Introduction
"I feel like I've heard it before":
The Audiovisual Echoes of YouTube

Part 1: Holly Rogers

"I'm going to say that's the wildest video I've ever seen".[1] When YouTuber Jucee uttered these words, with a mixture of horror, intrigue and excitement in a reaction video to Lil Nas X's 2021 "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" video (directed by Tanu Muino and Lil Nas X), she contributed to a swirl of attention, comments, spinoffs and discussion that had taken the internet by storm (figure 1a). The MONTERO project was made up of numerous paratexts. Prequel and sequel videos extended the world in multiple directions and the musician extensively remediated his own music and images, sending versions, interpretations and his own reaction videos (figure 1b) through YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Twitter.[2] In October 2022, this transmedial spread moved out into the real world for the live MONTERO gig at California's YouTube Theatre (see the cover of this book), which used large screens, live dancers and lavish costumes to realise the project's audiovisual aesthetics in multidimensions. Footage from numerous mobile phones (seen at the bottom of the cover image) instantly relayed the performance back onto YouTube, where the multiple perspectives joined the rapid spread of fan noise from reaction videos, mashups, cover versions, vids, supercuts, samples and lyric videos. MONTERO's universe was also generating controversy from artist and director Andrew Thomas Huang, who meticulously pointed out the music video's marked similarities with his earlier video for FKA Twigs' "Cellophane" (2019).[3] As the song, its video, its multiple reimagined paratexts and its criticisms ricocheted through social

[1] Nicole, Jucee & Rex, 'WHEEWWW! | Lil Nas X – MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name) (Official Video) | REACTION', *YouTube video*, 00:10:36, 26 March 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY6cde00TGg.

[2] Emily Thomas traces this transmedial spread in "Quare(-in) the Mainstream: YouTube, Social Media and Augmented Realities in Lil Nas X's *MONTERO*", in *YouTube and Music: Online Culture and Everyday Life*, ed. Holly Rogers, Joana Freitas and João Francisco Porfírio (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 65-89. Zach Campbell, 'Lil Nas X 'MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)' REACTION WITH LIL NAS X!!', *YouTube video*, 00:12:45, 26 March 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2OAuf4G6CI.

[3] Jackson Langford, "Director of FKA Twigs' 'Cellophane' Video Responds to Similarities in Lil Nas X's 'Montero' Video, *NME*, March 29, 2021, at https://www.nme.com/news/music/director-of-fka-twigs-cellophane-video-responds-to-similarities-in-lil-nas-xs-montero-video-2909922.

media, Sidemen's reaction video voiced confusion over the music video's origins: "It's not a bad song either man, I'll give him that". "I feel like I've heard it before". "You might have heard it on TikTok already?" "Maybe" (figure 1c).[4] Where does "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" start, and where does it end? And whose work is it?

When a piece of music moves through what Carol Vernallis calls the great "media swirl" of the twenty-first century, it can quickly gain cultural traction by transforming from a discrete, authored text to a participatory hub of creative activity.[5] "[V]alue is primarily generated via 'spreadibility'", writes Henry Jenkins; "Through reuse, reworking and redistribution, spreadable media content 'gains greater resonance in the culture, taking on new meanings, finding new audiences, attracting new markets, and generating new values'".[6] But the specificity of such spreadability is reliant on the evolving affordances of different online platforms. While musicians and industry personnel work the generative qualities of new media for their marketing and distribution potential, it is fans who engender the greatest traction for music by developing and sharing cover versions, supercuts, mashups, remakes, fanvids, lyric, literal and reaction videos, parodies, memes and other chain or iterative collaborations. This simultaneity of commerce and fandom and professional and amateur creativity has had a profound influence on contemporary music cultures and practices.

Since its launch in 2005, YouTube has been a key driver in the regeneration of music through and across online spaces. With easy-to-use software and slogans like "Broadcast Yourself", the platform has encouraged its users to participate by adding their own videos, or by liking, sharing, commenting on, manipulating and appropriating previously uploaded material.[7] In this book's companion text, *YouTube and Music: Online Culture and Everyday Life*, our authors show how YouTube's participatory nature has determined how we produce, consume, circulate and analyse networked musical creativity. Here, we narrow our gaze to focus on the

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[4] "Go on, explain this away, how are there three of him, holding his arm as well? How has this happened?" SidemanReacts, 'Sideman React to Lil Nas X – MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)', *YouTube video*, 00:08:45, 28 March 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Yb0EJdJSww.
[5] Carol Vernallis, *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video and the New Digital Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.
[6] Henry Jenkins, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century (Part One)," *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy* 2, no. 1 (May 24, 2007): 20.
[7] For an in-depth discussion of this process of professionalisation, see Holly Rogers, "'Welcome to your world': YouTube and the Reconfiguration of Music's Gatekeepers," in *YouTube and Music*, 1-32.

sonic repeatability that floods the platform through the appropriations, adaptations, intertextualities, samples, quotations, re-combinations, reworkings and even cannibalisms of various music practices. Following Michael Mandiberg's observation that YouTube has helped to "destabiliz[e] the one-directional broadcast from a reporter to an audience into a multivoiced conversation among participants", and with a focus on the technologies and aesthetics of remediation, our authors explore what YouTube can reveal about music culture, social media users and the contemporary music industry.[8]

"The people formally known as the audience"

YouTube's potential for interaction rests within the wider affordances of new media. When the term web 2.0 was first coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999, the ways in which internet users could contribute to and drive the aesthetics of online culture were only just beginning to be realised.[9] Tim O'Reilly, when he brought the term into popular parlance during a conference speech five years later, demonstrated how the capacity for what he referred to as "'hackability' and 'remixability'" was being built into new platforms. The products of "'born digital' industries and media such as software, computer games, web sites, and social networks", writes Lev Manovich, "are explicitly designed to be customized by the users".[10] A few months after O'Reilly's speech, the principles of "'hackability' and 'remixability'" became the cornerstone of YouTube, the platform that was about to move music production, marketing and creativity into (what seemed to be) a more democratic space.

Initially, and despite YouTube's early call to "Broadcast Yourself", professionally made content dominated the platform. This could be new footage uploaded by commercial enterprises—music videos, adverts, film trailers, concert footage—or fan-uploaded clips of pre-existent work—film, television shows and other broadcast footage. Although the platform's content rapidly diversified, its signature as a video-sharing site remained strong. In her 2013 research into YouTube's content, José Van Dijck found that over two-thirds of user-uploaded clips were taken

[8] Michael Mandiberg, "Introduction," in *The Social Media Reader*, ed. Michael Mandiberg (New York and London: New York University Press, 2012), 3.
[9] Darcy DiNucci, "Fragmented Future," *Print Magazine* 53, no. 4, (April 1999): 32.
[10] Lev Manovich, "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life," in *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, ed. Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008), 37.

from professional sources: “over 63 percent of the most popular uploaders do not contribute user-*generated* content (UCG) but user-*copied* content (UCC) to the site—user-copied meaning that the videos are not created by uploaders themselves. These research outcomes certainly warrant the conclusion that YouTube has gradually shifted toward being a site for recycling PGC [professionally generated content]”.[11] More recently, the notion of “recycling PGC” has become complicated. While pre-existing videos can be shared—or recycled—without intervention, there has been an increasing tendency to disrupt, to recall Mandiberg, “the one-directional broadcast from a reporter to an audience” by also remodelling and recrafting them. Other users may then copy and recycle the transformed music or video rather than the original version, reworking it further and muddling the distinctions between professional and user-generated content (UGC).

