Guy Morrow

Designing the Music Business

Design Culture, Music Video and Virtual Reality

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Music Business Research

Music business research is a new multidisciplinary field that puts a number of different analytical approaches into mutual dialogue. It is located at the intersection of economic, artistic, musical, cultural, social, legal, and technological understandings of this cultural industry and it aims to generate a better understanding of the creation, distribution and consumption of music as a cultural good. As a field it is therefore characterised by methodological diversity and involves linking academic research with music business practices. The book series welcomes monographs and edited volumes that feature groundbreaking research into this dynamic and exciting field.

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This book is dedicated to my daughters Zara and Leila

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Melbourne, VIC, Australia   Guy Morrow
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Chapter 1
Designing the Music Business: Design Culture, Music Video and Virtual Reality

Abstract Design culture can be difficult to explain. My aim in this book is to answer three questions that will help to define it for anyone with a serious interest in the music business and its future. These questions are designed to outline why I use design culture theory rather than other options: Why design culture and not branding? How does design culture relate to organisational culture in the music business? How does design culture relate to deal making in the music business?

1.1 Introduction

I first met Jefferton James in 2007 when I was managing quirky Sydney band Cuthbert and the Night Walkers. He was hired by the band to produce the cover and packaging design for their album *Love needs us* (Cuthbert and the Night Walkers 2007). Working out of a share house in the inner-western Sydney suburb of Dulwich Hill on an old PC with cracked software on it, Jefferton was producing an entire children's book-style album cover and packaging design for the band and, to me, it was amazing. He was producing hand-drawn images at an astonishing pace and scanning them into the old computer. He was then using an ancient version of Photoshop to convert them into something remarkable. Years later, in 2010, I was in Toronto, Canada, meeting with the record label EMI on behalf of my then client, Australian band Boy & Bear. Jefferton had designed the single cover for the band's breakthrough triple j[1] hit song 'Mexican Mavis' and I was raving about Jefferton's talent (as well as the band's, obviously) and the A&R person said off the cuff, 'You should manage him'. It wasn't until 2012, when I was somewhat abruptly freed from band

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[1]Triple j is a tax-payer funded radio station in Australia that broadcasts nationally. It is a part of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and is a youth focused station that has a specific remit to facilitate innovation in contemporary music. It has a key taste making role in the development of new local talent through its 'unearthed' platform and international music through its sponsorship of festivals and other live music events in Australia. Its branding policy requires its name to be stylised in lowercase letters (Triple j. 2020).

management commitments, that I approached Jefferton about managing him. We have worked together ever since. It was through helping him to produce album cover designs, gig and tour posters, stage designs, music videos and merchandise designs that I became fascinated by design culture in popular music and the extent to which the production of fundamental, non-musical, visual and multisensory content is—somewhat ironically—invisible in music business research.

Design culture (Julier 2006) can be difficult to explain. My aim in this book is to answer three questions that will help to define it for anyone with a serious interest in the music business and its future. These questions are designed to outline why I use design culture theory rather than other options such as transvisuality (Kristensen et al. 2013; Michelsen and Wiegand 2019) or branding theory.

- **Why design culture and not branding?** Design culture is a process that is broader than a branding process. Just as popular music itself is not a brand, neither is the visual and other sensory art that surrounds it. While design culture within the context of this book does involve seeking coherence between the ethos of a popular musician or band's project and their interactions with their fans—and therefore branding is part of it—design culture is also more than this. Design culture offers a way to understand popular music product milieus and the visual and multisensory storytelling practices that stem from these. Design here does not simply involve creating a form for the purpose of achieving product differentiation and a competitive advantage (Porter 1985); it is a fundamental part of the artform. It is not just something that is tacked onto popular music to market it.
- **How does design culture relate to organisational culture in the music business?** Design culture is a form of organisational culture. Simply put, organisational culture can be defined as 'the way we do things around here' (Bower 1966, as cited in Saintilan and Schreiber 2018, p. 213). Rather than just concerning the outputs of a design culture, such as a piece of music or a visual artefact, the words 'design' and 'culture' are most often used in this book as verbs, rather than nouns. The term 'design culturing' potentially provides clarity here. In biology culturing means to grow, 'to breed and keep particular living things in order to get the substances they produce' (Cambridge 2020). Just as branding processes involve ensuring consistency with a company's ethos, mission and values, so too does the process of 'design culturing'—just in a broader way. It not only concerns commercial value generation but also intrinsic cultural value as well as 'encultured' practices.
- **How does design culture relate to deal making in the music business?** Design culture, as a form of organisational culture, involves a 'way of doing things' and is therefore broader than the form making within design. It extends to the totality of carrying out design; from negotiating with clients, to producing visual and multisensory artefacts and experiences, to the consumption of the outputs of design processes. Given that in this book I argue that the visual and multisensory artefacts featured are a part of popular music as an artform—they are not just tacked onto music to market it—I also argue that the designers and artists featured in this book deserve better and fairer deals; albeit whilst acknowledging that what is best/fairest for certain stakeholders is often at the expense of others (but

not zero-sum). Designers and artists arguably merit deals that enable them to generate capital income from the copyrights they generate as opposed to just labour income, or a combination of both—like the deals many record producers agree with clients.[2]

Multiple creativities drive growth in the music business and design culture theory provides a pathway for understanding how these different forms of creativity are coordinated by musicians' and bands' organisations. The sector is constituted by a cluster of interrelated industries that activate multiple senses; 'music' consumption is often a multisensory experience. This book will benefit practitioners, scholars and students within the music business because it addresses the omission of visual creativities and content, as well as creativities relating to touch (somatosensation) and our kinaesthetic sense (proprioception), and how these are commercialised, in this field.

1.1.1 Outline of the Book

In order to achieve the aims of this book, it is organised in the following way. Chapter 2 outlines the research methods used, including the method of participant observation. I used this method to immerse myself in the production of music videos, album art, gig posters and stage designs by Jefferton James. This chapter also outlines the selection of participants for the semi-structured interviews that were conducted and the rationale for the case studies, as well as the visual method and the digital ethnographic and sensory ethnographic methods that were used.

Chapter 3 concerns album cover design. After an initial discussion of the album covers produced for bands such as The Beatles, Cream, Led Zeppelin, The Cure, Sex Pistols, The Rolling Stones, Kanye West, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and others, I conduct case studies of contemporary British band Bear's Den's approach to album cover design and Australian singer–songwriter Dustin Tebbutt's work with Jefferton James. I argue that album covers are often the starting point for the development of a musician's design culture. While they are initially designed to represent an album of songs, through a process of design culturing, album cover designs also often subsequently operate in three-dimensional space as the key design concept(s) used

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[2]Design culture also includes deal making because it is a context-informed practice (Julier 2006). The collectively held norms of practice in a particular geographical place include deal making. For example, in Chapter 7, the case study of British band Bear's Den's live experience design practice shows that if such a band were to tour a country in Europe that tends to have higher production values in its live music venues than other countries on the tour, then the band has to spend more to produce their shows in order to fit into these contexts. Similarly, according to Deserti and Rizzo (2019) and Wilson (2015), the company Apple attributes a heroic role to design with its former Chief Design Officer, California-based Jony Ive, being considered a superstar, whereas Samsung's equivalent in Korea is comparatively unknown (Deserti and Rizzo 2019, p. 1099).

for gig and tour posters, as (part of) stage designs, merchandise designs, music videos and virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) experience designs (henceforth VR, AR and MR will be collectively referred to as 'extended reality' (XR)).

Chapter 4 addresses gig and tour poster design and identifies two main types of poster. First, stand-alone gig and tour posters are posters that are designed for a specific show or tour, with the design concept often being independent from the primary design culture surrounding the music. The second type involves gig and tour posters that form a part of the overall design aesthetic of a musical project, often because they are derivative of the album cover design. The work of Australian illustrator Ken Taylor is discussed as an example of the first type, a genre of gig poster that stems from the 1960s countercultural movement that started in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, while the work of Australian artist and designer Jonathan Zawada and his contributions to the design cultures of musicians Flume and The Presets provides an example of the second type of gig and tour poster discussed.

Chapter 5 concerns contemporary music video production and outlines how musicians over the last decade perceive changes in the ways in which they produce and use music videos. Through reflections on my involvement in the production of Australian musician Emma Louise's music video for her song 'Mirrors' (2013), as well as a digital ethnographic study of 60 music videos that Jefferton James directed between 2012 and 2018, this chapter builds on the work of Caston and Smith (2017, p. 2). These authors argued that music video production has a hybrid production culture that emerged from the coming together of graphic design, specifically album cover and gig poster design, portrait photography, televised live concert performance and fine art.

Chapter 6 examines music video dissemination. Through an initial discussion of Passenger's video for his song 'Let her go' (2012), a video that has a YouTube viewership in the billions and as such is an outlier in the field, this chapter examines YouTube's role in the music business ecology. Following this, through a case study of Sydney-based musician and videographer Sean Walker's project Breathe, this chapter examines the implications for the music business of capital owners such as musicians creating their own music videos. Musicians who are also visually creative in this way can potentially use their position as copyright/capital owners to shift the deal making pertaining to music video dissemination.

Chapter 7 concerns live music experience design and begins with a case study of British band Radiohead and their lead singer Thom Yorke's long-term collaboration with visual artist Stanley Donwood. This case study is useful for understanding how visual design symbolically ties together Radiohead's organisation, and the design objects and experiences this organisation creates, which showcases how design culture is a form of organisational culture. Their design culture/organisational culture has led millions of strangers to cooperate effectively to purchase concert tickets and various items of merchandise from the band's website. This chapter then examines the economics of contemporary live music experience design through case studies of the work of British stage designer Es Devlin and British folk-rock band Bear's Den. Through the Devlin case study, I argue that 2003 was the year that the

field of stage design fundamentally changed due to the widespread use of mobile phones that functioned as cameras. This enables audience members to record the musical and visual experience of a live music performance from many different angles without the consent of the creator(s). This often impacts musicians' moral rights. The chapter concludes with a discussion of merchandise in the live music business.

Chapter 8 concludes the book and addresses XR design. It features a case study of Icelandic musician and visual artist Björk's release of her full VR album *Vulnicura* (Björk 2019). A case study of Florida-based company Magic Leap's work with Icelandic band Sigur Rós is also provided. Sigur Rós (2020) and Magic Leap collaborated to develop an interactive music and mixed reality experience called *Tónandi*. This chapter then traces the declining cost of XR production and the role companies such as Facebook, and platform economics generally, have to play in this. In the conclusion to the book I critically consider blockchain technologies and discuss areas for further research such as whether the design culture process of producing music-related XR artefacts will change the 'way of doing things' in the music business. Design culture has agency here for changing practice norms for the visual creators/designers and artists interviewed for this book, particularly in relation to intellectual property policies, and therefore design culture has an instrumental role to play in changing the deal making around visual representative media in this business; the music business can be changed through a new kind of design culture.

1.2 Defining Design

In an attempt to explain what design is, Mathers (2015) asked the following question:

> How has design, which many still associate largely with style and consumerism, come to be something one might look to for solutions to the most complex and challenging problems facing humanity today; problems requiring not just local fixes using clever design objects, but solutions that reimagine systems themselves? (p. 24)

In order to understand how all of these different applications of 'design' form part of the same discipline, it is useful to link definitions of design to those of imagination, creativity and innovation. The word 'creative' is contested and so it is necessary to define it here within the context of this book and to link it to definitions of imagination and innovation. Robinson (2011) noted that 'imagination is the ability to bring to mind things that are not present to our senses … it is the primary gift of human consciousness' (p. 141). For Robinson, creativity is 'applied imagination' (p. 142). Unlike the process of imagining, creativity involves *doing* something and his definition of it, that it involves generating original ideas that have value, resonates with another commonly iterated definition: that creativity involves making useful, novel products (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, pp. 28, 113; Kilgour 2006, pp. 80–81; Mumford 2003; Weisberg 2006, 2010). Following this, for Robinson (2011), innovation is 'applied creativity' (p. 142); innovation involves putting creative ideas into practice.

So how does design relate to imagination, creativity and innovation? According to Cox (2005), '"Design" is what links creativity and innovation. It shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers. Design may be described as creativity deployed to a specific end' (p. 2).

The word design is useful in this context because it is both a verb and a noun. As a verb, it is useful for describing the process of creation, of *designing* something, while it is also used as a noun to describe the output of creative processes, as in *the design.* Design contrasts in some instances with notions of artistic creativity because it is defined as involving creativity that is deployed to a specific end, such as solving a problem or obtaining customer satisfaction. In contrast, artistic creativity is frequently defined as being more 'open-ended', with notions of the 'liberal artist' and their 'aesthetic autonomy' often lying at the core of definitions of the workings of an 'artist' (Morrow 2018, p. 86), as opposed to those of a 'designer'. Artistic creativities are 'symbolic' and therefore 'cannot be reduced to set rules or procedures' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 84) and are therefore not easily deployed to a specific end in the same way designs usually are. This complicates the argument I will put in this book that the visual and multisensory artefacts featured are a part of popular music as an artform and are not just artefacts that are used for marketing purposes.

The Design Council in the UK atomises design into the following roles: '"framing", "problem solving", "form and function" and "style"' (Mathers 2015, p. 24). Mathers noted that, while 'form and function' and 'problem solving' are arguably the core roles, the relevance of these varying roles changes depending upon their location within the design disciplines. For him therefore, it is problematic to buy into the stereotype that design is primarily concerned with style. Following on from Mathers' taxonomy, the Danish Design Centre's 'Design Ladder' is useful for understanding the different levels of design.

Step 1 of the design ladder is entitled 'Non-Design', whereby design is simply not applied systematically (Dansk Design Center 2015). Step 2 is entitled 'Design as Form-Giving'. This involves styling new products or services. Step 3 is entitled 'Design as Process', whereby design becomes an integrated element in processes. Finally Step 4 is entitled 'Design as Strategy' where design is understood to be a key strategic element in a business model (Dansk Design Center 2015).

Therefore, at the lower rungs of the ladder, design is either neglected or is only used for styling, while at the top rung, design is understood to be a key strategic means of facilitating innovation that affects the entire structure of an organisation and its culture, or even an entire industry and its culture or 'way of doing things'. This book will examine design within the music business on these multiple levels, from design as form giving, involving style and therefore the shaping of new products, through to design as strategy, whereby arguments for designing the music business for the benefit of all creatives who contribute to it will be made.

This latter use of the word design resonates with a body of literature that links management to design. Boland and Collopy (2004) argued that managers are designers as well as being decision makers, and in an earlier work (Morrow 2009) I argued that, with the release of their *In rainbows* album, Radiohead (2007) brought

their own artistic sensibility to the organisation of their commodification. Therefore, the notion of designing the music business does not solely concern the ways in which artists, their management and labels engage in 'interaction design'. It also prompts reflection on how systems of remuneration within this business need to be designed to reflect the growing importance of these changing modes of interaction.

1.3 Design Culture

In their attempt to define design culture, Julier and Munch (2019) noted that 'we have moved beyond solely regarding design as concerned with singularities, be these spatial, material or visual or the serial reproduction of objects. Design, these days, also includes the orchestration of networks of multiple things, people and actions' (p. 2).

In the context of music business, this network of 'things' includes recorded and live music, album cover designs, gig and tour posters, stage and lighting designs, music videos, online presences such as artist websites, merchandise and XR experiences. The 'people' whose 'actions' orchestrate the network of the music business are designers, video producers and directors, musicians, artist managers and other creative labourers who work together to make business decisions concerning the overall design of this network.

In an earlier work, Julier (2013) defined design culture as an attempt to trace the interactions and tensions between material culture studies, art history and design history. He asked the questions: 'How do design objects, their producers and designers, conspire to script experience? What tensions and discontinuities exist between this aspiration and how these "experiences" are actually encountered?' (p. xiii).

While visual culture studies challenged and widened the field of investigation which was previously the sole focus of art historians by including design alongside fine art, photography, film, television and advertising, the concept of design culture in turn broadens the focus of study from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional understanding of design. For Lash (2002), 'Culture is now three-dimensional, as much tactile as visual or textual, all around us and inhabited, lived in rather than encountered in a separate realm as a representation' (p. 149, as cited in Julier 2013, p. 11). Rather than interpreting visual content such as album covers and gig posters as merely forms of pure representation or as narratives that visually convey messages, this book uses the concept of design culture and the understanding that:

> Culture formulates, formats, channels, circulates, contains and retrieves information. Design, therefore, is more than just the creation of visual artefacts to be used or 'read'. It is also about the structuring of systems of encounter within the visual and material world. (Julier 2013, p. 11)

Design culture involves 'networks of interaction between design, production and consumption and beyond this, the relationships of value, circulation and creation and
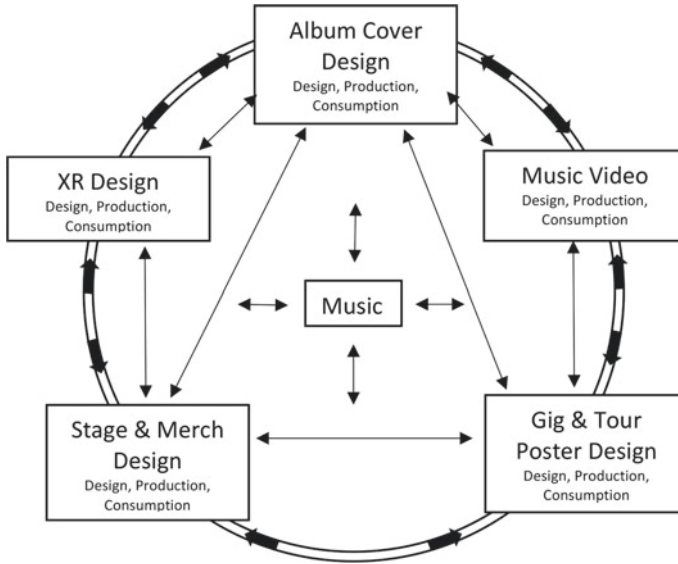
Fig. 1.1 Circuit of music business design culture

practice' (Julier 2013, p. 3). A musical artist is surrounded by a complex system of exchange, or in other words a 'culture of design', that is constituted by a dense coexistence of designers, producers and consumers who are responding to, and informing, the musician's work. This 'circuit of culture' is itself designed to generate economic, social and cultural value for a musical artist and the entities with which they are collaborating such as record labels. These design cultures stemming from music are therefore important for generating these forms of value, despite the fact that the designers who service this circuit of culture operate in a secondary business-to-business (B2B) market[3] within which many of them are often arguably exploited and/or they 'self-exploit'[4] (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 6) (Fig. 1.1).

The dearth of literature relating to design culture and the music business is significant given that the production of meaning and value within this sector occurs across a number of textual sites. Popular music is a multisensory, multimedia, discursive, fluid and expansive cultural form that, in addition to the music itself, includes album

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[3]In other words, visual creatives in the music business do not typically have a direct relationship with consumers/audiences (i.e. business to consumer, B2C). They instead provide their services to musicians, bands, record labels, etc. (other businesses) and therefore they most commonly operate in a business-to-business (B2B) secondary market.

[4]Designers who create album covers are engaged in what is known as 'creative labour'. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) argued that a key critique of creative labour is 'self-exploitation', whereby creative labourers 'become so enamoured with their jobs that they push themselves to the limits of their physical and emotional endurance' (p. 6). As is evidenced by the example in Chapter 3 of the work of British typographer John Pasche who originally designed The Rolling Stones' Tongue and Lip image for 50 British pounds (Walker 2008), they are often self-exploiting to produce work for which they are not paid very much.

covers, gig and tour posters, music videos, stage and lighting designs, live concert experiences, websites, XR experiences, merchandise and other forms of non-musical content. The implication of this for music business studies is that it is impossible to understand the meaning and value of popular music without considering its relation to these non-musical components, and to the interrelationships between these components. For Straw (2012), music's materiality is paradoxical, 'long considered one of the most ethereal and abstract of cultural forms, music is arguably the one most embedded in the material infrastructures of our daily lives' (p. 228).[5] This paradox is arguably the reason why there is a dearth of literature relating to design culture and the music business.

Design culture is a useful lens for examining this paradox and for understanding how music comes to be embedded within the material infrastructures of the music business, and through this, our daily lives. Design cultures 'come into being through the agency of their objects and people … this also takes us from linear flows of meaning to complex, multi-linear ecologies that involve ongoing interactions between design and its human and other participants' (Julier and Munch 2019, p. 3). This research-based book uses participant observation, interviews, case studies, textual analysis, visual methodology, and digital and sensory ethnography to examine these multilinear ecologies, because, as Julier and Munch (2019) noted:

> A design culture requires a more extended and, perhaps, embedded mode of investigation. It is something to be inhabited, to move within, following the connections and flows through it so that its existence isn't just understood as the sum of its individual nodes but, in addition, the movements and translations that take place between them. The researcher thus becomes the curious traveller, engaged in multi-linear micro-journeys, with or without maps. (p. 3)

We can be creative in, and can design for, all of the different ways in which we can sense the world. And, to understand the ecology of design cultures that stem from and interact with music, it is necessary to be embedded within them. To write this book I therefore inhabited design cultures in the music industries and followed the flows and connections and moved within these industries as a curious traveller. In doing so, I have attempted to provide a more extended and embedded understanding of the music business.

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[5] See also Bartmanski and Woodward (2014). Bartmanski and Woodward used insights from material culture studies to explore the question of why the seemingly obsolete medium of vinyl became one of the fastest-growing format in music sales.

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Chapter 2
Research Design

Abstract To write this book I inhabited design cultures in the music industries and followed the flows and connections and moved within these industries as a curious traveller. In doing so, I have attempted to provide a more extended and embedded understanding of the music industries. This chapter therefore outlines the research methods used, including the method of participant observation. I used this method to immerse myself in the production of music videos, album art, gig posters and stage designs by Jefferton James. This chapter also outlines the selection of participants for the semi-structured interviews that were conducted and the rationale for the case studies, as well as the visual method and the digital ethnographic and sensory ethnographic methods that were used.

Keywords Research design · Participant observation · Visual methods · Interviews

2.1   The Visual 'Turn'

In 2013, I flew from Sydney, Australia to the South by South West (SXSW) conference and festival in Austin, Texas, USA to represent Jefferton James Designs. I had attended SXSW twice before as a band manager, but this was the first time I was attending since crossing over from representing musicians to representing a designer and videographer within the music business. I was struck by the scale of the Flatstock gig poster exhibition that year. Taking up a massive section of the convention centre, this colourful event featured screen-printing workshops and individual designers' displays. One of the stars of this event was Australian illustrator Ken Taylor. There was a queue for Ken's booth and he was signing gig posters he had designed. When I approached the flannelette shirt-wearing Ken, he was busily sketching into his tablet device. He informed me—in his thick Australian accent—that he designs gig and tour posters for high-profile international artists such as Bob Dylan, Metallica and Pearl Jam, that are sold as 'high end' merchandise items. Ken also has a direct audience, selling his posters on sites such as GigPosters.com and PostersandToys.com.

The international status of top illustrators/designers such as Ken Taylor in the contemporary post-digital music business was put into context by one interviewee

for this book, Australian artist manager and record label owner John Watson (Eleven Music):

> I think that for most careers, not all, but for most careers visuals have been integral to the success of artists, and even just to individual songs, whether that was Elvis swivelling his hips or whether that was The Beatles in mop tops … I think that in the last 15 years that [the importance of visuals] has gone on steroids. So, it's now even more significant … you've got vastly more clutter out there. Now it's cheaper and easier than it's ever been to make a recording and to make visuals to go with it … And so, one of the ways that you cut through and get differentiation is through striking visuals. (Interview 6)

Musicians and their managers and other representatives do not, and cannot, think in terms of disciplinary boundaries between the visual (and related sensory) components that form their visual identity and their music. It was while attending SXSW that the need of a book that focuses on the businesses relating to non-musical components of the *music industries* became clear to me.

There has been a shift within music business research from referring to this sector or field as *the* music industry, to using the plural *music industries* (Hughes et al. 2016; Nordgård 2018; Williamson and Cloonan 2007; Wikström 2009). This is because the music industries are constituted by a collection of different industries that have some commonalities. Following Tschmuck (2017), there are three core sectors of the music industries: live music, recording and publishing and these sectors are linked by the musicians themselves and by collecting societies (pp. 2–4). These sectors are also closely related (as we saw through the COVID-19 crisis when a decrease in live revenue impacted other sectors) and a growing number of companies integrate all three functions by acting as record labels, publishers, as well as booking agents, promoters and even ticketing companies. Beyond this, the music industries (recording, publishing and live music) are embedded in secondary music markets, including merchandising, the synch rights business, branding, sponsorship, musical instruments, live music ancillary services and the media. These industries sometimes align and at other times conflict.[1] The concept of design culture is useful here for understanding how symbolic imagery and content is created and used to signify that these different industries are interrelated. Design culture is the glue that often ties these disparate industries together. Therefore, design culture production can be seen as being fundamental to the functioning of the music industries.

Later in 2013, Jefferton James and I were invited to partake in a panel presentation at BIGSOUND festival and conference in Brisbane, Australia as part of their (albeit short-lived) music and design programme. The programme featured headliners including London-based Australian musician Nick Cave; Los Angeles-based VJ, animator and producer Vello Virkhaus; and Melbourne-based co-founder and member of the multidisciplinary creative studio 'Tomato', John Warwicker. While sharing our panel with Aaron Hayward (designer at Debaser), Rob Jones (illustrator,

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[1]Nordgård (2018) noted that it is unusual to cite merchandise as a separate business as it is usually understood to be part of the recording industry and the live industry and he agrees that 'a more common suggestion would perhaps be to list publishing, recording and the live music industry (Towse 1997:147; Wikström 2009: 49–60)' (p. 6).

Animal Rummy), Sonny Day (illustrator, We Buy Your Kids), Ken Taylor (illustrator/designer), Celeste Potter (illustrator) and Kane Hibberd (photographer), Jefferton James and I learned that his particular business model is relatively unique. He produces almost everything visual relating to music: album art, gig and tour posters, stage designs, merchandise designs and music videos. In a research interview for this book, Jefferton James noted that his 'business model is essentially intended to be like a one-stop shop for a musician, so they can get everything done under the same umbrella and have a through line through all their work' (Interview 1).

Jefferton James's unique approach forms a case study in this book and, through the use of the research method of participant observation, insights will be gleaned into how it works in practice. My involvement in the aforementioned BIGSOUND panel event led to the development of the following research questions: If design culture is so important to popular music, how does the business of it function? How has the business of popular music-related design changed in the digital age? In terms of creative labour, how do the designers, videographers and other creatives who service this important function sustain themselves? Are musicians themselves increasingly responsible for creating their own design culture in the digital era? How does copyright function in this context?

In addition to the primary research questions outlined above, the following sub-research questions were identified and will be addressed in the various chapters: How does design culture help to sell music? Have methods for remunerating musicians for the visual content they create for themselves changed? Are designers who make music videos, album art, gig posters, screen prints, merchandise, live sets, brand images, websites, and so on 'artists' or not?

2.2   Selection of Cases and Participants

The research reported in this book was carried out between 2018 and 2020 in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, and with participants located in Los Angeles, New York, USA and London, UK.[2] I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with musicians, artist managers, graphic designers, video directors and stage designers who work within the music industries. This method was supplemented by the following digital ethnographic approaches. I reviewed online music video and gig poster-related sites, conducted content analysis of public discourse available on online sites, conducted interviews with professional artists/designers in digitally mediated ways, and I analysed the technical properties and policies of online platforms.

As mentioned above, in this project I also used participant observation. Given that this is a time-consuming method, and given the time limitations and budgetary limitations of this project, I only undertook one such observation of the work of Jefferton James over a period of six months. This project also involved textual analysis and sensory research through participation; the method of participant observation

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[2]Participants in the USA and UK were interviewed via Skype.

outlined in this section is related to this sensory ethnographic approach. Finally, the visual methodology I deployed involved gaining informed consent to reproduce visual material, and permission to display visual material among different audiences and in different contexts. By using multiple methods in this way, this book provides a fuller and richer understanding of the music business than currently exists and it contributes to knowledge by explaining how the design cultures that are produced by these industries function.

When selecting interviewees, I made an effort to achieve a balance between male and female participants. However, an even split between the two sexes was not achievable due to the fact that the music business is still male dominated (Cooper et al. 2017; Coles et al. 2018). For example, recent research has suggested that the algorithmic listening facilitated by music streaming services can serve to perpetuate gender imbalances within both the recorded music industry and the live music industry. Research by *The Baffler* contributing editor Liz Pelly (2018) suggests that the Spotify algorithm favours male artists, suggesting that use of streaming service data as a measure of who to include in this research project would replicate gender imbalances. Further, the fact that the music business is still male dominated is reflected by the broad push within the contemporary live music industry for greater representation of female artists at festivals and on touring circuits. As Newstead (2018) noted:

> A collection of 45 international music festivals [now 300 + music organisations][3] are addressing gender inequality by pledging towards a 50/50 gender split on their line-ups, conference panels, and more by 2022. The push comes from the UK's PRS Foundation and its International Keychange initiative, which was founded to help women transform the music industry.

Despite these efforts however, an even split between the two sexes in terms of research participants was not achievable due to the fact that the music business currently remains male dominated. Hopefully this will change by 2022. I also sought a balance in the following dimensions: those well established in their industries, newcomers and mid-career workers; older and younger participants; participants working for larger artist management or production companies and those working on a freelance basis; those working in major cities and those working outside of major cities. The recruitment of interviewees was guided by these efforts.[4]

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[3]As of 25 February 2020, more than 300 music organisations had signed on to Keychange (Keychange 2020). Keychange has a list of current signatories on their website: keychange.eu

[4]If the potential participants I approached decided to participate, I invited them to participate in an interview (either face-to-face, by telephone or by Skype). Each interview took approximately 45–60 min. I informed the participants that, in addition to being a researcher, I also work as an artist manager and producer, and as an artist management consultant, and therefore the subject matter of this research might be of benefit to my work as a manager and producer. Regarding the confidentially of the data collected, I asked the participants whether they wished to be attributed in the research results.

2.3 Participant Observation: Reciprocity as an Ethical Stance

As mentioned above, I made participant observations of the production of music videos, album art, gig posters and stage designs by Jefferton James, who is a designer and videographer with whom I had an existing relationship. I did not coerce Jefferton James into being involved in this project in any way and I sought his fully informed consent to use this research method. Furthermore, I made it clear to Jefferton that he was free to withdraw from this project at any time and that there would be no consequences for him in doing so.[5]

Involving Jefferton James in this project was the most ethical way to proceed with this research. This is because his involvement was the key to the reciprocity of this project. Trainor and Bouchard (2013) noted that 'reciprocity is an ethical stance rather than a simplistic exchange of goods or tolerance' (p. 987). Through completely immersed participant observation, this research project was more effectively able to give to, as well as take from, the community in which the research was conducted. This approach grounded the reciprocity in the context of economic transactions; the specific reciprocity here involved service provision in the form of artist management and an exchange of my own creative labour for access to knowledge in the form of participant observations. It was important here that I was remunerated for my services in the same way that comparable artist managers and producers in this community are; to provide a subsidised or free service in exchange for access to the research site would be unethical because it would undermine other artist managers' and producers' efforts to be remunerated for their labour.[6]

Trainor and Bouchard (2013) engaged with the work of Zigo (2001) to argue that by exchanging goods or labour for information through participant involvement, 'researchers potentially reduce power inequalities that may exist between themselves and participants' (2013, p. 989). Yet, interestingly, they also engaged with the works of Eder and Fingerson (2002), Gluck and Patai (1991) and Subedi (2006) to note that service and labour provision 'may also cause power dynamics to surface or become obvious' (Trainor and Bouchard 2013, p. 989). Either way, the reciprocity facilitated by this project was ethical because it reduced any power inequalities between the observer and the observed and, when it caused power dynamics to surface and become obvious, this openness and disclosure was in line with the guidelines for the ethical conduct of research (National Statement 2007).

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[5]I informed him that if he did decide to withdraw, he could choose whether all data pertaining to him was deleted or not.

[6]I obtained permission from the University of Melbourne to conduct outside work, which included disclosing any conflict of interest that may arise between the proposed work and my duties for the university, as well as arrangements to manage the conflict. This also involved noting that I have the necessary insurance to do this work. In addition, I also obtained approval to hold a directorship of a company, Guy Morrow Management Pty Ltd, as this is the entity through which I provided this service.

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Overall, this project used a qualitative approach. The aim of this project was to capture an aspect of the music industries—design culture—as it is experienced, and interpreted, by the participants in this project. To this end, I used an 'intensive' rather than an 'extensive' (Harré 1979) research design. I investigated how music and design practices work in a small number of cases in order to generate explanations of the relevance of design culture to the development of artists' careers and of the experiences involved in developing design cultures within the music business.

The qualitative method I used addressed the potential pitfalls of this approach through ensuring that the analysis of the data was systematic, disciplined, transparent and described (Punch 2014). Care was taken when analysing the interview transcripts so that the data could provide relevant knowledge concerning the topic of design culture within the music industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 16). I continuously evaluated the interviews while they were in process, and the interviewing processes were guided by the criteria provided by Merton and Kendall (1946, p. 545).

My qualitative method was recursive; it involved a fluid relationship between the various elements of the research (Veal and Burton 2014, p. 220). My hypothesis formation evolved as the research progressed and data analysis and collection often took place concurrently. The writing process was also evolutionary and ongoing, rather than being a separate process that took place once the data had been collected (Veal and Burton 2014). I coded the data using the Miles and Huberman (1994) approach throughout the writing process and this was done in a fluid way.

While the early labels I used were merely descriptive, the second round of coding involved using NVivo software and featured inferential (or pattern) codes. These latter codes were more interpretive and required some degree of inference beyond the data, and it was at this stage that confirmations and challenges of the understandings evident in previous studies were uncovered. An intracoder reliability test (Given 2008) was then conducted. This involved re-analysing unmarked copies of the transcripts to double check that the same codes were generated the second time in order to ensure consistency. These interviews were supplemented by analysis of the trade press associated with the music industries as well as attendance at peak Australian and international industry conferences, BIGSOUND (Brisbane, Australia), and the Kristiansand Roundtable Conference (Kristiansand, Norway), which served to add ethnographic context to this research.

2.4.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation took the form of myself as the researcher taking field notes immediately or within a few hours of key events such as the filming of a music video, or the generation of images for album cover designs, gig posters, stage designs and XR experiences. My participation in the project involved helping to produce music videos, and negotiating terms for the production of album art, gig posters and stage designs by Jefferton James, including issuing invoices and networking to generate leads for new clients. As a method, participant observation provided a number of advantages. It enabled this project to trace the experiences of a designer in this field over a sustained period of time, rather than only in a short interview. By incorporating participant observation into the research design for this project along with more structured interviewing and the other methods outlined in this section, the quality of the interpretation of the data collected through these other methods was enhanced. This is because participant observation was used as both a data collection and an analytic tool.

Moreover, participant observation allowed trust to be built between the observer and the observed. As Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) noted, participant observation enables the researcher 'to go beyond language and discourse—the primary product of interviews—to observe much more fully other aspects of creative workers' lives and subjectivities, such as their comportment, demeanour, behaviour and attitudes' (p. 17). Similarly, Musante (2014) noted, 'participant observation may be the only way to capture tacit aspects of culture as praxis … as well as explicit culture' (p. 252). In order to articulate how this project adhered to ethical principles relating to participant observation, the sections that follow provide a clear description of the methods that were used in this project, their risks and how these risks were managed.

Within the context of this project, I did not view participant observation as a superior method to the semi-structured intensive interviewing outlined above. The semi-structured interviews allowed for a much wider range of situations and contexts to be examined than the single case of my collaboration with Jefferton James. While the data from the interviews were not understood in this book as simply being transparent reflections of reality, neither were the interviews viewed as being 'performances' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 17). By immersing myself in the analysis of the production of music videos, album art, gig posters, stage designs, and extended reality experiences, the aim here was to provide a basis for judging when insight was being provided 'into real events and processes that might throw light on our understanding of creative labour' (p. 17) within the music business. In other words, my participant observations allowed me to 'reality check the interviews' (p. 17). This was particularly important given that, within the music industries, Williamson et al. (2011) argued that:

> A premium is put on what one might call experiential knowledge—on the unsystematized accumulation of anecdote and example, on instinct and gut feelings, on the value of 'good ears' and intuition, luck and personality. Historically, then, most music industries have been not much concerned to produce any sort of organized knowledge. (p. 460)

Because of this, it was envisaged that participants within the music industries subcultures of design, video and XR may have been wary of researchers who were outsiders and who were attempting to produce 'organized knowledge' (Williamson et al. 2011, p. 460). By using longer-term field research, and long-term personal relationships, I was able to gain insight into these distinct sub-cultures within the music industries.

Moreover, as Musante (2014) noted, such participation allows one to gain insight into the tacit. The aim here was to gain an understanding of various emotional responses to places, situations and individuals (Crapanzano 2010; Davies and Spencer 2010; Hage 2010) through the processes of data analysis that this method allowed. As Musante (2014) argued:

> Tacit aspects of culture may not be directly observable and often remain outside our awareness or consciousness. Tacit knowledge may become embodied in the way we learn to stand, sit, move, modulate our voices, and perform—the day-to-day practice of living in a culture. (p. 252)

By explicitly incorporating the collection and recording of information gained from participating in the production of music videos, album cover designs, gig poster designs and stage designs, participant observation allowed me to collect and analyse data in natural settings. It was necessary for me therefore to take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people and networks being studied.

Musante (2014) engaged with the work of Spradley (1980) to provide a 'Participant-Observer Continuum' (2014, p. 262) concerning the degree of participation, and this is useful here. This continuum, or 'spectrum of participation', starts with simply observing and not participating, next is moderate participation, then active participation, and finally it includes complete participation and native participation. Musante (2014) argued that, 'There is no absolute right way to balance participation and observation. The key is to make the form of the balance explicit in analysis' (p. 262). This project involved complete participation (Johnson et al. 2006; Riemer 1977) because as Jefferton's manager and producer I was a native ethnographer who was a member of the group being studied, turning an observer's eye to my own community to carry out analysis (see Appadurai 1981; Kraidy 1999).

2.4.3 Visual Methodology, Digital Ethnography and Sensory Ethnography

This project concerned the interrelationship between music and design culture in its various forms. The senses are interconnected and this project analysed the interconnections between the musical and non-musical content that is made and sold to trigger the senses, as well as XR design objects that are likewise created to trigger the senses. Therefore, the research interviews, digital ethnographic approaches, visual methods and participant observations were not structured through reference to different sensory modalities or categories, but rather through a theoretical commitment to

the understanding that the senses are interconnected and thus it is not always possible to use them separately to understand phenomena.

Therefore, the methods that I am outlining here are interrelated and the data generated by them was analysed in an interconnected way. Following Pink (2015), this approach demanded a certain reflexivity and 'an appreciation of the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the sensory ethnography process' (p. xiv). Those whose work contributes to the development of design cultures in the music business are trying to represent one sense—hearing music—with other senses—sight and 'seeing' design, as well as touching it and moving within it.

Therefore, the methods and approaches of conventional participant observation and semi-structured interviewing outlined here benefited from being combined with the reflexive and emplaced methodology detailed in this section. This methodological approach was informed by the notion that 'emplaced and active participation can accommodate some of the characteristics of the classic approach while acknowledging that through our own emplaced experiences we can gain insights into those of others' (Pink 2015, p. 116).

2.4.3.1 Visual Methodology

Visual methods were necessary for this project because I sought to further our understanding of visual creativities in the music industries and how the various artefacts produced by the various visual creatives who were observed and/or interviewed function. There is a debate concerning visual ethics in the contemporary research landscape (Allen 2009; Clark et al. 2010; Perry and Marion 2010; Prosser 2000; Wiles et al. 2011). The specific visual data I sought to collect for this project included album cover images, gig poster images, images of set designs, still images from music videos and still images of XR media designs, as well as images of the draft ideas that led to the development of these visual artefacts. With regard to the ethics of doing visual research, this project addressed concerns about how to gain informed consent, how to deal with issues of confidentially and anonymity, dissemination, secondary usage, copyright and legalities in ways that are in line with the codes of ethical conduct for visual methods that have been produced by the International Visual Sociology Association (Papademas and IVSA 2009).

2.4.3.2 Digital Ethnography

Most contemporary research is entangled with the digital world. The forms of ethnography that are outlined in this section are interrelated; I examined how selected visual content functions in a digital environment. Methodologically speaking, in this project I drew from a body of work that concerns digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2016) and virtual ethnography (Hine 2000, 2015). Pink et al. (2016) made the point that 'we are often in mediated contact with participants rather than in direct presence' (p. 3) and as researchers we need to 'consider what differences the digital actually makes

to our practices as ethnographers' (p. 3). I was particularly interested in the interrelationship between practices, digital platforms and social formations within the music industries.

I therefore attempted to capture data that would shed light on these interrelationships using digital ethnographic methods built around analyses of specific case studies. These case studies of music-related digital artefacts were useful for capturing detail, multiple actor perspectives and their interactions, change over time and contested meanings. These case studies were drawn from both Australia and abroad (due to the international nature of music-related digital media) and, in order to indicate national, cultural and demographic variance, they were comparative. This research project was therefore designed so as not to privilege particular senses. This is because the primary goal driving this project was to fill the gap in our knowledge that exists because design cultures within the music business are a neglected area of research within the field. It was therefore logical to use an approach that was multisensory.

In their attempts to define digital ethnography, Pink et al. (2016) engaged with the work of Murthy, who described digital ethnography as being centred on 'data-gathering methods [that] are mediated by computer-mediated communication … digitally-mediated fieldnotes, online participant observation, blogs/wikis with contributions by respondents, and online focus groups' (Murthy 2011, p. 159, as cited in Pink et al. 2016, p. 5). According to Pink et al. (2016), there are a number of digital ethnographic approaches, and these include:

> first, new forms of professional practice where sociologists use digital tools to network and build conversations; second, researching how people are using digital media, technologies and tools; third, using digital tools for analysis; and fourth, engaging in critical analysis of the use and consequences of digital media. (p. 5)

Algorithms that are used in the digital world are of particular relevance for this project. This is because algorithms are key to the function of design cultures within the music business in the digital age (recommendation engines on Spotify and YouTube somewhat dictate what is shareable for example).

2.4.3.3 Sensory Ethnography

This project involved sensory research through participation. Therefore, the method of participant observation outlined above is related to the sensory ethnographic approach used. Following Pink (2015), the approach taken here involved a 're-thinking of participant observation with particular attention to the multisensory and emplaced aspects of other people's (and the researcher's own) experience' (p. 95). This project therefore involved a reframing of ethnography as a 'participatory practice in which learning is embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic, rather than observational' (p. 95). By way of its design, in this project I attempted to create 'research encounters' that involved shared moments through which, as an ethnographer, I was able to 'learn and know about other people's experiences' (p. 95).

2.5 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Clark (2012) and Wiles et al. (2010), noted that anonymity and confidentiality present particular challenges for visual researchers, as opposed to those researchers who are able to achieve anonymity and confidentiality with regard to data that is only text-based. Specifically, Clark (2012) noted: 'To put it bluntly, it is often impossible, impractical, or even illogical to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of individuals in artwork, photographs and film' (p. 21). He noted that visual methods are able to provide information that text-based methods alone cannot and that they may have appeal as, and/or be, aesthetic cultural artefacts (see also Chaplin 2004; Harper 2005; Holliday 2007). This latter point therefore concerns the issue of artistic integrity and artistic intent; it would be problematic for the researcher to undermine the artist's intent by disguising participants for the purpose of preserving their anonymity and confidentiality. This would undermine the purpose of producing data visually and potentially the artistic intent behind the design of the images.

However, that being said, if any of the artists, designers or participants requested that their images and/or the people in them be made anonymous, computer software packages (specifically Adobe Creative Cloud's Photoshop and Premier) would have provided pixilation techniques that would have been used to blur faces. As it turned out, this was not necessary. Furthermore, many of the images collected by this project did not contain recognisable individuals in them (i.e. they were more abstract designs).

2.6 Ownership and the Display and Dissemination of Images

The question of the ownership of visual imagery in the music industries (both still and moving images) is complicated given that the visual designer/artist who creates the image or video may assign or licence the copyright to a musician or band or to the recording label or other business entity with which the musician or band is working. While usually the person/visual designer/artist who creates an image or video retains copyright, because this is a commercial form of art and the images may only be made if they have been commissioned, the visual creatives involved in this project have often sold and thereby assigned or licensed the copyright to another entity. In these cases, permission to use the image needed to be sought from the entity to which the copyright was assigned or exclusively licensed.

However, even though this was often the case, the person or artist who generated the image or video retains moral rights in the work and these involve them having a say in how the work is used (unless they have signed a contract that waives these). Furthermore, because visual content in these industries is created for musicians and bands, permission to use any of the musicians' or bands' trademarks needed to be obtained. In addition, as Clark (2012) noted, 'what may be considered legal in

copyright terms is not necessarily ethical in terms of ownership and usage' (p. 23). Therefore, the approach I took in order to obtain permission to use the images that I collected involved contacting for permission the visual designer/artist who created the work, the record label or other business entity that paid for the work to be created and/or may have an agreement with the visual designer/artist, and also the musician/band whose music is represented by the imagery.

The nature of the data I sought approval to collect enabled a particular focus on public engagement with the research through the presentation of the findings via not only published outputs, but also in the form of displays, exhibitions and online galleries. In order to address the issues stemming from such public displays of the research findings, such as the loss of control that the participants and/or the researcher has over how the images are read, and are potentially reused by others for different purposes (Clark 2012; Pauwels 2006; van Dijck 2008), full disclosure was made to participants, and specific permission was sought for the different types of public engagement events that will potentially follow the publication of this book. This is because, as Pink (2007) noted, ideally specific consent should be acquired for displaying the still and visual imagery collected for a research project in different formats and contexts (books, exhibitions, online galleries, etc.).

The particular combination of research methods that constitute the research design for this book was needed to mount this attempt to understand how symbolic imagery and content is created and used to signify that a number of different industries are interrelated under the term 'music industries'. As stated at the outset of this chapter, design culture is the glue that often ties these disparate industries together, and in order to understand design cultures in this context, it is necessary to be embedded within them.

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Chapter 3
Album Cover Design

Abstract This chapter concerns album cover design. After an initial discussion of the album covers produced for bands such as The Beatles, Cream, Led Zeppelin, The Cure, Sex Pistols, The Rolling Stones, Kanye West, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and others, I conduct case studies of contemporary British band Bear's Den's approach to album cover design and Australian singer–songwriter Dustin Tebbutt's work with Jefferton James. I argue that album covers are often the starting point for the development of a musician's design culture.

Keywords Album cover design · Design culture · Visual storytelling

3.1 Designer Unknown: A Canon of Album Covers

In 2018, I attended the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) exhibition MoMA at NGV: 130 Years of Modern and Contemporary Art, an exhibition that was presented in Melbourne, Australia in partnership with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA. Branded as the 2018 iteration of the annual Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition series, the artworks chosen for display constituted a survey of the MoMA's iconic collection. Amongst the over 200 key art and design works on display were album cover designs/artworks. These included German designer Klaus Voormann and British photographer Robert Whitaker's (1966) album cover design for The Beatles' album *Revolver*, Australian illustrator Martin Sharp and British photographer Robert Whitaker's (1967) album cover design for Cream's album *Disraeli gears*, London-based art design studio Hipgnosis and British designers Storm Thorgerson and Audrey Powells' (1973) album cover for Led Zeppelin's album *Houses of the holy*, and American artist Andy Warhol, American photographer Billy Name, American designer Craig Braun and British typographer John Pasche's (1971) album cover for The Rolling Stones' album *Sticky fingers.*[1] (Fig. 3.1).

