii (Tim Bergling). The film is framed as a memorial to his life and work, released to coincide with the first anniversary of his death in April 2019. *True Stories* shares numerous qualities with *Underestimate the Girl*. Like Goldstein, Tsikurishvili followed Bergling for numerous years to make the film, capturing his experiences and difficulties with fame. Prior to its association with *Storyville*, the film had a limited worldwide theatrical release, and was made available on Netflix in December 2018.

The selection of *Underestimate the Girl* directly from Doc/Fest alongside skateboarding film *Minding The Gap* (Bing Liu, 2018) and *Roll Red Roll* (Nancy Schwartzman, 2018) on the Steubenville High School rape case demonstrates a continued commitment to documentary on television, while broadening the existing identity of *Storyville* beyond its existing associations with BBC Two and BBC Four.¹⁹ The appearance of *Underestimate the Girl* in this context illustrates the legitimating effects of *Storyville* as a brand, signified by its transfer across multiple channels and viewing modalities. Furthermore, it aligns the film and others in the collection with BBC Three Commissioning Editor Fiona Campbell's desire to show 'authentic, relatable stories [...] to a younger and more diverse audience.'²⁰

Campbell's observations bring into focus our changing relationship with documentary formats and their broadening mode of address. Moreover, the (re)appearance of *Underestimate the Girl* and *True Stories* in this new youth-oriented documentary context also illustrates the impact of the textual reframing that occurs when features reappear within the context of television. Bound within its rhetoric and flow, their cultural value and significance is also reframed. For example, in the UK, Goldstein's film is largely understood by its association with BBC Three, rather than a film with its own (previous) life on the festival circuit. This replicates the contextual loss or stripping out that occurs following a programme's acquisition by Netflix, whereby its original broadcast context is lost once it assumes the label and identity of a 'Netflix Original' once it arrives on the platform. *Derry Girls* (Channel 4, 2018-) and *The End of the F****ing World* (Channel 4, 2017-2019) are notable examples of this, often described in terms of their relationship with Netflix as opposed to Channel 4.²¹

¹⁹ In the *Storyville*/iPlayer context, both films are known by longer alternate titles. Liu's is retitled as *Minding the Gap: An American Skateboarding Story* and Schwartzman's as *A High School Rape Goes Viral: Roll Red Roll*. At the time of writing, all films remain available to view on iPlayer.

²⁰ BBC Media Centre. 'BBC *Storyville* Announces New Films for BBC Three and BBC Four and Unveils a New Look'. *BBC Media Centre*, 10 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2019/storyville-new-films>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2020.

²¹ For more on the "slipperiness" of Netflix Originals as a term see Petruska, Karen, and Faye

Documentary Techniques and Transferrable Aesthetics

Underestimate the Girl mobilises both old and new documentary techniques to incorporate multiple types of footage into a new unified whole. Archive performance and interview footage are used interchangeably alongside newly filmed interviews and other handheld and self-filmed segments captured as events unfold. Rather than wholly adopting the observational style of *Dont Look Back* to follow Nash as Pennebaker once did for Dylan, Goldstein's film is characterised by its foregrounding of the intimate and personal, further blurring the lines between public and private, and onstage and offstage spaces. The only real delineation between these spaces is an aesthetic one, with handheld cameras used for sequences where Nash prepares backstage, and static, wide-angle shots of her later onstage performances. This blurring or breaking down is reinforced by dispensing with 'voice of god' narration in favour of using Nash's own voice, excerpted from interviews to relate her experiences to the audience.

The film's relationship to the intimate and personal is further emphasised in promotional interviews for the film. In a discussion with Muse TV at the LA Film Festival, Goldstein described the project in terms of being "let inside" Nash's life and work, noting the "closeness" afforded to her throughout its production.²² These qualities are reiterated in the accompanying BBC Three press release, which describes the film as an 'intimate portrait' that 'provides a unique insight into the challenges an independent artist goes through, and the resilience required to live and create art on their own terms.'²³ Such statements are further echoed within the film's style and construction by Goldstein's consistent use of close-ups and handheld camera. Moreover, Goldstein's closeness to Nash (both physical and emotional) facilitates an openness between the two, where Nash is

Woods. 'Traveling without a Passport: "Original" Streaming Content in the Transatlantic Distribution Ecosystem'. *Transatlantic Television Drama: Industries, Programs, and Fans*, edited by Michele Hilmes et al., OUP USA, 2019, pp. 49–68.

²² Sandoval, Michael. *Amy Goldstein Talks Kate Nash: Underestimate the Girl*. Muse TV, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5anGHNKurrQ>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2020.

²³ BBC Media Centre. *Kate Nash: Underestimate The Girl*. June 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2019/26/kate-nash>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2020. Similar language can also be found across reviews for the film.

more willing to self-disclose, speaking with candour on the more difficult aspects of fame, not wanting to 'sugar coat' things for the audience. This closeness also allows for moments where Nash is shown to be vulnerable – visibly upset or crying – lending her surrounding comments a confessional quality.

Sean Redmond argues that the celebrity confessional 'has become one of the dominant ways in which fame is circulated and consumed,' exemplified in the continued success of documentary features constructed around the desire to see and hear stars as never before.²⁴ As Ian Goode's work on *Living with Michael Jackson* (Julie Shaw, 2003) and *Geri* (Molly Dineen, 1999) illustrates, the phenomenon of the celebrity confessional is not new and our 'appetite for salacious exposure' has been 'heightened and extended beyond film stardom' by the rise of reality television and what Goode terms 'the industry of celebrity.'²⁵ For Goode, the celebrity confessional is a product of competing desires – to see and know more – and the need to mediate between the possibilities of access and revelation. In this context, Nash's desire to self-disclose and confess is not only encouraged by her relationship to and with Goldstein, but also by the documentary mode itself. Here, Nash's involvement in the process could prove therapeutic, and potentially offer her cathartic release when viewed later. On some level, the film's therapeutic potential could also be experienced by the audience, who – to borrow from John Ellis – are witness to the film's events.²⁶

The film's mobilisation of verité techniques to create the conditions for continued access, confession, and revelation is complicated by the inclusion of traditional 'talking head' interview sequences. Some of these segments are shot in specific locations, such as the garden of Nash's LA house, and childhood bedroom of her family home in Ryslip, Greater London. The Ryslip sequences include an interview with Nash's mother, Marie, recorded in their living room. The choice to include Marie Nash is significant, as she is the only family member who appears. Her comments are in keeping with the film's work to emphasise

²⁴ Redmond, Sean. 'Introduction'. *The Star and Celebrity Confessional*, edited by Sean Redmond, Routledge, 2014, p. 2.

²⁵ Goode, Ian. 'Living with Fame: *Geri* and *Living with Michael Jackson*'. *The Star and Celebrity Confessional*, edited by Sean Redmond, Routledge, 2014, p. 69.

²⁶ Ellis, John. *Seeing Things: Television in an Age of Uncertainty*, I.B. Tauris, 2000, pp. 17–38.

Nash's ordinariness in contrast to her extraordinary talents that led to her stardom, with Marie commenting that she wishes her daughter had been a teacher rather than a singer (Figure 3.2).

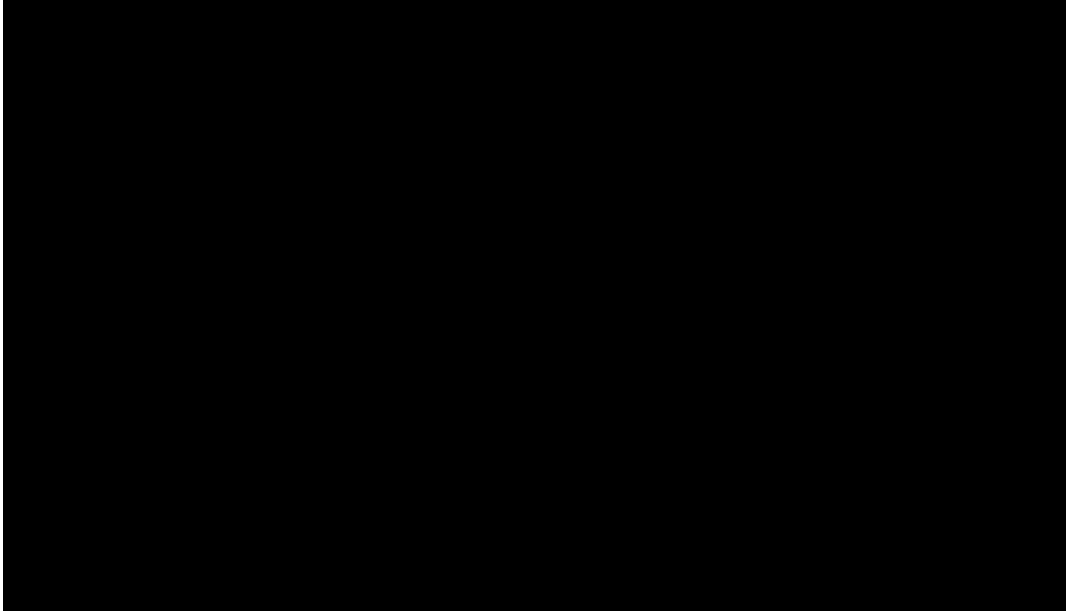


Figure 3.2: Contrasting LA and Ryslip in Underestimate the Girl

This is in direct contrast to other interview segments with Nash interspersed throughout the film, where she is filmed in a black room, responding directly to specifically posed but unheard questions from Goldstein (Figure 3.3). At the beginning of one such sequence, Goldstein's presence is revealed by Nash when she asks, 'are you going to ask a question?' Goldstein is then heard off-camera prompting her to 'talk.' In these interview-turned performances, Nash's status as author of her own experience is reasserted when the artifice of documentary construction is revealed, making it seem more authentic.

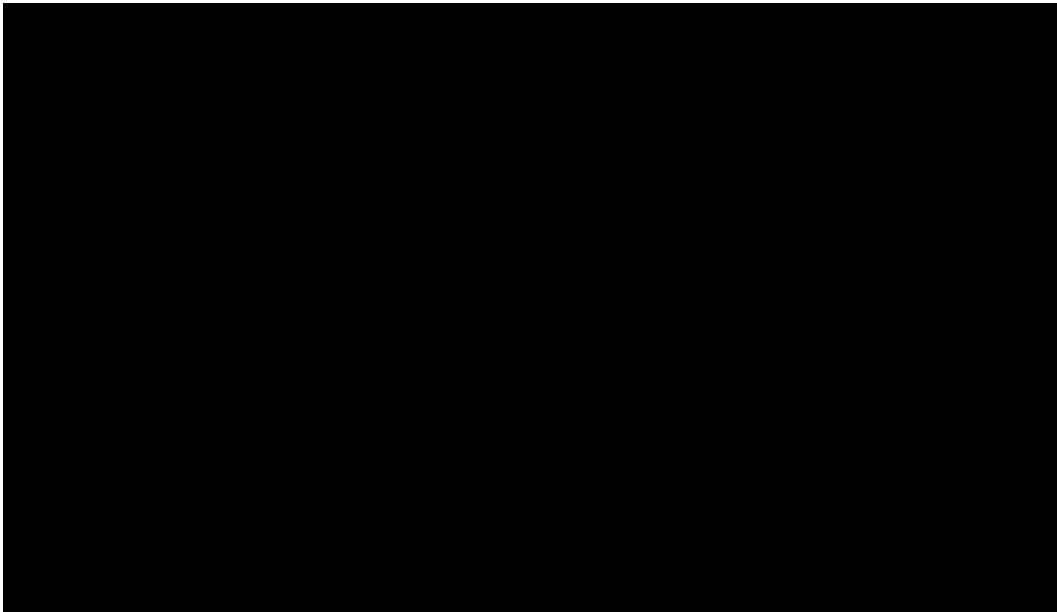


Figure 3.3: Interview as performance

These sequences are a performance of memory and an overt performance of self, where she retains control. As Andrew Tolson writes in relation to *Geri*, these films are an experiment in personal disclosure where performance of the self or, *being yourself* is ‘a type of public *performance*, but a performance, which, crucially, is not perceived as “acting.”’²⁷ While Tolson’s assertion remains true for *Underestimate the Girl*, unlike the earlier *Geri* in which Halliwell frequently seems to lack control and authority over her experience, the interview sequences in *Underestimate the Girl* have the opposite effect, illustrating that Nash is as much a collaborator in the experience of the documentary as she is Goldstein’s subject.

The textual longevity attained by *Underestimate the Girl* in its journey from the festival circuit to online platform illustrates how a film’s endurance is increased by its circulation across several platforms, extending its lifespan. This longevity is increased by the numerous viewing methods and delivery modes of the post-broadcast environment, allowing for numerous re-encounters with a text. For *Underestimate the Girl*, however, the film’s transformed state is not solely related to its content but also to its form, producing what can be defined as its transferrable aesthetic. Like *Amy* and *Supersonic* before it, *Underestimate*

²⁷ Tolson, Andrew. “‘Being Yourself’: The Pursuit of Authentic Celebrity”. *Discourse Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, Nov. 2001, p. 444-445. Emphasis in original.

the Girl traverses pre-digital and digital life, and in doing so, draws attention to the materiality of the image through its use of different media formats from different periods within the same filmic space. The juxtaposition of these is a visual representation of the passage of time, an aestheticization of pastness and, in turn, nostalgia. *Underestimate the Girl's* use of different media forms is not solely related to pastness; however, it also aestheticizes the present, captured as it happened.

For the majority of the film, Goldstein films Nash, but there are notable exceptions where Nash films herself. Directly following the *Storyville* title card, she is shown in her bedroom, surrounded by musical instruments. She leaves the camera running, sometimes repositioning it, before settling down to record a song. A montage of this process follows, cutting between her picking up instruments and recording vocals – snatches of which are heard underneath her song 'Life in Pink' which dominates the soundtrack. Interestingly, Nash does not address the audience or perform directly for the camera. This is a stark contrast to other interview and self-filmed sequences with video cameras or phones where she narrates her experience directly for the benefit of the viewer.

The opening of the film and these subsequent pieces to camera illustrate a changed relationship to the camera and self-expression and, in turn, to the performative that also changes over the course of the film. As Nash becomes a more active participant in the documentary, her self-filmed pieces adopt a delivery style that consciously evokes YouTube aesthetics and vlogging practices, where the content is recorded with the underlying intention of being seen. This intent is lacking in the film's opening sequence, where the camera functions simply to record what she is doing, rather than Nash being an active participant (Figure 3.4).

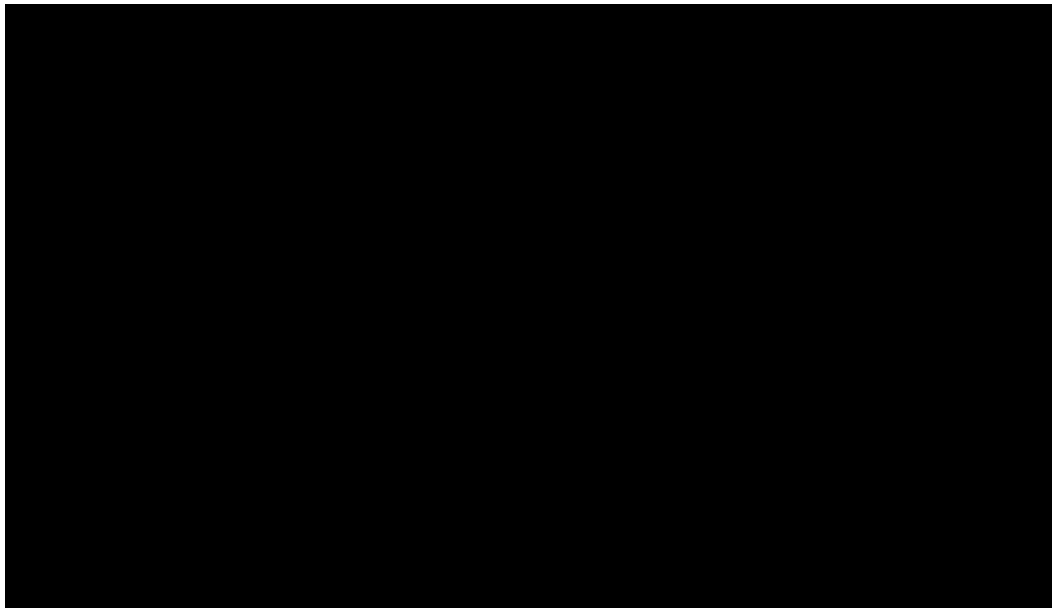


Figure 3.4: Vlog aesthetics in *Underestimate the Girl*

While this change is clearly a reflection of the different functions that self-filming and self-recording performs, it also underlines Nash's status as a digital native, and her increased degree of personal interaction and connection with fans through social media, initially with her use of Myspace to share music at the beginning of her career, and later, using Kickstarter to independently fund her new album.

The use of handheld camera, and in particular self-filmed sequences, takes on an aesthetically and culturally contingent meaning when considered in relation to the film's recontextualization within the *Storyville* on Three strand. Constructed around the aesthetics of immediacy and intimacy, *Underestimate the Girl* relates Nash's story in a manner that mobilises a visual grammar that is immediately familiar, facilitating a greater degree of closeness between Nash and the audience. The film feels intimate, and consequently, less controlled or contrived. Her presentation in the film and its aesthetic strategies also emphasise authenticity, but this aspect has not always been interpreted positively. Joel Golby described the film in terms of what was unnecessary. For Golby, it was *too* authentic, and showed too much of Nash and her bandmates in their ordinariness – driving, shopping, texting – that he did not need or want to see, saying, 'at times it really does feel a lot more like an SD card dump than an exercise in

storytelling.’²⁸ This assessment, though dissenting, is an apt one, and inadvertently offers a useful way to describe the aesthetics of new documentary and its relationship to the digital and material.

In one sense, the film is exactly what Golby defines it as: an extended digital snapshot, lacking in the rapid-editing style or glossy aesthetics of other notable contemporary documentaries. In another sense, it is much *more* than an ‘SD card dump,’ articulating the dailiness and emotional labour that goes into being a touring artist and creating music, and in so doing, undercuts the expected glamour associated with fame. In *Underestimate the Girl*, Goldstein shows us Kate the girl, rather than Kate the singer. Furthermore, through his evocation of the accumulated traces of our digital lives, Golby’s observation also articulates what makes the aesthetics of *Underestimate the Girl* and new music documentary transferrable, allowing it to traverse so freely and easily across different cultural sites and platforms.

This is primarily due to the fact that the documentary does not look or feel cinematic. New documentary remains inherently televisual due to its use of handheld camera and the aesthetics of intimacy and closeness it mobilises from television that have since filtered into online video. By making this distinction, I do not wish to reinstate the contentious value-laden hierarchical lines between the two mediums, but rather point out that in rejecting some aspects of the observational for the personal, intimate and performative, new music documentary has also rejected cinematic aesthetics, namely the high production values associated with the look of feature film cinematography that were, as John Thornton Caldwell observes, transposed into television in its move to become ‘more stylistically exhibitionist’ from the late 1980s onwards.²⁹ Equally, I do not wish to suggest that these films are no longer cinematic or that television cannot be either. The distinction I wish to make is one based on aesthetics and affect rather than value and cultural meaning, related to how these films construct

²⁸ Golby, Joel. ‘Kate Nash: *Underestimate the Girl* – A Televised SD Card Dump’. *The Guardian*, 22 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/jun/22/kate-nash-underestimate-the-girl>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2020.

²⁹ Caldwell, John Thornton. ‘Excessive Style: The Crisis of Network Television’. *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television*, Rutgers University Press, 1995, p. 12.

space and explore narrative in a way that is defined by intimacy rather than spectacle.

Such a reading changes how documentary aesthetics are understood and complicates what is meant by cinematic or televisual. Just as Helen Wheatley argues that both film and television can be spectacular, it is equally possible for them to be intimate.³⁰ In the context of new music documentary, space within the frame is constructed and understood in terms of the closeness to its subject rather than distance from it. This directly correlates to the function of the documentary feature itself: to offer audiences the opportunity to gain insight, further their knowledge, or in some cases, change their perspective on the documentary's subject. In doing so, they facilitate and mediate a sense of illusory closeness to that subject, leaving the audience feeling that they know them 'better' than previously thought, while still wanting to know more.

Supersonic

To examine how contemporary music documentaries narrativize and memorialise the past and, in turn, how they can be seen to function as a social document as well as an object of memory, we must first think about a related set of questions: how do these films operate? How do they render the world of their subject and bring it to life? Thinking through these questions offers a way into *how* contemporary music documentary represents and *reshapes* history to challenge or expand what is known about an artist's life that circulates within the public domain, as I will go on to explore in more detail in my later discussion of *Amy* and *What Happened, Miss Simone?*

An obvious entry point is to consider further the aesthetic strategies of the contemporary music documentary and their relationship to materiality. As *Underestimate the Girl* illustrates, this relationship is increasingly complex, characterised by how their numerous types of source material are integrated into a unified whole, used to aestheticize nostalgia and evoke pastness in a manner

³⁰ Wheatley, Helen. *Spectacular Television: Exploring Televisual Pleasure*, I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2016, pp. 6-7.

that is markedly different to earlier music documentary forms. While increasing in structural and narrative complexity, they are also more self-conscious, calling upon a wider range of aesthetic and stylistic reference points.

Contemporary music documentaries made over the last five years have begun to illustrate particular aesthetic tendencies which consciously aestheticize nostalgia and evoke pastness. Mat Whitecross' *Supersonic* is the most overt example. It is positioned within this chapter as a normative example of the contemporary music feature documentary, whose history and narrativization is built upon male, white conceptions of rock music. *Sharing Amy*'s production team of Asif Kapadia and James Gay-Rees, the earlier film originated many of its narrative and stylistic conventions. Whitecross has described *Supersonic* as having 'a similar technique,' to *Amy*, leading to an obvious but unintentional 'house style.'³¹ This is primarily created through the use of audio interviews, integrated with multiple sources of archive, ranging from television interviews and performances to personal photographs and handheld camera footage, which are edited together to form a collage film. Alongside their shared aesthetic strategies and narrative techniques, both films have maintained similar routes of circulation in visual and popular culture, and this journey or textual afterlife is significant to understanding how nostalgia and pastness operate within both films, but also to *how* both Oasis and Amy Winehouse continue to be understood as artists.

Supersonic and *Amy* maintained a traditional release route, beginning with a UK theatrical release on 2nd October 2016 for *Supersonic* in a one-off screening, and 3rd July 2015 for *Amy* (preceded by earlier premieres in the Midnight Screenings section at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival and the Edinburgh International Film Festival). Their framing as significant cultural events is reinforced by Q&A discussions and other promotional screenings, with Whitecross noting the importance of film as a communal experience, whereby the emotional and affective power of *Supersonic* is increased by viewing it 'in a

³¹ Whitecross qtd. in Stroud, Tom. 'Chasing Yesterday: Raiding the Archives for Lost Footage'. *Oasis Recording Information*, 26 Oct. 2016, http://www.oasis-recordinginfo.co.uk/?page_id=1952. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

crowd of like-minded people.’³² Whitecross’ comments underline the significance of maintaining theatrical release windows alongside home viewing options, and are illustrative of his (and Kapadia’s) role in the viewing experience. The presence of both directors as authors of their text functions differently to the in-text presence of Morgan Spurlock or Michael Moore. Through promotional work, Whitecross and Kapadia are conferred as authors of the text, as much as the Gallagher brothers or Amy Winehouse are. This authoring continues throughout promotional and supplemental materials for the films’ respective DVD and Blu-ray releases. For *Supersonic*, this window was reduced from the typical release window observed for *Amy* down to two weeks, released on 31st October 2016, in comparison to the release of *Amy* on 2nd November a year earlier, emphasizing the change in viewing culture, the framing of screenings as events, and the shortening of traditional theatrical release windows, likely in response to VOD and streaming.

Since then, both films have maintained a consistent presence as video-on-demand and streaming assets in various digital spaces, including Amazon Prime and Netflix while also being aired in broadcast spaces via premieres on FilmFour/All4 (*Amy*) and BBC Two/iPlayer (*Supersonic*).³³ In the case of *Supersonic*, its status as an event was reinforced by its positioning within the BBC’s 2017 Christmas schedule.³⁴ Beyond these avenues, both films also exist in fragmentary forms, circulating as clips on YouTube. These multiple viewing contexts extend the cultural afterlife of *Supersonic* and *Amy* (and that of many others referenced through this thesis), far beyond their original releases, their longevity maintained by increasing numbers of viewing modalities and modes of

³² Whitecross qtd. in Stroud, Tom. ‘Up on the Silver Screen: *Supersonic*’s Final Cut’. *Oasis Recording Information*, 26 Oct. 2016, http://www.oasis-recordinginfo.co.uk/?page_id=1955. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

³³ The original standard theatrical release window was conceived as six months. As of 2019, this had reduced to three months or less, with simultaneous on-demand releases occurring more frequently. Following the Coronavirus outbreak and the closure of cinemas, the practice of early releases to streaming/VOD became commonplace. At the time of writing (May 2020) *Supersonic* remains available on Netflix worldwide, while *Amy*’s availability on Amazon Prime ended in 2017.

³⁴ This has since been replicated with *Bros: After the Screaming Stops* (Joe Pearlman and David Soutar, 2018), first shown on BBC Four on 23rd December 2018.

delivery available in the streaming era. Of particular interest to the concerns of this chapter is what this textual and cultural longevity means for *Supersonic* and *Amy* in terms of their relationship to time and memory.

