This is a repository copy of *Listener discretion advised: the power and politics of intercultural encounters on music radio*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/204609/

Version: Published Version

Article:

Draisey-Collishaw, R. orcid.org/0000-0002-3187-7564 (2021) Listener discretion advised: the power and politics of intercultural encounters on music radio. Music and Politics, 15 (1). ISSN 1938-7687

https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0015.102

Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND) licence. This licence only allows you to download this work and share it with others as long as you credit the authors, but you can't change the article in any way or use it commercially. More information and the full terms of the licence here: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

Listener Discretion Advised: The Power and Politics of Intercultural Encounters on Music Radio

REBECCA DRAISEY-COLLISHAW

Abstract

On April 14, 2007, rapper Cadence Weapon and indie pop musician Final Fantasy featured on *Fuse*, a weekly radio program produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) about serendipitous encounters between musicians from diverse scenes, styles, places, and cultures. By bringing together disparate strangers—or, at least, unlikely pairings—producers sought to stage unique performances that demonstrated the capacity for collaborations to spark creativity and enable communication across sometimes vast musical and cultural differences. This article addresses the deployment of power in situations of intercultural collaboration, exploring first how the form of the episode communicates ideological assumptions about the nature of multiculturalism and then focusing on two collaborative performances from the episode to demonstrate how the music may add to a more complicated discourse about social norms. In addition to pointing to the gulf that exists between intention and realization as a means of positively engaging the operationalization of principles of multiculturalism, my approach provides a potential model of analysis suitable for situations of intercultural performance that involve disparately present audiences and levels of mediation.

> I've been told to warn you that the upcoming episode of *Fuse* has coarse language and listener discretion is advised. Can you have listener discretion? Anyway, get ready to fuse now with Cadence Weapon and Final Fantasy.[1]

These words, spoken over a fleeting moment of radio silence, prefaced the April 14, 2007, episode of *Fuse*, a weekly concert program produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) between 2005 and 2008. As the CBC's primary platform for recording "non-classical" live music, *Fuse* was an answer to representational imbalances during an era of rapid technological, social, economic, and political transition.[2] Canada's public broadcaster actively reimagined its services—and audience(s)—by rebranding its networks, exploring new technologies and production platforms, and dramatically re-facing programming with

[1] Alan Neal, *Fuse*, April 14, 2007.

[2] When *Fuse* was cancelled in 2008, the CBC management circulated an email to staff that stated: "Radio One priorities regarding live music have changed and that while *Fuse* was once the only show on either network recording non-classical music, Radio 2's *Canada Live* has now become the prime venue for this" (internal email, July 31, 2008). Radio One and Radio 2 are the primary English-language networks operated by the CBC; *Canada Live* is a concert program. For more information on the CBC and its music programming, see Rebecca Draisey-Collishaw, "Curating Canadianness: Radio, fusion programming, and hierarchies of difference" (PhD diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2017).

Music & Politics 15, Number 1 (Winter 2021), ISSN 1938-7687.
Article DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0015.102

younger, more diverse listeners in mind.[3] Like other examples of "fusion programming"—programming premised on intercultural encounters between musicians from a variety of genres, styles, and ethnocultural traditions—*Fuse* gave voice to Canadians who could not hear themselves in an otherwise western art-music-heavy rotation that targeted the CBC's rapidly aging, White, upper-middle-class, and well-educated audience(s).[4]

But what does it mean when programming that offers a broader range of representation begins with a discretionary warning? The warning that prefaced the April 14, 2007, broadcast of *Fuse* was a matter of broadcaster responsibility to its audience(s): a simple application of well-established policy of censoring profanity from shows aired during a mid-afternoon time slot. While the addition of a warning was not intended to set the episode apart from the regular flow of programming, starting with a cautionary statement set the tone for the coming encounter. Before the performers were even introduced, audiences received a preemptive apology branding the musicians as somehow challenging or adverse to the sensibilities of the imagined audience. Just as important, such policies (and the statements they generate) communicate deeply entrenched mores that risk being dismissed as "just the way things are" and ultimately impede meaningful renegotiations of existing hegemonies.

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall suggests that the purpose of public service broadcasting in the twenty-first century is to help "re-imagine the nation" by "becoming the 'theatre' in which cultural diversity is produced, displayed and represented."[5] This assertion relies on the notion that social realities are discursively constructed: that ways of arranging words, voices, and gestures structure our experience of social relationships through cumulative iteration. Broadcasts of intercultural collaborations, accordingly, are public performances with the potential to confirm or disrupt established discourses.[6] In the case of fusion programming, bringing together disparate strangers—or, at least, unlikely pairings—enabled producers to craft unique performances that demonstrated the capacity for collaborations to spark creativity across sometimes vast musical and cultural differences. Such pairings also provided opportunities for "up-and-comers" working in a variety of genres, styles, and scenes to access national-scale audiences, often with an assist from a well-established Canadian performer who already was in "heavy rotation on the CBC."[7] Notably, the producer of *Fuse* did not envision creating "multicultural programming." At least initially, the