On the one hand, the combination of free and easy to use editing software, combined with YouTube’s educational opportunities like Next Up and the Partnership Programme, meant that amateur uploaders were able to create more professional-looking videos, a process clearly seen in the emergence of the proficient YouTuber able to monetise the platform’s stylish and current aesthetics. On the other hand, the process of what Vernallis has called “YouTubification” saw the platform’s audiovisual vernacular bleed beyond its boundaries.[12] Commercial music video directors and filmmakers increasingly draw on the aesthetics of online DIY (Do It Yourself) and amateur culture in their professional work, leading to a reciprocal flow of influence between contemporary media forms. On YouTube, this entangled reciprocity taps into and enlivens the contemporary mania for remediation. In his work on new media, Axel Bruns forwards the portmanteau “*produsage* - **the collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement**.”[13] This term, which embodies both an activation of what Jay Rosen calls “the people formally known as the audience” and the process of collaborative, iterative creation, is significant for YouTube.[14] When users edit and reupload moving image clips (whether the original material is professionally created or produced by

[11] José Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 119.
[12] Vernallis, *Unruly Media*.
[13] Axel Bruns, “Produsage: A Working Definition,” *Produsage.org* (December 2009), at https://produsage.org/node/9 (bold in the original).
[14] Jay Rosen, “The People Formerly Known as the Audience,” in *The Social Media Reader*, 15.

another amateur user), distinctions between the creator of material and its consumer are diminished. Other users can work on already-manipulated versions; simultaneous interpretations can take affect and meaning in different directions; edits and reworkings can fractal out to other genres; and revoiced clips can reach between echo chambers and communities. This movement of material through online culture allows it to accumulate perspectives, styles, meanings and gestures. While there is a distinction to be made, then, between videos uploaded by professional musicians as part of a commercial venture, and user-generated material that, while it can become commercial, is often motivated by different aesthetics, YouTubification and produsage can significantly confound these boundaries. When commercially created high-budget primary material is reconfigured through amateur processes, or when DIY uploads enter the internet's swirl of repetition, a new hybrid type of absorptive moving-image media emerges that is alive and responsive to the fleeting resonances of popular culture.

"I feel like I've heard it before": Musical Retromania

The revoicing of creative material is of course no new thing, and visual and moving image histories have been reconfigured across their many styles, articulations and mediums. The multiple histories of music have also been driven by repetitions and remediations. Internal musical repetition is an integral part of compositional practice, directing the theme and variation, sonata form's recapitulations, da capo arias, folk music's versification, leitmotivic transformation, African drum patterns, the rondo form, the dub beat, minimalism's insistent reiterations, the song chorus, trance music and the circularities of the Javanese Gamelan. Intertextual references and echoes also cascade through the centuries, passing through many different styles, from the reuse of specific structures in the sixteenth-century imitation mass based on existing *cantus firmus* (or melody), the jazz contrafact where new melodies are woven above an existing chord pattern and the folk song which transformed as it was passed orally through communities and centuries. But with the unfolding twentieth century and the loosening of Modernism's drive for innovation and originality, came an emerging sensibility for explicit creative borrowing. Moving through the wider, cultural, mid-century postmodern aesthetic and its "incredulity toward metanarratives" identified by Jean-François Lyotard, an explosion of musical intertextuality, borrowing, appropriation, quotation and multiplicity began to dissolve

linear time and coherent space in a way quite different from what had gone before.[15] The emergence of affordable recording technologies—tape from the 1940s, video from the 1960s, sampling equipment and Digital Audio Workstations from the 1970s and '80s—enabled an even clearer connection to the sonic past by allowing the reuse of actual recorded music artefacts, an opportunity that unleased what Simon Reynolds has called a turn towards "retromania".[16] Hastened by the affordances of these new technologies, the invigorated zeal for reusing sonic material moved through tape music, dub versions, hip-hop sampling, turntablism, plunderphonics, electronica, Afrofuturism and, as the new millennia got underway, the eclectic mix of 1980s and 90s audiovisual samples that drove internet genres like vaporwave.

Fundamental to all these cultures of sonic remixability is the loosening hold of traditional music education over musical creativity. Technology enabled wider access to the tools of music composition and performance, which activated different groups of musicians and fuelled the surge of bedroom music culture and an increased presence of women in music technology environments and practices.[17] In his work on contemporary music practice, for instance, Ellis Jones notes how today it is "hard to maintain" the idea of "separate worlds" for DIY and mainstream music practice. Where once DIY signified "cultural resistance" (an aesthetic that drove punk for instance), new technologies—and social media in particular—have repositioned it as an active and productive process of doing.[18]

In his work on postmodern music, Jonathan D. Kramer notes that the emerging sensibility for quotation embraced contractions between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' styles, between the past and the present, traditions and cultures and between meanings and temporalities.[19] With its tendrils in multiple histories and diverse styles, quotation-heavy music holds a double life as both a newly

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[15] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), xxiv.

[16] Holly Rogers, *Sounding the Gallery: Video and the Rise of Art-Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Holly Rogers, "Instruments," in Tom Perchard, Stephen Graham, Tim Rutherford-Johnson and Holly Rogers, *Twentieth Century Music in the West: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 202-226; Simon Reynolds, *Retromania*: *Pop Cultures Addiction to Its Own Past* (London, Faber & Faber: 2012).

[17] Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[18] Ellis Jones, *DIY Music and the Politics of Social Media* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 8, 38.

[19] Jonathan D. Kramer, "Postmodern Concepts of Musical Time," in *Indiana Theory Review* 17, no. 2 (2012): 21-60.

constructed piece and as one that comments on the original material, as David Metzer writes:

> It is the ways in which quotation handles the "what" and the "how" that make it such an effective cultural agent. The gesture latches on to a specific work, often a familiar one, and places that work squarely in front of us. The borrowed material is tightly gripped and prominently featured rather than being merely alluded to or buried in the background. This directness calls attention to the cultural associations of the original, for the more discernible and intact the borrowing, the more apparent those Associations.[20]

When music is visualised, these resonances can become even more palpable by drawing on, and combining, both visual and sonic histories. Sometimes, as we shall see below, when moving image fragments are combined, the "cultural associations of the original" texts form comedic, or parodic configurations, or, in the case of music video, can draw attention to the intertextuality of the form, as Mathias Korsgaard has shown on his work on polyphonic videos.[21] At other times, these associations take on powerful political resonances. Hip-hop artists have long used quotation as an articulation of political critique and cultural lineage, for instance, allowing musicians to link back to earlier African-American pop music traditions and jazz, but also to the "multimedia borrowings" from 1970s blaxploitation film soundtracks and other expressions of black womanhood and representation.[22]

The participatory spaces of web 2.0, the enmeshing of professional and amateur or DIY sensibilities and the opportunities for "remixability" afforded by YouTube moved these professional practices of audiovisual remediation into the public, amateur sphere. At the same time, they resonate and reinvigorate the familiar historiographic narratives of musical retromania. On YouTube, these convergences manifest in two ways. First, with over 720,000 hours of new material uploaded every day, the platform supplies a significant repository of audiovisual material for appropriation.[23] This includes uploads from the record industry but also footage uploaded and organised by fans as part of crowd-sourced cataloguing and

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[20] David Metzer, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.
[21] Mathias Korsgaard, *Music After MTV: Audiovisual Studies, New Media, and Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[22] Joanna Demers, "Sampling the 1970s in Hip-hop," *Popular Music* 22, no. 1 (2003): 42. Gwendolyn D. Pough, *Check it While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip Hop Culture and the Public Sphere* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004).
[23] Jason Wise, "How Many Videos are Uploaded to YouTube in 2022?," *Earthweb* (October 15, 2022), at https://earthweb.com/how-many-videos-are-uploaded-to-youtube-a-day/.

preservation to form what's become known as YouTube's "long tail", as Chris Anderson writes:

> You can find everything out there on the Long Tail. There's the back catalogue, older albums still fondly remembered by longtime fans or rediscovered by new ones. There are live tracks, B-sides, remixes even (gasp) covers. There are niches by the thousands, genre within genre within genre: imagine an entire Tower Records devoted to '80s hair bands or ambient dub. There are foreign bands, once priced out of reach in the Import aisle, and obscure bands on even more obscure labels, many of which don't have the distribution clout to get into Tower at all.[24]

Internet music, like vaporwave, chillwave and hypnagogic pop explicitly ransacks YouTube's archives for creative material, remediating existing audiovisual material to perform what Reynolds refers to "echo-jams" through online culture.[25] Second, the platform provides the tools and know-how to sample and revoice the copious clips within these deposits.