It is significant to note that neither film is overt in its nostalgic intent nor do they actively seek to evoke nostalgia in the audience. Both *Supersonic* and *Amy* generate nostalgic effects and affect differently to films that are specifically constructed as nostalgic texts, such as the retrospective documentary, *The Beatles: Eight Days A Week - The Touring Years* (Ron Howard, 2016), which actively encourages nostalgic engagement. Despite this difference in construction of nostalgic intent, the aesthetic strategies of *Supersonic* and *Amy* are typically interpreted through a nostalgic lens, and ultimately generate nostalgic affect for the audience. This is clearly evident in reviews of *Supersonic* in particular, with nostalgia forming a prevalent element of its reception. The film as a whole is often described as *being* nostalgic or its content is framed as making the reviewer *feel* nostalgic. Peter Bradshaw's *Supersonic* review for *The Guardian* is one such example, where he describes the film as being 'like cracking open a time-capsule.'³⁵ While Bradshaw does not use the word nostalgia, its effects and affects are implicit. The time-capsule in question is the formation and subsequent national and international success of Oasis throughout the 1990s, situated around their 1996 sell-out concerts at Knebworth, the pinnacle of their success during the height of Britpop and the Cool Britannia movement. It is the latest of numerous documentaries dedicated to the band, following *Live Forever* (John Dower, 2003) and the retrospective *Definitely, Maybe* (Dick Carruthers, 2004) on the making of the album).³⁶ The band are also featured in *Upside Down: The Creation Records Story* (Danny O'Connor, 2010) on the history of the label. Performance footage shot by Dick Carruthers is used throughout *Supersonic*, but is most notably used to anchor its opening and closing sequences.³⁷ The

³⁵ Bradshaw, Peter. 'Supersonic Review: Oasis Pop History Lesson Ignores Battles'. *The Guardian*, 2 Oct. 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/oct/02/supersonic-review-oasis-documentary-noel-gallagher-liam-gallagher-mat-whitecross>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

³⁶ Referred to as *Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of Britpop* in some territories.

³⁷ Carruthers is a frequent collaborator, directing several concert films, including *Oasis... There and Then* (1996), featuring footage from Earls Court and Maine Road, and *Oasis: Familiar to Millions* (2000), recorded at Wembley Stadium, among others.

Knebworth concert bridges the gap between the past and present, and is our narrative point of entry and exit.³⁸ The treatment of Knebworth within the film is befitting of its status as a significant media event, both a fixed point in the history of Oasis, and in our collective national memory. The footage itself is instantly recognisable and culturally familiar due to it being consistently circulated in visual culture in other documentaries.

“This is history”: Changing Signifiers of Pastness

The opening sequence of *Supersonic* begins with aerial shots of Knebworth’s grounds flooded with crowds of fans and ends with a mid-shot of Noel Gallagher on stage, guitar-in-hand, standing at the microphone. Rather than singing, he reflects on the magnitude of the unfolding moment. “This is history, right here, right now,” he declares loudly. “This is history,” he reiterates, pointing at the crowd to emphasize his point as the rest of the band arrives on stage. Noel’s self-aware proclamation not only gains greater significance in retrospect, but also illustrates two important facets of understanding *how Supersonic* evokes pastness, and its relationship to time and memory.

The history presented in the film is one based in lived experience. It is another example of Raphael Samuel’s unofficial history or E.P. Thompson’s history from below (explored in relation to *The People’s History of Pop* in Chapter Two). It is also a history that maintains an increasingly close relationship to the present. This closeness necessitates that black and white can no longer be used as a signifier of pastness since it can no longer be used as the sole referent to the past. Consequently, *Supersonic* mobilises a different visual iconography to signify and articulate pastness. In doing so, it not only evokes nostalgia in the audience, but also self-consciously aestheticizes and ultimately fetishizes it through a number of different stylistic techniques derived from a larger set of strategies commonly used to evoke pastness within visual culture and image making over the last ten to fifteen years.

³⁸ I use the term ‘narrative’ to describe the film’s sequence of events rather than to call upon notions of storytelling usually reserved for fiction films.

To understand the value and meaning of these techniques to *Supersonic's* exploration of history, we must first consider the value and meaning behind the more prevalent use of black and white to signify the past, since it informs how the different colour techniques in *Supersonic* are employed to make them more conspicuously aged, intensifying their nostalgic effects to situate them as images of the past rather than the present. This conscious evocation of pastness is not new, however, even if the processes and technologies used to evoke them are. Here, the practice of colourising black and white footage and photographs should also be acknowledged for the ways in which it alters our perspective on (the more distant) past and brings it "to life" echoing the modifications employed by *Supersonic*. Colourisation techniques have a long history of their own in relation to film but have become an increasingly common convention of post-millennial history documentaries on television, such as *World War II in Colour* (Channel 5, 2009).

Writing on colourisation, Paul Grainge notes that the wider debate surrounding the practice centred on two forms of nostalgia: 'a nostalgia for authenticity and the value attached to authentic nostalgia.'³⁹ Within the resulting dialectic of authentic/inauthentic, black and white is always prioritised over colour due to its association with authenticity, value, and seriousness. In his related work on the significance of black and white photography in *Time* magazine, Grainge argues that '[m]onochrome is a stylistic trend but a revealing one', which he links to the 'growing preoccupation [...] with heritage and memory.'⁴⁰ Though speaking in the US context, his observation is equally applicable to global cultures of heritage and memory, reflected in the late 1990s trend of the stylistic use of monochrome. This trend is visible across various media forms, including print photography and advertising; music videos, such as Sixpence None the Richer's 'Kiss Me,' and appropriately, Oasis' 'Wonderwall.'⁴¹

³⁹ Grainge, Paul. 'Reclaiming Heritage: Colourization, Culture Wars and the Politics of Nostalgia'. *Cultural Studies*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1999, p. 632.

⁴⁰ Grainge, Paul. 'TIME's Past in the Present: Nostalgia and the Black and White Image'. *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1999, p. 383.

⁴¹ Popa, Alexandru. "Sixpence None The Richer - Kiss Me (The Black And White Version)." 1998. 2013. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88_XAat01wA. Accessed 28 Mar. 2020. The

The former is an homage to the films of *nouvelle vague*, while the latter recalls 1960s pop art and incorporates multiple references to The Beatles, borrowing iconography from *Help!* (Richard Lester, 1965).⁴²

Beyond music videos, the trend proliferated across numerous other aspects of visual culture, particularly film, reflected across art, foreign-language, and mainstream cinemas. Often, the use of monochrome is a conscious aesthetic choice, as in *La Haine/Hate* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995), or to evoke the specific cinematic periods, as in *Ed Wood* (Tim Burton, 1994).⁴³ The resurgence in the prevalence of monochrome and the reverence expressed for the 1960s expressed throughout the 1990s is a further indication of Marcus' assertion that nostalgia is cyclical, recurring in loops of twenty, or in this case, thirty years.⁴⁴ The monochrome trend extended into the new millennium, maintaining its use as a signifier of pastness, authenticity, and seriousness in certain contexts. It is a notable recurring facet of contemporary music biopics, with black and white featuring in sequences of *24 Hour Party People* (Michael Winterbottom, 2002) on the rise of Manchester label Factory Records, and Joy Division biopic *Control* (Anton Corbijn, 2007), shot entirely in black and white.⁴⁵ In both cases, the decision is intrinsically linked to how both films present time and memory, carrying a cultural as well as an artistic imperative; Caitlin Shaw notes that these choices impact on 'cultural memories of the group,' contributing to the mythos

video recreates several scenes from *Jules et Jim/Jules and Jim* (François Truffaut, 1962). Once the song increased in popularity following its use in *She's All That* (Robert Iscove, 1999) and *Dawson's Creek* (The WB, 1998-2003), two further videos were released, which did not maintain the treatment of the original. Oasis. "*Oasis - Wonderwall (Official Video)*." 1995. 2013. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx1Bh8ZvH84>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2020.

⁴² This system of references stems from the Gallagher brothers' consistent reference to The Beatles as an influence on their music, which director Nigel Dick used as a basis for the video's imagery.

⁴³ *La Haine* was filmed on colour stock and converted to black and white in post-production.

⁴⁴ Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years*.

⁴⁵ Conscious stylistic usage such as this has increased in other mainstream contemporary forms of cinema, extending its connotations beyond pastness and nostalgia, most notably in *Coffee and Cigarettes* (Jim Jarmusch, 2003) and *Nebraska* (Alexander Payne, 2013). This prefigures the common practice of releasing black and white version of films, including *Mad Max: Fury Road* (George Miller, 2015), *Logan* (James Mangold, 2017), and, most recently, *Parasite* (Bong Joon-ho, 2019). In these cases, black and white is not used as a signifier of pastness or nostalgia, but as a purely stylistic conceit, reclaimed from art cinema.

surrounding the band as opposed to exploring new perspectives.⁴⁶ Director Michael Winterbottom defines Joy Division as a 'black-and-white band' reflecting their treatment within his own film.⁴⁷ In contrast, Shaw defines Anton Corbijn's use of black and white as being 'to be intent on upholding rather than critiquing cultural memory.'⁴⁸ Both films reflect pastness in a visual rhetoric that is consistent with how Joy Division are typically constructed and stylistically represented in popular and cultural memory – itself a reflection of Corbijn's earlier role as a photographer for the band, later directing their video for 'Atmosphere' – even if this is not wholly consistent with other extant archive footage of the band or the wider dominant image culture of the late 1980s.

The perceived rightness or correctness in the evocation of pastness is common to discussion of black and white and its relationship to authenticity. For instance, Grainge notes that for both Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, the authenticity of black and white is always configured 'in relation to past time "properly" captured.'⁴⁹ Grainge concludes that for both critics, 'monochrome is an aesthetic of the authentic figured around a basic quality of pastness.'⁵⁰ For Barthes, this is concerned with the truth of black and white versus the cosmetic artifice of colour, deeming it a 'coating later applied' to the original (black and white) image.⁵¹ For Sontag, colour seals off the image, denoting a 'cold intimacy,' and lacking in age or patina in comparison to black and white images and the connotations of age, historical distance, and most intriguingly, aura afforded to monochrome.⁵²

⁴⁶ Shaw, Caitlin. 'Known Pleasures: Nostalgia and Joy Division Mythology In *24 Hour Party People and Control*'. *Cinema, Television and History: New Approaches*, edited by Laura Mee and Johnny Walker, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, p. 171.

⁴⁷ Winterbottom qtd. in Shaw, Caitlin. 'Known Pleasures', p.171.

⁴⁸ Shaw, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Grainge, Paul. 'TIME's Past in the Present: Nostalgia and the Black and White Image'. *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1999, p. 383.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁵¹ Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. 1980. Translated by Richard Howard, Vintage, 1993, p. 81.

⁵² Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. 1977. Rosetta, 2005, p. 110.

The Conscious Evocation of Pastness

The techniques used throughout *Supersonic* to aestheticize nostalgia and evoke pastness can be read as a rebuttal to Barthes' and Sontag's critiques of colour images, while also being an answer to how contemporary visual and image cultures 'properly' capture a past that is rendered in colour, and how it can confer age on footage that appears to lack the usual markers of age and patina that Sontag, Barthes, and others so prize. Of particular importance here is Whitecross' attention to colour and specific colour palettes, evident in *Spike Island* (Mat Whitecross, 2014). Set in 1990, it follows a group of teenage friends who journey from Manchester to Widnes, Cheshire to see their musical heroes, the Stone Roses at Spike Island. Speaking about the film's aesthetic, Whitecross stated that he wanted to strike a balance between making the film 'feel realistic, but at the same time heightened and somehow seen through that rose-tinted gauze that you have when looking back nostalgically.'⁵³ Whitecross cites *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989), and *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002) as exemplars of such an approach, noting their 'very deliberate colour palette.'⁵⁴ In *Supersonic*, this influence is reflected in the dominance of yellow and red (and to a lesser degree blue) within the film's colour palette. This is partly due to the prevalence of these colours as part of the gels used to colour stage lighting rigs, but it is also one consistent marker of 1990s pastness carried from *Spike Island* as an established part of Whitecross' signature aesthetic.⁵⁵

Throughout *Supersonic*, several techniques are used to evoke a sense of pastness, while also giving that past a sense of material weight. Additional grain is added in various places, including the Knebworth sequences, despite already being shot on Super 8 (8mm film) by Carruthers and his team. Furthermore, additional effects were added to the Knebworth and Maine Road concert sequences as part of the work on the film by VFX (visual effects) company The

⁵³ Whitecross qtd. in Wigley, Samuel. 'Teen Dreams: Mat Whitecross on *Spike Island*'. *British Film Institute*, 4 June 2014, <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/interviews/teen-dreams-mat-whitecross-spike-island>. Accessed 4 May 2020.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Similar colour palettes are used in *Derry Girls* and *My Mad Fat Diary* (E4, 2013-2015), both set during the mid-1990s.

Brewery, who also collaborated on Whitecross for *Spike Island* and *Coldplay: Head Full of Dreams*. Their work in *Supersonic* includes the mimicking of light leaks and other Lomography features that create other forms of defects, glitches and/or noise within the image, evoking colour palettes and photo processing techniques of the 1970s and 1980s, which experienced a resurgence in the 1990s (Figure 3.5).⁵⁶

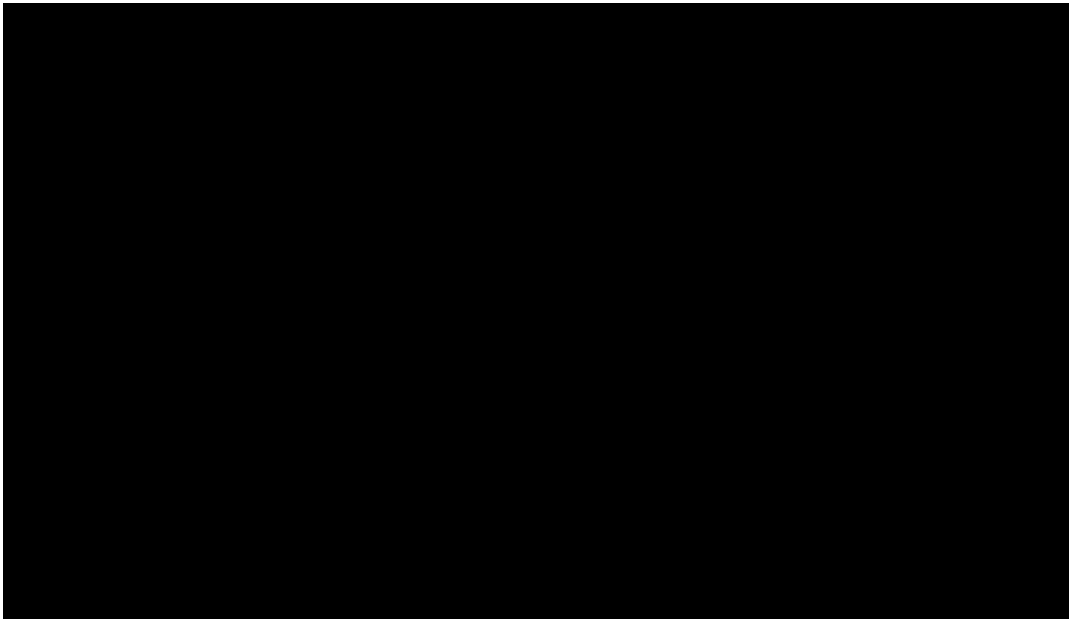


Figure 3.5: VFX Lomography, light leaks, and grain in *Supersonic*

Their stylistic re-use in *Supersonic* intensifies the feelings of nostalgia the footage evokes, recalling Barthes' 'coating later applied' and other conceptions of pastness and nostalgia by several critics (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two). The resulting images are ones that are doubly encoded with a nostalgia for the analogue that is genuine and effects that are added after the fact.⁵⁷ The VFX work in *Supersonic* has been created and added to archival sources *purposefully*

⁵⁶ Lomography refers to the popular photography style based on the photos produced by Austrian Lomo cameras originating in the 1980s. Lacking viewfinders, the pictures often contained light leaks and other defects. Stylistic use of Lomography effects try to replicate this effect through cross-processing the film negative. Their use for creative and stylistic purpose rose to prominence in the 1990s. The popularity of the photography style and its digital equivalents peaked in 2011 and is roughly concurrent with the general decline of skeuomorphic elements in graphic and web design.

⁵⁷ This is a modifier of Highmore's term 'doubly-coded, used in relation to the transformation and nostalgic nature of the televisual form. See Highmore, 'TV Times', p. 44.

to generate nostalgic affect and evoke pastness in a manner that becomes embedded in the text. Its effect is simultaneously conspicuous and yet, in-keeping with the look of the film as a whole, an acknowledgement of the skill required to successfully combine digital and analogue formats.

The Brewery's work in *Supersonic* is consistent with broader practices in image-making, the popularity of retro and vintage filters, and related forms of photo and video manipulation, including iPhone apps such as Dazz Cam and Camcorder, which apply effects and filters to photos and video that mimic the effects of VHS and camcorder tapes (including date stamps). These apps capitalise on nostalgic cultural trends while also offering a site for nostalgic engagement that is built upon and facilitated by technological affordances.

Supersonic is by no means the first text to self-consciously aestheticize nostalgia and pastness in a manner informed by the 1970s and 1980s aesthetic of Super 8 film and its common signifiers of age and pastness. Perhaps the most high-profile contemporary example of this is in television rather than film. *Succession* (HBO, 2018–) uses similar aesthetic techniques in its home movie style title sequence, depicting its protagonists, the Roy family, as children, by mimicking the qualities of 8mm. It is notable, however, that the titles have updated over the course of the series, to reflect technological innovations following the introduction of VHS and camcorders into family life. The presence of cameras and recording devices is itself a reflection of the media conglomerate, Waystar Royco, owned by the characters' father, the running of which provides the focus of the narrative. *Succession*'s title sequence recalls an earlier instance of similar techniques employed in the titles for *The Game* (David Fincher, 1997) – an earlier example of attempts to aestheticize nostalgia and articulate pastness that predates those of *Supersonic*, occurring before the digital and affective turns, and the boom in memory and nostalgia.

The visual strategies mobilised within *Supersonic* are another clear indicator of Schrey's concept of analogue nostalgia (referred to across this thesis), and the role of the digital in celebrating and remediating such forms,

increasing their appeal.⁵⁸ Functioning as a nostalgic portal, *Supersonic* creates a complex visual dialogue between the past and the present, nostalgia and memory, which complicates how signifiers of pastness are read in relation to the authentic. The purposeful manipulation of images within *Supersonic* is in stark contrast to the non-manipulated archival forms used elsewhere in the film that are authentic to the period, such as the behind-the-scenes handheld footage taken from the personal archive of Tim Abbot (managing director of Creation Records) and rehearsal footage from The Boardwalk nightclub recorded by then film student Bobby Langley. Peter Bradshaw's description of it as 'milky analogue' is an evocative one, that picks up on both the difference in quality of this footage compared to other material used in the film, and its washed or bleached out nature, shot on camcorders and Hi-8 video.⁵⁹

The phrase 'milky analogue' also carries connotations of pastness through its association with the pre-digital, looking and feeling much older than any other footage in the film. This can be attributed to the fact that the footage *is* older, filmed throughout 1992 prior to the release of *Definitely Maybe*. The nostalgia the footage evokes is elevated by its rare archival status prior to its use in *Supersonic*, which has since allowed it to circulate in clip form online. The Boardwalk footage and other candid material that appears in *Supersonic* is one example among many that characterises the presentation and representation of history in contemporary music documentaries. Such footage also opens up what is meant by the term archive and where it can be located, creating the space for other forms of knowledge to be incorporated into public forms of historical account.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Schrey, 'Analogue Nostalgia.'

⁵⁹ Bradshaw, Peter. 'Supersonic Review: Oasis Pop History Lesson Ignores Battles'. *The Guardian*, 2 Oct. 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/oct/02/supersonic-review-oasis-documentary-noel-gallagher-liam-gallagher-mat-whitecross>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

⁶⁰ I use the words authorised and legitimate to acknowledge both the co-operation of the band and family members in *Supersonic* as much as to differentiate it from unofficial television documentaries including *Oasis: In Their Own Words* (BBC, 2016), and related products, most notably several unauthorised print biographies, such as Mick Middles' *Oasis: Round Their Way* (1996), which encapsulate the same period as *Supersonic*, and operate on similar assumptions of rarity and alternate forms of knowledge.

The use of colour in *Supersonic* generates a kind of nostalgia for the past connected to the celebration and evocation of the analogue that is connected to the pre-digital, but is facilitated by the digital. The film brings back the early to mid-1990s for the audience, and though it returns them to a specific timeframe, it mobilises an aesthetic that carries historical signifiers of earlier decades, namely the aesthetics of Super 8 and related photographic trends of retro and vintage image making that characterises post-millennial visual culture.

The conspicuousness of nostalgia and pastness also extends to the acknowledgement of the band's own nostalgia for the past. This is embedded within the band's music, style, and the aesthetic of their videos – which consistently make reference to and are inspired by both the 1960s and the Beatles – that are intensified by the peak of their 1990s success also occurring during the Mod revival. In a moment which rhymes with the comments of the young Noel on stage during the Knebworth opening sequence, in the film's penultimate sequence, an older Noel engages in a similar degree of self-reflection, noting the significance of the band existing in the pre-digital age "when things meant more," Noel continues, describing Knebworth as "the last great gathering of the people before the birth of the Internet," referring to the rise of reality TV and celebrity culture. He concludes by saying, "I just think in the times in which we live, it would be unrepeatable." His comments are overlaid onto a montage of Knebworth footage that shows fans, celebrities, and band members in and around the Knebworth Park grounds, alternating between close-ups on faces and wider shots of the ground filling with crowds, to capture the mood, meaning, and magnitude of Knebworth. This montage recalls both *Monterey Pop* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968), and *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh, 1970). Noel's reflections here and elsewhere in the film add to *Supersonic's* status as a memory object and a performance of memory, which seeks to narrativize, historicise, and consolidate the band's legacy and cultural significance.

Despite how this feeds into wider discourses of self-mythologising, the band's achievements are always contextualised within a more personal, intimate, and self-reflexive, rhetoric; one that is defined by their rise to prominence and the unexpected nature of their later phenomenal success that in turn emphasizes

their ordinariness as working-class young men from council estates with ambition (and youthful egotism) who triumphed, echoing the rags-to-riches narrative arc as opposed to a grander narrative that emphasizes their *extraordinariness* to frame them as musical geniuses or rock gods who were destined for superstardom. While music and tabloid press represented the band – particularly the Gallagher brothers – in such a way, indeed, the band themselves would play into such archetypes as they progressed, and the scale of their fame increased.

Aestheticizing Beyond (and Without) Archive

The audio-visual material used within *Supersonic* is derived from multiple archival forms, including excerpts from official channels, MTV, and the BBC for video footage of interviews and news coverage, Capital Radio and other stations for archival audio, alongside various types of other personal archive forms separate from family photographs or footage by Tim Abbot and Bobby Langley.⁶¹ These range from stills by music photographer Jill Furmanovsky to audio recordings from the band's former sound engineer and producer, Mark Coyle.

Despite this wealth of material, *Supersonic* also has to negotiate the lack of archive for sequences where no sources exist, and stock footage cannot be used as a stand in. Here, The Brewery incorporated various forms of 2D and 3D animation, designed to create 'a visual language that suits the spirit of Oasis.'⁶² These animations are in fashioned a similar manner to the various styles in *Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck* (Brett Morgen, 2015), mimicking Cobain's artwork. In a

⁶¹ These audio sources are separate from the new audio interviews with Liam and Noel, conducted by Mat Whitecross specifically for the film, and song recordings used in the film, discussed below. There is also some interesting attention to regionality here through the use of ITV franchise Carlton Television's late-night arts/music magazine programme, *The Beat* (Carlton TV/ITV, 1993-1995) presented by DJ and broadcaster Gary Crowley, recalling *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. The 1994 interview with the Gallagher brothers is their first on UK television, and forms part of Crowley's work to introduce Britpop to audiences, reflected in the appearance of Oasis, Blur, Pulp, and the Charlatans in other episodes of *The Beat* throughout the 1990s. Extant fragments including clip excerpts and partial episodes exist on YouTube, most recorded from its networked broadcast to the Central (Midlands) region. The survival of these clips echoes archival practices discussed in Chapter Two in relation to *Something Else*, *Jukebox Jury*, and *Ready, Steady Go!*

⁶² Brewery VFX, The. 'Oasis: Supersonic'. *The Brewery*, 6 Sep. 2016, <http://www.brewery-vfx.com/project/oasis-supersonic/>. Accessed 23 Mar. 2020.

promotional project video, the various animation techniques used in the film are showcased in a brief montage, including close attention to the labour of the drafting process for the hand-drawn and digital elements. The clip not only shows how the visual language they sought to create is constructed, but also makes clear the links between the digital and the analogue that their work represents within the film, encompassing 15 minutes of total footage, interspersed throughout its running time.

The most interesting segment combines the hand-drawn elements and the digitised scrapbook aesthetics of other contemporary music documentaries, including *Janis: Little Girl Blue* (Amy J. Berg, 2015), when Liam recounts a story of the band travelling to Amsterdam, where they end up in a drunken brawl with football fans on the ferry. This leads to the band being thrown off the ferry, arrested, and deported. The events are humorously depicted using a mixture of 2D and 3D animation elements, some hand-drawn and digitised to build up a layered collage of imagery related to the story, including tickets and lifejacket safety warnings, alongside casino chips and a small-scale aged piece of footage of Liam drinking, signalling how existing photographs and video are re-purposed to illustrate events approximating the ephemera of *The People's History of Pop* and its materiality (Figure 3.6).

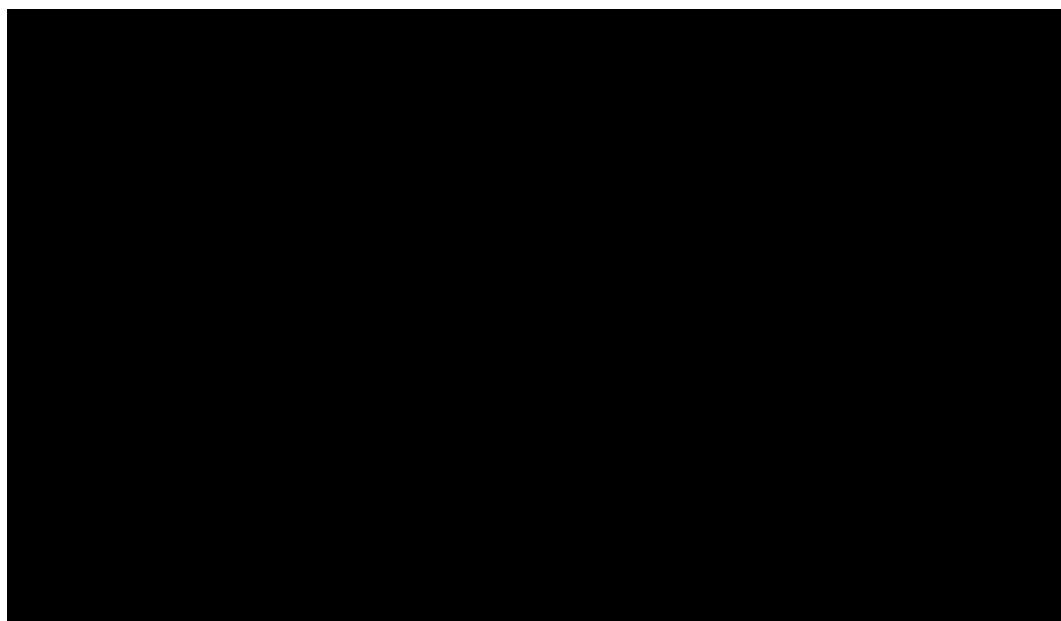


Figure 3.6: 2D and 3D scrapbook-style animation in *Supersonic*

As the story is recounted by Liam, Noel, Mark Coyle, and others, it is brought to life by other moving elements, including animated fighting figures, along with more footage of Liam from the ‘Supersonic’ music video running along the rooftop as another example of repurposing. The sequence ends with digitised versions of the press coverage related to the event, detailing how it led to the band’s growing reputation as ‘laddish’ hooligans. The archive resumes once more with an interviewer asking Noel his opinion on the subject of the reputation and how they are perceived by the public.