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[1] The MoMA at NGV|NGV (2018) exhibition provides a useful entry point for a discussion of the canon of album cover designs. For a broader discussion of this canon of work, see Spampinato (2017). Spampinato examined the relationship between visual and music production since the rise of modernism and he included Luigi Russolo's 1913 Futurist manifesto L'Arte dei Rumori (The Art of Noise), Marcel Duchamp's 1925 double-sided discs Rotereliefs, Banksy's stencilled graffiti for the

Fig. 3.1 Jefferton James,
album cover design for
Australian Band Hey
Geronimo's album *Content.*
Copyright Hey Geronimo

Then, in a different section of the chronologically arranged exhibition, were tour,
single, album and film promotion posters. These included British designers Pearl
Thompson and Andy Vella's (1985) poster for The Cure's album *Head on the door*,
British designer Jamie Reid's (1979) poster for the Sex Pistols's soundtrack and
film *The great rock 'n' roll swindle*, British designers Peter Saville and Trevor Key's
(1989) poster for the New Order single 'Fine time' (after a painting by Richard Bern-
stein), and designer unknown and Spanish photographer Rocco Redondo's (1980)
poster for The Clash's album *Black market Clash.*

The fact that The Clash poster on display was attributed to 'designer unknown'
highlights the status of this particular music-related artwork. The poster can be
displayed in this type of exhibition alongside masterworks by Vincent van Gogh,
Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Duchamp and
Frida Kahlo, yet the status of the visual creative who designed The Clash's poster is
such that no one knows who did the work. This issue of a lack of attribution for visual
creatives who work in the music industries arose frequently throughout the research
that was conducted for this book. The status of visual creatives within the music busi-
ness arguably hinges on whether their work is considered to be advertising or art.
For example, in his editorial concerning 'artists' who designed album covers, Tillery
(2017) noted that 'At their best, record covers double as artworks'. For Tillery, these
include Andy Warhol's 'endlessly-reproduced' banana for The Velvet Underground

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band Blur, Damien Hirst's synecdoche skull for the band The Hours, and a skewered Salvador Dali
butterfly on Jackie Gleason's *Lonesome echo* album in his overview of 500 album cover designs.

and Nico album,[2] Takashi Murakami's (2007) design for Kanye West's album *Graduation*, Urs Fischer's (2009) 'cracking egg' photograph for the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' album *It's blitz!*, Keith Haring's (1983) artwork for David Bowie's single 'Without you'[3] and Raymond Pettibon's (1979) illustration for Black Flag's album *Nervous breakdown.* By positing this canon of work, Tillery (2017) implies that only some album covers can be considered 'art' that was created by 'artists'.

That the designer of The Clash's poster on display not credited because the poster was simply viewed as an advertisement for the band's album *Black market clash* and it has been only retrospectively reconceptualised as art? The title card for the poster display at the MoMA NGV exhibition read:

> These posters, all designed in a punk spirit, would have been sent out to record shops, inserted in albums or distributed at clubs and gigs. As a group, they exhibit the anarchic experimentation, crude collage aesthetic and abrasive imagery, often pornographic or macabre in nature, of a movement opposed to establishment values and the perceived blandness of commercial pop music. (MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018)

The British punk and post-punk movements that began in the late 1970s represent a useful starting point for this chapter. Through an engagement with Julier's (2017) aforementioned concept of design culture, I argue that in the contemporary music business, rather than simply *promoting* albums in record stores, album cover designs assume a more central and complex role due to the ubiquity of their presence in the online environment and, through a process of brand stewardship/design culturing, they often come to operate in three-dimensional space as, at least part of, stage designs, merchandise designs and music videos. This is arguably reminiscent of the way in which punk and post-punk artists 'asserted their creativity as musicians, performers and designers of fashion and graphics, at times combining several of these roles' (MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018). Contemporary album cover design is influenced by, and often actively shapes, the actual music itself, as well as the physical space in which the music is performed.

That the punk and post-punk posters originally designed to promote tours, singles, albums and films in record stores and live music venues were on display at the MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018 visual art exhibition is evidence that punk rock has travelled full circle: it began as an anti-music project that was inspired by anti-art movements such as Dadaism, and it is now being displayed alongside Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle wheel* (2013) at the NGV. Authors such as Wicke (1990) and Rogan (1988) have referred

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[2]According to Gardner (2013), The Velvet Underground and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts agreed to confidentially settle a dispute over the iconic cover art for the 1967 album *The Velvet Underground & Nico.* Gardner (2013) noted that the Andy Warhol-created artwork became the 'subject of legal controversy after reports circulated that the Foundation planned to license the design for iPod and iPad ancillary products. In January 2012, Velvet Underground … sued in New York federal court with the claim that the artwork had become 'a symbol, truly an icon, of the Velvet Underground' for decades. This case highlights the need to rethink and redesign how album art is managed within the music business.

[3]Bowie's single 'Without you' was also one of the songs on his 15th studio album *Let's dance*, which was also released in 1983.

to the work of the Sex Pistols manager, Malcolm McLaren, in order to discuss this connection. In the context of a discussion of the way in which the Sex Pistols fulfilled the attributes of 'anti-music', Wicke (1990) stated:

> It was the concept of the band's manager, Malcolm McLaren, for whom this represented the carefully prepared conversion of an avant-garde art project. McLaren professed the art philosophy of the 'International Situationists', an (anti-)art concept which grew up in France in the fifties in relation to Paris Dadaism and which experienced a renaissance in British art schools in the sixties, while McLaren himself was studying at St Martin's School of Art. (p. 135)

Wicke claimed that punk as a musical concept did not arise 'on the streets', but was instead the product of McLaren's artistic ambitions. He argued that although, for some, punk rock was the direct musical expression of unemployed teenagers' political protest against a society that had turned them into 'outsiders', these associations actually came later (see Osborne 2015). And while for others it was a particularly cunning capitalist subterfuge to overcome the decline in the record market caused by a recession in the UK (Harker 1980), this association was in fact a contextual one. In contrast, Wicke (1990) posited that ultimately punk was derivative of the art philosophy of the 'International Situationists' and was an anti-music movement that mirrored an anti-art concept used by Paris-based Dadaists in the 1950s. In this way, a movement in visual art actively shaped punk music itself.

The question of whether album cover designs are artworks or are simply advertisements becomes complicated when they are considered within the context of the pop art movement.[4] The curators of the MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018 exhibition certainly considered them to be part of this movement; the aforementioned Cream, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones album covers were displayed alongside Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe* series (1967), with Roy Lichtenstein's *Drowning girl* (1963) displayed on the opposite wall. In a research interview for this book, Los Angeles-based music executive Vince Bannon (Chief Executive Officer of music and social media start-up So.Co)[5] mused on the topic of whether album art should be seen as advertising or art:

> Well that's an interesting stand because you could sit there and you can say 'all great art is basically advertising' in the sense that all the renaissance painters … were doing it for a big corporation: the church … and Warhol really blended advertising and art … I would definitely say that a major piece of [popular music] was the album art. (Interview 10)

This discussion of the blending of advertising and art evokes the art versus commerce debate (see Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 81). As a form of graphic design,

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[4]See Spampinato (2017) for a broader discussion of how art movements such as pop art, modernism, conceptual art, post-modernism and various forms of contemporary art practice have informed the field of album cover design. With 500 covers and records that were produced to support the mass distribution of music, Spampinato's text provides a broad outline of the canon of album cover designs that is beyond the scope of this chapter to address.

[5]Canadian-born Vince Bannon founded Detroit, USA-based concert promotion company Ritual (which was subsequently sold to Clear Channel Entertainment) and has also worked as a senior executive at Sony Music, and as an executive at Getty Images.

album covers involve art that is *for* commerce, though such designs are arguably not as commercial as other forms of graphic design because they are *for* music. Therefore, within this chapter, concepts of aesthetic/creative autonomy, or a lack thereof, are relevant because the designer is designing *for* someone else. And yet despite this subservience to *someone else* when designers do their work well, their outputs can combine with the music to produce a third artefact that is greater than the sum of its parts.[6] Furthermore, album cover designs are often the first point of contact for music, even before consumers have listened to the music itself. Before purchasing or streaming music, people who are consuming music legally, for the most part, initially have to view album cover designs. The omnipresent graphic design environment of the music business shapes consumers' interpretations and expectations of the music itself in a way that is reminiscent of Dadaism's influence on punk and post-punk music.

The field of album cover design has also had an impact on the broader field of graphic design. As FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) noted:

> It's unavoidable to include music when considering many of the prominent figures and movements in graphic design. Design for music has set trends in the field for decades. Reid Miles's album covers for the famous Blue Note jazz label created a form language that suffuses all areas of design production. Many designers who employ Miles's stylistic features are unaware of their origin. (p. 13)

Therefore, album cover design has historically had a significant impact on design cultures other than those relating to music.

3.2   Album Covers: The Starting Point for a Musician's Design Culture

Album cover designs are often the starting point for the development of a musical artist's design culture and they are therefore the starting point for this book. While initially designed to represent an album of songs, through a process of brand stewardship/design culturing, album cover designs also often subsequently operate in three-dimensional space as the key design concept(s) used for gig and tour posters, and as (part of) stage designs, merchandise designs, music videos and XR design objects. Discussing album art as the starting point for his clients' brand stewardship and resultant design culture, London-based artist manager Rowan Brand[7] (Tribe

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[6]In a parallel with the world of opera, my colleague at the University of Melbourne, Dr. Brian Long pointed out that Richard Wagner had his idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: the idea that stage design and text were as important to opera as was the music. For Wagner, good design could combine with good music to produce a third artefact that is greater than the sum of its parts.

[7]Rowan Brand and I co-managed the Australian band Boy and Bear from 2008 through 2012.

Management) gave the example of his client Bear's Den's[8] work with London-based visual creative Ross Stirling (Studio Juice):

> Think of it like an hourglass: we take a lot of different ideas and we gradually narrow them down and centralise them into a very specific, narrow and often singular album cover design. Then out of that central funnel point we proliferate all the other visual things that we need. It involves trying to get down to a specific identity or series of identities that all relate to one another and then extrapolating that into different expressions. I would say that the pinch point in the hourglass is the album cover design, being a central and leading image in the visual campaign of an artist. (Interview 16)

The reason why album cover designs are so pivotal for the design culture surrounding a musical artist's work simply relates to the chronology of the musician or band's creative process. Brand continued:

> Music videos and set design are part of that funnelling out process and that's usually because of the chronology of how an artist's album cycle works. The album has to be recorded and then the vinyl has to be pressed and the album has to be designed, and you then announce the album, then you start to reveal the visual work and the tour comes later. Usually the stage design is not the first to begin; it usually comes out of that look. (Interview 16)

This design culture and its associated processes lead to Bear's Den's album cover designs functioning in interdisciplinary ways, becoming ubiquitous in and around their recorded music and live performances, in both digital and physical contexts. Album cover designs are therefore often the starting point for the process of visual storytelling that plays out across an artist's album cycle, or even their entire career (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3).

3.3 Visual Storytelling

On Saturday 16 September 2017, I attended The Rolling Stones' concert at the Red Bull Ring Motorsport racetrack in Spielberg, Austria, an event that was attended by approximately 95,003 other people (No Filter Boxscore 2018). The concert formed part of the band's #StonesNoFilter 2017/2018 tour of Europe and the UK. According to Rutherford (2018), the tour grossed US\$237,802,307, with 1,506,219 tickets sold and 28 sold-out shows. The concert I attended grossed US\$11,202,349 (Rutherford 2018).

After heavy rain on the morning of the event, the clouds cleared and the sun started to dry out what ended up being a very muddy arena. The Rolling Stones' 'Tongue and Lip' logo was everywhere, on the T-shirts of the mud-stained fans, on the plastic 'keep cups' used to serve beer, and later on, when the band performed, it formed a key element of the stage design. Originally designed by British typographer John Pasche, the design was later revised by American designer Craig Braun for the

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[8]Bear's Den is a British folk-rock band from London, formed in 2012. They have released three studio albums to date (Bear's Den 2019).

Bear's Den
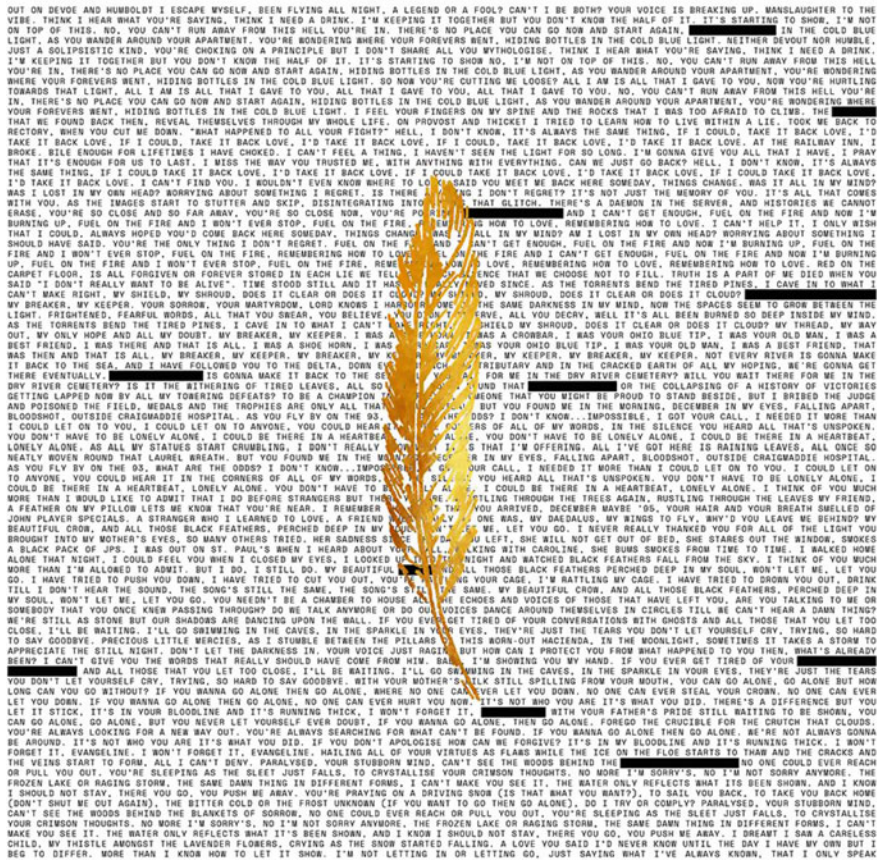
So that you might hear me

Fig. 3.2 Cover design for Bear's Den's third album *So that you may hear me.* Copyright Bear's Den

aforementioned *Sticky fingers* album package; it was reproduced on the inside sleeve of the album that was released in April 1971 (Coscarelli 2015). The logo has been used ever since and has become a visual shorthand for the band. Discussing the process for generating the idea for the logo, Pasche said:

> Mick had a picture of Kali, the Hindu goddess … but I thought something like that might go out of date. I wanted something anti-authority … the mouth idea came from when I met Jagger … the first thing you were aware of was the size of his lips and his mouth. (Pasche, as cited in Coscarelli 2015)

Fig. 3.3 Design culture production often starts with the album cover design
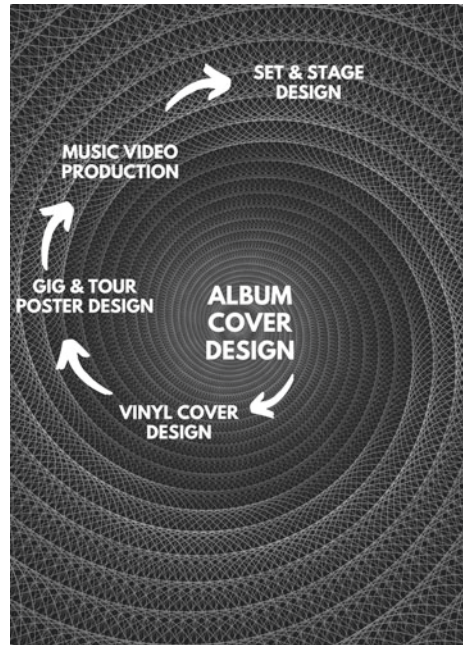
Pasche was a 24-year-old postgraduate design student at London's Royal College of Art at the time when, according to Coscarelli (2015), Mick Jagger was looking for new talent and approached him directly to design the logo. In terms of the business transactions surrounding this design, Walker (2008) noted:

> Initially paid just 50 lb ([US]$76 at current rates) for the design, Mr. Pasche sold his copyright to the band for £26,000 (about [US]$40,000 at the time) in 1984. In 2008, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London bought his original artwork for £50,000 ([US]$92,500).

In contrast to Pasche's eventual remuneration for the design, Walker continued by noting that, while Braun subsequently established a merchandising company called Licks which used an alternate version of the logo and paid The Rolling Stones a small royalty, the business was ahead of its time. Given that The Rolling Stones' merchandising interests now allegedly generate billions of dollars, Braun is quoted as having said, 'I should have stayed in the business' (as cited in Walker 2008).

The Tongue and Lip logo had a presence beyond the various merchandise items that were worn by the multigenerational audience that I observed in attendance at the concert in Spielberg. During the tour, the landing page for The Rolling Stones' website featured user-generated content (Rolling Stones 2017). Live footage filmed on smart phones and still photography generated by fans, often featuring the Tongue and Lip logo, dominated the website. The motorcar company Jeep, the major sponsor of the tour, also had their logo displayed. This logo sat unexpectedly comfortably alongside the Tongue and Lip, despite the Stones' logo originally being designed

to represent an anti-authoritarian stance. In fact, the two different iterations of the design being used on the website and on the beer, soft drink and spirits-filled keep cups at the event were yellow and red, and black and red: the same colour schemes used by McDonald's restaurants and by Coca Cola.

A key question here is: What exactly is the story that the (immensely profitable) design culture of The Rolling Stones' business telling? To answer this question, it is useful to go back to the early stages of the band's career and to consider the visual intelligence of the band's first manager and producer, Andrew Loog Oldham, who managed the band from 1963 to 1967 (Oldham 2000). Oldham's visual intelligence was pivotal in The Rolling Stones being positioned as the anti-thesis to The Beatles; he, along with photographer Gered Mankowitz, is arguably responsible for the band's early visual (photographic) representation as 'bad boys' (see Oldham 2000, 2003) and for the publicity campaign that enabled this image to be established, encapsulated in the headline: 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?' (Oldham 2000). In an interview for this book, Sydney and New York-based artist manager and record label executive John Watson (Eleven Music) noted: 'The Rolling Stones was a visual contrivance by Andrew Loog Oldham and Gered Mankowitz … He's a really famous photographer … that was a deliberate look that they created' (Interview 6).

The Rolling Stones' Tongue and Lip logo stems from the design culture originally contrived by Andrew Loog Oldham, Gered Mankowitz and The Rolling Stones members themselves and it visually tells an anti-establishment 'story' of rebellion and is symbolic of the 1960s countercultural movement. Watson continued:

> He [Andrew Loog Oldham] was the one that came up with the non-matching suits thing so they had a counterpoint to The Beatles. He was the one that came up with the out of focus photos things, the don't smile in your photos, you know, all of that. And really the whole thing is about storytelling. (Interview 6)

The networks of interaction between design, production and consumption that constitute a musician or band's design culture ideally tell a story in a multisensory way: through the music, the album art, the gig posters, the photos, the press articles, and, in a tactile way, through stage designs, merchandise items and the design of performance spaces. Further discussing the process of storytelling through a musician or band's design culture, Watson elaborated:

> The visuals are but one component of a story; people buy into the story of an artist. They buy into Bruce Springsteen, the working-class kid from New Jersey. They buy into 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?' They buy into Ozzie Osborne biting the head off a bat. So when you talk about branding it's then about alignment to that story. Do the visuals reinforce that story? Does it match the lyrics? Does it match who the artist seems to be when they talk? Does it match where they play and who they play with and the issues on which they take a stand and what their videos look like, and what their artwork looks like? (Interview 6)

One obvious, yet important, point to make here is that the networks of interaction between design, production and consumption in the contemporary digital environment function differently to the way they did during Oldham's tenure managing The

Rolling Stones (1963–67). Rather than an artist manager, or using Bourdieu's (1986) term 'intermediary', such as Andrew Loog Oldham controlling and helping to create the visual identity of a band through the traditional media, in the digital environment musicians often start to build their visual identity and associated design culture themselves. They do this by releasing their music and accompanying imagery directly to fans via digital means.

3.4   Digital Visual Creativities

Digital visual storytelling is more interactive and is more consistently, or frequently, fundamental to musical artists' creative processes. It is more agile, iterative, initially direct-to-fan, and it involves faster processes that require more content due to a broad paradigm shift from linear career development to circular career development (see Hughes et al. 2016).[9] Watson continued:

> One of the great things about the modern music business is that artists can do more for themselves than ever before. The flip side of that same coin is that artists have to do more for themselves than ever before, so more and more artists are creating their own visuals. Not just in the sense of their album artwork or their music videos, but in terms of the photos that become the iconic picture in people's minds. When you say 'Sia' you think of that photo of her in the wig … [The Beatles' album cover design] Sergeant Pepper's, that's Peter Blake [and Jann Haworth]. So now more and more is coming from the artist. (Interview 6)

While according to Coscarelli (2015), Mick Jagger was the one who sought out John Pasche directly to design the Tongue and Lip logo, in the post-digital environment, musical artists themselves are necessarily also required to be visually creative. Watson argued:

> With the younger artists, this is typically not seen as an imposition or a burden. It's seen as an opportunity. They see it as a fantastic additional channel of expression … The ability to pop photos on Instagram every day is not like eating your greens and doing your homework, it's fun in the same way as busting out a new tune is, or sharing a playlist of all the stuff you've listened to this month and any number of other forms of sharing yourself with the world, which is, at one level, what it means to be an artist. So they see the visuals now as an important extension of their creative self-expression. (Interview 6)

While earlier publications within the field of popular music studies tended to discuss the use of design within the music business in terms of the promotional efforts of major record companies (see Goodwin 1992; Middleton 1990; Negus 1992), the circuit of culture stemming from, and revolving around, album cover designs in the

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[9]In my earlier co-written work (Hughes, Evans, Morrow and Keith 2016), we argued that there has been a paradigm shift from linear to circular career development in what we refer to as the 'new music industries'. As I outlined in Morrow (2018b) until quite recently, musicians sought attention from industry gatekeepers first and this is what is meant by *linear* career development (artist–industry– industry–industry–fan). *Circular* career development is an inversion of this process. It features the artist sharing his/her music online with potential fans/consumers first to see if it resonates.

post-digital context is more likely, initially at least, to be generated and sustained by musical artists directly (Hughes et al. 2016). The networks of interaction that constitute a musician's design culture engage the audience for the music at an earlier stage of musical and visual development. Visual content is also then used to consistently keep the attention of the audience in an effort to extend the life cycle of the project for as long as possible. According to one interviewee, London-based entrepreneur Caroline Bottomley (founder of Radar Music Video and Shiny Awards), the design culture surrounding recorded music in the post-digital environment has become somewhat of a hungry beast:

> The marketing process demands a different kind of content strategy now, so there isn't that release, great big activity and then drop-off. It is a slower build-up to the release, keep that going, keep that going for as long as you possibly can. So dance labels in particular will look at a release strategy that just keeps on for a year, two years, and even longer if they can keep it going. To keep that marketing strategy up there, they need content to keep pumping out into the different platforms. (Interview 17)

An obvious challenge in the post-digital environment is that not all musicians also possess visual and design culture-related creative confidence. While some do have this type of creative confidence in abundance and can therefore service this increased demand themselves, thereby achieving consistency across the portfolio of work that forms their design culture, other musicians may not be blessed with the same level of visual intelligence or creative confidence. Some musicians simply do not have an interest in the visual side of the music business and its associated design culture. Discussing this issue, interviewee Rowan Brand commented:

> It actually depends on what types of creativity the artist is interested in and how the artist is wanting to express themselves. I think there are some artists who are very gifted and talented and interested in the visual as well as the sonic. So, those artists naturally are self-motivated to look at the world around them and express it visually or represent it. [They] might be a keen photographer and take pictures on the road. There are other artists who I think are not wired that way and are interested in other forms of creativity and struggle to express themselves visually. In which case, it's my job as a manager to connect those people with visual artists or people who are gifted in the visual world to help express those ideas and concepts and build the world around it. (Interview 16)

The collaboration between musicians and the visual creatives that they and/or their management engage to help create the design culture that stems from their music can be immensely challenging.

3.5   Clash of the 'Liberal Artists'

In my earlier work, Morrow (2018a), I discussed the fact that the artist manager is managing the 'concrete and named labour of the artist' (Ryan 1992, p. 41). This means there is a direct connection between the person/musician they are managing and the product of the musician's work. They are therefore managing someone who

may 'over-identify' with their work.[10] The work of the musician is therefore a type of creative labour that 'resists the abstractness and alienation that Marx attributes to pretty much all other work under capitalism' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 84). This 'causes a constant problem for capitalist businesses' (p. 84). The challenge for the visual creative who collaborates with a musician to design an album cover is that their labour is *not* 'concrete and named'; they are designing *for* the musician whose name will remain attached to the resulting design. Therefore, in this way, the designer's creative labour is subject to the aforementioned abstractness and alienation of work under capitalism. This dynamic is encapsulated in the following interview data. Rowan Brand discussed the challenge of

> Finding talent to connect an artist [musician] with and to help foster that connection so that the transfer of the artist's vision of their career and vision of their art is expressed in a form that they would find exciting, acceptable and supportive of their overall vision, even if they didn't come up with it themselves. (Interview 16)

The fact that the designer is often in a subservient position in the collaborative relationship with the musician can cause creative/productive conflict (see Morrow 2018a, pp. 58–61), which can quickly escalate from task-based conflict to relationship-based conflict and process-based conflict (see Kurtzberg and Amabile 2001, p. 290). While some task-based conflict can be beneficial to the output of the relationship between the musician/band and the designer, 'too much of it can become counterproductive (Jehn 1995), and relationship-based conflict and process-based conflict are both damaging to groups' (Morrow 2018a, p. 61). Discussing collaboration from the perspective of the designer within the general field of graphic design, FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) surmised:

> As no military plan survives contact with the enemy, no design concept survives contact with the client. Both situations feature laboriously (if not lovingly) crafted plans blown away by reality. The endgames differ in that designers define victory as gaining that initial approval … to change course because of someone's uninformed opinion can be galling … The favored client is one that gets out of the way. Otherwise, for designers (and generals), resistance is to be overcome. (p. 42)

Discussing the nature of his collaborations with musicians and bands when designing album covers, and the fact that musicians and bands themselves are increasingly responsible for creating, co-creating and/or funding the creation of their own visual identity and design culture, my client, Jefferton James, noted:

> It's a double-edged sword of there being more control with the musician because you can have a direct line of communication with the person you're working with and you can find an even ground. That way you're not pleasing half a dozen different people for the same result. You're only pleasing the one. But then the flip side of that is pleasing the one can sometimes be harder than pleasing the many. There's a tendency with some musicians and

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[10]Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011, p. 149) discussed the fact that it is a problem when creative labourers over-identify with their work because their career is fragile and uncertain. Being highly personally and emotionally invested in something so fragile and fleeting can lead to mental health issues, hence the term 'over'-identify.

people you collaborate with for overthinking because it's not the speediest process … the best result usually comes from being on the same page from the outset and just sticking to that through to the finish line. (Interview 1)

A key concept that informs the nature of the collaboration between a musician/band and a designer is the artistic/aesthetic autonomy of the artist. While the notion of the autonomous artist or 'liberal artist' (Wiseman-Trowse 2008) often informs the contributions of the musician or band to the collaborative process because it is *their* album, it can be difficult for the designer to let go of this concept themselves. This can cause tension in the relationship. This issue is encapsulated in the following quotation from FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010):

Though compromise is a fact of life, it's a troublesome topic in our individualistic culture. Graphic design's stature as art to its practitioners (however strident claims to the contrary may be), and the popular view of art as 'self-expression,' makes compromise akin to selling out … Too often, client input is regarded as a de facto detriment, irrespective of content. And freewheeling, personal aesthetic achievement is regarded as design's highest prize. (pp. 43–44)

In the case of Jefferton James's collaborations with his clients, the fact that Jefferton views himself as a liberal artist is evidenced by his claim that musicians are 'just using a different paintbrush than I am' (Interview 1). Discussing the tension that ensues as two supposedly 'liberal' artists attempt to collaborate, Jefferton continued:

If they're self-managed it's very much them putting up the money towards whatever the project is so they want a huge amount of input and they usually have a much clearer idea of what they want. So in that respect it's easier from the outset. At the finish line sometimes it's harder because they'll say, 'I want it to be like this.' And the creative side of me is going, 'No, I think that will diminish the end result if we do it like this.' But they've always got the trump card of, 'Yes, but I'm paying for this job so my opinion kind of outweighs yours.' And it's finding that middle ground, that safe spot where you can say, 'I think the project will benefit the most from both of us meeting at this point', not at being 100% your idea or 100% my idea but finding that sweet spot between the two. (Interview 1)

Conflict often arises between designers such as Jefferton and musicians/bands due to the fact that both parties view themselves as liberal artists. Designers often feel micromanaged by the bands who hire them to create, or help to create, their visual identity and the design culture stemming from it.

3.6 Participant Observations

As a participant observer in these processes, I observed that it is often one particular member of a band who takes the lead in the design process. The designer can then come to feel micromanaged by this member, to the extent that the relationship deteriorates and the designer does not finish the job. I observed one such collaborative process in May 2018 in Sydney, Australia.

On 29 May 2018, Jefferton James and I met with a Sydney-based band[11] to pitch for the opportunity to design their album cover. The band had already worked with another designer who had generated a complete album cover and packaging design but they had since decided not to proceed with those design ideas. Jefferton and I met with the band at 4 pm at a hotel in Sydney. In advance of the meeting, the band's manager called me to discuss pricing of music videos as well as the album cover design in case the conversation progressed in the meeting past album cover design and packaging to music video production. The manager of the band was comfortable with the price range offered. All quotations/pricing, logistics and options on produc-tion types or genres—performance video through to narrative/concept video—were discussed in advance of the face-to-face meeting. The face-to-face meeting itself ended up being solely focused on visual concepts.

Jefferton hastily pulled together a mood board of ideas in the hour before the meeting to pitch to the client/band. The mood board consisted of reference images for colour schemes and photos of particular compositions that were used as a spring-board to discuss the overall concepts the band had for their album cover. These were generated in response to a detailed brief that the band's management sent to me to send onto Jefferton in advance of the meeting. The meeting with the band began with light banter concerning where we had travelled from to get to the hotel. The band drank cocktails and offered us drinks. I accepted (a beer); Jefferton did not. We mentioned that Jefferton produces music videos and set designs, as well as album art, in an attempt to up-sell future services.

At one stage, Jefferton's reference for the concept being pitched was 'high-end Tool' (field notes, 29 May 2018). However, the body language of the band suggested that this reference to the California-based progressive rock band Tool did not work, and it may have instead just emphasised the age difference between Jefferton and myself and the band. Essentially, the meeting was organised to ensure that the band liked Jefferton and that they got along well before they committed to working with him. During the meeting, however, the band's manager noted that they were behind schedule and needed to organise the photoshoot that was required to realise the concept as soon as possible. This was because, as aforementioned, the band had come to Jefferton after working with another visual designer whose commissioned work they ended up not wanting to use.

The band stated that, following their experience with the previous designer, they wanted more input into the design process. Jefferton responded by saying, 'I am here to facilitate your vision', and that he views himself 'as a facilitator and will work collaboratively with you' (field notes, 29 May 2018). He noted that he is not a 'task master' (field notes, 29 May 2018). My understanding of this interaction was that Jefferton was not so much saying that he would be subservient to them, but that together they would operate with a 'flat' hierarchical structure.

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[11]For reasons of confidentiality, the band's name will not be used here. Suffice to say that at the time they were signed to a mid-sized record label and were an up-and-coming Sydney band with a growing international audience.

The ideas in the mood board that Jefferton pitched were discussed and then the band's manager got out his laptop in order to discuss the ideas that they themselves had drafted. The two laptops sat side by side on the table and the colour schemes and ideas were compared. We all concluded that the band and Jefferton were on the same page. The meeting ended with light banter concerning plans for that evening. The two parties said their goodbyes and we went our separate ways.

Unfortunately, however, although Jefferton did design the album cover that was used, as well as a separate single cover, during the process of designing the packaging for the album, the relationship broke down and the two parties agreed to go their separate ways. This was due to Jefferton feeling micromanaged by the band and feeling overworked due to the large number of iterations of the design(s) that were requested. Under the 'fee for service' deal agreed for designing the album cover, this meant that Jefferton kept the 50% deposit for the job, though we did not invoice for the balance of his fee. The layered Photoshop files were handed over to the band so that they could finish the job, or they could hire someone else to.

3.7 The Lifespan of Design Collaborations

Designers who create content for musicians are often prone to self-exploitation (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 221). One reason for this self-exploitation is their anxiety concerning future work. Designers such as Jefferton James often quote lower than they otherwise would because they want to build a long-term relationship with the client. This relates to relationship cycles within the music business. It often also stems from the fact that lower profile artists for the most part cannot afford to pay designers very much. Jefferton used the following wave pool analogy to explain this:

> One job for someone small could ripple through to someone slightly bigger in the industry and that ripples through to someone slightly bigger and slightly bigger. And then sometimes it ripples back to someone smaller and starting out who has liked your work for a couple of years, or heard your name and wants to see if they can get you on board. And then they evolve into something bigger. And then there's another kind of side ripple to that where you start opening up gates to different genres of music. (Interview 1)

Exploitation and self-exploitation can occur when a lower profile musician convinces the designer to work for a low (and sometimes non-existent) fee on the often-implicit promise of future work when they have more funding. Designers also often 'low ball' themselves during their own fee negotiations in an attempt to get a musician or band to remain loyal. However, this is often misguided, as Jefferton explained:

> It can hurt on a certain level if they go up the music industry rung a little bit and then they kind of leave you behind. But again it's a business and the higher up you go, the more opinions are being thrown in there and the money men [sic] or middle management will say, 'That's cool that you've worked with this person but we really want you to work with this person that we like.' So yeah, there is a certain amount of loyalty but the more voices that are heard, it's harder for that artist to remain loyal to you. (Interview 1)

While Jefferton posited here that this lack of loyalty is caused by the politics that arise if a musician or band of musicians becomes more commercially successful, there are also other reasons for disloyalty that can be identified here:

1. The social psychology of bands can make sustaining such collaborations difficult.
2. Musicians often choose to work with new visual design collaborators because they are trying to visually represent an innovative new direction in their music.

In terms of the first point, that the social psychology of bands can make sustaining such collaborations difficult, in my earlier work (Morrow 2018a), I engaged with Sawyer's (2012) notion of group flow, which refers to the highly enjoyable psychological state that members of a group are in together when they are creating at the top of their collective ability, to explain the lifespan of collaborative teams such as bands. Applying this concept here involves arguing that musicians may not want to continue a collaboration with a designer simply because it is no longer challenging or fun: 'When group flow fades away, the group usually breaks up because its members want to find new challenges elsewhere' (Sawyer 2007, p. 52). The poignancy of this element of social psychology is encapsulated in the following Instagram post the band The Lumineers made when cellist Neyla Pekarek left the band: 'Every band is like an organism—it continually grows, changes and evolves. These changes aren't always easy but are an unavoidable part of life' (Lumineers 2018).

Designers who collaborate with musicians and bands are also subject to the tendency for creativity to lead to disloyalty within groups because any collaboration has a lifespan (see Morrow 2018a, p. 4), and often even more so because they are not actually in the band.

In relation to the second point introduced above, that musicians often choose to work with new visual design collaborators because they are trying to visually represent an innovative new direction in their music, Sydney-based Australian musician Josh Pyke[12] noted:

> I don't want every record to be the same. So for instance, I did *Feeding the wolves* and *Memories and dust* with James [James Gulliver Hancock] and then I felt like I was going in a different direction musically and so I used different artists for *Chimneys a'fire* and that was a much more crafty kind of paper cut, that was Anna Van Least. And then after that I had another idea which I thought suited James's aesthetic again so I went back to James. And then *But for all these shrinking hearts* I had a different visual idea that I wanted to use. (Interview 4)

Artists such as Josh Pyke change their visual identity from album to album by collaborating with different designers. In contrast to this approach, the research conducted for this book uncovered numerous examples of bands that have maintained consistency in how they are visually represented by working with the same designer or visual artist throughout their career. One such example is the band Radiohead with their collaboration with visual artist Stanley Donwood. A case study of Radiohead's,

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[12]Josh Pyke is a multi-Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) award-winning Australian singer–songwriter. He has released five studio albums to date (Pyke 2019).

and specifically their lead singer Thome Yorke's, collaboration with Donwood is explored in a case study in Chap. 7 of this book.

Discussing these two different approaches, Sydney and New York-based Australian artist manager and record label executive, John Watson (Eleven Music), noted that the collaboration between Stanley Donwood and Radiohead dovetails into the prog (progressive) rock tradition:

> That's coming straight out of Hipgnosis who did all the [Pink] Floyd stuff, all the Genesis stuff. You know, Yes always had that other guy who did all of those illustrations which are very identifiable Yes artwork. Radiohead kind of fit more into that broad tradition. I always loved the way Oasis did that … very signature, very clean, very strong and I love that when you get a thread going through a career, I think it's great. But … artists that want more change they fit more into The Beatles part of the rock family tree where it's all about progress, change and reinvention. (Interview 6)

For Watson, The Beatles were 'sending a message of trailblazingness, of innovation … who's the leaders of the pack' (Interview 6) whereas:

> In the instance of a Radiohead you're wanting to say we exist over here on this island. We exist on Radiohead Island. No one else is on our island. We don't really care where everybody else is. If you'd like to come and spend some time with us come to our island … both of those are completely defined propositions for an audience. (Interview 6)

The following case study of Jefferton James's work with and for Australian musician Dustin Tebbutt provides an example of the consistency that can be achieved when a musician works with the one visual creative throughout multiple release cycles.

3.8 Case Study: Jefferton James and Dustin Tebbutt

Dustin Tebbutt is an Australian singer–songwriter in the neo-folk genre. The design culture surrounding his music was originally informed by the story of the recording of his debut EP. This story is encapsulated in the following quotation from his website: 'Dustin Tebbutt's acclaimed debut solo recording—"The Breach"—set blogs and triple j alight on release and his story of creating the bleak epic during the depths of a Scandinavian winter captured imaginations everywhere' (Tebbutt 2019). This case study concerns the way in which this story was used to create the design culture surrounding Dustin Tebbutt's music.

Since the release of his debut EP, Dustin Tebbutt has achieved success within the music streaming economy. According to his website, his album *First light* propelled his monthly Spotify listeners to 'over 1.5 million with his songs accumulating an astounding 200 + million streams to date' (Tebbutt 2019). Tracks such as 'Love is blind', 'Satellite' and 'All your love' from his 2018 *Chasing gold* EP 'have so far amassed over 4.6 million streams and counting' (Tebbutt 2019). However, Tebbutt is an example of a contemporary musician whose recorded music is highly streamed, but whose ticket sales for his live music events are relatively low. His manager, John

Watson, discussing Tebbutt's profile in relation to the Australian heritage artists he also manages, Cold Chisel and Midnight Oil, noted:

> Within our own roster, Dustin Tebbutt is easily our best streaming artist, but he can barely sell out the Oxford Art Factory [capacity 500] whereas Midnight Oil and Cold Chisel because they skew older and for lots of other reasons relating to new music and the way your own playlist behaviour grows over time and a lot of other variables—they will vastly out sell Dustin, ticket wise. (Watson, as cited in Morrow and Beckett 2019, pp. 65–66)

Tebbutt's success on services such as Spotify, and his relatively low ticket sales, means that the majority of consumers engage with his music online. In this digital context, Dustin Tebbutt is an example of an artist who has achieved design culture consistency. Similar to Radiohead and the other artists who fit within the prog rock tradition discussed above, Dustin has achieved consistency across his first three EPs and his debut album partly by working with the same designer, Jefferton James, and partly because as a musician he has a very clear concept of how he wants his design culture to look and feel.

The following section uses the visual research method of displaying Tebbutt's first three EP cover designs along with his debut album cover design and other components of his design culture. These images are accompanied by interview data featuring Jefferton James's explanation of his creative processes and an outline of the labour that was involved in producing the various artefacts displayed. This section is therefore designed to function as a 'research encounter' (Pink 2015, p. 95) that sheds light on Jefferton James's experiences. As such, the approach taken here is in line with the aforementioned rethinking of participant observation as it pays 'particular attention to the multisensory and emplaced aspects of other people's (and the researcher's own) experience' (p. 95). This section therefore reframes ethnography as a 'participatory practice in which learning is embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic, rather than observational' (p. 95).

In response to a question concerning Tebbutt's story of creating his debut EP *The breach* during the depths of a Scandinavian winter and the extent to which this concept informed the creation of his overall design culture, Jefferton James noted:

> Very much so, it's been a through line up until recently … if you look at all the album art it's all related to a very removed mountain scape; sprawling mountains imagery. Everything ties into essentially mountains … There's abstract mountains, there's torn bits of paper mountains, but everything comes back to that original concept. He wanted it to feel very mountainesque because obviously when he was writing it in that Scandinavian environment he wanted to continue that throughout. (Interview 20)

Discussing the first design Dustin Tebbutt commissioned him to create, a gig poster (see Fig. 3.4), Jefferton posited:

> I had originally done work for Dustin for a gig poster and I guess that was my 'audition' piece for him and that was very much a collage art piece. It was mainly the Mountain Head (surprise, surprise, mountain). But from there when he was talking about the EP he wanted to keep the mountain thing going but have it very abstract. And at the time I was doing very

Fig. 3.4 Gig poster concept for Dustin Tebbutt. Copyright Jefferton James

wink, wink, nudge, nudge, jokey imagery … very kind of Monty Python, Terry Gilliam-esque sense of humour through my imagery and he wanted to steer away from that, have it more abstract. (Interview 20)

In an interview, Jefferton discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's debut EP *The breach* (Fig. 3.5):

So the process with Dustin Tebbutt was completely different to how I work with most people where it was me being almost like an actor doing multiple takes of the same thing.

So I'd start off with this mountain concept and I'd say, 'What about this?' He'd be like, 'No, no, it's too …' it's either too literal or it's too far away. And it involved this constant rebounding, spitballing of ideas, and I think it ended up being 30 or 40 concepts that I sent through for Dustin. Like with most things with Dustin it was on my 'off time' that I came up with the concept for *The breach*. I was watching a documentary about a chalk artist, as you do.

And she was doing these amazing pictures but just with chalk on a chalkboard. I thought, 'That's really interesting.' And so I was doodling some mountain images and I put them into scan and I was putting them through Photoshop and I'd accidentally hit invert and by inverting the image and making a black and white image it made it look very much like a chalk drawing and I was like, 'That's kind of really interesting.' So I played with that a little bit.

And so I looked at it and from a graphic point of view it was quite interesting but it was still too literal. So what I did was I started playing with the kind of recurring patterns that you see in nature. I started giving it this kaleidoscopic effect and I thought in nature you can get a natural kaleidoscopic effect. When you see an image reflected in a lake it gives you that kind of natural kaleidos-isational (that's not a word) but anyway it gives you a natural kaleidoscope.

So the idea behind that was mirroring the image like fourfold by using, I used one mountain scape, mirrored it along the horizon line and then flipped it vertically and implied that it was a lake setting and that's how you get this kind of natural organic kaleidoscopic effect. And once I sent that through that seemed to really resonate with Dustin and the ping ponging of ideas ended and we just really refined that one, getting the tones and the hues and everything just right. And yeah, then that one was the lock and that was used for the tour poster and it was used for merch and shirts and whatever. (Interview 20) (Fig. 3.6)

Jefferton also discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's second EP *Bones* (Fig. 3.7):

Bones was very similar whereby he wanted to keep the mountains theme going but he wanted it to be abstract and didn't want it to feel like it's *The breach part 2*. So I started playing with very bright images. At the time I was using very cultural primary colours … and that was way too far off.

And yeah it was another 20, 30 ideas that just didn't resonate and then it was me again taking time off with my son Jack and we were doing watercolours and he had ripped up little bits of paper and one of them had slightly submerged in the watercolour paint palette and it seeped in and made it look a little bit like an iceberg or that natural blue colouring in white snow that you get from natural light.

And I was like, 'That looks really interesting.' And then I compiled them together, these torn bits of paper, and then dipped the edges into the watercolours, photographed them, manipulated them a little bit and then sent that through as my kind of torn paper mountain range. And that really resonated with Dustin.

And then, funnily enough, we went through a process of 20 or 30 different shades of white that we could go with. Dustin has a very keen eye so when we had finally locked it, he was like, 'Can you transfer this to the tour poster?' I'd done it and to transfer the white ideas for the eye dropper tool and I clicked on the wrong bar. It was a slightly different shade of white and Dustin had emailed back saying, 'It's the wrong colour white. It's the wrong

Fig. 3.6 Shrink-wrapped copies of Dustin Tebbutt's Debut EP *The breach.* Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Fig. 3.7 Cover design for Dustin Tebbutt's second EP *Bones.* Copyright Dustin Tebbutt
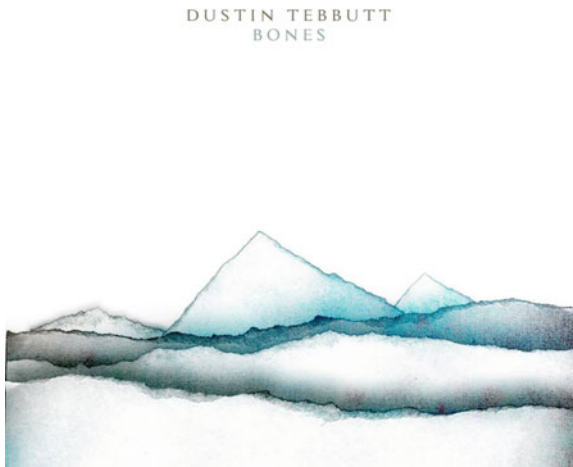
colour white.' So he is so attuned to exactly what he wants that he can pinpoint if it's not the exact colour temperature of white that he wanted. So it's good working with an artist who is that visually attuned to what he wants, but it also can be a bit crap because then you end up with 30 or 40 emails. But it's also amazing to have someone who cares that deeply about the image being put out. (Interview 20) (Figs. 3.8 and 3.9)

In the interview, Jefferton also discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's third EP *Home* (Fig. 3.10):

Fig. 3.8 Single cover design for Dustin Tebbutt's single *Bones*. Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Fig. 3.9 Tour poster for Dustin Tebbutt's *Bones* tour. Copyright Dustin Tebbutt
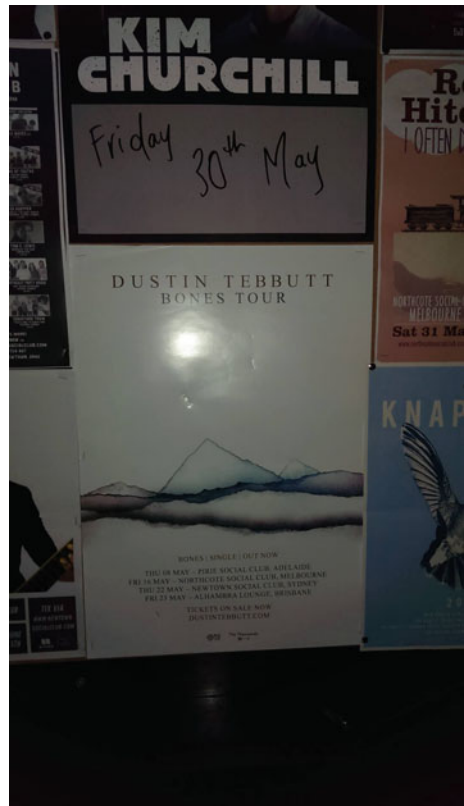
Fig. 3.10 Cover design for Dustin Tebbutt's third EP *Home.* Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Home continued on the mountain tradition. For that design he was like, 'Let's go super abstract.' And we talked about which artists we really like and one artist he really liked was Paul Klee and so I did a lot of research on Paul Klee and I found recurring colour tones that he used … I put together a graded Paul Klee colour palette and sent that through rather than an image to Dustin and he was like, 'Yeah, these are the colour tones we should be sticking with.'