Remediation and the "echo-jams" it initiates is key to YouTube's process of refashioning and regenerating audiovisual material, leading to the common feeling, as Sidemen assert in their relation video, that we've "heard it before". Proposed in 1999 by Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, as an update of Marshall McLuhan's 1964 assertion that "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium" for the digital age, remediation can be understood as "the representation of one medium in another".[26] For Bolter and Grusin, media history is not a series of displacements in which new media (for example the internet) make old media (like the radio) obsolete. Instead, new media transform older media, retaining some of their features while discarding others. In their own words, remediation is "the way in which one medium is seen by our culture as reforming or improving upon another"; it is "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms".[27] This refashioning arises through a two-way process of integration and evolution by which new media both intervenes into and alters older media, while the specificities and affordances of new media then prompts changes in the aesthetics of older technologies. Key to this duality are the differences, but also the interrelations, between the processes of immediacy—looking through—and hypermediacy—looking at. Immediacy, present in computer-

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[24] Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail," *Wired* 12 (2004), at https://www.wired.com/2004/10/tail/.
[25] Reynolds, *Retromania*, 80.
[26] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 8; Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Boston: MIT Press, 2000).
[27] Ibid., 59, 273.

generated imagery (CGI), 3D technologies and immersive sound, write the authors, "dictates that the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented". By contrast, hypermediacy "calls attention to the medium", foregrounding its specificities and technological applications.[28] Remediation, then, can come from a collision of media (when one technology makes direct use of another to enhance its own processes, for example the use of digital technologies for special effects to enhance a film's immersion) or through mimicry (when one form of media uses its own specificities to take on the vocabularies of another).

YouTube constantly performs both kinds of remediation: as Grusin later said in his work on new media, "YouTube sets out to remediate TV not merely as a neutral intermediary but as an active mediator."[29] Videos can promote immediacy through traditional filmmaking techniques like perspective, point of view and audition, framing, audiovisual synchronicity and smooth editing. And yet, when placed within YouTube's patchwork framework, they jostle against thumbnails and recommendations, comments and adverts, which draws attention to the surface of the screen and the opacity of the medium. In other videos, stylised and first-person addresses—technologies notable in the recent ways that musicians market themselves through behind-the-scenes footage and vlogs—play with hypermediacy from the outset. This can be seen in the direct-to-camera address, abrupt editing, shaky camera work and the use of text, collage, split screen and other techniques that highlight the materiality of YouTube as a medium. As Bolter writes in the foreword to this volume, then, YouTube remediates in two ways: "through remix practices that characterize much of its music content and through the algorithmic hypermediacy that presents that content to users."

Audiovisual Remediation on YouTube

Bolter's and Grusin's theory is located in the remediation of the image and the aesthetics of looking. But it can be productively applied to music and the act of listening to and beyond the materiality of sound. The appropriation of orchestral sounds through digital media, the jagged tapestry of sampling, hip-hop, polystylism and vaporwave all force the hypermediacy of the remediation process into the

[28] Ibid., 6.
[29] Richard Grusin, "YouTube at the End of New Media," in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 99.

foreground; and yet, if the revoicing is seamlessly woven into the new sonic textures, reducing the rupture of juxtaposition, music can generate a more transparent sense of immediacy. Mashups of pre-existing music are a good example of this. These are extremely popular on YouTube and can either be produced from a compilation of similar tracks, or by modifying two songs into a new and coherent song structure. Sir Mashalot's "Mindblowing SIX song country mashups", for instance, reveals the identical chord structure beneath six of country music's biggest hits,[30] while Dj Pyromania and Yabanci Müzikler's audiovisual mashup of around 23 of 2016's biggest pop hits uses Wordplay and Harmonic Mixing to blend together the different sonorities and textures.[31] Sonic mashups can also draw attention to extra musical resonances, like Atlasito's heady mix of Lil Nas X's "Industry Baby" and Michael Jackson's "Beat It".[32] While this mix plays on the differences between the songs' lyrics—Jackson warns his protagonist away from violence and confrontation; Lil Nas confronts his problems head on and shows inmates escaping from a burning prison—other mashups work to smooth over potential disjunctions. DJ Earworm, for instance, uses wordplay to create a new track where singers complete the lyric or phrase started by another to create a different, yet harmonically and tonally consistent, track.[33] Here, although the fragments remain recognisable, they coalesce into a new tuneful and plausible song. In her work on internet music, Georgina Born argues that the affordances of new media have expanded the aesthetic and communicative possibilities of contemporary musicking.[34] Here, we can see how refreshed creative possibilities emerge through colliding digital music and social media practices.

When combined with the moving image, music can enact both states of remediation simultaneously. Existing music can be re-visualised with different material; the moving image can be re-sounded. In our first collection of essays on

[30] Sir Mashalot, 'Sir Mashalot: Mind-Blowing SIX Song Country Mashup', *YouTube video*, 00:03:55, 4 November 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY8SwIvxj8o&t=3s.
[31] Yabancı Müzikler, 'Pop Songs World 2016 – Mega Mashup (Dj Pyromania)', *YouTube video*, 00:07:02, 15 September 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyJ3GmDGrPE&t=1s.
[32] Atlasito, 'Lil Nas X ft. Michael Jackson – Industry Baby X Beat It (Atlas Mashup)', *YouTube video,* 00:03:37, 28 August 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt_seNeuDrs.
[33] DJ Earworm, 'DJ Earworm- United State of Pop 2009 (Blame it on the Pop)', *YouTube video*, 00:04:45, 27 December 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNzrwh2Z2hQ&t=2s.
[34] Georgina Born and Christopher Haworth, "Music and Intermediality After the Internet: Aesthetics, Materialities and Social Forms," in *Music and Digital Media: Towards a Planetary Anthropology,* ed. Georgia Born (London: UCL Press, 2022), 378-438.

