

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’s¹ 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

¹Passenger 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 billion³ on YouTube, 750 million streams⁴ on Spotify. And both of those platforms were pretty eminent at that point ... YouTube was three times plus what Spotify was. (Interview 7)

²The 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.

³Medland 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.

⁴Likewise, 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. Airoidi 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

⁵This research was commissioned by the Victorian 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).

⁶These 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 Donovan (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, Donovan 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, Donovan 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

⁷When 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 Donovan'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'. Donovan 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, Donovan 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 Donovan'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 billion⁸ for allegedly suppressing competition. When that happened, Google immediately effectively

⁸The 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 Walker⁹ (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 rights¹⁰ 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

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

¹⁰The *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 recordings¹¹ 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 services¹² and amidst

¹¹Musicians 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.

¹²It 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

¹³It 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 YouTube¹⁴ 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 cityscape 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

¹⁴The 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 TikTok¹⁵ 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 Jeffertson 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:

¹⁵On 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 Barber-shop 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 inter-relationships 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 filmmakers' (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:

¹⁶Vivid 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).

¹⁷SUNSTUDIOS 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).

¹⁸As 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

¹⁹The price point range that Jefferton James outlined in Chap. 5 was AU\$1,000 to AU\$10,000, while Gregg Donovan 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 Donovan 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 inseparable ... 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 interview 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 business. 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

²⁰Or as Netwerk 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?

References

- Aguiar, L. (2017). Let the music play? Free streaming and its effects on digital music consumption. *Information Economics and Policy*, 41, 1–14.
- Airoldi, M., Beraldo, D., & Gandini, A. (2016). Follow the algorithm: An exploratory investigation of music on YouTube. *Poetics*, 57, 1–13.
- Australian Cultural Fund. (2019). Sean Walker—Artist profile. *Australian Cultural Fund*. <https://australianculturalfund.org.au/artists/sean-walker/>. Accessed 21 Oct 2019.
- Breathe. (2018). *Are you all good? (official video)* [Music video]. Independent. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqwVUrymno>. Accessed 22 Oct 2019.
- Breathe. (2019a). *Haze (official video)* [Music video]. Independent. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ptYqaheP38>. Accessed 22 Oct 2019.
- Breathe. (2019b). *London (official video)* [Music video]. Independent. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpZeNkSCxXc>. Accessed 22 Oct 2019.
- Cambridge. (2019a). Business ecology. *Cambridge English Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ecology>. Accessed 4 Oct 2019.
- Cambridge. (2019b). Disseminate. *Cambridge English Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disseminate>. Accessed 4 Oct 2019.
- Cambridge. (2019c). Moral rights. *Cambridge English Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/moral-rights>. Accessed 19 Oct 2019.
- Carey, C. (2019, September 10). *What are the key drivers of growth in music streaming? Past, present and future*. Keynote presentation to the 10th anniversary Vienna Music Business Research Days Conference 'Future of the Music Business', Vienna, Austria.
- Carriageworks. (2019). *Carriageworks—About*. <https://carriageworks.com.au/about/>. Accessed 5 Nov 2019.
- CLIPPED. (2019). *CLIPPED Music Video Festival*. <https://www.clippedfestival.com>. Accessed 5 Nov 2019.
- Copyright Agency. (2019). *Moral rights*. <https://www.copyright.com.au/about-copyright/moral-rights/>. Accessed 13 Dec 2019.
- Crellin, J. (2019, July 8). What does EU Article 17(13) mean for content marketing? *Econsultancy*. <https://econsultancy.com/what-eu-copyright-directive-article-13-17-means-content-marketing/>. Accessed 7 Oct 2019.
- Cru Cuts. (2019). *Cru Cuts—About*. <https://www.crucuts.com/about>. Accessed 21 Oct 2019.
- Eriksson, M., Fleischer, R., Johansson, A., Snickars, P., & Vonderau, P. (2019). *Spotify teardown: Inside the black box of streaming music*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- FEAT. (2019). *FEAT/Future Energy Artists*. <https://www.feat.ltd>. Accessed 21 Oct 2019.
- Fox, C. (2019, February 14). What is Article 13? The EU's copyright directive explained. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-47239600>. Accessed 7 Oct 2019.
- Goodwin, A. (1988). Sample and hold: Pop music in the digital age of reproduction. *Critical Quarterly*, 30(3), 34–49.
- Goodwin, A. (1992). *Dancing in the distraction factory: Music television and popular culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Havens, L. (2018, July 26). What's the future of the music video? YouTube, Spotify & more share visions for what's ahead. *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/8467188/future-music-video-youtube-spotify-snapchat>. Accessed 14 Sep 2018.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., & Baker, S. (2011). *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Hiller, S. (2016). Sales displacement and streaming music: Evidence from YouTube. *Information Economics and Policy*, 34, 16–26.
- Julier, G. (2013). *The culture of design*. London: Sage.
- Kim, J., Nam, C., & Ryu, M. H. (2017). What do consumers prefer for music streaming services? A comparative study between Korea and US. *Telecommunications Policy*, 41(4), 263–272.
- Kostas, M. (2017, January 16). YouTube's safe harbor: The push for reform. *Hypebot*. <https://www.hypebot.com/hypebot/2017/01/youtubes-safe-harbor.html>. Accessed 7 Oct 2019.
- Krueger, A. (2005). The economics of real superstars: The market for rock concerts in the material world. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 23(1), 1–30.
- Marshall, L. (2015). 'Let's keep music special. F— Spotify': On-demand streaming and the controversy over artist royalties. *Creative Industries Journal*, 8(2), 177–189.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morrow, G. (2013). The influence of dirty pool on the Australian live music industry: A case study of Boy & Bear. In P. Tschmuck, P. Pearce, & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Music business and the experience economy: The Australasian case* (pp. 135–152). New York: Springer.
- Movement. (2019). *Us* [Music video]. Modular Recordings/Universal Music Australia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpIz5sAu0B8>. Accessed 11 Nov 2019.
- Muikko, J. (2017). *Pro rata and user centric distribution models: A comparative study*. Helsinki: Digital Media Finland.
- Neighbour(u)r Film Project. (2019). *About*. <https://neighbour.always823.com/about>. Accessed 23 Oct 2019.
- Nordgård, D. (2013). *Rapport fra Nordgård-utvalget*. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Culture. https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kud/kunstavdelingen/rapporter_utredninger/rapport_nordgardutvalget.pdf. Accessed 28 Jan 2019.
- Nordgård, D. (2016a). Lessons from the world's most advanced market for music streaming services. In P. Wikström & R. DeFillippi (Eds.), *Business innovation and disruption in the music industry* (pp. 175–190). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
- Nordgård, D. (2016b). Norwegian festivals and a music economy in transition: The art of balancing ambitions, expectations and limitations. In C. Newbold & J. Jordan (Eds.), *Focus on world festivals* (pp. 32–42). Oxford: Goodfellow.
- Nordgård, D. (2017). Assessing music streaming and industry disruptions. In P. Meil & V. Kirov (Eds.), *Policy implications of virtual work* (pp. 139–163). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Nordgård, D. (2018). *The music business and digital impacts: Innovations and disruptions in the music industries*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- O'Hagan, P., & Jenner, P. (2019, September 13). *Why label services? The case of Taylor Swift, Billy Bragg & The Bluebells, or how to avoid indentured servitude in the music business*. Presentation at the 10th Anniversary Vienna Music Business Research Days 'Future of the Music Business', Vienna, Austria.
- Passenger. (2012a). *All the little lights* [Music album]. London: Nettwerk Music Group; Crow Records.
- Passenger. (2012b). *Let her go (official video)* [Music video]. Nettwerk Music Group; Crow Records. <https://youtu.be/RBumgq5yVrA>. Accessed 1 Oct 2019.
- Pedersen, R. (2014). *Music streaming in Denmark: An analysis of listening patterns and the consequences of a 'per user' settlement model based on streaming data from WiMP*. Roskilde, Denmark: Roskilde University. https://rucforsk.ruc.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/55002316/Analysis_Music_Streaming_In_Denmark_2014.pdf. Accessed 28 Jan 2019.
- Pedersen, R. (2015). *Ad hoc entrepreneurs: Middle-layer musicians and the contemporary media landscape*. Ph.D. dissertation, Roskilde University, Denmark.