Paul Klee also uses some very strong geometric images so I wanted to essentially look at a mountain like it's a bunch of huge geometric shapes. The weird inspiration, apart from Paul Klee on that, was bad PlayStation graphics. So I was looking at mountains like they were like bad polygon graphics. So I was breaking mountains down into huge polygon shapes and then I reduced the polygons down into triangles. And that's essentially where we got that image from. It was breaking down a mountain range into their most basic shapes and then putting it in this very Paul Klee-esque world.

But also with *Home* there was constant rebounding because he had something very different in mind. And for the album as well he had something very different in mind at the outset, but then we got to somewhere that was very different from the last two but still in tune with them as well. (Interview 20)

Jefferton discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's debut album *First light* (Fig. 3.11):

This is probably the most literal thing that he had sent me. So he wanted to get off mountains even though we essentially went back to mountains for the cover. But he wanted to initially get away from mountains and he was thinking more literally and he wanted to have the cover represent the birth of the universe, almost the beginning of time.

So I played with a lot of imagery using old-style maps and that wasn't really landing. He was doing all these very basic starburst images and at one point I was breaking down the beginning of time into almost looking like a stained-glass window. But then that felt a little

Fig. 3.11 Cover design for
Dustin Tebbutt's Debut
Album *First light.* Copyright
Dustin Tebbutt

bit too religious. And it was constant back and forth-ing trying to get the beginning of time just right.

And for some reason I was thinking about the Terrence Malick movie *Tree of life* where he does the progression of time in this, like, 15-minute montage. But he used existing locations to represent the beginning of time. So I thought, 'What if I make it earthbound?'

I thought of a kind of alien, untouched landscape that I could use, but have it looking up at the night sky. And again it was from watching a documentary, an Ansel Adams documentary. And he's shot this very famous photograph in New Mexico at dusk but he had held the shutter open long enough for him to get the natural sunlight coming across the New Mexico plain but you could also see a lot of the star fields in the sky. I was like, 'Well that's really interesting.' So I used a very stark desert landscape that had this very clear untouched sky above it. And sent that through to Dustin and it instantly landed. He was like, even though we were headed back to mountains, it's using the two ideas—the beginning of time plus the mountains idea from the previous album.

So yeah, that's how we landed on *First light* but again that was many, many dozens of emails. Probably the most I've back and forth-ed with Dustin for any of the work because we were kind of stuck in this beginning of time mindset for so long and we wouldn't budge from it. But when we did and we factored in a new idea with the pre-existing idea it really works.

He said that it feels like a classic album cover … it could be an album cover that would be in your dad's album collection. And for me nowadays that's how I try to measure success here because if it feels like something that you could stumble across and it's existed for years … it feels a little bit timeless. (Interview 20)

In the interview, Jefferton discussed his work stage designing a live performance set that formed part of the design culture stemming from the mountain-themed EP cover designs. The photograph in Fig. 3.12 shows the set design that was used for the tour that accompanied the release of Dustin Tebbutt's second EP *Bones* (Fig. 3.7):

Fig. 3.12 Set design for Dustin Tebbutt's tour promoting second EP *Bones*. Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

So he was like, 'Can we have something again mountains but something that's different to what we already have existing?' [The idea was to have] four or five really famous mountains all form together to make this one kind of mega mountain.

So I stitched together half a dozen mountains to make a mega mountain that I dubbed 'Frankenmountain'. And yeah, again that really resonated with him. (Interview 20)

3.9 Conclusion

Album cover design provided a useful starting point for this book because it is usually this particular design object that musicians and bands start with. Following the design of their album cover, they then attempt to develop the networks and relationships between the various other domains of design practice that form their overall design culture. Design culture is a useful concept here for understanding the interrelationships between album cover designs and the multiple people who are engaged in their shaping and functioning, and the extent to which these design concepts in turn inform the design of gig posters, stage designs, music videos, merchandise and XR products.

This chapter has served to introduce the scholarly possibilities of linking design culture studies with the field of music business research. This study of design within the contemporary music business involves moving beyond solely regarding design as contributing to the marketing and promotion of music, and the singular design objects that are used for this end, towards an understanding that design in this context also includes the orchestration of networks of multiple design objects, people and

actions. This rethinking of design in this context may also require the music business itself to be redesigned.

Julier and Munch (2019) noted that 'design defines itself in relation to its contexts that are—in the contemporary economic and social circumstances—always on the move, so too is design' (p. 5). The ever-shifting boundaries and porosity of what design involves within the music business has implications for the economics of music and for the related deal making. As I outlined in this chapter, the main sources of tension within the album cover design culture network are definitions of art and understandings of creative/aesthetic autonomy that stem from these definitions.

Historically, it has arguably been convenient for the music business to label a creative labourer such as Jefferton James a 'designer' and not an 'artist'—and the output of their labour a 'design' and not an 'artwork'—because otherwise the way in which the music business functions economically and legally would have to be redesigned. A key question here then becomes: will this change as musicians increasingly create more of their design objects themselves? While the work of a 'designer' such as Jefferton can be managed on a fee-for-service basis with a complete assignment of copyright to the musician or label that has commissioned the work, the linear flow of this type of deal (designer designs for the musician/label who then own the design object) gives way to a more complex, multilinear ecology when the musician (the 'named' artist) is also the designer/artist.

As the domain of album cover design shifts and morphs in the post-digital environment, a grey area is emerging relating to the issue of attribution for design, or lack thereof, as was the case with The Clash poster that was on display at the aforementioned NGV exhibition. The extent to which such design objects will be labelled art from the outset, rather than just retrospectively as they were at the 2018 NGV exhibition, will also arguably be in flux. And in this context, while musicians who design their own album covers may be able to negotiate better deals because their name remains attached to the product and they have a direct relationship with the audience, there is also arguably a need for commissioned 'designers' to receive better deals.

As was evidenced by Jefferton James's work for Dustin Tebbutt, visual design can be fundamentally important for a project, but it is often not remunerated as such. While I do not have permission to disclose how much Jefferton was paid by Dustin on a fee-for-service basis, suffice to say here that an ongoing royalty relative to the number of streams of the music that Jefferton's body of (dare I say) artworks accompanies would obviously put Jefferton in a better financial position. His fee was modest relative to what he contributed to the Tebbutt project. In many, but not all, countries performing rights/neighbouring rights income from recordings is shared between record companies and recording artists (usually 50/50) (see Osborne 2014, p. 574) and the recording artists' share is often split between 'featured' artists and 'non-featured' artists such as session musicians and singers (Osborne 2014, p. 578; see also Stahl 2012). It is arguably time for a similar arrangement for be negotiated for visual designers—be they 'non-featured' commissioned designers, or the musicians themselves if they design their own album cover.

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Chapter 4
Gig and Tour Poster Design

Abstract This chapter addresses gig and tour poster design and identifies two main types of poster. First, stand-alone gig and tour posters are posters that are designed for a specific show or tour, with the design concept often being independent from the primary design culture surrounding the music. The second type involves gig and tour posters that form a part of the overall design aesthetic of a musical project, often because they are derivative of the album cover design. The work of Australian illustrator Ken Taylor is discussed as an example of the first type, a genre of gig poster that stems from the 1960s countercultural movement that started in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, while the work of Australian artist and designer Jonathan Zawada provides an example of the second type.

Keywords Gig and tour posters · Psychedelia · Counterculture · Business models

4.1   A Unique Business Model

As I outlined in Chap. 2, I first met Australian gig and tour poster designer and illustrator Ken Taylor at the Flatstock gig poster exhibition that was held at South by South West (SXSW) in Austin, Texas, USA in 2013. And as also previously mentioned, Jefferton James and I then shared a panel concerning music and design with him and others at the BIGSOUND conference and festival in Brisbane, Australia that same year. As part of his contribution to the panel discussion, Taylor disclosed how his unique business model works (Fig. 4.1).

Interestingly, while he has designed gig and tour posters for high-profile international musicians and bands such as Pixies, Bon Iver, Blink 182, The Avett Brothers, Primus, Sigur Ros, First Aid Kit, Dave Mathews Band, Pearl Jam, Sonic Youth, Queens of the Stone Age, Bob Dylan, The National, Soundgarden and The Black Keys (Taylor 2019), he is typically not paid directly for these designs. Instead, the representatives of these bands and artists approach him to create the design/illustration. Then, rather than paying him money for the design, once the design is printed on 'museum quality' paper to be sold as a merchandise item, these representatives allocate and ship approximately 100 poster units to him. As he has such a large personal following, he then sells these posters via sites such

Fig. 4.1 Jefferton James
hand drawing a gig poster.
Copyright Jefferton James

as PostersandToys.com and previously also through the former incarnation of Gig
Posters.com for between AU$35 and AU$100, thereby at times grossing AU$10,000
for one design, with his stock allocation often 'selling out in a matter of minutes'
(Taylor 2013).

After outlining this business model on the BIGSOUND panel, Taylor (2013) said:
'This isn't necessarily a model for anyone else to follow, it is simply what I do and it
works for me'. This is something that I learned the hard way; following my attendance
at SXSW in 2013, I was so excited and inspired by the experience that I negotiated
with the managers of Australian bands and artists such as Boy & Bear[1] and Dustin
Tebbutt to obtain permission to manufacture museum quality prints of the designs
my client Jefferton James had done for these artists. After spending approximately
AU$2,000 pursuing this 'experiment', I managed to sell approximately 10 prints and
I had to give away the rest of the stock for 'promotional purposes'—and I still have
some of them sitting in a box in my garage at home.

After this experience, I retreated from being directly involved in this particular
part of the gig and tour poster business.[2] I did, however, become curious about the
origins of this particular subcultural activity, an activity that I will refer to in this
chapter as the 'stand-alone' gig and tour poster business. For the purposes of this
chapter, stand-alone gig and tour posters are simply posters that are designed for
a specific show or tour, with the design concept often being independent from the
primary design culture surrounding the music, such as the album cover design. This
is what is meant by 'stand-alone' posters. The first main section of this chapter will
discuss this type of poster, while the second will examine gig and tour posters that
form part of the overall design aesthetic, often because they are derivative of the
album cover design.

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[1]While I was one of the founding co-managers of this band, by this time they were being managed
by Wonderlick Entertainment.

[2]As is discussed below and evidenced by the interview data, the market for such posters is a lot
weaker in Australia than it is in the USA for historical reasons.

4.2   **Stand-Alone Gig and Tour Posters**

As part of his professional practice, Ken Taylor designs the type of gig and tour posters that operate as collectable stand-alone artworks, and that are not simply advertisements for a tour or show.[3] Some of Ken Taylor's poster designs (see kentaylor.com.au) are a modern extension of a practice that Moist (2010) claims generated one of the most popular products of the 1960s counterculture: iconic gig and tour posters that became representations of a community vision, specifically of the subculture located in, and emanating from, the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Analysing what he calls 'concert' posters through the lens of post-modernism, Moist (2010) noted that 'the concert posters created to announce the shows were similarly unorthodox, and were seen by the community as transcending mere advertisement to become totemic expressions of the collective consciousness' (p. 1245). Similarly, Mouse (1993) quoted Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart, saying:

> the posters looked like what we were playing … they resonated with the styles of the times and described visually what the Grateful Dead, Big Brother, Quicksilver and the [Jefferson] Airplane were doing at the Fillmore and the Avalon the following nights. (Mouse 1993, pp. 10–11, as quoted in Moist 2010, p. 1245)

These concert posters were highly significant; they encapsulated the ethos of the 1960s countercultural movement emanating from the Haight-Ashbury subcultural community in particular, a movement that became globally influential (Grushkin 1988; Moist 2010, 2018; Mouse 1993; Owen and Dickson 1999; Perry 1984). And, as we will see later in this book, psychedelic art of this type is a useful exemplar for music-related design cultures in action; as Hall (1969) noted, concert posters, light shows and acid rock are 'best understood as a way of reproducing, or re-creating through music and the new art forms the multi-media, multi-dimensional nature of the psychedelic experience' (p. 188, as cited in Moist 2018, p. 200). Designed by members of the community rather than by advertising agencies or professional graphic artists, the posters were experimental, abstract in nature and often required an active readership to decipher and de-code the message, including the location and time of the performance.

The poster show series 'Flatstock' is obviously named in reference to the iconic 1969 festival Woodstock. The Flatstock events are presented by the American Poster Institute (API); they are an ongoing series of exhibitions featuring the work of popular gig and tour poster artists and the series has included yearly exhibitions at SXSW in Austin, USA; Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago, USA; Primavera Sound in Barcelona, Spain; and Reeperbahn Festival in Hamburg, Germany. The API is a USA-based not-for-profit corporation. The API's mission is to improve standards in the field of poster art. It also provides accreditation for 'professional' poster artists

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[3]Albeit Ken Taylor also illustrates album covers that form part of musician and band's primary design cultures and therefore his work is also relevant to the second half of this chapter.

and started the Flatstock events to provide sales opportunities for these accredited professionals (API 2019). The API's website sets out who qualifies for accreditation:

> An artist or printer is eligible to apply to join the API as an Accredited Professional if he or she has produced more than one authorized commercially-released poster promoting an entertainment-related event. Designation as an Accredited Professional is at the sole discretion of the API Board of Directors and subject to periodic review. (API 2019)

According to their website, the Flatstock series of poster shows began in 2002 in response to the enthusiasm of artists, supporters and collectors who frequented the original incarnation of the website GigPosters.com.

Websites such as the original GigPosters.com, PostersandToys.com and OMG Posters,[4] along with the Flatstock events, facilitate direct relationships between the poster artists/designers/illustrators and collectors and consumers. In this sense, in addition to the design concepts featured in these posters often standing alone from the rest of the musician or band's design culture (they are often created as an independent tribute to it), the market for these posters also often stands alone from the businesses of the musicians: there is a direct business-to-consumer (B2C) relationship between some poster artists and poster consumers. Albeit, as mentioned in the quotation above, the posters have to be 'authorised' by the band or musician. The API claim on their website:

> The best concert posters have always captured both the essence of the music they promoted and the spirit of the time in which they were produced. This is as true today as it was in San Francisco during the Sixties. (API 2019)

Hayes' (2009, 2011) coffee table books *Gig posters volume 1: Rock show art of the 21st century* and *Gig posters volume 2: Rock show art of the 21st century* each feature approximately 700 posters from the archives of the website GigPosters.com, a website that Clay Hayes also founded. Out of the many artists and designers featured in Volume 1, Hayes identified Rob Jones (Animal Rummy), Steve Walters (Screw Ball Press), Jay Ryan (the Bird Machine), Gary Houston and Michael Byzewski (Aesthetic Apparatus) and Jeff Kleinsmith and Jesse LeDoux of Patent Pending Industries as being the 'headline' artists in the promotional materials for the book. In Volume 2 he identified David V. D'Andrea, Peter Cardoso (Ghost Town), Graham Pilling (Army of Cats Prints), Tyler Stout, Marq Spusta, and the Nashville-based firm Hatch Show Print in the book's promotional headlines. Regarding the contemporary significance of these posters, in the promotional blurb on the Amazon page for Volume 1, Hayes (2009) argued: 'With the rising popularity of MP3 files and streaming digital music—and the near-extinction of traditional album art—concert posters have become the most important visual representation of contemporary music'.

Hayes may be overstating their significance here. It is important to note that the design concepts and illustrations that feature on these posters are often independent

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[4]OMG Posters now uses a Facebook page (Facebook.com/therealomgposters) and redirects to Posters and Toys for sales.

from the album design concepts commissioned by musicians and bands. They are therefore not a direct replacement for the album art that is commissioned (or created by) the musicians themselves. It is clear, however, that the digitisation of these often striking posters has expanded the market for this genre of poster art. Founded in 2001, in its heyday GigPosters.com showcased 160,000 posters from 12,000 designers from various parts of the world; however, in 2015 and 2016: 'The site took major downturns due to decreased community participation, increased spambots, hacker attacks and overwhelming server attacks. As of June 1, 2016 … the increased negative traffic and attacks have forced the shutdown of the site' (Gigposters.com 2019).[5] After a period of time being hosted on the Wix platform, as of 4 February 2020 the website is now back up and running using the original domain name.

4.2.1   Global Psychedelia and Counterculture

Moist (2018) has also edited a special issue of the journal *Rock Music Studies* on global psychedelia and counterculture. The various contributions to this issue critically analyse the extent to which the counterculture played out differently around the world to the way it did in the USA post its 1960s beginnings in places such as San Francisco. In the course of this research, one specific regional difference that came to light was that the gig and tour poster subculture that is further facilitated by the Flatstock shows, by GigPosters.com, PostersandToys.com and by the API generally, is a very US-based phenomenon, according to one interviewee of this book, Australian artist manager and label owner John Watson. While this is perhaps not surprising given that the association being discussed here is called the 'American' Poster Institute, the direct B2C market for gig posters is much softer in territories such as Australia, as Watson noted:

> The legacy of that comes from [Concert Promoter] Bill Graham … what the Fillmore West and Fillmore East were in the late sixties. The posters from there were very, very iconic and everybody who was an independent promoter in America aspired to have their version of a Fillmore. And one of the ways they used to do that was they'd do these custom posters and so it became a souvenir thing … They would do this exclusive poster so there [in the US] was a kind of a cultural legacy to it going back to the late sixties/early seventies that we never got here [in Australia] … [the US scene has] got that link back to [Jimi] Hendrix, [Janis] Joplin, The Doors, The Who; it goes right back to that late sixties period which is ground zero for what we think of as modern rock and roll. (Interview 6)

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[5]On 1 July 2019, when I viewed the simple replacement website that had been set up on Wix.com, the 'Buy/Sell/Trade' tab linked to a Facebook public group for sales and discussion. When I Googled the website GigPosters.com, I was directed to the Amazon page for Hayes' (2009, 2011) aforementioned gig poster books. Likewise, the web link on the Twitter account for GigPosters.com links to the Amazon page for the two books. Clearly in the age of Facebook Marketplace, Etsy.com, eBay, Pinterest, Wix.com, Instagram, etc., there appeared to be no need to incur the cost of maintaining the independent website GigPosters.com at that time.

For Moist (2010), these countercultural concert posters were also ground zero for post-modern culture; they were the visual representation of the collapse/blurring of traditional boundaries between binaries such as commerce and art, and high and low culture.

One legacy of the 1960s counterculture therefore is the collage aesthetic and the copy and paste practice. This practice at times involved a blatant disrespect of intellectual property/copyright law, while at other times it simply embraced fair use/fair dealing exemptions to copyright law. This disregard of proprietary rights, and the countercultural belief that appropriation without permission was not an issue (Moist 2010, p. 1247), and was in fact necessary to challenge the established capitalist, colonial and patriarchal narratives of modernism, now causes anxiety for contemporary poster artists who pursue the collage aesthetic that is derivative of this time. For instance, in an interview, one poster artist, who wished to remain anonymous here, discussed a contemporary version of this countercultural/post-modern practice:

> Well copyright's strange because it's a constantly evolving thing. Everything's so digital and everything seems so up for grabs these days, especially in the last 10–15 years. Everything— there's almost a mindset of people that I can cherry pick things that I like from pre-existing content and just put that towards my artwork or whatever and that's okay because it's like a homage or something, but I don't know. There's a danger in being too loose with copyright and yeah, it's funny because I do do some collage-based artwork which does rely on pre-existing things but then making it my own. So I can't get too much on the soapbox about people lifting from [my] pre-existing content. I think there definitely needs to be some kind of guidelines of where's okay to lift from? Where's the cut-off point that you can lift from someone else's work? (Interview 22)

As Schmidt (2014) usefully outlined, in the visual arts the cut-off point for appropriation remains vague (see also Carlin 1988; Greenberg 1992; Holloway-Smith 2012; Weil 2001). There are simply no clear answers to the questions posed by this interviewee. Fair use (United States) and fair dealing (United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand) come into play here as they are relevant to artworks that utilise appropriation. Discussing a number of case law precedents in New Zealand, Schmidt (2014) concluded:

> Despite the fact that there is little to no common law in the various fair dealing jurisdictions pertaining to artistic works, expansive copyright laws do impact on artistic practice. Thus, liberal fair dealing provisions which recognise transformative use, a broad reading of criticism, and uses such as parody and satire should be adopted, as this would send a signal to artists and copyright holders that at least some degree of appropriation is legitimate in artistic works. (pp. 58–59)

Given that the courts seem to be finding a breach of copyright only in very obvious cases of appropriation of artworks (Schmidt 2014, p. 58), the risk of legal action against poster artists who appropriate the work of others to generate collage-based works appears to be minimal.

Furthermore, in the post-digital era, stock images can easily be purchased from sites such as Shutterstock and Adobe Stock, and there is a lot of material available under various creative commons licences (albeit often non-commercial ones).

There are therefore now more efficient ways to legally pursue the twentieth-century aesthetic strategy of collage, a key trait of post-modern aesthetics. However, this approach does not have the same effect as the Haight-Ashbury illegal/fair use/fair dealing version because the images are not removed from their original surroundings to be recontextualised in a new setting; they are stock images and not well-known ones.

4.2.2   Craft Entrepreneurialism

This practice of collage making through (potentially) breaching copyright by lifting pre-existing images continues as a subcultural practice. This is arguably part of the 'craft' of this particular type/genre of gig and tour poster design. The paradox of gig and tour posters is that they are often very significant cultural artefacts, but the gig and tour poster (cottage) industry itself functions as a form of 'craft entrepreneurialism' (Luckman 2018); in the USA the posters are often literally screen printed by the poster artists themselves by hand. The market that is further facilitated by the Flatstock events and by PostersandToys.com is not a mass market; it is a niche one.

   This form of craft entrepreneurialism is often an underground practice performed by amateurs, as it was in the Haight-Ashbury district subculture in the late 1960s in San Francisco. It is therefore a subsection of the music industries in which the rules of the rest of the music business seemingly do not apply; copyright is managed in a loose way—or is simply not managed—and the pricing of the service of gig and tour poster design, and of the products of this 'service', is challenging. There is often no pricing consistency. For example, discussing the demand for this service he provides, and the pricing of it, Jefferton James noted: 'Yeah, there's still demand. [But] the financial side of things, like the budgets definitely get smaller and smaller' (Interview 1).[6] This parallel world of craft in the music business is, as evidenced by the discussion of copyright above, still very countercultural and the Flatstock gig poster exhibitions and the screen-printing subcultures stemming from them (in the USA at least) feature craft entrepreneurs who do not necessarily intend to scale up their businesses. In her research concerning craft entrepreneurs generally in Australia, Luckman (2018) found that many *want* to remain 'counter'-cultural.

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[6]One area for future research here concerns the impact that services such as Canva have had on such price points. Canva's (2019) tag line is 'Online Design Made Easy' and they are essentially an automated graphic-design tool website. The company is based in Sydney, Australia and was founded in 2012. In response to a question concerning Canva, Jefferton James noted: 'The kind of blessing and curse of that is that people will be able to spot that right away and then that makes your product look a bit cheap if you've gone that route' (Interview 1).

4.2.3 Gig Poster Heritage-As-Praxis in Music Venues

Gig poster design and manufacture, and the screen-printing subcultures that are sometimes associated with this form of craft entrepreneurialism, are often localised activities that help to build a sense of place and space. Gig posters are collectable items *for* music venues, as well as for fans and, by collecting and displaying posters, some venues have a key role in generating a sense of not only place, but 'space'. Strong and Whiting (2018) argued that music venue displays of gig posters are an under-examined aspect of popular music's culture and heritage and that they are

> a form of heritage-as-praxis that helps to create a sense of identity and community in the venue, giving punters a clear idea of what the venue provides musically, and signifying the space as representative of a certain subsection of the city's broader music scene. (p. 151)

They examined four small-to medium-sized live music venues in Melbourne, Australia—The Tote, The Corner, the John Curtin and the Old Bar—that feature displays of gig posters for both upcoming shows and past ones as a significant aspect of their visual aesthetic.

As Melbourne was the city in which I was based while writing this book, I took the opportunity to visit these venues in order to examine the posters on display. The posters in these venues appeared to be a mixture of stand-alone gig posters of the genre discussed above, and posters that were derivative of the musicians' and bands' album cover designs and primary design cultures (which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter). The venues I observed appear to use these posters in order to visually tell the story of the venue in terms of the past, present and the future. Strong and Whiting (2018) noted that these venues are not museums, they are living breathing venues; hence their argument that this is a form of *heritage-as-praxis*. I witnessed, upon visiting these venues, that, while each poster represents an ephemeral moment (a 'gig') within the local Melbourne music scene, collectively they form a patchwork design culture through the way in which the design of the venue space is interwoven with the bands' and musicians' individual design cultures.

Quite often the consistency of the visual design aesthetic in live music venue spaces is due to the fact that a small number of gig poster designers design a number of posters. For example, in Seattle, USA in the early 2000s Jeff Kleinsmith and Jesse LeDoux (Patent Pending Industries) produced screen-printed gig posters while also working together in the iconic Seattle-based label Sub Pop Record's art department. Michael Byzewski of Aesthetic Apparatus produces numerous screen-printed gig posters in Minneapolis, USA. While Jefferton James's work in Sydney, Australia in the late 2000s and early 2010s, amongst many other designers, contributed to the design aesthetic of numerous live music venues. Likewise, Moist (2010, p. 1246) noted that between 1966 and 1970 there were approximately twelve to fifteen artists who designed around four hundred posters for live shows and other events produced by the Haight-Ashbury countercultural community in San Francisco. The following Figs 4.2 through 4.11 are examples of Jefferton James's work in Sydney between 2007 and 2019.

Fig. 4.2 Jefferton James's poster for Bello Winter Music festival. Copyright Jefferton James

The paradoxical status of gig posters in music venues, however, is such that, while they often have the status of being heritage items, they are also often on the cusp of becoming rubbish (see Baker and Huber 2013). Strong and Whiting (2018, p. 157) noted that, while The Corner hotel keeps two copies of every poster in a storage unit in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond, they are the exception to the rule: The Tote, the John Curtin and the Old Bar manage the posters in a looser way. Audience members

Fig. 4.3 Jefferton James's poster for a Boy & Bear gig. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.4 Jefferton James's poster for a Cuthbert and the Night Walkers tour. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.5 Jefferton James's poster for a Cuthbert and the Night Walkers tour. Copyright Jefferton James
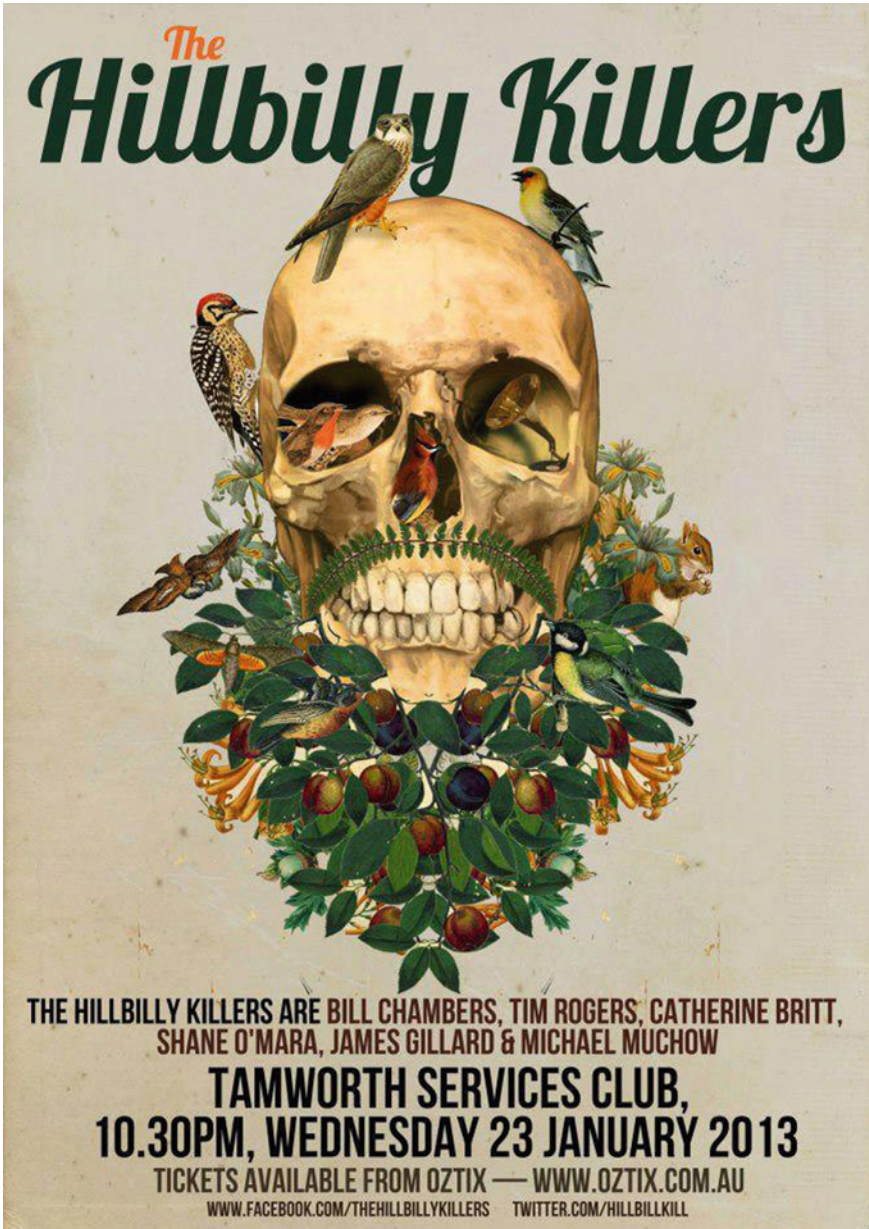
Fig. 4.6 Jefferton James's poster for a Hillbilly Killers gig. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.7 Jefferton James's Poster for a Hey Geronimo tour. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.8 Jefferton James's gig poster for The Small Hours. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.9 Jefferton James's poster for the Shoot the Player initiative. Copyright Jefferton James
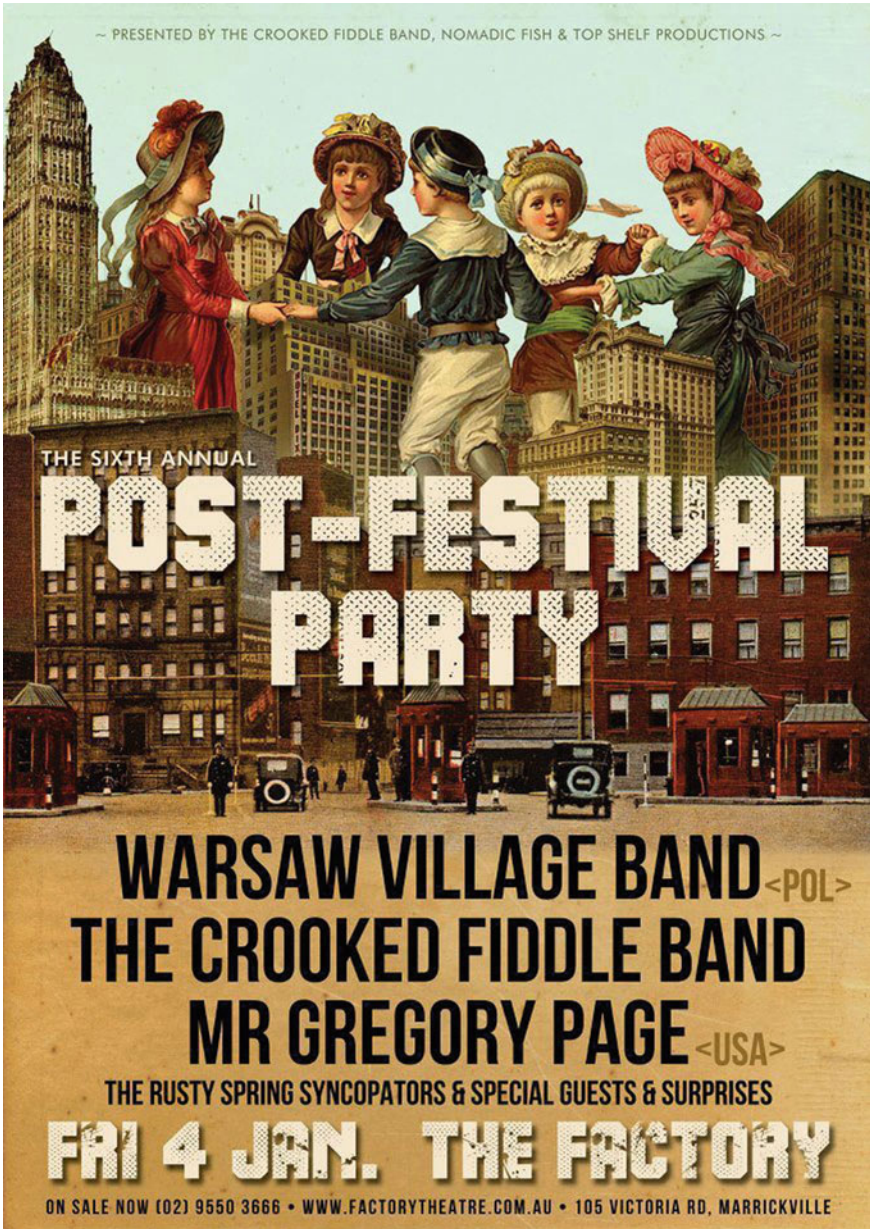
Fig. 4.10   A Jefferton James gig poster. Copyright Jefferton James

Fig. 4.11 Jefferton James's tour poster for The Paper Kites. Copyright Jefferton James

will often take them off the wall of the venue once a band has finished playing and the posters that are displayed in the toilets often end up covered in graffiti.

This mixed status of gig posters as artefacts helps to explain the mixed status of gig poster designers themselves and the loose way in which copyright is managed in this genre of poster design, and the inconsistent pricing for the service of gig poster design.

4.3   Derivative Gig and Tour Posters: Jonathan Zawada Case Study

While the previous section of this chapter focused on stand-alone gig posters, through a case study of Australian artist and designer Jonathan Zawada (see zawada.art), this section will examine gig and tour posters that stem from a musician or band's overall design aesthetic. This is often because this type of gig and tour poster is derivative of the album cover design (see Chap. 3). This case study of posters that form part of a band's overall design aesthetic also raises other important issues such as art versus design and fee-for-service versus royalties that will also be discussed in this section.

Zawada is known for his multifaceted approach to the field of art and design. He weaves together both what he calls 'analogue imagery' and digitally generated content, with his work often centring 'around the intersection and blend between the artificial and the natural' (Zawada 2019b). Having started with web design and coding, he has since worked in the fields of commercial graphic design, illustration, art direction and also object and furniture design, sculpture, video, installation and painting. He has won two Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) awards for his album cover designs and he has presented solo exhibitions of his artworks in Los Angeles, Paris, Tokyo, London, Sydney and Beijing.

Zawada is a useful case study for this book because he has straddled both commercial and non-commercial realms. As his website states, 'he has a foot firmly in both the commercial and fine art camps, when asked to describe his practice he says, "recently I've simply settled on the idea that I like to make things"' (Zawada 2019b). Discussing how he got started as a graphic designer, web designer and coder, and then later artist, Zawada noted:

> I think I started pretty early. I started doing design work for local businesses when I was about 14. I would wander around and offer up my services, and would make T-shirts for the local hairdresser or business cards for some local rubbish removal company. (Interview 18)

In addition to working for advertising agencies through a studio he established with a number of partners, Zawada worked for a time for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and their label ABC Music. This involved designing album covers, compilation CD covers and generating animations for the ABC television show *Recovery* (now defunct). He also started working on a freelance basis for a number of bands:

> I think the first music jobs I got were when I started university and I met a couple of people who were either in bands or friends with people in bands, and designed a couple of flyers for that. That sort of trickled along … I think once you start designing for music and as long as you can complete the job on time and do it in a way that fits the miniscule budget, your name gets around pretty quickly. (Interview 18)

As I outlined in Chap. 3 of this book, album cover designs are often the starting point for the development of a musical artist's design culture and the gig and tour posters that feature Zawada's work are an example of this. Through design culture as a process, or design culturing, Zawada's album cover designs also subsequently operate in three-dimensional space as the key design concept(s) used for gig and tour posters, as well as becoming (part of) set designs, merchandise designs, music videos and virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality designs. While stand-alone gig and tour poster designers such as Ken Taylor (discussed above) at times have a direct relationship with consumers (B2C), the gig and tour posters that are derivative of Zawada's album cover designs are primarily commissioned by way of a business-to-business (B2B) arrangement. These gig and tour posters are also often more fundamentally a part of the musician or band's design culture.

Because stand-alone gig and tour posters are by definition not connected to the main concept of the album cover design, new copyright is often generated by the stand-alone poster designer/illustrator even though they do need permission to use the band or artist's name/trademark (this is what is meant by 'authorised' gig and tour posters). Furthermore, stand-alone gig and tour poster designers' creative processes are often not integrated with the musician's creative processes; this type of poster is often a tribute to the musician's creative output. In contrast, Zawada's creative process often occurs alongside and even as part of the musician's creative process. For example, discussing how he generated the ideas for Australian record producer, music programmer and DJ Flume's album life cycle for his Grammy award winning album *Skin*, Zawada noted:

> His label introduced us and I went and listened to some music and met up with him and had a bit of a chat … They had to do a fair bit of convincing to convince me to take that on, which was really lovely of them, and they got me involved early enough in that process that we had time to get to know each other without just rushing straight into figuring out deliverables … He would play me early versions of demos and songs which we would then end up talking about for hours … Then I went away and formed a bit of a—I guess a mood board really, although I hate doing them normally—but I put together a kind of a mood board around concepts that I felt would feel like a match to the music. (Interview 18)

Following this initial collaborative process, which started with the album and single artwork, Zawada's collaboration with Flume then extended to the design of merchandise and promotional videos and he also worked as the creative director for Flume's live show. This involved the creation/commissioning of visual material for the backdrop video wall for Flume's live show, and also designing Flume's DJ desk and lighting structure and directing the lighting designers (Zawada 2019a). Zawada also went on to collaborate with Flume to produce an exhibition of audio/video works and printed silks that was presented in Los Angeles and Sydney. This exhibition

aimed 'to explore ways of making the digital become organic and find tension points between comfort and discomfort' (Zawada 2019a).

Zawada's profile and status working as an artist in his own right is important here. Interestingly, the fundamental image that was used on the *Skin* album cover was originally an artwork that was featured in one of his solo exhibitions:

> In terms of the actual album artwork though, one of the pictures in that mood board was an image I had made for an exhibition maybe nine months earlier, which was the flower that's on the cover of the album, slightly different version of that, which he really loved and really responded to, then I felt well, that's something I'd been keen to explore more of anyway. So we latched onto that, and just started evolving that more and more. (Interview 18)

Zawada's status as an 'artist', in addition to being a 'designer', arguably helped to locate him at the top of what Soar (2006) and FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) identified as 'the design class ladder'. For FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010, p. 29), graphic design is essentially about differentiation and position on this ladder, a ladder that is established through the interplay between clientele, aesthetic accomplishment and regular access to substantial amounts of economic capital. Zawada's aesthetic accomplishments within the fine arts have helped to locate him at the top of the field of music-related graphic design in Australia and internationally. FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) noted that 'Anyone with a cursory knowledge of the field's players could compile their own scorecard' (p. 36). And with 50,000 followers on Instagram (as of 17 July 2019) (Zawada 2019c), Zawada is in the unique position of having a direct audience for his work (B2C) and a high profile in the music industries through his work with musicians and other businesses (B2B). However, in order to achieve this position, Zawada has had to navigate the tensions between the art world and the field of commercial graphic design.

Across his career, Zawada has made a transition from being a supplier of designs that function like advertising content, whereby he is paid a fee for the service of making content for someone else, to being known as an artist in his own right, having his own exhibitions, and selling prints and oil paintings. Discussing how this transition took place, Zawada noted:

> That was a long process for me. I for a long time kept the two things very separate. So for a while I wasn't trying to get any personal creative output done through my professional work … So the art stuff I would do as a hobby and I kept it totally separate, and I started having exhibitions with that work and for a good number of years, made it a real conscious point that I wouldn't—if I got asked to do anything that felt like it was part of my art process for a commercial job, I wouldn't do that, and I would keep the design work and graphic work very separate. And vice versa as well. I wouldn't put any graphic design ideas into my art exhibitions. So a lot of that work was pencil drawings and eventually some oil paintings. (Interview 18)

Zawada's strategy here of separating his art and design work was not simply informed by his creative process and his desire to do different work on these two sides of his practice; it was a reaction to the tension he perceived between the art world in which he was beginning to operate, and the field of design:

In terms of then transitioning, that was a long process for me to come to terms with it, because I think especially going the other way, there's a lot of bias from the art world against design and designers. I know from the galleries I have, they've always been reluctant to put that I'm a designer in my bio or even explain it to anybody or include it as any part of the communication around me. (Interview 18)

In this sense, Zawada's career has been caught up in what Bourdieu (1986) identified as a correlation between cultural taste and class/social positioning. The cultural capital he has accumulated through becoming an established artist in the art world, as a form of value, has helped to propel his career as a commercial artist. However, because he started as a designer, he had to carefully navigate this new field. This is because, while working with popular musicians and as a commercial designer enabled him to accrue a form of value that Thornton (2006) identified as subcultural capital or 'coolness', this youth-oriented form of value (a sub-species of cultural capital) initially worked against Zawada in the art world. Yet despite this, for a time in his career, Zawada completely transitioned from being a commercial designer to being an artist:

The reason why we ended up in Los Angeles was I had an art gallery that brought me over there. I had a few shows with some little galleries in Sydney and then a gallerist in LA had seen my work and asked me to have a show there, which went really well. Then he encouraged us to move over there so I could have more shows and be around that scene a bit more, which was great. I used that opportunity to basically stop doing commercial work for a couple of years, and just focus solely on my art practice. But I'd find I'd be inclined to come back to design, so in working and thinking about the two things over those years, I really ended up feeling like it was actually okay that I was a designer and an artist and it was nothing to be ashamed of. (Interview 18)

Discussing how he finally merged his approach as an artist during this time with his approach as a designer when he returned to commercial work, Zawada continued:

At the same time, I'd kind of become a bit disillusioned with the music industry as well, and had decided that I wasn't going to work for music anymore, because I didn't really like the way the business was run. Not in terms of the way I was treated, but more in terms of the way musicians were treated by labels and the way that whole thing worked. So then when I got talked back into doing it, I just shifted my perspective to thinking—and this is the perspective I try to hold as much as possible now—any project that I'm working on, the output should feel like something—whether it is something that I would end up making as part of my personal artistic output is a different question, but it should at least feel like it's cohesive with what my output is as an artist and so I veered away from the more traditional graphic design approach. (Interview 18)

Zawada is in the unique position of being known as both an artist and a designer, and this along with his very close collaborations with musicians has led to him being considered to be part of the bands he works with at times. He also noted that being known as an artist in his own right has given him a degree of creative autonomy in his work, albeit he pointed out that

I'm going through exactly this process at the moment, where I have creative freedom from the first meeting about the project, I'm told I have creative freedom, for quite a long while until such a time as a musician gets an idea. (Interview 18)

Interestingly however, even though he has achieved a high status in the field and managed to successfully transition from being a 'designer' to being an 'artist', the deal making surrounding his work remains fee-for-service. While the musicians he works for are paid royalties by way of deals that may or may not also pay an advance, Zawada has not been able to realise this type of deal.

This is the heart of the issue that this book has been designed to address. As we move further into the digital realm with visual content including gig and tour posters, album cover designs, music video and set design traditions feeding into virtual, augmented and mixed reality—which are increasingly becoming part of musicians' design cultures—there is a need to think about how the business will change. Whether (re)designing the music business will involve blockchain technologies also needs to be considered.[7] Given the importance of the visual content that artists and designers such as Zawada produce to the popular music industries and the careers of musicians, and how much of a visual medium popular music is[8]—the question of deal-making leverage needs to be considered here.

Do artists/designers such as Zawada, who have a name in their own right as artists and direct relationships to consumers through selling prints and doing solo exhibitions, have additional deal-making leverage? In the research interview I conducted with him, I asked whether this positioning gave him such leverage, leverage that other commercial design business-to-business service providers do not have. Zawada responded:

> Not being business minded, it's not something I've put forward to anybody, but it's absolutely something I've been thinking about, especially—I have had other friends that have got 25 years [experience] in the music business with different labels. One of them said something to me after the Flume release along the lines of, I really don't see that release as being his release … that project was him and you. I remember The Presets[9] said something similar to me a very long time ago after that third album which was hugely successful for them. They said something along the lines of I was the third member of the band. But at the time, they both bought giant houses, I had next to no money still. I lost money still on the tiny fee I was getting from the job. It's absolutely something that occurs to me. (Interview 18)

Zawada has not been able to negotiate better deals with business entities in the music business such as record labels (and his musical clients' own businesses) through any deal-making leverage he accrued by transitioning to becoming an 'artist'.

Musicians are in a better position in the business to be able to negotiate different types of deals than artist/designers such as Zawada. As musicians themselves increasingly come to create their own visual content, this could potentially open the door for artist/designers such as Zawada to shift their deal making from fee-for-service

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[7]Blockchain technologies are discussed in Chap. 8.

[8]In this context it is striking how little has been written in the academic domain on the interrelationship between the different types of visual content and the 'business' of generating this content.

[9]The Presets are an Australian electronic music duo of Julian Hamilton (vocals, keyboards) and Kim Moyes (drums, keyboards). They formed in 2003 and signed to Modular Records. They have released four studio albums to date (Presets 2019).

to royalty-driven deals, or to deals that feature a combination of a fee for service and points.[10] These deals could function more like some music/record producer agreements do.

For example, in the record producer agreements that I have helped to negotiate, a musician or band often pays the producer a fee for the producer's services. In some agreements, 50% of the fee is required to be paid upfront, with the remaining 50% being a recoupable advance (against the producer royalty outlined below) that may be paid in instalments. The producer is then also paid a royalty that may be, for example, 15% of net income with no royalties to be paid to the producer until recoupment by the musician or band of all recording, manufacturing and distribution costs incurred in connection with the production of the master recording. While record producers often negotiate to be credited as the producer, the musician or band remains the owner of the copyright in the master recording. Because producers will also often write songs with the musician or band, a co-writer agreement may also be annexed onto a producer agreement (for more on producer agreements see Perry 2008).

Record producers have been able to articulate the value they bring to recording projects over time and they have been able to negotiate to have this factored into their agreements. In the following quotation it is evident that Zawada is aware of the value he brings to some of his clients' projects, yet he has not been able to negotiate to have this factored into his agreements:

> At the moment I'm going through a process with a couple of bands where, as it evolves into being much more of a visual medium where each campaign for each release becomes bigger and bigger and potentially involves films and so much other social [media content] … I've found some acts that I work with where me talking to them about the artwork has ultimately given the label their entire narrative to say what the music is about, which didn't exist before I teased out some aspects of what I decided the music was about and what the album was going to be about. Then that becomes a narrative for how the whole project was presented. (Interview 18)

Yet despite this cultural/intrinsic value, and associated economic value, that Zawada arguably brings to his clients' projects, and his belief that royalty-driven deals may be on the horizon, the financial position he ends up being in once the current deal-making process has played out, and he has done the work, causes him anxiety:

> So yeah, it's definitely something that—not being business minded, it just seems so impossible to imagine happening, but I could totally see it happening. Occasionally I'll get hugely freaked out when I realise that some incredible album cover design from the '70s and all these iconic things—there's all these bands that are incredibly wealthy and the album designers are still just scraping by and that's kind of terrifying to me. (Interview 18)

Interestingly, for artist/designers such as Zawada who have been working in this field for a long time, the revenue they obtain from this work has only increased because the volume of work they are commissioned to do has increased. Zawada noted:

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[10] 'Points' is a jargon word from the record business that refers to the royalty percentage points that record producers negotiate into their agreements.