YouTube and Music, Vernallis et al show how lyric videos enact a process of redactive revisualisation by adding a double, subversive or fresh reading of the original material.[35] A literal video like "Total Eclipse of the Heart Literal Video Version" (2013), for instance, throws the music video form into the foreground, highlighting its tropes and cliches and drawing our attention to the weirdness of our learnt behaviours.[36]

Mashups, rather than literal videos or visualisers, destabilise expectation in slightly different ways because both sound and image are pre-existent, as Korsgaard points out:

> Fanvids often display the potent pairings of image and music sources; in these cases the videos offer a double reading of both the musical and the visual source material, in which one sheds new light on the other … The "shreds", literal versions, and autotune forms instead disrupt their sources' meaning by substituting or transforming elements, thereby creating new associations.[37]

The combination of material from one or more sources can reveal a "double reading" through insightful or witty commentary that emerges through the hypermediacy of irregularities or similarities. Often highly satirical, political mashups tend to be infused with quotation, appropriation and intertextuality to produce folk cultural responses to dominant and official narratives. These abrupt visual cut-ups are usually collaged to accord with musical rhythms and structures. JOE's June 2022 satire "Boris Johnson's Mashup Years – No Confidence Vote Remix", for instance, tunes speech snippets from the former UK prime minister and Michael Gove into an assortment of popular tunes, including Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Any Dream Will Do" (*Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, 1991) and Shakin' Stevens' 1985 hit "Snow is Falling".[38] While this video reorganises the politician's speech as a form of satire, Sam Dubs' 2018 "Donald Trump Singing Baby Shark" mashup simply highlights what the YouTuber understands as the former president's empty and repetitive rhetoric (figure 2).[39]

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[35] Carol Vernallis, Laura McLaren, Virginia Kuhn and Martin Rossouw, "m☺Re tH@n WorD$: Aspects and Appeals of the Lyric Video," in *YouTube and Music*, 149-168.
[36] Artistwithouttalent, 'Total Eclipse of the Heart Literal Video Version', *YouTube video*, 00:05:33, 1 September 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsgWUq0fdKk.
[37] Korsgaard, *Music After MTV*, 209.
[38] JOE, 'Boris Johnson's Mashup Years – No Confidence Vote Remix', *YouTube video*, 00:04:09, 6 June 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTD3Yo6DbOE.
[39] Sam Dubs, 'Donald Trump Singing Baby Shark', *YouTube video*, 00:01:42, 27 November 27 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXNWGjK74Lo.

Much can be learned about the popular cultural role of a particular type of music from its spread through YouTube. As part of his work on opera and its resonances in contemporary society, for instance, Carlo Cenciarelli collected together YouTube versions of users faux operatic singing along to a recording of Verdi's aria "Brindisi" from *La Traviata* (1853) to produce "Twilight Brindisi: A YouTube Mashup".[40] At the time of posting, the aria had recently found fame in *Twilight* (2008). As his mashup moves through various versions of over-the-top, sing-a-longs to Verdi's aria the "emphasis on performance rather than on storytelling, open[s] up the music's field of cultural connotations", writes Cenciarelli.[41] And yet, the continual parodic nature of the singing and farcical gestures tells us a lot about the ways in which opera is imagined within today's popular culture. It is also an example of how material can be reappropriated in ways inappropriate to or unimaginable for the original artist, becoming twice displaced as it moves through a blockbuster movie and social media's iterative processes. Such iterative remediation can have negative effects, such as the harmful whitewashing of black culture behind the Harlem Shake meme's progression across social media. In her work on YouTube, Kyra D. Gaunt explores the aftermath of Miley Cyrus's appropriation of twerking, which went viral after she posted a video to Facebook in March 2013. The video kickstarted a twerking craze which spread rapidly across the internet, noting how it initiated a "subversion of the history, complexity and meaningfulness of the black social dance and the role black females play/ played in it began".[42] As Cyrus's video garnered massive social media views, it quickly eclipsed its previous expressions on YouTube, often performed by black girls who "do not make the cover of magazines or even the most-watched videos, despite the fact that black girls' performances definitely help generate, define, and trigger the viral trend of twerking…".[43] This appropriation ricochets negative cultural connotations through YouTube and destabilises what Gaunt describes as "the translocal and ethnic sense

[40] Carlo Cenciarelli, 'Twilight Brindisi – A YouTube Mashup', *YouTube video*, 00:03:28, 24 June 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyiEUGykkRI.
[41] Carlo Cenciarelli, "'Warped Singing': Opera From Cinema to YouTube*,"* in *Verdi on Screen*, ed. Delphine Vincent (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2015), 266.
[42] Kyra D. Gaunt, "YouTube, Twerking & You: Context Collapse and the Handheld Co-Presence of Black Girls and Miley Cyrus", *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27, no. 3 (2015), 244.
[43] Ibid., 245-6.

of belonging that the imagined community of African American girls attribute to participating in twerking".[44]

Even when the original artist, song or dance remains at the heart of a viral spread, it is not always a positive attribution. A powerful example of this is bait-and-switch trolling, where a link, placed in a variety of contexts, takes users repeatedly to the same place rather than the promised content. The most notable instance of this is the art of Rickrolling, where users are taken to Rick Ashley's 1987 hit video for "Never Gonna Give You Up", a bait-and-switch so embedded in popular culture that the White House's official Twitter handle made use of it in 2011. While "Twilight Brindisi" relishes its audiovisual disjunctions and self-consciously low-fi quality, other YouTube mashups enjoy a more unified, cinematic quality. In these cases, music can be employed filmicly to cover edits and jumps in time and space. SUPERCUT's 2012 video, "50 Heartbreaking Movie Moments / SUPERCUT", for instance, draws the visual tapestry together via the continuous strains of John Murphy's *Sunshine (Adagio in D Minor)* (2008).[45] Here, the music acts like conventional film music, providing a sonic wash that stitches together images, unites narrative threads and helps to reinforce particular positions and understandings.

Vidding also starts with music. This practice involves collaging television and film clips to pre-existent music, usually songs. Rather than generate a new music video from scratch, explains Francesca Coppa, this form of media fandom collates images from one or more audiovisual texts (known as a garbage can vid) to construct an analytical rereading of the original that follows the rhythmic or aesthetic contours of the chosen music, which can be completely extraneous to the original source material: it "is a visual essay that stages an argument, and thus it is more akin to arts criticism than to traditional music video".[46] The focus can lie on one character, or the relationship between several (often rethinking a heterosexual relationship into a same-sex one, known as slash or femslash collage, for instance); it can subvert the original meaning, or reveal its perceived issues; it can draw out

[44] Ibid., 245.
[45] SUPERCUT, '50 Heartbreaking Move Movements | SUPERCUT', *YouTube video*, 00:08:15, 7 December 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58VQ7_Hugbg.
[46] Francesca Coppa, "Women, StarTrek, and the Early Development of Fannish Vidding," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 1 (2008): at https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/44/64; See also Tisha Turk, "Transformation in a New Key: Music in Vids and Vidding," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 9, no. 2 (2015): 174.

connections that have remained hidden; or it can tell another story entirely. To do so, though, requires the "directness" noted by Metzer above, which "calls attention to", but also subverts, "the cultural associations of the original."

Fannish vids (which are also known as fanvids or songvids, or anime music video if the source footage is anime) interpret performatively, using the same technologies and aesthetics as the media they critique. With dedicated fan conventions and a large following, these forms play a significant role in YouTube's critical remediations and potential for "hackability". They also embrace the platform's capacity to link transmediality to other media sites. Fannish vids critique their source material using the tropes, styles and in-jokes that populate online viddish forums. When revoiced and repositioned on YouTube, these references demonstrate the platform's powerful capacity for building community and affinity spaces, as Jenkins explains: vids "articulate […] what the fans have in common: their shared understandings, their mutual interests, their collective fantasies" and "focus on those aspects of the narrative that the community wants to explore".[47] With found-footage images cut to existing music, fannish vids perform an important part in YouTube's sonic remediations. Here, music is used to analyse the cut-up and re-sequenced visual material. In her work on the genre, Tisha Turk explains that "Vidders' use of music is critical to this collaborative construction of meaning: the song and its lyrics provide narrative and emotional information that the audience must decode … music is a vid's most obvious and essential discursive feature."[48] Her analysis rests on the narrative positioning of the chosen songs and, while noting that songs sung from the first person are most common, as they allow the lyrics to draw out a character's emotions, other modes of narration allow for larger cultural resonances to accumulate. In sisabet's 2010 vid edited from Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* Vols. 1 and 2 (2003-2004), for instance, Bob Dylan's 1989 song "Ring Them Bells," infused with Biblical and spiritual imagery sung from an unknown narrator, is used to draw attention away from the film's ultra-violence and towards what Turk describes as the films' "causes and consequences of violence" and "cultural narratives about gender

[47] Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 249.
[48] Tisha Turk, "'Your Own Imagination": Vidding and Vidwatching as Collaborative Interpretation," *Film and Film Culture* 5 (2020): 99.

and sexuality".[49] This "double reading" (Korsgaard) relies on the hypermediacy of the original visual and sonic material, and the knowing, shared cultural knowledge of the viddish forums for its success. The tapestries of all these forms of repetition, then, involve playing with fragments, reassigning meaning and deconstructing (or revealing) intention through the affordances of online culture.

