

Discussing the Notion of the Auteur in Contemporary Music Production



Master of Arts - Dissertation

Dave Johnston

17459814

Abstract

It has become increasingly common to see music creators take on multiple creative and technical roles as they create music - roles that would have once been handled by several individual specialists.

Due in part to improvements in the functionality and affordability of studio technology, the fundamental concept of the recording studio has changed. This contemporary production approach isn't exclusive to the top tier of musicians and producers - bedroom producers are beginning their musical journeys making complete works from their laptops.

'The auteur' is a term describing the accomplished producer-composer who exerts authority over most, if not all, of the aspects of a production. The application of this term is not without some degree of conflict within the scholarly community.

The term 'auteur' came into usage in French film criticism in the 1950s describing a director who influences their films to the extent that they are considered to be the author. It has since been adopted by other creative fields, including music. Some question how and when authorship or auteurship can be unequivocally assigned, considering complex issues such as collaboration and intertextuality; others wonder whether this credit should be assigned to one person at all.

While the debate regarding authorship and auteurship is ongoing and duly recognised, the dissertation assumes the position that the term 'auteur' is legitimate. Several accomplished producer-composers who may be considered auteurs and their works are scrutinised, and a methodological framework is presented through identifying a number of components that these music producers attest to as contributing to their creative process. This framework could be used to aid the progress of other producer-composers who are operating within popular music styles.

Acknowledgements

As I put the finishing touches on my dissertation, I'd like to acknowledge a number of people who have been of great assistance to me with my dissertation and creative project.

I'd like to thank my Wintec supervisors Jason Long, Jeremy Mayall and Matthew Bannister, who all helped to guide my learning, research and writing. As well as ensuring I've remained on track towards satisfying the requirements of the assessments, they have led me to think about my music and the field I'm operating in at a deeper level.

A big thank you also to my colleague Dr. Stephen Small, who has provided additional advice and guidance throughout the writing of this dissertation. It's been great to have someone with such a strong combination of musical and academic experience to bounce ideas off on a regular basis.

Along with Dr. Small, David Chechelashvili and Marcel Bellve have been very helpful with advice and support regarding my music as it has developed. Their creative and technical expertise, along with our nerdy music and mixing chats, have been invaluable to me.

Finally to J'aimee and my friends, family & colleagues; thanks for the ongoing faith and encouragement as I wade my way through a turbulent career in music and creativity!

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
Table of Contents	3
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Discussion	5
2.1 The Auteur Music Producer	5
2.2 How Technology Enables the Contemporary Producer-Composer	8
2.3 Production Processes of the Contemporary Auteur Music Producer	10
2.4 Values, Strategies and Methods Identified by Contemporary Producer-Composers	11
2.4.1 Emotion	12
2.4.2 Movement	14
2.4.3 Purpose & Familiarity	16
2.4.4 Tension & Edge	18
2.4.5 Character	21
2.4.6 Originality	23
2.4.7 Artistic Growth	25
2.5 Exemplar - Trent Reznor	28
3.0 Conclusion	30
4.0 Reference List	31

1.0 Introduction

In order to focus its scope, this dissertation primarily concentrates on music production and producers related to popular music styles that are likely to be included in the US Billboard charts, such as pop, rock, hip-hop and some electronic genres, within the 21st century. This is largely the area that I am concerned with, and has been the focus of the majority of my research.

Chapter 2.1 sees the concepts of the auteur and authorship discussed, and explores how they may be applied in a musical context.

In chapter 2.2, I look into how technology has helped shape the role of the producer over time, and what it means for music production in the current landscape.

Chapter 2.3 outlines increasingly common trends in the creative process of the contemporary producer-composer.

In chapter 2.4, I have selected a number of values that producers attest to as contributing to their creative process. From the gathered information, I have extrapolated several strategies that may be adopted in adherence with these values, and a number of methods that may help form those strategies, and presented them in diagrammatic form.

Finally, chapter 2.5 sees Trent Reznor put forward as an example of the contemporary auteur music producer, based on the criteria drawn from the discussion.

2.0 Discussion

2.1 The Auteur Music Producer

The term 'auteur', alongside 'auteur theory', is well established in the world of filmmaking. Originally used by influential French film critic André Bazin in the early 1950s during the period of the French New Wave cinematic movement, it was later introduced to American film criticism by Andrew Sarris in the 1960s to describe a director who controls all aspects of filmmaking (Santas, 2002, p.18). "Though film calls for the collaboration of various agents - a producer, director, screenwriter, cinematographer, costume designer, music scorer, actors, and technicians - a film can be seen as the product of a single creator, one artist - the filmmaker" (Santas, 2002, p.18). Auteurship has since been adopted to describe the work of artists within other creative fields, including that of music.

In a musical context, Burgess defines the auteur producer as "a music producer (or team) who is audibly the primary creative force in the production" (2013, p.9). The auteur oversees the entire creative process, but as with the filmmaking auteur, isn't necessarily carrying out all the roles in the production process his or herself. It is a team game with various contributions melding together, even if one artist or group is seen to provide the overall vision (Shuker, 2002, p.16).

The concept of the 'auteur music producer' bears a lot of similar traits to that of the 'producer as composer', although auteurship suggests an elevated status generally given only to those creatives with outstanding creative talent. It implies a certain level of competence, instinct and sophistication, separating those distinguished creators "with solid technique, a well-defined vision of the world, and a degree of control over their productions" from the average practitioner, according to Andrew & Sklar (2017). While not mutually exclusive, it is also important to separate the concept of the auteur from that of the celebrity or 'star'. Moy proposes that "if we grant the author auteur status, then this should be the result of active, self-conscious individual strategies, not through an unquestioning acceptance of hegemony and hierarchy" (2015, p.143).

Santas suggests that the artist whose distinct style leaves a recognizable mark on their work can be considered an auteur (2002, p.18). Musicologists see popular music auteurs as producers of art, extending the cultural form and challenging listeners (Shuker, 2002, pp.14-15). As pointed out by Cawelti, "one can see the difference between pop groups that simply perform without creating that personal statement which marks the auteur, and highly creative groups like The Beatles who make of their performance a complex work of art" (1971, p.267).

While the term 'auteur' has evolved to take on a different meaning from the word 'author', the historical debate regarding authorship can't be ignored when discussing the notion of the auteur. While 'authorship' can be defined as "the state or fact of being the writer of a book, article, or document, or the creator of a work of art" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.), there is debate within the academic world as to when anyone can truly label themselves as an author of a piece of creative work. Will Straw highlights the issue well, noting that "authorship is in

questions these days in part because so much popular music now unfolds within highly specialized cultural niches - complex clusters of influence and cross-fertilization marked by tiny moves ahead or to the side" (1999, p.199).

Some would say that originality, and therefore the right to claim authorship, is questionable considering the concept of intertextuality; any artist has unavoidably been heavily influenced by culture - any one piece of creative work is dependant in some way on the body of work which precedes or surrounds it (Straw, 1999, p. 200). Gunkel describes the anti-author standpoint, suggesting that "creative endeavors and artistic performances are not the unique expressions of an individual genius but are the product of 'scenius'¹ channeled by particular gestures and interventions situated within the available networks of culture" (2011). He goes on to suggest that an artist does not produce something out of nothing, but rather is responding to their scene or culture, thus they are responsible only for the manner, method, and means of that particular response. Taking this viewpoint a step further, Roland Barthes touches on the concept of intertextuality with a particularly strong anti-author stance in his influential essay 'The Death of the Author', suggesting that one's "arrogance in pretending to authority is only matched by his stupidity in mistaking what is actually the common stock of language for his own expression" (1967). While agreeing that the idea of the 'Author-God' as characterized by Barthes deserves attack, Toynbee opines that anti-authorism goes much too far when rigorously applied as it contradicts any notion of agency, or the idea that music might be made by people, even suggesting the argument contradicts itself considering "its preferred alternatives to the author as source of meaning - the productive text or born-again reader - are just as mysterious in their self-generation ex nihilo as any romantic artist" (2000, p.xiv).

Even when putting intertextuality aside, the concept of authorship within popular music remains contentious. While authorship has been the subject of much research in the wider creative fields, there is a relative absence of research within the field of popular music (Moy, 2015, p.xiii). Ahonen suggested that "until recently, popular music studies have typically treated authorship as just that: authorship is something that exists, but it receives no special attention, at least not from a theoretical or philosophical point of view" (2008, as cited in Moy, 2015, p. xiii). To confuse the situation further, Toynbee notes that authorship is also inextricably bound with the idea of stardom (2000, p.57). He points out the fact that there are clear commercial gains to be made through assigning auteur status, particularly in popular music, a field which developed historically in and through the mass media (p.xix); "authorship has helped to build markets and, in particular, extend middle-class consumption of popular music" (p.30).

One significant area in popular music where authorship continues to be unclear is within the collaborative studio environment. Moy questions how creative demarcations can truly exist between a single author and group authorship, as well as between composing musicians and session musicians (2015, p.45). Straw agrees, pointing out that "the precise input of composers, producers, engineers, and backup musicians is, most of the time, unclear to us" (1999, p.200). Assuming Moy's stance that all aspects of production, whether technological, musical or interpersonal, are situated along a continuum of creativity (2015, p.89), can

¹ Scenius: A term coined by Brian Eno to describe the intelligence and the intuition of a whole cultural scene.

authorship or auteurship be rightfully claimed by one entity in these situations? Moy wraps up the discussion well, recognising that “the assignation of auteur status is not fair, logical or the result of a unified narrative” (2015, p.x).

Perhaps assigning authorship is a little less muddy when considering the producer who carries out most, or all, of the creative and technical roles themselves. Moy mentions that “one dimension of the auteur process culminates in the situation where a musician may also be the composer, arranger, producer, mixer and even have significant input into areas such as design, choreography, audio-visual direction, marketing, business and promotion” (2015, p.45). Of course, we must still acknowledge the concept of intertextuality in this situation. Although it is possible for one artist to create a piece of music entirely themselves from writing to completed recording, “to write is not to confront a blank page but to build upon an existing body of writing. In this respect, it is neither solitary nor the production of meaning from nothingness” (Straw, 1999, p.200).