> I think where it has increased has been more in terms of there being so many more deliverables now. So within Instagram and social media stuff and social campaigns, and the ability to have videos that aren't fully fledged music videos, but are a bit more than just delivering an album cover, you can make a bit more money on all of those deliverables. (Interview 18)

It is concerning that this increase in deliverable content is occurring in a context in which Zawada sometimes loses his own money attempting to release design concepts for his clients:

> For the first three Presets album covers, I think I lost money on every one of them and ended up spending my own money to make them happen because they were all photographic. Even with somebody like Flume, I'm still really having to—my wife's really good at reminding me that I'm not in the band, it's not my—that my time—yeah, I don't get money when they get album sales. I just get the little bit of money that I get paid at the start. So she reminds me not to spend too much time or just try to renegotiate things when they're looking like I'm going to be spending a lot of time on something and not standing to make much back. (Interview 18)

Zawada provided a number of explanations as to why artists and designers such as himself are in the position they are in. First, the artistic success of the album cover is often defined by the commercial success of the musician's recordings. Discussing the value dynamic that is at play in this field, Zawada explained:

> There's an innate power differential there that is still hard to quantify. Because the perception is—which I actually to some extent agree with wholeheartedly. I remember when I won the ARIA for the Flume cover, somebody asked me in an interview a bunch of questions about it, and I said I've seen a ton of better album covers from this year, but the reason why my cover won, is because that album also won an ARIA. That was the same with The Presets cover; that won an ARIA because they won ARIAs. The visual quality of an album cover can absolutely help things, but simultaneously—and I think everyone's aware of this to some extent—a bad album cover on an incredible album won't really affect sales negatively. So there's that value dynamic that's hard to shift, that if I walk away from the job and they have to get somebody else to do it, they're probably not going to lose that much. (Interview 18)

The second explanation as to why artists and designers such as himself are in the position they are in concerns who takes the economic risk by investing money into a particular project. The high failure rate in the music business means that, more often than not, Zawada walks away with something—namely his fee—whereas the majority of his clients do not:

> I used to do a lot of fashion work especially and designed a lot of logos for brands. The same can be said for music: 95% of those brands don't exist anymore, they've gone bankrupt, and I always feel the push and pull of that. Well, at least getting paid some money to do the work and cover my time leaves me to walk away with something and I haven't taken on the risk. I completely understand that record labels and those people take on a lot of risk to help fund these sorts of things. It's such a tricky push and pull. (Interview 18)

The third explanation as to why artists and designers such as himself are in the position they are in concerns the way the copyright he generates is managed. When asked whether he assigns or licences the copyright he generates to the labels, musicians

and bands with whom he works, or whether there is simply no agreement in place as to where the copyright he generates vests, Zawada said:

> It varies. I mean it's never really articulated I guess. That's something that's been changing a little bit as well, and I tried to figure out ways forward … in the case of some of the acts, we would all discover that there was a huge appetite in an audience to say buy prints of that album cover, but because that's not part of what the record label does, they then don't do it at all. (Interview 18)

Clearly the copyright he generates is not a primary concern for the labels with whom he works and he therefore struggles to sell prints of his music-related artworks. This is clearly a frustrating experience for Zawada:

> I really want to do it and I get a whole lot of people asking me if they can buy the prints, and I try to negotiate that with the label. But because it's not been figured out from the beginning, nobody really knows the best way forward, and then the whole thing doesn't happen. Basically all that means is a whole lot of people don't get to have prints of the artwork, so they just print it out themselves or whatever they want to do. So I've been gradually trying to figure out a better way with that, where we can either share profits from selling material that's based on the artwork, when it's really specifically the artwork—that doesn't include something like merch [merchandise] stuff where those rights are negotiated from the beginning. If the band is going to use the design for merch purposes as well then they need to tell me or we negotiate a little bit of extra money after the fact if that happens. But it's never really clearly articulated to be honest. It's never written down and it's not like there's contracts around that stuff. Conversely, the type of person who would ask for that to be written out in a contract is generally not the sort of act that I'd want to work with. (Interview 18)

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter analysed two types of gig and tour poster. The types identified were first, stand-alone posters, which are often created as a reflective tribute to the music, and second, gig and tour posters that are derivative of the album cover design. These different types of gig and tour poster were analysed, examined and contrasted in order to better understand the business of gig and tour poster design and to provide explanations of why the creators of them are in the position they are in within the music business. The deal making leverage of the artists and designers who design these different types of poster, or the lack thereof, was considered. There are some key differences between these two quite different types of poster that are worth revisiting here in order to conclude this chapter.

First, perhaps obviously, stand-alone gig and tour poster designers often have more autonomy than artists and designers such as Jonathan Zawada who are more deeply engaged in helping to create their clients' primary design culture. Stand-alone posters are often designed separately from the musician or band's primary design culture and simply need to be authorised. A consequence of this is that they do not have much of an influence on the musician or band's primary design culture. Whereas practitioners such as Zawada greatly influence their clients' output, often

during the early creative processes and even as *part of* these processes. This spectrum of influence on musician and band's design cultures meant that these two types of poster needed to be treated separately in this chapter as this spectrum of influence has ramifications for the deal-making leverage that is discussed below.

The craft entrepreneurs who design stand-alone gig and tour posters are continuing a practice that is a modern extension of the 1960s counterculture. Like the gig and tour posters of the 1960s, these posters are not controlled by the musicians themselves but are instead generated by the community surrounding the music. The most iconic posters of this type have the potential to become a representation of the community vision, as did the original versions of this type of poster in 1960s San Francisco. As was outlined by the example of Ken Taylor's unique business model, this type of subcultural practice functions as a sub-industry within the music business; there are agreements in place whereby Taylor can sell the posters he has designed directly to consumers.

In contrast, as was evidenced by the Zawada case study, for the designers of gig and tour posters that are derivative of a musician or band's album cover design, the market for prints of the design concept used on the cover of the album and in associated posters remains somewhat inaccessible due to a more complicated deal-making process. This is challenging for artists and designers such as Zawada and it is arguably unfair given that some of the designs used by his musician clients were originally artworks that were created for his solo exhibitions. Yet despite the fact that he is not paid an ongoing royalty for their use, they nevertheless become so important to his musician clients' brand identities that he is not then able to generate derivative works of what were originally *his* own artworks. As Zawada noted:

> The thing that I've struggled more with recently … is the idea of not necessarily the exact specific artwork, but even variations—not even variations of that artwork, but variations on the theme. I remember when I did the Flume job, I got a lot of push back from the label in the six months afterwards, when I'd explored similar themes of flowers for another musician. (Interview 18)

The challenge for artists and designers such as Zawada here involves balancing the legal side of their deal making with the maintenance of the relationship with the musician or band and the staff at the label to which the musician or band are signed. Given that, as outlined in this chapter, the value dynamic favours the musician or band, Zawada felt that if he negotiates too hard to legally be allowed to generate derivative artworks and designs he may not be able to work with that particular musician or band again because the staff at the label to which they are signed would not want to deal with him.

Interestingly, if the campaign for a musician is uber-successful, as was the case with the 2016 Flume *Skin* album campaign that was discussed in this chapter, Zawada is not able to generate derivative works. However, the question of generating derivative works and re-using content can work in the artist/designer's favour if their clients'

campaigns are not successful.[11] In the interview data, Zawada estimated that 95% of the projects on which he has worked are unsuccessful commercially and therefore in the vast majority of cases there is potential for Zawada to commercialise his back catalogue of work. This point resonated with Zawada, who drew a parallel with an electronic musician and their back catalogue:

> There's a couple of musicians, one in particular I work with, who's been working forever … very well respected, still making music, but always living on the very edge of existence, barely surviving constantly for 25 years … he made a lot of very early ambient music, so his name often comes up in playlists for ambient music … because ambient music is particularly popular on Spotify because it's the sort of thing you just press play on and let play. He now gets a whole lot of money back that he never thought he would ever get back from music he wrote 25 years ago. (Interview 18)

As Zawada outlined in this chapter, the right for him to sell prints of his work directly to consumers is not written into the agreements he forms with his clients. Further, as a participant observer during the timeframe this research was conducted, I observed that oftentimes there is no formal written agreement signed by both parties when artists and designers such as Jefferton James are engaged to design gig and tour posters and the album cover designs from which the posters sometimes stem. While nevertheless copyright vests with whoever pays for the work to be created, whether there is a formal written agreement or not, this is only an 'implied contract' that covers the specific purpose for which the material was originally created.

There are many other uses to which the audio-visual copyright that artists and designers such as Zawada and James have generated over the years could be put. This theoretically means that there is an unrealised commercial value in the back catalogue of artists and designers such as Zawada and James. By extrapolating this point to the broader community of artists and designers who work with musicians, there may be ways that this value could be realised for the betterment and well-being of the music and design community; it could have a similar effect to the way Spotify has benefited the ambient musician discussed above.

This is particularly important because while the record labels and musicians take the financial risk when developing projects, and this is one of the issues that generates a particular value dynamic that puts artists and designers such as Zawada in a weak bargaining position, clearly practitioners such as Zawada invest huge amounts of time into the projects to which they contribute. They therefore *risk their time* and they are often exploited and/or they self-exploit in the process. This issue of time investment is compounded when considering what artists and designers such as Zawada sacrifice to work on music: more lucrative commercial design work for global brands. Clearly designers such as Zawada and James are intrinsically motivated to work on music. However, they arguably get exploited because they become wedged between commercial, industrial processes and artistically creative ones.

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[11]My use of the word successful here refers to a musician or band's commercial success and the exchange value of their musical products, as opposed to their cultural value or the critical success they have achieved.

As I outlined in this chapter, some of the musicians with whom Zawada works view him as being part of the 'team' and this in turn further intrinsically motivates him. This is perhaps why they tell him that he is part of the team. One would assume that musicians such as The Presets and Flume do not want to exploit artists and designers such as Zawada and, giving them the benefit of the doubt, they may not even be aware of the issues outlined in this chapter, but nevertheless artists and designers in this field are exploited and are led to self-exploit. This issue is being exacerbated by the exhaustion caused by the fact that for these practitioners an increase in the volume of output is often the only way to increase revenue in their attempts to make a living. As I outlined earlier in this chapter, this is the heart of the issue that this book has been designed to address. As we move further into the digital realm, there is a need to redesign the business of gig and tour poster design for the betterment of the artists and designers on whom the music business relies.

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Chapter 5
Music Video Production

Abstract This chapter concerns contemporary music video production and outlines how musicians over the last decade perceive changes in the ways in which they produce and use music videos. Through reflections on my involvement in the production of Australian musician Emma Louise's music video for her song 'Mirrors' (2013), as well as a digital ethnographic study of 60 music videos that Jefferton James directed between 2012 and 2018, this chapter builds on the work of Caston and Smith (Music, Sound, and the Moving Image 11:1–9, 2017) who argued that music video production has a hybrid production culture that emerged from the coming together of graphic design, specifically album cover and gig poster design, portrait photography, televised live concert performance and fine art.

Keywords Music video production · Digital ethnography · Remuneration

5.1 A Flooded Dance Studio

In early 2013, Jefferton James (director and producer), Dimity Kennedy (producer) and I (producer) collaborated with commercial choreographer Michael Boyd to produce a music video for Australian singer–songwriter Emma Louise for her song *Mirrors* (Louise 2013b). The video was to be a combination of a 'concept clip'[1] (Goodwin 1992) that told a story, and what is known as a 'performance video'. Typically, there are different logics, price points and timelines for producing these contrasting types of music video (Fig. 5.1).

Performance videos are typically cheaper and faster to produce than concept clips; they can often be shot in a day and simply involve the musician or band performing the song to the camera. This video was shot in a day. From our perspective, we were simply capturing a story that was to be told visually through the dance piece. The performance we captured included Emma performing the song amongst a dance piece that featured the choreographer Michael dancing with two female dancers.[2] The concept for this video was supplied by Emma and was derivative of the lyrics of

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[1]Concept clips are also known as 'narrative videos'.

[2]Zoey Black was known on the call sheet as 'dancer 1' and unfortunately I cannot remember 'dancer 2's' name. I know that this is ironic given this chapter's discussion of the lack of attribution for

Fig. 5.1 Stills from Jefferton James Designs' 17 Music Videos produced in 2013. Copyright Jefferton James

the song. As the producers of this video, Jefferton, Dimity and I therefore approached this production as a hybrid concept clip/performance video.

Concept clips and hybrid concept clips/performance videos are a lot more expensive, time-consuming and labour-intensive to produce than straight performance videos. Within these genres of music video, directors such as Jefferton may be approached directly by musicians, bands and their management and/or record labels to generate treatment[3] ideas for a song (see an example video treatment below).

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music video director and producer teams on YouTube, but alas, despite my best efforts, I have not been able to find her name.

[3]When the word treatment is used in the music video business, it refers to the script for a music video. The treatment contains the basic idea or 'high concept' for the production and it is often a one-page document that includes visual images, which may form a storyboard, and also web links to other music videos, short films, advertisements, and so on that are used as references.

Alternatively, a record label sends a brief to numerous director and producer teams that includes the budget available. The director then submits their treatment idea(s) and competes to secure the contract to direct and produce the video. Concept clips are often higher budget productions, though much of the budget has to be spent on costume design, manufacture and/or hire, location fees, studio hire, actor and extras fees, the lighting director's fee, the cinematographer's fee, the choreographer's fee, the dancers' fees, and so on. Due to these extra costs, the profit margin on concept clips can often be thinner than that for a straight performance video, which may simply involve the cost of lighting hire and studio hire. Concerning this issue Jefferton James noted:

> You can get like a 10-grand clip and they're like, 'Yeah, I want this to look like a 25-grand clip.' But if you're doing a thousand-dollar video clip I think they just want it to look good. They don't want every bell and whistle on that. They're just looking for quality over razzle dazzle. The more it goes up, the more razzle dazzle is expected. (Interview 1)

The Emma Louise (2013b) *Mirrors* video is therefore useful here as an example of a hybrid concept clip/performance video. In terms of the costs involved, Emma generated the concept for it and, via her management, incurred the cost of hiring Michael to choreograph the piece and for him and the dancers to perform it. We were brought into direct, film and produce the video on a low budget. Jefferton incurred the cost of hiring the dance studio.

And so it was that on the morning of 21 February 2013 we met at the first location for the shoot, a dance studio in Marrickville in Sydney's inner-west called TMS Studios. It was serendipitous that, upon entering the studio early in the morning, we noticed that the third-floor studio, which was essentially the attic of the building, had a skylight that provided a single source of natural light. Due to the low budget, we did not hire a lighting director for this shoot and, as a general rule, when shooting this type of video a direct source of light can be used if it is the only, or at least the primary, source being used. The creative process for producing this video therefore was very low cost and, arguably, effective. In addition to simply using this single source of natural light, Jefferton found a broken piece of glass and moved this in front of the lens of the camera in order to slightly distort the images of Emma performing the song and singing the lyrics to the camera. The video was shot entirely on a Canon 5D Mark III camera, which was a low-cost option.[4]

The lead reference video that Emma supplied to Jefferton for the shoot was a trailer clip for the French film company La Petite Reine (2008). In discussing how to realise a similar image of dancers dancing in water in a darkly lit space, Jefferton and Michael brainstormed the idea of putting black plastic on the floor of the dance studio and flooding it with water. As the other producers, Dimity and I rejected this idea outright and insisted that we not flood the dance studio. In terms of the overall

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[4]While at the time Jefferton owned a Canon Mark III camera, for higher budget video shoots we would often hire additional equipment such as a Blackmagic Design URSA Mini Pro 4.6 K EF camera and additional lenses, stands, lighting equipment, dollys and sliders, microphones, etc. from hire equipment suppliers for the photographic and film industry such as The Front (2019) in Sydney's inner-west.

design aesthetic for the video, Emma supplied a link to Australian singer–songwriter Sarah Blasko's video entitled 'I awake: A short film' (Blasko 2012). In order to realise similar sensual interactions between dancers in an attempt to tell a story of a love triangle in which a man leaves an older woman for a younger one (Emma's concept),[5] the shower at the dance studio was used for a scene featuring Michael and dancer Zoey Black. It was at this stage that unfortunately the black plastic we used to darken the space blocked the plug hole for the shower and we did, albeit accidentally, flood part of the dance studio.

In a moment of insight during the shoot, Michael suggested that we relocate the shoot to a Sydney Harbour beach that night in order to realise the design aesthetic that was originally outlined in the reference videos that Emma had provided (dancers dancing in darkly lit water). And so it was that the shoot wrapped in Sydney Harbour at around 11 pm (fortunately it was summer). Once all of the footage was captured, which included some pick-up shoots with two of the dancers in the following days, Jefferton edited the video together. The editing process was somewhat stressful due to the two different perspectives on the video: (1) capturing the story told through the dance piece, and (2) making sure that the shots that were used in the final edit were lit properly and suited the overall aesthetic that Emma wanted Jefferton to achieve as the director and editor of the video.

As of 17 September 2019, the *Mirrors* video has been viewed 413,593 times on YouTube (Louise 2013b). Emma Louise has now released three critically acclaimed studio albums, the most recent of which received a 7.6/10 review on Pitchfork.com. The reviewer Cox (2018) noted that her 2018 album *Lilac everything* was enchanting and was the result of a successful creative gamble:

> When Louise and Jesso[6] were just about to finish their sessions together, she asked him to pitch her vocals down, dragging them out of her natural soprano range and into a full, creamy baritone. This series of bold moves has led Louise into uncharted territory. (Cox 2018)

After the release of her low-budget 2013 video for her song *Mirrors*, Emma, with the help of her manager Rick Chazan, has managed to build a sustainable and critically successful career. The *Mirrors* video contributed, in a small way, to the development of her career.

5.2   A Hidden Screen Industry

This chapter concerns contemporary music video production and examines how musicians over the last ten-year period have changed the way in which they produce and use music videos. This chapter is therefore located within a growing body of

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[5]Regarding the lyrical meaning of the song, Emma noted: 'I guess this song is a cowardly way to say, stay away from my man … I imagined my cat back arched while I hissed these lyrics behind a microphone' (Louise 2013a).

[6]Tobias Jesso Jr produced the album.

literature that addresses music video as a 'hidden' screen industry that has been neglected within creative and cultural industries research (Caston 2015; Caston and Smith 2017; Cave 2017; Fowler 2017; Grainge and Johnson 2015).[7] Through the use of the research methods of participant observation, digital ethnography and semi-structured qualitative interviews, this chapter builds on Caston and Smith's (2017) examination of British music video culture. Caston and Smith (2017, p. 2) argued that music video production involves a hybrid production culture that emerged from the coming together of graphic design, specifically album cover and gig poster design, portrait photography, televised live concert performance and fine art. As a relatively new art form it has had, and continues to have, a broad impact on the music business. This chapter will also locate music videos within this book's discussion of music-related design cultures.

While there is significant research by Kaiser and Spanu (2018), Shaviro (2017), Caston and Smith (2017), Arnold et al. (2017), Mathias (2017), Caston (2015), Donnelly (2007), Railton and Watson (2011), Andrejevitch (2009) and Vernallis (2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2013a, b) that has demonstrated the need for an evidenced-based understanding of the production of music videos, there is a paucity of literature published concerning the contemporary music video business.[8] While recent literature on Australian music video for example has tended to focus on specific television programmes (Giuffre 2009, 2013), or on the issue of gender, both in terms of representation and participation in the art form (Giuffre 2016), this chapter is designed to make a unique contribution to our understanding of contemporary music video production by using my 'insider' perspective as a music video producer and manager of a music video director.

Initially, as was evidenced by the discussion of the production of Emma Louise's *Mirrors* video above, this chapter focuses on music video director and producer teams' creative processes by exploring the way in which such teams, in collaboration with musicians, use metaphorical thinking, associative thinking and conceptual combination (Sawyer 2012) in order to visually realise lyrical and musical ideas. It will also engage with primary qualitative research data that was collected for this book that points out that the budgets for music videos have been declining over the past ten years.

Music video is a heritage cultural form and, while the categories of 'concept clips' (Goodwin 1992) that tell a visual story and what are known as 'performance videos' existed during the music television era of music video, this chapter will specifically examine the way in which these different types of music video function within the social media/YouTube era of music video. Music video production and consumption

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[7]Caston and Smith (2017, p. 1) specifically point out that music video is a 'hidden screen industry' that has been neglected in taxpayer-funded research into the creative and cultural industries in the UK.

[8]There are some (now quite dated) 'how to' books about making videos. Schwartz's (2007) *Making music videos* focuses on the technical and managerial skills that producers and directors need, while Hanson's (2006) *Reinventing music video: Next-generation directors, their inspiration and work* is now over 11 years old. This book contrasts with this literature because it is a research-based monograph.

is changing as a result of social media platforms and, while concept clips remain relevant, this chapter argues that the role of a performance clip has been replaced by social media content. Performance videos used to serve the purpose of showing fans what musicians and bands look like and nowadays fans can see what the musician or band looks like, and often what they sound like when they talk, because of the content that musicians and bands share via services such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. These platforms have also led to a fragmentation of the traditional music video into packages of content that can be drip fed into the rivers of content these services facilitate.

Through a digital ethnographic case study of YouTube and Facebook, this chapter will also explore the sub-research question: What are the conditions and experiences of a contemporary music video director in terms of creative labour? Karjalainen and Ainamo (2011) noted that 'the number of bands playing and delivering music has increased considerably and the industry has witnessed the birth of alternative configurations of music: catalogue offerings, distributed compositions, and new e-platforms' (p. 100). Therefore, music video production businesses have benefited from the increased 'churn' of musicians' releases (and careers) through generating revenue on aggregate from the many more musicians who can reach an audience directly. Video production businesses have also benefited from the fact that, in order to retain the attention of their audience, artists who do have an audience large enough to sustain a career need to be consistently remarkable. However, generating revenue on aggregate by producing many videos in a competitive environment has come at a cost in terms of workload, burnout and lower price points.

5.3 Conceptual Combination, Metaphor and Analogy

According to Sawyer (2012), the mental processes most relevant to creativity, in terms of cognitive psychology, are conceptual combination, metaphor and analogy (Mumford and Gustafson 1988, p. 27, as cited in Sawyer 2012, p. 116; Ward et al. 1997a, b, as cited in Sawyer 2012). Creativity within the field of music video production often provides clear examples of this. This is simply because music video treatment writers and video directors are attempting to represent lyrical and musical content visually. They use a form of radiant thinking (see Illumine Training 2019), which is a specific form of associative thinking (see Sawyer 2012, p. 107) whereby their ideas radiate out from the central ideas contained in the lyrics and music of a song.

The creativities that are involved in music video production involve a mental cross-fertilisation between the different disciplines of music and screen production. In order to analyse this process, I will now examine a music video treatment that Jefferton wrote for the Australian musician Kasey Chambers. The following is the original treatment that was written by Jefferton and submitted to Warner Music Australia in

order to secure the contract to direct and produce a music video for Kasey Chambers'[9] song *Is God real?* (Chambers 2015b). The parents of the boy in the story below are separated/divorced. While the boy's mother is religious, his father is an atheist. The video therefore features a split screen and two parallel narratives that come together at the end. One narrative involves the boy experiencing his mother's religious faith while she looks after him. The other involves the boy thinking through his father's atheism when his father is the primary carer.

IS GOD REAL?

MUSICAL INTRO (single frame)

We see the young boy looking out the window, lost in his own world. We intercut shots of empty school hallways, schoolbags, etc. He is broken out of his spell when his teacher places his homework assignment in front of him. We can see by his expression that the question stirs something conflicting inside of him.

Begin split screen mum on the left/dad on the right

[Lines 1 and 2 of the lyrics here][10]

We see the boy leaving school, being collected by each respective parent. The mother is loving and nurturing as she greets him. The father is more playful and 'buddy' like.

[Lines 3 and 4 of the lyrics here]

We see the boy in respective cars, he zones out and watches the world whiz by while his mother and father ask him questions about his day etc. His mind still thinking about his assignment question.

[Lines 5 to 8 of the lyrics here]

We see that it is dinner time in each house. In the mother's house we see them sitting at the table. She takes his hand and bows her head. She says grace/a prayer for the two of them. The boy doesn't instantly pray along with her, instead he watches his mother in her quiet reflection. He ponders the point of doing this each night. We see him write something on his hand, then bow his head and say his own prayer for both his mum and dad.

At the father's house we see a more relaxed situation, the two sit on the couch, eating take out and watching the news. The son is lost in thought, much like at his mum's place, while his father watches the news and muses at the situation the world finds itself in, all because of religion.

[Lines 9 to 12 of the lyrics here]

At the mother's house we see him wake and get ready into his 'Sunday best'. At his father's house they wake early and head out into the woods. We see the mother and the boy enter their church, the roof looming over them. We see the father and boy enter the woods, the canopy of trees looms over them. We see the boy zoning out of the service and stares at the crucifix. We see him writing questions and thoughts on his hand again for his assignment

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[9]Kasey Chambers is an Australian country singer–songwriter who has released 12 studio albums to date. Coming from a musical family, she achieved cross-over success from the Australian country music scene to the mainstream pop music scene in Australia with her album *The captain* in 1999. She has a large audience in the USA and is one of the most well-known female musicians in Australia (Chambers 2019).

[10]The lyrics for the song were also included in the original treatment for this video. Despite an attempt to obtain permission to reproduce them here, unfortunately the cost to do so exceeded the amount I had allocated in the budget of the publication subsidy grant I obtained from the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne to produce this book. A Google search on 18 November 2019, however, revealed that the lyrics were available on various websites.

while others pray. We see the father and son out in the woods. The father walks slightly ahead, pointing things out in nature and teaching his son about our place in the world.

[Lines 13 to 16 of the lyrics here]

We see each respective parent putting the boy to bed. We see him wishing his dad good night and slowly drifting off to sleep at his father's place, while at his mother's place he watches his mother alone and looking lost. We see him mutter a prayer for her before going to sleep.

[Lines 17 to 20 of the lyrics here]

MUSICAL BRIDGE

As he sleeps we see both parents alone in their respective houses. They seem a little disconnected as they stare blankly at their TV/book.

[Lines 21 to 24 of the lyrics here]

We see the boy alone, riding his bike through the streets of his neighbourhood. He watches people as he passes. Kids playing with sticks (using them as sticks and guns). He sees missionaries being yelled at, an angry drunk at their front door etc. We see him cycle up to a 'lookout' and look across his suburb as the sun is setting. He pulls out a folded-up photo from his pocket of him and his parents, happy and together. He smiles and places it back in his pocket.

[Lines 25 to 28 of the lyrics here]

We see the boy sitting in his room cutting pages from books and sticking them to a large cardboard panel. Images of Darwin and apes, Adam and Eve. Images of gods from all religions and their leaders (e.g. the Dalai Lama). We see him putting together his assignment. We see him working on the images at his mother's house and the words at his father's house.

[Lines 29 to 32 of the lyrics here]

We see his mum quietly seeing what he's doing from the other room, she draws closer, peering through the door. Her heart about ready to burst with pride. She quietly withdraws before being seen. On the dad's side of frame, we see him discover his son's notebook filled with questions about God and religion. He shares a similar look of pride before putting the book back before his son realises.

[Lines 33 to 36 of the lyrics here]

(Single frame) It's the morning of school and we see the boy wearing his uniform, practising his speech with the door closed in the bathroom to the mirror. He looks nervous but as ready as he's ever going to be. His mum toots the car horn. He grabs his schoolbag and races out to the car.

[Lines 37 to 40 of the lyrics here]

We see the parents standing in his classroom with a few other parents for speech day. We see the boy's teacher call him up and he stands before the class with his speech card in his hand. We see him say his name and tell the class and parents that when he is with his mum he is Christian and when he is with his dad he is an atheist. We see the parents almost tear up with pride as he starts his speech. We see his teacher, also smiling with pride, write down notes as he delivers his speech.

[Lines 41 to 44 of the lyrics here]

We see everyone applaud and we see him look over to his parents and smile.

This video treatment provides a clear example of radiant thinking. If the music is muted, music videos essentially function as silent short films. The ideas that formed the visual story here radiated out from the central ideas contained in the lyrics of

Chambers' song and combined with the visual story told through the 'silent film'. Through so doing the video arguably became a powerful piece of art and helped to advertise Chambers' 2014 album *Bittersweet*.[11] Interestingly, while treatments such as this are key starting points for the mental cross-fertilisation between the different disciplines of music and screen production that is required, according to Jonathan Zawada, these documents can also limit this creative process: 'The way videos get produced in terms of writing treatments and all that sort of stuff never felt like the way I work. I like to discover stuff as I'm going along' (Interview 18).

Zawada is referring here to a major label-commissioned higher budget music video. Of course, the creative processes involved in music video production depend on the genre, the status of the musician for whom the video is being made, and whether the video is being commissioned by a major label or whether it is self-funded by an independent musician. Therefore, the original treatment does not always limit the subsequent creative process in this way. Chambers' video, however, was commissioned by Warner Music Australia and was an example of a video that was produced under the terms of a production agreement with a major label. Videos such as this are usually produced under strict agreements that have a clause in them stating that the video must conform to the theme, style, duration, and so on outlined in the treatment that was approved by the label. Such agreements often also involve an assignment of copyright in the video and any excess footage to the label and the waiving of any moral rights the director and producer of the video may otherwise have throughout the world in perpetuity (Schwartz 2007).

5.3.1   Digital Ethnography

Using a digital ethnographic approach, Table 5.1 shows how selected videos that Jefferton James directed over the period 2012–2018 performed on the platform YouTube. This is not an exhaustive list of the videos he directed and produced over this time period, nor is it a comprehensive overview of how they performed on all digital platforms and on television. This case study involves basic quantitative data; it simply outlines how many times the selected videos have been viewed on YouTube to date. The table has also been designed to highlight whether the teams that created the videos were credited on YouTube or not and also to identify the genre of music video being used.

This table has been created for the purpose of critically analysing the use of these music videos and the interrelationship between this use, YouTube as a platform, and social formations within the music industries. The following videos were all directed, produced or co-produced, shot and edited by Jefferton James in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for Australian, New Zealand and some international musicians between 2012 and 2018. All YouTube viewership numbers represent a snapshot taken between 15 and 20 September 2019.

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[11]A behind-the-scenes video that accompanied the release of Chambers' video 'Is God real?' is available (Chambers 2015a).

Table 5.1 Directed by Jefferton James: a digital ethnographic case study of YouTube

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Boy & Bear—Rabbit song (official video)	Not credited	2,765,234 views as at 17 Sept 2019	29 Apr 2010 Concept clip	Universal Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYCDNRpyzrM
Boy & Bear—Blood to gold (official video)	Not credited	1,162,631 views as at 17 Sept 2019	13 Sept 2010 Concept clip	Universal Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYjwRfyi-no
Tim & Jean—Come around	Not credited	129,655 views as at 15 Sept 2019	29 Oct 2010 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiKUzpOxUSs
Dead Letter Chorus—Run, wild	Directed by Jefferton James	39,551 views as at 15 Sept 2019	4 Nov 2010 Concept clip	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ05JUDT8E4
Georgia Fair—Times fly	Not credited	66,772 views as at 15 Sept 2019	17 Mar 2011 Concept clip	Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7YbIR3fWCI

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Georgia Fair—Marianne ft. Lisa Mitchell, Boy & Bear	Not credited	51,875 views as at 15 Sept 2019	7 Apr 2011 Performance video	Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7m11On5nAWg
Avalanche City—Ends in the ocean (official video)	Director: Jefferton James	298,982 views as at 15 Sept 2019	18 Apr 2011 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNc8SzWvoMg
Boy & Bear—Feeding line (official video)	Not credited	1,146,660 views as at 17 Sept 2019	31 May 2011 Concept clip	Universal Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AeKD2oHrFg
Charlie Mayfair—Tell her (official music video)	Directed by Jefferton James. Cinematography and editing by Byron Quandary. Make up by Hannah O'Callaghan	108,982 views as at 15 Sept 2019	6 Jul 2011 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL9cbXUrX48
Avalanche City—You and I (official version)	Directed by Jefferton James	524,317 views as at 15 Sept 2019	5 Dec 2011 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfoJfYI7jY
Charlie Mayfair—Waste me (official music video)	Directed by Jefferton James. Written by Charlie Mayfair	9,009 views as at 20 Sept 2019	6 Jun 2012 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoUafuQU1yY

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Jack Carty—She's got a boyfriend	Directed by Jefferton James	13,601 views as at 15 Sept 2019	7 Jul 2012 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Qo24vZ4lUg
The Paper Kites—A maker of my time (official music video)	Directed and Produced by The Paper Kites & Jefferton James. Edited by Jefferton James	2,867,497 views as at 15 Sept 2019	23 Aug 2012 Concept clip	Nettwerk, Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8A_8rbakgg
Catherine Britt—Charlestown Road (official video)	Not credited	4,260 views as at 15 Sept 2019	1 Oct 2012 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHZyRoTc4DU
Jackson McLaren, The Triple Threat—This be the place	Not credited	2,550 views as at 15 Sept 2019	21 Nov 2012 Concept clip	Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93aqPcYkMLs
Tin Sparrow—The beast	Not credited	5,254 views as at 15 Sept 2019	10 Jan 2013 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUhNiY-I2BU

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
ME the band—Vampire!! Vampire!!	Directed by Jefferton James. Starring Mark Lee	31,521 views as at 15 Sept 2019	3 Feb 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Lizard King Media	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBQJX54HowE
Allie & Ivy—Uh oh!	Directed by Jefferton James	13,660 views as at 20 Sept 2019	22 Feb 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/cgWFG9mZzUo
Morgan Evans—Carry on (official video). Currently unlisted	Not credited	31,091 views as at 20 Sept 2019	11 Apr 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Warner Music Australia	https://youtu.be/PMNaAC-Uenk
Emma Louise—Mirrors (official video)	Directed by Jefferton James. Choreographed by Michael Boyd. Produced by Dimity Kennedy and Guy Morrow	413,593 views as at 17 Sept 2019	28 Apr 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Frenchkiss Records	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H33KDQtr3A8
Baylou—Novocaine (official music video)	Music video produced by Jefferton James	41,836 views as at 15 Sept 2019	28 May 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLL2_13axBU
Jasmine Rae—If I want to (official music video)	Video directed by Jefferton James and produced by Dimity Kennedy	233,734 views as at 15 Sept 2019	2 Jun 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIkPXVFdKVo

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Adam Katz—Stars (official video)	Film by Jefferton James	62,279 views as at 15 Sept 2019	13 Jun 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Central Station Records	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANBZs0OI-QI
Richard Cuthbert—It stops	Film clip directed by Jefferton James. Filmed at Hibernian House. Choreographed and danced by Philippa Ryan. Also danced by me	939 views as at 20 Sept 2019	22 Aug 2013 Concept clip	Independent	https://youtu.be/hnKX65lV-j8
Hey Geronimo—Lazer gun show	Film by Jefferton James	65,778 views as at 15 Sept 2019	9 Sept 2013 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSBf_N6rVRY
Luke Thompson—Walls (official)	Film by Jefferton James. Produced by Dimity Kennedy and Guy Morrow. Starring Chelsea Brown. www.jeffertonjamesdesigns.com.au Thanks to NZ on Air	12,759 views as at 15 Sept 2019	17 Oct 2013 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGcwjtqLEjU
Allie & Ivy—Cowboys and Indians	Film by Jefferton James. Produced by Allie & Ivy, Dimmity Kennedy and Guy Morrow	3,294 views as at 20 Sept 2019	31 Oct 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/A7MKkLRwG10

Table 5.1   (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Jasmine Rae—Just don't ask me how I am (official music video)	Not credited	241,337 views as at 17 Sept 2019	10 Nov 2013 Performance video	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmnvda R-YZk
Jackson McLaren, The Triple Threat—Some of my friends	Produced and directed by Jefferton James. Co-produced by Guy Morrow. Filmed at Factory Five Studio in Brunswick East, Melbourne	2,197 views as at 15 Sept 2019	6 Dec 2013 Concept clip	Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyp gZ0 yPiec
The Griswolds—The courtship of Summer Preasley	Directed by Jefferton James and The Griswolds. Produced by Dimity Kennedy	174,171 views as at 15 Sept 2019	11 Dec 2013 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Chugg Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNV hEtCgj-c
Ashleigh Dallas—Sail away (official video)	Not credited	15,748 views as at 15 Sept 2019	4 Feb 2014 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Warner Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzn mls pB2mE
Harry Hookey—Man on fire (official video)	Not credited	29,480 views as at 15 Sept 2019	20 Mar 2014 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Essence Music/Warner Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc1 Hph 8BeT4

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Pony Boy—If only he were you	Shot on location in the Blue Mountains and Sydney, Australia. Cast of Characters: The Narrator: Pony Boy; The Jilted Bride: Ruby Lennon; The Narcissist Groom: Luke Pegler; The Lumberjack: Peter Maple; The Cheerleader: Cassandra Chen; The Video Voyeur: Adam Daniel. Directed and edited by Jefferton James. Produced by Dimity Kennedy, Guy Morrow and Jefferton James	4,176 views as at 15 Sept 2019	7 Apr 2014 Concept clip	Odd Man Out Records	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdeoOY2WNjI
Harmony James—Skinny flat white (official music video)	Not credited	19,288 views as at 15 Sept 2019	18 May 2014 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Warner Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQoTsJ9WPOk
Masketta Fall—Big dog (official music video)	Film by Jefferton James Designs and Masketta Fall	64,487 views as at 15 Sept 2019	24 Jun 2014 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Masketta Fall Records	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwNw5vE1ss4

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Liam Gerner—Hank and Tammy (official music video)	Director: Jefferton James. Editor, DOP: Jefferton James. Producer, Assistant photographer: Guy Morrow. Hank: Greg 'Panks' Pankhurst. Tammy: Andrina Sheehan	8,516 views as at 15 Sept 2019	7 Jul 2014 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPJuIjugkk8
Joseph & Maia—Roll up your sleeves	Not credited	9,265 views as at 20 Sept 2019	3 Sep 2014 Concept clip	Sony Music Entertainment New Zealand Limited	https://youtu.be/CtUdLc_-AVk
Stu Larsen—King Street (official video)	Directed and edited by Jefferton James	147,296 views as at 15 Sept 2019	25 Nov 2014 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROOVIRHXHcQ
Love & Other Crimes—Pray woman	Not credited	2,108 views as at 20 Sept 2019	3 Dec 2014 Concept clip	Independent	https://youtu.be/_rb93W0pKuo
Morgan Evans—Best I never had (official music video). Currently unlisted	Not credited	48,585 views as at 20 Sept 2019	22 Jan 2015 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Warner Music Australia	https://youtu.be/Ul8mrj8fExo
Kasey Chambers—Is God real? (official music video)	Directed by Jefferton James	104,152 views as at 15 Sept 2019	19 Apr 2015 Concept clip	Essence Music/Warner Music Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Rh62aWp5Ow

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Josh Pyke—There's a line	Not credited	37,552 views as at 20 Sept 2019	29 May 2015 Concept clip	Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://youtu.be/OWP9MT_huxw
Josh Pyke—Hollering hearts (lyric video)	Not credited	54,779 views as at 15 Sept 2019	14 Jul 2015 Concept clip	Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElA6zf5OlFU
Patrick James—Bugs (official video)	Directed by Jefferton James. Produced by Jefferton James and Patrick James. Hair & make up by Maria Whiting. Production Assistant: Peter Maple. Shot on location at Cathedral Rock, Kiama, NSW	157,767 views as at 15 Sept 2019	3 Aug 2015 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Iy4glWc-es
Playing with Rockets—Altitudes	Directed and filmed by Jefferton James	13,572 views as at 20 Sept 2019	22 Aug 2015 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/ntfDsHWGm0I
Patrick James—Make me stronger (live at Alberts)	Directed by Jefferton James. Lighting by Eamon Barling. Band: Joe Kernahan, Curtis Smith, Scott Steven, Patrick James. Mixed: Jai Ingrim and Mark Smithers	3,599 views as at 20 Sept 2019	20 Oct 2015 Performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/K00yG-G6yG4

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Little Earthquake—Honest	Not credited	2,482 views as at 15 Sept 2019	20 Apr 2016 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ef6-BqMY8ws
Jack Carty—A way with me	Directed, filmed and edited by Jefferton James. Additional help from Natasha Saba and Guy Morrow	4,661 views as at 20 Sept 2019	19 Aug 2016 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/vmfMviSvZNQ
Josh Pyke—Into the wind	Directed and Produced by Jefferton James	4,193 views as at 20 Sept 2019	23 May 2017 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Wonderlick Recording Company/Sony Music Entertainment Australia	https://youtu.be/YrsCtwJjOe8
Baylou—Closing this memory down (official music video)	Video Produced by: Jefferton James. Wedding Gown Dress: Lena Kasparian	31,934 views as at 18 Sept 2019	8 Jul 2017 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	ABC Music	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OpGkQCbH74
Danielle Deckard—Happy (official music video)	Directed and edited by Jefferton James	1,794 views as at 20 Sept 2019	5 Oct 2017 Performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nWO8e5xFrY
AViVA—GRRRL grrrls (official video)	Directed by AViVA and Jefferton James. Filmed and edited by Jefferton James	766,931 views as at 19 Sept 2019	21 Nov 2017 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://youtu.be/jThFdXtotQc

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Little Earthquake—Human connection (official music video)	Produced and Directed by Jefferton James. Cinematography by Dimity Kennedy	690 views as at 15 Sept 2019	30 Nov 2017 Concept clip	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4HZFQWEBtc
Between Kings—The escape (official music video)	Not credited	170,255 views as at 17 Sept 2019	23 Jan 2018 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_Rw7bBPE4o
AViVA—Drown (official video)	Directed by AViVA and Jefferton James. Filmed and edited by Jefferton James	95,186 views as at 23 Sept 2019	15 Mar 2018 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUVt7VX4dVA
Matt Gresham—High wire (official video)	Not credited	101,041 views as at 17 Sept 2019	22 Mar 2018 Concept clip	Warner Music Germany	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBgVLW2QGtU
Danielle Deckard—Honey (official music video)	Directed and edited by Jefferton James	644 views as at 20 Sept 2019	6 Apr 2018 Performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAIW1nlunGE
Matt Gresham—Rising up (official video)	Rob Whittaker. Filmed by Jefferton James. Thanks to Stand Strong Boxing	351,022 views as at 17 Sept 2019	10 May 2018 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Warner Music Germany	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDpndQkN8j0

Table 5.1 (continued)

Title	Credits published on YouTube	Views on YouTube	Date published and genre	Label	URL
Danielle Deckard—Sky falls down (official music video)	Directed and edited by Jefferton James	501 views as at 20 Sept 2019	13 Jul 2018 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfC0KfjJY2I
E for Echo—Stay (official music video)	Directed by Jefferton James. Dancers: Amber Jenkins/Davie Denis	934 views as at 17 Sept 2019	18 Nov 2018 Hybrid concept clip/performance video	Independent	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHDuVUeDp14

This digital ethnography brings a number of points into the light. First, Jefferton is clearly prolific, with his output across this period peaking in 2013, a year in which he directed, produced, co-produced and edited 17 music videos. In total, Table 5.1 lists 60 music videos that were produced between 2012 and 2018. Given that for various reasons there are a number of videos that were taken down by the musicians featured in them, or the labels that own them[12]—and they have therefore not been included on this list—this is an average output of over 10 music videos per year. The total number of views these videos have had on YouTube is 12,777,657, with an average of 212,960.95 per video. The video that Jefferton directed that was most viewed on YouTube over this time period was The Paper Kites' *A maker of my time* video with 2,867,497 views as on 15 September 2019 and the video viewed the least was Danielle Deckard's *Sky falls down* video with 501 views on 20 September 2019.

Eight of the videos were funded by labels that are in joint ventures with major labels, 12 were funded directly by major labels and 40 were funded by independent labels or artists. Interestingly, if the video was independently funded then the director

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[12]For example, a video made for Danielle Deckard entitled *Sleep* has since been made private on YouTube despite the video originally being premiered by *Frankie* magazine (Deckard 2015). Likewise, the videos that Jefferton directed for Australian country music star Morgan Evans are currently 'unlisted' on YouTube. I assume that this is because Evans is now achieving global success and his current management want to make him look fresh and so have unlisted his older videos. This is despite the fact that his 2014 'Best I never had' video was shot across a 19-hour shoot day, as evidenced by the behind-the-scenes video (Evans 2015b). It was not until 2018 that Morgan became one of Billboard's '2018 Country Artists to Watch', and his global hit song 'Kiss somebody' achieved the number 1 spot on the US Country Chart (Forum Melbourne 2019). He has also achieved platinum sales status in Australia (70,000), and has tallied 66 million streams on Spotify as at 23 September 2019 (Forum Melbourne 2019).

and producer teams were more likely to be credited on YouTube than if the video was funded by a major label; 75% of the 20 videos that were funded directly by major labels or by labels that are in joint ventures with major labels do not have the credits for the director and producer teams listed on YouTube. In contrast, only 20% of the videos that were funded by independent artists and labels do not have the credits listed for the director and producer teams.[13] Regarding the issue of being credited on YouTube or not, Jefferton noted:

> Well everyone likes to be credited, especially if you've put in long hours on something but again I don't live and die by being credited. I prefer it but crediting accounts for I'd say about 25/30% of the business that you get in. A lot of it's like the word of mouth. The average punter off the street isn't going, 'I saw Jefferton James' name tagged in something, I'm going to get him.' (Interview 1)

Jefferton was referring to the fact that he is a business-to-business (B2B) service provider and therefore his reputation in the music business is what enables him to procure new business. According to him, this is more likely to occur through word-of-mouth support amongst industry networks than because an independent artist or someone who works for a major label (for example) saw his name listed in the credits on YouTube. Further to this, in relation to the way in which the business-to-business networks function despite the credits often not being included on YouTube, London-based music video and film entrepreneur, Caroline Bottomley (founder of Radar Music Video and the Shiny Awards) noted:

> Vimeo makes up for that in a lot of ways. Because if you've heard that blah blah's video for x is really good, and you want to know who the director is, you won't look for it on YouTube, you'll look for it on Vimeo because the director or their production company will have always, should have put up a copy of their own. (Interview 17)

The following digital ethnographic case study of Jefferton James Designs' (2019) Facebook page provides insights into the conditions and experiences of a contemporary music video director such as Jefferton. As is evidenced by the fact that 40 of the 60 videos produced over the six-year period above were funded by independent artists or labels, music video production businesses have benefited from the increased 'churn' of musicians' releases and careers through generating revenue on aggregate from the many more musicians who can reach an audience directly and who pay them to direct and produce videos in their attempts to grow their audience. The following archived Facebook posts provide glimpses into the realities of Jefferton's working life across the years he produced these videos, for many of which he was not credited on YouTube:

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[13]There may be a number of reasons for this. For example, typically major labels have more staff who may be enlisted to upload the videos to YouTube and they may not know who the directors are, or care who they are. Major labels also typically pay more for the videos to be made, whereas independent labels and artists are more likely to credit the director and producer teams in an attempt to intrinsically motivate them to work with them again. However, these are just guesses, and further research would be needed to determine the actual reasons for this difference in how these different types of labels credit, or do not credit, the director and producer teams on YouTube.