While vidding remediates both sound and image, no-budget user-made cover songs transform music but usually offer completely new, rather than remediated, visual material. The cover song is so popular that it has become, argues Costas Constandinides, a "YouTube genre in its own right".[50] Covers of popular songs—often acoustic and recorded as live versions—can achieve viral success irrespective of the musical life and fan culture of the original, base version. Erato's acapella, cup version of Robyn's 2011 electropop hit, "Call Your Girlfriend" (music video directed by Max Vitali, figure 3a), performed with hand claps and empty butter dishes, gained significant traction as soon as it was uploaded to YouTube in January of the following year, for instance (figure 3b).[51] This version received its own cover, this time by the young sisters Lennon and Maisy, who echoed Erato's hand-cup rhythms and acapella style rather than Robyn's original electropop groove. This cover of a cover became an instant viral hit, propelling the young sisters into the public consciousness and into leading roles in ABC's *Nashville* (2012-2018; figure 3c).[52] The popularity of Lennon and Maisy's version initiated a torrent of other "Call Your Girlfriend" covers and it soon became increasingly unclear whether musicians had come to the song via Robyn, Erato, Lennon and Maisy or another version entirely:

[49] Ibid., 90. sisabet, "Kill Bill – Ring Them Bells", *YouTube video*, 00:03:05, 23 October 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xc9Jqc53DQA.

[50] Costas Constandinides, "'You Just Got Covered': YouTube Cover Song Videos as Examples of Para-Adaptation," in *Adaptation in the Age of Media Convergence*, ed. Johannes Fehrle and Werner Schäfke-Zell (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 113. In his case study of teenage Wade Johnston, Christopher Cayari shows how the musician use YouTube to enlarge the genre of the cover version by including material from his recording sessions, direct to camera videos that explained his process, vlogs, collaborative versions and live footage: Christopher Cayari, "The YouTube Effect: How YouTube has Provided New Ways to Consume, Create, and Share Music," *International Journal of Education & the Arts* 12, no.6 (2011): 1–30.

[51] Erato, 'Erato – Call Your Girlfriend', *YouTube video*, 00:02:24, 7 December 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQoCEvVL57E.

[52] Lennonandmaisy, 'Lennon & Maisy // "Call Your Girlfriend" // Robyn and Erato', *YouTube video*, 00:01:53, 30 May 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_aJHJdCHAo. Suraj Saifullah drew my attention to this particular chain of versions in a wonderful conference presentation: starting at 06:16:24, watch Suraj Saifullah's talk at the *Like, Share and Subscribe YouTube, Music and Cyberculture Before and After the New Decade* international conference, CysMus-CESEM, "Day 3", *YouTube video*, 10:29:52, 25 January 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XHyrP3jsbc&t=22586s.

"the base song", writes Constandinides, "entails the possibility that at a certain moment in the history of a song, which holds the status of the base song, a paradigmatic cover may take the original song's position as a base song or base song performance due to its popularity or charismatic performance of the covering artist".[53] He describes this chain process of abstraction as "para-adaptation … that creatively 'disturbs' commercial source products, and may eventually achieve a status that surpasses the 'ordinary' expectations of its creator(s)".[54] A strong example of this is David Guetta's double-platinum 2011 collaboration with Sia, "Titanium", which spawned versions by other celebrity musicians, such as Rick Ashley in 2020 (figure 4a), but also launched the careers of several YouTubers, including SUNN ST. CLAIRE and Madilyn Bailey.[55] These last two versions use YouTube's common vernacular to reconfigure the original song into audiovisual forms with a uniquely social media vibe. SUNN ST. CLAIRE's acoustic guitar and voice version (which has received almost 3.5 million views), uses many of the platform's common vlogging tropes, including a direct address introduction to the camera, a messy domestic background and an amateur camera angle that cuts off the top of her head and half her guitar (figure 4b). Bailey's version, although sharing many of the same traits, offers a more professional aesthetic. Established YouTube presence Bailey had already received great acclaim for her cover versions while still at school, but it was her 2015 cover of "Titanium" (figure 4c), which currently has over 119 million views, that gained her a contract with a French Warner Music Group label which saw her version chart in France and Belgium and led to a successful 2016 album of covers (*Muse Box*). The spreadibility of media, then, doesn't always lead to greater exposure for the original; sometimes, the original can be eclipsed by subsequent covers and versions by becoming a reference original, as Henrik Smith Sivertsen and Edward Katrak Spencer show later in this book. Yet reference originals can present a dark truth

[53] Constandinides, "'You Just Got Covered'," 116.
[54] Ibid., 111.
[55] Rick Astley, 'Rick Astley – Titanium (Cover)', *YouTube video*, 00:04:06, 13 August, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_vnEHDjfZ8; SUNN ST. CLAIRE, 'Titanium David Guetta ft. Sia Cover Singing by SUNN', *YouTube video*, 00:03:15, 14 September 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrQb8JIDCxM; Madilyn Bailey, 'Titanium – David Guetta ft. Sia – Official Acoustic Music Video – Madilyn Bailey – on iTunes', *YouTube video*, 00:03:46, 2 June 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGoCtJzPHkU.

Other musicians have found fame through their highly individual interpretations of pre-existent music, like Walk off the Earth's 2012 version of Gotye's "Someone that I used to Know" performed with five musicians playing, hitting and strumming various parts of a single guitar (figure 5a).[56] "YouTube performers may reference the source song (wrongly or otherwise), but they don't always wish to communicate the (hi)story of this song or express a sense of devotion to the 'owner' of the song …; rather, they wish to promote their talents through a deliberate performance of the song", suggests Cayari.[57] This sort of virtuosic covering of well-known material has also entered the art music world with videos like "Salut Salong "Wettstreit zu viert" / Competitive Foursome" showing the all-female piano quartet playing their instruments upside down and in various other fiendish positions for a performance of Vivaldi's Summer from the Four Seasons (figure 5b).[58] Covers can also work through unexpected instrumentation, like 2Cellos' take on Iron Maiden (with their permission) in "The Trooper Overture" (figure 5c).[59]

YouTube's cover versions come in many forms, then, but usually take advantage of the platform's audiovisual capabilities. While Lennon and Maisy's cover feels relatively DIY—they sit at a table with their names scrawled on the wall behind them, the microphones are clearly in view and the fixed camera angel remains unchanged—Bailey's original 2012 version of "Titanium" feels more professional: multiple closeups from a variety of angles, a roaming camera and various visual effects position the video's gestures somewhere between amateur and professional. Although situated more firmly within the music industry's arena, her following official video for "Titanium"—which has received over 25 million views—retains the simplicity of many YouTube cover versions.[60] Although the roaming camera and high definition gives a slick feel, there are no effects, complex rhythmic editing, scene changes, props, narrative or symbolism: using her earlier version as a reference

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[56] Songs of the Underground, 'Somebody That I Used to Know – Walk off the Earth (Gotye – Cover)', *YouTube video*, 00:04:24, 10 March 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9mybTArlsk.
[57] Constandinides, "'You Just Got Covered'," 128.
[58] Salut Salon, 'Salut Salon "Wettstreit zu viert" | "Competative Foursome"', *YouTube video*, 00:03:24, 4 February 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKezUd_xw20&t=65s.
[59] 2CELLOS, '2CELLOS – The Trooper Overture [OFFICAL VIDEO]', *YouTube video*, 00:05:30, 21 October 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVH1Y15omgE&t=154s.
[60] Warner Music France, 'Madilyn Bailey – Titanium (Official Video)', *YouTube video*, 00:03:51, 16 June 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUKdufSG4tQ.

original, Bailey simply stands atop a cliff and sings her heart out (Warner Music France, figure 4d).