- Pedersen, R. (2018). Exploring bounty and spread: Key changes in the Danish music streaming economy. *International Journal of Music Business Research*, 7(1), 6–25.
- Radar. (2019). *Radar Music Videos*. <https://www.radarmusicvideos.com>. Accessed 24 Oct 2019.
- Rogers, J. (2017). Deconstructing the music industry ecosystem. In S. Sparviero, C. Peil, & G. Balbi (Eds.), *Media convergence and deconvergence* (pp. 217–239). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Ryan, B. (1992). *Making capital from culture: The corporate form of capitalist cultural production*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- SUNSTUDIOS. (2019). *About SUNSTUDIOS Australia*. <https://sunstudiosaustalia.com/about>. Accessed 5 Nov 2019.
- Swanson, K. (2013). A case study on Spotify: Exploring perceptions of the music streaming service. *MEIEA Journal*, 13(1), 207–230.
- Ta-ku. (2019). *AboutTa-ku*. <http://ta-ku.co/>. Accessed 23 Oct 2019.
- TikTok. (2019). *AboutTikTok*. <https://www.tiktok.com/about?lang=en>. Accessed 8 Nov 2019.
- Tiku, N. (2019, March 20). The EU hits Google with a third billion-dollar fine. So what? *Wired*. <https://www.wired.com/story/eu-hits-google-third-billion-dollar-fine-so-what/>. Accessed 11 Nov 2019.
- Tschmuck, P. (2017). *The economics of music*. Newcastle, UK: Agenda Publishing.
- Vedenpää, V. (2018, February 21). Spotify void the secret veil: User charges are pouring into the pocket of the most popular poppers—Just listening to classical music unknowingly supports Cheek and Sannia. *Yle News*. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10085321>. Accessed 30 Jan 2019.
- Victorian Music Development Office. (2019). *Music Victorial VMDO*. <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/vmdo>. Accessed 7 Oct 2019.
- Vivid. (2019). *About Vivid Sydney*. <https://www.vividsydney.com/about-vivid-sydney>. Accessed 5 Nov 2019.
- Walker, S. (2019). *About—Sean Walker*. <https://www.st-walker.com/sayhello>. Accessed 21 Oct 2019.
- Williamson, J., & Cloonan, M. (2007). Rethinking the music industry. *Popular Music*, 26(2), 305–322.
- Wilson, Z. (2019, September 6). Five takeaways from BIGSOUND’s splitting The Pie panel on artist management. *The Music Network*. <https://themusicnetwork.com/artist-management-bigsound/>. Accessed 8 Nov 2019.