A broad look at 2013 in music videos produced and directed by Jefferton James Designs. It's been a super busy and productive year producing 17 music videos plus also a stack of album covers and gig posters. Been lucky enough to creatively spread my wings in ways I could never have imagined and we have worked with a lot of incredibly talented and wonderful artists. To all of them I say thank you and to all involved in the making of these productions I can never thank you enough. (31 December 2013). (Jefferton James Designs 2019)

17 nearly 18 hours straight of editing done and one very rough cut ready for the record label to see. Now if you will excuse me I'm off to fall in a heap and dream about something other than making music videos. G Night world! (13 April 2015). (Jefferton James Designs 2019)

Currently editing 3 music videos at the same time, all very different in tone and style (which makes you feel a little scattered at times) but here is a 'sneak peek' at the opening title cards of Allie & Ivy's *Best friends* music video which allows me to play with my love of old/retro credit sequences. Again these 3 clips could not be more different … one dark and introspective, the 2nd is minimal and observed and this one is an explosion of colour, fun and absurdity. (15 March 2017). (Jefferton James Designs 2019)

2018 is ready to clock off and it's been another full year in making music videos and getting to create a wide array of different projects from dealing with mental illness, domestic violence, love in the disconnected digital age, American gun violence, modern dance, MMA, Neon pop explosions and more. Huge thanks to all my clients, the creative talent in front of the camera and everyone who works with me behind the scenes (31 December 2018). (Jefferton James Designs 2019)

Clearly generating revenue on aggregate by producing this many music videos was creatively rewarding for Jefferton, though his workload was huge and there was a high risk of burnout.

In terms of the genres of music video that Jefferton produced over the six-year period under examination here, 25 (41.7%) of the videos listed above are 'concept clips', 30 are hybrid concept clips/performance videos (50%), while only 5 are straight performance videos (8.3%). As discussed above, concept clips, that is music videos that are comparable to short films, and hybrid concept clips/performance videos, whereby the musician's performance of the song is interwoven with cutaways to a particular visual concept or a storyline (such as the Emma Louise *Mirrors* video discussed above), are more expensive and time-consuming to produce than straight performance videos. Caston and Smith (2017, p. 2) argued that, in the UK, music video as an art form emerged in the highly vibrant art school culture of the late 1960s from the coming together of graphic design, portrait photography, televised live concert performance and fine art. Hybrid concept clips/performance videos are literal examples of this combination of graphic design, live concert performance and fine art. Jefferton arguably excels at directing and producing this type of music video because he also works as a graphic designer and he has an ability to think divergently and to create novel ideas.

This genre of music video is an example of the fact that design in the music business itself is not a singular bounded discipline. The emergence of music videos in the late 1960s (Caston and Smith 2017) underlines the shifting boundaries of design within this field. Design cultures within the music business are generated by the fact that musicians and their management and record labels attempt to generate brand strategies whereby a particular visual identity is deployed across several inter-linked platforms (Julier and Munch 2019). The digital ethnographic approach used

in this section is a useful embedded mode of investigation for analysing music video production. It has enabled insights to be generated into the literal creation of the connections between the various elements of a musician's design culture.

5.4   Remuneration

Design is the interface between a musician and the world and between their music and the world. Highmore (2019) noted that 'design' involves 'the purposeful shaping of environments (both virtual and physical) … this shaping alters practices, affects our feelings and orchestrates sensorial perception' (p. 30). Yet, while Jefferton's contribution to the careers of the musicians with whom he has worked is profound for this reason, the argument that he should be better remunerated is easy to make if I only focus on the musicians with whom he has worked who have gone on to achieve astounding success.[14] It is a more difficult argument to make if I also consider the many musicians with whom he has worked who have created music and surrounding design cultures that, for whatever reason, have not connected with large audiences. The successful musicians achieve more exchange value from his design contributions than he does, but the reverse is also true: Jefferton achieves more exchange value from his work with unsuccessful musicians than they do. And in the social media/YouTube era of music video, the lack of viewership of videos is much more evident than it was in the MTV era. For music video directors and the musicians who hire them, this can be heartbreaking. For example, the music video for Australian duo Little Earthquake's (2017) (arguably very strong) song *Human connection* has been viewed only 690 times on YouTube as of 15 September 2019 despite receiving the following review:

> The art form of the music video is one that can be lost in the constant onslaught of new music. In an era where everything is in hyperdrive, sometimes it can be hard to pause, reflect and create something ultimately really special. Artists have barely let their first single cool off before they're onto the next one, and it's a shame because when it's done right, a music video can stick with you for days, weeks, months or even years. One such act that has chosen to take time and consideration with their music video is Little Earthquake … the clip for 'Human Connection' is a rich, detailed, visual representation of the song—soft and calm, yet powerful and captivating. (Jones 2017)

In her review Jones was alluding to music videos becoming lost amongst the sheer volume of music that is released nowadays and it is perhaps for this reason that budgets for music videos have dropped dramatically since the 1980s.

Discussing music video budgets in the 1980s and the fact that as budgets rose in this decade, many directors started using 35 mm film as opposed to 16 mm film, Caston and Smith (2017) outlined the following reference points for budgets at this time:

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[14]I am using the word success here to mean commercial success.

Released in 1981, 'Vienna' was shot on a paltry budget of under £7,000[15] because Chrysalis were not willing to fund the video. Bowie's 'Ashes To Ashes' video (1980) by contrast, secured an all-time high budget from his label of £250,000.[16] (p. 4)

In a quote at the start of this chapter Jefferton disclosed that the budget range that he worked within over the six-year period under examination here was AU$1,000 to AU$10,000. Highly successful Australian artist manager and label owner Gregg Donavan (Wonderlick Entertainment) advises musicians where to spend their own money and where to spend the advances[17] they receive from labels in their attempts to garner audience attention. In a research interview for this book, Donavan outlined the changes he has seen in the status (and usefulness) of music videos since he began working in the music business in the 1990s:

> So I think the big changes are that a) the video clip is no longer as important or necessary as it used to be and that's no relation to YouTube. It's not as important because the attention span isn't as long anymore. So a three-and-a-half-minute piece of video content of a band doing a 'hey boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy fights to get girl back, boy gets girl back', video is over, it just doesn't play anymore. It doesn't work. It has to be OK Go doing their cool treadmill thing.[18] It has to be sticky, sharable, viral ... Now achieving viral creatively isn't something you do on purpose. (Interview 2)

As a record label owner and artist manager, Donavan is no longer advising the musicians with whom he works (at least not those in an early career stage) to spend their own money, or the label advances they receive, on the production of music videos. He continued:

> We advise a lot of our acts now, we will say to them—if the act's more established it might not be the case, but definitely our breaking bands—I would say, hey, if we've got [AU]$15,000 to [AU]$25,000[19] to make a video for you on this album, fuck the video. Let's make six bits of highly shareable one-minute content that people want to hear—you talking about the music with snippets of music coming through. It's much more engaging. It's interesting ... So we're better off creating visual content that is more of mini doc, mini reality TV, mini basically anything that says come into my world and does it in a short attention span, a minute, 10 seconds and then try to consistently back it up. (Interview 2)

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[15]£7,000 converts to AU$12,822.80 as on 26 September 2019; however, this does not take inflation into account.

[16]£250,000 converts to AU$457,925.00 as on 26 September 2019; however, this does not take inflation into account.

[17]An advance from a record label is called an 'advance' because it is literally the future royalties from sales given to the musician or band in advance. Record labels, at least in the past, have typically provided musicians and bands recoupable advances for the purpose of making music videos.

[18]Donavan here is referring to OK Go, a US rock band from Chicago, Illinois, and specifically the band's quirky and elaborate one-take music video for their song 'Here it goes again'. This a low-budget video featuring the band members dancing on treadmills in a gym. The video had a large impact (OK Go 2009).

[19]The fact that Donavan is referring to a budget range of AU$15,000 to AU$25,000 whereas Jefferton disclosed that the budget range of the 60 videos outlined in the digital ethnography above was AU$1000 to AU$10,000 suggests that Jefferton James was positioned as a lower cost option within the music video business over the last ten years.

Likewise, in another research interview for this book, record label owner and highly successful Australian artist management John Watson (Eleven Music) also noted that he would not advise his clients or the artists signed to his label to spend AU$15,000 to AU$20,000 on a music video. He noted that this is because there has been a shift from limited bandwidth (MTV for example) to virtually infinite bandwidth (YouTube for example):

> I think what's happened with videos is symptomatic of the broader change in the industry. The primary purpose of a music video used to be being on music television, technically MTV or its equivalent in other markets—VIVA in Germany, you know, Channel V in Australia and South East Asia. So what you were seeking to do was to create a product that sat in the middle enough, typically, that it could get play on MTV … it couldn't breach their standards of practices but it had to fit the style of what was going on … By the time that grunge came along, you had to have sort of moody rockers in flannel and angsty looking teenagers … You wanted to fit in the middle of the lane in order to then get yourself in front of mass eyeballs because there was limited bandwidth. Now you have virtually infinite bandwidth so what you need to do is actually run to the edges. You need to be more extreme in some way in order to stand out … it's about doing something that's so unusual that people want to share it. So that doesn't necessarily require big budgets. It doesn't require glossiness and film lighting and huge crews. It just requires a really clever idea. (Interview 6)

This interview data partly explains the reason why, out of the 60 music videos that Jefferton produced over a six-year period listed above, the genres of music video included 25 concept clips, 30 hybrid concept clip/performance videos and only 5 straight performance videos. This quantitative data resonates with Watson's claim that the genre of performance video is no longer useful:

> A music video where the singer sings the song and jumps around and looks cool is completely pointless unless there is now something remarkable about it. Remarkable not just in the sense of being good but in the sense of having something upon which people wish to remark. There is absolutely no point in the exercise. You might as well not bother. (Interview 6)

These changes within the field of music video production are having an impact on the typical career trajectory of a music video director. London-based music video and film entrepreneur Caroline Bottomley (founder of Radar Music Video and the Shiny Awards) noted that the

> typical career strategy for someone who's going to make a good living as a director is: make lots of music videos, get your name out there, get people talking about you as an exciting conceptual director who delivers different and interesting stuff, get signed to a commercial production company, start making commercials. That's where you make a living; you don't make a living from music videos—it's rare to find a director who makes a living from music videos. Most people who've gone up that way, they'll keep making a music video occasionally just to keep their hand in. It's not a full-time career; it's a means to a career. (Interview 17)

Therefore, typically, leveraging success in the field of music video production was a means to build a career in advertising. An Australian example of a music video director collective that has successfully done this in recent years is Oh Yeah Wow. A collective managed by Darcy Prendergast, Oh Yeah Wow promote themselves on their website in the following way:

> Oh Yeah Wow is the award winning Melbourne production company responsible for those commercials you like. For cutting edge VFX, Animation, production, and more … Oh Yeah Wow continues to produce innovative, captivating content in the music video, commercial, and film landscapes for some of the world's biggest bands and brands. (Oh Yeah Wow 2019)

One problem with this typical career trajectory however is that the field of advertising has changed in a comparable way to the music video business itself. For music video directors, this pathway to commercial return may simply not be there anymore either. For example, in a research interview for this book, Ken Francis (Passionfruit Collective), a music composer for advertising, noted:

> Netflix is eating everybody in television pretty much. Not that the rest are dead; it's just that Netflix has cannibalised this huge segment—they've got 57% viewing share in some segments, which is extraordinary. They've only been around for 10 years, if that I think, not long, just like all those streaming services. So the nature of change is ruthless and every business in media is well aware of it. Competition is fierce, margins have shrunk so everybody is trying to do as much as possible as quickly as possible and I think all the forces conspire to make it so they're very rarely sympathetic to anything that's to do with craft or better creativity. (Interview 5)

The shift of audience attention away from television to streaming services such as Netflix and towards social media has led to a fracturing of what was previously more focused and singular content such as a single advertisement on television or a lone music video. This in turn has led to the rise of package deals between music video directors such as Jefferton and musicians. For example, in 2016 Jefferton produced a 'package' of content for Australian singer–songwriter Josh Pyke. This consisted of a 'half documentary' that could work as a singular piece of content but that could also be split into six episodes that were 5 minutes in length each. This content was drip fed over the course of the release of Pyke's 2017 album *Best of Josh Pyke + B-sides & rarities* (Pyke 2017a). The collection of episodes was then hosted online as one single documentary after the release (Pyke 2017c). The package deal also included the production of 2 × 1-minute trailers/teasers, 4 × 30-second social media snippets, 4 × 15-second social media snippets and 1 × full music video for the new single 'Into the wind' that accompanied Pyke's *Best of Josh Pyke + B-sides & rarities* album. This music video was used promotionally with the documentary and the social media snippet footage (Pyke 2017b). This fracturing of content into such package deals is a reaction to the fracturing of audiences' attention due to social media. Explaining the logic behind this approach, one of Josh Pyke's managers, Gregg Donavan (Wonderlick Entertainment) noted:

> So one little one-minute bit of content like that is fine but in isolation it's just going to come and go in that river of social media, right. So you want to be pumping out six to eight of

those over every week or two weeks or four weeks or whatever so that people are talking and sharing, going, 'Oh this is the latest episode.' It gives it time to bed in and for people to talk and share. So you want multiple bits. I think that's a much better way to spend $15,000 than making the boy meets girl video that nobody gives a shit about anymore or even worse still the performance video that the band loves of them standing around in front of a camera playing to camera. Nobody wants to see that video anymore, nobody, except for them. (Interview 2)

According to Donavan, this process of drip-feeding content is leading to the emergence of a new type of job in the music business. For him, this type of job potentially replaces that of the music video director:

Most artists are busy writing songs, touring, promoting, doing stuff so they're very much going to need content creators around them. I think we're going to start seeing a whole new job appearing very soon. I'll give you an example. Next year we're taking a social media manager on the road for the first time with a band for their entire album cycle. That social media manager has a camera that they can use to take stills and video. (Interview 2)

For Donavan this is important because it takes the consistent social media workload away from the band members while still maintaining the 'authenticity' of the band's presence on social media. He continued:

Every night coming home from their show, their job is going to be to send a link around, Dropbox link to the office, to everyone in the band to say here's this show and they're going to give their highlights, 20 odd photos and people are going to take those photos, using their video bits. They're going to grab really interesting bits and talk about where to use them with us. They're going to approve everything with the band but they are going to be uploading every day. They're going to be delivering content daily, photos, everything and then they're going to be spreading those to the labels and the publishers and all the other people so they can utilise the content as well and we're just going to have somebody out there whose sole job it is to do this for the band, be the extension for them … Literally take it out of the hands of the bands but still give them the control of saying yes or no so that their voice is authentic. So they can say, 'I wouldn't say that word. Make it this word.' Learn how to put it in—and the more they do that together the more the bands will trust them and just let them go for it. But it's got to be somebody's job when you're in cycle[20] now to aggressively go after your social media across the board. (Interview 2)

For Donavan, the role of the music video director as a content creator will merge with that of the social media manager:

So I think we're going to see these social media managers who are going to need to be content creators. They're going to need to be able to sit on their laptop backstage and edit a little one-minute piece. They're going to need to sit in there and Photoshop a photo. They're also going to need to know how to write some copy to drop it up there with it all and to know how social media works in order to utilise posting at the right time of day, geographically, what do you boost, what you don't boost, all of that sort of stuff. (Interview 2)

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[20]Donavan is referring to the album release cycle here which has traditionally been a two-year cycle, i.e. the band writes and records the album for a year and then tours and promotes it for a year. While the digitisation of the music business may have shortened this cycle, by 'in cycle' Donavan is simply referring to the promotional/touring phase of the album cycle.

For Donavan there are two distinct jobs that will become more prevalent in the music business: the social media manager who goes on the road with the musician or band, and the director and producer of longer-form content such as the Josh Pyke package of content discussed above:

> So I think we will see social media managers as an actual job on the road and then I think we will see companies like publicists, people who create websites, etc., who will specialise in creating bigger content … doing webisodes leading up to the release of a record or whatever it is … they'll be those directors who we all know already … and they'll probably start getting the good budgets for doing that. The social media managers will become almost roadies. They'll be employees that work for us. Two very different jobs but I think they're the two jobs we're going to see rising. (Interview 2)

It is positive for directors such as Jefferton to note here that managers and label owners such as Donavan envisage that the budgets for this type of music video package will increase. It is, however, potentially daunting for them to think of the workload that will accompany this type of video content package.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter located an analysis of Jefferton James's output of music videos over a six-year period within a growing body of literature that is addressing music video as a 'hidden' screen industry that has been neglected within creative and cultural industries research (Caston 2015; Caston and Smith 2017; Cave 2017; Fowler 2017; Grainge and Johnson 2015). Music video directors, the music video business and the sheer amount of creative labour that goes into helping musicians build design cultures around their music are—despite the fact that they involve the production of visual content—ironically invisible within the field of music business research. This is partly because the music business itself does not attribute a heroic role to design, like the company Apple does for example. With some exceptions, the designers, directors and producers behind the creation of music-related design cultures remain almost unknown (even when it is the musicians themselves).

A parallel can be drawn here between the contributions that these designers, directors and producers make to the music business and the contributions that session musicians and roadies make to the business. For example, the 2016 Fran Strine-directed documentary *Hired gun* (Strine 2016) drew attention to the role that session musicians have played in the music business. The promotional blurb for this documentary stated:

> Millions of fans have seen them and listened to them play the music of the famous stars who hired them. They are the 'First Call, A-list' musicians, just 20 feet from stardom, yet rarely receive credit for their work. The 'Hired Gun' community lives and breathes music, and for the first time ever, they share their experiences. (Strine 2016)

This documentary features session musicians such as Liberty DeVitto who played for a long time for Billy Joel, Rudy Szaro who plays for Ozzy Osbourne, Justin Derrico (P!NK), Eric Singer (KISS), Steve Lukather (Michael Jackson), Kenny Aronoff (John Mellencamp) and Phil X (Bon Jovi) among others. Music video directors such as Jefferton James are in a similar position to session musicians in the music business. They have to be highly talented and to consistently produce good work in order to continue to be hired by featured artists. They are also business-to-business service providers who do not have a direct relationship with the audience; they access an audience through the brand name of the featured artist who hired them.

Another parallel can be drawn here between the conditions and experiences of contemporary designers, music video directors and producers, and live production crew. Van den Eynde, Fisher and Sonn's (2016) Entertainment Assist-funded study of working conditions in the Australian entertainment industries found that the rate of attempted suicide in the industry is more than double the rest of the population. In response, Support Act founded the Roady4Roadies initiative because, as they noted on their website: '*Scarily*, it also found road crew members considered taking their own lives nearly nine times more than the general population. Independent figures have shown one in six roadies commit suicide, over eight times the national average!' (Roady4Roadies 2019). While live production crew are in a different position in the music business than designers and music video directors, there is a similar need to acknowledge the diverse range of highly technical and creative skills these practitioners bring to the music business. And while not everyone gets credit in the music business for the work they do, arguably because of the challenge of acknowledging the many and diverse contributions that various practitioners make to the music business, future research could consider blockchain and related technologies as a potential solution to this issue.

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Chapter 6
Music Video Dissemination

Abstract This chapter examines music video dissemination. Through an initial discussion of Passenger's video for his song 'Let her go' (2012), a video that has a YouTube viewership in the billions and as such is an outlier in the field, this chapter examines YouTube's role in the music business ecology. Following this, through a case study of Sydney-based musician and videographer Sean Walker's project Breathe, this chapter examines the implications for the music business of copyright/capital owners such as musicians creating their own music videos. Musicians who are also visually creative in this way can potentially use their position as copyright/capital owners to shift the deal making pertaining to music video dissemination.

Keywords Music video dissemination · YouTube · Capital income · Labour income

6.1 All the Little Lights

In April 2012, I found myself on my way to the Party People store in the Sydney suburb of Drummoyne. The Party People market themselves as Australia's largest party store. They supply party decorations, party catering and supplies, costumes and games and I was there to buy fairy lights. The fairy lights were to be used in a stage design that my client Jefferton James and his partner and producer Dimity Kennedy had been asked to produce for English singer–songwriter Passenger's[1] forthcoming tour to promote his 2012a album *All the little lights*. Released on 24 February 2012, *All the little lights* was Passenger's fourth studio album. I was at the Party People store to literally buy 'all the little lights' that would be painstakingly sown into a large black curtain by Dimity to form part of a stage backdrop that was also painted by Jefferton in a recreation of the *All the little lights* album cover.

The stage design that Dimity and Jefferton produced not only formed the backdrop for Passenger's live show, it also featured prominently in the music video that Jefferton's long-term friend and collaborator Dave Jansen directed and produced for

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[1]Passenger is Michael David Rosenberg's stage name. He is also known as Mike Rosenberg.

Fig. 6.1 Stills from Jefferton James designs' music videos produced in 2018. Copyright Jefferton James

Passenger's song *Let her go* (Passenger 2012b). Jefferton also worked as second cameraperson on this video production. This music video was essentially a live performance video featuring Passenger and his band performing at the Factory Theatre in Sydney on Saturday 21 April 2012. The video also features cutaway shots of Passenger and the band backstage at the show. The live performance footage of the musicians, as well as the audience's reaction to them and the music they are playing, is interwoven with pre-recorded closeups of Passenger performing the song to camera. This music video has been viewed 2,542,864,004 times on YouTube as of 8 November 2019.

6.2 YouTube's Role in the Music Business Ecology

Passenger's *Let her go* music video provides a useful entry point for this chapter's examination of YouTube's role in the music business ecology.[2] I have chosen to call this chapter 'Music Video Dissemination' rather than 'Music Video Distribution' because to disseminate is to spread something widely (Cambridge 2019b). However, to distribute is to share a unit of something with a number of recipients. Design cultures within the music business involve spreading musical and visual ideas widely in both physical and virtual space and therefore the word *dissemination* is more useful here; the ubiquity of contemporary design cultures within the music business is one of their key characteristics. Design culture is all around us.

Outlining the budget for the video and arguing that it was the song *Let her go* that disseminated the music video *Let her go* so widely, not the other way around, Passenger's manager, Dan Medland (i.e.: music), noted:

> $3000 Australian dollars. That's what it cost to make. It's not a very good video. It's the song. It's absolutely the song. I mean all due credit to the people who were involved in that. It's a wonderful story. And by not a good video, I mean we hadn't put any thought into it. We thought, 'Oh, we should probably just film a show, and "Let her go" is maybe going to be a single at some point' … so it was just a moment in time that captured enough about Mike's [Passenger's] personality to get it through and be a thing. (Interview 7)

As was evidenced by the digital ethnographic case study of Jefferton James's output of music videos over a six-year period in the last chapter, music video directors put a huge amount of work into directing and producing such videos. Yet, at least according to Passenger's manager Medland, users are not 'watching' the videos; they are using YouTube as a free music streaming service:

> But most people aren't watching the video, most people are just listening to the song. Because the video's not very good, you wouldn't sit there and watch it as a visual piece … In 2012, that song came out. If you look at how big that song was worldwide and the phenomenon that it became, most people listened to it on YouTube. 1.8 billion[3] on YouTube, 750 million streams[4] on Spotify. And both of those platforms were pretty eminent at that point … YouTube was three times plus what Spotify was. (Interview 7)

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[2]The Cambridge Dictionary defines business ecology as 'the relationship between the people working within a company or the relationship between different companies working together' (2019a). While the word is most often associated with scientific studies of environmental issues and the ecology of plants and animals, other scholars such as Rogers (2017) have used the similar word 'ecosystem' when referring to the music business ecology.

[3]Medland was interviewed for this research project on 21 June 2018. From that time until when I wrote this section of this chapter, 1 October 2019, views of this video had increased from approximately 1.8 billion to approximately 2.52 billion. It may well have also increased dramatically by the time you read this chapter.

[4]Likewise, because Medland was interviewed for this research project on 21 June 2018, the number of streams Passenger's song 'Let her go' has had on Spotify as of 2 October 2019 has increased from 750 million to 995.4 million.

Given the dominance of YouTube as a free music streaming service in the music business over Spotify in this case, it is interesting to note that, while there is a large and growing body of academic literature being published concerning Spotify (e.g. Swanson 2013; Marshall 2015; Nordgård 2013, 2016a, b, 2017, 2018; Pedersen 2014, 2015, 2018; Muikku 2017; Vedenpää 2018; Eriksson et al. 2019), the body of current literature that addresses YouTube's role as a *free music streaming* service within the music business ecology appears to be smaller (e.g. Airoldi et al. 2016; Hiller 2016; Aguiar 2017; Kim et al. 2017). This is understandable to the extent that Spotify from its inception was one of a number of solutions to the issue of monetising music streaming.

If Spotify is part of the solution, YouTube is part of the problem. Some recent research by Carey (2019) and his firm Media Insights Consulting,[5] through a survey of 2,025 people in the state of Victoria in Australia, found that 19% of respondents used YouTube Free every day, 21% used YouTube Free a few times a week, while 10% used Spotify Free every day, 11% used Spotify Free a few times a week, 10% used Spotify Premium every day, 6% used Spotify Premium a few times a week, while 6% used Apple Music every day, 6% used Apple Music a few times a week, 4% used Google Play every day, 7% used Google Play a few times a week, and only 3% used Soundcloud every day, and 5% used Soundcloud a few times a week (Carey 2019).[6] This survey data clearly reinforces the points Medland made above regarding the dominance of YouTube in terms of the listenership for Passenger's song *Let her go*.

Hiller's (2016) work on YouTube is also interesting in relation to Passenger's *Let her go* music video. Hiller used the removal of Warner Music content from YouTube in January 2009, and its restoration in October 2009, as a natural experiment and he investigated the effect this had on Warner Music artists' album sales. Hiller (2016) found that this removal from YouTube

> had both statistically and economically significant positive effects … which are quickly moderated as top-selling albums are dropped from the sample. Results also show that albums that have a very successful debut face more displacement from YouTube videos, while the effect on lower debuting albums may be moderated by a promotional effect. (p. 16)

The performance of Passenger's *Let her go* music video on YouTube did appear to resonate with these findings. Regarding this issue of missed album sales/streams and royalty payments from the massive viewership/listenership of Passenger's *Let her go* music video on YouTube, Medland noted:

> Of course, if we were talking 0.005 cents it would be huge. But what are we going to do about that? See I don't know if you can judge … I know on the face of it you see what rate

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[5]This research was commissioned by the Victoria Music Development Office. According to their website, 'The Victorian Music Development Office (VMDO) was established as part of the Victorian Government's $22.2 million Music Works strategy, is managed by Music Victoria and guided by a steering committee of music industry experts. The VMDO is focused on supporting the Victorian contemporary music industry now and into the future' (Victorian Music Development Office 2019).

[6]These data were generated by the respondents in response to the question: 'Which, if any, of the following digital music platforms do you use, and how regularly do you use them?' (Carey 2019).

it is per stream and it is ridiculous but I don't know if that's an argument you can have. It's a commercial world and they've managed to legally carve out this particular thing, they have ultimate power, and at least they are now engaging with the music industry as in by launching YouTube Music. In and of itself it's pretty hard to take but you can't see it by itself; it's not that simple. I don't know if you can change it. Certainly not one manager and one artist can't change the rate YouTube pay artists. (Interview 7)

YouTube's role within the music business ecology is a complex one. In answer to a question concerning the exchange value that flows from a music video receiving billions of streams on YouTube, Medland argued that it provides a very worthwhile promotional platform: 'That online real estate for us was hugely valuable. We used that to drive traffic to where we wanted them to go. And that is valuable beyond the argument around royalties from streaming on YouTube' (Interview 7).

Another interviewee for this book, Sydney and New York-based artist manager and label owner Gregg Donavan (Wonderlick Entertainment), was more scathing of arguments that YouTube plays a positive promotional role within the music business ecology:

Now the internet in some ways helped when it comes to YouTube and breaking bands but that caused problems of its own. I mean YouTube right now if you ask me in 2018 is the biggest enemy of the music business. It is absolutely the evil empire that's trying to fuck us and everybody's complaining about Spotify and Apple Music, which are our saviours. They are the people we should be supporting and giving all of our love and respect and help to, but yet for some fucking weird reason the industry's attacked streaming sites and is telling YouTube they're great. YouTube are fucking us and they're hiring lobbyists all over the world to continue to fuck us. (Interview 2)

While initially highly critical of YouTube, Donavan did go on to acknowledge, like Medland did in relation to Passenger's *Let her go* music video, that YouTube can be a useful promotional platform:

So it's been a double-edged sword, YouTube. Yes, there is no denying it's a discovery tool and it helps break bands. There's also no denying that it's fucking slave labour for YouTube. They fuck us on the income. They say bad luck, it's promo. It's like back in the day where people said, 'Oh, give us a song for our surf video or our boogie board video for free because it's good exposure.' (Interview 2)

In a section of the interview that resonated with the debate surrounding the European Union's (EU) Copyright Directive Article 17 (previously Article 13),[7] which was passed on 15 April 2019 and which I will discuss in this chapter shortly, Donavan continued:

It's an insult to say that to people but for some reason people always feel like that about music because they don't intrinsically understand intellectual property. That's been a big problem in our society across the board. I think YouTube have embraced that. I reckon they're not so dumb they don't know that. They've just embraced that because they know they can win a public war because the public don't really understand it either. So YouTube is good and

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[7]When this article was in draft it was referred to as Article 13. However, when the directive was passed it became Article 17.

bad. It's actually been bad for the business as a whole in terms of how we create new models of income for our music, whether it be visual or just audio, but it has helped expose things. (Interview 2)

While Donavan's company Wonderlick Entertainment is based in Sydney and New York and he is not specifically discussing the European context here, according to Fox (2019), during the proposal stage, Google's leadership voiced the company's opposition to the EU's Copyright Directive Article 17, stating that it could 'change the web as we know it'. By introducing the new law, the EU argued that it was aiming to make 'copyright rules fit for the digital era' (Fox 2019). Article 17 of the EU Copyright Directive makes services such as YouTube responsible if their users upload copyright-protected movies and music within EU member countries. Crellin (2019) noted that Article 17 states that:

content-sharing services must license copyright-protected material from the rights holders. If that does not happen, then the company may be held liable. This means that sites hosting user-generated content, like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Soundcloud and so on, will be responsible for copyrighted material that is shared illegally on their platforms.

This change within the EU is a major one. According to Kostaras (2017), in the USA, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 grants safe harbour provisions to video services such as YouTube. This essentially means that YouTube's legal position is a mere 'conduit' for content; it is not liable if its users upload copyrighted content illegally. This is why these provisions are also known as 'the hosting defence'. Donavan argued that these provisions are key to YouTube's business model:

They're hiding behind safe harbour laws and they are hiring lobbyists all over the world to try to get safe harbour laws put in place. There are places in Europe that have fought it and got rid of the safe harbour laws. The safe harbour laws, basically the translation for us, and I'm sure YouTube would disagree, but the translation is: 'We want these safe harbour laws because we're big tech money, we can bring big tech to your country. We can bring other things but we need you to fuck over music industry people to do it because they drive a huge amount of our numbers to keep people here and we don't want to pay them for that because it's too much money.' … I would support any day taking all of my artist's stuff off YouTube but my acts would not. (Interview 2)

As an artist manager, Donavan is alluding here to his assumption that his clients would be anxious if he suggested they take their music videos down from YouTube because they may not receive the potential promotional benefits.

6.3   The Kristiansand Roundtable Conference

In October 2018, I was invited by Associate Professor Daniel Nordgård on behalf of the University of Agder to attend the Kristiansand Roundtable Conference (KRC). The KRC is a closed event for invited stakeholders within and around the international music industries that takes place in Kristiansand, Norway over two days

each year. This event draws attendees from all over the world including musicians, artist managers, live booking agents, music and entertainment industries lawyers, academics, lobbyists, people who work for collecting societies, music streaming services, representatives of various music industries associations, music-related philanthropic foundations and many other people who contribute to the music industries. Attendance at this conference added ethnographic context to my research into music video dissemination and the role of YouTube in the music business ecology. The annual two-day meetings are conducted under the Chatham House Rule. This rule dictates that no statements can be attributed to any single participant, encouraging free-flowing debate while protecting anonymity. Therefore, none of the comments from this event that are used in this chapter are attributed (for a more in-depth discussion of the KRC, see Nordgård 2018, pp. 49–52). The two days of the conference were recorded, transcribed and were inductively coded using the Miles and Huberman (1994) approach. In this section this data is interwoven with the semi-structured interviews I conducted for this book.

Summarising the debate that took place in the EU in the lead-up to the passing of Article 17 on 15 April 2019, one KRC participant noted that the discussion and lobbying concerned whether

> platforms which house works uploaded by other people, so by their users, should be as liable as platforms that host the master recordings provided to them by the label. So the extent to which Facebook, YouTube, SoundCloud should be liable for copyright as Spotify, etc., and the source of that shouldn't be a determining factor on the liability. If you go back two years, the commission in its draft Copyright Directive set out a principle establishing that platforms that host user-uploaded works are liable for copyright and should obtain a licence for that work, and should implement measures to prevent the availability of unlicensed content. (KRC participant)

Interestingly, even though the music industries are a collection of disparate industries whose interests do not always align (see Williamson and Cloonan 2007), this issue brought various members of the music industries together:

> I think it was probably the first time that the European Parliament has ever been subject to US-style lobbying. In fact it's worth noting, I've never seen the music industry more aligned on anything in Europe as I have on Article 13 [17]. When you find yourself in a room wearing the same T-shirts as IMPALA [Independent Music Companies Association, originally the Independent Music Publishers and Labels Association], IFPI [International Federation of the Phonographic Industry], it was a complete single voice. But MPs [members of parliament] were receiving thousands of emails, death threats, bomb threats. Strasburg was covered in graffiti: save the internet, the death of the internet. Automated bots will kill freedom of speech. It was a very comprehensive campaign that ran both in July and September. (KRC participant)

In addition to the extent to which these changes were envisaged to impact free speech and the freedom of expression, one nuance that was discussed at the KRC was the tension between big businesses—which could potentially afford to licence copyrighted works—and small businesses and start-ups—which may not be able to afford licences—in some instances to even be able to 'start up':

> I had this debate with YouTube only last week, if we were to set up YouTube 2, how can we possibly get all the licences we need … So the idea is how do you create regimes for big businesses and small businesses, and that's certainly one of the big pressure points coming out of Germany. (KRC participant)

Clearly YouTube is on a different footing in this debate than companies such as Spotify because they have a business model that is based on advertising rather than one based upon subscription (Spotify's model). Google/YouTube has a gigantic global business in garnering audience attention and selling this viewership to advertisers. However, their model does involve them hiding behind safe harbour provisions. These provisions essentially mean that they can pay artists a fraction of what Spotify has to pay artists, songwriters and associated entities. The establishment of YouTube Music suggests that with safe harbour laws being rolled back in some territories, as evidenced by Article 17 in the EU, this subscription streaming model may well become the dominant way in which consumers experience music on YouTube. Regarding this issue, John Watson noted:

> At some level Google's probably looking at it going, 'Well, if Spotify can make a go of it and Apple can make a go of it then why can't we?' Hopefully they can find a way to lift their game from a music industry perspective on that and to allow artists and labels and solo artists and visual creators to receive as close to just recompense for their work. (Interview 6)

This is a topic that was also discussed at the KRC: 'We talk a lot about Article 13 [17], but there are also legal requirements on transparency to artists and performers. There are legal requirements on contract adjustments and contract disputes. There are discussions about performers rights' (KRC participant).

In contrast to Donavan's scathing criticism of YouTube above, Watson's assessment of YouTube monetisation was more balanced:

> YouTube is still very much the Wild West … the sheriff's just starting to get around with guns now to tidy it up. It's quite extraordinary when you dig around in the back of YouTube with any artist the amount of just random claims and missed monetisation. I don't know how much of it is actually deception. I think most of it's just actually sloppy administration and confusion. It's a bit of both … regardless of what the split should be, the first step is: 'Can we actually even collect the splits properly?' Because at the moment we don't. Everyone thinks they do but they don't. (Interview 6)

A point made at the KRC was that members of the music industries came together on this issue because they, and any country's government, are less powerful than 'big tech':

> The second vote on Article 13 [17] came fairly shortly after Google was fined [US]$9 billion[8] for allegedly suppressing competition. When that happened, Google immediately effectively

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[8]The fines for Google have kept flowing since this participant made this comment at the KRC. According to Tiku (2019), European officials fined Google another €1.49 billion (US$1.7 billion) on Wednesday 20 March 2019 for 'a decade of abusive practices in how it brokered online ads for other websites like newspapers, blogs, and travel aggregators. This is the third billion-dollar antitrust penalty levied against Google by the European Commission, which has fined the company more than $9 billion for anticompetitive practices since 2017'.

thumbed its nose at the European Commission and said, 'We don't care. We'll pay the fine off tomorrow.' They wrote it down in one day, and they've made the legislators think, 'Just how powerful are these people?' We can fine them this amount of money and they don't care … the legislators are finally realising they are completely losing control in terms of the tech giants. That's one of the things I think is important. (KRC participant)

Therefore, this KRC attendee made the point that the governments of Europe are essentially less powerful than big tech nowadays.

6.4 Labour Income Versus Capital Income

An issue that is of specific concern for this chapter is that if big tech companies are exerting their power over combined governments, and combined governmental bodies such as the EU are more powerful than the music industries, music video directors and other creators of visual content *within* the music industries—and how their copyrights are managed within the current music business ecology—are an afterthought, or at best a side discussion, within this context. Music video directors and producers have historically generated labour income as opposed to capital income; they typically work on a fee-for-service basis and assign the copyrights they generate to the record label, musician, band or other entity that has hired them to do the work. Discussing this issue, research interviewee Sydney-based musician, videographer and photographer Sean Walker[9] (Breathe) noted:

Every time I've ever done any visual stuff for anyone external to anything that I have interest in … they contract my services and, yeah, it's full handing over of everything. Any photos I take, any video I take … It's just once you do something for a client it's theirs. (Interview 9)

Music video production agreements often also involve directors waiving any so-called moral rights[10] they have in their work. This creates an interesting juxtaposition for musicians such as Walker who are also visually creative: 'We're so protective of our music [but] when it comes to video it's a lot more throwaway and we get paid on the day and it's theirs' (Interview 9).

In a capitalist economy, ownership of capital is what creates wealth and within the music business ecology copyrights are the form of capital that generates wealth. This is why major record labels have benefited from the advent of music streaming services because they own the copyright in large back catalogues of master recordings and these catalogues can be commercialised in new ways (Tschmuck 2017). Interestingly though, popular musicians generate a combination of labour income and capital

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[9]Sean Walker features in a case study later in this chapter.

[10]The *Cambridge Dictionary* (2019c) defines moral rights as 'a writer's or artist's legal rights to protect their work, for example, to prevent it from being changed: The author will always *hold the moral rights* over their work'. While according to Australia's Copyright Agency (2019), 'There are legal obligations to attribute creators and treat their work with respect'. Moral rights will be discussed at more length in Chap. 7.

income. For musicians, live music performance fees and income from ticket sales can be defined as a form of labour income because the musician's physical labour is required. Whereas their capital income is generated by the master copyright in their recordings[11] and if they are also songwriters, they 'own' the copyright in their music and lyrics.

The link between a musician's labour income from live performances and capital income generated by their ownership of, or royalties stemming from, recordings and songs has shifted in recent times. For example, Krueger (2005) argued that digitisation has shifted the balance between concert ticket (labour income) and record sales (capital income), while Tschmuck (2017) noted:

> Concerts are no longer seen as promotional tools for selling recorded music, but instead serve as a main income source for artists. The Billboard Money Makers List shows that all top ten artists earned more than 80 per cent of their total income from touring in 2014. Taylor Swift, who has headed the list in the past two years, ranked only fifteenth in 2014 because even though she had a top-selling album of the year, she did not tour. (Tschmuck 2017: 2680)

Therefore while in other sectors of the economy the wealthier the person or entity is the less their income is generated by labour and the more it is generated by the capital they *own*, for musicians this is inverted due to the dominance of live performance income in the contemporary music business ecology.

Yet a key difference here between a music video director's labour income and that of a popular musician is that the latter's labour income is often dictated by market demand (ticket sales) and they are commonly on a 90/10 deal (their way) with promoters (Morrow 2013, p. 138). Whereas a music video director's fee-for-service is not dictated by the (business-to-consumer) market, it is agreed between them and the record label and/or musician (business-to-business). Furthermore, on the record business side of their career, for musicians and bands this 'labour' versus 'ownership' dichotomy has shifted over recent years through the advent of label services agreements (O'Hagan and Jenner 2019). It is increasingly common for musicians and bands to only licence their copyrights to record labels—rather than assigning copyright to them. Labels agree to this because it externalises the risk of developing the copyrights in the first place onto the musician or band (O'Hagan and Jenner 2019). If the band or musician is subsequently able to connect with a massive audience, their ownership of capital means that the income they produce can shift from labour towards capital. This basic underpinning is good news for successful bands and musicians in the age of music streaming services[12] and amidst

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[11]Musicians generate capital income in a number of ways. When they assign the copyright in their master recordings to record labels this income takes the form of recording advances and then royalties once these advances have been recouped. When they licence their copyright, this income takes the form of royalties stemming from such licence agreements, or they may be independent musicians and simply retain the copyright.

[12]It is important to note here that this is potentially bad news for the many musicians and bands that do not become commercially successful; rather than using advances from record labels to produce their recordings, they may use their own money and they may not see a return from their investments in their own project.

the aforementioned developments that may see them receive more capital income from YouTube, the world's largest streaming service (Carey 2019).

6.5   A Musician's Leverage: Sean Walker Case Study

The creators of capital in the form of copyright in visual works—such as music video directors—will be left out of this potential shift from labour income to capital income if they continue to assign their copyrights to record labels and other entities on a fee-for-service basis. That is *unless they are the band or musician themselves.* What is particularly interesting in this context is the scenario whereby a capital owner such as a musician creates their own music videos. Musicians who are also visually creative in this way arguably hold the key to shifting the deal making pertaining to music video dissemination. Their ownership of copyright/capital in their music creates wealth and therefore power for them within the music business ecology that they can then apply to this end.

This chapter will now feature a case study of one such Sydney-based musician, videographer and photographer, Sean Walker. Walker currently works under the name St Walker. On his website, Walker (2019) noted: 'I produce music, take photos and direct films. I've created sounds and visuals for a range of media platforms from advertising campaigns to films'. Walker's current musical project is electronic duo Breathe (stylised as *breathe.*). Walker founded this project with fellow electronic music producer Andrew Grant (The Tapes). The Australian Cultural Fund (ACF) described Breathe in the following way:

> The project makes minimal soul music by collaborating with and sampling musicians from all around the world. The band has created sounds and visuals for a variety of media platforms from advertising campaigns to film. An EP is expected late 2019 and will be accompanied with self-directed films and photography. (ACF 2019)

As of 21 October 2019, Breathe's strategy has been to release a new track every few months. The first track released was *Are you all good?* This was made available on 13 September 2018 and features a male vocalist.[13] The second track, *London*, features a female vocalist and was released on 22 February 2019. The third track released to date is *Haze*. This was made available on 27 September 2019 and features a male vocalist. Each track released to date has been accompanied by a music video that has been directed by the duo (credited as 'Directed by breathe'). Each song has also been accompanied by the release of a lyric video. To date, the duo's music video *Are you all good?* (Breathe 2018) has been viewed 155,419 times on YouTube, their music video *London* (Breathe 2019b) has been viewed 22,115 times and their music video 'Haze' (Breathe 2019a) has been viewed 5,366 times on the platform. The lyric

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[13]It is interesting to note that the guest vocalists on the recordings are not credited on the platforms upon which the duo's music is available, such as Apple Music, Spotify and YouTube.

videos for these tracks have been viewed 9,331 times, 1,415 times and 895 times, respectively.

Walker also noted on his website that he is part of Cru Cuts, which is 'a group of musicians, producers, and enthusiasts who host living-room discussions with some of the world's most exciting and innovative creators' (Cru Cuts 2019). Further, Walker pointed out that he is part of Future Energy Artists (FEAT), a

> World-first initiative for artists to take ownership over accelerating our clean energy future at a critical time in human history. We are artist-led, science-backed, and results-oriented. We believe in the power of live music, the reality of the climate crisis and the need to rapidly transition to a renewables-based economy. (FEAT 2019)

Prior to founding the duo Breathe, Walker was one of the founders of Movement (stylised as *MOVEMENT*). Movement is an Australian minimal soul duo (formerly a trio) that blend R&B and ambient music. Movement is signed to Modular/Universal Music Australia and they released a number of critically acclaimed singles and a self-titled EP in 2013 and 2014. Walker has since left this trio.

Discussing the current release strategy for his current project Breathe, Walker noted that it was the duo's plan to produce the different musical and visual content that they would need for their first EP/album campaign before they released their first track:

> That's what I've spent the last 12 months doing … you're trying to get music videos, artwork, a larger collection of songs, your final press even, your PR teams in different regions, getting it all together before going public … All it takes is one song to explode and then you're running and trying to collect and do. That's also an option but it's stressful. (Interview 9)

For Walker, this process of producing as much of the content that they will need for a release campaign in advance of releasing their first track involves music video production folding into their artistically creative processes. With Breathe, music videos are not simply tacked on to the duo's music like advertisements to promote each track upon its release. Walker noted that for the duo it is both a marketing exercise and an artistically creative one and he clearly differentiated between short-form content needed for social media and their longer-form music videos:

> I see it as another avenue to explore creativity … directing/producing videos in a larger sense for music videos as well as smaller social media 30-second to minute-long marketing tools. For me it's like a perfect other avenue to explore because it's so accessible now making a video, so accessible, high-quality video. I've got two different things happening from my own filming, my own directing of short clips and then getting bigger cinematographers and bigger people to work with us, a larger three-and-a-half, four-minute video, those kinds of things. So yeah, it's great. I love it. (Interview 9)

Interestingly, while music video production is part of Breathe's overall creative process, Walker and Grant still work with professional cinematographers and associated practitioners:

> I could probably do it but not only do I not have the experience and I don't have the $50,000 set-up of cameras and all the high quality… A lot of the videos that are music clips now

are obviously shot in 4 K or obviously shot in very, very slow 120-frame setting where that isn't quite accessible in the camera market just yet, in the lower end. So if you really want to see the quality difference you need to get someone that really, really does it as a profession. (Interview 9)

Discussing the current release campaign for Breathe, Walker noted that the music videos that he writes and directs for his own project need to be conceptually simple due to the impact that social media has had on the art form:

'Us' [Movement's music video] just hit a million views on YouTube[14] but that took three years to get to that point whereas you put a video—say an artist with a social media following puts a small video, 15-second video on their Instagram. That's going to be viewed over and over and over because it's just on loop and it's a short video and it's funny or it's accessible. It's quick. Definitely this kind of media is being consumed a lot faster … it's such an interesting situation because you want to make something that's impactful and interesting but you also want to make something that's accessible or quick to understand. (Interview 9)

To this end, Breathe's music video *Are you all good?* (Breathe 2018) is conceptually simple. It begins with a shot from the point of view of the back seat of an old-fashioned car with a male driver in the (right-hand) driver's seat with the band's logo, a stylised lowercase punctuated 'b.', hanging from the rear-view mirror. A male passenger gets in, throws a bag into the back seat and warmly embraces the driver. The video then features the two characters—who are clearly friends—driving around a city with musically timed edits to different imagery and scenes outside of the car as day turns to night.

Likewise, the duo's video for *London* (Breathe 2019b) simply features a female character skateboarding at night around a city. The video starts with cutaway shots of city streets and a railway station and then cuts to a close-up of the skateboarder's feet and legs skating in slow motion. The deck of the skateboard features the band's stylised 'b.' logo. The rest of the video features slow-motion footage of the character skating around a city at night.

The duo's music video *Haze* (Breathe 2019a) simply features a scene whereby the camera's point of view is looking through a window from outside a building into a room in which the duo and the guest vocalist are performing the song. The room is lit with red light and this contrasts starkly with the grey walls of the outside of the building. The duo's stylised 'b.' logo is positioned in the lower right-hand corner of the window frame. The red light at times pulsates with the beat of the track. As the video progresses, the camera slowly moves away from the window. Toward the end of the video, the camera, which is clearly on a drone, zooms out to reveal the city scape in which the room the three musicians are performing in is located. The video was shot at dawn and so the sky matches the colour of the red light in the room. The red light continues to occasionally pulsate to the beat of the track.