The para-adaption of songs like "Call Your Girlfriend" and "Titanium" allow particular pieces of music to form a large and roaming conversation. In cases like these, the idea of remediation and remixability plays with social media's aesthetics of virality, sharing and growth. If something is endlesslessly replicated through shares, adaptation and reference, it suggests that it has entered the popular psyche to such an extent that it can be manipulated and parodied while still being instantly recognisable. It allows people to personalise things within a universal framework of signs and references and allusions. In the next section, my co-editors Joana Freitas and João Francisco Porfírio introduce the main themes of this book as they continue to explore how sonic remediation and memory have not only led to new forms of exposure for musicians and YouTubers but have also generated complex legal issues unique to online culture.

Part 2: Joana Freitas and João Francisco Porfírio

What Is Not Being Remediated: The Musical Upside Down of Online Culture

Above, Holly explores how musical versioning, mashups, vidding and remixing can fragment and reconfigure pre-existent music through the processes of para-adaptation and audiovisual mashup. But a piece of music doesn't have to be fragmented or visually revoiced to gather new meaning and reach new audiences. Here, while introducing the chapters that make up this collection, we (Joana and João) consider how YouTube's processes of fandom and nostalgia can determine the afterlife of musical multimedia, and how legal issues can propel or hamper the processes of online sonic remediation.

Each summer has its own soundtrack. Pop hits, disco beats and other top-of-the-charts songs make their way to radio stations, Spotify playlists and, for those that are still 'old school', annual CD compilations.[61] While physical compilations of summer hits usually feature recently-released commercial pop and R&B chart hits, however, the processes of selection that occur online are more complex. Unlike

[61] The most famous compilation CDs are edited by Sony Music from the Universal Music group. In 2021, their CD was titled *So Fresh: The Hits of Summer 2021 + The Best of 2020*.

chart music and record sales, online musical virality cannot be quantified (at least not solely) through financial success. Musical memes, remixes, tik-toks, cover versions, vids and mashups reach millions of users across in a wide variety of contexts, propelling sonic fragments, forgotten songs and unknown bedroom artists into the internet's most listened to material. While this can be at the expense of the original artist whose work may not be acknowledged, it can also lead to a significant revival of attention and corresponding financial gain.

Although the internet's summer soundtrack of 2022 featured the expected range of newly-composed material and stock Instagram reel tracks, it also saw a resurgence of '80s sound thanks to the resounding popularity of series 4 of *Stranger Things* (Netflix, 2022). During the first episode, Kate Bush's 1985 hit "Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)" is played by Max, one of the protagonists, through her Walkman's headphones, providing a moment of sonic introspection that is shared by the audience (figure 6a). Since its 1985 release, the song has enjoyed several resurgences thanks to various cover versions and remixes, the most notable being Placebo's 2003 cover, which charted thanks to its use in the fourth season of *The O.C* (2007). But the 2022 resurgence was different. Not only was it the original version that regained popularity, almost instantly, the show's worldwide audience thrust the song into a swirl of online remediation.[62] By June, and almost 40 years after its release, it had become the second most-played song on the main global streaming platforms and a US Top 10 hit.[63] Soon after, and fueled by a barrage of musical memes, remixes and mashups of the PGC, a raft of contemporary events tapped into the nostalgic turn. Arriving before the second set of episodes dropped, Netflix teamed up with Doritos to produce "Live From the Upside Down – The Doritos Music Fest '86", a "concert from another dimension" that streamed live on 23 June 2022 to millions of users eager to see a variety of 80s hits performed by contemporary music artists like Charli XCX and Corey Hart.[64] In less than a month, *Stranger Things* had positioned Kate Bush's hit—and her music video in particular—

[62] In the show, listening to their favourite song is the only way the characters have to avoid Vecna, a monster villain who wants to kill them and take their souls to the 'Upside Down', a dark and hostile parallel universe (see figure 6b).
[63] Ben Beaumont-Thomas, "Kate Bush Earns First Ever US Top 10 Hit with Running Up That Hill", *The Guardian*, 7 June 2022, at, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/jun/07/kate-bush-earns-first-us-top-10-hit-running-up-that-hill-stranger-things.
[64] The concert is available on YouTube here: Andy Gibbons, "Live From The Upside Down", *YouTube video*, 00:31:34, 27 June 2022, https://youtu.be/prjx7VuqFrA.

at the centre of a vibrant ‘80s nostalgia that was remediated via multiple online voices into a distributed and contemporary existence. If we return to Bolter and Grusin’s quote above, we can see how online culture reformed and refashioned the “prior media form[]” of music video.

Stranger Things, then, reinvigorated the “spreadibility” of “Running Up That Hill”, bringing new listeners to Kate Bush's work and garnering her a whole new generation of fans.[65] At the same time, while the song re-entered the airwaves, making Apple Music and Spotify playlists (where it is now possible to build a playlist that will save you from the show’s evil monster Vecna) and moving through participatory social media platforms, the Netflix series saw its marketing and distribution possibilities skyrocket.[66] Although *Stranger Things* is only available on Netflix, the “Doritos Music Fest ’86 concert” was streamed live on YouTube, where it is now also possible to see several clips and trailers from the series and, of course, listen to and watch the original music video of “Running Up That Hill”. Taken together, these events helped to *reviralise* Bush’s original sonic material. This process, though, is not always positive. Elsewhere in the series, Eddie, one of the central characters, plays Metallica’s 1984 metal hit “Master of Puppets” on his electric guitar as a diversion so that the remaining characters can reach Vecna (figures 7a and 7b). Thrust into the spotlight of a younger generation, Metallica welcomed their new listeners on their social media pages despite the gatekeeping efforts of their older fans, many of whom were uncomfortable with the band’s move into mainstream popular culture. However, they were soon to be targeted by what Liz Scarlett called TikTok's “cancel culture-hungry” communities as users investigated the band's past and highlighted several problematic incidents.[67] One highly visible user, Serena Trueblood, produced a video alleging several racist incidents in their

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[65] Jenkins, “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture”, 20.

[66] Gabriela Vatu, “Spotify Tells You Which Song Would Save You From Vecna in Stranger Things”, *MUO*, 1 July 2022, at https://www.makeuseof.com/which-spotify-song-save-you-from-stranger-things-vecna/; Tara Bitran, “These Are The Songs That Would Save You from Vecna”, *Netflix Tudum*, 29 June 2022, at https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/stranger-things-vecna-spotify-personalized-playlist; Evelyn Lau, “Upside Down Spotify Playlist: The Songs to Save You from ‘Stranger Things’ Villain Vecna”, *The National*, 1 July 2022, at https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/music/2022/07/01/upside-down-spotify-playlist-the-songs-to-save-you-from-stranger-things-villain-vecna/.

[67] Liz Scarlett, with contributions from Merlin Alderslade Scarlett, “Why Are Some Stranger Things Fans Now Trying to ‘cancel’ Metallica?”, *Metal Hammer*, 9 August 2022, at https://www.loudersound.com/news/why-are-some-stranger-things-fans-now-trying-to-cancel-metallic.

past and kickstarted a negative response to their representation of a heterosexual and white *status quo.* And yet, despite this backlash, the band's social capital, combined with their appearance in a highly popular TV series, allowed them to weather the storm in ways unusual today.