The negotiation practices adopted by The Brewery team are indicative of a broader aesthetic that is built upon throughout the film. Beginning with scrapbook aesthetics and animation, their work continuously adds layers of depth to the image, through another form of conscious nostalgic aestheticization and evocation used elsewhere, these elements include a SMPTE leader followed by flash frames of a countdown, and then initial production credits (Figure 3.7).

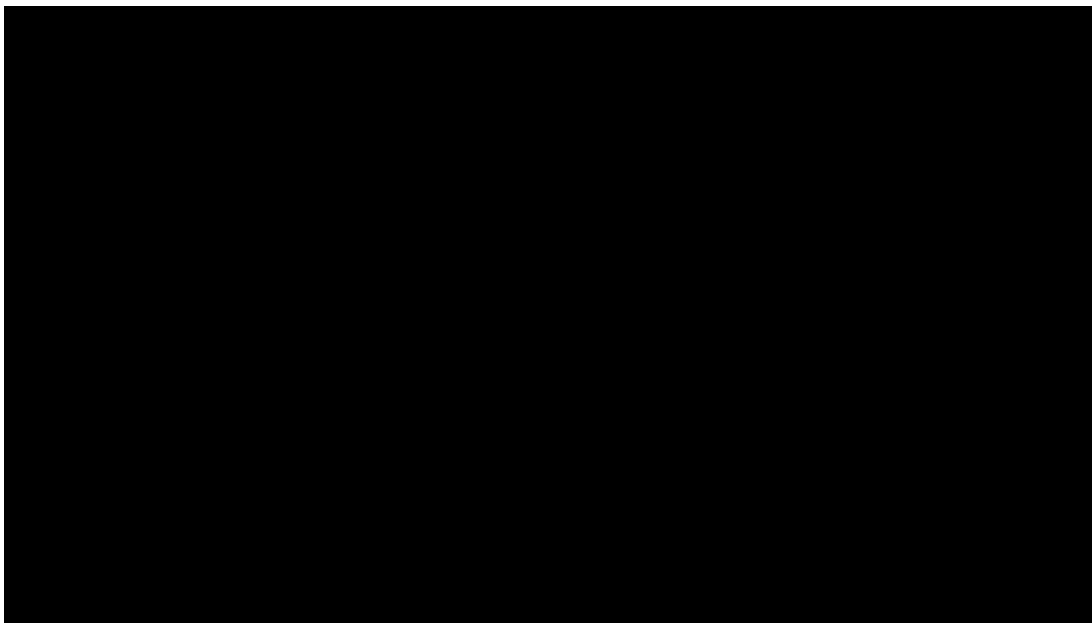


Figure 3.7: Supersonic’s SMPTE leader opening

The use of the leader establishes an attention to pastness and the analogue that is maintained throughout the film in different forms. This is shown throughout The Brewery’s animations, which combine ink and marker pen drawings, photograph negatives, and contact sheets to create detailed collages that give

the 'portal to the past' represented by *Supersonic* a tangible, material weight to make the images less perfect, and less obviously digital. Its attempts to recapture and aestheticize nostalgia are complicated by its use of colour. The increasing circulation and re-circulation of colour and colourised images from the past coupled with films like *Supersonic* which consciously aestheticise pastness in colour, the historical distance between past and present is reduced. As Claudia Hammond observes, our understanding of time and how we perceive it changes the course of our lifetime, constantly caught off-guard by markers of the passage of time.⁶³ Hammond writes, 'time constantly surprises us; we never get used to the way it plays tricks.'⁶⁴ Songs and related artefacts of music culture illustrate the affective impact of these 'tricks', known as telescoping or telescopic bias.⁶⁵ Telescoping makes artefacts of music culture *seem*, and most importantly to the experience of a film like *Supersonic*, *feel* more recent than they actually are.⁶⁶ In *Supersonic*, telescoping effects are intensified through elements of *mise-en-scène*, such as when we hear the voice of an older Liam while seeing his younger self.

New forms of nostalgic texts are constructed around memory and the conscious act of recall. They present the opportunity to recover the past by returning to it. In some cases – as I will now go on to explore – they also function

⁶³ Hammond's work follows the earlier theory of philosopher Paul Janet, who described this phenomenon as 'proportional theory' where we experience intervals or periods of time relative to our age. This means that, as Steve Taylor notes, 'each time period constitutes a smaller fraction of your life as a whole,' so it appears to pass more quickly. See: Taylor, Steve. 'Why Does Time Seem to Pass at Different Speeds?' *Psychology Today*, 3 July 2011, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201107/why-does-time-seem-pass-different-speeds>. Accessed 9 May 2020. This should be understood as an internal perception of time, distinct from the broader acceleration of modern culture/daily life.

⁶⁴ Hammond, Claudia. *Time Warped: Unlocking the Mysteries of Time Perception*, Canongate Books Ltd, 2013, p. 1.

⁶⁵ The trick of time is neatly explored within music critic Peter Paphides' concept of 'Mortality Maths,' temporal calculation puzzles built on the remembrance of collective anniversaries and events, which usually prompt disbelief and distress regarding the passage of time in response and is typically used as a basis for articles in popular culture outlets. One such example is artist Spencer Elden, the baby pictured on the cover of Nirvana's album *Nevermind*, is now 29 years old. Another example which includes the calculation process is that as of 2019, we were as far in the future from Orwell's *1984* as 1984 was when the novel was published, a total of 35 years.

⁶⁶ The origin of this is commonly attributed to John Neter and Joseph Waksberg's 1964 article in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* on effects of repeated survey interviews. The term itself is derived from time shrinking toward the present, akin to how our distance to distant objects shrinks when viewed through the lens of a telescope.

as a way to reinvestigate and reveal underexplored or unknown aspects of the past, particularly in relation to the life, death, and afterlife of significant figures in music culture.

Amy and What Happened, Miss Simone?

In the penultimate case study of the chapter, I turn to *Amy and What Happened, Miss Simone?* to explore how they complicate our understandings of memory and nostalgia, and the mediated images of the artists they depict.⁶⁷ The analysis is primarily concerned with the impact of the narrativization and memorialisation strategies of both documentaries and their effect upon the cultural legacies of Amy Winehouse and Nina Simone. As a specific form of remediation, documentaries like *Amy* and *Miss Simone* generate an overlapping set of questions which lie at the heart of how narrativization and memorialisation operate across different media forms: what elements of these women's lives are made more prominent? What elements are reduced or omitted entirely, and what does this mean for how they are remembered? Some potential answers to these questions are explored below.

Contextualising *Amy and What Happened, Miss Simone?*

Both films have been chosen for their numerous shared characteristics, which can be drawn out in spite of their very different aesthetic and representational strategies, and are used as a lens through which to examine the life and legacy of two markedly similar artists. The films are unified by the centrality afforded to the voice and its auratic qualities, alongside their significant reliance on interviews (either in the form of "talking heads" or audio excerpts), with people who knew Simone and Winehouse in a creative and/or personal capacity during their lifetimes. These contributors were also often witness to the events both

⁶⁷ For the purposes of clarity, for the rest of the chapter, *What Happened, Miss Simone?* will be referred to as *Miss Simone*. Similarly, to avoid confusion, *Amy* will be used to refer to the film, and Winehouse to the person it depicts.

films narrativize and historicise. Both films explore and critique the relationships between public and private spheres, and the overlap that occurs between the selves that both women presented to the world over the course of their careers. Part of the cultural work they perform is to challenge pre-existing narrative accounts of Simone and Winehouse in the public domain and to recuperate their images by revealing something unexpected or unknown.

Both films are also constructed around a central thesis. In the case of Garbus' film, this is made clear from the outset. The film's title *What Happened, Miss Simone?* is taken from a 1970 *Redbook* profile written by Maya Angelou, lamenting what had become of Simone and other prominent figures of the Civil Rights era. Following her departure from the US, Simone moved to Barbados where she was unable to work, isolated by the increasingly politicised nature of her music, typified by her 1964 song, 'Mississippi Goddam.'⁶⁸ Described by Simone as 'her first Civil Rights song,' it became a turning point in her career that offered her greater purpose.⁶⁹ This period changed her from what critic Phyl Garland describes as a 'supper-club songstress' into an activist, whereby her music became a site of political expression and protest to help the movement.⁷⁰ Later, by Simone's own admission, the song ruined her career, making her music and the performance of it no longer commercially viable. This same sense of loss pervades Angelou's piece as well as the film it inspired. Angelou's question is positioned as a mystery or a problem to be solved, explored through Simone's increased socio-political consciousness. Angelou writes:

⁶⁸ Simone wrote the song in response to the murders of Medgar Evers in Mississippi, and four young black girls in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombings in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. Garbus' film details the song's reception and its surrounding controversies, particularly its banning in the South. Copies of the record were also returned to the record company, snapped in half in retaliatory protest.

⁶⁹ Simone, Nina, and Stephen Cleary. *I Put a Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone*. 1991. 2nd edition, Da Capo Press, 2003, pp. 89-90.

⁷⁰ Garland, Phyl. *The Sound of Soul*. Chicago H. Regnery Co., 1969, p. 176. Simone commented frequently to this effect throughout her career, framing her music as being for 'her people.' Nadine Cohodas' biography of Simone details these terms. See Cohodas, Nadine. *Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone*. 2010. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2012. For an indicator of the scholarly discussion of Simone's political activism, see Feldstein, Ruth. "'I Don't Trust You Anymore': Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s'. *Journal of American History*, vol. 91, no. 4, Mar. 2005, pp. 1349-79.

What happened, Miss Simone? Specifically, what happened to your big eyes that quickly veil to hide the loneliness? To your voice, that has so little tenderness, yet overflows with your commitment to the battle of Life? What happened to you?⁷¹

The questions Angelou poses underpin Garbus' film, leading her to look for 'remnants of Nina telling her story,' to fill in the 'blanks' or reveal what became of Nina following her initial success throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁷² These remnants are reflected in the television interviews, performances and diaries Simone left behind, which are used to build a similar kind of audiovisual collage as *Supersonic* and *Amy*.

Kapadia's film is underpinned by a similar kind of revelatory purpose. Less overtly positioned than *Miss Simone*, *Amy*'s thesis is revealed over time. Rather than being concerned with a less well-known or less widely understood facet of Winehouse's personality, the film is concerned with revealing *who* Winehouse was behind or beyond understandings generated in the tabloid press, related in stories regarding her drink and drug dependencies, and the increasing interest in her private life. The latter is documented through paparazzi photographs and later videos, fuelled by print news media embracing online platforms, necessitating a drive for content. For Kapadia, Winehouse is 'the object of our attention' in the filmic space, and like Garbus, he turns toward the personal effects and ephemera of Winehouse's life to tell her story, relayed to us through interviews, lyric excerpts, performances, and archive footage recorded by friends.

Just as 'Mississippi Goddamn' is positioned as a turning point in Simone's career, 2007's 'Rehab' is framed similarly within *Amy*, with its own kind of commentary.⁷³ Kapadia uses the song and Winehouse's repeated performance

⁷¹ Angelou's *Red Book* article is cited in numerous reviews for the film, including Dillard, Clayton. 'Review: *What Happened, Miss Simone?*' *Slant*, 20 June 2015, <https://www.slantmagazine.com/film/what-happened-miss-simone/>. Simone's activism is explored further in Feldstein, "'I Don't Trust You Anymore'".

⁷² Garbus qtd. in Ifeanyi, K. C. 'The 8 Most Powerful Quotes from the Nina Simone Doc "What Happened, Miss Simone?"' *Fast Company*, 26 June 2015, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3047893/what-happened-miss-simone-nina-simone-has-8-answers-to-that-question-in-a-ne>. Accessed 8 Sept. 2020.

⁷³ Winehouse wrote the song as a response to her increasing drug dependency and her refusal

of it throughout her career – each different, offering a different perspective and inflection that is made obvious through the accumulated meaning of repetition – into a critical polemic of the paparazzi and the tabloid press. Through this repetition the audience is also made a complicit witness in Winehouse’s downfall. The *Telegraph*’s Robbie Collin writes of the song’s transformation from ‘a familiar hit record into a self-destructive mantra.’⁷⁴ At the beginning of the film, as Collin notes, ‘It’s the song that signals Winehouse has “made it”’.⁷⁵ The popularity and success of the song and, in turn, the *Back to Black* album, propelled Winehouse’s career into a new direction, exposing her to ever greater audiences, accolades, and ultimately, scrutiny. Collin emphasizes this shift when he later describes the familiar ‘heavy footstep’ of its opening bars taking ‘on a cortège-like quality.’⁷⁶

Collin’s comments are clearly informed by his own knowledge and understanding of Winehouse’s passing, and the later funereal imagery of the video for ‘Back to Black’. However, his observations regarding the transformed meaning of ‘Rehab,’ and its increased emotional and effective resonance are significant. Through the narrative and representational strategies of *Amy* and *Miss Simone*, ‘Rehab’ and ‘Mississippi Goddam’ are transformed into agents for critique. Songs are used as texts to reveal deeper truths, offering insight into who these women were outside or beyond the music they created, underlining the emotional labour that goes into the process of creating a song, and the toll this can ultimately take.

to enter rehabilitation, couched in her father Mitch’s declaration that she was ‘fine.’ Kapadia reinforces Mitch’s negative influence on his daughter throughout the film. Following the film’s release, Mitch spoke out against it, disavowing his portrayal and suggesting his comments regarding Winehouse’s possible rehabilitation had been misinterpreted.

⁷⁴ Collin, Robbie. ‘Amy Review: “Piercingly Sad”’. *The Telegraph*, 16 May 2015, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/amy/review/>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2020.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid. It is notable that the Motown/Phil Spector-inspired sound of the song came as a later development, in line with Winehouse’s musical interests and influences. This production is a departure from the jazz-oriented style of her debut record, *Frank*. Mark Ronson’s original production of the song and its recording is featured within *Amy*. The demo recording heard in the film is different in tempo, style, and tone, and is arguably less “catchy” and radio-friendly than the final version of the song, which proved intrinsic to its popularity. The larger context of making *Back to Black* is shown in *Mark Ronson: From the Heart* (Carl Hindmarch, 2019). Like *Amy* before it, Hindmarch’s film illustrates that Winehouse’s abilities as a musician and singer-songwriter were integral to Ronson’s creative process.

Miss Simone and *Amy* are the latest texts dedicated to Winehouse and Simone, which contribute to their cultural afterlife and maintain their posthumous stardom, alongside appearances on soundtracks, as part of ‘best of’ performance compilations, concert footage, and numerous documentary profiles. Many of these are single documentaries made for television, including *Amy Winehouse: The Final Goodbye* (Maureen Goldthorpe, 2016), that reuse the same footage to different effects and affects.⁷⁷ Others, such as *Amy Winehouse: Fallen Star* (Jason Boritz, 2012) and Winehouse’s episode of *Autopsy* (Channel 5, 2014 –) – which incorporate dramatised elements – are indicative of the continued fascination with Winehouse, and the desire to dissect her life, and particularly, her death.

Since its release, however, *Amy* and the awards success it has attained have legitimated the film, leading to its status as a definitive documentary account. *Miss Simone* has since attained a similar standing as a Netflix product, to the exclusion of crowdfunded documentary, *The Amazing Nina Simone* (Jeff L. Lieberman, 2015), which explores Simone’s life from a similar perspective as Garbus’ film, but lacks the official endorsement from Simone’s family that was secured by *Miss Simone*.⁷⁸ This film and others, including the controversial biopic *Nina* (Cynthia Mort, 2016), form part of what could be described as a “Nina Renaissance” stimulated by her continued and consistent reappearance in popular culture, reaching a degree of mainstream praise that largely alluded her during her lifetime.⁷⁹ Reflecting on Simone’s legacy for *The New York Times*,

⁷⁷ The BBC compilation *Amy Winehouse: In Her Own Words* (BBC, 2015) would also fit into this category.

⁷⁸ Simone’s daughter, Lisa Simone Kelly, serves as an executive producer, and accompanied Garbus to speak about the project’s genesis and her involvement during promotional engagements. In contrast, *The Amazing Miss Simone* remains independent, created in collaboration with Simone’s siblings, including her brother Sam Waymon.

⁷⁹ There was a considerable critical backlash toward the film, following a difficult production process, for the casting of actress Zoe Saldana, who required make-up to darken her skin and a prosthetic nose to more closely mimic Simone’s appearance, reigniting the colourism debate. Simone’s family refused to endorse the film and Mort filed a lawsuit against its producers in regard to issues with its editing. For an indicator of the initial reaction to the film see Abad-Santos, Alex, et al. ‘The Outrage Over Zoe Saldana Playing Nina Simone, Explained’. *Vox*, 4 Mar. 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/3/4/11161980/nina-simone-saldana>. Accessed 8 Sept. 2020. When speaking about the role during an interview on Instagram, Saldana apologised for taking the part and expressed regret for doing so, despite having earlier defended her decision. This

Salamishah Tillet describes her ‘decade-long resurgence,’ stimulated by the increased interest in Simone’s life, work, and most intriguingly, political activism, noting that ‘[f]ifty years after her prominence, Nina Simone is now reaching her peak.’⁸⁰

The reappraisal of Simone is indicative of a broader set of cultural and perspectival shifts that are emblematic of continued attempts to map and re-map narratives of music history and the lives of significant artists like Simone. Technological affordances brought by the digital turn – namely the digitisation of archives, video-on-demand, and music download and streaming platforms – mean that our understanding of heritage and history, and in turn, our sense of memory and pastness, has changed. This is reflected in the sustained popularity of the documentary and biopic genres, which rely on both the appetite for texts which narrativize and historicise the musical past, while encouraging nostalgic engagement with that past.

Paratexts and Narrative Meaning

How can we begin to unpack how both *Amy* and *Miss Simone* narrativize and memorialise their respective subjects? Here, the paratextual material surrounding a film can provide useful context as to how it could or should be read by the audience.

Jonathan Gray argues that paratexts ‘are a central part of media production and consumption processes.’⁸¹ For Gray, they are a constituent of the ‘extended presence of filmic and televisual texts across our lived

apology led to further discussion of the film’s controversies. See Beaumont-Thomas, Ben. ‘Zoe Saldana Apologises for Playing Nina Simone in Controversial Biopic’. *The Guardian*, 6 Aug. 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/aug/06/zoe-saldana-sorry-nina-simone-biopic-film>. Accessed 8 Sept. 2020.

⁸⁰ Tillet, Salamishah. ‘Nina Simone’s Time Is Now, Again’. *The New York Times*, 19 June 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/movies/nina-simones-time-is-now-again.html>. Accessed 16 Apr. 2020. Following the release of *Amy*, Winehouse’s work also underwent similar reappraisal, focusing on her talents as a songwriter and musician, while also emphasizing her skills as jazz vocalist.

⁸¹ Gray, Jonathan. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York University Press, 2010, p. 16.

environments.⁸² These extensions, including trailers, TV spots and other promotional materials, advance and develop the main text, allowing the audience to decode it and 'preview its meanings and effects' before actually encountering it.⁸³ In essence, they provide us with what Pierre Bourdieu described as 'cultural capital,' or, the tools that demonstrate the cultural competency required to read the text.⁸⁴ Paratextual media such as press releases, posters, and trailers can be used as an analytical lens through which to ascertain how the film generates meaning to create particular patterns of reception, which shape how the film is ultimately understood. Through analysing these materials we can also begin to see how each film approaches narrative and memorialisation.

Production summaries offer a natural entry point, as the paratext furthest from the film. *Miss Simone's* summary on Netflix's official site reads: 'Using never-before-heard recordings, rare archival footage and her best-known songs, this is the story of legendary singer and activist Nina Simone.'⁸⁵ Of particular significance here is the attention to contextualising the specialness of the film's audiovisual components, using the rarity of the archive material and recordings as a lure for potential viewers, maintaining fascination for Simone's life and work by emphasizing the potential to see and hear something new.

Similar language is used in A24's summary for *Amy*, drawing attention to the 'extensive unseen archive footage and previously unheard tracks' within the film.⁸⁶ However, it does not sanitise the more transgressive elements of Winehouse's life. It also makes clear Kapadia's guiding thesis for the film, referencing the 'invasive and relentless media attention' Winehouse endured alongside her success. It states that this attention in combination with her 'troubled relationships and precarious lifestyle saw her life tragically begin to

⁸² Ibid., p. 2.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. 1979. Translated by Richard Nice, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

⁸⁵ Netflix. 'What Happened, Miss Simone?' Netflix, <https://www.netflix.com/title/70308063>. Accessed 20 Sept. 2020.

⁸⁶ A24. 'Amy'. A24 Films, <https://a24films.com/films/amy>. Accessed 6 Sept. 2020. A24 serves as the film's distributor in the US.

unravel.’⁸⁷ Here, particular patterns are established, where Simone is positioned as the legendary singer-turned-activist, and Winehouse the rare yet tragic talent.

The similar treatment of Winehouse and Simone extends into another promotional paratext that is one step closer to the film: their posters and DVD/Blu-ray jackets. Characterised by their minimalist design and large central images of Winehouse and Simone, the taglines used for each film are also strikingly similar, creating a sense of musical kinship between the two women that transcends the boundaries of their deaths. The DVD/Blu-ray cover for *Amy* replicates the imagery and branding used in the poster, carrying the additional tagline ‘the girl behind the name,’ pointing to the film’s revelatory function and the potential for Winehouse’s portrayal within it to subvert audience expectations, by challenging their preconceived ideas of her based upon media coverage in her final years. The legitimacy garnered by the film’s critical and awards success is reflected in the star ratings and review pull quotes featured at the top of the cover above the film credits (Figure 3.8).

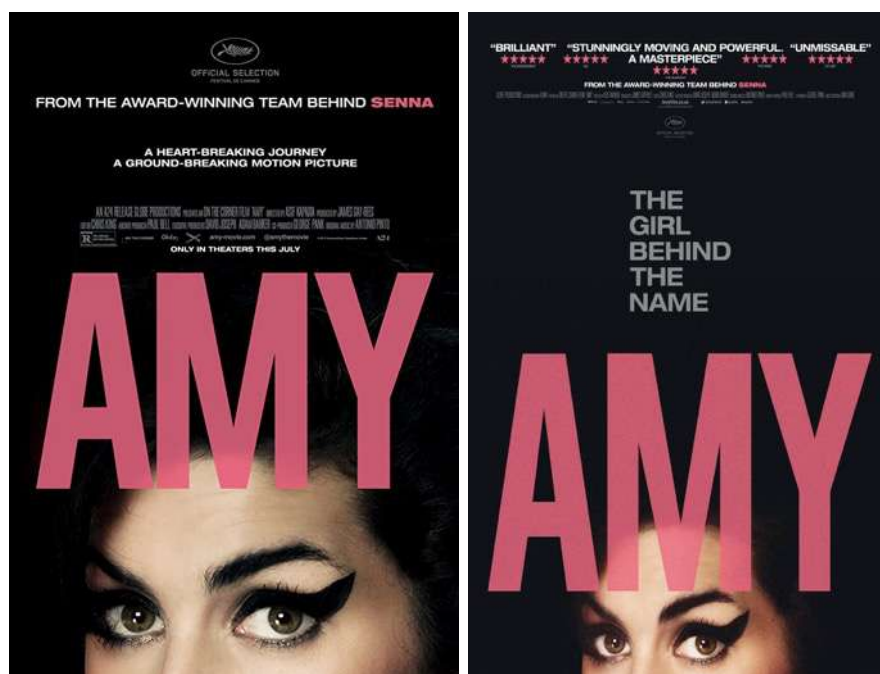


Figure 3.8: (L-R) Poster and DVD/Blu-ray cover for *Amy*

⁸⁷ Ibid.

The poster and DVD/Blu-ray cover of *Miss Simone* omits the majority of the traditional hallmarks associated with theatrical release, and instead carries the familiar laurels iconography bestowed upon it while on the festival circuit, reflecting its own awards success. The central image of the poster and cover is based on a double exposed image of Simone in hues of monochrome, blue, and sepia, embodying the schism between Simone's public and private selves (Figure 3.9). In a similar manner to the tagline of the *Amy* DVD and Blu-ray – 'The girl behind the name' – the equivalent on materials for *Miss Simone* materials focus on personhood, stating: 'Her story. Her voice.' This choice foregrounds the importance of voice (and Simone's voice in particular) to the story of the film, creating a point of difference in relation to other films about Simone's life and work. However, this is challenged and even undercut by other branded authorial markers that change it into a multi-authored text – its status as a Liz Garbus and Netflix film, which are rendered in larger fonts, demanding our attention, pulling focus away from Simone herself.



Figure 3.9: (L-R) Poster and DVD/Blu-ray cover of *Miss Simone*

While it is clear that *Miss Simone* ‘belongs to’ its subject, and like *Amy*, Simone is also its ‘central object,’ this is problematised by the fact the ‘story’ is owned and shaped by others. In the film’s promotion and branding, both Garbus and Netflix are just as important to the authored experience of the film as Simone herself. Kapadia maintains an equal presence in the promotional materials for *Amy*, reflecting his critical and awards success with the previous film in his ‘Tragic Trilogy’ of documentaries, *Senna* (Asif Kapdia, 2010).⁸⁸

The paratexts that maintain the closest relationship to the text before our encounter with it is the trailer, and each replicates the branding used in other promotional paratexts created for *Amy* and *Miss Simone*. Of importance here is not the footage excerpted from the film, but rather how the aural and visual elements are organised, and how this generates a sense of mood and tone to further guide the audience as to how the film should be read, but also how it should make them *feel*.