Clearly these concepts are designed to work as 15-second to minute-long video content that can be released and understood on platforms such as Instagram, and also

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[14]The music video for Movement's track 'Us' has now been viewed 2,193,714 times as on 11 November 2019 (Movement 2019).

as concepts that will work as 3- to 5-minute music videos. For Walker, music videos are still relevant and needed; it is just that he is cognisant of the need to also design them to work on social media platforms. We are also arguably in a new interactive age of social media, with services such as TikTok[15] enabling users to create highly engaging short-form content.

Interestingly, Walker alluded to the fact that Breathe is a do-it-yourself (DIY) project partly out of economic necessity:

> I think music videos and visuals are still very relevant and it's important. The whole thing is changing where you no longer can spend … [AU]$20,000 or $30,000 on these videos. It's crazy. So you have to be kind of really DIY, direct it yourself or learn how to film or get a friend or those type of things. (Interview 9)

There are, therefore, a variety of reasons why the music video baton (so to speak) is being passed from music video directors to musicians such as Walker. This is why arguably such musicians hold the key to shifting the deal making pertaining to music video dissemination. This is because music video production simply becomes an extension of their musical output and may come to be treated as such in the agreement's creatives such as Walker form with other entities such as record labels. Walker noted that it is

> crazy because people have specialised their whole lives in making these ideas, directors and story writers and then suddenly almost the responsibility or the hat, the baton has been passed to the artist now … it's really insane how many hats you wear as a musician. There's directing and story writing and producing and getting actors and locations, the budgets. (Interview 9)

As I discussed in the introduction to this book, design culture involves 'networks of interaction between design, production and consumption and beyond this, the relationships of value, circulation and creation and practice' (Julier 2013, p. 3). In this case study, Walker is a musical artist who is surrounded by a complex system of exchange—a 'culture of design'—that he and his partner in Breathe have created themselves. This contrasts with designers such as Jefferton James and Jonathan Zawada who featured earlier in this book who, by supplying visual content to musicians, operate in a secondary business-to-business (B2B) market within which they are often arguably exploited and/or they 'self-exploit' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 6). Musicians such as Walker operate in the primary business-to-consumer (B2C) market within the music business and therefore they can use their capital-owning position to negotiate terms that will potentially see them receive capital income from the exploitation of the copyright in the visual content they create.

To this end, Walker noted that he is influenced by Australian multidisciplinary artist Ta-ku. Originally from Perth, Australia, according to his website, Ta-ku (2019) has become:

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[15]On their website TikTok claimed that they are 'the leading destination for short-form mobile video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy' (TikTok 2019). They also noted that they have offices in 'Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Dubai, Mumbai, Singapore, Jakarta, Seoul, and Tokyo' (TikTok 2019).

one of the world's most in-demand beatmakers, he has found himself curator of a rapidly expanding creative empire. This storytelling gene is key. Once reserved as currency for his music, Ta-ku now applies it to a diverse range of passion projects that encompass creative direction, photography, videography, design, business and fashion.

Ta-ku's website also lists the fact that he is the founder of 823, which is the entity that produced the Neighbo(u)r Collaborative Art Project. This project's website noted that:

> 200 participants from Bangkok to Brooklyn took part, shooting portraits of their neighbours on the same batch of expired 35 mm film. Neighbo(u)r sought to push people out of their comfort zones; to talk to strangers, shoot with intention, and embrace the flaws, beauty and serendipity of the experience. (Neighbo(u)r Film Project 2019)

He is also co-founder of Pretty Soon, an advertising agency that is associated with brands such as Nike, Specialized, Puma and Red Bull Music; he is founder of Create Explore which produces film; he is a Sony Australia Brand Ambassador, which involves promoting Sony's camera equipment; he is co-founder of Westons Barbershop in Perth; and he is co-founder of Team Cozy, which is a clothing, sneaker and general lifestyle brand.

Ta-ku's approach has influenced Walker's strategy. Walker lists on his website that he is the founder of Breathe; founder of Movement; is part of Cru Cuts; and is part of FEAT. His website also associates him with the brands to which he has licensed his music or for which he has produced either musical or visual content. These brands include Lancôme Paris, Mercedes Benz Fashion, Tesla, Pitchfork, the Australian Ballet and Netflix. Discussing the extent to which Ta-ku's music and design-related business model has influenced him, Walker noted:

> I'm watching different artists that are taking control completely of their design, of their release, of their collaboration between film, photos and music as one package. Ta-ku's a perfect example from Perth, how he not only writes great music with collaborations from different musicians and vocalists but he's also tying in his work with Sony and his photos through social media but also making interesting portraits and taking really interesting travel photos set mainly in Japan… It's almost got the aesthetic of colour grade in his photos, colour for his music and now he's stepping into videos and it's all tied into this beautiful big package. (Interview 9)

Walker's plan is therefore to invite musicians and vocalists whom he admires to be involved in his project and then he plans to

> narrate the music with photos as part of an exhibition or part of a vinyl release packaging or part of a zine, any of these kinds of things, as well as film and being able to narrate your music and photos with film. (Interview 9)

Discussing his approach to branding and how he plans to tie the various components of Breathe's package of content together, Walker cited the influence of the English band The xx. Breathe's aforementioned stylised 'b.' logo appears in all of their music videos, which is derivative of The xx's approach:

> For me personally it's all about consistency and all about making it really obvious for
> the viewer, the person that's going to consume the art and understand it as a consistent
> brand. There's a consistent message. There's something that threads through it all. So for
> me personally, that's how I take in any projects for photos, any artwork, any posters, any live
> set design. All is going to be tied into one common theme. The band that did it the best that
> I've seen is The xx where they tied their artwork altogether. They tied in their videos really
> well and their live set … It really makes sense. (Interview 9)

Musicians such as Walker are in a different economic position than music video directors such as Jefferton James because their name remains attached to their labour, and for Walker, this includes the visual representative media that surrounds his music. Ryan (1992) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) argued that the 'concrete and named labour of the artist' (Ryan 1992, p. 41) means that artists are engaged in a type of creative labour that 'resists the abstractness and alienation that Marx attributes to pretty much all other work under capitalism' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 84). Artists such as Walker have the leverage of a type of labour that 'causes a constant problem for capitalist business' (p. 84) at their fingertips. In contrast, music video directors such as Jefferton James are subject to the aforementioned abstractness and alienation because their name does not remain attached to their labour in most instances (as evidenced by the lack of attribution of music video directors on YouTube that was outlined in the previous chapter). Even when the music video director's name does remain attached, someone else's name, namely the musician or band's name, is given prominence.

This case study of Sean Walker's strategy for Breathe, and his career generally, has served to foreground the role of design within the contemporary music business, paying particular attention to the relationships and networks between the different domains of design practice in the music business and the working life of a contemporary electronic musician. As such, design culture theory here contributes to our understanding of the contemporary music business and the changing interrelationships between the multiple actors engaged in the shaping, functioning and reproduction of design objects in this field. There is arguably a need to redesign the music business to bring more balance to the way in which creatives such as Walker are remunerated for the musical *and* visual content they produce. To this end, this chapter will now turn to an analysis of two initiatives that have attempted to redesign this part of the music business in a variety of ways: Radar Music Video (now Radar Music Creatives) and Clipped Music Video Festival.

6.6 Radar Music Video

London-based Radar Music Video was founded in 2007 by Caroline Bottomley, who originally had the vision of establishing a global and digital commissioning platform for music video directors. Bottomley sold Radar Music Video as an ongoing concern in late 2017 and the new owners have since rebranded the company to Radar Music

Creatives (henceforth both iterations of the company will be referred to simply as Radar). Regarding the reason for selling Radar, Bottomley noted:

> One of the things that happened was that in about 2014 a company called Creative Commissions set up. That was based on Radar, but their competitive advantage—they thought that they'd offer creatives of all kinds, so it wasn't just [music video] directors, it was also illustrators and people who could do web pages, photography and album art. (Interview 17)

While according to Radar's promotional materials the network facilitated by the platform includes 10,000 music video directors worldwide (Radar 2019), with the company enabling record labels, artists and managers to commission music videos cheaply from emerging talent in this field, the new owners have pivoted the company to facilitate the production of design culture more broadly within the music business. They noted on their website that:

> Let's say you want an official music video featuring your new act, currently recording in LA (you can also commission a lyric video, or creative director, or sleeve art, or merch design, or a concert shoot, or a logo, or photography, or web design, or documentary). (Radar 2019)

Commissioners such as musicians and record labels create a brief outlining what they want and the budget they have to produce it and then they upload this information to the website. Radar then have a filtering mechanism for 'recommended' creative talent that is facilitated by the Radar Awards. The brief can be targeted to specific creatives or the commissioner can open it up to the whole field. The commissioner can then see all of the treatment ideas/scripts that the creatives post in response in one place on the website. Once the commissioner chooses a treatment, Radar facilitates the transaction between the parties and commissions the sale.

Creatives can sign up for a free account, or they can subscribe to the service for an ongoing fee of £12.99 per month or £49.00 per six months. The free option enables creatives to set up a profile and be sent briefs by commissioners who are attracted to working with them, while the paid subscription option provides creatives with more options for submitting their treatment ideas to more commissioners. The budget example that Radar provided on their website (Radar 2019) is £8,000 (US$10,331.78; AU$15,073.29 as on 24 October 2019). However, in response to a question concerning the most common price points on Radar when she ran the platform, Bottomley stated: 'new bands would commonly pay £750–£1,000 if they were just funding themselves, labels £1,000–2,000—£4,000–£5,000 and £10,000 and £20,000 the very top, but most common a couple of grand' (Interview 17). Radar's original innovation was to use the internet to facilitate a global network of music video directors, record labels, managers and artists in order to facilitate more fee-for-service deals.

These deals involve a traditional rights buy-out situation whereby the music video directors assign their copyright to the commissioner and waive their moral rights. The fees outlined above can therefore be classified as a form of labour income. Regarding the question of increasing the capital income from copyright in this field—the focus of the Sean Walker case study above—through a shift towards royalty-driven deals that are reflective of those that a music producer may agree, Bottomley noted:

I know some people were interested in talking about that. Personally, I've always advised against doing that kind of thing because accounting afterwards is such a massive pain in the bum and the infrastructure isn't there to allow that to happen easily. When you dig into it, even songwriters and [music] producers aren't necessarily getting the income they should be getting because the data is never captured correctly at the beginning or there are disputes about what was agreed. (Interview 17)

Bottomley continued by noting that Radar, during her tenure running it, facilitated emerging talent and the economics of this type of alternative deal did not make sense; the potential time outlay of administering this type of deal was envisaged to not be worth the potential financial return:

When you're arguing—for most up and coming filmmakers who are making videos that are maybe getting 20,000 to 40,000 views on YouTube arguing about whether they've got £5 or £7—it's not worth it. I don't see that that alternative deal has any traction at the moment. Maybe when things get a bit more blockchainy and there's a much clearer ledger of who owns what and how payments are made and how people are accounted to, that idea might get more traction. (Interview 17)

Bottomley mentioned the potential of blockchain technology here to facilitate the generation of capital income for creatives in this field. This is a topic to which I will return in this book's conclusion (Chap. 8).

As I mentioned in Chap. 5, the traditional 'pay off' for music video directors involves them becoming known for making interesting music videos and then leveraging this success into the field of advertising: 'get signed to a commercial production company, start making commercials. That's where you make a living' (Interview 17). Interestingly, this is essentially the playbook that Sean Walker is following in the case study above; only with the addition of music production and becoming known for musical creative ability first and foremost. Walker is making interesting musical and visual content and then leveraging his success in the music business into producing advertisements for Lancôme Paris, Mercedes Benz Fashion and Tesla.

Bottomley noted that the original version of Radar was simply 'very right for its time' (Interview 17). She started working on developing the platform in 2006, the year after YouTube launched. It was an innovation in music video production and dissemination that suited this time period; it was designed 'to capitalise on the fact that the internet was happening in a much more visual way' (Interview 17). Regarding the timing of the establishment of this service, Bottomley noted:

the cost of technology was coming down so means of access to the market was much more open for people in Melbourne to make music videos for someone in New York. That was obviously all beginning to bubble up. Radar was about recognising that happening and also record labels—their incomes were dropping at the time, plus they had more need to have music videos. They were used to paying £60,000, £80,000 to £100,000 upwards for music videos, maybe £40,000 was a cheap one, then all of a sudden they just could not afford that anymore, so the whole notion of being able to get a music video from an up and coming director for maybe £2,000 was a bit mind-blowing for them. (Interview 17)

Unfortunately, however while the platform was visionary and innovative, from Bottomley's perspective, it was also flawed:

> What was happening with Radar—it was tending toward mediocrity, so people, creatives, who didn't have their own contacts for whatever reasons, maybe because they weren't good enough, they weren't noticeable enough, were using Radar. So, the people using Radar are often people who don't have other contacts for whatever reasons—the commissioners don't have other contacts—maybe they're not part of the main business or whatever. It does an alright job and puts out very acceptable work I think, but I wanted to go where the best work was. (Interview 17)

Bottomley has since established the Shiny Awards, which has a mission to connect production companies, advertising agencies and brands with the best freelance and unsigned talent and she is 'staying very much in filmmaker world, rather than doing that broad-sweep for filmmaker/illustrator/web graphic designer, what have you' (Interview 17).

6.7 CLIPPED Music Video Festival

The CLIPPED Music Video Festival (henceforth CLIPPED) forms part of Vivid Sydney.[16] In 2019, the event ran on Saturday 15 June at SUNSTUDIOS Sydney,[17] while in 2018 it took place at Carriage works.[18] The 2019 event featured a curated and interactive music video exhibition, an awards component, as well as 'screenings, Australian premieres, panels, industry talks, and masterclasses with international guest speakers' (CLIPPED 2019). CLIPPED's website posited that: 'High calibre work from around the world is showcased in our exhibition and prestigious awards competition, with a particular focus on talented Australian and New Zealand film-makers' (CLIPPED 2019). In 2018, according to Sydney-based CLIPPED founder and director, Samuel Bright, the festival provided AU '$18,000 worth of prizes' (Interview 15) for editing, directing, cinematography and make-up. The prizes took the form of hard drives, microphones and headphones amongst other items (Interview 15). Regarding the original idea for the festival, Bright noted:

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[16]Vivid Sydney is a winter festival of 'Light, Music and Ideas' (Vivid 2019). The festival involves light projections on buildings throughout the city of Sydney and it is known for projecting visual imagery onto the sails of the Sydney Opera House. The festival also includes associated events such as CLIPPED Music Video Festival and live music concerts. On their website, Vivid noted that: 'Each year Vivid Sydney brings together light artists, music makers and brilliant minds to share their creativity with you. The festival celebrates Sydney as the creative hub of the Asia-Pacific with large-scale light installations and projections, free family events, cutting-edge music performances and thought-provoking ideas talks, workshops and conferences' (Vivid 2019).

[17]SUNSTUDIOS Sydney is a 'busy creative hub for professional photography, television and video production image makers, in a beautiful renovated 1930s woolshed in Alexandria' (SUNSTUDIOS 2019).

[18]As its name suggests, Carriageworks is located in a complex of renovated former Sydney railway buildings and is 'the largest multi-arts centre in Australia. We commission Australian and International artists to make monumental new work that intersects with contemporary ideas. Reflecting the diverse communities of urban Sydney, our artist-led program is ambitious, radical and always inclusive' (Carriageworks 2019).

I had this idea: wouldn't it be great if there was a festival for music videos? Because after the first few [music videos] I did, I put a lot of effort into them and was surprised by the lack of opportunity there was to showcase them. By that time, 2015-ish … when I actually had the idea … and [I] got it running as an event in 2016. I applied for Vivid with an idea of an event and then they accepted, so that gave me the incentive to do it, figure it out and there wasn't really a precedent for what we were doing. (Interview 15)

This case study of CLIPPED is a useful way to conclude this chapter; as the founder and director of the festival Bright has a unique overview of the field of music video production and dissemination, primarily in Australia, but also internationally. His overview enabled him to provide a number of insights, such as his point that 'from this year [2018] 90% of the videos were non-performance, so heavily conceptual/short-film type videos and the artists were integrated' (Interview 15). This further substantiates the argument presented in Chap. 5 of this book that there has been a shift away from the genre of performance videos towards concept clips. Bright noted that when the musicians do appear in their videos, they tend to be 'either integrated minimally or as part of stories' (Interview 15).

Bright also pointed out, somewhat poignantly, that from his perspective music video is an afterthought in the film world. The irony of music videos is that they are invisible within the arts and film funding landscape in Australia:

I think that's kind of the irony … music videos are essential for artists or have been and people understand that, yet it doesn't really fit in anywhere, so it doesn't fit into the government body's curriculum or what they see as their jurisdiction. When I've gone to Screen Australia, they go: 'Music videos, they're not narrative so therefore they're not film, so we don't take care of them.' Which is a strange line to have and I don't know if that's just someone that I've dealt with there. Because it falls into the cracks, it's meant that it's a good thing because [CLIPPED] is a unique event that no-one is doing, but the challenge is that it's also harder to fit into the structures of funding or even people to comprehend what it is very easily. (Interview 15)

While in Bright's experience Screen Australia do not view music video as part of their remit, as was discussed earlier in this chapter, aspiring feature film directors use the genre of music video as a platform to hone their craft. According to Bright, this introduces a conflict of interest; while aspiring filmmakers may be interested in directing and producing conceptual videos in their attempts to establish their own portfolio to then obtain work making commercials, TV, short films and/or feature films, according to Bright:

Their music videos are generally more 'filmy'—they're more down that trajectory which can actually not be the best thing all the time for the artists [musicians] as well. I've actually heard people talk about their trouble sometimes, dealing with filmmakers when they don't want a film as a video, but then the filmmaker is trying to push that angle. (Interview 15)

The overview of the field that Bright has as director of this festival is also useful here for an outline of music video price points in Australia:

I'd say the average price of a music video in the top tier would be between [AU]$8,000 to [AU]$15,000—that is the top record label tier. That is where it seems to be sitting. There's not a huge amount you can do with that if you're paying full rates. (Interview 15)

This interview data further substantiates the reference to price point averages for the Australian market that were provided earlier in this book.[19] Albeit in Chap. 5 of this book these price points were mentioned in the past tense; the market for music videos produced at these price points has fallen away in recent times. This is another point that Bright reinforced in the interview he did for this book:

> Sony might be one of the labels that's moving away from music videos, which actually doesn't surprise me because they've generally done the worst music videos. They've done kind of studio stuff that's non-conceptual, really bland, so they probably never got a huge amount of traction from their videos or at least the moment they started spending less and less, their videos were actually closer to being content than actually being music videos anyway. Also, a lot of their artists are quite generic pop acts. So, I think it makes sense that they would be looking at it going, 'Oh well, it's more cost effective for us to do live content.' (Interview 15)

Bright is speaking here of Sony Music Australia's alleged shift from producing music videos to focusing on the production of cheaper live content for social media. The next section of this chapter will explore the forces and properties that have led to the decline in price points for music videos that is associated with this shift in Australia.

6.8   Willing Buyer, Willing Seller and Over-Supply

The changing dynamics of music video production and dissemination in Australia are obviously market-based and relate to the concept of 'willing buyer, willing seller'. Given Bright's points above—that music video is very much an afterthought within the Australian film world and that this genre of screen production is left out of arts and film funding schemes and policies in this country—radical interventionist governmental policy reform to address declining price points in this particular music/screen industry is unlikely. Downwards pressure on prices and associated (arguable) inequalities in pay are also, as Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) noted, 'the result of the huge "reservoir" of labour available to the cultural industries … the over-supply of aspiring entrants leads to a sense of vulnerability and even disposability amongst many workers' (p. 19). Bright described the 'churn' of music video directors in the music industries as essentially involving a 'brain drain'. According to him there is a constant exodus of talented, experienced and knowledgeable people: 'A lot of people in the last decade have just stopped doing it. Like a lot of people who have a lot of experience … and there's a new generation of people doing it now' (Interview 15). Bright was implying here that this brain drain is a problem for the music industries overall. His point is that, while music videos are arguably essential for musicians and bands, and talented and experienced people are needed to direct and produce

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[19]The price point range that Jefferton James outlined in Chap. 5 was AU$1,000 to AU$10,000, while Gregg Donavan posited that the range was at least AU$15,000 to AU$25,000. The average between the lowest price point provided by Jefferton James and the highest provided by Gregg Donavan is AU$13,000.

quality videos, these people keep leaving the industries because the willing buyer, willing seller concept clearly stops working when the seller, in this case the music video director, is no longer willing to sell.

One critique of this argument, however, is that it assumes that the aspiring entrants from the huge 'reservoir' of available creative labourers are not as talented as the established directors. Further, there is an assumption here that music videos directors *should* produce this content for a longer period of time than they currently do and this is questionable. Fairness is a relative concept; concepts of fairness differ and one of the problems with the argument that the music video business should be redesigned in a 'fairer' way—in order to stop such a brain drain—is the fact that arguably any single musician or music video director essentially only thinks about themselves, not about the music business overall. One is inevitably left with the questions: What is fairness? What does it mean? There will always be different views on what is fair and what is not and there is a tendency in these types of arguments for fairness to simply be determined by those who are not doing well out of any particular arrangement.

However, by raising the profile of music video production and dissemination CLIPPED is a unique event that may have an impact here. In relation to the principle of willing buyer, willing seller, CLIPPED can potentially be used to help music video directors and their management negotiate better deals for directors. CLIPPED music video awards have the potential to, and are certainly designed to, help get the buyers in this field to buy for more. An area for further research then relates to this question: To what extent can this event be used to get individual players to benefit the whole business by focusing on themselves? Bright has designed this event to motivate music video directors and further research could examine whether CLIPPED actually has this type of impact:

> The main goal is to try and incentivise music videos, so people that do them want to keep doing them and get better at them because that helps the artists if you've got better people doing them. What I find is, a whole heap of people have been turned away from music videos because of the lack of the communication and understanding and also because a lot of artists can't afford to pay the industry rates. What's ended up happening is that a lot of people come and go out of the medium, as opposed to people that stick in it. CLIPPED is very much tailored towards people who are dedicated to it. There is a small community that keep doing it even if they're doing commercials and that kind of thing. I guess the goal would be to grow the community, so it's bigger so more people do it and do it better. (Interview 15)

The paradox in the field of music video production and dissemination is that, while these design objects are highly visible and ubiquitous, being viewed on smart phones, TV, laptop computers, tablets, in cinemas, and generally on screens of all types in both private and public spaces, they are invisible within the screen funding landscape in Australia and, arguably, within the field of music business research. CLIPPED and this book are both designed to address this paradox.

6.9   Conclusion

One of the first academic researchers to seriously grapple with music video was Andrew Goodwin (1988, 1992). Goodwin (1992) argued:

> Mass-mediated rock and pop texts contain both visual and aural codes that are often insep-arable … analysts of popular music have tended to neglect the importance of what we see (and how it relates to what we hear), while, on the other hand, analysts of music television have tended to overlook what we hear (and how it relates to what we see). (p. xx)

This chapter, and book overall, builds on this early work and following Goodwin I have attempted to understand how the economics of music (and our associated sense of hearing) relate to the economics of music video and how our sense of hearing is aligned with our sense of sight through this medium. Writing early in the age of music television, Goodwin (1992) discussed the emergence of music video and attempted to understand how the economic function of such videos helped to explain their textual construction. Even back in 1992, Goodwin argued that music videos are an unusual type of commodity that demand 'some rethinking of traditional ideas about the relations among institutions, texts, and audiences, in particular with regard to the conventional application of the terms *use-value* and *exchange-value* in cultural analysis' (p. xxii). In this chapter I have also argued that music videos are an unusual type of commodity and that there is a new need to rethink traditional ideas about such relations: the line between 'music video' and social media 'content' has blurred; the line between 'music video director' and 'musician' has blurred; and the role YouTube plays in the music business ecology, particularly in relation to the generation of exchange value, is very blurry indeed.

The issues addressed in this chapter relate to the shifting application of use value versus exchange value in deal-making processes in the music business. For example, YouTube became the largest music streaming service in the world (Carey 2019) by providing use value to the masses—yet the music 'business' is dependent on the generation of exchange value and there are changes on the horizon for YouTube, as was evidenced by the passing of Article 17 in the EU. Through the primary inter-view data in this chapter I have argued that YouTube currently hampers attempts to commercialise music streaming. The commercialisation of 'music' streaming as opposed to 'music video' streaming is clearly the current focus of music business practitioners and researchers. And given that this focus is currently being hampered by YouTube, the possible shift to royalty-based deals that would generate capital income for music video directors (and musicians who produce their own videos) by enabling them to retain their copyright is currently arguably—and somewhat strangely—a lesser priority in contemporary discourse concerning the music busi-ness. Yet interestingly this idea is not at the back of YouTube's Global Head of Music Lyor Cohen's mind. Havens (2018) interviewed Cohen, along with Snapchat's Vice President of content, Nick Bell; Spotify's head of content experiences, shows and editorial, Rachel Ghiazza; and video content management platform Vydia's Chief Executive Officer Roy Lamanna about the future of music video for a *Billboard* piece. In this trade press article, YouTube's Cohen stated that the post-MTV period

saw … video become deemphasized. And I think as we're watching the tide rising and now video is not an expense item, but an item that artists can actually make money from—now we're going to see an acceleration on the focus and attention spent on creating really dope videos. (Havens 2018)

The potential production of 'really dope' music videos aside, if Cohen is being genuine here one would assume that YouTube needs to stop hiding behind safe harbour laws in more territories than just the EU for artists to generate capital income from videos.

This chapter began with a discussion of my (very minor) role in the production of Passenger's *Let her go* video, which has a YouTube viewership in the billions. I wrote the body of this chapter during the month of October 2019 and on the 1st of this month this video had been viewed 2,518,358,809 times on YouTube. By the end of October 2019, when I (finally) had a draft of the body of this chapter, it had been viewed 2,537,805,778 times on YouTube. Therefore during the time I wrote the body of this chapter it had been viewed 19,446,969 more times. When I wrote this conclusion on 8 November 2019, the video had been viewed 2,542,864,004 times. This meant that it had been viewed 5,058,226 more times on YouTube over the previous week.

Passenger's *Let her go* video, however, is an outlier; it is evident that the paradigm of 'winner takes all' late-stage capitalism has simply been replicated in the age of YouTube. To put these viewership numbers into perspective, as I outlined in Chap. 5 of this book, the 60 music videos that Jefferton James directed between 2012 and 2018 had a combined viewership on YouTube of 12,777,657 with an average of 212,960.95 views per video (between the period 15 and 23 September 2019). Rather than focus on hit videos when making arguments about royalty-based deals for music video directors that would see them earn capital income from their work,[20] there is a need to consider the fact that the fee-for-service deals that music video directors agree do somewhat balance out this issue. If the average price range for music videos in Australia during the period 2012 and 2018 was AU$1,000 to AU$25,000 and, as was the case with the Jefferton James case study of 60 videos, they are achieving YouTube viewership numbers between 501 views and 2,867,497, then music video directors such as James are better off taking the fee-for-service, assigning their copyright, and waiving their moral rights rather than wasting their time chasing royalty payments from an untamed behemoth like YouTube (via their clients).

The concept of 'willing buyer, willing seller' is clearly at play here, as is the concept of 'risk and return'. While record labels and musicians generate capital income, and music video directors typically do not, labels and musicians are usually the ones who take the economic risk. Generally speaking, if the capital owner takes the risk, the capital owner gets the return. What became evident through the Sean Walker case study in this chapter, however, was the potential for royalty-based deals when the musician who takes the financial risk also directs and produces the music video. This is most likely the scenario to which YouTube's Global Head of Music

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[20]Or as Nettwerk Music Group's Terry McBride said, 'Intellectual property pays you when you're sleeping. Forever!' (Wilson 2019).

Lyor Cohen was referring in the quotation above, that is, capital-owning musicians generating capital income from music videos. Some looming questions for Cohen, and YouTube generally, however, are: Where will YouTube draw the line with regard to which videos generate capital income for musicians? Can a musician or band's back catalogue of music videos on YouTube be commercialised in this way?

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Chapter 7
Designing the Live Experience: Stage, Lighting and Merchandise Design

Abstract This chapter concerns live music experience design and begins with a case study of British band Radiohead and their lead singer Thom Yorke's long-term collaboration with visual artist Stanley Donwood. This case study is useful for understanding how visual design symbolically ties together Radiohead's organisation, and the design objects and experiences this organisation creates, which showcases how design culture is a form of organisational culture. This chapter then examines the economics of contemporary live music experience design through case studies of the work of British stage designer Es Devlin and British folk-rock band Bear's Den. The chapter concludes with a discussion of merchandise in the live music business.

Keywords Organisational culture · Design culture · Live music · Merchandise

7.1 Stanley Donwood and Radiohead Case Study

In May 2015, Jefferton James and I attended the visual art exhibition *Stanley Donwood: The panic office* at Carriageworks,[1] Sydney, Australia. This retrospective exhibition was co-presented by Semi Permanent[2] and Carriageworks and was free to the public from 24 May to 6 June that year. This exhibition formed part of the (southern) winter-time festival Vivid[3] and, as long-time fans of the British band Radiohead, Jefferton and I were thrilled to have the chance to see the Donwood exhibition.

Stanley Donwood is a visual artist and writer who has been collaborating with Radiohead's Thom Yorke to design the band's album covers and associated gig and

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[1]As outlined in Chapter 6, Carriageworks is located in a complex of renovated former railway buildings in Sydney and is 'the largest multi-arts centre in Australia' (Carriageworks 2019).

[2]On their website, Semi Permanent describe themselves as being 'a platform for business and creativity. It's where inspiration is born, where careers are started, where innovations are launched, and where radical ideas about the future are shared, dissected and stitched back together again in service of the greater good' (Semi Permanent 2019a).

[3]As I also outlined in Chapter 6, Vivid Sydney is a winter festival of 'Light, Music and Ideas' (Vivid 2019). The festival involves light projections on buildings throughout the city of Sydney and it is known for projecting visual imagery onto the sails of the Sydney Opera House.

tour posters, stage designs, advertisements, billboards[4] and merchandise since 1994 (Brown 2015). In an inversion of the relationships between artists/designers and musicians/bands outlined thus far in this book, in this exhibition Donwood's visual work was front and centre with Thom Yorke's musical work accompanying it; *The panic office* exhibition was accompanied by a bespoke and previously unreleased soundscape composed by Yorke, who is Radiohead's primary songwriter, lyricist and vocalist (Osborn 2017, p. viii). Jefferton and I viewed Donwood's linocut prints, hand-drawn imagery and large oil paintings that were amongst the thousands of pieces on display. Many of these artworks have contributed to the Radiohead brand since 1994.

As we walked around the exhibition, we viewed the original pieces that became the band's album covers for *OK computer*, *Kid A*, *Amnesiac*, *Hail to the thief*, *In rainbows* and *The king of limbs*. These artworks were amongst Donwood's solo work, which is independent of Radiohead's design culture. All the while Yorke's compositions, which were exclusive to this exhibition, continually shuffled between one another and emanated from three speakers in the cavernous 6000-square-metre gallery space as we moved through it. According to Semi Permanent's (2019b) exhibition description, Yorke's compositions were pieced together into the 'longest recorded song in history, taking over three days to listen to in its entirety' (p. 2).

As Radiohead's dedicated art director, Donwood's creative process is intricately interwoven with the band's musical creative processes. Brown (2015) pointed out that: 'Donwood is heavily involved throughout the band's recording process, working on artwork as the songs unfold. He is not brought into simply draw some interesting pictures afterwards. He is an integral part of the whole process' (p. 4).

What is interesting about the relationship between Donwood's artworks and Radiohead's music is that, while design culture is a form of organisational culture that is focused on approaches that may improve customer experience through design, the symbolic consistency of Radiohead's brand is often couched in artistic terms, rather than marketing ones. *The panic office* visual art exhibition is one such example: the exhibition could be interpreted as a display of what is arguably a best practice branding strategy for a band, instead of as a visual art exhibition. The fact that Stanley Donwood and Thom Yorke met when they were both students studying visual art at the University of Exeter (Taffel 2015) is a key part of the story here; they have brought their own 'art school' sensibility to the organisation of their own commodification. Discussing how they collaborate to produce Radiohead's artwork, Yorke (2019) noted:

> How we work? From the music, mostly, but concepts fly around, and sometimes these fall in line in some weird way, but often things move down river just finding their way. It can be a colour. A technique. A sound in the music. Some wax. Some paint in a pool. Fate. Other times hard graft. Chipping away for weeks. Sometimes stories get told, characters or

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[4]One notable billboard Yorke and Donwood designed involved them convincing the band's then label EMI to simply have the words 'Kicking Squealing Gucci Little Piggy' with no explanation accompanied only by the hexes and doodles that Yorke and Donwood had hand-drawn (Donwood 2019, n.p.). These massive billboards appeared in cities all around the world for the *OK computer* album release campaign and associated tours.

creatures appear. Sometimes it is graphic, or landscape. Sometimes just textures. Sometimes words. Sometimes nothing happens for a worryingly long time. Sometimes I say very little, do very little. Watch him paint. Sometimes I spill turps on a table and watch things destroyed. The fool in the play, the adviser, the 'not this', 'what about this?' Talk about the words. Or I walk in, change weeks' worth of his work, walk out while he quietly rolls a cigarette. Sometimes it's much more involved. A shared myopic vision … Yes, it's just record covers and artwork, adverts, marketing. But no. For us, it was never just that. (n.p)

While on working with Yorke, Donwood (2017) noted:

To sum up crudely, when we're working together, I do something, then he fucks it up, then I fuck up what he's done… and we keep doing that until we're happy with the result. It's a competition to see who 'wins' the painting, which one of us takes possession of it in an artistic way. (Donwood cited in Britton 2017, n.p)

Organisational culture has been defined variously. As stated in the introduction to this book, it involves simply 'the way we do things around here' (Bower 1966, as cited in Saintilan and Schreiber 2018, p. 213). Or alternatively as being 'the spirit of the human hive' (Mintzberg 2013, p. 51, cited in Saintilan and Schreiber 2018, p. 213). Similarly, Saintilan and Schreiber (2018) noted that it 'binds individuals together in the pursuit of objectives' (p. 213).

While design culture is a form of organisational culture, it is useful here to link this to a broader definition of culture. The following broader definition of culture is useful for understanding how this form of culture is used to coordinate, organise, motivate and move masses of people into specific locations to witness and experience live music performances. In his best-selling popular literature book *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*, Harari (2015) defined 'culture' as involving a network of 'artificial instincts':

After the Agricultural Revolution, human societies grew ever larger and more complex, while the imagined constructs sustaining the social order became more elaborate. Myths and fictions accustomed people, nearly from the moment of birth, to think in certain ways, to behave in accordance with certain standards, to want certain things, and to observe certain rules. They thereby created artificial instincts that enabled millions of strangers to cooperate effectively. This network of artificial instincts is called 'culture'. (p. 139)

Earlier in his book, Harari (2015) noted that, in contrast to colonies of ants and bees that are organised by the instincts that are encoded in their DNA, humans are able to organise themselves into large societies through the way in which 'culture' provides an artificial set of roughly equivalent instincts. Organisational culture simply does this at the level of an organisation, institution or business rather than at a societal level.

Radiohead's long-term collaboration with Donwood is useful for understanding how visual design symbolically ties Radiohead's organisation, and the design objects and experiences this organisation creates, together, which showcases how design culture is form of organisational culture. It is easier to understand the multiple actors involved in the shaping of the design objects that Radiohead produces and sells because, as I outlined in Chap. 3, the consistency of Radiohead's brand identity

dovetails into the prog (progressive) rock tradition. Radiohead's design culture has a lot in common with bands such as Pink Floyd and Yes, in particular the fact that the one artist, designer or, in the case of Pink Floyd with Hipgnosis, the one art design group design(ed) much of their seminal work.

Through their long-term collaboration with Donwood, Radiohead's design culture has created artificial instincts that have enabled millions of strangers to cooperate effectively in the purchasing of tickets for their live performances and merchandise at these events or via their own merchandising company W.A.S.T.E (WASTE 2019). This network of artificial instincts called 'culture' is symbolised by Radiohead and Donwood's work in which 'Decay, ugliness and imperfection are clearly important themes … a slightly morbid fascination which the two have often sought to capture in the respective works' (Semi Permanent 2019a, p. 6). The exhibition title *The panic office* is a reference to the Radiohead song 'Fitter, happier' from their 1997 album *OK computer*, a scathing critique of modern life and perhaps their most well-known album. This is an example of what research interviewee for this book, John Watson (Eleven Music), described in Chap. 3: 'people buy into the story of an artist … when you talk about branding it's then about alignment to that story. Do the visuals reinforce that story?' (Interview 6).

In his work concerning the crafting of visual narratives in heavy metal music, Karjalainen (2019) examined the visual narratives of heavy metal and progressive metal bands such as Tool, Stamlna, The Nightwish, Dream Theater and Dark Tranquility and noted that: 'The purposive and continuous integration of certain visual signs into the bands' narratives can significantly contribute to a meaningful visual appearance that deepens the engagement of their audience' (p. 87). In his analyses, Karjalainen discussed both visual references that are endogenous codes that co-create the narrative of the band by referring to the lyrics and music directly, and the arbitrary referencing that is sometimes generated by exogeneous encoding (and the interrelationships between these two types of encoding). While Radiohead clearly use intentional endogenous codes that co-create the narrative, according to Sundin, a graphic designer and guitarist for Swedish melodeath band Dark Tranquility whom Karjalainen interviewed,

> most bands don't really have much of an expressed concept or ideology … The lyrics are rarely good enough to warrant a 'concept' tag, and the majority of people are content with something that looks good and has kind of surface connection with the genre they play in. (quoted in Karjalainen 2019, p. 82)

For Sundin genre recognition becomes more important for most bands in terms of visual communication than the uniqueness of their band's narrative. Yet in the case of Radiohead's visual narrative, and in the case of the metal and progressive metal bands that Karjalainen analysed, intentional encoding is often the key.[5] Regarding this intentionality, Karjalainen (2019) noted:

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[5]It must be noted here, however, that sometimes Donwood and Radiohead's visual signs are arbitrary. In his retrospective book that outlines his creative processes *Red maze* (Donwood 2010), Donwood noted regarding the period on which he worked on the designs for Radiohead's album *Kid A* that: 'Here, any semblance of narrative breaks down. All I have for a period of several years are a pile of

Overall, the objective of intentional encoding is to reduce the arbitrariness of the sign. Visual signs are predominantly arbitrary in nature, while there is usually no natural or inevitable link between the signifier and signified. But in our intentional realm, resulting from both endogenous and exogenous encoding, arbitrariness is reduced and specific meaning can be collectively constructed. Effective communication, however, presupposes clear intent and a story line that, furthermore, is communicated in a consistent manner through all the touch points between the narrator and the reader. Such internal coherence and reference construction creates a historical trajectory ('brand equity') for the band. (p. 84)

Through their collaboration with Donwood, Radiohead have achieved a high degree of 'paradigmatic coherence' (de Saussure 1996, as cited in Karjalainen 2019).

Radiohead's paradigmatically coherent story, which has been co-created through the historical trajectory of their collaboration with Donwood, is a somewhat negative one. In a 2008 *Pitchfork* interview, Thom Yorke posited that:

The whole point of creating music for me is to give voice to things that aren't normally given voice to, and a lot of those things are extremely negative. Personally speaking, I have to remain positive otherwise I'd go fucking crazy. (Yorke, as quoted in Reisch 2009, p. 3)

Forbes and Reisch's (2009) edited volume of essays concerning Radiohead and philosophy provided an in-depth analysis and critique of Radiohead's 'story'. Through the band's music, the various essays examine 'the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, the existentialism of Camus and Sartre, and the philosophical politics of Marx, Baudrillard, and Chomsky' (n.p.). In this volume, following Aristotle, Lott (2009) argued that catharsis is at the core of the appeal of the sense of tragedy that Radiohead's music evokes:

Radiohead often achieves a catharsis of negative emotions. Songs like 'Karma Police' and 'Exit Music' function as mini-tragedies: both lyrically and musically, they present images of human vulnerability and failure, snapshots of characters in the midst of breakdown and loss. And they present these images in a way that engages both our cognitive and affective capacities. We recognize in them something *true* about human life and human weakness. At the same time, we also *feel* the associated emotions—sadness, anger, and fear. (p. 71)

In addition to sadness and tragedy, Radiohead's story and associated brand arguably symbolizes innovation in contemporary music. In his musical analysis of Radiohead's 'mature phase' body of work, Osborn (2017) noted that:

Since OK Computer (1997), five of the six records released by the English rock band Radiohead has peaked at #1 on the UK and/or US charts, and these six records have accounted for nearly 26 million of the band's 30 million albums sold. This success in their mature period (1997–2011) is especially notable since, following the generic 'Brit Pop' and 'Alternative Rock' heard on their first two albums (1993's *Pablo Honey* and 1995's *The Bends*), the band's sound has never piggybacked on any mainstream trends. Their commercial success in this mature period stems instead from an ability to write music that balances expectation and surprise. (p. vii)

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battered, torn sketch books and a box of obsolete digital recording media … you will have to find your own way. Draw your own conclusions' (p. 68).

Interestingly, this balance of expectation and surprise and the general story of innovation in music that is evoked here is juxtaposed with the consistency of the band's visual representation, which has been generated by their long-term collaboration with Donwood. As I discussed in Chap. 3, through this approach Radiohead are attempting to say, according to John Watson, 'We exist on Radiohead Island. No one else is on our island. We don't really care where everybody else is' (Interview 6). In contrast, The Beatles, for example, chopped and changed their visual style to symbolise progress, change and reinvention.

Yet the story of Donwood's collaboration with Yorke on the creation of the band's album covers and associated artwork does concern innovation and it ties in neatly into the band's story of innovation in music. Discussing the process for creating the artwork for the band's 1997 album *OK computer*, Donwood (2019) noted that, following the recording of most of the album in the library of an Elizabethan manor house called St Catherine's Court in a rural area near Bath, Somerset, UK, the record was completed in London, which is where they also created the iconic artwork for it:

> All the pictures would be created on a computer and we had only two ideas to start with; one was that white was the colour of death, and the other was that we wouldn't use the 'undo' function. So nothing that went wrong with an image, no mistake or failing, could be undone … Instead we would overlay another image, or scratch over the error … The artwork was the visual impression of a ghost language or the relics of a disaster … I had been thinking of a nuclear winter, of leafless trees and drifting bone-white ash, of emptiness and the end of all life; this was like an occasional, momentary hallucination or an effect from a horror film. The shades of reality would briefly lift, just for a split second, to reveal a barren, blank landscape as white as death. (p. 69)

By approaching the album cover design in this way, Donwood and Yorke were able to create an iconic image that very directly related to the *OK computer* album's music and lyrics.[6]

At the end of their contract with major label EMI, ten years after the release of *OK computer*, Radiohead released their 2007 album *In rainbows.* Arguably, with the release of this album, Radiohead were able to bring their own artistic sensibility, and Donwood's, to the organisation of their own commodification. In my earlier work (Morrow 2009), I examined the case of the release of *In rainbows*, their seventh album, on 10 October 2007 as a digital download for which consumers choose their own price, beginning at nothing. On 3 December 2007 this digital release was followed by the release of a 'disc box' with a second CD, two vinyl records, artwork and lyric booklets (InRainbows.com n.d., as cited in Morrow 2019, p. 168). I argued that their approach to this album release was clever:

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[6]For an additional description of Donwood and the enigmatic Dr. Tchock (one of Thom Yorke's pseudonyms for attributing his work with Donwood), see *Dead children playing* (Donwood 2007). This book contains a particularly interesting outline of his creative process for the artwork that became the cover design for Radiohead's 2003 album *Hail to the thief.* This cover design features words and phrases drawn from roadside advertising in Los Angeles and lyrics from the album that critiqued the War on Terror and the resurgence of right-wing politics in the West that was occurring at the time.

> While it was perceived in some parts of the media as being unsuccessful because allegedly numerous consumers downloaded their music for free … Artist managers conceptualise the business holistically in terms of income that can be generated from live performances, merchandise sales, song publishing, sponsorship deals, as well as record sales. (p. 164)

This release functioned as a publicity stunt for the band; it combined with the band's design culture to further facilitate the artificial instincts/organisational culture that enabled millions of strangers to cooperate effectively in purchasing concert tickets and various items of merchandise from their website. This also enabled the band as an organisation to capture fan data (such as email addresses) directly for the purpose of future direct marketing efforts.

In this way Radiohead's new post-EMI organisational structure was designed to realise the potential of their design culture/organisational culture. The band's post-EMI organisational structure and the success of the *In rainbows* release strategy were also reflective of the fact that the commonly accepted notion of 'the music industry' is in fact an ecosystem of industries—'music industries' (Hughes et al. 2016; Nordgård 2018; Williamson and Cloonan 2007; Wikström 2009). The band's strategy enabled them to benefit from this entire ecosystem, rather than just from the revenue stream stemming from their recorded music.

The end of the band's relationship with EMI was also timely given another topic commonly discussed within recent literature: the rise of live music (Behr et al. 2016; Cloonan 2011a, b, 2013; Frith et al. 2010; Holt 2010; Morrow 2013; Nordgård 2018; Page and Carey 2009, 2010, 2011a, b). In this sense, Radiohead's release of *In rainbows* was fortuitously timed to maximise their return on investment in their own album release from their live music performances and associated sales of merchandise. The end of their contract with EMI enabled them to serendipitously restructure in a way that capitalised on the 'dramatic changes in the economic gravity between the sectors, particularly with the recent rise in importance of live music and the consequent focus on its economy' (Nordgård 2018, p. 28).[7] From the signing of their agreement with EMI in 1991–2007 live music had come much more to the forefront of the mix of industries that constitute the 'music industries'.

A number of publications discuss the economics of the dramatic growth in the live music market from the 1960s to the 2000s (Frith 2007; Krueger 2005; Montoro-Pons and Cuadrado-Garcia 2011; Nordgård 2013, 2016). From the perspective of a band and their management, due to the shift in the economic gravity of the music industries towards live music from the 1960s to the 2000s, it can be argued that contemporary

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[7]While figures indicate that streaming service revenue in some ways is shifting the economics of the music industry back towards the recording industry, this revenue is 'increasingly skewed towards international hits with massive spread and appeal' (Nordgård 2018, p. 38). Indeed, figures from the 2018 International Federation of Phonographic Industries (IFPI) report show that use of streaming services, and revenue collected from them, is increasing exponentially. In 2017 alone, there was a 41.1% growth in streaming revenue globally; a 54% increase in the digital share of global revenue; and an 8.1% growth in global revenue overall (IFPI 2018). While this might not seem like a cause for concern, the skewed nature of the distribution of revenues from the music streaming economy (Hesmondhalgh 2013; Elberse 2013; Mulligan 2014) should be and it means that live performance remains fundamentally important for many musicians.

design cultures intend to shape an album release campaign that culminates in the band achieving an economic return from their live concerts and associated sales of merchandise. In a business sense, therefore, the process of 'designing the live experience' involves the whole design culture process from album cover design through gig and tour poster design, music video production and dissemination, and merchandise design.