Another perspective is to essentially dismiss the authorship debate, arguing that it is largely peripheral. Gunkel concludes that “what a text is and what it means is not found in the animating intentions of its paternal author but is to be discovered and examined within the material of the message itself” (2011). He goes on to propose that “it does not matter who is speaking. Who the author is or what s/he had wanted or intended to say is effectively immaterial. What matters is what has been said, and what we - the reader, listener, viewer, user, etc. - do with it”.

Within popular music, many point to Phil Spector as being the first auteur producer. Richard Williams suggests that previous to Spector there were three basic types of producer: “the high-minded organiser, the shrewd businessman, and the studio innovator” (2003, pp.15-16). Williams noted that when Spector came along, he created the concept of the producer as director of the entire creative process, taking full control: “he picked the artists, wrote or chose the material, supervised the arrangements, told the singers how to phrase, masterminded all phases of the recording process with the most painful attention to detail” (2003, pp.15-16). Since then, the role of the music producer has continued to evolve and take on many different forms over the years, often influenced by technological developments - this is discussed further in the next section.

Through exploring the various definitions and discussions relating to the auteur, I have identified three key defining characteristics of an artist some may describe as an auteur music producer:

1. They are the visionary behind the production of a piece of recorded music, overseeing and scrutinising every aspect of the project from start to finish.
2. Regardless of whether they've performed every studio role themselves or if the production process has been a collaborative affair, they will impart their own recognisable mark on the finished product.
3. It is recognised that they possess outstanding creative talent.

2.2 How Technology Enables the Contemporary Producer-Composer

The idea that technological advancements change the way music is made is not a new concept. Indeed, emerging technology has influenced the sound of pop music since its early days, and the role of the producer has evolved alongside those changes. Moorefield notes that “the sixties were the beginning of the use of the studio as a true musical instrument. By the end of the decade the importance of the producer was something every professional pop musician and even a great many fans were aware of” (2005, p.41). Producers went from being organisers and businessmen to being a key part of the creative process. The nature of the recording studio changed from being a place “where musical performances were simply captured in the best available fidelity to an experimental workshop in which the transformation and even the distortion of the very sound of an instrument or voice became an element in the composition” (Emerick & Massey, 2006).

As technology has developed, the role of the producer has often changed. In the past, there were a number of separate creative roles within the music production process. These included:

- Composers
- Writers
- Arrangers
- Session Musicians
- Recording Engineers
- Mixing Engineers
- Mastering Engineers
- Assistant Engineers
- Artist Management
- Record Producer

Cooper mentions that these “separate creative roles... don't commonly exist anymore and have been completely taken on by the modern day Music Producer” (2016), and suggested that the term ‘Music Creator’ may be more fitting in a modern context. Megan Perry mentions that, while an engineer may still be assisting, the current responsibility of a record producer includes having “a solid understanding of the audio engineering sciences” (Perry, 2008, p.6), and that “well-rounded producers have a comprehensive knowledge of their recording gear and how to utilize it to get the sounds they are looking for”. In 2013, Billboard published a list of ‘The Top 10 Producers in Music’ - all ten of these producers were involved in the composition, arrangement and creation of their hit songs on a technical level.

Based on the evolution of the role of the music producer, there is a fourth characteristic evident when describing the auteur music producer in a contemporary context; technological proficiency regarding studio equipment and music production software.

Exponential improvements in the capabilities of computers and recording technology, as well as a drastic reduction in price and portability, have seen the concept of the ‘recording studio’

evolve from being a purpose built facility available exclusively to the musical elite, to a situation where DAWs ('digital audio workstation' software) can do much of the work that consoles and tape recorders used to do, allowing for high-end recording from a personal computer (Olivarez-Giles, 2009). Affordable music software has allowed the producer to become "a one stop shop from writing to producing to recording, and sometimes mixing the record" (Dupont, 2016). Alongside these developments, DAWs have become increasingly user friendly, no longer solely selling to studios and their expert audio engineers, but rather targeting the musicians themselves, which has allowed "people with little music theory knowledge but with inspiration, creativity and individualized taste to enter the playing field" (Dupont, 2016). Moorefield notes "the reason for the sharp rise in the number of producers in the world today is music technology and its interdependence with pop music" (2005).

One noteworthy technological improvement that has dramatically changed the way the contemporary producer operates involves portability. With the processing power to run large DAW sessions now available in a laptop, musicians and producers are able to create complete productions out of tour busses, backstage in their green room or in hotel rooms anywhere around the world. If they do want to work in a traditional recording studio while on tour, they can simply walk in with their laptop, plug in, and get going.

Harley Streten (Flume) has found he gets inspiration from travel, so being able to get work done wherever he goes is important: "I've found that traveling's been really helpful for me to get creative... I struggle to be creative if I'm in the same place for too long. I wrote a lot of the first record ('Flume') travelling, backpacking through Europe with my laptop; I'd just write in the hostel or in café's" (Streten, 2017). When talking about her new album, Alexandra Sholler (Alison Wonderland) admitted that she tends to work better at home than in traditional studios: "I went real hard, in my bedroom, on my laptop... there have been so many times I've been in fancy studios but I end up getting the best work done in my bedroom" (Sholler, 2018).

It may become increasingly uncommon to find artists labelled 'auteur' who lack technical competence in the recording studio, and who don't also compose and record a significant amount of the music themselves. With this in mind, it could be argued that the contemporary auteur music producer possesses additional creative avenues for composition, experimentation, and production compared to their predecessors.

2.3 Production Processes of the Contemporary Auteur Music Producer

While some may continue to call upon traditional singer-songwriter methods for writing, many contemporary producer-composers appear to be blending their writing and production into one process.

Traditionally the writing, composing and production processes have been treated as independent jobs, usually taken on by separate individuals or at least carried out in separate phases (Cooper, 2016). Indeed, even the jobs within the production part of that process tended to be separated chronologically into recording and arranging; editing; mixing; mastering. Increasingly, producer-composers are blending several or all of these phases into one. When asked about his process during the 2011 ASCAP Expo, Dr. Luke replied: “A lot of the time I write as I produce... I’d say most of the time” (Gottwald, 2011). Claire Boucher (Grimes) has mentioned that her music doesn’t start off as demos composed of vocals and piano or guitar, rather the songwriting and producing are interwoven, a process where she produces as she writes (Boucher, 2016, as cited in Ableton, 2016). Kevin Parker (Tame Impala) admitted that “messing with sounds is easily [his] biggest hobby”, thus effects are often an important part of how his songs come together: “the effects and sounds are pretty important to the song. I usually start adding those kinds of things while I’m still writing the song, so they totally influence the evolution of it” (Parker, 2013, as cited in Davie, 2013).

The ability to combine traditional roles into one fluid process has gone some way toward levelling the playing field between the bedroom producer and the seasoned pro, in that the barrier to making great music no longer lies with whether or not one has access to professional recording tools and specialist knowledge - novices and acclaimed artists alike are capable of making music in their bedrooms. This does not, however, mean that everyone is an expert - creativity and unique musical ideas still separate the amateurs from the pros and the pros from the auteurs.

2.4 Values, Strategies and Methods Identified by Contemporary Producer-Composers

Value - Principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important.

Strategy - A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

Method - A particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something.

(Definitions adapted from those in the Oxford Dictionary and Dictionary.com)

Throughout my research I have been exploring the unique values, strategies and methods utilised by producer-composers whose work has been contextually relevant to my own. In this section I have identified a number of components that these artists attest to as contributing to their creative process.

Producers prioritise these values in different orders, contributing to their own individual style. I have extrapolated several broad strategies that may be adopted in adherence with these values, and a number of overarching methods that may help inform those strategies, and will present them in diagrammatic form.

There is, of course, some crossover between the various values, strategies and methods listed; they can be used to achieve a variety of results in different situations. The seven values have been ordered intentionally below: 'Emotion' and 'Movement' are related as many of their strategies and methods are physiological in nature; 'Purpose & Familiarity' and 'Tension & Edge' contain strategies and methods that work strongly together and tend to create psychological responses; finally, strategies and methods relating to 'Character', 'Originality' and 'Artistic Growth' tend to be more aesthetic.

While I am not in a position to categorically state whether the artists cited are or are not auteurs (nor am I claiming this to be a definitive list of components), these values, methods and strategies play an important part in the creation of music in the context of this discussion. This section can serve as a methodological approach for the production and composition of new music in the manner of producers who could be considered auteurs.

2.4.1 Emotion

Emotion is undoubtedly an integral value for many music creators. Music is able to not only convey emotion but also to elicit an emotional response within the listener (Blood, Zatorre, Bermudez, & Evans, 1999).

Polar Music Prize winner Martin Sandberg (Max Martin) insists that “a great pop song should be felt when you hear it... It’s incredibly important... that something sticks to you, something that makes you feel ‘I need to hear that song again” (Sandberg, 2016). When asked what was so enjoyable about writing pop music, star producer Dr. Luke replied: “you mentioned that the songs are all happy and about feeling good - honestly, I want to feel that way. I feel that if you can make music and evoke that feeling in other people through writing songs, that’s a pretty cool thing to do” (Gottwald, 2011). Legendary guitarist and songwriter Keith Richards put it well when he said “music is a language that doesn’t speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions, and if it’s in the bones, it’s in the bones” (2010).