Later in this book, several of our authors dig into the online afterlife of artists and songs to explore how fandom can rejuvenate, but also reimagine creative work and artistic personae by confounding the boundaries between PGC and UGC. In her pioneering work on YouTube, Jean Burgess explains that "any particular video produces cultural value to the extent that it acts as a hub for further creative activity by a wide range of participants in this social network—that is, the extent to which it contributes to what Jonathan Zittrain might call YouTube's 'generative qualities'".[68] In her chapter, Lisa Perrott, as a self-confessed "aca fan", shares her research into YouTube's generative content dedicated to the life and work of David Bowie.[69] Her analysis of the "deep-fan" work of YouTube user Nacho reveals how the fan labour of recovering, restoring and editing lost footage of Bowie since his 2016 death negotiates a complicated and collaborative interaction between nostalgia and reality, and immediacy and hypermediacy that makes use of YouTube's potential for "'hackability' and 'remixability'".

In his chapter on para-adaptation, Henrik Smith Sivertsen takes a different approach to the musical afterlife of songs. While Perrott focuses on the creation of new work from pre-existent footage, Smith Sivertsen employs internet archiving techniques to investigate how "musical versioning practices" can generate virality. His research traces one particular song—Lukas Graham's "7 Years" (2019)—through its YouTube reiterations as fan footage, rewrite covers, cover versions, lyric videos, translations and parodies. His work shows how the platform has become a significant portal for both the creative remediation and archiving of all kinds of contemporary musiking. This double existence calls for a rethink of the concept of the reference original—a cover version that becomes the launchpad for subsequent versions, as we saw happening to the song "Call Your Girlfriend" above. And yet, the "generative qualities" of YouTube also create archiving issues for contemporary sonic remediation.

[68] Jonathan Zittrain, *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
[69] Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*.

YouTube's multifaceted remediation of sonic nostalgia can also be seen in its reaction videos, which, whether produced by major magazines, music labels or enthusiastic fans, return millions of search results and generate their own subcommunities based on their style or genre. The "kids react" category, for instance, exposes children to iconic musicians who were active decades before their birth, such as Nirvana or Queen and offer a unique take on how YouTube can recycle PGC. In terms of *reviralisation*, reaction videos work in one of two ways: the reaction to a popular video causes the music used to go viral causing a renewed surge of interest in a song, band or musician; or a specific reaction to a song can itself become viral, becoming the reference original for memes and other audiovisual content. Here, Michael Goddard examines reaction channels managed by African-American creators that include rock genres previously coded as white by both musicians and audiences. In his chapter, Goddard shows how the digital remediation of music where audiences can interact and re-live previous experiences with familiar musical material reveals the affective labour of the YouTubers in renegotiating and translating music across cultural contexts. The reaction videos he analyses are examples of the boundary destabilization between YouTube's "user-*generated* and user-*copied* content" (Dijck) discussed by Holly above.

YouTube, then, is more than an audiovisual repository: it is a (musical) social network that can help to destabilise cultural barriers. Community creation takes place through shared *affective* experiences of interacting with and listening to musical content. While writing this Introduction, we received an email from YouTube stating that soon all of us would be able to choose our own nickname or handle. This new form of identification, it promised, will allow users to find and interact with channels in a more social way: "For many creators, YouTube isn't just a place to upload and comment on videos, it's a community and home base. That's why today we're introducing handles, a new way for people to easily find and engage with creators and each other on YouTube. Every channel will have a unique handle, making it easier for fans to discover content and interact with creators they love."[70] These elements of interactivity – similar to those found on other social media platforms such as Instagram or Twitter – are designed to strengthen the community *feel* of YouTube and encourage users to converge on specific videos, shorts or channels.

[70] YouTube, "Introducing: YouTube Handles", Email sent to the authors, 20 October 2022.

And yet, as Emily Thomas points out in her chapter in our companion book, YouTube does not operate in isolation but is part of the interconnected universe of social media, something demonstrated in the multiplatform world of MONTERO, in which Lil Nas X tapped into the spreadibility of meme culture by using YouTube to remediate and parody his own official work, while simultaneously engaging with the specificities of TikTok, Instagram and Twitter as the iterative material moved across platforms.[71] Here, Edward Spencer focuses on similar forms of sonic virality, contagion and replication in his chapter on the social potential of YouTube's sonic remediations, using bass drop memes like the Harlem Shake and trolling repertoires to show how the movement of small musical fragments across the internet can "imitate and reconfigure" the social and cultural aesthetics of certain communities.

(Re)Mediating, (Re)Valuating, (Re)Appropriating, (Re)Musicking

> "[…] new digital media oscillate between immediacy and hypermediacy, between transparency and opacity. This oscillation is the key to understanding how a medium fashions its predecessors and other contemporary media. Although each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. Thus, immediacy leads to hypermediacy. The process of remediation makes us aware that all media are at one level a 'play of signs,' […] this process insists on the real, effective presence of media in our culture. Media have the same claim to reality as more tangible cultural artifacts; photographs, films, and computer applications are as real as airplanes and buildings."[72]

Today, the internet is not only as "real" as the airplanes that Bolter and Grusin refer to in their 1999 quote above, but is, for many of us, an omnipresent and indispensable part of our daily life and culture. YouTube, as a "tangible cultural artifact[]" that fosters a sense of community, is an integral part of the (hyper)real and (hyper)immediate fabric of online and offline culture. And yet, while the platform is marketed as a universal resource, to navigate through its search engines, playlists and billions of hours of content requires a degree of media literacy, a reliable internet connection, access to technology, an able body and a location that doesn't perform censorship. In our last book, we noted the global structural and economic inequalities that the internet poses, and how the "participation gap" observed by Jenkins challenges YouTube's claims that it affords a democratized creative space.[73]

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[71] Thomas, "Quare(-in) the Mainstream".
[72] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 17.
[73] Jenkins, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture"; Rogers, "'Welcome to your world'".

In her work on the signed-song videos of Beyoncé's music, Áine Mangaoang draws attention to the "participation gap" experienced by global deaf hearing loss communities. Noting the "importance of embodied expression", she calls for a more inclusive, democratic and egalitarian networked space.[74] Later in this book, Joana Freitas' work on the spaces of YouTube's echo chambers, exposes a different reading of online community building. Her chapter shows how YouTube communities form around the idea of a musical genre—in this case the 'epic' genre—and how this reflects the convergent culture associated with today's audiovisual content. In certain cases, user-generated epic music videos can reflect outdated views on gender in a way that ultimately reinforces the mechanisms of power and patriarchal domination related to musical discourse.

While engaging with the darker side of YouTube's affordances, it is nevertheless possible to find rich possibilities for creativity across the platform. Here, Christine Boone and Brian Drawert discuss how new technologies like artificial intelligence have enabled refreshed forms of audiovisual mashup that, while not directly tackling issues of inequality and in-accessibility, nonetheless offer users the tools to remediate and recombine sonic content in creative, and sometimes political, ways: "the role of YouTube in this is the same as that of the mashup artist: user-created content, and a platform that is accessible to almost everyone, democratizes the role of the artist and gives everyone the potential to create – with or without AI." While Boone and Drawert focus on the positives of new media and its ability to include voices from different contexts and backgrounds in the current flow of creative production, the multi-national research team Olu Jenzen, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Derya Güçdemir, Umut Korkut and Aidan McGarry investigate the role of YouTube in drawing together protest-oriented communities that use music as a political tool. In their chapter on the Gezi Park protests that took place in Turkey in 2013, the authors analyse how YouTube was used "as a platform for protest communication" in the form of online music videos that became sites of digital activism.