7.1.1   Live Production

One consequence of this dramatic growth in the live music market is that, the more commercially successful bands such as Radiohead become, the more they have to spend on live production in order to compete in this part of the business. This can make the economics of live music difficult for such bands as this impacts profit margins. In a research interview for this book, Los Angeles-based music executive Vince Bannon (Chief Executive Officer of music and social media start-up So.Co),[8] discussed the production values he witnessed at 2018 Radiohead and U2 concerts:

> I just saw Radiohead in Montreal about two weeks ago and I was blown away. I mean I was really glad to see them outside of say a festival situation because I got to see the production and the show and how it looked and it just added so much to everything … I think that's really what people are looking for when they go to a concert now. They really want to see a really great production … I enjoyed the U2 tour when they did the Joshua Tree [album tour] with all of Anton Corbijn's visuals. What I really admired about U2 was they didn't really put themselves up on the big screen as much as they showed the landscapes and the visuals and everything that was Anton Corbijn. (Interview 10)

The top end of the live music market has become increasingly innovative and elaborate and, as a consequence of the shift in the economic gravity of the music industries towards live music, the shows have become more expensive to produce.[9]

In the Netflix documentary series *Abstract: The art of design*, leading London-based artist and stage designer Es Devlin (2017) disclosed that 'I have been given this opportunity to sometimes spend millions of an artist's money on this sculpture they have commissioned'. Devlin is known for creating large-scale stage designs that feature kinetic/performative sculptures. Her work essentially fuses sculpture, light, darkness, music and language. According to her website, she has conceived such performative sculptures for

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[8]As I outlined in Chap. 3, Canadian-born Vince Bannon founded Detroit, USA-based concert promotion company Ritual (which was subsequently sold to Clear Channel Entertainment) and has also worked as a senior executive at Sony Music, and as an executive at Getty Images.

[9]While this chapter concerns popular music and live music production, for an extensive analysis of current trends in digital scenography in opera, see Vincent (2018). Vincent not only addresses the dramaturgical effects of digital technology but also the processes by which the operatic productions she studied are created. She used a methodology termed 'modes of synthesis', which 'is based on the kind of visual relationship that emerges between live performers and digital elements on stage, or the synthesis that is created for the audience perspective' (p. v).

Beyoncé, U2, Adele, The Weeknd and Kanye West as well as two decades of opera, drama and dance worldwide. Devlin has been awarded the London Design Medal, three Olivier Awards and a UAL Fellowship. She has been named RSA Royal Designer for Industry and was made an OBE in 2015. (Devlin 2019a)

Devlin (2017) outlined the five ingredients that she uses when creating her work:

1. The space
2. Light
3. Darkness
4. Scale
5. Time perceived by the audience.

These ingredients are used by Devlin, and the teams with which she works 'that are a least the size of a symphony orchestra' (Devlin 2019b), to focus the audience's attention often on only one person: the musician. Devlin (2019b) noted:

I call my work stage sculpture. But of course what is being sculpted is the experience of the audience. And as directors and designers we have to take responsibility for every minute that the audience spend with us. We're a bit like pilots navigating a flight path for one hundred thousand passengers.

For Devlin, the moment the audience sits together in the dark before the performance begins is important and this moment can be understood through Dissanayake's (1988) work. Dissanayake argued that art making is a universal human practice that involves the behavioural tendency of 'making special' (p. 74). Given that sitting in the dark is not something groups of people habitually do, this moment is arguably key for building audience anticipation that something 'special' is about to happen. Continuing with the flight metaphor, Devlin (2019b) argued:

And like any flight the most delicate part is the liftoff, the beginning … and our first task is to deliver for an audience on their anticipation, to deliver their first sight of the performer … The end of the show is like the end of a flight. It's an arrival.

The design culture/organisational culture that stems from Devlin's work for artists such as Kanye West, Beyoncé and U2 helps to create the artificial instincts Harari (2015) discussed, instincts that enable thousands of strangers to cooperate effectively:

The stadium is a mass congregation. It's a temporary population of a hundred thousand people who've all come there to sing along to every word together, but they've also come there seeking one-to-one intimacy with the performer. And when we conceive of the show we have to provide intimacy on a grand scale … Where else do you witness this many humans, connected, focused, undistracted and unfragmented? (Devlin 2019b)

These mass congregations are necessarily short-lived. The aforementioned ingredients Devlin uses relate to the fact that stage designs only exist for a short period of time. They necessarily work to the timeline of the show and therefore have an ephemeral nature; the millions of dollars spent by the artists who engage her services

are spent to make performative sculptures that will not exist in the context for which they were designed as soon as the show is over. These are not sculptures that are designed to be exhibited in an art gallery.

As Frith et al. (2010) noted, 'live music has to happen somewhere' and this means that an audience member had to be there on *that* night to see *that* particular performance. After this, what Devlin (2017) is designing 'will only exist in people's memories'. Devlin (2019b) noted that: 'Most of what I've made over the last 25 years doesn't exist anymore. But our work endures in memories, in synaptic sculptures, in the minds of those who were once present in the audience.'

Regarding the topic of innovation in the field of set design, Devlin cites the year 2003 as being pivotal, both for her personally and for the field generally. She noted that in 2003 when she went to see the bands, she found them to be visually 'really desperately boring' (Devlin 2017). So, when given the opportunity to design a set for a rock show she put each band member of a four-piece band in a box of their own and deconstructed the anatomy of the band with each box zooming into feature a different facial part of each member. This was for the band Wire for their 2003 show entitled *Flag: Burning* that took place at the Barbican Theatre in London on 26 April that year. According to Devlin, this was the stage design that caught Kanye West's attention and led to her working with him and then with Beyoncé on her Formation tour and also with Kanye West and Jay Z for their Watch the Thorne tour. She has now also worked with Adele (Devlin 2017).

Devlin argued that 2003 was the year that the field of stage design fundamentally changed due to the widespread use of mobile phones. This is because mobile phones around this time also started to function as cameras. Social media platforms that could be used to share the imagery captured also started to proliferate from 2003 onwards:

> If you look at most concerts before 2003, most of the photos were done by professional photographers near the front. And you'll see a big God-like image of the pop star and a load of lights behind. And that's how the imagery was recorded and how most people who didn't go perceived the show. Cut to cameras on phones. Suddenly that event is being recorded from every angle. And therefore my work is suddenly being seen from every angle and being understood in a different way. So it's a big shift. The artists I'm working with are bombarded with images of themselves and their show. They know their show like they never knew it. They're aware of how many people will perceive this show via this media. So to a degree we are designing to a square at the moment. That will probably change. Instagram may suddenly become a triangle. (Devlin 2017)

Smartphones and social media have fundamentally changed the way in which designers such as Devlin approach their craft. These technologies have also led to fans breaching artists' moral rights, a topic that will be explored later in this chapter.

Another development that has benefited the top end of the live music business is the emergence of film and TV streaming services such as Netflix. The very reason I am discussing Devlin's work for Kanye West, Beyoncé, Adele and Jay Z in this chapter is because of the Netflix documentary series *Abstract: The art of design* (Devlin 2017). Beyoncé's Netflix film *Homecoming* (Beyoncé 2019), which features an intimate in-depth look at the production of her 2018 Coachella performance is another example

of a megastar musician using Netflix's reach to broaden their audience. Thom Yorke also released a short musical film, directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, to promote his third album. Both the film and the album are called *Anima.*

Regarding the impact that such documentary content can have on the demand for a musician's live music performances, Los Angeles-based music executive Vince Bannon (Chief Executive Officer of music and social media start-up So.Co) discussed the impact that the Foo Fighters'/Dave Grohl's *Sonic highways* HBO documentary series had (Foo Fighters: Sonic highways 2014):

> About four years ago I was at a Canadian friend's house. I'm Canadian as well so full disclosure, but a lot of the Live Nation people at top management are Canadian and a guy that was there was working on the Foo Fighters tour and he said to me, 'We had to double the size of the Foo Fighters tour after Sonic Highways played.' After that came out and played, they had to double the size of the tour. Dave Grohl's become a … great filmmaker, a great storyteller and that goodwill actually made the band the biggest rock band in the world. (Interview 10)

However, clearly only a very small number of musicians are able to use Netflix as a platform for indirectly promoting their live performances in this way. Therefore, the following case study will concern British band Bear's Den,[10] a band that does not have access to millions of dollars to fund Es Devlin-designed performative sculptures, nor access to Netflix as a promotional channel like the Foo Fighters do. Yet, Bear's Den has a significant live audience. Regarding the nuances of the economics of live performance production, in the following case study London-based artist manager Rowan Brand[11] (Tribe Management) outlined a number of factors that are at play at the level at which Bear's Den operates.

7.2 Bear's Den Case Study

Julier and Munch (2019) argued that:

> design's relations are in constant flux … if design defines itself in relation to its contexts that are—in the contemporary economic and social circumstances—always on the move, so design is too. In turn, design contributes to this dynamism and is shaped by it. (p. 5)

Live music experience design is shaped by the different contexts in which bands and musicians find themselves and also by a variety of factors such as career stage and genre. The first factor that Brand discussed in terms of his experience managing Bear's Den concerned audience expectations in particular markets. According to Brand, across a tour, the audiences in the different cities and countries that a band

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[10]As I outlined in Chap. 3, Bear's Den are a British folk-rock band from London, formed in 2012. They have released three studio albums to date (Bear's Den 2019).

[11]As I also stated in Chap. 3, Rowan Brand and I co-managed the Australian band Boy & Bear from 2008 through 2012.

visits have different expectations due to their own local design cultures. These geographically based design cultures somewhat dictate what a band and their management and/or promoters need to spend on the production of their live performances. This impacts profit margins in various territories:

> It probably starts with the audience's expectations and they are driven by a few things. The first is obviously the place or the culture in which the show is happening. Some markets will have a preference for higher production values and have better infrastructure, so the expectations are that the shows look more impressive. There are other markets in which the expectations are a lot lower, so that is something that is important to acknowledge to start with. (Interview 16)

The second factor Brand outlined was the genre of music in which the band or artist is located. Bear's Den is a useful example here:

> In the world of Bear's Den—and speaking very generally in the world of singer-songwriter music—the values of authenticity, of realness, of connectivity with your audience and vulnerability tends to mean that the audience's expectations visually are to make sure that the artist is presented in a very real and transparent way. That often means you're excluding the theatrical or the dramatic—we don't use fireworks, we don't use massive video screens. It's not to say those things can't be used, but I think there's a natural tendency that where audiences don't expect and also aren't drawn to those elements because of what they perceive to be the brand values or what people attribute to being important for that kind of music. (Interview 16)

The third factor Brand identified was the venue in which the band or musician is playing:

> The third principle … would be the venue. There's an expectation that if you are playing a show at the Hammersmith Apollo[12] that's very different from whether you're playing the Lexington which is a 250 [capacity venue][13]—classier club; both in terms of facility, in terms of the layout and the number of people, the show is inherently different for those venues of course and the visual expectations are different as a result. (Interview 16)

Tying these principles together in his outline of Bear's Den's live music-related design culture, Brand continued:

> As the band has grown and the venues have grown, the expectations and audiences have become more hungry for a higher level of production values in the live show, but it's not to the extent that it would be for say, electronic artists or a pop artist, where the expectations of audiences are elevated even higher because of the cultural context and the perception of the genre. Those things have become more important as the band has grown. (Interview 16)

In order to illustrate this point, Brand gave a specific example of the production of a show in Belgium:

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[12]The Hammersmith Apollo is a prestigious theatre venue in Hammersmith, West London with a capacity of 5,039 (standing) and 3,632 (seated) (Eventim Apollo 2019).

[13]The Lexington is a small music venue in London near Kings Cross Station (Lexington 2019).

> We did a show in a small arena at the end of 2017 which involved us rebuilding the visuals for the show and the lighting design that was necessary and it was customised, and it was a one-off show. It was the most expensive lighting and budget we had to put together, but it was important with that many people, 7,000 people in a small arena in Belgium. It was important for the band to produce a show that spoke to the audience in that space and filled that space with an experience that was immersive but also inherently connected to the artist. (Interview 16)

Regarding the concept behind the design of this particular live experience, Brand noted:

> So, an example of how we achieved that was to try and scale the intimacy of the show—that was a real key thought. Visually the way we did that was to build a second stage behind the sound desk in the middle of the venue essentially where the band popped up and did a couple of acoustic songs around a central microphone with a lamp that hung from the roof—which is by no means an over-the-top or dramatic visual design, nor is it necessarily a terribly expensive one, but the concept of that came from the brand identity and that is being personal and being connected and being transparent, raw and approximate and close to people—is a very important part of what people perceive to be a key point of attraction for them with Bear's Den. (Interview 16)

Bear's Den's design culture, or 'the spirit of the human hive' (Mintzberg 2013, p. 51, as quoted in Saintilan and Schreiber 2018, p. 213), which they were trying to recreate in this large venue, revolved around a desire to achieve a sense of intimacy. This sense of a direct connection between the musicians and the fans in the venue was generated through the use of a number of 'authenticity' constructs:

> Us expressing that in the live performance in a bigger venue when intimacy is hard to create, we developed another element to the show to put into that venue to reinforce those brand values that we want to maintain and that's what gives people the Bear's Den experience when they leave the show—these are some of the key moments that stick with them. They talk about the fact that the band just popped up in front of them—they had seats right at the back and all of a sudden the band came to them and sung that song that is so personal to them and it was intimate and there wasn't a lot of light and there was a single lamp on stage, and creating that kind of romantic notion in a very simple way—those are the things that really lead the design characteristics and become the challenges as the shows grow and as the band grows, to reinforce and express that in ways that are appropriate in the context. (Interview 16)

Therefore, one interesting insight that came to light through this case study of Bear's Den's approach to live concert production is that, the more commercially successful bands become, the more they tend to have to spend on live production in order to compete. Furthermore, this issue, and the profit margins associated with it, are dependent on the geographic context, the size of the venue, the musical genre in which the band is located and the specificities of the band's design culture. Brand posited:

> So inherently as the shows get bigger, the costs get bigger, but I don't think it's always a definite. I think that's the by-product. I think the focus—how do you express the brand visually in that space and does it require more money? Often it does but just throwing more money at it doesn't necessarily—or is definitely not the way we do things. (Interview 16)

Following on from Chap. 3's discussion of Bear's Den's brand stewardship/design culture and the way in which the various components of the design culture spiral out from the album cover design as the starting point, Brand discussed London-based visual creative Ross Stirling's (Studio Juice) contribution to the band's live concert experience design:

> The creator or visual director Ross Stirling in this case would usually give us, once the artwork has been designed, a deck of a whole bunch of different ideas. Everything from tour poster designs, billboards, television ad concepts, video ideas and set design being one of them. We'll usually have a bunch of blue-sky ideas from him and then we'll work with our—at that point the decision-making process moves over to the lighting director and to the manager and artist to decide together what works, what's affordable, what's supportive of the concept of the band, what the audience expects, or the audience would enjoy. (Interview 16)

Brand described Bear's Den's approach to lighting design:

> We work with colour palettes—Bear's Den in particular work with particular styles of lighting. There's a lot of backlight, lot of movers, beams that go up into the air that create these spectacular, but not necessarily entirely dramatic, visual looks. The band don't often use strobe lights for example, there's definitely a colour and light palette that becomes part of the band's visual identity as much as the album artwork is. (Interview 16)

Bear's Den's design culture is both organisational and attitudinal. By working in a team with visual director Ross Sterling and by creatively empowering lighting directors in the way outlined above, the band is able to generate coherence between the internal ethos of their project and their interactions with the public in live performance contexts. Through this process of brand stewardship, Bear's Den's design culture functions as an organisational and attitudinal spine (Julier 2013, p. 7) for the project that signifies the cultural, or subcultural, capital of the band and this helps them to achieve distinction and differentiation within the live music market. However, in the age of social media this process of brand stewardship is often hard to control as fans breach artists' moral rights when they post footage of such live performances on various social media platforms.

7.3 Moral Rights

As outlined above, Es Devlin (2017) argued that 2003 was the year that the field of set design fundamentally changed due to the widespread use of mobile phones and the photography, filming and social media participation these devices facilitate.[14] The fact that live music events are recorded by audience members from many different

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[14]This section focuses on user-generated content (UGC) from live music events and experiences. For an examination of the content produced by music festival organisers and promoters, such as the genre of festival event 'after-movies' (Holt 2019, p. 91) that function as folkloric texts on Facebook, see Holt (2019).

angles without consent has impacted musicians' moral rights. Whenever a fan takes a video on their mobile phone of a musician performing and posts it online to any number of social media platforms, they are technically breaching the rights of these musicians/creators/authors. This is because the live performance is something the musician or band created, and often when fans post their footage to social media the musician or band (the 'author') does not have a say in how their creation is represented and their work may not be treated with respect.

In Chaps. 5 and 6 of this book, I discussed authors' moral rights in relation to music video production agreements. As I outlined in these chapters, through these agreements music video directors often agree to waive any moral rights they may have. The *Cambridge Dictionary* (2019) defines moral rights as 'a writer's or artist's legal rights to protect their work, for example, to prevent it from being changed: The author will always hold the moral rights over their work'. While according to the Copyright Agency (2015), 'There are legal obligations to attribute creators and treat their work with respect'. According to Towse (2008), the 1710 Statute of Anne in England was the first such law and, following this, copyright law/authors' rights laws spread around the world (often by conquest). Towse noted that:

> Two traditions coexist: Anglo Saxon copyright law with its emphasis on economic rights and the civil law authors' rights tradition that has moral rights as an integral feature. However, the difference between these traditions is being eroded by deliberate policies of harmonisation. (p. 247)[15]

Attempts to exercise such moral rights are putting pressure on stage designers such as Es Devlin because performers can view their performances in detailed and comprehensive ways that were heretofore not possible. There have been a number of attempts to address the issues generated by the fact that live performance events are now recorded from almost every angle. Clearly, the way in which user-generated content (UGC) is managed is a key consideration when it comes to contemporary live music experience design.

One theme that arose in the research interviews for this book was that there is a spectrum of concern regarding this issue, with some artists being highly concerned about UCG and attempting to control it, while others are not concerned about it and do not attempt to control it. Regarding the first end of the spectrum, Melbourne-based artist manager Catherine Haridy (Catherine Haridy Management) commented that:

> Some artists now refuse to have phones at their live shows … a blanket ban on phones at shows for that very reason because it was distracting them from their performance … taking away from the engagement between the audience and the artist in that live context and also because there is no way to filter the visual content. (Interview 11)

While at the other end of the spectrum, Haridy noted that it can be viewed

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[15]According to Towse (2008), the English copyright tradition is evident in its former colonies in North America, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, while the authors' rights approach is evident in former Spanish, French, Portuguese colonies and also in countries such as Japan, China and Russia.

as a positive thing … your audience contribute to marketing your artist by filming various pieces of visual content at a live show and then distributing it through their friendship group. What we can't control is the quality of that content and if it's terrible quality or it happens to be at a point in the show that maybe the artist wasn't as happy with the sound or happy with the way that they were singing and that suddenly goes viral, then you're negating that positive marketing effect and it becomes a negative marketing effect. So instead of turning people on, you are turning people off. (Interview 11)

Similarly, regarding the issue of fans breaching his clients' moral rights, Sydney and New York-based artist manager and label owner John Watson (Eleven Music) posited that the manager's role

is always to represent the view of your artists. So some artists that we work with would be very sensitive to this issue and others would be very relaxed about it … we trim our sails according to the client concerned. (Interview 6)

The responses to questions concerning this particular issue of UGC that breaches musicians' moral rights tended to fluctuate between respondents stating that any publicity is good publicity, with Vince Bannon (So.Co) noting 'what they're doing is being the best promoter for the band' (Interview 10), and responses describing the negative effects of some UGC. For example, Melbourne-based artist manager Michael Parisi (Michael Parisi Management) argued:

how do you control what fans are going to do? Some labels are very vigilant about it and some labels are quite lax about it … Unless it's something that's going to be demeaning and detrimental to my artist's career, I don't particularly mind it. If it's terrible footage and terrible sound the artist will probably be upset about it, but again if it's something that's effectively promoting my act I don't mind … If it is an artist in a compromising position and they're being shot without their knowledge, then we have an issue, we have a major issue. If it's fan-generated live footage for example I am all for it—no problem at all. (Interview 12)

Australian singer–songwriter Josh Pyke gave the following concrete examples of his experience of this issue:

I was really worried this one time a punter got on stage and was messing with me on stage and I shoved him out of the way and he kind of fell over. I felt threatened. He was invading my personal space on stage and it wasn't cool at all. But I was really worried that somebody had filmed that because I also felt embarrassed that that had happened and I didn't really want to be represented by that event. (Interview 4)

As an artist, Pyke feels conflicted about this issue. On the one hand, he noted:

sometimes people in the crowds make really good sounding videos and it becomes an advertisement for live shows. Because everybody knows that you can watch as many YouTube clips as you want of a live show but nothing replaces the experience of being at a live show. And so part of me is like, well, the more evidence out there that I put on a good live show it's like free advertising for me and people share it. (Interview 4)

While on the other hand, Pyke argued that:

> the other part of me is thinking this is something that I've spent a lot of time and money over
> my career developing, this live act and this aesthetic and this production and I pay all my
> musicians and you know I pay my sound guy [sic] … then if they put it out and it gets lots
> of hits and they start putting advertising on the video of that I think that becomes definitely
> a problem. (Interview 4)

Pyke is referring here to the business models of social media platforms such as
YouTube; UGC benefits *their* business but not necessarily *his* business as a self-
employed musician.

A number of respondents proposed ideas for controlling this content. John Watson
(Eleven Music) noted that

> instead of trying to control the almost uncontrollable you're better off trying to figure out
> 'how can I get into those same channels?' Somewhat satiate the public demand but in a form
> that the artist is happy with. So if you take Midnight Oil[16] as a case, that's probably as close
> to the Gotye[17] end than the other, but they're not as strict about it … we're putting up some
> great photos from every show on the website and sharing them on socials so that people
> don't need to … share around the one that the band isn't happy with. (Interview 6)

Leanne de Souza (former Brisbane-based artist manager and now music industries
consultant) proposed a similar solution, namely that musicians should focus on what
they can control:

> Being prepared, being on your A game, not getting messy in public, not being photographed
> smoking, don't fucking smoke. So it's all about that, so if you're transparent about who you
> are and what you stand for, really whatever photos or videos are taken of you should amplify
> that. (Interview 14)

Similarly, Sean Walker (Breathe), who featured in a case study in Chap. 6, argued that
musicians simply need to be aware that once a song is performed live it is potentially
'released':

> When you've played a show at Primavera [Sound] and you only played the song once and
> you played it live and a fan has a very good quality phone and it's recorded the video and
> the audio really well and it goes up online. That's almost like a release. You see it constantly
> when, say, Frank Ocean plays an unreleased song and the only version of it is on a fan's

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[16]Midnight Oil are an Australian rock band composed of Peter Garrett (lead vocals), Rob Hirst
(drums and vocals), Jim Moginie (guitar, keyboards and vocals), Martin Rotsey (guitar) and Bones
Hillman (bass and vocals). The band formed in 1973 in Sydney. Watson has managed the band
since 2013. The band's website notes: 'Throughout all this the band wrote their own rules; refusing
to appear on popular TV shows like Countdown and shunning all the "music biz" norms. At the
same time, Midnight Oil was becoming known for their support of environmental and social justice
causes. The singular trail that they blazed set the tone for everything that followed' (Midnight Oil
2019).

[17]Watson mentioned another client of his Gotye here because earlier in the interview he mentioned
Gotye as an example of an extreme case in one direction, because he 'feels very strongly about
quality control and gets very perturbed by works of his being in the public domain which are not
of quality that meets his standards' (Interview 6).

phone. It gets millions of views on YouTube and it's kind of like, 'I didn't release it like that.' You didn't want it viewed like that. (Interview 9)

Walker also made a similar point to the one made by interviewee Gregg Donavan (Wonderlick Entertainment) in Chap. 5, namely that the process of drip feeding content to social media platforms is leading to the emergence of a new type of job in the music business: a social media manager who goes on the road with a band for their entire album cycle to help manage this very issue. Along similar lines, Walker noted that he feels the need to remove himself from the anxiety-inducing process of managing his own social media profiles:

There's such an anxiety-inducing thing that happens with social media. You have to do it in a certain way, you have to post at certain times, you have to act a certain way. You want to be cool but removed, minimalistic in my sense. You don't want to say too much but you also—it's over-thought, it's over-considered, anxiety inducing. It's not your job. Your job is to take photos, your job is to write music, to make videos, yet there's another whole world now of when to post, what to post with it, who to tag, how to find the locations of where you are, so you've tagged off at the right geo setting. It's just like beyond—I don't want to think about that. (Interview 9)

Interestingly, London-based artist manager Rowan Brand (Tribe Management) argued that the alternative solution (to those outlined above) of issuing take-down notices to fans and potentially suing them would most likely backfire. Regarding how useful leveraging a musician client's moral rights could be for an artist manager, he noted:

I look at that protection as being one lever that's there to pull should it be worth your time to try and fight something. It is difficult for that to be enforced across the board, but also, I don't think it's necessarily in the artist's best interest to be doing that. In the same way that in the early days in the digital music industry, with the proliferation of music piracy, this set up quite a combative environment between some artists and their fans; where artists were … suing their own fan base. That's never a good look. In the same way, doing that with moral rights—we've learnt the lesson that this isn't the best way to handle things. (Interview 16)

The fact that live music events are nowadays often recorded by audience members from many different angles without the consent of the creator(s) of what they are witnessing often impacts musicians' moral rights. The irony of the title of this chapter 'Designing the Live Experience' is that in the contemporary music business live music experience designers to a certain extent can only design for chaos. As Keith et al. (2014) noted:

Concepts surrounding 'liveness' in the contemporary music context are changing, so a precise definition is complex. Traditionally defined 'live' performance, as in concerts or gigs, is currently undergoing significant changes within the Australian scene due to changing regulations, opportunities, music consumption habits, and the affordances of the Internet' (p. 226).

In this context any attempt to control the almost uncontrollable may backfire. At the top end of the music business the solution appears to be to proactively design *for*

this ubiquitous dissemination of footage and photography via social media and this helps to explain why set designers such as Es Devlin (2017) 'spend millions of an artist's money' on the performative sculptures they are commissioned to create.

While musicians' moral rights may be fiendishly difficult to enforce in this context, further research is needed in this area because breaches of these rights may affect musicians' well-being. This chapter's discussion of design culture as a form of organisational culture relates to attempts to control the visual and sensory story of a musical project and how this reinforces the musician or band's overall brand. The moral rights issue discussed here however highlights the extent to which musicians and their management *cannot* control these stories in the age of social media.

7.4   Merchandise

Designing the live experience often also involves considering how to maximise the sale of merchandise in venues. Just as for Es Devlin (2019b), the moment the audience sits together in the dark before the performance begins is important, the 15- to 30-min period after a performance has concluded is, in my experience as a band manager, the crucial window for selling merchandise at venues. As stated earlier in this chapter, for Dissanayake (1988) art making is a universal human practice that involves the behavioural tendency of 'making special' (p. 74). And following a 'special' performance, fans will often purchase merchandise that symbolises this specialness in their attempts to capture for posterity the extraordinary ephemeral moment they have just experienced. In my experience, merchandise was often *only* sold in the 15- to 30-min window after the performance had ended.

Bands I managed or co-managed such as Sydney-based Australian band Boy and Bear, their crew and I would get to the venue, load in, sound check, and set up the merchandise point of sale in advance of the band's performance. We would then staff the stand but not sell a single item before the performance. Then following the performance there would sometimes be a rush on the merchandise point of sale, especially if the band told the audience that they would attend the merchandise stand after the concert to sign posters and other items of merchandise and pose for photos with fans. But then after the 15- to 30-min window after the performance had ended even if the staff were to stay at the point of sale, we would not sell any more merchandise. This is a phenomenon I can recall witnessing at Boy and Bear's performances on 3 November 2011 at Uni Hall Wollongong south of Sydney and at the Enmore Theatre in Sydney on 5 November 2011.

This 15- to 30-min window after a performance for selling merchandise at venues is something that e-commerce companies such as Music Glue (2019) utilize by sending solicited text messages to the concert attendees reminding them that there is merchandise available for sale.[18] Music Glue (2019) is a London-based direct-to-fan

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[18]Albeit in the research interview for this book Music Glue founder Mark Meharry noted: 'We are looking at ways of maybe making that more of an online experience to remove the queuing. But

platform that has been designed to provide a single integrated website from which consumers can purchase tickets, music, merchandise and 'experiences' directly from artists. Music Glue's clients include Probity Merchandise in the UK and, through their relationship with merchandising companies such as Probity, they work with bands/brands such as Iron Maiden, Led Zeppelin, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Flume, Metallica, Mumford & Sons and Zara Larsson amongst thousands of other bands and musicians. Music Glue founder Mark Meharry noted in the music merchandising business there are four rights to consider:

> To break it down there's basically four fundamental rights that a merchandise company will be assigned with … the right to sell at the show. So that's the guys [sic] who sit at the desk all day or use the venue's desk and facilities, which is different to the e-commerce rights. So in some cases, you might have a company that's only got the rights for the show. Otherwise it's the e-commerce and you've got the retail rights, which is the right to sell that brand to retail stores like H&M or to Marks and Spencers … And then the final one is just basic branding … the right to use the logo of the artist with other companies. (Interview 21)

While live music experiences are often designed to maximise the sale of merchandise at venues in the way mentioned above, Music Glue only deal with the e-commerce rights. Regarding these rights, Meharry (2016) argued that attempts to sell merchandise online have been fraught with complexities that have frustrated consumers. Albeit in a self-interested blog post, Meharry (2016) argued that the music industries are missing out on the sale of billions of dollars' worth of merchandise and tickets because of the fragmented and frustrating experience they provide consumers. He argued that the industries' focus on royalty rates paid by music streaming services needs to be matched with a focus on a streamlined and integrated online experience for purchasing tickets and merchandise alongside music itself to yield the business overall vastly more revenue. According to Meharry (2016), 30 years ago there was a

> simple 'supply chain' world, when music retail was uncomplicated. Consumers would walk into a local record store, listen to new music, flick through the vinyl racks, peruse the range of T-shirts and posters, chat with the clerk and other customers, then make a purchase that could include concert tickets.

Music Glue's vision therefore was to recreate this uncomplicated supply chain online. Meharry encapsulated the issue in the following quote:

> You go to almost any large international act and go to their website to buy something from them. You enter this myriad of difficult and complex mazes to find the things that you want. A great example of this is if you go to say Taylor Swift, one of the biggest artists on the planet, go to her website. And I challenge anybody to buy a ticket and a T-shirt. And her latest album, you will be sent to three different places. (Interview 21)

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the difficulty there is that you've got to get a message to those people that are having that euphoric moment through their phone and get them excited and then get them to push some button. So there's a lot of pieces of the puzzle that we have to solve there in order to actually make that an online experience' (Interview 21).

Meharry argued that the cause of this problem is actually split territories deals[19] for the licencing of music itself:

> The biggest issue is that e-commerce within the music business has replicated the fragmentation of the licencing of music. So for large artists, they will have a different merch deal in Australia than they will have in the UK and that they'll have in America. They'll have a record deal with someone in the various countries so that this patchwork quilt of licences means that each one of those companies creates an online store to sell their products branded as the artists that is not a sewn up e-commerce solution for the artist. That is a fragmented and horrible solution which is still used by so many. (Interview 21)

Meharry (2016) put the argument that when musicians and bands use Music Glue's services, they sell 70% of their concert tickets on average if these tickets are made available at the same time as all other outlets. He also claimed that 1 in 3 customers who buy directly from a musician or band via their platform will buy more than one item, that when tickets and merchandise are bundled together a musician or band will sell an additional £19 of merchandise per ticket, and that fans on average buy 2.4 tickets (albeit in 2016), and over a five-year period fans returned to buy an additional £53 of products (Meharry 2016). He noted that Amazon has set the pace in the e-commerce space and have therefore become the dominant site from which to buy music-related merchandise. In contrast to Amazon, by providing a fractured experience for music consumers by sending them to different online stores, the music business overall limits sales. According to Meharry, this is beginning to change:

> When I talk to my clients, they'll still say that about 80 percent of their revenue comes from the live side, from the actual desks at the gigs. But that's now starting to shift to about 75 percent and two or three years ago was around about 90 percent … the e-commerce part of it is actually starting to increase considerably. (Interview 21)

An additional cause of the problem here is that, while some musicians and bands are independent and can sell their merchandise at venues and via services such as Music Glue, other artists have assigned or licensed their merchandising rights to major record labels and other entities. Concerning the way in which merchandising rights are treated in record contracts, London-based artist manager Rowan Brand (Tribe Management) noted:

> You've such a variety of business models now … these agreements are pretty far reaching in terms of the intellectual property that's created … there's usually one clause to catch all the visual. That usually expresses itself explicitly in the copyright in the album art. (Interview 16)

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[19]The term 'split territories' refers to the patchwork of deals that a musician or band may form with different record labels or song publishing companies in different countries/geographical territories around the world. For example, Rowan Brand and I worked with the band Boy & Bear to negotiate a licence deal with record label Universal Music Australia for Australia and New Zealand only. The band were then free to sign directly to Universal Music Group (Republic) in the USA for the rest of the world. The band's song publishing agreement with SonyATV was for the whole world. The band and Republic have since parted ways and they are now signed to Nettwerk Music Group for the world excluding Australia and New Zealand. This is what leads to the fragmentation to which Meharry is alluding.

Such clauses in recording agreements that 'catch all' of the visual content may cause complications for bands and musicians that seek to sell merchandise directly to consumers via platforms such as Music Glue. Discussing merchandise-related clauses in such contracts, Brand posited:

> The second, would probably be the rights to merchandise and the ability to have certain designs—some sign away all merchandising rights, particularly the majors. Their argument for doing so is they have full-service merchandising companies that can exploit those rights and benefit and pay royalties back to an artist … the visual side [of the music business] is stepping into a royalty-based mechanism, rather than a right's buy-out. That fits neatly into the contract of what an artist expects which is a royalty in return for use of their IP. (Interview 16)

Brand noted, however, that clauses pertaining to merchandise are usually not exclusive. If their rights are not exclusive to the label to which they are signed, musicians and bands could also sell their merchandise directly: 'I've never seen—when they [record labels] buy-out the rights to the artwork or the merchandise exclusively. I'm sure there are examples of that, but I wouldn't say it's common' (Interview 16).

One key to understanding the fragmented consumer experience to which Meharry (2016) is referring to above is the ownership of the musician or band's digital spaces. Brand continued:

> The third area would be, and this is where it gets very cloudy, the rights to online or the digital space, so ownership of the website, of the domain, of the content that's on that, YouTube channels, social media content, Vine and all these other proliferations of video and visual content. Everything from being ignored by some record labels in the agreements, for some of them it's actively omitted so that the artist is incentivised to create and to do that and others—they bring it all within the boundaries of the agreement so that the rights' holder also ends up having the rights to the visual online. (Interview 16)

Brand outlined the following concrete example of this issue that he and his company Tribe Management have faced:

> We have an artist who we manage called Amber Run and they have a YouTube channel with a quarter of a million subscribers, but that YouTube channel is owned by RCA. That is the record label that they signed their first record to. The band has since released a second album and are about to do a third album, but they don't have the access to monetise that content and speak to that audience. It's a very strange situation because at the end of the day, those subscribers are connected to the band and are loyal to the artist's brand and not to RCA, but it is an example of where those things get caught up in the agreements and the artist loses control of, not just the content, but also the connection digitally that content has created between a fan and the artist. (Interview 16)

Design culture is a form of organisational culture, and arguably the onus is on musicians and bands to understand this form of culture holistically. In order to facilitate the more integrated consumer experience Meharry (2016) outlined above, musicians and bands themselves need to identify all the different forms of creativity that are associated with their brand. By retaining control of these forms of creativity and the online spaces from which they are disseminated by only licensing this content and associated digital space to other entities such as record labels, musicians and bands would be better able to control their design cultures.

For Brand and his company Tribe Management, the strategy for increasing the commercial exchange value of their clients' holistic design cultures (for both his management company and for his clients directly) involves the timing of when particular deals for the separate rights are done:

> Much in the way there's been a practice in the past when doing record deals that split your [geographic] territories up into multiple areas and you may do a deal for a smaller [geographic] territory first to exclude it and provide favourable commercial terms before doing a deal with a larger territory. Because it is going to be of less significance to the larger territory if there was a small territory excluded than it would be to do it the other way around. In the same way, I think there's a practice that is starting to emerge in the industry where taking away and doing deals for certain bundles of rights which are outside the core business of a record label is becoming an interesting thing to explore. For example, doing a deal with a MCN—All Channel Network for an artist's YouTube channel first and excluding those rights from the discussion with the record label. The record label doesn't view YouTube as part of their core business, I don't think, or not many do. That way, you're looking at super-serving and ring-fencing different forms of copyright and ensuring that value is being incentivised and driven in each of them. (Interview 16)

Brand and Tribe Management's strategy here involves attempting to get in first, before his clients sign recording agreements, to do what Radiohead were able to do after the end of their contract with EMI expired. That is, sell directly to consumers.

As stated previously in this chapter, in my earlier work (Morrow 2009) I argued that Radiohead's *In rainbows* album release was successful because it functioned as a publicity stunt that directed consumers to their own website from which they could purchase merchandise and concert tickets directly from the band. Interestingly, by early 2008, only a few months after the famous 2007 'choose your own price' release, when consumers went to their website, rather than being able to pay what they wanted (beginning at nothing) to download the album they were instead greeted by the message: 'In Rainbows is no longer available as a download. You can purchase the discbox by clicking here' (InRainbows.com n.d., as cited in Morrow 2009, p. 168). When consumers clicked the link they were taken to a page on which the following message was displayed in capital letters. This indicated that the Discbox available consisted of:

> The new album, *In Rainbows,* on CD and on 2×12 inch heavyweight vinyl records, a second, enhanced CD contains more new songs, along with digital photographs and artwork. The discbox also includes artwork and lyric booklets. All are encased in a hardback book and slipcase. (Pitchfork 2007, n.p)

The price for this disc box was £40. From the homepage of the *In rainbows* website, consumers could link to pages on which they could purchase various items of clothing, audio and visual material, books and posters and badges, calendars and keyrings all designed by Stanley Donwood in collaboration with Thom Yorke from the Radiohead-owned merchandise company W.A.S.T.E. When visiting Radiohead's wasteheadquarters.com from Melbourne, Australia in February 2020, I was only able to access the US store and the only currencies listed were Euro, British Pound and USD. I found the lack of an option to purchase in Australian Dollars frustrating. I left the site without purchasing anything.

7.5 Conclusion

Designing the live experience involves the use of creativities relating to our kinaesthetic sense (proprioception), in other words, our sense of self-movement and body position, as well as creativities relating to touch (somatosensation). Through the Es Devlin case study it became evident that, while she calls her work 'stage sculpture', through her scenography the experience of the audience is what is actually being sculpted—the audience members' sense of self-movement and body position is a key consideration. An audience member's sense of touch comes into play when, following a 'special' performance, they purchase merchandise that symbolises this specialness in their attempt to capture for posterity the extraordinary ephemeral moment they have just experienced.

And in the age of smartphone cameras and social media, visual and auditory representations of these special events are captured from as many different angles as there are audience members in attendance. While this can complicate a musician or bands' processes of brand stewardship/design culturing and this process often breaches their moral rights, Radiohead's Thom Yorke (2019) was quoted in this chapter saying, 'Yes, it's just record covers and artwork, adverts, marketing. But no. For us, it was never just that' (n.p.). The concept of design culture was therefore more useful than branding theory for conducting the case study of Radiohead's collaboration with Stanley Donwood in this chapter. Donwood's work does not simply signify cultural capital for the purposes of obtaining commercial advantage. Radiohead's long-term association with him and his work has provided their project an organisational and attitudinal spine—a way of doing things. Through their long-term collaboration with Donwood, Radiohead's design culture has created artificial instincts that have enabled millions of strangers to cooperate effectively in the purchasing of tickets for their live performances. Branding is a by-product of their collaboration with Donwood and their resultant design culture/organisational culture, not the focus.

Live music events are mass congregations of connected and focused human beings. While these events have intrinsic value for this reason, they also have commercial value. From the perspective of a band and their management, due to the shift in the economic gravity of the music industries towards live music from the 1960s to the 2000s, this chapter argued that contemporary music-related design cultures are often created so that an album release campaign culminates in the band achieving an economic return from their live concerts and associated sales of merchandise—in other words from the sale of tickets and T-shirts. In a business sense therefore, the process of 'designing the live experience' involves the whole design culture process from album cover design through gig and tour poster design, music video production and dissemination, merchandise design and the interrelationships between these.

This chapter attempted to examine the topic of designing the live experience in a number of different ways that concern different levels of the music business. At the top end of the business, Es Devlin's work was of interest because she often spends

millions of dollars of her musician client's money producing performative sculptures for them, while Radiohead were of interest because they have built a long-term and sustainable brand in the progressive rock tradition. Bear's Den featured as a medium-size case study, while the moral rights issue that was examined affects musicians and bands at all levels of the business.

Areas for further research relating to music merchandise specifically include the entry level of the music business and also, at the top end, the way in which music-related brands such as Metallica and Led Zeppelin function as broader fashion brands. While the promise of web utopianism led to the establishment of services that would 'cut out the intermediaries' such as Pledge Music, TopSpin, Music Glue and Trinity Street, the difficulty of finding a sustainable business model that supports a high number of lower-volume creators and that therefore services the long tail (Anderson 2006) of content has meant that Pledge Music has filed for bankruptcy (Liptak 2019; Sanchez 2019), while Trinity Street has ceased trading (Paine 2009). For entry-level bands and musicians stock risk is also an issue for further research; attempts to sell merchandise may only lead to boxes and boxes of unsold goods sitting in a band member's garage or bedroom.

Through conducting the research for the Music Glue case study in this chapter, it became evident that, while this company started with the goal of connecting artists directly to fans and they do still service the long tail of bands and musicians, they have more recently pivoted to service established bands/brands such as Iron Maiden, Led Zeppelin and, through a partnership with merchandising company Probity, Metallica and Red Hot Chili Peppers (Sutherland 2017). Clearly the digital evolution of the music business has not led to this particular business escaping the grip of the winner-takes-all setting of late-stage capitalism. An area for further research relating to the 'winners' such as Metallica and Red Hot Chili Peppers concerns the difference between their merchandising and branding strategies when they are in an album or touring cycle and attempting to sell T-shirts and other items of merchandise to consumers who also purchase concert tickets, and how they function as broader fashion brands whereby their branded merchandise is purchased independently of any particular live music experience. As Meharry noted:

> There's two fundamental fan groups that will buy from the artists directly. You've got the fans of the band and you've got the fans of the brand. And they're not the same thing. And they need to be marketed to in different ways and they need to have different products as well. So fans of the band don't want to buy the standard Iron Maiden T-shirt that you can buy in H&M because that's not what they're into; they've already got that T-shirt. They bought that when they were 20 years old … Fans of the brand, which are people who like to wear a live Zeppelin shirt but have never heard a Led Zeppelin song; if you played them Led Zeppelin, they wouldn't know what the hell it was. They want the Led Zeppelin shirt … It's an iconic brand, is an iconic look. (Interview 21)

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Chapter 8
Conclusions: Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality

Abstract This chapter concludes the book and addresses XR design. It features a case study of Icelandic musician and visual artist Björk's release of her full VR album *Vulnicura* (Björk 2019c). A case study of Florida-based company Magic Leap's work with Icelandic band Sigur Rós is also provided. Sigur Rós (2020) and Magic Leap collaborated to develop an interactive music and mixed reality experience called *Tónandi*. This chapter then traces the declining cost of XR production and the role companies such as Facebook, and platform economics generally, have to play in this. Design culture has agency here for changing practice norms for the visual creators/designers and artists interviewed for this book, particularly in relation to intellectual property policies, and therefore design culture has an instrumental role to play in changing the deal making around visual representative media in this business; the music business can be changed through a new kind of design culture.

Keywords Virtual reality · Augmented reality · Mixed reality · Platform economics · Blockchain

8.1 Cutting Edge

On 5 September 2018, I was invited to Cutting Edge's studio complex in the West End in Brisbane, Australia to interview Benjamin Richards for this book. Cutting Edge has been a leading provider of sound and picture post-production for the advertising, film and television industries for 27 years both in Australia and internationally (Cutting Edge 2020). At the time of the interview, Benjamin was the Director of Creativity and Innovation and was Asia Regional Manager for the company. In this role, Benjamin was responsible for developing market strategies for new geographical territories and for new technologies (Richards 2020). He led Cutting Edge's research and development efforts in the fields of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) (VR/AR/MR will henceforth be collectively referred to as 'extended reality' (XR): see Greengard 2019, p. xvii). He also opened the first international branch of Cutting Edge in Tokyo, Japan, had one of his VR films screened at Cannes

Film Festival and was awarded both the Queensland and Australian International Export Awards for Creative Industries in 2016 (Richards 2020).[1]

Prior to the interview, Benjamin took me on a tour of the studio complex. On the way to the XR studio I was introduced to various producers, visual effects artists, a creative director, sound designers, an immersive content supervisor, an animator and a 3D artist who were all working busily in their open plan and semi-open plan offices. Once we made it to the XR studio, Benjamin provided me with a VR headset and gave me the opportunity to experience some immersive content; giant robots surrounded me and then I walked through a virtual maze. While I had the headset on, I had a disconcerting feeling that I did not know what the people in the actual room I was in were doing while I was immersed in the experience.

This book has concerned design culture not only in terms of the creation of visual artefacts that are to be used or 'read'; it has also examined the structuring of systems of encounter within the musical, visual and material world (Julier 2013, p. 11). It has achieved this through an analysis of the businesses associated with album cover design, gig and tour posters, music videos and stage and merchandise designs. Arguably XR will increasingly become part of this interlocking web of cultural production within the contemporary music business. In this book I have not singularised and isolated the visual artefacts that are produced within the music business in my analysis of them and their production. Although in structuring this book I have included separate chapters on all of the aforementioned areas of visual culture production, by analysing them in the one book I have been able to produce an overview of an interlocking web or design culture/organisational culture. This has generated a better understanding of the product milieu (Margolin 1995) that often surrounds a piece of music. For the purposes of this concluding chapter, XR simply becomes an extension of this *music* product milieu; it will increasingly be used alongside these other elements of design culture to create the context and environment in which a piece of music 'lives'.

The multiplication of the artefacts produced by music-related designers and visual artists within and across the different media this book has analysed is what makes them so meaningful. As has been discussed throughout this book, musicians and their management orchestrate these artefacts into an architectonic structure through the way in which key visual signs are often serially reproduced through a range of media.[2] This concluding chapter explores the notion that, as musicians and bands' story lines increasingly enter the realm of XR, effective communication in this field will soon commonly include creativities relating to touch (somatosensation) and our kinaesthetic sense (proprioception), which is used for spatial movement.[3] XR

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[1]For a full list of Benjamin Richard's awards, see Richards (2020).

[2]While, following Karjalainen (2019), these visual signs can sometimes be predominantly arbitrary in nature, at other times intentional encoding can reduce the arbitrariness of such signs and they can come to generate a consistent visual narrative (as was evident in the case of the Stanley Donwood/Radiohead case study in the previous chapter).

[3]For Richards, this may also come to involve the user's sense of smell (olfaction): 'So the most immersive experiences that occur when you're in a 6 degree of freedom thing and when you can activate as many other senses as possible. So if you're on a motion ride so that you're feeling

has been—and will arguably more commonly be used as—an additional touch point between musicians and bands as 'narrators' and their fans. Further, fans will not only be 'readers' of their work, but participants who actively choose from the multilinear narratives that XR artefacts make available.