With the desire to focus on songwriting rather than simply making tracks for the club, Alexandra Scholler (Alison Wonderland) “has earned a reputation for giving soul and an emotional identity” to EDM (Robertson, 2018). On her 2018 album ‘Awake’, Billboard noted the “deeply personal collection of songs... that addresses the musician’s struggles and victories head on” (Bein, 2017). A sufferer of depression and anxiety, Scholler admits her lyrics come from a very personal and emotional place - she is known for her public honesty regarding her experience with anxiety and depression, and is seen as a role model by many of her fans who relate to the lyrics she writes (Robertson, 2018). The title track of her 2018 album ‘Awake’ uses several techniques that relate to ‘Emotion’: relatable, nostalgic lyrical theme (regarding the breakup of a relationship that has been haunting her for some time) and affective vocal delivery; emotive chord progressions & orchestration that match the lyrical theme; spacious atmospheric production elements and effective use of dynamics. These all culminate in a powerful final track which serves to wrap up the album experience well.

Using these strategies and methods can help to create emotional attachments that cement a song in the listener’s mind.

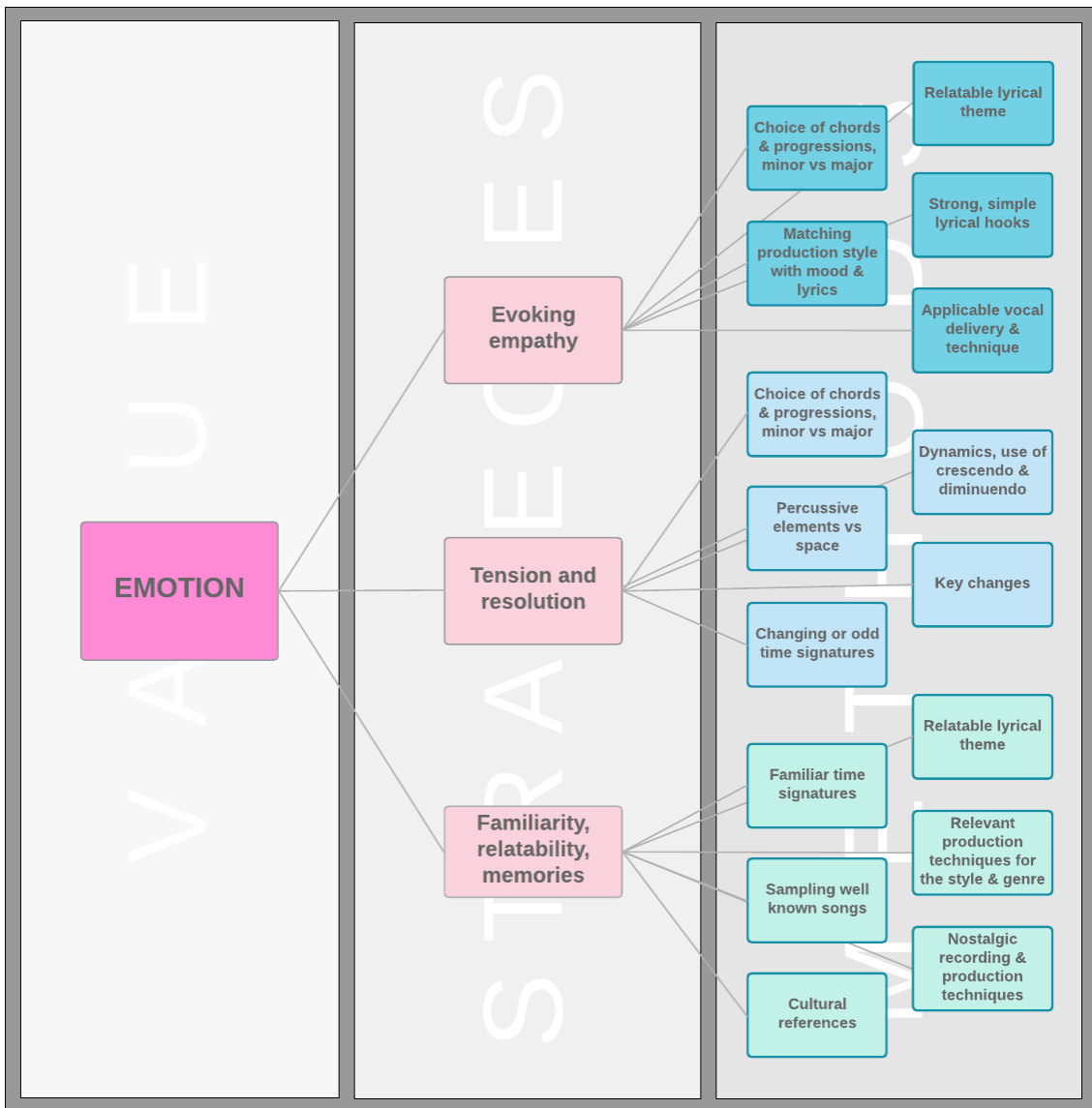


Figure 1 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Emotion

2.4.2 Movement

'Movement' refers to a track's rhythm and the way in which different elements of a mix interact to create a particular sense of momentum and feel.

Harley Streten (Flume) admits that the physical movement of a live festival audience has influenced his production style as his career has progressed. "I did not expect such slow music to create that movement in a crowd. I guess over the years through doing shows my music has gotten [sic] heavier - I want to make stuff that I can play out, I get a kick out of seeing a response from an audience which generally comes from playing heavier stuff" (Streten, 2018).

Corin Roddick's love of hip-hop shines through in his production style with 'Purity Ring'. A drummer himself, the rhythmic feel is a big part of that. "There are a lot of things that appeal to me about hip-hop, from the actual lyrical delivery to the style of the drums to the actual bounce and rhythmic feel of everything. I've always been drawn to hip-hop, and I think you can definitely hear that influence in our music" (Roddick, 2015). Purity Ring's track 'Dust Hymn' has a particularly interesting rhythmic feel, combining a fusion of electronic and hip-hop rhythmic elements with Roddick's characteristic atmospheric push and pull production which, were it intended for a different project, could just as easily have included rap verses in place of Megan James' otherworldly vocal melodies, which would sit the track in a different genre.

Movement is often a starting point for Claire Boucher (Grimes). "I typically start with kick / snare and work backwards... I think tempo is really important. Fast can be amazing, but then you have to simplify the drums. Slow can be amazing, but then you have to really perfect the groove. This is something I agonize over" (Boucher, 2016).

Sandberg (2016) uses the description of 'sweet and salty' regarding movement and rhythm when it comes to vocals, suggesting you need a balance at all times. For example, if you have a section of a song with a lot of rhythm, you need to pair it with one that doesn't, otherwise it can be too much information for the listener to take in.

These strategies can help to create patterns for the listener to latch onto and associate with the track.

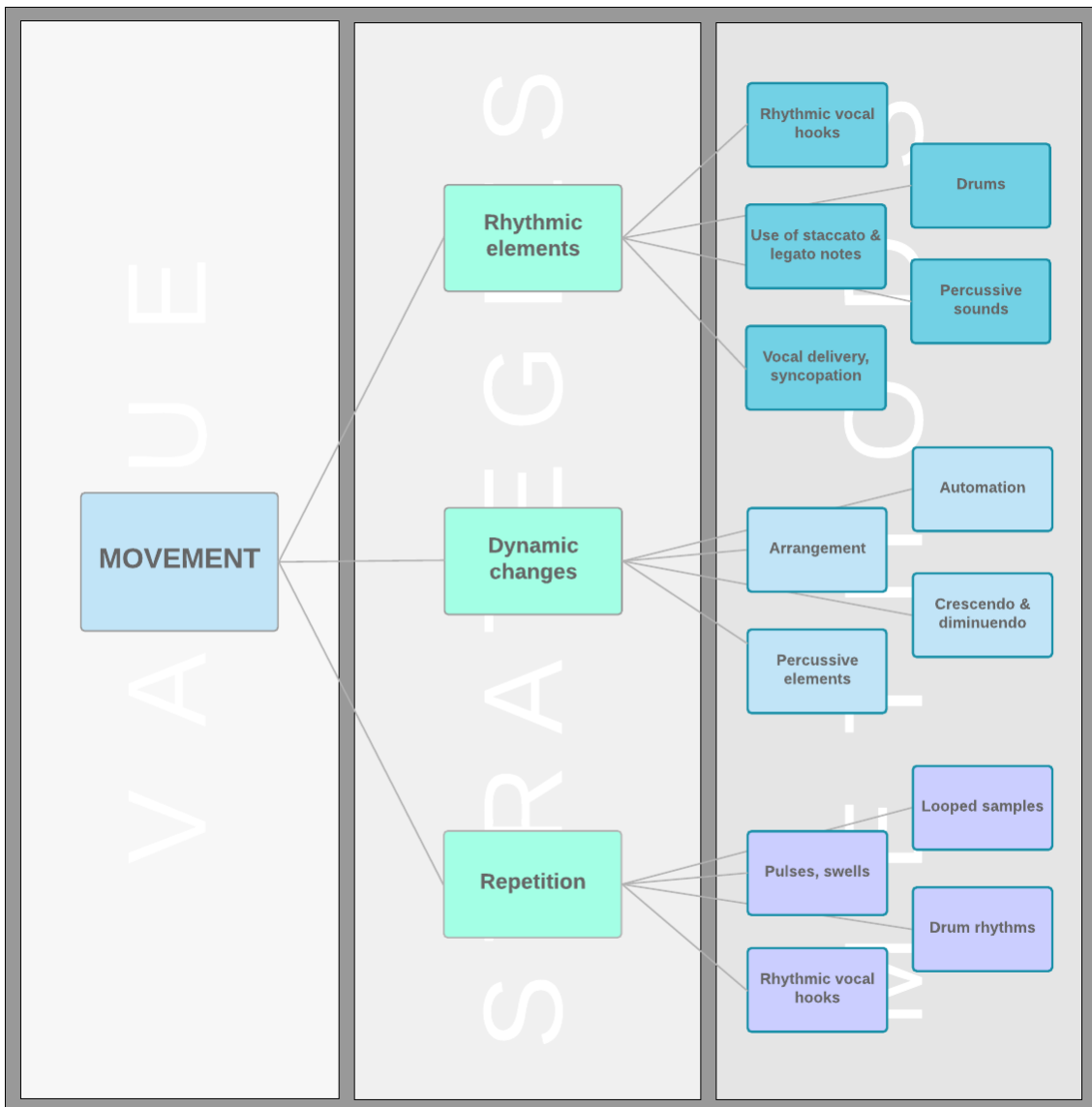


Figure 2 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Movement

2.4.3 Purpose & Familiarity

While not exactly a romantic concept, a great pop song is a finely tuned creation, and top producers & composers understand the unwritten rules associated with making the type of music that appeals to the masses. Most pop singles tend to be concise, with every part of the song having a purpose. It is uncommon to find extraneous song sections, verses that are too long, instrumentation that isn't serving a desired function, and rhythms & time signatures that pull the listener out of their groove.