Both trailers follow a similar basic structure. A microcosm of a film’s three act structure, their progression is signalled through changes in music that in turn reflect a change in mood and tone, marked out clearly in the trailer’s editing pattern. For *Miss Simone*,⁸⁹ the trailer begins with the studio version of ‘Feelin’ Good,’ followed by her cover of ‘Strange Fruit,’ and ends with ‘Please Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood.’ As the trailer progresses, the editing speed becomes faster, in response to the revelatory shift from Simone as a brilliant music legend, to an angry, volatile, and violent woman. The final section of the trailer balances out the juxtaposition between the polarised competing aspects of Simone’s personality, underlining the love and respect she earned from her peers and fans, bowing in front of various audiences. The trailer tellingly ends with voiceover narration from her daughter, Lisa Simone Kelly, describing her

⁸⁸ *Senna*, *Amy*, and *Diego Maradona* (Asif Kapdia, 2019) are almost always informally referred to in popular discourse as a trilogy. This is typically either in reference to their relationship with tragedy or when they are specifically defined as being tragic. It is notable however, that they have never officially been marketed as such, or given the same treatment as Baz Luhrmann’s ‘Red Curtain Trilogy’ of *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), *Romeo and Juliet* (1996), and *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) in subsequent home viewing releases.

⁸⁹ Netflix. “What Happened, Miss Simone - Official Trailer.” 2015. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtnmncV74uM>. Accessed 9 Sept. 2020

mother as a brilliant genius who 'paid a huge price' for sharing her talent with the world.

A similar sense of foreboding is evident from the opening moments of the trailer for *Amy*, that intensifies as it progresses.⁹⁰ Sombre and funereal, its opening footage is of Winehouse recording 'Back to Black.' Completing the song, she comments "Ooh, it's a bit upsetting at the end, isn't it?" This is followed by the first music change, the studio version of 'Back to Black' ending with a live performance of 'Love is a Losing Game' and the string orchestrations composed for the film by Antonio Pinto. Throughout the trailer, the narration reinforces Winehouse's authenticity, honesty, and intelligence, while foregrounding her talents. Much like Simone, Winehouse is frequently heard speaking on her own behalf as her success, accolades, and the subsequent scrutiny of the press increase. In contrast to the *Miss Simone* trailer, the cutting rate of the editing slows down, reflecting Winehouse's unravelling onscreen, being followed by paparazzi. The significant presence of cameras and the value of Winehouse as an image is foregrounded in the earlier teaser trailer where the film's multiplicity of video sources are assembled in split screen until they make a multi-layered collage of photomosaic with a larger black and white image of her taken by Alex Lake used throughout the film's promotional material (Figure 3.10).⁹¹ The poignancy generated by the final teaser image is replicated within the final full trailer, where Winehouse's ordinariness (in contrast to the extraordinary nature of her talent) is emphasized when she is heard saying, "I'm not a girl trying to be a star. I'm just a girl that sings."

⁹⁰ A24. "Amy | Official Trailer HD | A24." 2012. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2yClwmNuLE. Accessed 6 Sept. 2020.

⁹¹ Movieclips. "Amy Official Teaser Trailer #1 (2015) - Amy Winehouse Documentary HD." 2016. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1K84K9Q-KO8>. Accessed 9 Sept 2020.

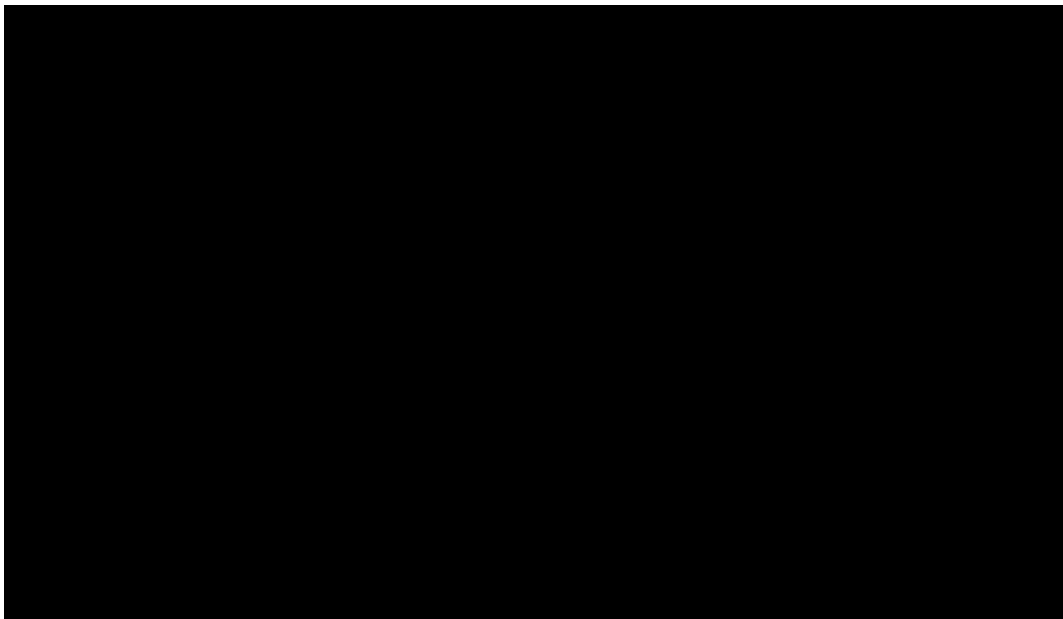


Figure 3.10: A photomosaic in the teaser trailer for *Amy*

The trailers function in a similar manner to an artist's greatest hits compilation. Given the subject matter of *Miss Simone*, it is notable that the trailer does not include any reference to 'Mississippi Goddamn' (though Simone's activism is referenced through archival footage of Civil Rights marches). Similarly, songs from Winehouse's first album, *Frank*, are omitted, but performance footage and music videos does feature. In a little over two minutes, the pattern of received meaning, and the preferred reading of the films – and the women whose lives they document – are set. Simone is the volatile, outspoken musical genius. Winehouse is the tragic, prodigious talent ruined by the uninvited pressures of fame.

To begin breaking down how the readings of Winehouse as tragic and Simone as volatile are constructed and deconstructed within *Amy* and *Miss Simone* we must first think about the significant components of that narrativization and memorialisation. This will be explored through a discussion of performance of the self, the auratic nature of the voice, the complexities of archive, and finally complicity and media witness. These focal points have been chosen due to the ways in which they illustrate elements of the films' construction and reception as indicated by the reviews referenced throughout this section.

Performance and/of the Self

While not as overt in their performance of self as *Underestimate the Girl* or *Songbird*, both *Amy* and *Miss Simone* are indicative of the trends I outlined earlier, defined by Redmond and Goode. Interview segments provide us with the most easily accessible version of Winehouse's and Simone's public or public-facing selves, whether reflected in their own contributions or by those who knew or worked with them. This material can be broadly described as confessional. The quality is more readily apparent in relation to their songs and lyrics, often attributed in the press as maintaining a confessional quality.⁹²

Through their songs, Simone and Winehouse are confessing something to us, and discussing their songs and what it means to perform is its own kind of confession. The candour of both women, and their willingness to be self-reflexive or self-critical, aligns their life and work with notions of honesty and openness. Tolson argues that performance of self is a type of public performance, but one which is not read as 'acting.'⁹³ For the performance of self to work, 'the celebrity needs to project an aura of "'authenticity"' which 'also lays claim to wider moral credibility.'⁹⁴ For Winehouse and Simone, Tolson's observations hold true to an extent, but the specific context of their position as women working within the male-oriented and dominated genre of jazz should be taken into account. In her work on Simone, Feldstein describes jazz as a gendered space, with its music and meaning allied to 'avant-garde radicalism *and* with associations to a modernist universal high culture in ways that seemed to preclude women,' intensifying Simone's already othered status as an African-American woman.⁹⁵ Sheila Whiteley traces similar gender bias in her own discussion of women in popular

⁹² Many articles published after Simone's and Winehouse's deaths are exemplary of this tendency, seeking to reinstate their value as musicians and songwriters beyond their most well-known songs. For an indication of such writing on Simone and Winehouse, see Allen, Jeremy. 'Nina Simone – 10 of the Best'. *The Guardian*, 2 Mar. 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2016/mar/02/nina-simone-10-of-the-best>; and Fearon, Faye. 'The Hidden Gems in Amy Winehouse's Discography'. *British GQ*, 23 July 2020, <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/music/article/amy-winehouse-best-songs>. Accessed 16 Mar. 2020.

⁹³ Tolson. 'Being Yourself', p. 445.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Feldstein, "'I Don't Trust You Anymore'", p. 1356.

music, impacting upon how and what women express within their music. For Whiteley, women's songwriting, performance, and by extension, their credibility, is predicated upon the specific 'cultural space or context from and through which (women) artists "speak" or represent themselves.'⁹⁶

This arises from two competing but interrelated traditions. One is based in folk music and the traditions of the singer-songwriter, with an 'emphasis on authenticity, "truthfulness" to personal experience, and community,' while the other is based in artifice, and 'is largely governed by the imperatives of commercial success.'⁹⁷ In different ways, *Amy* and *Miss Simone* articulate the demands of these competing desires, the negative impact on their presentation of self. This is particularly evident in moments where they are shown to express doubt regarding the trajectory of their career or have creative difficulties, unsure how to express their ideas, and/or in the case of Simone in particular, describe the impact of overtly using their voice to offer personal perspectives in song. For Winehouse, this is evident in her increased popularity following the release of *Back to Black* and her highly-published relationship with Blake Fielder-Civil, the subject of numerous songs on the record.⁹⁸ For Simone, this is indicated by the lack of commercial success and the politicised nature of her music following the release of 'Mississippi Goddam,' which her husband-turned-manager Andrew Stroud is shown to have warned her against.⁹⁹ Despite this, Simone continued to ignore him, using her voice to, as Lisa Simone Kelly observes, "speak for her people" and speak to them by articulating their experience.

⁹⁶ Whiteley, Sheila. *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity, and Subjectivity*. Routledge, 2000, p. 196.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Winehouse's songs maintain a strong relationship to the autobiographical, with many songs on her previous record, *Frank*, discussing relationships, but the increased interest in Winehouse's music and her relationships holds particular relevance here.

⁹⁹ Stroud is shown in interview excerpts taken from an unreleased documentary describing Simone's political activism as a 'side-track' from being a commercially successful artist.

Auratics of the Voice

Rather than focusing on the interview elements used within *Amy* and *Miss Simone* in relation to the auratic nature of the voice, I wish to focus upon elements used within both films to represent the voice in addition to the songs we hear. In foregrounding words – the written extension of the voice – to incorporate their ideas and inner thoughts, both films turn their voices into something that can be seen. Through this, they maintain a material and thus an auratic relationship to the star that is intensified due to their passing. The use of lyrics in *Amy* and diaries and letters in *Miss Simone* recentre their narratives on Winehouse and Simone, reinstating them as the ‘central object’ of their respective films. Through this ephemera, both women maintain a different sense of presence and vitality, further adding to the ‘aliveness’ generated by their audiovisual presence in the film that is augmented by a connection to the material world.

In *Miss Simone*, this material connection is expressed through enlargements of itineraries and diary entries, where the latter are transcribed on screen (Figure 3.11).

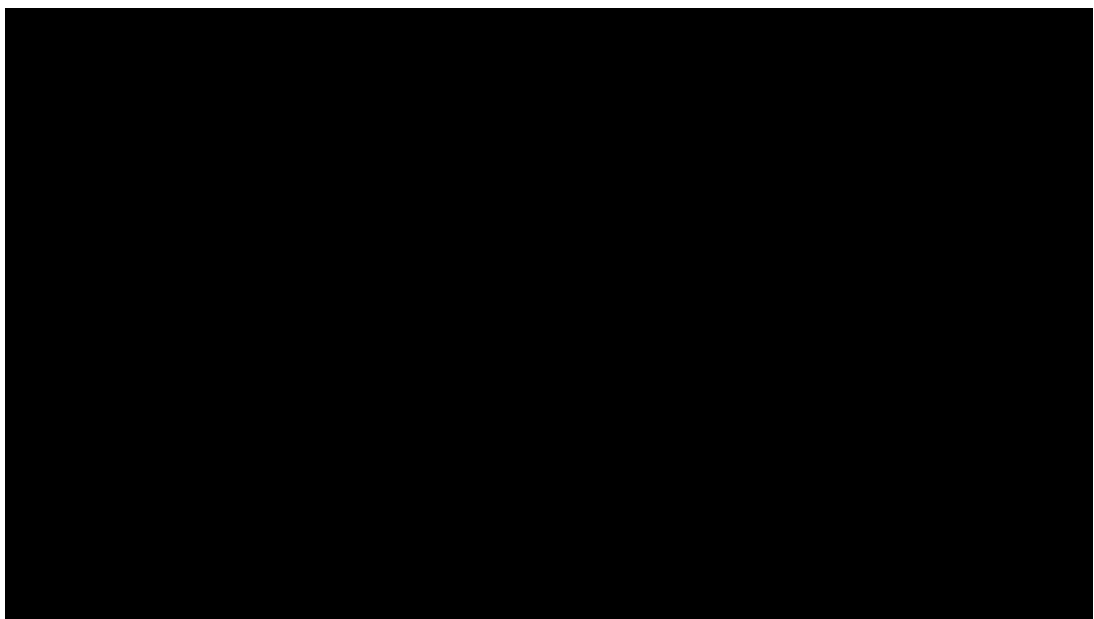


Figure 3.11: Enlargements of Simone's diaries, letters, and itineraries

This ephemera offers the 'flipside' to the outward expression of 'a cultural terrain [of] pain and rage'¹⁰⁰ embodied by 'Mississippi Goddam,' 'Backlash Blues,' and other songs recorded throughout the mid-to-late 1960s when Simone surrounded herself with other artists and activists, including Langston Hughes, Lorraine Hansbury, and Stokeley Carmichael. As Fedelstein observes, Simone's songs acted 'far more than as merely the background sound track [sic] to the movement, and not simply as a reflection of the pre-existing aspirations of political activists.'¹⁰¹ In song, Simone maintained and even amplified the candour expressed in her interviews. Her inner thoughts, desires, and increasingly volatile nature are revealed to us through different means: in written words, rather than those spoken or sung. While the use of letters and diaries is not new and their implementation within the film is perhaps one of its most conventional aspects, where and how such material is positioned is significant, recalling the other forms of ephemera shown throughout *The People's History of Pop* – taken together, they illustrate both sides of music's material culture's ephemera. Echoing a similar usage of Janis Joplin's personal letters in *Little Girl Blue*, diaries and itineraries are used in *Miss Simone* to indicate Simone's emotional state and the decline of her mental health as her life begins to unravel.

Through this material, we are given tangible, detailed insight that illustrates the impact of the increasing pressure Simone felt to perform, and the tempestuous, abusive nature of her relationships with Stroud and daughter Lisa. Access to such material and their purposeful transcription also makes what was once private, public, further blurring the lines between the two spheres. At times, the closeness and intimacy generated by the film and its attention to the personal feels *too* close, leaving the audience with an uncomfortable sense that some of this material should not be seen or heard. A similar feeling is prompted by *Amy's*

¹⁰⁰ Feldstein. 'I Don't Trust You Anymore', p. 1350.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Feldstein details further references to the varied political perspectives at the time in the article's footnotes, including Biondi, Martha. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*. Harvard University Press, 2003; and Tyson, Timothy B. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

use of ephemera, this time generated by song lyrics.¹⁰² The film includes enlargements of lyrics written on lined paper, foregrounding physicality and touch in the same manner as Simone's diaries and itineraries (Figure 3.12).

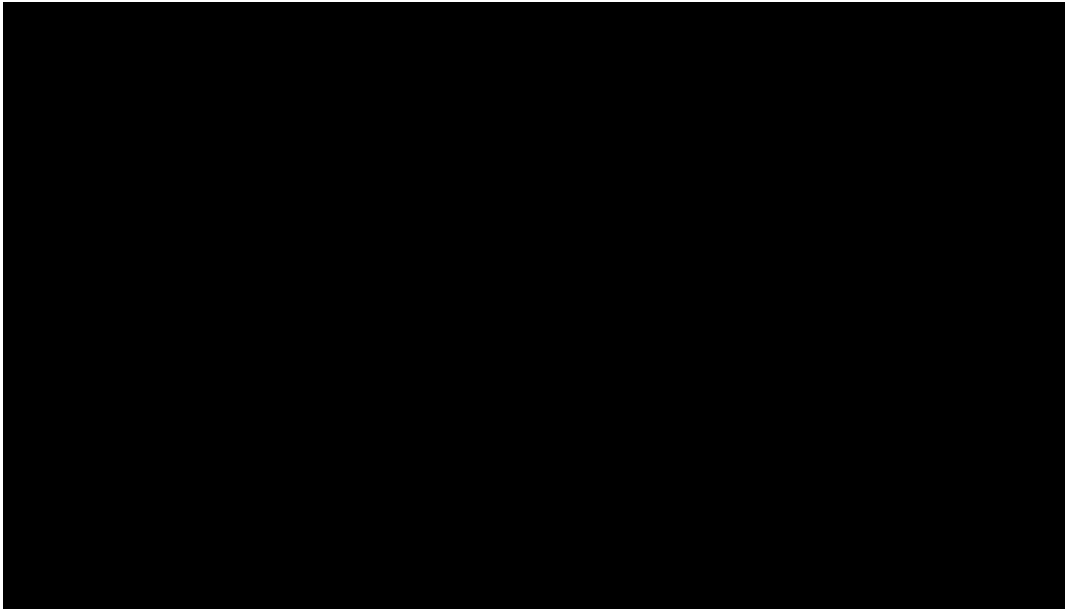


Figure 3.12: Handwritten lyric enlargements in *Amy*

The lyrics imbued with the aura of their writer and their handwriting maintains connection to the material world that is defined by a uniqueness and an indexicality separate from the image itself, derived from its status as 'direct evidence of the human touch.'¹⁰³ In the case of Winehouse and Simone, ink on paper is the evidence of that touch. Like the Oasis tape in *The People's History of Pop*, it gives credence and authenticity to the exploration of their life and work. For Johnson, art 'communicates personal struggle' – so too does songwriting.¹⁰⁴ As *Amy* and *Miss Simone* attest, this struggle is literal, in the similarly 'irregular brushwork and uneven marks' they leave behind on the paper, sometimes

¹⁰² A similar attention to interiority is instead articulated through archive photographs, particularly selfies. The prevalence of this photography stems from social networking and Myspace, becoming a more dominant part of image culture through the rise of Twitter and Instagram. *Amy* contains a sequence of selfies taken by Winehouse using her laptop. Pictured without make-up, wing-tipped eyeliner or the hair extensions and wig that maintained her signature beehive, they are positioned as a counterpoint to how she typically presented herself in public in the later years of her life.

¹⁰³ Johnson, Mia. 'Made by Hand'. *Art Education*, vol. 49, no. 3, 1996, p. 38.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

correcting what they wished to write.¹⁰⁵ There remains significant fascination with ephemera of this type, which carries a further emotive and affective resonance when the artist has died, reflected in the continued posthumous publication of letters and journals by musicians including Kurt Cobain and Jeff Buckley, or exhibitions of their clothing and stage costumes, giving insight into their creative process.¹⁰⁶

In addition to handwritten elements appearing within *Amy*, the film also explores the link between songs lyrics and musicianship, built around segments dedicated to the recording of significant songs. One such example occurs during the recording session of 'Back to Black' with Mark Ronson, where the film mobilises the aesthetic of the lyric video to emphasize Winehouse's song writing abilities.¹⁰⁷ Archive footage of Winehouse recording the demo is combined with voiceover audio of her reflecting on the writing process. The piano and percussion tracks are then stopped to isolate her vocals.¹⁰⁸ On screen, the lyrics she sings are superimposed over the image as she sings them, rendered in a cursive (but not handwritten) font.¹⁰⁹ Once she gets to the chorus hook, the audio changes to reflect the final mix of the song while the lyrics remain on screen, reinforcing their meaning and Winehouse's word choice. Through this, we listen to the song as well as hear it, perhaps for the first time (Figure 3.13).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Cobain, Kurt. *Kurt Cobain: Journals*. Penguin, 2003. Journal excerpts are also part of the multimedia and multimodal technique used throughout *Montage of Heck*; Guibert, Mary, and David Browne. *Jeff Buckley: His Own Voice: The Official Journals, Objects, and Ephemera*. Cassell, 2019. The exhibition 'Beyond Black – The Style of Amy Winehouse' is indicative of the exhibition trend. It displayed dresses, awards, and other ephemera relating to her career. This echoes similar posthumous retrospectives created for Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana, and Alexander McQueen.

¹⁰⁷ I borrow my definition of a lyric video from Mathias Bonde Korsgaard, who describes it as showing 'the lyrics to the song as the video progresses' where they are replicated as 'text in the image.' See Korsgaard, Mathias Bonde. *Music Video After MTV: Audiovisual Studies, New Media, and Popular Music*. Routledge, 2017, p. 69. For an overview of the field, see Korsgaard, Mathias Bonde. 'SOPHIE's "Faceshopping" as (Anti-)Lyric Video'. *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2019, pp. 209–30.

¹⁰⁸ Winehouse can clearly still hear these tracks through her studio monitor headphone as she continues to sing. For the audience, they are dimly audible, but not as loud on the soundtrack as earlier in the sequence.

¹⁰⁹ A similar lyric video aesthetic is also adopted throughout *Underestimate the Girl*.

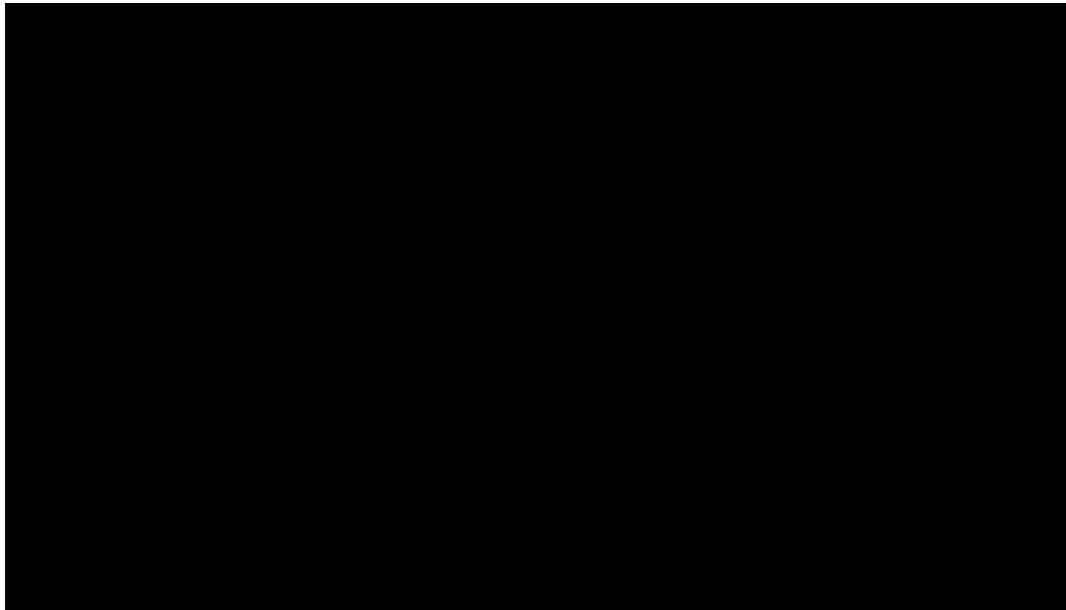


Figure 3.13: Lyric video aesthetics during the recording of 'Back to Black'

Attention to lyrical detail once more underlines the significance of hearing the voice and its auratic effects. For both Simone and Winehouse, the singing and speaking voice have a particular relationship to memory and nostalgia. Stephanie Zacharek's review of *Amy* pays particular attention to the voice and the fragility of human life versus the stability of recorded music, describing it as 'half-comforting, half-haunting permanence.'¹¹⁰ The uncanniness alluded to is ever-present within both films, carrying even greater affective resonance since Winehouse and Simone are no longer alive. Zacharek's further observations on the experience of re-encountering or re-listening accurately describes the spectatorial experience of watching a documentary that brings an artist back to life:

When a musician or singer we love dies, we mourn with our ears. Once an artist is lost to us, the music he or she has left behind somehow changes color and tone, often becoming more beautiful rather than less — maybe because *what we're hearing is a beginning with an ending already written into it.*¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Zacharek, Stephanie. 'We Could Only Hold Her for so Long: Stellar Doc "Amy" Summons up All That Amy Winehouse Was'. *Village Voice*, 30 June 2015, <https://www.villagevoice.com/2015/06/30/we-could-only-hold-her-for-so-long-stellar-doc-amy-summons-up-all-that-amy-winehouse-was/>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2020.

¹¹¹ Ibid. My emphasis.

Of greatest significance to *Amy* and *Miss Simone* is the idea that we arrive at these documentaries with predetermined knowledge, as Zacharek describes, specifically of the story's end. This knowledge does not impact our viewing experience, and in some cases, the experience enriches or expands upon that knowledge. The presence of the artist's voice and song or speech is central to the affective and auratic experience of these films, and can, as *Kurt Cobain: About a Son* (A.J. Schnack, 2006) powerfully illustrates, decentre our understanding of artists beyond seeing their image, instead *recentring* our attention on their voice, lending their words greater significance.

Schnack's film uses recordings from interviews conducted between Cobain and music journalist Michael Azerrad for the book *Come as You Are: The Story of Nirvana* as narration over travelogues showing Aberdeen, Olympia, and Seattle – the three Washington cities Cobain lived in throughout his life.¹¹² This approach facilitates a shift in focus, allowing Cobain to take ownership of his own life story, reclaiming it from the salacious tabloid discourse Winehouse also endured. While not implemented in precisely the same way, the speaking voices of Winehouse and Simone operate similarly to Cobain's in *About a Son*, functioning as the authorities on their own lives, their speaking voice is just as important to articulating inner thoughts and experiences as their singing voices to understanding how their lives, deaths, and afterlives have been shaped in the process of narrativizing them.