8.2 The Declining Cost of VR Production: Björk Case Study

As I discussed in Chap. 5, from the 1980s to the present day the democratisation of film production technologies has allowed musicians to create music videos for thousands of dollars instead of hundreds of thousands.[4] While only the most popular musicians and bands could afford to produce music videos in the 1980s—because shooting on film was so expensive—the arrival of video and then digital technologies made the artform more affordable for more musicians. Benjamin Richards has observed a similar decline in the cost of production in the field of VR:

> I think the same sort of thing happened with computer graphics as well. It was, again, early days in computer graphics, it was prohibitively expensive to really do anything. I guess the first time I saw a 3D animated music video was 'Money for nothing', [by] Dire Straits, and that was one of the earliest 3D animated videos, maybe even the first. I saw it when I was a kid and I later got into 3D animation. I think it was one of the things that inspired me. We've sort of reached the point today where a kid at home could now make a 3D animated music video and do it for free. (Interview 13)

Richards cited Icelandic musician Björk's (2015) 360-degree virtual reality music video 'Stonemilker' as an early pioneering example of the use of VR technology within the field of popular music. This video was released on 6 June 2015 and as on 12 January 2020 it had been viewed 5,739,475 times on YouTube. Since the release of this music video, Björk launched Björk Digital, which is an ongoing immersive virtual reality exhibition. Debuting at Carriageworks in Sydney, Australia as part of the Vivid Sydney festival on 4 June 2016, the exhibition has since been toured to other cities such as Tokyo, London, Montréal, Reykjavik, Barcelona, Bogota, Mexico City and Los Angeles (Cooper 2016; Björk 2019a).

Following this, on 6 September 2019, Björk released her full VR album *Vulnicura* (Björk 2019c) on the Steam platform for the VR systems Oculus Rift, Valve Index and HTC Vive (Fingas 2019).[5] Discussing the five-year period it took her and her

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movement as well as seeing movement, and if there's smells and things like that, the more senses that are tricked into believing that you're in an alternate reality, then the more you believe you're there' (Interview 13).

[4]Caston and Smith (2017) noted that David Bowie's 'Ashes to ashes' video (1980) secured a budget from his label of £250,000 (AU$472,563.65 as of 20 January 2020) whereas Jefferton James disclosed that the budget range that he worked within over the six-year period under examination in Chap. 5 (2012–2018) was AU$1,000 to AU$10,000 (£529.38 to £5,293.88 as of 13 January 2020).

[5]Regarding headset options, Richards noted that 'the Oculus Go has really been the biggest market disruptor in a while. It's actually a higher resolution than the Oculus Rift, because it's much

creative director James Merry to produce this VR album, Björk noted that she had mixed

> the sound of this album a million times now … there's a new format, new mastering software or now we have to mix it for 360 … The amount of work and the amount of tech and the amount of money… it's the most labour intensive of anything I've ever done. (Björk, as quoted in Charara 2019)

Music video, as a non-interactive form of cultural production, only allows its consumers to react to, interpret and reconstruct the intended meaning of the artform. In contrast, the amount of labour, time, technology and money that Björk cites here as having gone into the production of her *Vulnicura* VR album reflects the fact that the audience for it can intervene in the various representations themselves. The linearity of the traditional storytelling evident in the majority of music videos has become a 'multi-linear network through which the audience navigates' (Julier 2013, p. 191). Björk's gamble that by the time she released her VR album in 2019 the technology would have developed enough to enable her audience to drive the narrative, through their own spatial movement, seems to have paid off. Regarding the democratisation and accessibility of the requisite VR technologies to enable the album to function as a mainstream release, Björk stated:

> [When] I went into the VR album, I allowed myself to dream that I'd be able to eventually release it on something as democratic as a gaming device … But I decided that'd be a bonus … I had to let the industry or whatever it is develop, and trust it. (Björk, as quoted in Machkovech 2019)

Björk's VR album release was well timed given that, as Greengard (2019) noted, after much hype over a long period of time, XR has entered the mainstream:

> Extended reality is taking shape. Zion Market Research estimates that the total market for virtual reality will swell from [US]$2.2 billion in 2016 to [US]$26.89 billion in 2022. According to the market research firm ARtillry Intelligence, the augmented-reality market will reach $18.8 billion by 2022. Yet these technologies are also reshaping business. The number of companies entering the augmented-reality market is growing at an annual rate of about 50 percent. Total global extended reality revenues will reach [US]$61 billion in 2022, ARtillry reports. (p. xiii)

At the time of writing (early 2020), Björk was advertising forthcoming 2020 headline shows at Carnegie Hall, New York (7 March and 14 March), Kings Theatre, Brooklyn (18 March and 22 March), City Center, New York (25 March, 28 March and 1 April), All Points East Festival, London (27 May), Welovegreen, Paris (3 June), Northside, Sweden (7 June), Governors Ball Music Festival, New York (5 June), as well as Manchester International Festival (5 July), Pohoda Festival, Slovacchia (11 July), Colours of Ostrava, Repubblica Ceca (16 July), Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome (29 July), Spandauer Zitadelle, Berlin (2 August), Wilderness Festival, Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire (6 August), Tbilisi Concert Hall, Georgia (31 October), State

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newer generation. The one with 32 gig of internal storage is US$199. So it's very cheap. It's fully standalone, you don't need a computer, you don't need a phone to drive it' (Interview 13).

Opera House of Georgia (3 November), Harpa, Iceland Airwaves (7 November), and a DJ set at Art Basel (7 December) (Björk 2019b). While it is beyond the scope of this book to pinpoint exactly why there was such demand for Björk's live performances in 2020, and most of these shows would have been cancelled or postponded due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an area for further research is whether her VR visual narrative, and the story of innovation associated with it, helped to generate the media attention that has enabled her to create this demand.

For Benjamin Richards, a VR album such as *Vulnicura* potentially opens the way for new business models. He noted that:

> Spotify and any sort of music streaming service that you pay $10 a month, if you listen to whatever artist a million times, okay maybe they see a bit of that $10, but for many artists I know that get a pay cheque from Spotify, it's not much. And certainly not much compared to album sales in the past when people were buying physical media. A friend of mine worked on Björk's first 360 video VR experience. Once they started putting it out there, showing Björk fans, it went nuts, because anyone who was a real, pure, hard-core Björk fan was just in tears because of the fact that they could put on this VR headset and it felt like Björk was there looking into their eyes giving them a personal performance with no one else around. So it was an intensely personal and intimate experience, and it was the sort of thing that those fans didn't hesitate to pay a few dollars for that individual song. (Interview 13)

In this case, while music videos in the past were often simply used to advertise albums, for Richards, this 'model has changed because you're not really buying the album; you're maybe now just buying the visuals, which—they've sort of turned that on its head a bit' (Interview 13).

8.3   Platform Economics

However, any assertion that the sale of Björk's (2015) 360-degree VR music video 'Stonemilker' as a download marks the return of the music business to the economics of goods such as CDs and music downloads is undermined by the potential of platform economics in this space. For Evans (2011), platform economics are facilitated by 'businesses that create value by providing products that enable two or more different types of customers to get together, find each other, and exchange value' (p. vi).[6] While selling a 360-degree VR music video as a download may have worked for Björk— because she was such an early adopter of these technologies in 2015—platform economics, a relatively new term, provides an economic model for intangible trade (Towse 2019). For Parry et al. (2011): 'Intangible things are not physical objects and only exist in connection to other things. Examples include a brand image, or goodwill' (p. 21).

While intangible products such as music composed by musicians and bands have a history of being recognised and sold as a type of good rather than an intangible service, platforms such as Facebook already incorporate VR into the services they provide. Therefore, VR products such as Björk's *Vulnicura* will arguably come to

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[6]These businesses were originally called 'two-sided markets' by Rochet and Tirole (2003).

function as intangible services in the platform economy, rather than being sold as downloadable artefacts. In this context, VR music videos will essentially function as intangible digital goods[7] and the business models of platforms such as Facebook and YouTube will dwarf those of individual artists such as Björk (and most other businesses in the world for that matter).

For Haskel and Westlake (2017), an intangible-rich economy is fundamentally different from one based on tangibles (see also Klein 1999, 2010; Gawer 2009; Kenney and Zysman 2016). And the future of XR is arguably going to be caught up in the economic and social activity that is facilitated by transaction and 'digital matchmaking' platforms that facilitate this intangible-rich economy. For example, Facebook (2020) noted on their website that:

> Facebook IQ commissioned a study by Neurons Inc to compare how participants in the United States responded both cognitively and emotionally to conversing in virtual reality via an Oculus Rift headset versus having a face-to-face conversation. Learn more on what social interaction looks like in VR and the implications for marketers.

This quotation helps to explain the decreasing cost of VR production; platforms such as Facebook are investing heavily in this technology in order to make it broadly accessible, as Richards noted:

> Even in the last three years, just looking at 360 camera technology, the cost of what we were doing things for three years ago is much less today. Just to give a quick example, it was very, very common three or four years ago to see Go Pros mostly used for shooting 360 content. There's a few technical reasons why that was a good approach, but there were not many software options for how to then stitch all of those different video streams together. Then Facebook, because they've got a vested interest in immersing you in content and shoving ads down your throat, they're investing billions, not just into headsets but into the tools for people to make content. So the most expensive and most advanced sound tools for doing spatial audio were made by a company called Two Big Ears, and we were actually right on the verge of buying those tools for stupid amounts of money. Then Facebook bought them and released it all for free and threw more developers on it and quickly developed more and more features to just give everybody the opportunity to do spatial audio for free. (Interview 13)

Through such investments, Facebook is making these technologies more accessible for music business practitioners to use. At the same time, though, they are potentially replicating the problematic role YouTube plays in the music business ecology that was discussed in Chap. 6. Clearly Facebook desires to become the largest XR service in the world by developing these technologies to provide use value to the masses. And for Towse (2019), the dynamics of intangible markets suggest that size counts: the big get bigger, and this is a space where large, multifaceted enterprises such as

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[7]Whilst VR headsets are certainly tangible, the entry-level VR hardware such as Google Cardboard is very affordable, as Richards noted: 'On the low end of the scale you've got your Google Cardboard, which advertisers for example are using for all sorts of experiential marketing or activations and this sort of thing. If you're buying a Google Cardboard that's not printed on or whatever else, then you can be paying [AU]$2 or something. So your entry point for having VR is almost nothing' (Interview 13).

Facebook can dominate. Furthermore, datafication is an issue here: large companies such as Facebook have more data than their competitors and can afford better analysis (Towse 2019; see also Morrow 2019). For Towse (2019), the implications of platform economics for the earnings of artists are that 'the larger the enterprise, the relatively weaker the artist in terms of getting a deal. Also the chain of production from creator to market has lengthened with DSP [Digital Service Provider] taking a cut'.[8]

Platforms/DSPs such as Facebook do not create XR content; they just distribute it. This is why, according to Richards, the software that stitches all of the different video streams together when producing XR artefacts are designed to plug into Pro Tools and Reaper, two popular software programs for audio professionals. Facebook's attempt to make this software available to a wider audience has been matched by the way in which they have functioned as a platform of sorts for hardware manufacture. Richards continued:

> When it comes to stitching and post-production tools for 360 video, Facebook built a 360 stereoscopic camera, then never produced the camera but they just open sourced everything. Then in addition to the camera they built an optical flow stitching algorithm for stereoscopic footage which was the best that anyone else had done, and also stabilisation tools and all sorts of stuff to help with shaky footage—and shaky footage in VR will make you sick. They developed all these tools. Then it was probably only the matter of a year before five or six new camera companies popped up in China who just took all of Facebook's camera designs and referenced it and built it, put their own shell on it, then all those cameras shipped with their own stitching tools with their own stabilisation, and then all of a sudden there was just this proliferation of affordable camera gear with easy post-production and easier stitching. Still a little bit out of the hands of everybody, but it shows that movement towards it being completely democratised. (Interview 13)

In the age of big data and associated surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2018), the platform economics facilitated by companies such as Facebook mean that, while artists such as Björk may have been able to generate capital income during the period 2015–2020 from the sale of VR artefacts as downloads, this will become increasingly difficult income for such artists to generate. The rapid democratisation of VR-related software and hardware means that music-related VR directors and producers may only be able to generate labour income from these technologies by receiving a fee for the service of creating content. Then the content created will essentially function as advertising, not as saleable products that could generate royalties/capital income.[9] Similar to the way in which music video was harnessed by YouTube,[10] music-related VR artefacts may simply come to be harnessed by the big platforms of the data economy such as Facebook to sell advertising.[11]

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[8] Albeit, the passing of Article 17 of the European Union's Copyright Directive, discussed in Chap. 6, may make a difference here in relation to XR creators' copyright.

[9] That is, they will be in the same position in the music business as music directors have been throughout the years, rather than functioning in a similar way to record producers who often receive capital income from their work (see Chaps. 5 and 6).

[10] See Chaps. 5 and 6 of this book.

[11] For more on the topic of artist management practices in the age of big data, see Morrow (2019).

8.4 Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality: Sigur Rós and Magic Leap Case Study

In contrast to Björk's pioneering work with VR technologies and design, Icelandic compatriots Sigur Rós were chosen by Florida-based start-up Magic Leap to be the first band they would work with to develop a music-related mixed reality (MR) product.[12] The company worked with Sigur Rós to develop an interactive music and mixed reality experience called *Tónandi*. *Tónandi* can be experienced through Magic Leap's head-mounted virtual retinal display called Magic Leap 1, 'a wearable spatial computer that brings the physical and digital worlds together as one' (Magic Leap 2020b). This head-mounted display superimposes 3D computer-generated imagery over objects in the physical world by using a tiny projector to shine

> light onto a transparent lens, which deflects the light onto the retina [the user's eye]. That pattern of light blends in so well with the light you're receiving from the real world that to your visual cortex, artificial objects are nearly indistinguishable from actual objects. (Metz 2015)

By projecting light onto the user's eye in this way, the device is able to generate a hologram that only the user can see, rather than projecting a hologram into a physical space that multiple people can see.

Magic Leap founder and CEO Rony Abovitz noted that their 'philosophy as a company (and my personal view) is to "leave no footprints" in the brain' (Abovitz, as quoted in Lapowsky 2015). Magic Leap argued that their competitive advantage is that their technology is safer than alternatives because it addresses the side effects of other 3D technology such as nausea and headaches. The company claimed to have addressed this issue by generating holograms that the user's brain perceives in the same way as objects in the physical world, and at the same time as the user's brain interprets and 'reads' the physical space they are in. Richards discussed Sigur Rós and their Magic Leap-designed interactive music and MR experience, *Tónandi*:

> When it came to music, they were looking for pioneering musicians to go along for the ride with them and imagine what they could be. So Sigur Rós was someone they chose to work with. Basically the idea with the Magic Leap headset is it's an augmented reality device. So unlike virtual reality where it replaces everything, it's just integrating digital content into the world around you. So for Sigur Rós, they've designed all these sound elements which have visual representations, then those visual representations adapt to your environment. (Interview 13)

In the case of *Tónandi*, Sigur Rós's music did not exist first and then the MR experience was designed afterward; the music and the sensory experience were designed together and are intimately linked: 'A sensory ecosystem grows and surrounds you … Tónandi is a creature with unique sound and personality, inhabiting your environment and inviting interaction' (Magic Leap 2020b). Richards continued:

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[12]For Greengard (2019) mixed reality refers to a 'world somewhere between virtual and augmented reality' (p. xv).

So if you've got a small coffee table in your lounge room, or a very large table in a boardroom, then your experience will be different depending on your environment. For example, if there's some strange sound coming out, there might be organic objects floating out and growing out of your small coffee table and it would limit itself to the size of that coffee table. If it's a very large table, then those objects might be—there might be many more of them or all spread out. But basically when you reach out and touch that object, you can alter the sense. It's a fully interactive thing, so the more you touch the more it changes. (Interview 13)

On their website, Sigur Rós noted that they have been working with Magic Leap for five years:

exploring and expanding the frontiers of musical creation within 'mixed reality'. Tónandi is the first fruit of that collaboration, and perhaps even a glimpse of the future of music … a place in the here and now, where the 'sound spirits' of Sigur Rós's music can be played with. (Sigur Rós 2020)

In 2017, senior staff writer for *Pitchfork* Marc Hogan was invited to Magic Leap's headquarters to experience an early demonstration of *Tónandi*. Hogan (2017) described the experience in the following way:

There's a nervous hum, and then I see a group of little sprites floating around in front of me. The jellyfish-like creatures seem to match the waveform of the music I'm hearing through headphones. Encouraged to explore with my hands, I reach out, causing the waveforms to alter shape—both visually and in the audio.

As on 16 January 2020, the price points for the various versions of the Magic Leap 1 were US\$2,295 for the basic Magic Leap 1, US\$2,495 for the Developer Suite and US\$2,995 for the Enterprise Suite (Magic Leap 2020a). Richards noted on the adoption of headsets for XR generally:

The adoption of quality headsets is still not where any of VR's biggest fans would like it to be. I know that certain headsets like Oculus Go are already in the millions, which having been released only earlier this year [2018], that's decent sales. And critics of the adoption of VR try to remind people how slow the adoption of smartphones were. Now everyone can't live without their smartphone, but it took a while for it to get on people's radars. A lot of people hadn't heard of the iPhone until it came to iPhone 3. So again, with VR it just might be that 10 years until everyone's got a high-end headset. (Interview 13)

Assuming that the adoption of VR headsets does follow a similar trajectory to the uptake of smartphones, the way in which visual content in the music business functions, and is managed, may change as a result.[13] As was evidenced by the Björk and Sigur Rós case studies in this chapter, the potential for these technologies to break the traditional relationship between the viewer and the viewed in the field of

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[13]Furthermore, as Richards noted: 'Alternatively you can watch 360 content on a phone or on a tablet; you can hold it and move it around or you can use your finger to swipe it around. You could view it on a computer screen the same way, and a lot of the YouTube 360 videos are consumed not on headsets. But of course that's the least immersive way to experience the content, and for me it's not very compelling unless it's in a headset' (Interview 13).

popular music may require alternative conceptions of how visual culture is produced, understood and contracted, and its creators remunerated.

In the case of these technologies and the 'experiences' they facilitate, 'immersion' in the content becomes literal. As Chan (2014) noted, 'instead of viewing an image with a defined boundary such as a frame, virtual reality seems to offer the possibility of moving beyond the frame and into the image' (p. 1). A consumer of Sigur Rós's *Tónandi* release literally steps into the 'object' and this signifies a paradigmatic shift in how we understand the function of 'visual' culture within the music business—and potentially the deal making relating to it.

8.5   Emergent Themes

How XR technologies and design will be applied in the music business largely remains to be seen as well. When writing a future-gazing conclusion to a book such as this one it is tempting to engage in futurism that is not grounded in empirical evidence. Apart from the research interview I conducted with Benjamin Richards (Cutting Edge) that is cited above, and the secondary data relating to the Björk and Sigur Rós case studies also above, the majority of interviewees for this book were not engaged in XR production. During the timeframe the interviews were conducted for this book (2018–2020), XR technologies and designs were simply something that *may* be on the horizon for the music business from the perspective of the majority of participants. The following themes were identified in my analyses of the interview data relating to XR technologies and design.

8.5.1   Theme 1: Storytelling and Extended Reality (XR)

In Chap. 3, I argued that post-digital visual storytelling, when compared to pre-digital, is more interactive, agile, iterative, initially direct-to-fan, and it involves faster processes that require more content. Comparatively speaking, for the time being at least, XR design is much more reminiscent of the top-down storytelling of the MTV era of music video production. This is due to the current expense of producing XR content and the access to, and knowledge of, the technology required. Interviewee, my client Jefferton James (Jefferton James Designs) was critical of VR. He noted that:

> I have a mate that's really into the VR stuff and thinks I should get into it and that's where the future is, but I don't know. I'd rather focus on good visual storytelling over—this will come back to bite me on the arse—but what I almost feel is a gimmick. Look at *Avatar*. Everyone went bonkers over that movie because of the 3D … They kind of lost track that it was a very ho-hum story with really mediocre acting, but because the 3D was so dazzling, everyone lost their fricking minds over it. (Interview 1)

To a large extent the case studies of Björk and Sigur Rós's respective VR and MR releases conducted earlier in this chapter evidenced that much of the press coverage relating to these releases concerned the novelty of them. However, once this technology is no longer novel the content itself will need to be engaging enough to garner an equivalent amount of attention. Los Angeles-based Canadian entrepreneur Vince Bannon (formerly Getty Images and Sony Music and now So.Co) commented that there is currently a lack of clarity regarding what the 'content' of VR will be and that simply being able to have the experience of being on stage with a famous musician is not a sufficiently compelling 'story'. He discussed his key insights after visiting a VR demonstration at Google:

> Number one, until it becomes just simply a pair of glasses, it's not going to happen. Number two, nobody knows what the content will be. I got asked by a lot of start-up VR companies to come work with them or consult them and what they wanted was my rolodex and my rolodex has, like, every manager and every band in the planet … And I said, 'Well, wait a second. If I'm going to give you this and you want to talk to them, you have to tell me what you want them to do.' The idea of just sitting on the stage with Paul McCartney is pretty fucking boring, right? And so nobody's really come and said, 'This is what it's going to do.' (Interview 10)

For Bannon, visual storytelling is going to be the key to XR experiences that work:

> You see that all these festivals are streaming their shows, and you know what? Any time I see that it's as boring as all hell to me … one of the things that we knew at Getty [Images] was you could hang on to somebody's attention with a slideshow much easier than you could with a video unless the video has a story in it. (Interview 10)

Former artist manager and now Brisbane-based music business consultant Leanne de Souza made a similar point concerning artistry, storytelling and XR: 'Ultimately if the artist's got nothing to say as an artist are we just going to get caught up in technology again to make art that's crap?' (Interview 14). Unlike Vince Bannon, however, Leanne did view the interrelationship between XR and live music experience design as having potential:

> The way AR or VR works to enhance the intent of the art in the live space could be really cool. I thought Pink almost verged on that in her show. They weren't just using slides and visuals. It was like creating other worlds for songs out of how she staged stuff. (Interview 14)

As I discussed in Chap. 3, an obvious challenge in the post-digital environment is that not all musicians also possess visual and design culture-related creative confidence, despite them having to produce a lot more of their visual representative media themselves. For interviewee, Australian artist manager and song publisher Keith Welsh (Velocer Music), we have gone full circle when it comes to XR design. He made the following comment concerning the extent to which the musician or band has historically been involved in the creation of their visual presence or 'look', and the extent to which they have relied on professional help in this area. According to him, when it comes to XR design, the music business has gone back to needing professionals to be involved:

> You've got to have the latest fashions … The fact of the matter is, the musical artist has to be involved somewhere with how they're going to express their visual presence. Up until probably the last 10 years, more often than not they hired people in. I think that most artists have had to become more and more involved in their own videos and their own creations and be part of that creative process than probably any other time in the past, just because of scarcity of resources and way we work, and tying in with what is the image. Because if somebody's heavily working Facebook, heavily working YouTube, doing all those sorts of things, everything has to marry, and it's generally around the artist and their management team that are going to be at the centre of that, who are going to be able to direct what's needed. When virtual reality comes along and the whole 3D idea of visuals, we're back to that situation where we're going to need the experts more. (Interview 8)

For Welsh, this will cause an increase in the cost of producing this type of content, but this will be followed by a steady decline in the cost of the technology and expertise required:

> I think the price is going to go up for a while and it'll be the people with money or who are super interested, and then the cost of the technology will come down and more artists will embrace it themselves, and that will be part of what they've got to do. But it is going to become part of what the artists are going to have to educate themselves in; not how to write the code so much, but certainly how to use it to communicate with potential consumers. (Interview 8)

As I argued earlier in this chapter, companies that facilitate platform economics such as Facebook are accelerating the democratisation of XR technologies through their investments. If Welsh is correct here and artists *have to* embrace these technologies in order to have careers, then the music business will play right into the hands of companies such as Facebook and their surveillance capitalist agenda facilitated by platform economics.

8.5.2   Theme 2: The Cost of XR Production

The theme of the cost of XR production was raised in a number of other interviews as well. Similar to the way in which YouTube used music video and video generally to establish a massive global platform that in many ways does not serve the music business well (as I argued in Chap. 6), Facebook's desire to become the largest XR service in the world could cause similar problems for the music business in this space. There is a long way to go however before we reach this point as, according to London-based music video and film business entrepreneur Caroline Bottomley (Shiny Awards and formerly Radar Music Video), XR-related technology is currently very expensive and the content being generated does not involve sufficiently compelling stories:

> It's expensive technology or relatively expensive technology and so emerging filmmakers don't necessarily have access to it … I've still yet to see particularly much interest in content in that world—the technical things are really interesting, but the editorial stuff isn't so interesting. That's a challenge that they're looking at, at the moment—how to make this more interesting and more relevant to people? (Interview 17)

For Bottomley, the expense and challenge of being able to realise the potential of XR design in the film business means that at the moment there is a lot of frictionless collaboration between companies:

> The technology barrier is high, but the people who own the technology or who have access to it are really keen to share it … collaboration is a necessity for the industry at the moment because one company can't really do it on their own. At the moment everyone is friendly and sharing and doing things together and collectively trying to encourage new talent to come in and work with them. (Interview 17)

For interviewee, Sydney and New York-based artist manager and label owner Gregg Donavan (Wonderlick Entertainment), while XR-related technologies are too expensive for his clients to be using directly at the moment, he cited their use in the world of sport as an example of what is to come for the music business:

> I think it's no secret that VR's one of the most exciting things coming on the horizon but no-one's really touched it yet to get it. But if you look at, say, the NFL in America, I mean it's an amazing experience to sit there and watch TV in those goggles and look around and look at the audience and look at those things. So that's why I can see Live Nation and these huge promoters—I get why they are putting money into this because you could sell tickets to say a Madison Square Garden U2 show and then sell another fucking 50,000 tickets at a quarter of the price to your VR subscribers. (Interview 2)

Despite these technologies being too expensive for his company to experiment with directly, Donavan gave the following concrete example of a VR experiment that took place at a show in Ballarat in regional Victoria, Australia as part of the regional touring festival Groovin the Moo in 2018. Donavan's client, Australian band Grinspoon, participated in the experiment:

> A few hundred metres away from the main stage they had a tent … [and] front of house again that was getting mixed in the room by another mixer who was making sure the mix in the tent was sounding perfect but you were getting it live. You could hear the crowd. They were just a few hundred metres away and they were mic'd as well so you were getting it in the room. You put on the VR goggles and the stage had cameras all over it. So you could be in that VR tent and Phil [Jamieson, Grinspoon's lead singer] would come running by you and you could stand on the stage and look at the audience and do things or then you could choose to put yourself in the audience and watch from different places in the audience or you could be up on stage … It was free, it was Groovin the Moo and the VR company working together as an experiment so it wasn't like anybody tried to monetise that or do anything with it. It was just a bit of a show, show these kids and see how they reacted … Interestingly enough they reckon about 10% of people that do it start vomiting straight away. It's like sea sickness. (Interview 2)

In a more future-gazing section of the interview, Donavan posited:

> I think that is an incredibly exciting space for us. Imagine the videos we can make, the content we can create, not to mention the events … I can see that being exciting just to use that to announce a tour … I think we're barely scratching the surface of VR and I think it's going to be a huge game changer … Gaming, sport, porn—if they've got them everyone's going to have them and then music will just benefit … Right now it's too expensive for us to—I've looked into it. It's just like, holy shit! That's five times what we're going to make on

> the show … We believe it's going to be important but I don't think we'll really know exactly where it's going to go just yet and that's exciting because it's obviously good for live. It's obviously good for fan-to-band interactions of some sort. The real question is what else can we do with it and when is it going to be affordable? (Interview 2)

Therefore, for Donavan, while there is clearly potential for these technologies to expand and develop the design culture of the music business, at present these technologies are cost prohibitive.

8.5.3   Theme 3: The Impact of XR on Live Music Experience Design

Another common theme that emerged in the research interviews was the impact of XR on live music experience design. Notably, interviewee Australian singer–songwriter Josh Pyke made the following comment concerning potential VR experiences and the multisensory nature of actual live performance experiences:

> I could do a show here in my studio and people could subscribe and log in and have a virtual reality experience with that … I think it will be quite a long time until that technology replaces an actual live experience because unless we're talking like full-on VR where you're wearing a full suit and it's like pressure sensitive, you're not experiencing the sweat of the crowd and a crowd pressing against you and you're not hearing the echo off the walls, you know, the walls of the venue and how it sounds different in different venues. So it would be really cool to feel like you're sitting in the room with somebody but I think that's a long way before that replaces the live experience. But it could be a fantastic extra thing you know, an extra experience. (Interview 4)

Similarly, interviewee Sydney and New York-based Australian artist manager and label owner John Watson (Eleven Music) noted that, while his company has not yet experimented with XR, there are some interesting questions relating to its impact on live experience design:

> At the very cutting edge of the business … I'm sure David Byrne and Brian Eno are doing something in it right now but we're still trying to figure out how to collect our YouTube royalties … It's particularly interesting in the area of live performance. Are we going to finally digitise the live experience? Is that going to be something that becomes sharable? Is that going to become something whereby artists who don't like to tour can still perform live? There's lots of really interesting questions in the VR space around that. But right now it's still a couple of steps away from being a practical reality for artists and there are so many other challenges, the execution challenges of things, that we currently confront, that our ability to turn our minds to those new ideas, new opportunities is limited because we're still trying to execute the ones we've already got. (Interview 6)

Therefore for Watson, and a number of other interviewees, it is simply too early for them to be using XR-related technologies.

8.5.4 Theme 4: Too Early

For interviewee, Sydney-based Australian musician and videographer Sean Walker (Breathe), while there is a certain novelty associated with these technologies, it is too early for him to have engaged with them. He commented that:

> I was in Japan last year and I saw the Chainsmokers do a collaboration with VR … You put the earphones and the goggles on and you go on a journey with the track and when you turn your head it changes the song and it changes the position of where you go in the music. So it's an interactive music video. Really novelty and it didn't seem like it would be anything I'd want to straight away explore. It worked so perfectly for them because it's a big band and everyone knows the song. They're kind of already out and about. It's not quite there yet in terms of something I'd want to pursue. (Interview 9)

Again, for Melbourne-based Australian artist manager Catherine Haridy (Catherine Haridy Management), while it is too early for her management firm and their clients to attempt to use XR-related technologies to engage audiences, she has noticed others starting to use it:

> It's not something we're utilising right now, but I know there are people that are starting to utilise it. It's too early for us to be implementing within the structure of our artists' broader strategy, but it is something I realise we will all be utilising meaningfully within the next ten years. I believe there's a Japanese artist that's actually completely virtual … this artist has been incredibly successful and is 100% virtual [Hatsune Miku] … I also think it will be really interesting to see how the live space is integrated visually into being a more technologically accessible thing via our screens … I personally believe that it's got to be a full sensory experience for people now and a very, very integral part of that is what we see and how that is experienced alongside the music that's created. (Interview 11)

Therefore, while for Haridy it is too early, she argued that it is very much going to be a part of the future music business. Likewise, for Melbourne-based artist manager Michael Parisi (Michael Parisi Management) XR is going to be a part of the future, as is artificial intelligence (AI):

> Silicon Valley is all about that right now. Investors are looking—they've invested a lot of money in this space and artificial music—AI—is the future too. I saw a presentation recently by a company in Brisbane called Popgun and they've created a software program which enables anyone with half an idea to be able to create a song from scratch. It's incredible. You may not be able to play a musical instrument, but you'll be able to produce a song yourself … half the room were arguing that it was going to destroy the music industry and half of them were going 'this is an opportunity' and this kind of thing. I see it as an opportunity … I think virtual or augmented reality is going to become a massive part of the future, not just in the music business but in everyday life. (Interview 12)

However, in order to reach this future, XR-related skills and knowledge will need to be developed.

8.5.5 Theme 5: XR Skills Development

Another theme that emerged in the research interviews concerned the development of XR-related skills and the use of UK, Australia and New Zealand taxpayer funding to assist with this development. Discussing her overview of both the film and music businesses, London-based entrepreneur Caroline Bottomley (founder of Radar Music Video and Shiny Awards) noted that there is a:

> massive skills shortage down the line, so there's a huge concentration on beginning to build a pipeline for that … there's definitely a supply problem there in terms of creatives which is a great opportunity for people. It's part of UK policy to try and be number one in the world for that industry, so there's a lot of government funding for it and there's a lot of private investment. (Interview 17)

Discussing music export initiatives such as Sounds Australia[14] in Australia and NZ on Air[15] in New Zealand, London-based Australian artist manager Rowan Brand (Tribe Management) made the following comment regarding arts funding opportunities in this area:

> What I think would be really interesting is if there was funding to develop new forms of visual creativity. Augmented reality, virtual reality are emerging and expensive fields for artists to get into but if there were mechanisms by which people could participate in these newer technologies and engage audiences in that way … it's not about looking at what the previous formats for visual content are, but looking at what the future formats are and investing in those and investing in interesting creativity. It's also a much better story, an artist that creates something that's AR is so much more worthy of discussion, than someone who creates another [video] clip of someone walking through the woods. What's the point of difference? How do artists stand out? How do smaller markets have artists that are distinctive and are worthy of cutting through the international competition? (Interview 16)

Brand's point here that the novelty of XR could be harnessed by smaller countries in order to help their artists stand out is a salient one, albeit the novelty of such technologies will fade if and when they do become commonplace in the music business.

Abbasi et al. (2017) developed a 'technology roadmap for the creative industries' that examined the present, probable and possible uses of XR technologies and it could be used to inform the development of such funding initiatives within the music business. In order to realise the potential of XR technologies, Abbasi et al. (2017) noted that:

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[14] According to their website, Sounds Australia is Australia's 'export music market development initiative, established to provide a cohesive and strategic platform to assist the Australian music industry access international business opportunities. Sounds Australia is a joint initiative of the Australia Council for the Arts and APRA AMCOS, supported by the Federal Government together with State Government Agencies and Peak Industry Associations' (Sounds Australia 2020).

[15] Amongst other media products, NZ On Air fund the production of music videos for New Zealand musicians and bands. On their website they noted that the 'NZ On Air model is unique in the world. Formed in 1989 … we invest in authentic New Zealand stories and songs. This is public media content that reflects our cultural identity, which in turn helps build social cohesion, inclusion and connection' (NZ On Air 2020).

> New modelling and management software tools for non-programmers (curators, librarians, artists, etc.) are needed in order to help manipulate and use rich, multi-layered structured data files … as they become standard and replace flat files (two-dimensional [2D] images, text files, etc.). (p. 48)

While, as was discussed earlier in this chapter, Facebook has invested significant amounts of money in order to assist non-programmers in this way, there appears, for the time being at least, to be an opportunity for taxpayer-sourced arts funding here as well.

8.6   Further Research

XR is obviously a very rich area for research relating to design cultures within the music business, as well as the design culture of the music business itself; there are a number of areas that fall outside the scope of this research project that could be explored in further research. In addition to an examination of the use of wearable technologies for performers and audiences, cyborg implants, XR glasses and experimental body technologies, another area for future research is the use of holograms in live performance contexts. Notable examples of this include deceased musician Tupac's 2012 appearance at the Californian music festival Coachella (Bukszpan 2017), deceased heavy metal singer Ronnie James Dio's 'world tour' (Bukszpan 2017), the use of Michael Jackson holograms in live performance contexts (Bukszpan 2017) and Amy Winehouse's announced and then postponed/cancelled posthumous 2019 world tour (Reed 2019; Snapes 2019; Spangler 2019).

Discussing the postponement/cancellation of Amy Winehouse's posthumous 2019 world tour, Catherine Allen, founder of the arts venue virtual reality platform Limina Immersive and VR ethics expert commented that 'consent for holograms is going to be a hot topic. As long as the person has consented it's fine. And this is where it gets tricky with Amy' (as quoted in Snapes 2019). The production company behind this now indefinitely postponed tour, BASE Hologram, made this statement on Twitter concerning the reason for the postponement: 'In developing the type of highly ambitious, state-of-the-art hologram/augmented reality theatrical event that would truly capture [Winehouse's] genius and incredible artistic and social contributions, we have encountered some unique challenges and sensitives' (BASE Hologram, as quoted in Spangler 2019). While this tweet did not provide much information regarding the specific reasons for the postponement, the issue of consent to use footage and copyrighted imagery is key here.

Clearly, the use of posthumous holograms that bring musicians, and the businesses stemming from their estates, back to life are fascinating areas for others working within the field of music business research to explore. Of particular relevance to music business studies are the legal and ethical complications in this process. As US attorney Jeff Brown noted, there are major legal hurdles here:

> When a performer dies, the name, image and likeness rights held while they were alive may or may not still apply, and those rights must be secured. Brown added that if the hologram is created with third party images, it's necessary to acquire those rights as well. (Brown, as cited in Bukszpan 2017)

There is clearly a way to go with regard to the broad use of these technologies to enhance the experience of music. In particular, Abbasi et al. (2017) noted that 'the lack of broadcast grade or even hobbyist cameras capable of capturing VR content (hence, the existence of very little VR content) is a fundamental constraint and key reason for VR's minimal impact on TV and movies to date' (p. 49). Yet there is potential here for these technologies to become democratised and therefore accessible enough to be used for managing musicians' legacies and associated estates. In addition, for living musicians and bands the issue of the punishing physical demands of touring is moot when it comes to the touring potential of their holograms. Furthermore, the punishing physical demands of touring are also moot for virtual hologram singers such as the China-based Luo Tianyi (Tangermann 2019), or the Japan-based Hatsune Miku (Petrarca 2016). These are no doubt worthy areas for further research.

8.6.1 Blockchain Technologies

An obvious area for further research here is blockchain technologies. At the time of writing (January 2020), discussions of blockchain technologies involved a lot of hype and potential but not much substance, or evidence that these technologies will actually provide deal making solutions for the musicians, artists, designers and videographers featured in this book. Whether these technologies will address the problems outlined (and argument put) in this book remains to be seen. For Potts (2018), the first generation of the internet broke the creative and cultural industries, whereas the second generation of the internet, which includes blockchain, will fix it. For him, blockchain is the solution to the problem of being able to put contracts and economics 'natively' on the internet.

Rijmenam and Ryan (2019) defined a blockchain as being 'a digital ledger in which transactions made in bitcoin or another cryptocurrency are recorded chronologically and publicly' (p. 12). Potts (2018) argued that such a digital ledger will provide the economic infrastructure for artificial intelligence/machine learning, as well as for the field of XR, through the way in which it will provide solutions for data management, information and record keeping. Issues relating to meta-data, contracts, co-production management, payments, digital assets and collectables, content databases and authentication can also potentially be addressed through the use of blockchain technologies. Early examples of attempts to use blockchain technology in the creative and cultural industries include Cellarius (2020), a decentralised storytelling economy, Plantoids' (2020) 'blockchain-based life forms', and CryptoKitties (2020), a game that involves breeding virtual cats (Berg 2018). Specific music business-related examples include Björk's work with UK-based start-up Blockpool

(Greene 2017), and Imogen Heap's release of her track 'Tiny human' (Heap 2017). In an attempt to further explain the utopian potential of blockchain technologies, Rijmenam and Ryan (2019) noted:

> Although ledgers have been around for millennia, for the first time in history they can be updated across multiple organisations and computer networks simultaneously through the use of blockchain technology. This functionality significantly reduces the possibility of 'gaming' the system, that is, the distributed and decentralised nature of the blockchain ledgers prevents any single party from controlling, and therefore manipulating, the ledgers. The cryptography underlying blockchain ensures a 'trustless' system, thereby removing the need for intermediaries to manage risk. This is a true paradigm shift and it is why so many organisations are exploring Blockchain's potential use. (p. 12)

Note the reference to 'potential' use rather than 'actual use' at the end of this quotation. The *potential* disintermediation that blockchain technologies would facilitate in the music business would involve automated 'smart contracts'. The so-called smart contracts would enable money to be sent peer-to-peer, thereby cutting out the cost of transactions because the parties would not have to go through a third party. The potential here of being able to 'cut out the intermediaries', which is reminiscent of similar claims made during the early days of the internet, accounts for the excitement, hype, controversy and perceived *threat to intermediaries* surrounding blockchain technologies within the music business. In contrast to the hype surrounding blockchain technologies, however, in a research interview for this book, Mark Meharry (founder of leading London-based global e-commerce platform for the music business Music Glue) noted that not only has his company *not* experimented with blockchain technologies, but that:

> Blockchain's a bit of a buzzword that became very popular within the venture capital world. And so a lot of companies got a lot of investment, but it wasn't because of blockchain, it was because of the cryptocurrencies and the opportunity that came from nowhere in cryptocurrencies. Now that that has all died down because it's all complete nonsense, the actual benefits of blockchain are now being analysed and I'm not too sure the application of blockchain is really that applicable in all the cases where people have tried to apply it. It's a little bit like AI [artificial intelligence] as well; unless there's a problem that needs to be solved with that technology, then it's just a buzzword technology that's being used for the wrong reasons … I mean, AI, I think it is starting to come through. Blockchain, I'm not aware of anything that's actually managed to get off the ground and be used. I mean, you've got the theoretical people that, you know, the Benji Rogers[16] of the world that have gone out and tried to build the blockchain music solutions, which I totally endorse. I get what he was trying to achieve there. However, if you're going to have a ledger of all music that's been recorded ever, obviously you need the main participants—the most commercially viable participants—participating in that ledger. And we all know that the major record companies who own the majority of the commercial content benefit from opacity. So why would they

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[16]Benji Rogers is a New York–based serial technology entrepreneur who founded the company Dot Blockchain Media. Rogers has since left the company (Reinartz 2019) and Dot Blockchain Media has since become Verifi Media. Verifi Media (2020) is a company that claims to harmonise media and ownership using blockchain technologies: they 'link media files, ownership data, and artwork in a bundle to facilitate multiparty communication'. Rogers is perhaps most well known for having founded the direct-to-fan crowdfunding platform PledgeMusic, which went into administration in 2019 (Liptak 2019).

want to create a transparent model which is detrimental to them? And they're not going to. They may even say they will, but they won't do it … The theory of blockchain, it's absolutely perfect. There's a fantastic solution for this problem. However the execution and the implementation of it is impossible. Therefore, it's not actually a good solution, if I may say. If you can't implement it, it will never be done. (Interview 21)

Therefore, for Meharry, blockchain technologies *sound* like a good solution, but they are actually *not* a good solution because they will never be implemented. Another interviewee, London-based artist manager Rowan Brand (Tribe Management), commented:

I am a curious onlooker in the blockchain discussion. I'm yet to see a material manifestation of it that I can get my head around, but it's something that's frequently discussed at industry conferences and literature that you read about the future of the music industry. Until we see some more examples of how it could work, even on a small scale, I think it's difficult for the industry to perceive how they best participate and how to be a part of it … finding people who can build an ecosystem using blockchain and encouraging a consumer base to participate in it is the challenge and we're yet to see how that's going to be expressed. (Interview 16)

For the purposes of this book, it is too early to be able to say whether blockchain technologies present solutions to the problems relating to the deal making leverage that visual artists, graphic designers, videographers and stage designers in the music business have, and the associated status they have. Even if blockchain technologies do enable artistically creative people in the music business to be better remunerated, visual artists, graphic designers, videographers and stage designers may still remain an afterthought when it comes to deal making: it is the *music* business after all. Ultimately, to discuss blockchain technologies further here would be to go beyond the scope of the research design for this book. Suffice to say that blockchain does not appear to be the solution to the problems outlined in this book, at least not yet anyway.

8.7 Designing the Music Business

The processes of 'encounter' between a musician or band and their audience are becoming more involved and complex due to the use of XR technologies in this field. For Julier (2006) and also Chan (2014), VR moves us away from a certain ocular-centrism towards understandings of the embodied nature of engagement. This has implications for musicians and designers in the music business; it changes the rules of engagement between the subject and the object, as well as the relationships between music, visual culture and 'embodied' culture. Reminiscent of Es Devlin's live music experience designs that were outlined in Chap. 7, engagements with recorded music through VR experiences become as much spatial and temporal as they are musical and visual: 'Information is presented within architectonic planes rather than in the bounded, two-dimensional space of representation' (Julier 2006, p. 69). Given this

paradigmatic shift, the music business itself will need to evolve and arguably be 'redesigned'.

This book has explored a number of themes relating to design culture within the music business. In Chap. 3, I considered how the art philosophy of the 'International Situationists'—an anti-music movement that mirrored an anti-art concept used by Paris-based Dadaists in the 1950s—actively shaped punk music by providing and suggesting 'a way of doing things' (see Wicke 1990). I also explored the question of whether album cover designs are artworks or are simply advertisements. In Chap. 4, I considered the extent to which Jonathan Zawada had been able to successfully transition from being a 'designer' to being an 'artist', yet the deal making surrounding his work remained fee-for-service. Thus, he was only able to generate labour income. While the musicians he worked for were paid royalties by way of royalty-based deals and can therefore also generate capital income, Zawada himself was not able to realise this type of deal. As we move further into the virtual realm, with visual content including gig and tour posters, album cover designs, music videos and stage designs feeding into XR designs, there is a need to think about how the business may evolve. The VR and MR experiences examined in this chapter by way of the Björk and Sigur Rós case studies do not simply function as advertisements for their music—as some music videos arguably did in the MTV era, and as some album cover designs still do. As the creators of capital in the form of VR and MR-related copyright, artists such as Björk and Sigur Rós arguably hold the key to shifting the deal making pertaining to musicians' and bands' design culture production. In a parallel with the situation Sean Walker (Breathe) was in by being both a musician *and* a videographer (outlined in Chap. 6), Björk and Sigur Rós's ownership of music copyrights/capital creates wealth and therefore power for them within the music business ecology that they could apply to this end.

Design culture is a form of organisational culture that includes deal making. This is because organisational culture involves simply 'the way we do things around here' (Bower 1966, as quoted in Saintilan and Schreiber 2018, p. 213). A key question here therefore is whether the design culture/process of producing music-related XR artefacts is going to change the 'way of doing things' in the music business. Design culture has agency here and therefore has an instrumental role to play in changing the deal making around visual representative media in this business; the music business can be changed through a new kind of design culture.

Following Julier (2006), I am not using the term design culture in this book to signify cultural capital that is used for competitive advantage; it is not directly equivalent to 'branding' practices in the music business. It instead refers to design practices that are 'encultured' and that therefore strive for a higher moral ground (Julier 2006, p. 71). Of course the notion of being able to redesign the entire music business is problematic—it to an extent implies that one single entity *could* redesign it—and therefore any attempt to argue here that we should strive for higher moral ground and make the music business 'better' will inevitably be met with the questions: Make it better? How do you define better? Fairer to whom? Better for whom? The music industries are constituted by a collection of industries and businesses that often have competing and conflicting interests (Williamson and Cloonan 2007). Therefore

what are you arguing here? That it should be made 'better' for artists? Which artists? Musicians or visual artists and designers? Musicians who are also visual artists, videographers and designers? Better for videographers and graphic designers who work in the music business? Better for the music industries as defined as different to big tech? Or is big tech now part of the music business and therefore will it be fairer and better for them?

Amongst other research methods that were outlined in Chap. 2, the research design for this book involved use of my insider perspective as the manager of graphic designer, videographer and stage designer Jefferton James. This method helped to create knowledge concerning the ecology of design cultures that stem from music by being embedded within them *and* their production. Therefore in response to the aforementioned questions, I have argued throughout this book that a *part of* the music business needs to be redesigned in the following ways. First, designers and visual artists such as Jonathan Zawada need better/fairer deals (see Chap. 3), and second, musicians who are also designers, visual artists and videographers such as Sean Walker (see Chap. 6) will potentially help visual artists and designers/videographers such as Jefferton James to obtain better/fairer deals. By better and fairer deals, I mean ones that enable them to generate capital income from the copyrights they generate as opposed to just labour income, or a combination of both—like some record producers do.

As was evidenced in Chap. 3 through the case study of Jefferton James' graphic design work for Australian musician Dustin Tebbutt, visual design can be fundamentally important to a musician's project, but it is often not remunerated as such. As I outlined in Chap. 3, in many countries, performing rights/neighbouring rights income from recordings is shared between record companies and recording artists (usually 50/50) (see Osborne 2014, p. 574) and the recording artists' share is often split between 'featured' artists and 'non-featured' artists such as session musicians and singers (Osborne 2014, p. 578; see also Stahl 2012). It is arguably time for a similar arrangement to be negotiated for visual designers—be they 'non-featured' commissioned designers, or the musicians themselves. Design culture has a role to play here in changing 'the way of doing things' in the music business.

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