While Claire Boucher (Grimes) creates music that often falls into the 'experimental' side of pop music, she likes figuring out what makes a song captivating, even if the answers aren't always satisfying (Sanneh, 2015). While perhaps partly tongue-in-cheek, she has a sign on her studio wall containing 'The Golden Rules of Pop':

1: IT MUST HAVE A DANCE GROOVE THAT RUNS ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE RECORD

2: NO LONGER THAN 3:30

3: INTRO -> VERSE -> CHORUS -> VERSE -> CHORUS -> BREAKDOWN -> DOUBLE CHORUS -> OUTRO

Star pop producer Martin Sandberg (2016) adds another rule to this list, suggesting that the listener should be able to recognize a song after just one second. While this may seem a little extreme, it comes from the school of thought employed by a man with 21 #1 Billboard hits as a songwriter, third only behind Paul McCartney and John Lennon, and 19 #1 hits as a producer, second only behind Sir George Martin (Gradvall, 2016).

Sandberg also mentions another technique he has used to add familiarity within a track - adding the chorus melody to the verse. The listener doesn't necessarily notice this happening as the instrumental energy in the verse differs from the chorus, but when the chorus does hit, the melody already seems familiar... because it has actually been heard before (Sandberg, 2016).

Having familiar and proven facets to a song can help push it towards the popular music space.

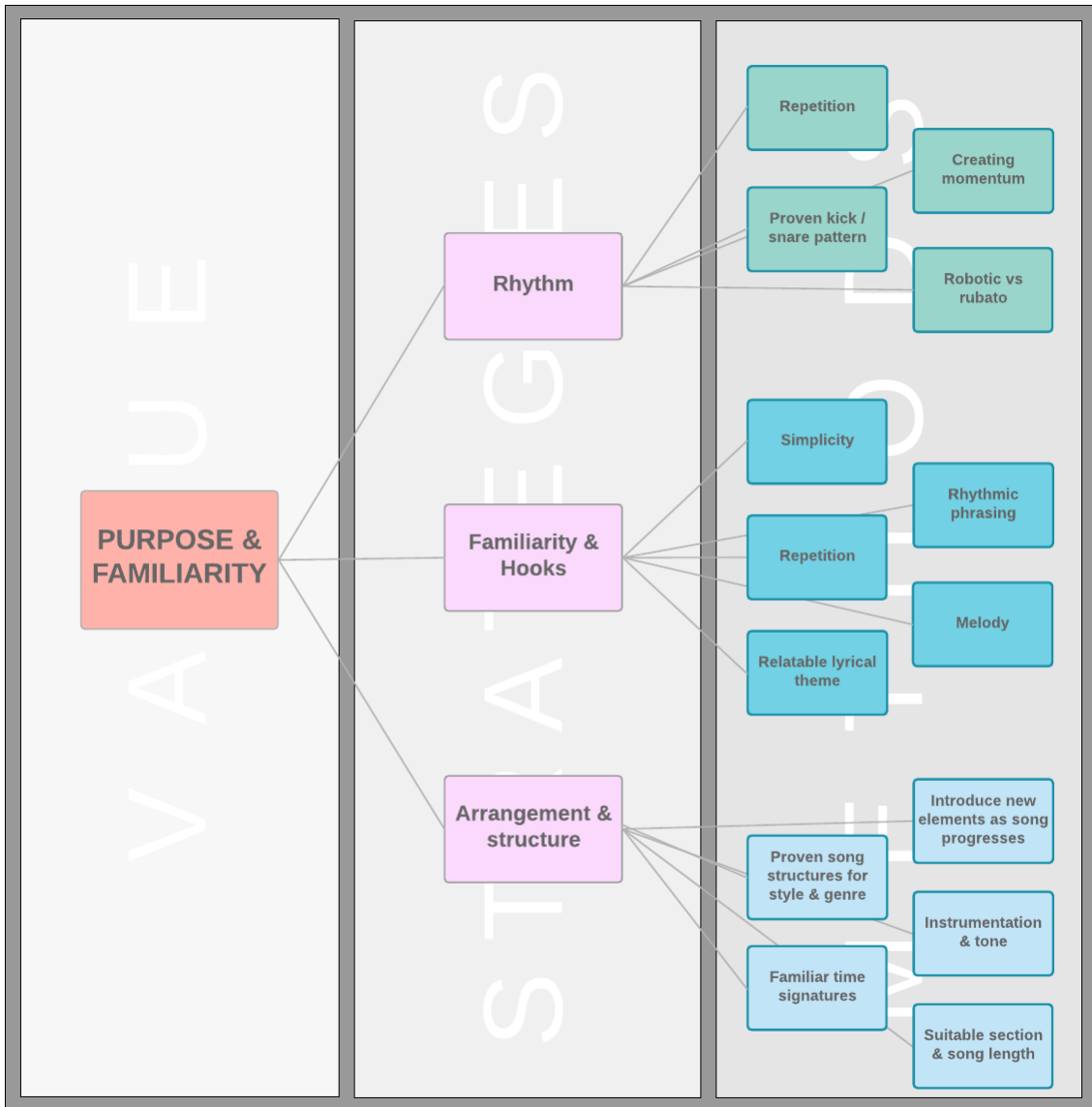


Figure 3 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Purpose & Familiarity

2.4.4 Tension & Edge

'Tension & Edge' refers to the elements within a mix which the listener may not expect. They provide psychological interest to the listener because they provide new focal points for the ear.

Finding the right balance between the methods and strategies related to 'Tension & Edge' and those related to 'Purpose & Familiarity' can result in a piece of music that is both digestible and unique, capable of truly captivating an audience. Interestingly, some elements that fall under 'Tension & Edge' can quickly shift towards 'Purpose & Familiarity' if they are repeated, as they are no longer new or surprising - this may or may not be a good thing, depending on the situation.

Tim Oliver suggests that "a better mix is often one with incorrect balances, things jumping out at you, and so on. When everything is perfectly in balance and inoffensive, the result can be boring and lifeless" (2014). Alexandra Scholler is no stranger to tension, operating on the darker, grittier edges of pop and electronic music as Alison Wonderland. Listening to her sophomore album 'Awake', feelings of anxiety are conveyed both in her lyrics and by the tension and frantic energy of her production. On watching the video to her single 'High', Steph Evans of music publication Earmilk described it as an "unsettling experience". Billboard's Kat Bein mentioned that the single Happy Place "purposely plays on the wild ups and downs of mental illness. It opens with airy strings and grounding chimes as Wonderland sings about her struggles to remain in sunny spaces. Tensions grows as the build leads to a jungle gym of clashing noise, landing in one of Wonderland's wildest creations to date" (2017).

Scholler's music is full of moments of tension and release. She regularly employs the build-and-drop technique commonly associated with EDM to bring in choruses and other key passages, often enhancing these further through delayed drop entries that, rather than emphasizing beat one of the chorus, hold back until later in the first bar or even the following bar, which also intensifies the corresponding feeling of release (see her track 'Sometimes Love' as an example). Other techniques she uses which create tension include gradual increases and decreases in the pitch of certain instruments, large changes in dynamic level, dissonance, bold mix decisions, jarring sound effects, the removal and re-introduction of instrumental elements, and regular use of audio loops that verge on anxiety-inducing. This collection of descriptors may make some wonder why a person would choose to listen to such music; the answer comes down to the significant feelings of release following on from the tension caused by these compositional methods (particularly when experienced on a large sound system such as in the live arena).

Several of these techniques are utilised by other artists that have been involved in this discussion, such as Harley Streten (Flume) and Thomas Pentz (Diplo / Major Lazer). Both incorporate jarring sound effects (e.g. horse neigh sound effect at 4:54 in Flume's remix of Lorde's track 'Tennis Court'), regularly make use of crescendo through builds (1:05 in Diplo's 'Revolution'), create significant and sudden dynamic changes (e.g. the sudden burst of synths and percussive elements on beat two of each chord rotation within the choruses of Flume's 'Say It'), use of unusual loops (e.g. from the beginning of Flume's 'Wall Fuck') and

studio mixes that often cause elements to jump out at the listener unexpectedly (e.g. ascending synth notes at 1:23 of 'Jah No Partial' by Major Lazer).

Through utilising the elements in the table below, it will be possible to give the track a point of difference and give the listener something memorable to associate with it.