The most significant shaping element in narrativization and memorialisation is the use of archival or found footage, more specifically, where the footage comes from and how it is used, rather than its position *as* archive and its affects as explored in Chapter Two. Rebecca Swender defines archive as 'recovered actuality footage incorporated into a secondary text,' which is particularly useful when describing material not recorded for a specific purpose, and most importantly in relation to *Amy* and *Miss Simone*, is classed as archive 'whether or not that footage once happened to reside in a recognized film

¹¹² Azerrad, Michael. *Come as You Are: The Story of Nirvana*. Virgin Books, 1993.

archive.’¹¹³

Swender’s definition takes account of the changing position of what is understood as an archive, but also the function[s] the material performs. Following the process of remediation and transformation that occurs when archival footage is reframed in a new context, Swender outlines five different categories to classify the new functions the footage fulfils. Of these, iconic specificity and applied specificity have particular relevance to *Amy* and *Miss Simone*. ‘Iconic specificity’ refers to the content itself, ‘and its degree of physical resemblance to a prior reality’ or, the ability to identify when and where the archival footage originates, such as interview material or performance footage, without the aid of additional captions.¹¹⁴ The most obvious examples of this in *Amy* and *Miss Simone* would be performance footage from Montreux Jazz Festival for Simone, or Grammy or BRIT Awards performances by Winehouse, which maintain their own indexicality by being linked to a particular time and place outside the context of the documentary features they re-appear within.

‘Applied specificity’ relates to additional ‘external material’ added to the archive footage, including ‘voice-over narration, music, intertitles, or subtitles,’ that comment upon the image.¹¹⁵ There are moments in *Miss Simone* where, in contrast to *Amy*, the commentary provided by the additions of music and voiceover does more, adding layers of meaning to what we see and hear – such as Winehouse’s narration describing her relationship with Blake Fielder-Civil while we see her recording ‘Back to Black.’ Other uses, like Garbus’ use of Simone’s ‘Strange Fruit’ cover, is made more complex by the addition of archival footage that reflects the climate which compelled Simone to cover it, juxtaposing the performance with confronting archive of lynching, which contextualises the politicised nature of Simone’s music *and* the unchanged socio-cultural climate for Black people in 1960s America.

¹¹³ Swender, Rebecca. ‘Claiming the Found: Archive Footage and Documentary Practice’. *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 64, Fall 2009, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

This allows for familiar material to be re-read and understood in new ways, similar to that of *13th* (Ava DuVernay, 2016), and its commentary on race and incarceration in the US. For Swender, the combination of all five categories of archival footage, defined as ‘conventional specificity,’ where iconic and applied specificity work together with ‘juxtapositional specificity’ (the sequencing of images juxtaposed to support an argument or narrative trajectory) and ‘historical specificity (dependent on the audience’s pre-existing knowledge of the historical world) ‘can direct the viewer *toward a preferred reading* of a particular piece of footage.’¹¹⁶ Swender argues that preferred readings remain ‘bound’ to the image or become embedded within it. This recalls the clear shaping of meaning performed by marketing paratexts for *Amy* and *Miss Simone*, which is reflected within (but sometimes challenged by) the films themselves.

As Vance Kepley describes in relation to the sequencing in *Pont of Order!* (Emile de Antonio, 1964) on the Army-McCarthy hearings, the incorporation of archive footage into a new textual space carries with it a changed sense of historical specificity.¹¹⁷ Following Philip Rosen, Kepley notes that all archive maintains connection to the real and to history, while also being a record of a *past reality*.¹¹⁸ Recontextualising footage ‘involves the knowledge of what has happened since,’ whereby the possible meanings of the original footage can be contained or changed by how they are edited or sequenced.¹¹⁹ Kepley continues, describing the process of sequencing as a negotiation of ‘give and take between the integrity of the original image and the demands of the text.’¹²⁰ While Kepley calls this a negotiation, I argue that the relationship between the archival text and its new context also generates a spatiotemporal and historical tension between the past and present that is created through the use of found footage

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 4-5. My emphasis.

¹¹⁷ This series of hearings were held to investigate conflicting accusations between the US Army and US Senator Joseph McCarthy.

¹¹⁸ Rosen, Philip. ‘Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts’. *Theorizing Documentary*, edited by Michael Renov, Routledge, 1993, p. 71. Desmond Bell expresses this in stronger terms, saying ‘archival image provides for a retrieval of a vanished past.’ See Bell, Desmond. ‘Found Footage Filmmaking and Popular Memory’. *Kinema: A Journal for Film and Audiovisual Media*, Spring 2004, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Kepley, Vance. ‘The Order of “Point of Order”’. *Film History*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2001, p. 213.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

and its capacity to double the 'historical real.'¹²¹ Through this, found footage maintains a dual status as truth and fiction, while also being a 'document of history and unreliable evidence of history.'¹²² In Catherine Russell's terms, the 'intertextual nature of found footage means it is always also an allegory of history, a montage of memory traces.'¹²³

Whether considered as traces or evidence, the remnants of history that remain embedded within found footage have the potential to create the conditions for what Landsberg describes as 'prosthetic memory,' particularly in cases where, as Swender argues, the specificity of the original footage (historical or otherwise) is lost through recontextualization. For instance, the reframing of Simone's 'Strange Fruit' cover brings with it the context of Billie Holiday's original, intensifying its association with the violence enacted upon Black bodies, but does so through connection to Simone's own activism, without acknowledgement of Holiday.¹²⁴ The reframing of the song in *Miss Simone* means its original context is lost, either considered assumed knowledge or that Holiday's association with the song is unnecessary for applied specificity to operate successfully.

What does this mean in terms of how we understand performance and memory, and indeed, how we understand the life and work of Amy Winehouse and Nina Simone? For instance, we may remember performance and interview footage including Simone at Montreux or Winehouse being interviewed by Jonathan Ross in either their original or alternate contexts, either encountered contemporaneously on television or subsequently on YouTube. These viewing contexts and the memories associated with them are expanded upon, and on some level overwritten by, their reappearance within the new contexts of *Amy*

¹²¹ Russell paraphrased in Bell, Desmond. 'Found Footage Filmmaking and Popular Memory'. *Kinema: A Journal for Film and Audiovisual Media*, Spring 2004, p. 8.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Russell, Catherine. *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*. Duke University Press, 1999, p. 238.

¹²⁴ Written by Abel Meeropol and recorded by Holiday in 1939, 'Strange Fruit' is described as the first Civil Rights song. In a 1998 article for *Vanity Fair*, David Margolick calls it a 'musical cry against racism.' See Margolick, David. 'STRANGE FRUIT'. *Vanity Fair*, Sept. 1998, <https://archive.vanityfair.com/article/1998/9/strange-fruit>. These ideas are expanded in Margolick, *Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society and an Early Cry for Civil Rights*. Canongate Books, 2013.

and *Miss Simone*. When we (re)engage with archive in this manner these excerpts can be viewed both *out of time* in their new context, while still remaining *in time*, still bound to the original context they existed in for the viewer.

In its re-use of performance and interview footage, both *Amy* and *Miss Simone* facilitate various kinds of textual re-encounters with the past. These re-encounters perform several functions. First, they reunite us with younger selves, re-experiencing performances in a familiar yet different context, aided by their nostalgic reframing as a “return” to the past, where music is used as the bridge between past and present. Second, it is another kind of return: a resurrection facilitated through repeat broadcasts and online circulation of footage, where the dead are brought back to life.

The Complexities of Archive

Both films contain a significant amount of archival film footage, made valuable and significant though rarity. In *Miss Simone*, this never-before-seen material includes a work print of a 1968 concert at Village Gate, shot by an NYU student in attendance,¹²⁵ and excerpts from an unreleased documentary featuring footage of Andrew Stroud. However, there is a notable diversion from archive in *Miss Simone*, which I would now like to focus on in more detail.

These additions were created to negotiate for the lack of material, like the animations in *Supersonic*. Garbus employs these reconstructions or, as Anne Thompson calls them, ‘scripted dramatic scenes,’ as an ‘exciting visual storytelling’ technique to avoid overreliance on talking head interviews.¹²⁶ The first is added to Simone’s voiceover reflections on her childhood and the influence of her piano teacher, Mrs Mazzanovich. This sequence also marks the first instance of a recurring motif, featuring a child Simone crossing railroad tracks, used to communicate her difference and isolation (Figure 3.14). During promotional interviews, Garbus cited these formative moments and Simone’s

¹²⁵ Reference is made to this in Thompson, Anne. ‘How Liz Garbus Made Oscar Nominee “What Happened, Miss Simone?”’ *IndieWire*, 20 Feb. 2016, <https://www.indiewire.com/2016/02/how-liz-garbus-made-oscar-nominee-what-happened-miss-simone-174919/>. Accessed 16 Apr. 2020.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

background as a classical pianist as a source of ‘fascination’ that gave ‘insight into [Simone’s] music and its brilliance.’¹²⁷

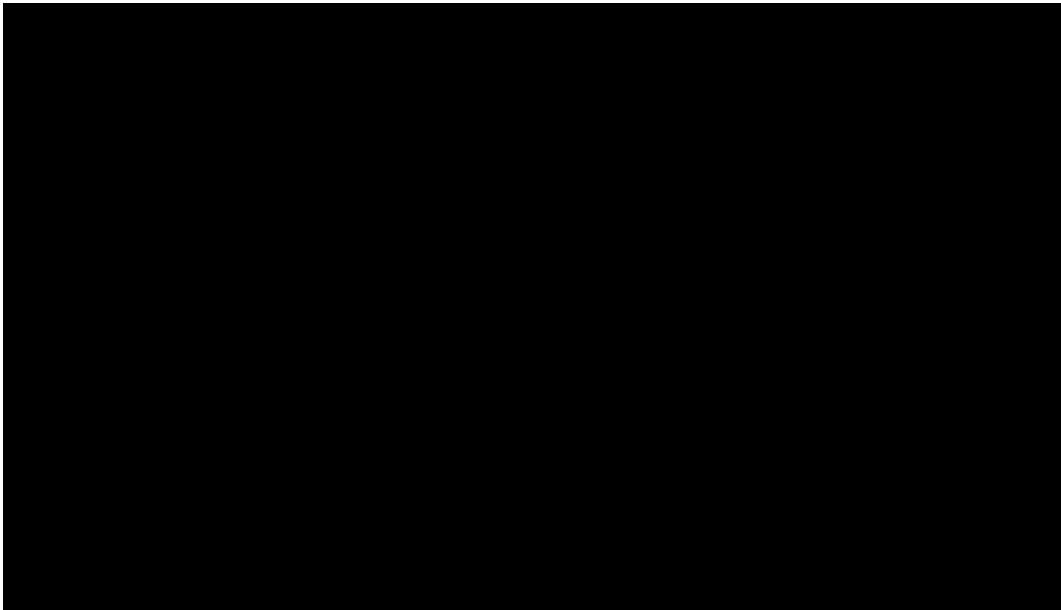


Figure 3.14: Reconstructions of Simone’s childhood in *Miss Simone*

The reconstructions momentarily turn the film into a docudrama, calling into question the validity of the material that surrounds them. More troublingly in relation to the film’s marketing, which proclaims it to be ‘her story and her voice,’ these scenes are nothing more than an approximation of both rather than a true reflection of her or her voice. In a similar manner to *Supersonic*, these scenes are purposefully made to look “old.” Significantly and problematically, these scenes are *not* delineated as a reconstruction through the addition of captions.

As a consequence, these images can be read as archive and thus, as truth rather than an approximation of it. On one level, the appearance of the proxy young Simone suggests the image of one Black little girl is the same as another. On another, it renders the memories created by the viewing experience not only prosthetic but also entirely false. Both qualities are significantly damaging to our understanding of Simone’s life and afterlife, and though these scenes have been commented upon in press for the film, they have not attracted as much criticism

¹²⁷ Garbus qtd. in Kelsey, Colleen. ‘Being Nina Simone’. *Interview*, 25 June 2015, <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/film/liz-garbus-what-happened-miss-simone>. Accessed 16 Apr. 2020.

as *Nina*. The contextual frame of the documentary then makes permissible scripted or reimagined elements because they are read as truth. However, this does not extend to biopics which maintain a different, yet equally specific relationship to truth and validity.¹²⁸

Complicity and Media Witness

The relationship to truth expressed within *Amy* is equally complex. A defining feature of its surrounding critical discourse is a reflection upon the tragic nature of Winehouse's death, and the role of press scrutiny – particularly the paparazzi and tabloid press – in her public downfall and eventual demise, and the complicity of the public in wanting to see and hear more. This desire was fuelled by press commentary upon her alcohol and drug dependencies, resulting in her increasingly erratic behaviour towards the press, and later fans, culminating in a refusal to sing on stage at all.

Through its central thesis of media critique, *Amy* constructs, deconstructs, and then reconstructs Winehouse's relationship to and with the image, showing moments where she engages playfully with the camera, and conversely, where she is resistant to being filmed or having her picture taken. In interviews, Kapadia described the film's relationship to the camera in similarly polarised terms, noting on multiple occasions that while this footage allowed Winehouse to have a presence in the film, creating a vitality and "aliveness" cameras were also part of her downfall. Often expressing sympathy for Winehouse, he felt a duty of care towards her image, while also having conflicting feelings of "complicity" and "culpability" that the film also inspires in the audience.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ The discourse surrounding a biopic and its relationship to the real is equivalent to fidelity criticism in the context of literary adaptation, where the source text is not a novel, but a person. Translating their life to screen involves a similar adaptive process with the 'correctness' of the adaptation built around the performance of the actor playing the title role.

¹²⁹ Kapadia has spoken in similar terms throughout the promotion and cultural afterlife of the film. See, for example, MacInnes, Paul. 'Asif Kapadia on *Amy*: "The Drinking, the Bulimia, the Drugs – Nobody Stopped It"'. *The Guardian*, 27 June 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/jun/27/asif-kapadia-amy-winehouse-doc>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2020; and a BFI Q and A conducted by Stuart Brown, BFI, *Amy Q&A with Asif Kapadia*, BFI. 2015. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H78vCyPKp8>. Accessed 27 Mar.

The presence of cameras and the footage they provide makes *Amy* possible, providing candid insights into her life. Through the camera, we come to know Winehouse differently, but are also made to care about her. Part of the film's cultural work, as with *Miss Simone*, is to restore a fuller sense of Winehouse's identity, reclaiming her as a singer-songwriter, musician, and human being, separate from the caricature of voluminous hair and wing-tipped eyeliner, who became a victim of her own success to the point of being an object of public ridicule. The shift in perception is most obvious in *Amy*'s last act, where personal archive is almost entirely replaced by paparazzi material and television clips that are markedly impersonal, deftly illustrated during a montage of US talk show hosts, including Jay Leno, making jokes at her expense, with specific reference to 'Rehab.' This is in stark contrast to the earlier parts of the film, where personal archive is used almost exclusively, intensifying our affective and emotional closeness to Winehouse through a combination of this material and interviews given by family and friends. The origin of this footage, collated from various sources in pre-digital formats including Mini DV and Hi-8 calls direct attention to the materiality of the image, but also to the person *behind* the camera.¹³⁰

Winehouse frequently addresses whomever is filming her, looking into the camera as she does so. In speaking to them, she also speaks to us, and the camera makes us a complicit witness to events. This creates a complex set of looking relations that changes over the course of the film, purposefully shifting away from feelings of comfort and warmth, because the camera eye brings Winehouse close and brings her back to life, to intense discomfort *because* the very same camera seems too close; invasive, and unwanted. In *Amy*'s affecting final montage, the camera reverts to its earlier function by resurrecting young

2020. The documentary ethics of *Amy* are explored in Andrews, Hannah. 'From Unwilling Celebrity to Authored Icon: Reading *Amy* (Kapadia, 2015)'. *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 351–54.

¹³⁰ Kapadia discussed the pre-digital sources used within the film and made similar statements regarding the looking relations between Winehouse, the camera, and the audience, in a live tweet-along for the film's premiere on Channel Four. See Kapadia, Asif. 'Asifkapadia on Twitter'. *Twitter*, 11 June 2020, <https://twitter.com/asifkapadia/status/1271201731196661766>. Accessed 18 Mar 2021.

Winehouse once more, and her watchful gaze is intensified when she turns the camera on herself, retaking control of her own image (Figure 3.15).

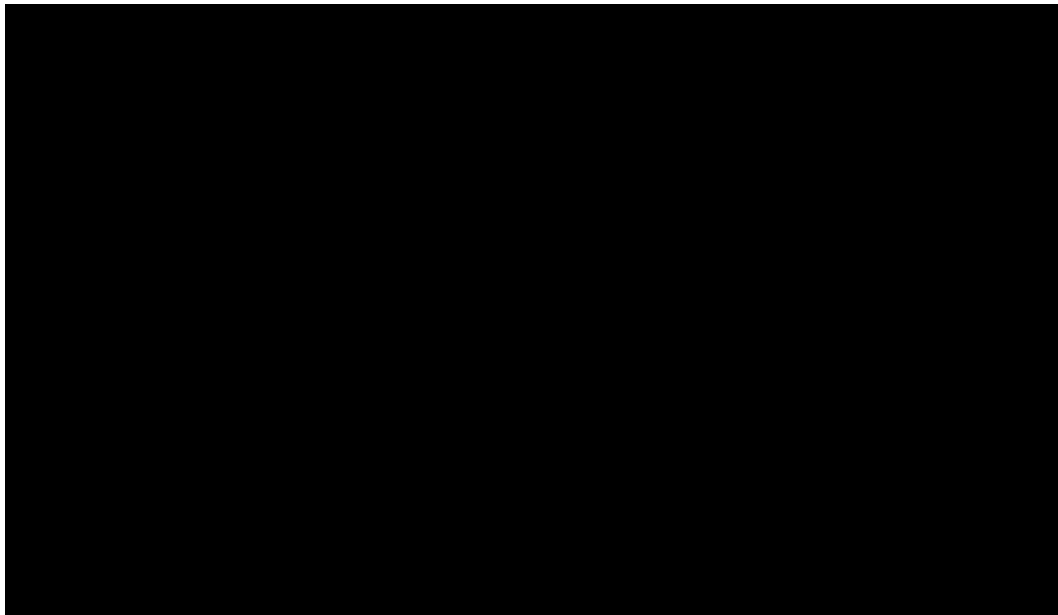


Figure 3.15: Winehouse looking into the camera lens

John Ellis notes that this kind of watching is no longer described as voyeuristic, and is instead referred to as ‘witness’ or ‘witnessing,’ rooted in eyewitness accounts in documentary and news reportage. As Ellis observes, the media has a particular role to play in this regime of looking, and typically ‘place their viewers in the position of the witness, as the persons to whom testimony is directed.’¹³¹ Of particular relevance to *Amy* is Ellis’ further qualifications on witness and judgement:

Alongside the possibility of observation of fragments of an event, media witness also *implies the possibility of judgement*. The portrayed events always already attest to something. The portrayal acts as a witness whose truthfulness should be assessed from the position of the viewer of the screen on which they appear.¹³²

¹³¹ Ellis, John. *Documentary: Witness and Self-Revelation*, Routledge, 2012, p. 122.

¹³² Ibid., p. 124. My emphasis.

In *Amy*, the possibility of ‘judgement’ is complicated by its meta-reflexive construction. The film does, as Ellis suggests, naturally invite judgement. We arrive with a preconceived idea concerning who we believe Winehouse, Fielder-Civil, and her family to be. *Amy* works to reinforce or refute this perspective, and the audience takes what they wish from the experience. However, this judgement is complicated by the film’s own desire to critique. The judgement first conferred on Winehouse and others is turned back upon the audience, forcing us to reflect critically and judge our own actions in relation to her media treatment instead, recognising our own complicity within it.¹³³

Schankweiler et al. aptly define witnessing as a ‘social relational practice,’ which is always dependent upon ‘mediation through testimony.’¹³⁴ Specifically defining these practices as media witness or media witnessing, Frosh and Pinchevski state that media witness encompasses ‘witnessing performed *in, by,* and *through* the media.’¹³⁵ This is further evidence of a shift away from notions of eye-witnessing towards an active and receptive state of witnessing, which is facilitated by technological change and through our relationship with media texts, both as consumers and creators of image culture, to easily capture and document our daily lives, whereby ‘each of us hold the potential to bear witness, but pervasive smartphones enable others to become co-witnesses.’¹³⁶

The impact of these technologies and the abundance of audiovisual material used throughout *Amy*, *Supersonic*, and *Underestimate the Girl*, encompassing both pre-digital and digital spaces, are a testament to this. Describing Winehouse in the context of digital natives, Manohla Dargis pays specific attention to the presence of video as a ‘running record’ of her life, noting

¹³³ John Durham Peters explores the connections between witness and complicity in more detail in Peters, John Durham. ‘Witnessing’. *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication*, edited by Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 23-41.

¹³⁴ Schankweiler, Kerstin, et al., editors. *Image Testimonies: Witnessing in Times of Social Media*. Routledge, 2018, p. 3. This collection also provides useful context for other forms of witness, namely in relation to political activism, social unrest, and the influence of the Internet.

¹³⁵ Frosh, Paul, and Amit Pinchevski, editors. *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 1. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁶ Richardson, Michael, and Kerstin Schankweiler. ‘Affective Witnessing’. *Affective Societies: Key Concepts*, edited by Jan Slaby and Christian von Scheve, Routledge, 2019, p. 166.

that it ‘sometimes gives the movie the feel of a diary.’¹³⁷ Dargis’ observations reinforce the intimacy that handheld material creates, and the emotional closeness this generates with Winehouse, with the film ‘pulling you in close to her.’¹³⁸ The closeness and intimacy Dargis refers to throughout her review is a significant part of the viewing experience and its critical reception, which is absent (or simply less prominent) in films which rely more heavily on newly filmed retrospective interview material, because of the critical and emotional distance it implies.

The emotional closeness and intimacy generated through the affective transferable aesthetics of *Amy* and its auratic qualities, are the largest indicators of the potential for the audience to become co-witnesses. As Dargis’ work illustrates, this is evident in the film’s surrounding critical discourse and the discussion it continues to generate. Language in reviews is characterised by a relationship to closeness and empathy that translates into a desire on the part of the reviewer to disclose their empathy or sympathy for Winehouse. Remarking on the film’s sound design and the impact of the amplified clicks of the paparazzi camera shutters, David Edelstein follows with a reflection that is typical of the affective introspection the film produces, revealing himself as an empathetic and yet conflicted co-witness: ‘We identify with her pain but see her through the eyes of those cameras, complicit in spite of ourselves.’¹³⁹ Whenever *Amy* re-appears in visual culture, available on another viewing platform or in another viewing mode, it prompts a textual re-encounter and, in turn, a re-emergence of similar emotional reflection and introspection.¹⁴⁰

The personal reactions toward *Amy* in particular illustrate the potential for media witness (and by extension co-witness) to have an affective dimension,

¹³⁷ Dargis, Manohla. ‘Review: “Amy,” an Intimate Diary of Amy Winehouse’s Rise and Destruction’. *The New York Times*, 2 July 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/movies/review-amy-an-intimate-diary-of-amy-winehouses-rise-and-destruction.html>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2020.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Edelstein, David. ‘Winehouse Documentary *Amy* Reveals the Lethal Effects of Celebrity’. *Vulture*, 2 July 2015, <https://www.vulture.com/2015/06/movie-review-amy-winehouse-documentary.html>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2020.

¹⁴⁰ Kapadia’s live tweet-along of the film’s premiere on Channel Four in July 2020 and the discussions it inspired are a high-profile example of this.

which further complicates our relationship to archive material and the past. *Amy*'s capacity to move its audience emotionally and elicit an affective response counters the idea that mediated experiences, and the prosthetic memories they can create, lack in emotional weight or affective impact. Returning to her work on prosthetic memory in relation to our engagement with the past and the production of history, Landsberg draws attention to the body's affective response in relation to lived versus and mediated experiences, noting that 'the body responds' irrespective of these distinctions:

Even in the presence of a mediated representation, the body can be moved, touched, affected. The experience of the mediated representation is itself lived; *it is a real experience*.¹⁴¹

Here, Landsberg opens up the potential for *Amy* and films like it to be read as a fully realised, affective experience that is understood and felt *as real*. Such a reading complicates arguments around false nostalgia. Landsberg's observations are lent further credence through her acknowledgment that mass media and the Internet have in turn challenged the 'epistemological premise of history as primarily a distanced intellectual engagement with past events.'¹⁴² How we consistently re-engage and re-encounter the past reflects what she describes as 'experiential modes [that] often have an affective dimension.' Through these new modes, she argues, history is 'something that can be lived or at least imported into one's life.'¹⁴³ The modes Landsberg alludes to could apply when the historical engagement is defined by a relative recency and an emotional closeness that changes our sense and understanding of time, making these events – as I argued in relation to *Supersonic* – feel temporally closer to the present than they actually are.

For much of *Amy*'s audience, their viewing is informed by memories drawn from lived experience that can blur or blend with the mediated experience

¹⁴¹ Landsberg, Alison. *Engaging the Past: Mass Culture and the Production of Historical Knowledge*. Columbia University Press, 2015, p. 20. My emphasis.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

of the film itself. Through this, *Amy* and the other texts referenced throughout this chapter become sociocultural palimpsests that are constantly overwritten, illustrating a changed (and consistently changing) relationship to time and memory.

Fleetwood Mac's Songbird: Christine McVie

The final part of this chapter will consider an example of a contemporary music documentary made for television, *Fleetwood Mac's Songbird: Christine McVie* to examine the cultural legacy of a living, working artist. Throughout the analysis that follows, I will consider how the film aestheticizes and narrativizes McVie's emotional and creative life in order to restore her position within Fleetwood Mac's history, changing how her contribution to the band is typically understood.

Aesthetically, *Songbird* combines the traditional retrospective 'talking head' interviews with newer aesthetic strategies employed by *Supersonic*, *Amy*, *Miss Simone*, and *Underestimate the Girl* in its use of multiple media forms, including archive interviews and performances, stock footage for historical context, photos, and mobile phone concert footage. Narratively and representationally, it takes an entirely contemporary approach to its subject, framing its narrative to emphasise the role of women in rock, influenced by popular discourses of female empowerment.

Narrative, History and Legacy

Broadcast on Friday, 20th September 2019, *Songbird* occupied the 9pm slot on BBC Four, in the channel's established space for music programming.¹⁴⁴ Appearing within the wider context of BBC Music's output, it was described as a TV special rather than a documentary feature.¹⁴⁵ The broadcast was bookended

¹⁴⁴ The channel's scheduling and branding strategies are explored in more detail in Chapter One.