[74] The almost-complete oral presentation by Mangaoang can be accessed here: CysMus - CESEM, 'Day 1 • Part 1 (Morning)', *YouTube video*, 01:44:21, 01 October 2020, https://youtu.be/nd75h4c2Twc.

Investigating YouTube's place within social media platforms, Holly Rogers approaches these potentialities from a more DIY perspective in her chapter on networked soundscape composition. With a focus on compositional practice that lies beyond the realms of traditional music education, she traces chains of sonic manipulation to show how creativity often moves between platforms while incorporating the specificities of each:

> The platform now sits within a tightly connected nexus of post-media potentialities, its content spreading across social media sites and out into everyday life [...] it continues to provide ample raw material for composers to play with; and with well-established algorithms, search engines and communities, material can easily be passed between users. When uploaded, tags and comments provide a useful way to link between remixed works. Yet significantly, YouTube also acts as a vital conduit between various existing and bespoke online platforms.

Like the transmedial spread of Lil Nas X's MONTERO, the collaborative chains of interpretation embedded in online soundscape practices discussed by Rogers remediate both the real world and subsequent creative interpretations of it. This consistent repetition, recycling and circulation of content, points out Jonas Wolf in his chapter on ironic distance and networked composition, "(...) constituents of the productive conditions of possibility regarding discursive formations of musical vernaculars, which serve to integrate socio-aesthetics and ethe into subcultural everyday communication and creativity." From mainstream styles to the niche genres that Wolf delves into – including SoundCloud rap, vaporwave and mumble rap – YouTube and its reach towards other media platforms also promotes a creative interchangeability between different aural aesthetics, cultural influences and dialogues, and juxtaposes mixed, mashed up, original and remixed content. These processes of social media remediation alter definitions of originality, with the spectrum ranging from 'new' or 'created from scratch' to 'yet another copied copy', which in turn raises issues of authorship and copyright. What material can be remixed or collaged on YouTube and how? Who retains authorship in mashups and fanvids and how does the diversification of voice trouble clear processes of monetisation and control?

Digital technology has always posed a significant threat to the record industry, as Jim Rogers explains: "The unauthorized use of copyrighted material is undermining the record industry's ability to make money and has produced a 'crisis'

for a sector that had grown exponentially on the back of the CD-boom".[75] As a result, strict permission laws developed around the sharing, dissemination and reuse of music. In his work on remix culture, Lawrence Lessig shows how textual quotation and adaptation are permitted, within certain parameters of fair use and citation, in academic work and literature, and yet the sampling of music, without authorisation, violates strict copyright laws.[76] With the emergence of MP3 files and tools to replicate CDs at home, the fight against copying and piracy has become a major concern for musicians and labels. The easy circulation of music online has amplified the music industry's "crisis" of regulation, as Siva Vaidhyanathan explains: within the legal field of intellectual property, copyright law "encourages the dissemination of creative and informative work" while aiming to protect its creators and authors; ultimately copyright laws become a "(…) common and unavoidable practice that affect daily life and commerce around the world".[77]

In the audiovisual arena of YouTube, with its constant and viral sonic remediations, the rules of music and moving image permissions can be difficult to navigate. Juan Bermudez tackles these issues in his ethnographic research into cross-platform musiking. With a focus on flashmob dances that move across YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, his chapter reveals how the nexus of interconnected practices shared by platforms, artists and labels complicates the virality and spreadibility of sonic imitation. When social media users use viral song fragments as a backdrop for their videos, they rarely credit the original source and this can throw up legal issues. In 2009, the murky terrain of music copyright was thrown into relief when Calvin Harris's new music video, "Ready for the Weekend", which he had uploaded to his YouTube channel, was removed after a copyright claim was launched against it. "IT'S MY F**KING SONG YOU ABSOLUTE BASTARDS. This is enough to tip me over the edge, i'm not joking. There are videos up there that other people have uploaded of the same song, and they haven't been removed!? But mine does!", he raged on his Twitter account.[78] While this error shows how confusing YouTube's copyright laws can be for whole songs, the

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[75] Jim Rogers, *The Death & Life of the Music Industry in the Digital Age* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 4.
[76] Lawrence Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).
[77] Siva Vaidhyanathan, *Intellectual Property: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11-12.
[78] Calvin Harris, Twitter Post, 23 July 2009.

remediation of fragments can also incur copyright, even if the material undergoes significant transformation. What material can be remixed or collaged on YouTube and how? Who retains authorship in mashups and fanvids and how does the diversification of voice trouble clear processes of monetisation and control?

After it was bought by Google in 2006, YouTube introduced strict regulation and control mechanisms. Video ID was brought in, enabling rights holders – mainly companies and media agents – to either block, promote or, through a partnership, monetize particular content. In 2010, the technological developments that allowed more refined identification and filtering led to the current iteration of Content ID, which includes both audio and video and maintains the same options for the 'original' rights holders. Given that one of the dominant categories of YouTube is music, and that its main activity revolves around music videos, the company has taken responsibility for implementing copyright mechanisms in order, above all else, to protect major music companies and record labels. Before YouTube was purchased by Google, the free use of copyrighted songs on the platform wasn't an issue for companies; however, as Jin Kim explains, by 2011, five years after Google bought YouTube, "72 out of the top 100 all-time popular YouTube clips are music videos, which are mostly copyrighted and provided by major music labels".[79] Within YouTube's mediascape of user-generated content, these companies also want to claim the copyright "even for amateur users' singing of their songs or the use of portions of their songs in home videos".[80] We experienced the regulation process ourselves when editing footage of a conference attended by many of our contributors.[81] Most participants used YouTube clips during their presentations and, when we tried to upload the talks to YouTube, almost every segment was flagged as copyright infringement. After being given the option to replace the sound with a free-to-use track from YouTube's own library or to simply remove the sound, we had to heavily re-edit the videos to get through the platform's stringent filters.

But there are ways around this. In her chapter, Júlia Durand draws our attention to royalty-free music, or library music, which she calls the "soundtrack of YouTube." Vast databases of ready-to-use music is available in commercial

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[79] Jin Kim, "The Institutionalization of YouTube: From User-Generated Content to Professionally Generated Content," *Media, Culture & Society* 34, no. 1 (1 January 2012): 55.
[80] Ibid.
[81] International conference *Like, Share and Subscribe: YouTube, Music and Cyberculture Before and After the New Decade*, Lisbon, 1-3 October 2022.

catalogues, which are either accessible through affordable licenses or for free under Creative Commons licenses. Durand's analysis of the ways in which composers and videographers use these catalogues reveals how well-established musical stereotypes can be reused or reappropriated to gather specific vocabularies for YouTubers.

When one of the Sidemen YouTubers cried out, "I feel like I've heard it before", then, he captured one of the fundamental aesthetics of YouTube. The platform's emphasis on "'remixability'" and its blurring of "user-*generated* and user-*copied* content" has opened up new possibilities for the remediation of sound that sends sonic echoes and fragments ricocheting through its many long tails. The following chapters in this book develop the research presented in our companion text to explore what it means to have heard something before. Our authors consider the spreadibility and remediation of sound through a variety of YouTube's most popular forms, including memes, fanvids, cover songs, protest videos, mashups, reaction videos and flashmobs. YouTube's extraordinary range of users, tools and (co)creative possibilities not only provides an incessant flow of resources but also reinforces the idea that cybercommunities perform vital and energising interventions into the ways in which music and sound are created, disseminated and engaged with in the twenty-first century.