

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

¹Concept clips are also known as ‘narrative videos’.

²Zoey 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 treatment³ ideas for a song (see an example video treatment below).

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

³When 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

⁴While 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, dollies 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 Jesso⁶ 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

⁵Regarding 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).

⁶Tobias 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

⁷Caston 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.

⁸There 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

⁹Kasey 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).

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹A 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

(continued)

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

(continued)

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=5Qo24vZ4Ug
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

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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

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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/hnKX65IV-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=WGc wjt qLEjU
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

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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=XmndvdaR-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=dypgZ0yPiec
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=cNVhEtCgj-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=pznmIsPb2mE
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=OclHph8BeT4

(continued)

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

(continued)

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=WPUJugkk8
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/UI8mrj8fExo
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

(continued)

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=ElA6zf5OIFU
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=6Ly4glWc-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/ntfDsH WGm0I
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

(continued)

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

(continued)

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=XAIW1nIunGE
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

(continued)

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=LfC0KfjY2I
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 them¹²—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

¹²For 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:

¹³There 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:

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

Released in 1981, ‘Vienna’ was shot on a paltry budget of under £7,000¹⁵ 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 Donovan (Wonderlick Entertainment) advises musicians where to spend their own money and where to spend the advances¹⁷ they receive from labels in their attempts to garner audience attention. In a research interview for this book, Donovan 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, Donovan 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]\$25,000¹⁹ 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)

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.

¹⁷An 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.

¹⁸Donovan 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).

¹⁹The fact that Donovan 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 Donovan, 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 Donovan 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 cycle²⁰ now to aggressively go after your social media across the board. (Interview 2)

For Donovan, 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)

²⁰Donovan 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’ Donovan is simply referring to the promotional/touring phase of the album cycle.

For Donovan 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 Donovan 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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