¹⁴⁵ This is a parenthetical suffix added to its entry on Matt O'Casey's IMDB filmography, and is repeated across his body of work, defined variously as 'TV Movie Documentary' or 'TV Series Documentary' in the case of multi-episode projects, such as *Rock 'n' Roll America* (Matt O'Casey and John Williams, 2015).

by repeat airings of *Fleetwood Mac: Don't Stop* (Matt O'Casey, 2009) and *Fleetwood Mac: A Musical History* (Steve Freer, 2018), creating a themed block of programming dedicated to the band with *Songbird* at the centre, creating the space to celebrate and revise the band's history.¹⁴⁶ *Songbird* is described as follows: 'In this 90-minute film, this most English of singers finally gets to *take centre-stage* and tell both her story and the saga of Fleetwood Mac *from her point of view*.'¹⁴⁷ Accordingly, the film uses significant biographical events to map out McVie's life and career, tracing her roots in Birmingham as a blues musician, and her time with the band Chicken Shack, prior to joining Fleetwood Mac.

The film is focused upon her status as the longest-serving female member of the group, reflecting upon the significance of her departure in 1998 and eventual return in 2014. McVie's own perspective on events is largely constructed through the foregrounding of her song writing abilities and musicianship, and discussion of her lyrical content and musical style. *Songbird's* most interesting narrative choice is to emphasise the importance of her presence as a woman in an otherwise all male group (until the arrival of Stevie Nicks alongside Lindsay Buckingham in 1975). Early in the film, this is framed within the wider context of the male-dominated genres of blues and rock, reinforcing McVie's status as both unusual and special – qualities that are reiterated by performance archive, press coverage, and contributors reflecting on her skills as a songwriter and a musician. These comments are part admiration, part consolidation of McVie's musical legacy, consistent with the documentary profile format.

In his review of the film for *The Times*, James Jackson observes that this tone is a hallmark of the BBC Four's music output, saying, 'As always with BBC Four's rock-doc tributes, the eulogies flow freely.'¹⁴⁸ The opening montage of

¹⁴⁶ This evening of programming was in direct competition with Sky Arts' own Fleetwood Mac evening, curated from a more typical angle. It consisted of an episode of *Brian Johnson's A Life on the Road* (2017–), featuring Mick Fleetwood, and a repeat airing of the *Classic Albums* episode dedicated to the making of *Rumours* (itself discussed in Chapter Two).

¹⁴⁷ BBC. 'BBC Four - Fleetwood Mac's Songbird – Christine McVie'. *BBC*, 20 Sept. 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0008k8q>. My emphasis.

¹⁴⁸ Jackson, James. 'What's on TV Tonight: Friday September 20, 2019'. *The Times*, 20 Sept. 2019, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/whats-on-tv-tonight-friday-september-20-2019-cggs9ncss>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2020.

Songbird reinforces this, with McVie shown shaking hands with fellow band members as they progress towards stage, intercut with cheering crowds of fans. This is accompanied by voiceover narration where John McVie describes her absence from the band as “a hole”. Next, Mick Fleetwood extols the virtues of her voice as “distinctive”, while Stevie Nicks goes on to describe McVie’s “art” for writing choruses. Finally, McVie is heard, declaring herself “the hook queen” as she and Nicks arrive on stage. The simple but effective montage offers an audiovisual shorthand for the overarching themes and concerns of the film as a whole. It is significant, however, that despite the film’s clear intent to restore understanding of McVie’s contributions to the band, *Songbird* does not revise Fleetwood Mac’s history to facilitate this shift but acknowledges the value of McVie’s contribution to that history instead.

The result onscreen is both purposeful and timely, working to reinscribe value and worth owed to McVie that had been lost due to the dominant focus on Nicks and Buckingham in other documentary histories of the band.¹⁴⁹ However, Nicks maintains a degree of narrative weight in the film due to the foregrounding of the longstanding friendship between the two women. Describing how they could now ‘never be barred from the boys club’ of rock, Nicks emphasizes their relative rarity as women in the genre (with the exception of Janis Joplin). Both McVie and Nicks consistently assert the value of their friendship, noting their support for each other during times of personal and professional hardship. Such reflections not only foreground the inherent emotional labour associated with creativity but also fit with the film’s broader narrative decisions to avoid salaciousness by aligning their experiences to discourses of empowerment as opposed to cultures of gossip, subverting common narratives of jealousy and infighting, with McVie recognising that her “role was not being a frontliner,” better suited to remaining part of the band’s “rhythm section” with John McVie and Mick Fleetwood.

¹⁴⁹ Buckingham is a notable absentee from the contemporary interview segments, but does feature in archive material. This is likely a consequence of his high-profile firing from the group in 2018. His touring replacement, singer-songwriter Neil Finn, briefly appears as a contributor.

Aesthetics and Archive

The combination of different media formats used throughout *Songbird* creates a rich, dynamic viewing experience through its recontextualization of familiar archival footage and photographs which also appear in *Don't Stop* and *A Cultural History*. On the soundtrack, interview segments are used as narration, acting as a bridge to unify different sources. At times, this is expositional, to reiterate the accompanying visual material, and at others, it is connotative, used expressively to add depth and meaning to visuals. For instance, early in the film we are shown archive performance footage of McVie (then as part of Chicken Shack), singing 'When the Train Comes Back.' The song is used as a focal point of discussion for several minutes, intercutting between its performance with photos and reflections on her move into song writing offered by producer Mike Vernon, McVie, and others in the accompanying interview segments. This sequence contextualises the song as a watershed for both McVie and the band, with Vernon making links between the importance of McVie's writing and her growing abilities as a pianist and singer, with the archive footage placed to offer audiovisual evidence for his points. McVie, meanwhile, expresses the value of the song more simply, describing it as "what you might call the beginning of my style."¹⁵⁰

Using archival material in this manner is by no means a new technique, but its re-use has a particular value and meaning in the BBC Four context. Vana Goblot notes its dual function as a source of preservation and production for the broadcaster, embedded into its own cultural and creative practices. Goblot argues that the audiovisual archives held by the BBC are no longer a 'sleeping asset' and have instead become 'stimulated by digitisation,' emphasising their prominence in 'the channel's signature "seasons" and themed evenings.'¹⁵¹ For Goblot, re-use also allows archival content to be 'refreshed' through various intervention techniques, based around how the material is re-edited and

¹⁵⁰ The treatment of this song within this sequence sets the pattern for how others are explored throughout the documentary.

¹⁵¹ Goblot, Vana. 'The Television Archive on BBC Four: From Preservation to Production'. *VIEW: Journal of European Television History and Culture*, vol. 4, no. 8, Dec. 2015, pp. 80-82.

recontextualised.¹⁵² Goblot notes that the processes of recontextualization and reinterpretation create an active link between the past and the present, and in turn, make another bridge between sources, this time built around the visual rather than the aural.

Within *Songbird*, Goblot's observations take on greater meaning, and a distinctly personal significance. The various sources that mediate our access to McVie and define our experience and knowledge of her throughout the film – archive performances and interviews, photographs, contemporary interviews – create a personal link between her own past and present and those who shared her experiences. The film can be read as a kind of multimedia feedback loop where, through editing, the younger and older versions of McVie are allowed to co-exist. One such example is the sequence exploring 'Lay it All Down' where McVie, Fleetwood, and John McVie reflect upon the contributions of former band member Bob Welch and his creative partnership with McVie, noting the significance of their voices harmonising, and the influence of this on the development of Fleetwood Mac's sound and later use of multi-part harmonies.

The sequence is one of many that naturally invites comparison, with the archive material acting as a commentary on her interview reflections or vice versa. Consequently, though *Songbird's* archive *looks* familiar, it does not *feel* that way. Its recontextualization and reappearance creates a different sense of history and pastness that is built on different forms of memory: it is at once collective and yet intensely personal, public, and yet private, both for McVie and the audience watching. The film's relationship to and with memory is complicated and intensified by its incorporation of tangible ephemera to provide further context for the audience. Throughout *Songbird*, items related to McVie's life and career are shown in close-up enlargements, curated from different sources for the purposes of the documentary. These include newspaper cuttings, vinyl records, and photographs, some of which are taken from Mick Fleetwood's own personal archive. Their presence affords them value through their framing as another kind of witness to events, and as the tangible proof of the band's (and

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 82.

by extension, McVie's) achievements (Figure 3.16). In recent years, the appearance of tangible memory objects has become more commonplace, featuring throughout *Amy* and *Miss Simone* as well as numerous BBC Four texts, including *The People's History of Pop* discussed in Chapter Two, reinforcing Goblot's statements regarding the channel's unique approach to archive.



Figure 3.16: Music ephemera documenting Christine McVie's career

Following Goblot, I suggest this uniqueness includes other archival forms beyond the audiovisual, incorporating paper-based archival sources that draw attention to the materiality of the image. However, their appearance within the film is not solely relegated to exposition. Other types of ephemera, such as sheet music, liner notes, and lyrics are also used expressively. In one such instance, they are used to highlight the differences between Nicks' and McVie's respective approaches to songwriting, and how this reflects their characters. During a discussion of 'Gold Dust Woman,' written by Nicks, and 'Oh Daddy' by McVie, while each song plays on the soundtrack, an enlargement of the gatefold vinyl sleeve with the lyrics shown in close-up, allowing them to be read. Some lyrics remain clearly visible, while others are blurred and less legible (Figure 3.17). This focal point directly relates to the section of the song that can be heard on the soundtrack, unifying the sound and image tracks once more, while also drawing

attention to the songwriting process, and the inherent labour within it, reiterating its significance as a craft, and, to borrow from Nicks herself, "an art."

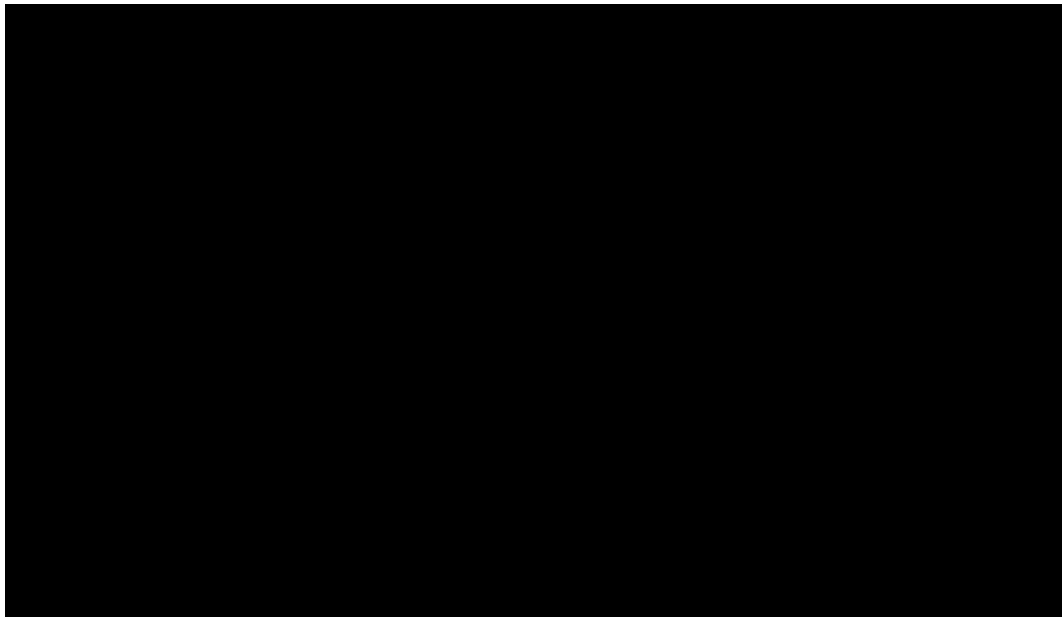


Figure 3.17: Enlargement of lyrics to 'Gold Dust Woman'

As the discussion from contributors singer-songwriter Nancy Wilson and musician Mike Campbell continues, more lyrics and photographs of Nicks are shown, reiterating the difference between the two women, where McVie is positioned at the opposite end of the spectrum to Nicks' romantic style, described by John McVie as "down-to-earth, bluesy," as the opening moments of 'Oh Daddy' are heard, before replicating the treatment used earlier for the Nicks song, this time alongside polaroid photographs and camcorder archive footage. The degree of detail and dissection of McVie's skills as a songwriter are further expanded upon during a later sequence on 'You Make Loving Fun,' that once again reiterates the value and significance of her innovations in song writing and musicality, while maintaining the overall narrative of progress and evolution throughout McVie's career.

Unlike the other songs explored throughout the film, performance is used to accompany the discussion alongside the use of ephemera and archive footage. Towards the end of archive performance footage of the song, contributor singer-songwriter Nerina Pallot discusses Fleetwood Mac's "musical evolution" from

their basis in blues to West Coast style-infused modern pop. While McVie's performance continues, Pallot turns her focus to the song itself. On the image track, sheet music is shown in a double exposed image, layered with footage of McVie performing the song (Figure 3.18). They exist momentarily in the same frame, visually expressing the relationship between song as musical notation and lyrics, and its subsequent performance.

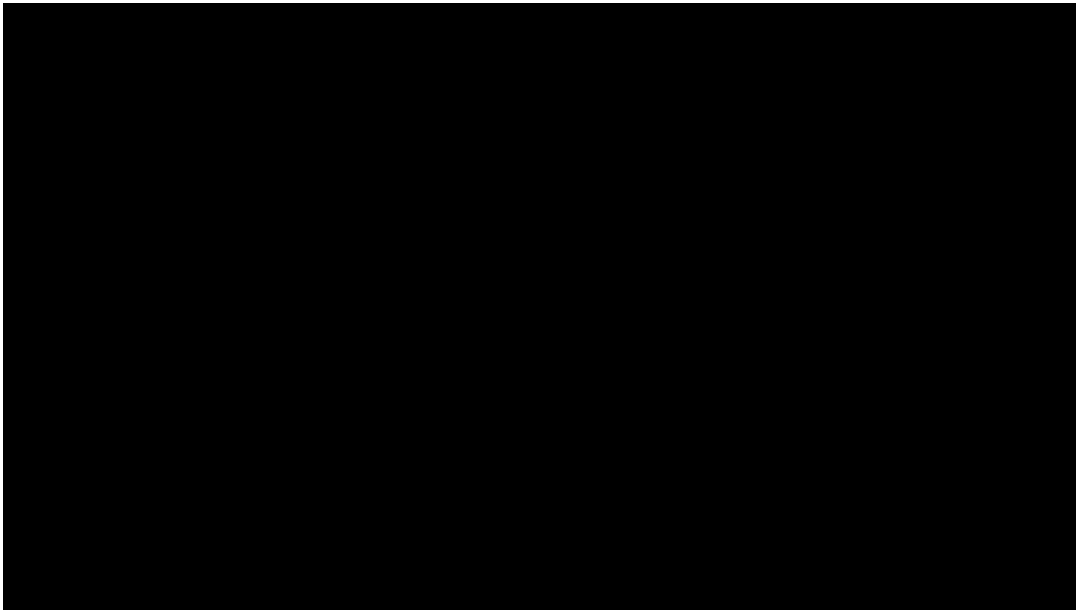


Figure 3.18: Double exposure during performing 'You Make Loving Fun'

In the next shot, Pallot, shown in mid-shot, sitting at a piano, dissects McVie's skills as a songwriter and a musician, in a similar manner to *Classic Albums*. Pallot begins to describe the song as being indicative of "where her writing has come from, and where it's going." Her observations are intercut once more with the sheet music, this time in extreme close-up, to emphasise the musical notation. Following this, Pallot begins to play the piano melody of the verse, noting its "bluesy groove."¹⁵³ Once again, the sheet music is shown in extreme close-up, focusing on the first line of the chorus hook, while Pallot demonstrates the major chord, intercut with archive of McVie singing the same lines while Pallot describes it as "pure pop." The sequence ends with her reflecting upon the impact of

¹⁵³ It is notable that this is the only time anyone other than McVie plays music live within the interview segments. In the first instance, McVie plays 'Blueberry Hill' by Fats Domino, and in the second, 'Songbird' itself over the documentary's closing credits.

McVie's blues-based playing style, combined with the sensibility of pop-based chord progressions, declaring, "the song opens up, it's magical."

Pallot's detailed analysis is significant for several reasons. First, it is indicative of the eulogising that James Jackson's review draws attention to. Second, it reinscribes the song with value and meaning that runs counter to the notion of popular music being throwaway and/or inconsequential, reinforced by the layered complexity of the accompanying images. Third, it is based on Pallot's own musical knowledge and implicit understanding of the emotional and creative labour associated with song writing drawn from her own experiences as a woman in the industry. Fourth, the sequence exemplifies why McVie's story is one worth being told and underlines the fact that her contributions also have value and worth, both culturally and musically.

Conclusion

This chapter has acknowledged and analysed the increasing popularity and significance of contemporary music documentary features within the post-broadcast mediascape. The picture created through this analysis is not exhaustive, nor does it offer an indicator of a specific definable trend within the genre. Rather, the chapter reflects the *trajectory* of the genre, and the changes to its traditional codes and conventions, indicated by the shift away from direct cinema and the observational style originated by D.A. Pennebaker in *Dont Look Back* to an increasingly personal and intimate exploration of an artist and their art in *Supersonic*, *Amy* and others.

The case studies explored throughout this chapter are also exemplary of a particular set of tendencies exhibited by contemporary music documentary features. Analysed throughout in relation to their aesthetic, stylistic, narrative, and representational strategies, I argue that they illustrate a complex and changed relationship to memory, nostalgia, and materiality. The cultural and textual longevity attained by these films through their lifetime as they migrate from one format or platform to another, entering different viewing contexts and modalities, is further evidence of the continued blurring between media forms,

and the breakdown of the boundaries between the traditional medium-specific boundaries of film and television facilitated by their transferable aesthetics and attention to materiality. Their longevity is a testament to the continued appetite for texts which are created to show and tell us more about the historical past, and which, in their many and varied approaches to their subject[s], attempt to fill in the blanks of that past.

The aesthetic and narrative strategies employed by these films also articulate that our memory and our understanding of it can change over time. However, the found footage basis of these films, particularly in relation to *Amy* and *Supersonic*, complicates the idea that media texts which can create the nostalgia cannot also maintain an affective dimension. The longevity of digital image culture, combined with media witness, means that we reencounter media text and star images within them more frequently and in transformed states, and make the dead eternally alive. Rather than entirely overwriting our original lived experience, they expand upon it, and are indicative of a relationship to memory that exists beyond classifications of a memory that is direct (being there) or indirect (from media witness and circulation of footage), changing the formation of what is understood as shared, collective, or even national experiences.

However, as my analysis of *Amy* and *What Happened, Miss Simone?* illustrates, the mediation that occurs through the process of narrativization and memorialisation is not always positive. For some artists, these films expand upon and enrich our understandings of their life and work in new and productive ways, satiating the desire to see and know more through their combination of familiar footage with rare or never-before-seen additions. For other artists, the problematic authored nature of the film text limits what is known, closing down the possibility of historical reinterpretation. This in turn impacts – albeit on a personal rather than institutional scale – what is included or excluded from narrativizations of the musical past.

Conclusion: Musical Re-encounters in Visual Culture

Song, like all art, is at the intersection between individual feeling and the socially and historically specific forms available to *express* that feeling, forms that shape and limit and make indirect what can be expressed and *with any degree of consciousness felt*.¹

As much as this thesis is about media, it is also about songs and the music culture surrounding those songs. It is about the representation of the emotional and creative labour behind their writing and performance. It is also about the value of music programming. Most significantly, it is about how the history of those songs, and the lives of the artists who made them are aestheticized, narrativized, and memorialised in music programming – whether in the live performances of *Ready Steady Go!* and *Old Grey Whistle Test*, heritage series like *The People's History of Pop*, or feature-length documentaries, such as *Supersonic*. It is also concerned with what happens when music programming ends, and the cultural afterlife such programming maintains.

The analysis presented contributes to a growing body of work that seeks to address a critical lacuna generated by the dominance of MTV and music videos in scholarship on music television and attempts to restore the value of such texts to television historiography. This work is a product of the increased availability of non-contemporary television on home viewing formats, the intersecting influences of the historiographic and affective turns, wider perspective shifts regarding what is understood as heritage, and the position occupied by music within new heritage frameworks. Most significantly, this work illustrates the impact of the culture and memory booms, signified by our contemporary 'fascination with memory.'² This fascination is maintained through various technologies (video-on-demand, video sharing platforms) and media forms

¹ Dyer, Richard. *In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film*. Routledge, 2012, p. 2. My emphasis.

² Holdsworth, *Television, Memory, and Nostalgia*, p. 2.

(repeat broadcasts, classic and archival film and television channels) which, as Huyssen observes, 'make ever more memory available to us day by day.'³

The thesis has also outlined the sociohistorical contexts of music programming, detailing their aesthetic, affective strategies, and influences to examine their relationship with and to nostalgia and memory. The most significant of these findings are as follows:

1. Contemporary music programming is characterised by a relationship to affectivity and materiality that is expressed through sustained use of close-ups and slower editing patterns, mobilising what Laura Marks describes as a 'haptic look' which produces a sense of aura and the possibility of touch, generating a feeling of proximity and intimacy between a text, its subject, and the audience.⁴ This illusion of physical closeness creates a sense of emotional closeness as if audiences 'know' who they are watching.
2. Contemporary music features are also defined by a transferrable aesthetic, created by their archive material traversing pre-digital and digital life, which draws attention to materiality of the image and its indexicality, exemplified by the video diary aesthetics of *Amy*, *Supersonic*, and the influence of vlogging and the confessional mode in *Underestimate the Girl*.
3. Within these aesthetic strategies, different techniques are used to signify pastness, extending beyond the traditional use of black and white to appropriate other visual signifiers – Lomography or the graininess of videotape/film – in order to appeal to and generate nostalgia for the analogue.
4. Encountering non-contemporary music programming – and particularly music television in fragmentary or transformed states

³ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p. 17.

⁴ Marks, Laura U. 'Video Haptics and Erotics'. *Screen*, vol. 39, no. 4, Dec. 1998, pp. 331–348. This concept will be explored in more detail below.

- produces temporal dislocation or displacement, generating a changed sense of what is understood as “now” and “then.”
- 5. Nostalgia and nostalgic engagement facilitated by music programming can be productive, beneficial, and in some cases transformative. Reading music programming as an object of memory and/or site of nostalgic engagement opens up ways of thinking about the musical past, and the representational, historical, and narrative strategies of texts dedicated to that past.

These findings challenge not only how we think about our interactions with the past through ‘mediated nostalgia’ texts that actively encourage nostalgia, but also what it means for discourses of memory when we repeatedly encounter the past in the present.⁵ Of equal importance is the impact of the digital turn – including niche channels such as Yesterday and Talking Pictures TV, and streaming platforms like All4 and BritBox – in increasing access to the past and its media.

Nostalgia, Memory, Affectivity, and the ‘haptic look’

Nostalgia and being nostalgic has, in the age of the Internet, become a socialised activity rather than an isolated, reclusive act of longing, facilitated through online communities and social media. As Elisabeth Wesseling observes, ‘[t]his has endowed nostalgia with a materiality and thereby also an easy accessibility that it has never had before.’⁶ This changed landscape, as demonstrated by this thesis, has positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it increases the value of nostalgic texts, and demonstrates their intergenerational potential. On the other, it means that, as Linda Hutcheon predicted in the late 1990s, ‘nostalgia no longer has to rely on individual memory or desire: it can be fed forever by quick access

⁵ Lizardi, *Mediated Nostalgia*.

⁶ Wesseling, Elisabeth. ‘Introduction’. *Reinventing Childhood Nostalgia: Books, Toys, and Contemporary Media Culture*, edited by Elisabeth Wesseling, Routledge, 2018, p. 4.

to an infinitely recyclable past.’⁷ The impact of this ‘infinitely recyclable past’ is felt throughout this thesis and facilitates its existence, but it is important to acknowledge what ‘quick access’ ultimately means for our relationship to memory and technologies which facilitate our engagement with media from the past. In changing our sense of ‘now’ and ‘then’ our memories are never allowed to fade, and should they begin to do so, re-engagement with media sharpens them once more.

The connective thread between the past and present that defines the spectatorial experience of nostalgic re-encounters is affect. Like Dyer, this work acknowledges the affective power of song, both as a memory object and an access point for nostalgic engagement.⁸ The singing voice and the speaking voice have significant roles to play in the affectivity of music programming, with Meredith Monk describing them as ‘a direct line to the emotions.’⁹ However, as this thesis demonstrates, the screen (and thus screen presence) is equally significant to the affective potential of music programming. This is most evident when, as noted in Chapter Three, some texts form part of the cultural afterlife of an artist, contributing to their posthumous stardom. In combination, song, voice, and screen complicate the perceived directness of the relationships observed by Dyer and Monk, requiring further nuance. Instead, they can be placed within a larger Williamsian ‘structure of feeling’ that takes account of the ‘particular quality of social experience and relationship’ of affect as part of our daily lives.¹⁰ Through this, we can consider the kind of relationship *to* and *with* affect that

⁷ Hutcheon, Linda. ‘Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern’. 1998. *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*, edited by Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor, Rodopi, 2000, p. 196.

⁸ Dyer, *In the Space of a Song*.

⁹ Monk, Meredith. ‘Notes on the Voice’. *Painted Bride Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2, Spring 1976, p. 13.

¹⁰ Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 131.

Williams first used this phrase in ‘Film and the Dramatic Tradition’. See Williams, Raymond, and Michael Orrom. *Preface to Film*. Film Drama, 1954. These ideas are elaborated upon in Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell*. 1955. Random House, 2015; and Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*. 1961. Parthian Books, 2013.

Williams’ later observations are made in the context of Marxism, but the significance of his ideology to affect is clear, facilitated by the cultural, affective, and phenomenological turns. The applicability of the model is consolidated by Sharma, Devika, and Frederik Tygstrup, editors. *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture*. De Gruyter, 2015.

music programming articulates, and most significantly the role of the screen (or screens) in this process as a ‘transmitter of affect.’¹¹

This affective relationship can be expressed directly between artist and fan during live performance, or indirectly in the feelings the song produces when seen in recordings – either when encountered for the first time or re-encountered subsequently. Within this affective schema, music programming mediates between public and private forms of memory and nostalgia, often blurring the distinctions between them. This is primarily achieved through its haptic strategies and aesthetic affect. When adopted in music heritage texts like *The People’s History of Pop* or *Classic Albums*, they signify an alternative approach to the production of cultural history where closed, linear narratives are decentred, in favour of embracing alternate forms of knowledge that privilege the personal and the private, while attending to the emotional and creative labour of music and music culture.