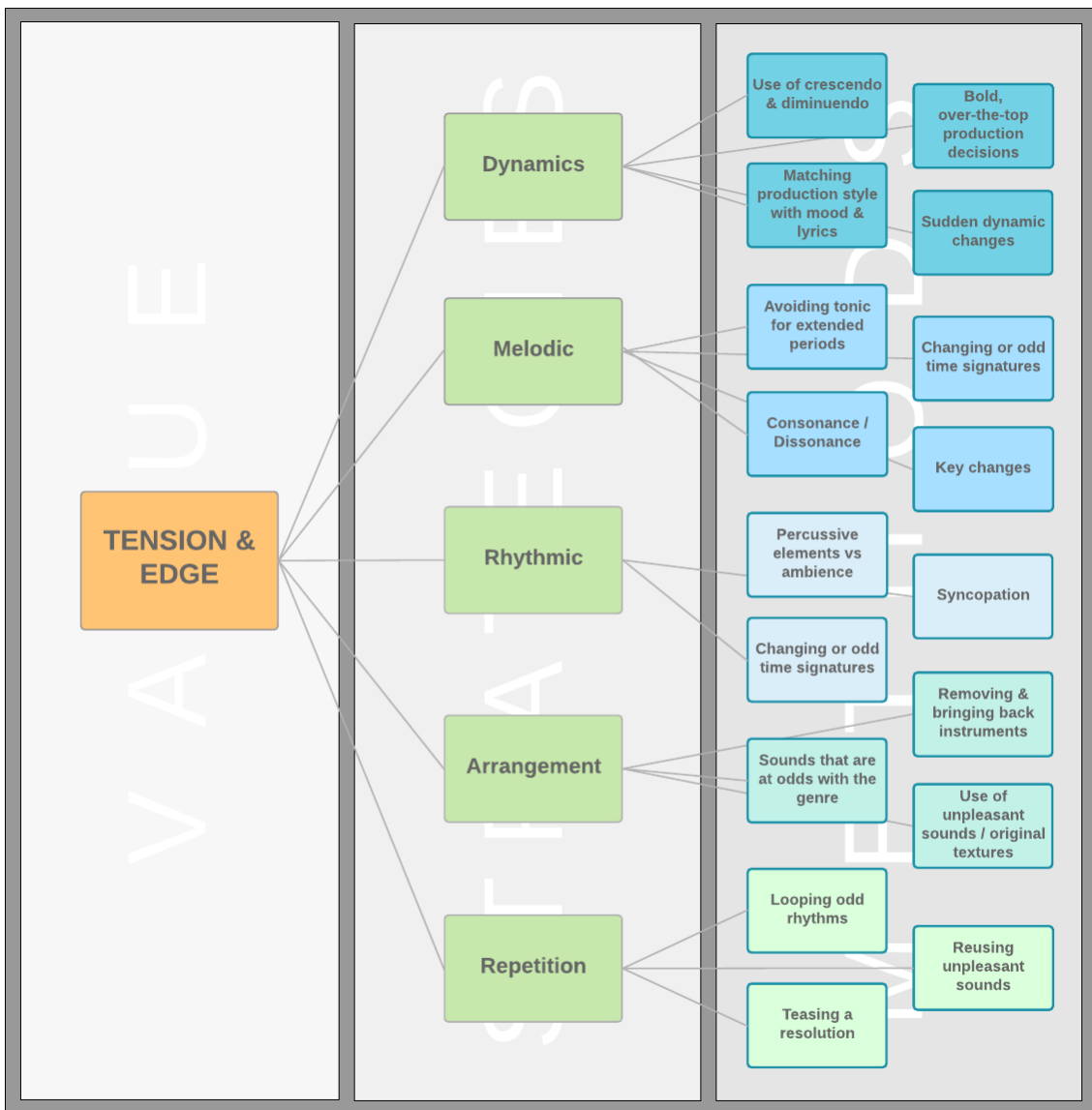


Figure 4 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Tension & Edge

2.4.5 Character

Developing a characteristic 'sound' as a producer-composer is vital in creating a musical identity. It is usually evident when an established producer-composer has had involvement in a piece of music - either their own, or as a collaboration - as their sonic fingerprint shines through.

Harley Streten's signature production sound as 'Flume' has seen him labelled as the pioneer of the 'Future Bass' genre (Lucas, 2016). His characteristic style is derived in part from the unique textures, tones and qualities of the sounds he creates. His style shines through even when he's just one of several producer's on a track. For example, without even looking at the credits, Streten's influence is obvious through the instrumental post-chorus passages of Lorde's track 'The Louvre' [at 1:07 and 2:41].

As Corin Roddick (Purity Ring) points out, small changes in texture and character can make a big difference in how a piece of music is perceived by its audience. "You can take the poppiest song in the world and distort the vocals a little bit and suddenly everyone is like, 'This is the coolest, hippest-sounding thing'. But if you produce it to just sound clean, some people might say it's very pop and mainstream and radio-friendly. Just really small tweaks to the formula can completely change someone's perception of it" (Roddick, 2015).

Alexandra Scholler (Alison Wonderland) is a big fan of DIY sound effects, lo-fi recording and experimentation: "I like the DIY type of sounds that are coming back. I think the less perfect the recording, the more vibe it has... I mean, most of the vocals I did for this record ['Run'] were recorded on my iPhone voice memo" (Scholler, 2015, as cited in Barnes, 2015).

Brian Eno suggests that the character of a sound recording is the primary thing that makes it recognisable: "A fact of almost any successful pop record is that its sound is more of a characteristic than its melody or its chord structure or anything else. The sound is the thing that you recognize." (Eno, 1986, as cited in Théberge, 1989).

It's hard to pinpoint exactly how one can develop unique musical character, but achieving this can give an artist a strong point of difference. The table below presents some tools that can be experimented with in order to craft a musical character in the music.

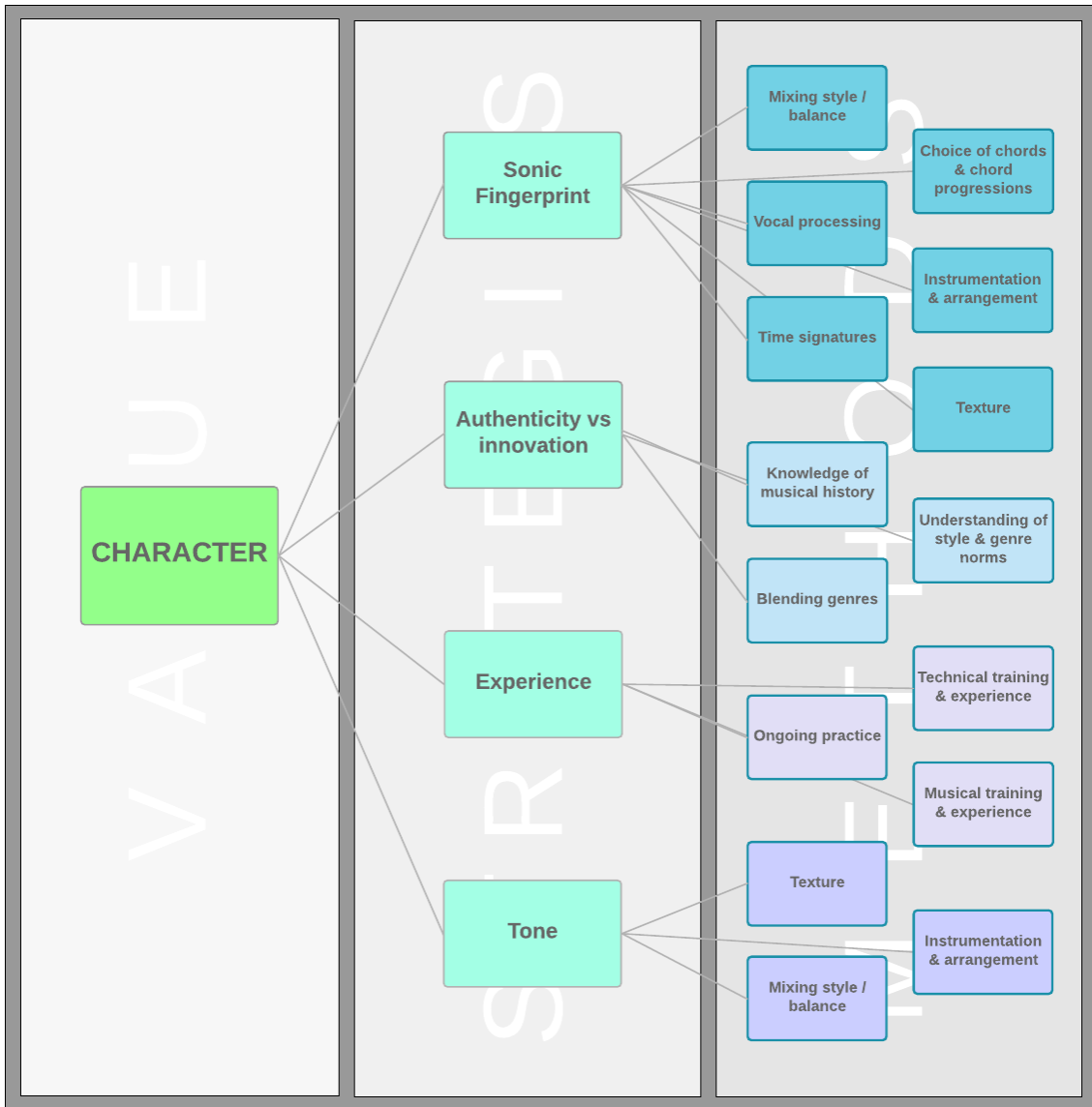


Figure 5 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Character

2.4.6 Originality

Alongside having an overarching sonic fingerprint to your productions, creating sounds, textures and ideas that people haven't heard before (either at all or within the context of the style music being made) and experimenting with new creative processes can help a piece of music stand out.

Thomas Pentz (Diplo / Major Lazer) is always trying to push the boundaries of what's acceptable in popular music. "To approach me, you have to be kinda weird anyway, you have to want something different, I'm not a cookie cutter producer, I'm going to do something strange" (Pentz, 2016). An example of this mindset is the inspired Jack Ü collaboration with Justin Bieber for the 2015 track 'Where are Ü now'. At the time, it was seen as an alliance of musicians from very different camps - prominent EDM producers joining forces with a teen idol, each with a completely different fanbase - as Pentz himself put it, "no-one would expect it - it would be so insane" (Pareles, 2015). This risky collaboration ended up paying off in droves - the crossover track became Pentz' first top 20 hit as a lead artist, earning him, Skrillex and Bieber the Grammy for Best Dance Recording at the 58th Grammy Awards ceremony, and opening up new creative and collaborative opportunities for all three artists moving forward. The track also ushered in the era of the 'pop-drop'², a pop music form trend that dominated the charts of 2016 (Harding, 2016).