The attention to materiality and tactility in contemporary music programming is defined by a specific affective relationship that mobilises what Laura Marks describes as a ‘haptic look.’ This reinforces their emotional and affective potential and intensifies their transmission of affect by engaging the senses as part of nostalgic engagement – seeing photographs, hearing songs, watching archive clips and performances. Originating in the philosophies of Deleuze and Riegler, Marks argues that both film and video can be ‘impressionable and conductive, like skin.’¹² Emphasizing the tactile qualities of the image, she describes cinema as being ‘something we viewers brush up against like another body.’¹³ Such sensory engagement is possible in any genre, but holds particular relevance to music programming and an understanding of its aesthetics. For Marks, ‘the screen invites a haptic look, or a look that uses the eye like an organ of touch.’¹⁴ This act of embodied, attentive looking is achieved through the

¹¹ Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*.

¹² Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Duke University Press, 2000, p. xi.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. 105.

extensive use of close-ups and long takes that encourage the audience to look and, in turn, to *feel*. Through its mobilisation of the haptic look, music programming not only maintains connections between the past and the present, but also bridges the distance between it. In doing so, it allows us to return to and engage with the musical past and brings it back to life.

Expanding the Cultural Discursive Contexts of Music and Memory

Detailing the lifespan of music programming and its circulations within visual culture is a central concern of this thesis, but defining where music *is* in the post-broadcast mediascape, the dedicated spaces it occupies (channels, platforms), and the forms it takes (genre, style), reveals an alternative cultural history: where music is not, or rather, is no longer. Consequently, I turn now toward possible avenues for further research by expanding the cultural discursive contexts of music to trace some of this cultural history, encompassing Highmore's evocative notion that television, and by extension media, has spread 'centrifugally' beyond the broadcast schedule and, as Matt Hills similarly argued, beyond 'the box' itself.¹⁵ For Highmore, this transforms our 'historical consciousness' so that we lose our sense of the now, and with it, the knowledge of all 'that is connected with and disconnected from what came before.'¹⁶ Thinking through the implications of this offers a way into considering our relationship to time and memory, and in so doing, how this intensifies the affectivity of nostalgic engagement.

The analysis focuses upon television with some reference to film, following the structure of this thesis and its structure, organised in light of Karen Lury's assertion that 'music, like the human voice, is everywhere on television. It is ubiquitous' – deftly illustrated by Neil Brand's recent series, *The Sound of TV* (BBC Four, 2020).¹⁷ And yet, as Faye Woods observes, music *in* television remains, until more recently, a 'neglected' area of television aesthetics, understudied and

¹⁵ Hills, 'Box in the Corner'.

¹⁶ Highmore, 'TV Times', p. 40.

¹⁷ Lury, Karen. *Interpreting Television*. Hodder Arnold, 2005, p. 71.

undervalued.¹⁸ This mirrors the treatment of music *on* television, to which this thesis attests.¹⁹ Outside the specialised themed programming blocks offered through the established scheduling practices of BBC Four discussed in Chapter One, subsequent provision offered by Sky Arts (and recently, BBC Two and Channel 5) and event-based cinema releases, the contemporary presence of music on television might best be described in terms of its use rather than performance.²⁰ While light entertainment and music-based reality formats endure, dedicated performance programming (chart-oriented or otherwise), has, with rare exceptions including *Later... with Jools Holland* (BBC Two, 1992–), and newer youth-oriented series such as *Sounds Like Friday Night*, all but disappeared. Instead, music as performance (whether live or pre-recorded) has diffused into other genres and contexts.

The most obvious of these is as a longstanding feature segment of chat and magazine shows including *The Graham Norton Show* (BBC Two/BBC One, 2007–) and *Sunday Brunch* (Channel 4, 2012–), where music functions as a commodified promotional tool, rather than a site of artistic or musical expression. This is by no means a new phenomenon, however, given the traditional use of such television as a promotional space, evident in earlier

¹⁸ Woods, Faye. 'Storytelling in Song: Television Music, Narrative and Allusion in *The O.C.*' *Television Aesthetics and Style*, edited by Jason Jacobs and Steven Peacock, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, p. 199. However, the increase in visibility and recognition of music supervisors and sync (the editing of songs to moving image) within the last decade must also be acknowledged, evident in the formation of The Guild of Music Supervisors in 2010, and the introduction of a dedicated Emmy category in 2017. Attention to music and music use maintains a longer history in popular discourse and film studies. Despite its growth in relation to television studies, Woods' work remains a notable exception.

¹⁹ The changed scholarly position of music supervision is reflected throughout Mera, Miguel, et al. *The Routledge Companion to Screen Music and Sound*. Routledge, 2017, which attends to both film and television.

²⁰ Since late 2020, both channels have begun to offer space for music programming in their Friday night schedules post-watershed, once more reiterating its subcultural and popular significance. For BBC Two, this includes repeat broadcasts of archival assets, such as the *Top of the Pops Story* of series dedicated to particular decades and television premieres, such as *Ella Fitzgerald: Just One of Those Things* (Leslie Woodhead, 2019), and *Dolly Parton: Here I Am* (Francis Whately, 2019). Meanwhile, Channel 5's provision has concentrated on heritage series, including *The Greatest Hits of the 70s* (Channel 5, 2021) and *Britain's Favourite 80s Songs* (Channel 5, 2021), alongside repeat broadcasts of related acquisitions and commissions, like *n*. These decisions may have been prompted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic upon new television production, and a desire to increase arts provision within the schedule in response to the closure of live concert, cinema, and theatre venues as part of lockdown measures.

examples such as *Wogan* (BBC One, 1982-1992), but this positioning becomes significant when it is the *only* context within which to hear and see music in primetime outside of reality and light entertainment formats (or indeed, the programming discussed throughout this thesis). I include them here as an acknowledgement of their function as an entry point to contemporary musical engagement, and as an exemplar of the numerous ways we can re-encounter music in everyday life (outside radio and streaming). My interest lies in drawing attention to genres and contexts which foreground the narrative and expressive use of music, and make explicit the connections between music, memory, and nostalgia, while also indicating a changed sense of time, which signifies a different relationship to the past.

Musical comedy drama *Glee* (Fox, USA, 2009-2015) is one such example, broadcast during the increased interest in music heritage and the historiographic turn that underpins this thesis but ending just before the majority of corpus texts were produced. It centres on the highs and lows of McKinley High's glee club, New Directions, bringing together students from different factions of the school social hierarchy through their love of music. Some express this with overt enthusiasm, such as aspiring Broadway ingénue Rachel Berry (Lea Michele), while others, like closeted bitchy cheerleader Santana Lopez (Naya Rivera), are more covert, expressing reluctance and even disdain regarding their involvement, only to come to enjoy the experience, revealing a secret love and talent for singing not otherwise obvious.

The success of the series stemmed from its use of music as a narrative lynchpin, functioning as a site of expression and catharsis that resulted in personal growth or change for the characters. The act of performing was consistently shown to help them to overcome personal issues, foregrounding the transformative power of song, and by extension, the value of extracurricular engagement with the arts. Recalling Dyer and Monk, the featured songs often 'speak for' the characters, expanding on their emotional state and articulating

emotions or ideas they are otherwise unable or unwilling to express.²¹ *Glee*'s pertinence to this thesis arises in its purposeful mix of chart pop, showtunes, and non-contemporary music – mostly 1970s and 1980s rock and pop – appearing as full covers or fragments as parts of medleys or mash-ups, bringing older musical forms back into the popular consciousness, allowing *Glee*'s fanbase to engage with them for the first time in new forms and contexts.²² Its success drove digital music sales at a time when downloads and streaming were increasing in popularity, overtaking that of CDs, creating both the supply and demand for non-contemporary songs.²³ Its cultural dominance contributed to the already saturated market of 'The Cover Age,' characterised by the consistent recycling and reprocessing of music.²⁴ Through *Glee*, the "old" became "new" once more, stimulating intergenerational nostalgic engagement with music, stimulating sales for both the covers and their original artists. This process of rediscovery and reappraisal occurred almost immediately for rock band Journey, following the use of 'Don't Stop Believin'' in the pilot episode.

During *Glee*'s lifetime, the calibre of featured music became its own source of interest, with inclusion becoming a signifier of its success and musical authenticity. This reached a peak in the second series with episodes 'Sexy' and 'Rumours' (Figure 4.1). The latter is based entirely on covers of the Fleetwood Mac album of the same name, approached from various perspectives. These include tensions arising from a love triangle between club members Rachel, Finn (Cory Monteith) and Quinn (Dianna Agron), explored through 'I Don't Wanna

²¹ Both Jeff Smith and Ian Garwood have discussed the function of music in these terms. See Smith, Jeff. 'The Sounds of Commerce: Sixties Pop Songs and the Compilation Score'. *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music*, Columbia University Press, 1998, pp. 154–85; and Garwood, Ian. 'Must You Remember This?: Orchestrating The "Standard" Pop Song in Sleepless in Seattle'. *Movie Music, the Film Reader*, edited by Kay Dickinson, Routledge, 2003, pp. 109–18.

²² For more on this see Hunting, Kyra, and Amanda McQueen. 'A Musical Marriage: The Mash-Up Aesthetic as Governing Logic in *Glee*'. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, vol. 31, no. 4, May 2014, pp. 289–308.

²³ The cast's record eclipsed that of the Beatles, but they are now tied with rap artist Drake for the most Billboard Hot 100 entries. For an indicator of the US sales see Unterberger, Andrew. 'How Glee Cast Became the Act With the Most Hot 100 Entries'. *Billboard*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/chart-beat/8511849/glee-cast-billboard-hot-100-history-most-entries/>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021. For a sense of sales in the UK context see Official Charts Company. 'Glee Cast - Full Official Chart History'. *Official Charts Company*, <https://www.officialcharts.com/artist/5980/glee-cast/>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

²⁴ Plasketes, George. 'Re-flections on the Cover Age'.

Know' and 'Go Your Own Way,' to Santana struggling with her burgeoning romantic feelings for best friend Brittany (Heather Morris), which culminates in her singing 'Songbird' to begin expressing her emotions more openly.



Figure 4.1: *Glee*'s Sam (Chord Overstreet) and Quinn (Dianna Agron) pay tribute to Fleetwood Mac in 'Rumours'

Promotional paratexts for earlier episode 'Sexy' focused on Stevie Nicks' set visit, with Nicks expressing her enjoyment of the series, while extolling the value of arts education.²⁵ During an interview that privileged both memory and creative labour, she detailed the process of writing 'Landslide,' which featured in the episode, legitimating its inclusion.²⁶ Representing another narrative and *emotional* peak for Santana's ongoing self-discovery and acceptance, the episode introduced the song to an entirely new yet naturally receptive audience.²⁷

Beyond fiction, music as a site of nostalgia and affective resonance plays a significant role in the context of television advertising, reiterating music's

²⁵ iamjuliesmith. "Stevie Nicks on Glee Set EXTENDED. 2011." *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a85aKPqFock>. Accessed 28 Feb 2021. This extended version is derived from B-roll uploaded by a fan. An edited version of Nicks' visit circulated online, as part of promotional coverage for the episode, appearing again as part of the season's DVD supplemental features.

²⁶ EntertainmentHotline. "Glee - Episode 2.15 - Sexy - Stevie Nicks Interview." 2011. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ugow1gBrFjA>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

²⁷ As a further indicator of the power of nostalgia and its cyclical nature, the series' recent re-appearance on Netflix has in turn generated nostalgia for the series from long-time fans, reclaiming their love and enjoyment of it. This reappreciation occurred alongside younger, newer audiences who did not see it when originally broadcast discovering it for the first time. The reappearance has led to fan and popular critical re-evaluation following a backlash and perceived decline in quality of later seasons.

function as a promotional tool. It is at once indicative of ‘the presumed power and significance of popular music’ and antithetical to music as art, consistently associated with ‘selling out.’²⁸ Though there are earlier precedents, including Nike’s use of the Beatles ‘Revolution’ (1988), and Levi’s 501 ‘Laundrette’ ad (1985) causing Marvin Gaye’s ‘I Heard It Through the Grapevine’ to re-enter the charts.²⁹ Coca Cola’s use of Etta James’ ‘I Just Wanna Make Love to You’ in their infamous ‘Diet Coke Break’ series (1994-2013) is largely considered to be the origin point of the reciprocity between music and advertising.³⁰ These examples make clear the connections between music and commerce, but in more recent years adverts have also begun to explicitly foreground music as an object of memory and a site of nostalgic engagement.

One such example is Bupa Healthcare’s ‘For Owning the Dancefloor’ ad.³¹ Created by Dan Gorlov and Richard Glendenning as part of the brand’s ‘for living’ repositioning to emphasize the enjoyment of everyday life, it features a recovered cancer patient (Suzann McClean) dancing to Helene Smith’s ‘Pain in My Heart’ to the exclusion of party guests around her (Figure 4.2).

²⁸ Klein, Bethany. *As Heard on TV: Popular Music in Advertising*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013, pp. 1-3. The increased interest in ad music in the Internet age is reflected in sites such as Sounds Familiar which details the songs featured in ads, similar to Tunefind for film and television.

²⁹ acmestreamingDOTcom. “Beatles ‘Revolution’ 1988 Nike Air Commercial.” 2016. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAl8eUtwJzo>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2021; oonai5000. “Levi’s 501 Commercial with Nick Kamen (Laundrette) (1985).” 2008. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q56M5OZS1A8>. Accessed 26 Mar.

³⁰ KookieLaLa. “Diet Coke Ad 1996 - Etta James ‘I Just Wanna Make Love to You.’” 2012. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1bsFn0F5vl>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2021.

³¹ Bupa UK. “For Owning the Dancefloor 60” | For Living | Bupa.” 2017. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcG0tyRetcc>. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

As indicated by the video title, the ad is available in 30 and 60 second versions. The longer version is referenced here for a broader understanding of the ad’s construction and context. However, it is notable that the affective resonance of the ad is retained in the shorter version, which aired later. See Bupa UK. “For Owning the Dancefloor 30” | For Living | Bupa.” 2017. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWAv8DsAFqc>. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

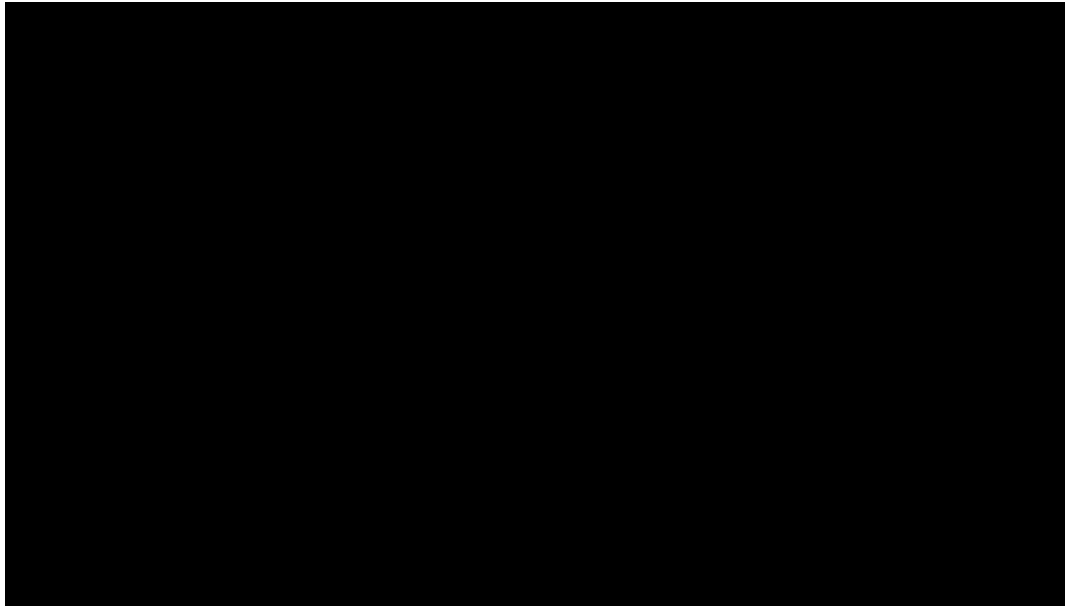


Figure 4.2: Bupa healthcare ad depicting a cancer survivor's dancefloor encounter with her musical past

The affective poignancy of her re-encounter with her musical past (and her past self) is intensified by isolating the song on the soundtrack and the use of close-ups that allow us to see the changing emotions on her face: at first overwhelmed and brought to tears by hearing the song again, and then demonstrating obvious joy as she becomes lost in dancing, retaking control of her life (and body) once more. The ad is exemplary of a broader tendency within visual culture to overtly centre music as an object of memory and site of nostalgia. The 'infinitely recyclable' past Hutcheon described is indeed everywhere.³²

No matter the context, music, nostalgia, and their affects dominate everyday life, and characterise our cultural encounters (and re-encounters), evident in the success of *Mamma Mia* (Phyllida Lloyd, 2008), its sequel, and similar jukebox musicals. These are complemented by a range of films which explore our engagement with music culture in various contexts, whether in fiction through *Good Vibrations* (Glenn Leyburn and Lisa Barros D'Sa, 2013), *Northern Soul* (Elaine Constantine, 2016), and *Blinded by the Light* (Gurinder Chadha, 2019); or in nonfiction, such as the exploration of vinyl culture in *Sound it Out* (Jeanie Findlay, 2011) or the transformative effects of music in 'Soul Boy,' an episode of long-running documentary strand *Our Lives* (BBC One, 2017–)

³² Hutcheon, 'Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern', p. 196.

following teenage care-leaver Anthony Flavin and his love of northern soul (Figure 4.3).

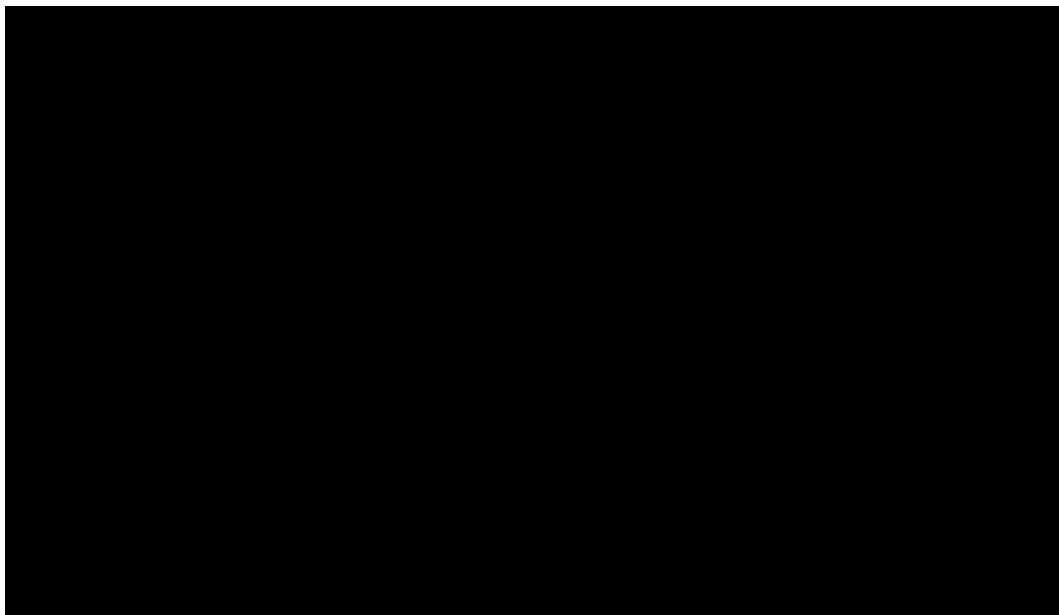


Figure 4.3: (L-R) Music culture in *Blinded by the Light* (2019), *Good Vibrations* (2013), 'Soul Boy' (2020), and *Sound it Out* (2011)

Throughout the writing of this thesis, music and music culture has continued to appear in evermore unlikely contexts, informed by our daily interactions and engagements with music and memory. In *Peter Kay's Car Share* (BBC One, 2015-2018), music forms the narrative framework of each episode, with John (Peter Kay) and Kayleigh's (Sian Gibson) daily commute soundtracked by fictitious classic hits radio station, Forever FM. Throughout their journey, the characters sing along to the radio, and swap memories linked to the songs (Figure 4.4).³³ The series is indicative of an increasingly metareflexive engagement with nostalgia, signifying that nostalgia no longer solely implies looking backwards, but also looking inwards, typified by numerous texts dedicated to the history of particular decades, programmes or films.

³³ The station is an homage to numerous digital radio stations dedicated to non-contemporary music, such as Greatest Hits Radio and Dead FM. As the name implies, Dead FM, created by DJ Steve Penk, only played music by deceased artists. It occupied the frequency held by Penk's short-lived version of Forever FM, created in response to the popularity of *Car Share*. Both stations are now defunct.

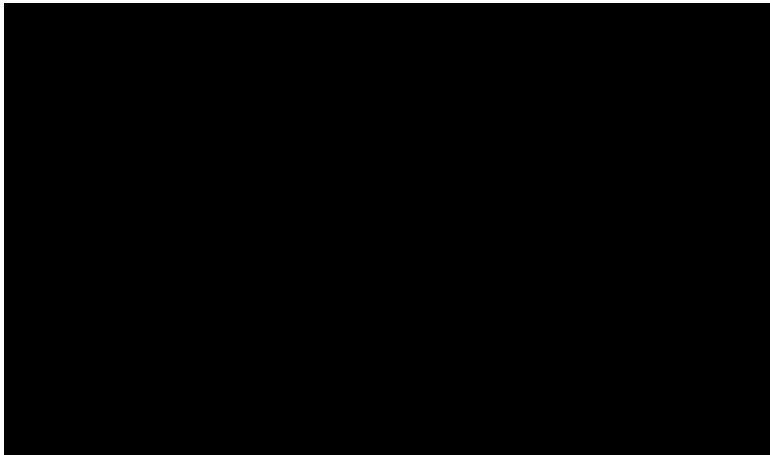


Figure 4.4: *Car Share*'s John (Peter Kay) and Kayleigh (Sian Gibson) commute with Forever FM

Thus far, I have outlined numerous potential sites for further research through various other cultural discursive contexts. In so doing, I have illustrated that my interdisciplinary approach to analysing and discussing music programming is equally applicable to other genres and formats of media. Moreover, the findings I have outlined are neither isolated nor anomalous, but instead reveal a defined set of cultural and aesthetic tendencies occurring in visual culture in the last decade.

Television Resurrections: *The Old Grey Whistle Test Live* and Returning to Live Performance

The culture of recycling and reflexivity generated by nostalgia and nostalgic media text can also relate to television's celebration of its own past. An example of this is the BBC Four special, *Old Grey Whistle Test Live: For One Night Only* (BBC Four, 2018). Exemplary of the increasingly meta-reflexive inward-looking nature of nostalgia and nostalgic media, the special is indicative of a desire to return to the very roots of music programming by recentring the genre in live performance.³⁴

³⁴ An early indicator of this tendency is evident in various iterations of *Later ... with Jools Holland*. From 2008-2018, a 30-minute live show, *Later Live... with Jools Holland*, was broadcast on Tuesdays. This was followed by the original *Later... with Jools Holland*, featuring pre-recorded live performances broadcast on Fridays.

Marking thirty years since the broadcast of *Whistle Test*'s final episode, the special was framed by the BBC as 'a celebration of the iconic music television show,' highlighting its 'special guests and rare archive.'³⁵ Presented in its entirety by Bob Harris between 9pm and 12am, it follows a number of texts which maintain the series' cultural afterlife, including *The Whistle Test Years* (BBC Two, 2003), *The Old Grey Whistle Test: 70s Gold* (BBC Two, 2011), and *The Old Grey Whistle Test Story* (BBC Two, 2007). These textual re-encounters are often framed in new ways, as with *70's Gold*, whereby "old" archive material is made "new" through the addition of onscreen captions, offering context in a similar manner to artefacts displayed in a museum, echoing the continued musealization of the past, and acting as a defence against 'obsolescence and disappearance.'³⁶

The desire to historicise and musealize *Whistle Test*'s history can be viewed in similar terms, preserving what remains and consolidating its position as a valuable cultural object, while negotiating for what has already been lost. These 'repeats and re-versions' contribute to the ongoing narrativization of the series' history and expand its own mythology.³⁷ Harris is frequently installed as a focal point, positioned variously as a curator-turned-custodian to share his favourite archive selections, or as a historical witness to events. The 2018 special reaffirmed Harris' function as custodian, while re-establishing *Whistle Test*'s position as a valuable space for live music performance on television. It also attempted to restore the experience of watching the series as broadcast. This is achieved by consciously mimicking its original magazine format: combining archive and live performances, interviews, and features on the series' history and legacy.

The brand identity of *Whistle Test* is consistently reinforced through the set design, with logos and imagery featuring heavily. The studio set echoes the

³⁵ BBC Press Office. BBC Four Presents *Old Grey Whistle Test Live: For One Night Only*, Explores the Music of Africa and Revisits 80s Pop - Media Centre. 11 Feb. 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2018/bbc-four-old-grey-whistle-test-africa>. Accessed 25 May 2018.

³⁶ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p. 23.

³⁷ Aust, Rowan, and Amy Holdsworth. 'The BBC Archive Post Jimmy Savile: Irreparable Damage or Recoverable Ground?' *The Past in Visual Culture: Essays on Memory, Nostalgia and the Media*, edited by Jilly Boyce Kay et al., McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2016, p. 175.

design of the original, albeit on a much larger scale (Figure 4.5). In the background, cameras, light rigging, stairs, and amps are clearly visible, and the space is broken up into smaller stages with instruments set up, ready to play. In the foreground, a chair and sofa are arranged around a coffee table and flatscreen television, making clear the connections between the *Whistle Test*, television culture, intimacy, and domesticity, transferred to a new context. The show is unmistakably and unapologetically televisual in its presentation, aware of its own status as a television text, which is reinforced throughout Harris' opening address.