Harley Streten (Flume) is also a big proponent of the idea of originality, drawing excitement from the fact that it's possible through modern music production to "make a sound that has never been heard in the history of mankind" (Streten, 2016). He has a fascination with the strange and the unfamiliar, and suggests a major contributor to his sonic identity comes from taking weird, unmusical sounds and making them sound musical (Blake, 2016). Listening to his track 'Wall Fuck' is an odd experience for the first time listener; Streten has said he wanted it to sound like "the fabric of the universe tearing" (Blake, 2016).

Corin Roddick's sound (Purity Ring) is an example of blending recognisable elements from a range of different genres to get something new. "I love hip-hop, I love pop music, I love experimental music. I'm pretty open to a lot of things and they all influence me in different ways. But you can kind of pinpoint the different things from each genre that influence me." (Roddick, 2015).

As with 'Character', these strategies and methods can keep things interesting and help give the producer-composer their own musical fingerprint.

² 'Pop-drop': a post-chorus musical interlude, predominantly instrumental, blending techniques from EDM and hip-hop which takes the place of a chorus (Harding, 2016).

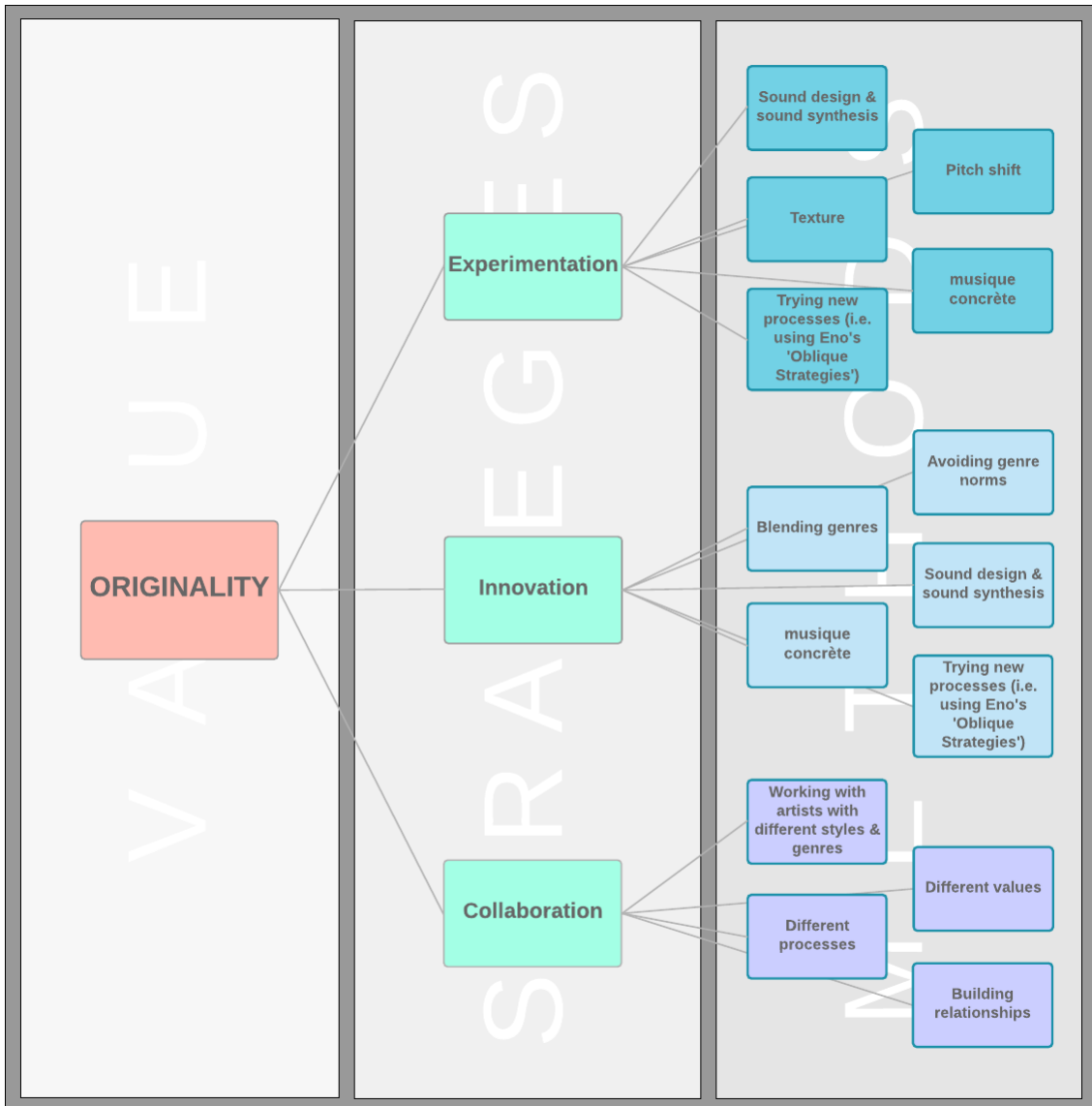


Figure 6 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Originality

2.4.7 Artistic Growth

This value highlights the desire to learn and evolve. It is larger in scope than the previous methods as this addresses the desire for a long-term career, and thus is perhaps most connected to those who may be considered auteurs. Sticking to a recipe may generate a few hits in the short term, but top producer-composers suggest that artistic growth is key to maintaining a lengthy career in popular music fields.

With his first album released in 2002, many may consider Thomas Pentz (Diplo) to be a veteran in the electronic music scene. Nevertheless, he continues to dominate the music charts, with production credits on two of the albums nominated for Album of the Year at the 2017 Grammy Awards for Beyoncé's 'Lemonade' and Justin Bieber's 'Purpose'. His continued success in the fast moving field of electronic music is due in no small part to his drive to push the boundaries and evolve as an artist. "I'm learning how to make music every day, I'm still trying different things, trying new things all the time because that's how you keep it fresh" (Pentz, 2016). Gradvall echoes the need for continual growth, mentioning that "a successful formula might work for a few months, perhaps a year, but after that, it's spent and can't be used any longer. In order to stay at the top of the game, you need to continually evolve and reinvent yourself" (2016).

Martin Sandberg stresses the importance of collaboration when it comes to artistic growth, admitting that the majority of his successful tracks have been the result of lots of people helping out, as they make him work hard to keep up: "It's my collaborations with others that have made me able to stay on beyond the average lifespan of a songwriter" (2016).

Another way to achieve artistic growth is simply through experience and being prolific. In an interview while backstage at Lollapalooza 2016 while discussing making music towards a future Grimes album, Boucher hinted at the sheer mass of work she creates during her process: "I usually make hundreds and hundreds of songs, and it doesn't come together until near the end... I'm just in the 'puking out material phase'... I haven't settled on a deep vibe yet" (2016).

Tied in closely with 'Character' and 'Originality', these strategies and methods can help to keep an artist's output sounding fresh as their discography grows.

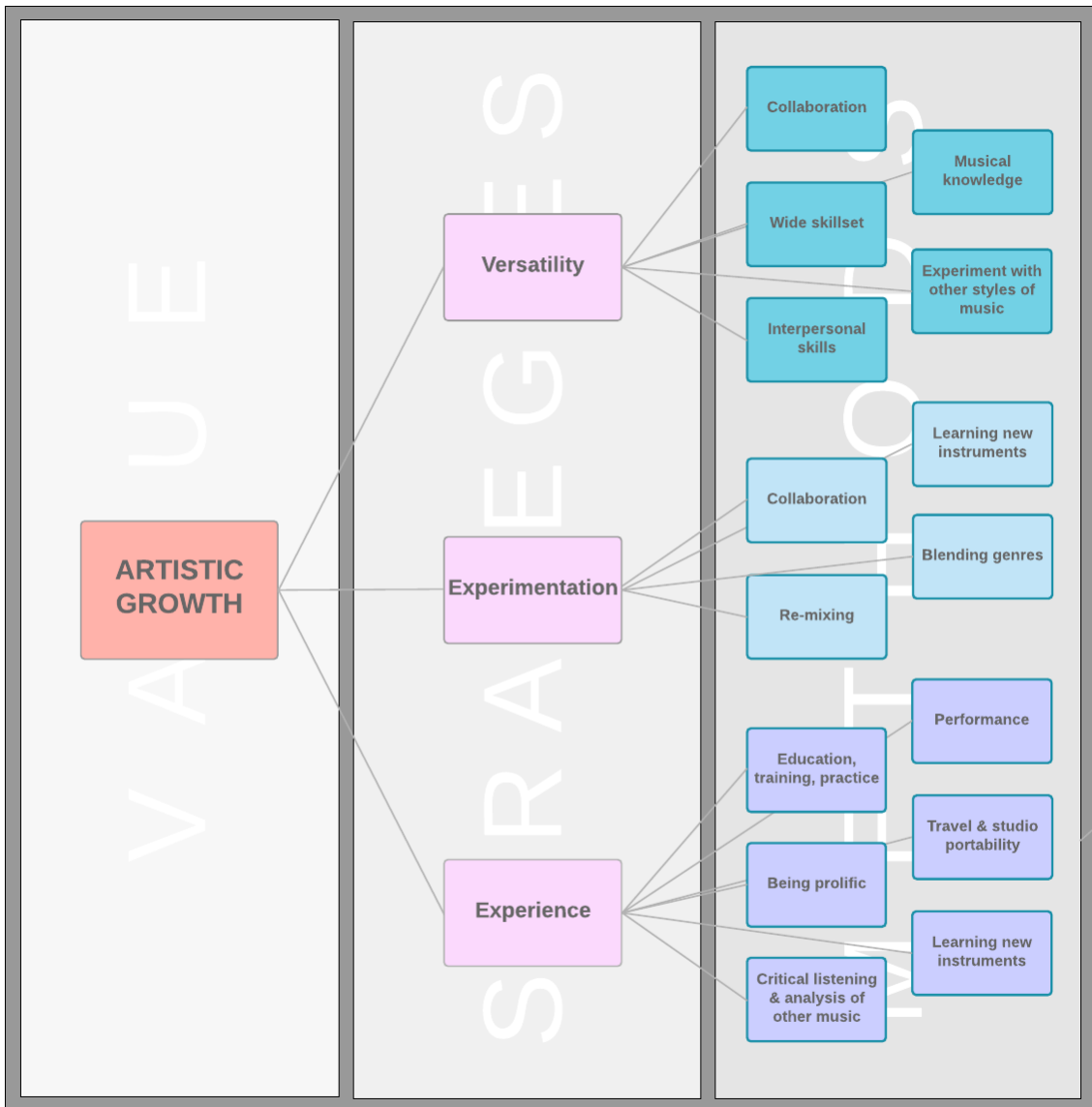


Figure 7 - Values, Strategies and Methods of the Modern Auteur Music Producer: Artistic Growth