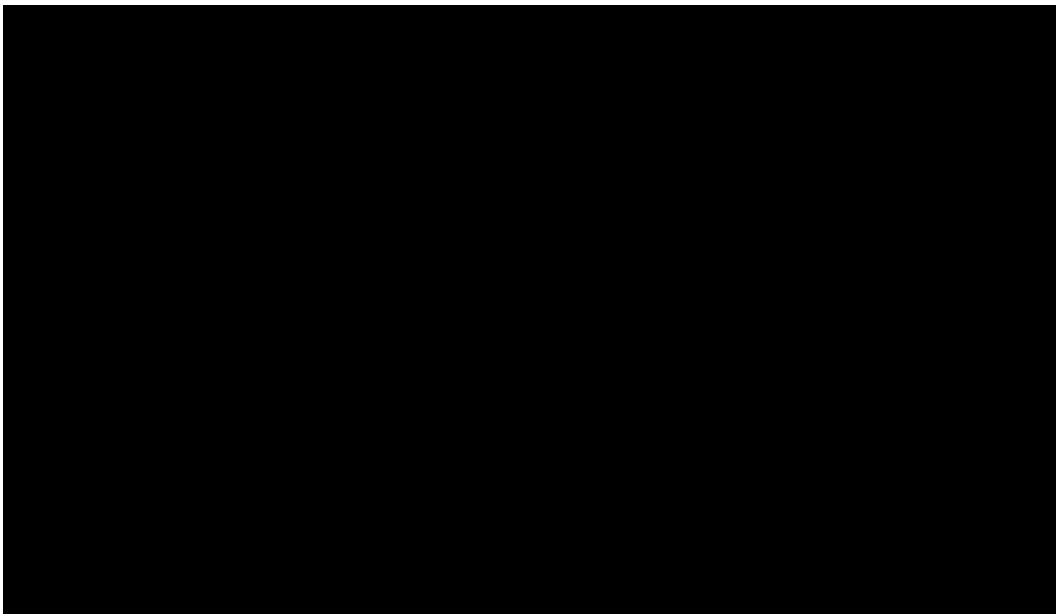


Figure 4.5: The set of *The Old Grey Whistle Test Live*

Striking a balance between intimacy and nostalgia. Harris framed the special as a long-overdue return, welcoming back the audience to the 'home' of BBC Television Centre. Part celebration, part commemoration, it conformed to the dominant narrative surrounding *Whistle Test* by emphasizing the importance of its archival legacy, while consolidating its position as a unique space for considered music appreciation. The cultural and memory work performed throughout positioned *Whistle Test* as a central text in music television

historiography and a continued site of nostalgic fascination for its audience.³⁸ The treatment of *Whistle Test* in popular and visual cultures raises important questions about the ways in which non-contemporary music television can survive, and what forms survival can take.

The Threat of Precarity, or Why Music Programming Matters

In this thesis, I have sought to explore and examine the fascinating rhythms of nostalgia, memory, and materiality in music culture and its programming, to consider their function, meaning, and affects. Structured around the close reading of featured texts (and surrounding paratexts), this thesis considered the content and form of music programming, attending to the intricacies of its visual style as opposed to descriptive analysis, which has typically characterised the treatment of such programming in scholarship. In doing so, I present a snapshot of a particular cultural moment that is also a narrative about survival and the impact of precarity upon a genre that remains largely undervalued within the academy.

Throughout, I have been attentive to the sociocultural and industrial changes that have occurred during the writing of this work, and as such, I cannot end this work without reference to the press coverage which detailed BBC Four's possible closure at the end of the year as a cost-cutting measure due to the increased financial pressures of Coronavirus, intending to reallocate budget to BBC Three.³⁹ Six days later on May 20th, the BBC released its Annual Plan document for 2020-2021, where BBC Four remained a feature in spite of earlier

³⁸ The live special model was also implemented for *Jazz 625: For One Night Only* (BBC, 2019). It formed part of Nicolas Pillai's 'Jazz on British TV 1960 to 1969' project, and he acted as a research consultant and interviewee. See Pillai, Nicolas. 'Researching *Jazz 625*'. *BBC*, 30 Apr. 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbchistoryresearch/entries/577fcd74-290b-48f8-abb3-2e52ee49de11>. Accessed 6 Jan. 2021. It was followed by second special unrelated to Pillai's work, *Jazz 625: The British Jazz Explosion* (BBC, 2020) showcasing new British jazz. Like the earlier live special, it consciously mimicked the original *Jazz 625* aesthetic.

³⁹ Singh, Anita, 'Save BBC Four: Presenters Say Channel Must Not Be Axed as Corporation Plans Cuts', *The Telegraph*, 13 May 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/13/save-bbc-four-presenters-say-channel-must-not-axed-corporation/>. Accessed 16 May 2020.

speculation.⁴⁰ Several possibilities for its future were outlined, including its role in arts education, use of archive material, potential commercial opportunities, and a programming showcase on BBC Two to increase viewership. At the time of writing, no final decision has been taken and the BBC continues to deny reports of the channel's closure.⁴¹

Over the course of writing this thesis, the channel's output has become a central source for my research by offering an access point to engage with music culture, which has been fundamental to restoring cultural value and raising the visibility of music programming on television. As Chapter One detailed, the channel's precarious state is woven into its history, remaining a constant source of debate, mirroring the ephemeral, precarious nature of the genre which has defined the structure and content of the thesis as a whole. Through BBC Four, music television has been reclaimed from the pre-YouTube dominance of MTV and the music video cycle, returning it to exploring music as art, built upon performance and musicianship. In so doing, it offered exactly the kind of television this thesis sought to highlight and wished to reinstate into television historiography, with the intention of building a more accurate picture of the musical past, and the ways in which we engage with media texts to return to that past.

No matter what the future holds for the channel, this thesis is, in part, a record of its valuable contribution to the arts and arts programming. The treatment of the channel, and other music programming referred to throughout this thesis, illustrates the damaging impact of hierarchies of value and judgement, and of mapping cultural value against economic gain. Such discourses also unconsciously reassert the dominance of drama and comedy as bankable and exportable products over that of music or arts, which in turn impacts upon what we see and hear on screen (or do not).

⁴⁰ BBC. *Bringing Us Closer: BBC Annual Plan 2020/21*. May 2020, <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualplan/annual-plan-2020-21.pdf>. Accessed 23 Mar. 2021. On 3rd March 2021 the BBC released plans for BBC Three to return as a linear channel, beginning in January 2022, as indicated in the Annual Plan. This is exemplary of the Corporation's continued commitment to appeal to the 16-34 demographic.

⁴¹ BBC News. 'BBC Three Could Return as an On-Air Channel'. *BBC News*, 19 May 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-52719883>. Accessed 23 Mar. 2021.

This thesis set out to break down these hierarchies, examining music programming on its own terms, and in doing so, to prove its value and reinscribe it with the cultural worth it has historically been denied. This work exists not as finite discussion, but as a starting point to open up debate concerning discourses of nostalgia and memory by highlighting the haptic and affective potential of music programming, enabling it to be considered as sociohistorical artefacts rather than just media commodities created to fuel consumption and nostalgic desire. It begins and ends with the desire to articulate what it means to engage with music programming and the culture it strives to represent, while also giving a sense of what that past looked and sounded like for future scholars.

It proves, in no uncertain terms, that there is much more to be seen and heard.

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Oasis: Definitely Maybe. Directed by Dick Carruthers, Epic Music Video, 2004.

Oasis: Familiar to Millions. Directed by Dick Carruthers, Big Brother Recordings/Telecine, 2000.

Oasis ... There and Then. Directed by Dick Carruthers and Mark Szaszy, 4D Films Ltd/Definitely Maybe Touring Ltd, 1996.

Parasite. Directed by Bong Joon-ho, Barunson E&A/CJ Entertainment, 2019.

Pont of Order!. Directed by Emile de Antonio, Point Films, 1964.

Privilege. Directed by Peter Watkins, John Heyman/Peter Watkins Production et al., 1967.

Quincy. Directed by Alan Hicks and Rashida Jones, Le Train Train/Tribeca Productions 2018.

Roll Red Roll. Directed by Nancy Schwartzman, Multitude Films/Sunset Park Pictures, 2018.

Romeo + Juliet. Directed by Baz Luhrmann, Bazmark Films et al., 1996.

Senna. Directed by Asif Kapdia, Universal Pictures et al., 2010.

She's All That. Directed by Robert Iscove, Miramax et al., 1999.

Sound it Out. Directed by Jeanie Findlay, Glimmer Films, 2011.

Spike Island. Directed by Mat Whitecross, Bankside Films, et al., 2014.

Strictly Ballroom. Directed by Baz Luhrmann, Beyond Films et. al, 1992.

The Story of Skinhead with Don Letts. Directed by Don Letts, 7Wonder et al., 2016.

Super Size Me. Directed by Morgan Spurlock, The Con et al., 2004.

Supersonic. Directed by Mat Whitecross, Lorton Entertainment et al., 2016.

This is Spinal Tap. Directed by Rob Reiner, Spinal Tap Prod, 1984.

Upside Down: The Creation Records Story. Directed by Danny O'Connor, 2010.

What Happened, Miss Simone? Directed by Liz Garbus, Moxie Firecracker Films et al., 2015.

Wild in the Streets. Directed by Barry Sheer, American International Pictures, 1968.

Woodstock. Directed by Michael Wadleigh, Wadleigh-Maurice Ltd., 1970.

Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars. Directed by D. A. Pennebaker, Mainman et al., 1973.

Teleography

"1955–1965: The Birth of the Fan." *The People's History of Pop*, directed by James Giles, episode 1, BBC Four, 15 Apr. 2016.

"1966–1976: The Love Affair." *The People's History of Pop*, directed by James Giles, episode 2, BBC Four, 22 Jul. 2016.

"1976–1985: Tribal Gatherings." *The People's History of Pop*, directed by James Giles, episode 3, BBC Four, 7 Oct. 2016.

"1986–1996: All Together Now." *The People's History of Pop*, directed by James Giles, episode 4, BBC Four, 25 Nov. 2016.

Abbey Road Studios: In Session. Created by Peter Van Hooke, Live From Abbey Road, Channel 4, 2012.

American Idol. Created by Simon Fuller, Fremantle et al., Fox/ABC, USA, 2002–.

"Amy Winehouse." *Autopsy: The Last Hours of*, directed by Adam Warner, series 5, episode 1, Channel Five, 28 Sept. 2015.

Amy Winehouse: In Her Own Words. BBC Music Television, BBC, 2015.

Arena. Created by Humphrey Burton. BBC, 1975–.

Autopsy: The Last Hours of. Directed by Ros Edwards et al., ITV Studios/Potato, Channel 5, 2014–.

"Bad Meaning Good." *Open Space*, directed by Tim Westwood, BBC Two, 5 Aug. 1987.

"The Beach Boys: Pet Sounds." *Classic Albums*, directed by Martin R. Smith, BBC Four, 24 Jul. 2016.

The Beat. Carlton TV/ITV, 1993–1995.

The Beatles Anthology. Directed by Geoff Wonfor and Bob Smeaton, Granada Television et al., ITV, 1995–1996.

Behind the Music. Created by Jeff Gaspin and Gay Rosenthal, VH1 Television et al., VH1, USA, 1997–2014.

Big Brother. Directed by Mark Butler et al., Bazal et al., Channel 4/Channel 5, 2000-2018.

Boulez at 80. Directed by David Stevens, BBC, 2005.

Britain's Favourite 80s Songs., Viacom International Studios, Channel 5, 2021.

Britannia. Directed by Mike Connolly, BBC, BBC Four, 2005-2012.

CD:UK (Countdown: United Kingdom). Blaze Television, ITV, 1998-2006.

The Chart Show. Video Visuals, Channel 4/ITV 1986-1996.

Cilla. Directed by Michael Hurll et al., BBC, BBC One, 1968-1976.

Colour Me Pop. Directed by Steve Turner, BBC, BBC Two, 1968-1969.

Classic Albums. Created by Nick de Grunwald, Isis Productions et al., BBC One/BBC Two/BBC Four, 1997–.

“Cream: Disraeli Gears.” *Classic Albums*, directed by Matthew Longfellow, BBC Two, 6 Nov. 2006.

The Crown. Created by Peter Morgan. Left Bank Pictures/Sony Pictures Television, Netflix, 2016 –.

Derry Girls. Created by Lisa McGee, Hat Trick Productions, Channel 4, 2018–.

Dawson's Creek. Directed by Gregory Prange et al., Outerbanks Entertainment et al., USA, The WB, 1998-2003.

The Devil's Music. BBC. BBC One, 1979.

Disco 2. Directed by Colin Strong et al., BBC, BBC Two, 1970-1971.

Doctor Who. Directed by Waris Hussein et al., BBC, 1963-1989; 2005–.

*The End of the F****ing World*. Directed by Jonathan Entwistle et al., Clerkenwell Films/Dominic Buchanan Productions, Channel 4, 2017-2019.

Fame Academy. Directed by Sebastian Kaddatz, BBC, BBC One/BBC Three, 2002-2003.

“Fleetwood Mac: Rumours.” *Classic Albums*, directed by David Heffernan, BBC One, 22 Jul. 1997.

The Frankenstein Chronicles. Created by Benjamin Ross and Barry Langford, ITV Encore, Rainmark Films, 2015-2017.

Friday Night Jukebox Live!: The BBC Four Request Show. BBC Studios, BBC Four, 2018.

Glee. Created by Ryan Murphy, Ian Brennan, and Brad Falchuk, Fox, USA, 2009-2015.

The Graham Norton Show. Directed by Steve Smith et al., So Television/BBC, BBC Two/BBC One, 2007-.

Harlots. Created by Alison Newman and Moira Buffini, Monumental Pictures/ITV, ITV Encore, 2017-2019.

Hit Parade. BBC, BBC One, 1952-1956.

Hits, Hype & Hustle: An Insider's Guide to the Music Business. Directed by James Hale, BBC Studios, Pacific Quay Productions, BBC Four, 2018.

Jazz 625. BBC, BBC Two, 1964-1966.

Jazz 625 Live: For One Night Only. Directed by Marcus Viner, BBC, BBC Four, 2019.

Jazz 625: The British Jazz Explosion. Directed by Marcus Viner, BBC, BBC Four, 2020.

Juke Box Jury. Created by Peter Potter, BBC, BBC One/BBC Two, 1959-1990.

"Jay-Z: Reasonable Doubt." *Classic Albums*, directed by Jeremy Marre, BBC Two, 3 Oct 2007.

Later Live ... with Jools Holland. Directed by Janet Fraser-Cook et al., BBC. BBC Two, 2008-2018.

Later ... with Jools Holland. Directed by Janet Fraser-Cook et al., BBC. BBC Two, 1992-.

Live Aid. Directed by Vincent Scarza and Kenneth Shapiro, BBC et al., BBC One, 1985.

Live & Kicking. Directed by Alison Cresswell et al., BBC, BBC One, 1993-2001.

Live from Abbey Road. Created by Peter Van Hooke, Live from Abbey Road. Channel 4, 2007-2012.

Live from Abbey Road: Classics. Live From Abbey Road, Channel Four, 2015–2018.

Live from the Artists' Den. Directed by Jojo Pennebaker et al., American Public Television/Ovation USA, 2008–.

Made in Chelsea. Directed by John Pereira et al., E4 Productions/Monkey Kingdom Productions, E4, 2011–.

"The Making of Sgt. Pepper." *The South Bank Show*, directed by Alan Benison, series 15, episode 25, Isis Productions, ITV, 4 Jun. 1992.

"Mick Fleetwood." *Brian Johnson's A Life on the Road*, directed by Christopher Walker, series 2, episode 4, Somethin' Else, Sky Arts, 29 Mar. 2019.

MTV Unplugged. Created by Jim Burns and Robert Small, Dakota North Entertainment/MTV Networks, MTV, USA, 1989–.

Music Masters. Directed by Suzy Klein, BBC, 2001.

My Mad Fat Diary. Directed by Tim Kirkby et al., Tiger Aspect Productions/Drama Republic, E4, 2013–2015.

Neil Brand's The Sound of TV. Directed by Ian Macmillan, Brook Lapping Productions/Zinc Media, BBC Four, 2020.

Oasis: In their Own Words. BBC Studios, BBC, 2016.

Oh Boy!. Directed by Rita Gillespie, ABC Weekend Television, ITV, 1958–1959.

"The Old Brass Plate Rattle Test: The Englishman and his Jukebox." *Arena*, series 14, episode 14, BBC Two, 17 Mar. 1989.

The Old Grey Whistle Test: 70s Gold. BBC, BBC Two, 2011.

The Old Grey Whistle Test. Directed by Tom Corcoran et al., BBC, BBC Two, 1971–1988.

The Old Grey Whistle Test Live: For One Night Only. Directed by Julia Knowles, BBC Studios, BBC Four, 2018.

The Old Grey Whistle Test Story. Directed by Dione Newton, BBC, BBC Two, 2007.

Omnibus. BBC, BBC One/BBC Two, 1967–2003.

The Only Way is Essex. Created by Ruth Wrigley and Tony Wood, Lime Pictures, ITV2/ITVBe, 2010–.

Open Door. Directed by Mary Routh et al., BBC Community Programme Unit, BBC Two, 1973-1983.

Open Space. Directed by Mary Routh et al., BBC Community Programme Unit, BBC Two, 1983-1995.

Orange is the New Black. Created by Jenji Kohan, Tilted Productions/Lionsgate Television, USA, Netflix, 2016-2019.

"Otis Redding." *Ready Steady Go!*, series 4, episode 3, ITV, 16 Sept. 1966.

Our Lives. Directed by Matthew Tune et al., BBC, 2017–.

"Peter Gabriel: So." *Classic Albums*, directed by George Scott, BBC Four, 23 Mar. 2012.

Peter Kay's Car Share. Directed by Peter Kay, BBC/Goodnight Vienna, BBC One, 2015-2018.

The People's History of Pop. Directed by James Giles, 7Wonder/BBC, BBC Four, 2016-2017.

Play it Loud: The Story of the Marshall Amp. Directed by Brian Marshall and David Rust, Play it Loud, BBC Four, 2018.

Pop Idol. Created by Simon Fuller, 19 Entertainment/Thames Television, ITV, UK, 2001-2003.

Pop! What is it Good For?. Directed by Mike Connolly, BBC Scotland, BBC Four, 2008.

Pride and Prejudice. Directed by Simon Langton, BBC/Chestermead, BBC, 1995.

"Queen: A Night at the Opera." *Classic Albums*, directed by Matthew Longfellow, BBC Four, 16 May 2006.

Ready Steady Go!. Directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg et al., Associated-Rediffusion Television, ITV, 1963-1966.

The Real World. Directed by Kasey Barrett et al., Bunim-Murray Productions/MTV Studios, MTV/Facebook Watch/Paramount+, USA, 1992–.

Re:covered. Blaze Productions, BBC Choice, 2002-2003.

Rock 'n' Roll America. Directed by Matt O'Casey and John Williams, BBC Music, BBC Four, 2015.

"Rumours." *Glee*, series 2, episode 15, directed by Ryan Murphy, Fox, USA, 8 Mar. 2011.

"Sexy." *Glee*, series 2, episode 19, directed by Tim Hunter, Fox, USA, 3 May 2011.

Shindig!. Directed by Dean Whitmore et al., Selmur Productions et al., ABC, USA, 1963-1964.

"Simply Red: Stars." *Classic Albums*, directed by Bob Smeaton, BBC Two, 7 January 2005.

The Six-Five Special. Directed by Alfred Shaughnessy, An Insignia Film Production, BBC, 1957-1958.

SMTV Live. Blaze Television/Gallowgate, ITV, 1998-2003.

Something Else. BBC, BBC Two, 1978-1982.

"Soul Boy." *Our Lives*, season 4, episode 3, episode 12, BBC One, directed by Luke Radford and Toby Curzon, 27 May 2020.

The Sound and the Fury in Concert. Directed by Ian Macmillan, BBC, 2013.

"The Sound of Motown." *Ready Steady Go!*, directed by Rollo Gamble, series 2, episode 35, ITV, 28 Apr. 1965.

Sounds Like Friday Night. Directed by Chris Howe and Benjamin Riad, Fulwell 73, BBC, BBC One, 2017-2018.

Sounds of the Sixties. BBC, 1991.

The South Bank Show. Created by Melvin Bragg, London Weekend Television/Sky Arts, ITV/Sky Arts, 1979–.

Storyville. Directed by Leslie Woodhead et al., BBC, BBC Two/BBC Four/BBC Three, 1997–.

Succession. Created by Jesse Armstrong, Gary Sanchez Productions et al., HBO, 2018–.

Sunday Brunch. Directed by Ashley S. Gorman et al., Princess Productions et al., Channel 4, 2012–.

Top of the Pops. Directed by Stanley Dorfman et al., BBC, BBC One, 1964–.

Top of the Pops 2. Directed by Chris Cowey, BBC, BBC Two, 1994–.

The Tube. Directed by Gavin Taylor et al., Tyne Tees Television, Channel 4 1982-1987.

"A Tribute to the Beatles." *Live from Abbey Road*, directed by John Mills et al., series 3, episode 12, Channel Four, 29 Dec. 2009.

Ultimate Albums. VH1 Television/Painless Productions, VH1, 2002-2003.

The Voice. Directed by Alan Carter, Mark Burnett Productions et al., NBC, USA, 2011–.

The Whistle Test Years. BBC, BBC Two, 2003.

Wogan. Directed by Dave Perrottet et al., BBC, BBC One, 1982-1992.

World War II in Colour. NMP Productions/IMG Entertainment, Channel 5, 2009.

The Word. Directed by Andrew Margetson et al., Planet 24 Productions/Rapido Television Limited, Channel Four, 1990-1995.

The X-Factor. Directed by Phil Heyes et al., Fremantle Media et al., ITV, UK, 2004–.

Your Hit Parade. Directed by Norman Jewison et al., NBC/CBS, USA, 1950–1959.

Discography

Alice Cooper, "Under My Wheels," *Killer*, Warner Bros., 1971.

Amy Winehouse, *Frank*, Island, 2003.

---, "Rehab." *Back to Black*, Island, 2006.

---, *Back to Black*, Island, 2006.

---, "Back to Black." *Back to Black*, Island, 2006.

---, "Love is a Losing Game." *Back to Black*, Island 2006.

The Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds*, Capitol, 1966.

---, "God Only Knows." *Pet Sounds*, Capitol, 1966.

---, "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times." *Pet Sounds*, Capitol, 1966.

The Beatles, "Paperback Writer." *Paperback Writer/Rain*, Parlophone, 1964.

---, "She Loves You." *She Loves You/I'll Get You*, Parlophone/Swan, 1966.

---, "Revolution." *Revolution/Hey Jude*, 1968.

---, *Abbey Road*. Apple, 1969.

---, "Come Together." *Come Together/Something* Apple, 1969.

---, *Anthology 1*, Apple/Capitol, 1995.

---, *Anthology 2*, Apple/Capitol, 1996.

---, *Anthology 3*, Apple/Capitol, 1996.

---, *Love*, Apple/Capitol/Parlophone, 2006.

Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit" *Strange Fruit*, Commodore, 1939.

Chicken Shack, "When the Train Comes Back." *40 Blue Fingers, Freshly Packed and Ready to Serve*, Blue Horizon, 1968.

The Contours. "Do You Love Me." *Do You Love Me (Now That I Can Dance)*, Motown, 1962.

Cream, *Disraeli Gears*, Reaction, 1967.

Etta James, "I Just Wanna Make Love to You." *At Last!*, Argo, 1960.

Fats Domino, "Blueberry Hill." *This Is Fats Domino!*, Imperial, 1956.

Fleetwood Mac, "Lay It All Down." *Future Games*, Reprise, 1971.

---, *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

---, "Gold Dust Woman." *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

---, "Landslide." *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

---, "Oh Daddy." *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

---, "Songbird." *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

---, "You Make Loving Fun." *Rumours*, Warner Bros., 1977.

Glee Cast, "Don't Stop Believin'". *Glee: The Music, Volume 1*,
Columbia/Twentieth Century Fox Television, 2009.

---, "Landslide." *Glee: The Music, The Complete Season Two*,
Columbia/Twentieth Century Fox Television, 2012.

---, "Songbird." *The Complete Season Two*, Columbia/Twentieth
Century Fox Television, 2012.

---, "I Don't Wanna Know" *The Complete Season Two*, Columbia/Twentieth
Century Fox Television, 2012.

---, "Go Your Own Way," *The Complete Season Two*, Columbia/Twentieth
Century Fox Television, 2012.

Helene Smith, "Pain in My Heart." *Pain in My Heart / You Got to be A Man*,
Deep City, 1966.

Jay-Z, *Reasonable Doubt*, Roc-A-Fella/Priority, 1996.

Kate Nash, *Made of Bricks*, Fiction/Cherrytree/Universal Music, 2007.

---, *Yesterday is Forever*, Girl Gang, 2018.

Marvin Gaye, "I Heard it Through the Grapevine." *I Heard it Through the
Grapevine* Tamla, 1968.

Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddam." *Nina Simone in Concert*, Philips, 1964.

---, "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood." *Broadway-Blues-Ballads*, Philips, 1964.

---, "Feelin' Good." *I Put a Spell on You*, Philips, 1965.

---, "Strange Fruit." *Pastel Blues*, Philips, 1965.

Nirvana, *Nevermind*, Geffen, 1991.

Peter Gabriel, *So*, Charisma Records, 1986.

Oasis, "Wonderwall," (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?*, Creation, 1995.

---, *Definitely Maybe*, Creation, 1996.

---, *Be Here Now*, Creation, 1997.

OK Go, "Here It Goes Again." *Oh No*, Capitol, 2005.

Queen. *A Night at the Opera*, EMI Records, 1976.

Seal, "Something." Performed on *Live from Abbey Road*, 2009.

Simply Red, *Stars*, EastWest Records, 1991.

Siouxsie and the Banshees, "Love in a Void." *Once Upon a Time: The Singles*, Polydor, 1981.

Sixpence None the Richer, "Kiss Me." *Sixpence None the Richer*, Squint/Elektra, 1997.

Sugarland, "Come Together." Performed on *Live from Abbey Road*, 2009.

Talking Heads, "Psycho Killer." *Talking Heads: 77*, Sire, 1977.

Various Artists, *If I Were A Carpenter*, A&M, 1994.