Through my own experience, I have found that when in the thick of a creative session it's easy to get stuck concentrating on the smaller details, temporarily forgetting about the bigger picture: what you're ultimately trying to achieve with a piece of music. My intention with this research is that through the applied consideration of 'Emotion', 'Movement', 'Purpose & Familiarity', 'Tension & Edge', 'Character', 'Originality' and 'Artistic Growth', this resource could be used as a methodological framework to aid the progress of other producer-composers who are operating within popular music styles. This may be in situations of 'writer's block' where the artist needs assistance moving past a creative barrier, or when they are looking to streamline their own creative process, or perhaps when they are seeking inspiration to try something new.

Throughout this section, I've presented a number of values, strategies and methods that prominent producer-composers attest to as contributing to their creative process. The following section takes a deeper look into one artist and his work, putting him forward as an example of the contemporary auteur music producer, based on the criteria drawn from the discussion.

2.5 Exemplar - Trent Reznor

Trent Reznor is a notable contemporary artist who is widely considered to be an auteur, known for combining *emotive* and pop-like hooks with dark and intense industrial instrumentation. Many of the values, strategies and methods presented within the aforementioned methodological framework are evident in his work.

The music of Nine Inch Nails was an undeniably unique sounding project during the band's most influential years in the 1990's, and its sound was directly related to Trent Reznor's total ownership of the process as the primary musician and principal songwriter. Labelled "the auteur of doom and kaboom" by music critic Greg Kot (1994), Reznor's impact on the music industry saw him included in Time Magazine's 1997 list of the 25 Most Influential Americans, with Spin magazine naming Reznor 'the most vital artist in music' in the same year (Time, 1997; Spin, 1997). Rolling Stone suggested that 'The Downward Spiral' (1994) "is among the most radical sound assemblies ever to become a multimillion seller", mixing "violent textures with lovely melodies, all to frame a harrowing, deeply affecting story of one man's descent into his own abject soul" (Gilmore, 1997).

"A master of the art of immersion" (Beaumont, 2013), Reznor has also lent his *characteristic* sound to the world of filmmaking, with credits on a growing number of soundtracks. "Some of the most wondrous moments in David Lynch's Lost Highway owe significantly to the aural genius of Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor. His thick, ambient drones ... give the fated house... a life all its own; it's as if the walls were breathing and murmuring, or trying to whisper horrid secrets" (Gilmore, 1997). His work on 'The Social Network' (2010) won him an Oscar for Original Score, a Golden Globe for Best Original Score, and his work on 'Girl with a Dragon Tattoo' (2011) won him a Grammy for Best Score Soundtrack.

Moorefield's 2005 case study on Reznor examines the multiple creative and technical roles he takes on as a part of his process, and how they are interwoven, all culminating in his unique sound. Moorefield found that "It is impossible to separate Reznor the producer from Reznor the artist. They are one and the same. His functions as producer and composer overlap: this orchestra is the studio" (2005, p88). He goes on to suggest that "Reznor's work as a producer is clearly an extension of his personality as a composer" (p89), and discusses how his mastery of studio technology also plays a key part in his sound: "his level of technical skill is reflected in the *originality* of his music: his instrument is the studio, and he knows how to play it without relying on intermediaries" (p87).

'March of the Pigs', the lead single from Nine Inch Nails' breakthrough album from 1994, 'The Downward Spiral', is classic Reznor. The unusual metering (29/8 loops consisting of three bars of 7/8 followed by one bar of 8/8), frantic 269 bpm tempo, fatiguing distorted guitar textures, industrial instrumentation and destructive lyrical content serve for an energizing, albeit unsettling, listening experience. The constant intensity is briefly interrupted twice by short piano breakdowns, the first of which is followed by several seconds of silence before the track suddenly explodes back into its frenzy. These elements combine to create a unique track which challenges the norms of popular music (see '*Originality*'). Clocking in at just 2:58, the track peaked at 59 on the Billboard charts and, along with the rest of the album, presented a sound that would be widely imitated for years

to come.

The track 'The Day the World Went Away' was the polarising first single released from Nine Inch Nails' third album 'The Fragile' in 1999. It is a particularly interesting case study, as it bares very few traits of the common pop song, yet it charted in the top 20 on the Billboard Hot 100 - the only Nine Inch Nails track to do so to date. While the single has some common '*Purpose & Familiarity*' traits such as common chord progressions, time signatures and song length, it ignores others and opts for '*Tension & Edge*' components:

- After a 24 second atmospheric build, heavily distorted guitars create a sudden dynamic change.
- There is a strong pulse that runs through the track, yet despite the track being heavy at times, the sense of '*Movement*' is achieved through the syncopation of the vocals and the eighth note guitar & bass chugs - there are no drums whatsoever.
- The vocals don't come in for a minute and a half.
- The verse is the one and only passage containing lyrics.
- There is a 30 second atmospheric passage after the verse, followed by a startling re-entry of the distorted guitars.
- The song ends abruptly, essentially cut off mid-transient.

Reznor's '*Character*' shines through in the vocal delivery, heavy distorted guitar tones, touches of atmosphere and sudden dynamic changes - without even looking at the credits, it is clear who authored the song.

Through researching Reznor's musical works and accomplishments, one could confidently argue that he has satisfied all four of the defining characteristics of an auteur as identified in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this discussion.

3.0 Conclusion

The world of popular music is becoming dominated by artists who have blended the traditional creative processes, artists whose writing and production processes are blended together. Enabled by modern technology, they can make music from start to finish whenever they like, wherever they like, even releasing the finished product independently if they so choose. Many of these contemporary producer-composers possess auteur-like qualities, and may one day be seen as auteurs.

Moorefield notes that “at the top of the current charts, one increasingly finds cases in which the producer is the artist is the composer is the producer” (2005). He raises an interesting question regarding the current climate: is the term ‘producer’ obsolete? The role has expanded over time from sitting at the back of the control room, to involvement in engineering, to composing, to performing onstage: “today one can find producers in any one or all of these functions... it may not make much sense any more to speak of ‘the producer’ as a clearly delineated entity. He or she can play many roles, even varying from project to project” (2005). Perhaps the term ‘Music Creator’ is more appropriate to describe those artists who may one day be seen as musical auteurs.

The contemporary auteur is able to combine roles in ways that simply weren’t possible to their predecessors, taking total control of music creation from start to finish with technological proficiency and creative expertise. Their character and music are inseparable, and therefore they are heavily involved in their own production. While technology has gone a long way to levelling the playing field by making professional sound quality achievable with low cost equipment, the auteur’s outstanding creative talent ensures their output floats to the top. Complete oversight of the process allows the auteur to inject their own unique character into their music in a variety of ways. Alongside making their own music, many of these artists collaborate with others in order to grow their networks, to learn, to experiment with different ideas and to further participate within the wider music community; however, even when working with others, the auteur will imprint their own sonic fingerprint on the music they’re involved with.

Perhaps Moorefield described the state of contemporary music production best by suggesting that “what is important now is imagination” (2005).

4.0 Reference List

- Ableton. (2016, October 25). *A Brief History of The Studio As An Instrument: Part 1 - Early Reflections*. Retrieved from Ableton:
<https://www.ableton.com/en/blog/studio-as-an-instrument-part-1/>
- AllMusic. (n.d.). *Ambient Pop*. Retrieved from AllMusic:
<https://www.allmusic.com/style/ambient-pop-ma0000012263>
- Ambient Music*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Dictionary.com:
<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/ambient-music>
- Andrew, D., & Sklar, R. (2017, October 05). *Motion picture*. Retrieved from
<https://www.britannica.com/art/motion-picture/Expressive-elements-of-motion-pictures>
- Barnes, T. (2015, March 11). *Alison Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass [Interview]*. Retrieved from Magnetic Magazine:
<https://www.magneticmag.com/2015/03/alison-wonderland-through-the-looking-glass-interview/>
- Beaumont, M. (2013, August 8). *The Nine Lives of Trent Reznor*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/aug/08/the-nine-lives-of-trent-reznor>
- Bein, K. (2017, November 9). *Alison Wonderland Conjures a 'Happy Place' for Anyone Who's Ever Struggled With Depression*. Retrieved from Billboard: <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/dance/8031122/alison-wonderland-happy-place-song>
- Bergman, B., & Horn, R. (1985). *Experimental Pop - Frontiers of the Rock Era*. Dorset, U.K.: Blandford Press.
- Blake, E. (2016, May 27). *Flume walks us through his 'weird' new album, 'Skin'*. Retrieved from <https://mashable.com/2016/05/27/flume-skin-interview/#r3Dle9mtugqm>
- Blood, A. J., Zatorre, R. J., Bermudez, P., & Evans, A. C. (1999). Emotional responses to pleasant and unpleasant music correlate with activity in paralimbic brain regions. *Nature America*.
- Boucher, C. (2012, March 15). *Grimes Studio Interview*. (Dazed, Interviewer)
- Boucher, C. (2016, August 17). *Grimes at Lollapalooza 2016*. (G. Pro, Interviewer)
- Boucher, C. (2016, February 26). *Grimes: writer, producer, fighter*. (K. Lloyd, Interviewer) TimeOut.
- Boucher, C. (2016, July 5). *Grimes: 808s, bird calls and dentist's drills*. (Ableton, Interviewer)
- Boucher, G. (2000, June 5). *Practicing the Fine Art of Production*. *LA Times*.
- Brend, M. (2012). *The Sound of Tomorrow: How Electronic Music was Smuggled into the Mainstream*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Burgess, R. J. (2013). *The Art of Music Production: The Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Candelaria, L. (2015). *American Music: A Panorama* (Fifth Concise Edition ed.). Stamford, USA: Cengage Learning.

- Carter, P., Bolt, B., Perry, G., Reid, D., Iggulden, A., McLeod, S., . . . Barrett, E. (2010). *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B. Taurus & Co Ltd.
- Cooper, D. (2016). *The Role Of A Music Producer In Modern Music Production*. Retrieved from Rodel Sound: <http://www.rodelound.com/studio-blog/the-role-of-a-music-producer-in-modern-music-production>
- Davie, M. (2013, December 2). *LONERISM: TAME IMPALA IN THE STUDIO*. Retrieved from AudioTechnology: The Magazine for Sound Engineers & Recording Musicians: <http://www.audiotechnology.com.au/wp/index.php/lonerism-tame-impala-in-the-studio/>
- DeSantis, D. (2015). *Making Music: 74 Creative Strategies for Electronic Music Producers*. Ableton AG.
- Dupont, F. (2014, December 14). *The Role of the Producer in Music Creation*. Retrieved from Avid Blogs: <http://www.avidblogs.com/the-role-of-the-producer-in-music-creation/>
- Emerick, G., & Massey, H. (2006). *Here, There and Everywhere: My Life Recording the Music of The Beatles*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Eno, B. (2011, June 03). *Brian Eno: The Original Conception of Ambient Music*. (R. Khan, Interviewer)
- Evans, S. (2018, March 23). *Don't watch Alison Wonderland & Trippie Redd's latest if you're "High"*. Retrieved from Earmilk: <https://earmilk.com/2018/03/20/dont-watch-alison-wonderland-trippie-redds-latest-if-youre-high/>
- Gilmore, M. (1997, March 6). *Trent Reznor: Death to Hootie*. Retrieved from Rolling Stone: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/trent-reznor-death-to-hootie-19970306>
- Gottwald, L. (2010, December 16). Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald: 2010 ASCAP "I Create Music" Expo. (ASCAP, Interviewer)
- Gottwald, L. (2011, September 7). *Artist Interview - Dr. Luke*. (A. News, Interviewer)
- Gradvall, J. (2016, February 11). *World Exclusive: Max Martin, #1 Hitmaker*. Retrieved from Di Weekend: <https://storytelling.di.se/max-martin-english/>
- Gunkel, D. (2011). What Does it Matter Who is Speaking? Authorship, Authority, and the Mashup. *Popular Music and Society*.
- Harding, C. (2016, December 19). *How the Pop-Drop Became the Sound of 2016*. Retrieved from Billboard: <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/pop/7625628/pop-drop-sound-of-2016-chainsmokers-justin-bieber-switched-on-pop>
- Harrison, N. (2016, December 20). *The Best Avant-Garde and Experimental Music of 2016*. Retrieved from Pop Matters: <http://www.popmatters.com/feature/the-best-avant-garde-and-experimental-music-of-2016/>
- Johnson, M. (2009). *Pop Music Theory*. Malden, United Kingdom: Lulu Press.
- Kot, G. (1994, May 9). *Nine Inch Nails Hammers Home Its Message Of Alienation*. Retrieved from Chicago Tribune: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1994-05-09/news/9405090078_1_guitars-trent-reznor-nine-inch-nails-band
- Lamb, B. (2016, August 24). *What Is Pop Music?* Retrieved from ThoughtCo.: <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-pop-music-3246980>
- Lamb, B. (2017, December 31). *What is Pop Music?* Retrieved from ThoughtCo.: <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-pop-music-3246980>

- Linder, B. (Director). (2015). *Grimes - Art Angel (Documentary)* [Motion Picture].
- Lucas. (2016, February 29). *FLUME DELIVERS THE ULTIMATE CHILL MIX*. Retrieved from YourEDM: <https://www.youredm.com/2016/02/29/flume-delivers-the-ultimate-chill-mix/>
- Martin, B. (1997). *Music of Yes: Structure and Vision in Progressive Rock*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Massey, H. (2000). *Behind the Glass: Top Record Producers Tell how they Craft the Hits*. San Francisco: Backbeat Books.
- Massey, H. (2009). *Behind the Glass: Top Record Producers Tell how they Craft the Hits* (Vol. 2). Milwaukee: Backbeat Books.
- Matos, M. (2015, August 20). *Electronic dance music*. Retrieved from Encyclopaedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/electronic-dance-music>
- Matos, M. (2016). 33 1/3 - Sign 'O' *The Times* (Vol. 10). New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Moorefield, V. (2005). *The Producer as Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music*. London, England: The MIT Press.
- Moy, R. (2015). *Authorship Roles in Popular Music : Issues and Debates*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Muhly, N. (2007, October 5). *Walls come tumbling down*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/oct/05/popandrock.classicalmusica ndopera>
- Negus, K. (2011). AUTHORSHIP AND THE POPULAR SONG. *Music & Letters*, 92, no. 4, 607-629.
- Olivarez-Giles, N. (2009, October 13). *Recording Studios are Being Left Out of the Mix*. Retrieved from Los Angeles Times: <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/13/business/fi-smallbiz-studios13>
- Oliver, T. (2014, March 24). Are music production values still improving? (C. Music, Interviewer)
- Oxford Dictionary. (n.d.). *Authorship*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/authorship>
- Pareles, J. (2017, December 21). *The Inside History of 'Where Are Ü Now'*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/26/arts/music/justin-bieber-goes-electronic-with-skrillex-and-diplo-help.html>
- Pentz, T. (2016, March 16). *Diplo*. (Z. Sang, Interviewer)
- Perry, M. (2008). *How to Be a Record Producer in the Digital Era*. New York: Billboard Books.
- Pitchfork. (2016, September 26). *The 50 Best Ambient Albums of All Time*. Retrieved from Pitchfork: <https://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/9948-the-50-best-ambient-albums-of-all-time/>
- Richards, K. (2010). *Life*. London: Orion Publishing Co.
- Robertson, K. (2018, April 13). *Alison Wonderland shows EDM can have heart too*. Retrieved from The Spinoff: <https://thespinoff.co.nz/music/13-04-2018/alison-wonderland-shows-edm-can-have-heart-too/>
- Roddick, C. (2015, September 25). *Purity Ring's Corin Roddick on Not Settling for a Cult Following*. (M. Roberts, Interviewer)
- Sandberg, M. (2016, February 11). *World Exclusive: Max Martin, #1 Hitmaker*. (J. Gradvall, Interviewer)

- Sanneh, K. (2015, September 28). *Pop For Misfits: Can a former noise musician become a star?* Retrieved from The New Yorker: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/09/28/pop-for-misfits>
- Santas, C. (2002). *Responding to Film: A Text Guide for Students of Cinema Art*. Chicago: Burnham Inc., Publishers.
- Sholler, A. (2018, March 4). *Alison Wonderland & Matt Medved Interview | Billboard Live*. (M. Medved, Interviewer)
- Shuker, R. (1994). *Understanding Popular Music*. New York: Routledge.
- Shuker, R. (2005). *Popular Music: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Simons, D. (2004). *Studio Stories: How the Great New York Records were Made*. London: Backbeat Books.
- Sinclair, J.-L. (2011, September 29). *Organizing Sounds: Musique Concrete, Part 1*. Retrieved from CodeHop: <http://codehop.com/organizing-sounds-musique-concrete-part-i/>
- Spin. (1997, April). The Spin Top 40: The Most Vital Artists in Music Today. *Spin Magazine*, p. 70.
- Straw, W. (1999). Authorship. In B. Horner, & T. Swiss (Eds.), *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Streten, H. (2016, June 23). Flume Interview - How To Make A Drum Beat. (iHeartRadio, Interviewer)
- Streten, H. (2017, October 17). *Flume Talks Music, Travel & Surfing*. (D. TV, Interviewer)
- Streten, H. (2018, February 1). *Flume (10 Questions Interview)*. (B. R. China, Interviewer)
- Théberge, P. (1989). The 'Sound' of Music: Technological Rationalization and the Production of Popular Music. *New Formations* (8: Techno-Ecologies).
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Musique concrète*. Retrieved from Encyclopaedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/art/musique-concrete>
- Time. (1997, April 21). *Time's 25 Most Influential Americans*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,986206-18,00.html>
- Toynbee, J. (2000). *Making Popular Music : Musicians, Creativity and Institutions*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Vazquez, V. (2009, October 23). *Das Racist to Sasha Frere-Jones: "Stop trying to kill rap."*. (C. Stanley, Editor) Retrieved from Flavorwire: <http://flavorwire.com/45316/das-racist-to-sasha-frere-jones-stop-trying-to-kill-rap>
- Vox. (2017, August 18). *How a recording-studio mishap shaped '80s music*. Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bxz6jShW-3E>
- Watson, M. (n.d.). *A Short History of Ambient & Downtempo Music*. Retrieved from ambientmusicguide.com: <http://ambientmusicguide.com/history-of-ambient/>
- Wonderland, A. (2015, March 11). *Alison Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass*. (T. Barnes, Interviewer) Magnetic Magazine.