---

[3] In May 2004, President of CBC Television Harold Redekopp stated: "Audiences are getting older and it's not that they are not valued, but what are we doing about the next generation of listener's [sic] coming up" (quoted in Anu Sahota, "CBC Radio 3: A Disquieting Radio Revolution," MA Extended essays, Simon Fraser University, 2006, 64). The introduction of CBC Radio 3 targeted youth listenership and partially answered how to ensure the relevance of the CBC in the face of an aging population, but more widespread changes were also adopted. The Canadian Broadcasting Company/Radio-Canada's *Strengthening and Renewing the CBC: Our Strategy at Work, CBC Corporate Plan Summary 2002–2003 to 2006–2007* (June 2002), https://site-cbc.radio-canada.ca/documents/vision/strategy/corporate-plan/complete-plan-2002-e.pdf, outlines the broadcaster's Strategic Plan for 2002–2007 and attempts to account for changing conditions of the period. Pierre C. Belanger with Philippe Andrecheck, "CBC's Electronic Radio 3," *Journal of Radio Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005): 120–135, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506843jrs1201_10, provide a relevant review of this strategic vision and discuss implications for the development of CBC's youth audience in relation to Radio 3 and internet broadcasting. For commentary that specifically deals with *Fuse* in the wider context of this transition, see Draisey-Collishaw, "Curating Canadianness."

[4] See Draisey-Collishaw, "Re-imagining the Nation," in *Contemporary Musical Expressions and Cultural Resonances in Canada*, ed. Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen, and Sherry Johnson (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvt6rn0d.22, for a case study of CBC Newfoundland's "Come By Concerts," another example of fusion programming produced during this period.

[5] Stuart Hall, "Which Public, Whose Service?," in *All Our Futures: The Changing Role and Purpose of the BBC*, ed. Wilf Stevenson (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 36.

[6] Cf. Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49–90, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-49.

[7] In "I Make the Dough, You Get the Glory" (2008), Canadian singer-songwriter Kathleen Edwards asks how "Heavy rotation on the CBC" inflects perceptions of legitimacy.

production team focused on bringing together musicians who happened to be in the same place at the same time; "diversity" was a simple matter mixing musical styles and, in most cases, did not explicitly account for ethnocultural traditions or racialized identities.[8] While the performances on *Fuse* may have been "marriages of convenience," the broader production context makes it difficult to divorce the music aired on *Fuse* from a large-scale attempt to represent and recruit a diverse cross-section of the population.

This article focuses on a single staging of intercultural collaboration on *Fuse*—the April 14, 2007, broadcast that featured Edmonton-based rapper Roland "Rollie" Pemberton (a.k.a. Cadence Weapon) and Toronto-/Montreal-based indie violinist/singer/composer Owen Pallett (then known as Final Fantasy)—in order to explore the gulf that exists between intention and realization. Specifically, I am interested in uncovering the mechanisms of systemic racism and bias that exist in absences, tensions, and misalignments between content (i.e., the music, storytelling, and warnings) and structure (such as narrative conventions, un/shared musical metalanguage, and broadcasting technologies) in an episode of *Fuse*. In previous studies of fusion programming, I addressed the representational challenges of staging intercultural collaborations by comparing the stated objectives of production teams, demographic patterns, and narrative tropes.[9] Though my research is informed by interviews with CBC insiders (e.g., hosts, producers, management), dialogues with musicians, and internal production documents obtained through an Access to Information (ATI) Request,[10] my focus shifts away from the stated intentions of contributors; instead, I read the performances staged in this episode of *Fuse* as texts.[11] Systemic racism, by definition, operates outside conscious awareness, often counter to the cited goals of the individuals entangled in its structures. As a discursive system, systemic racism maintains inequalities because it remains invisible to its beneficiaries.[12] Focusing narrowly on the structure of the broadcast, musical gestures and meanings, and the technical mediation of communication between musicians, broadcasters, and audiences enables consideration of the cultural work of the broadcast separate from the unequal capacities of all contributors to voice their intentions—or, more to the point, to have their intentions heard.

To this end, my discussion begins with a plea for formalism, albeit a formalism grounded in storytelling, conversation, and the lived experiences of the people implicated in intercultural encounters. I draw primarily on the work of media critic and philosopher Slavoj Žižek[13]—and interpretations by Paul Taylor[14]—to make the case that seemingly non-ideological objects are culturally embedded texts with the potential to reveal, replicate, and/or challenge systemic inequalities. I ask what it means that some words and voices are discretely censored. I explore how performances of Rollie Pemberton's "Grim Fandango" and

---

[8] Caitlin Crockard, interview, September 2, 2015.

[9] See Draisey-Collishaw, "Curating Canadianness"; "'Traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling': Producing multicultural Canada through narrations of mobility on CBC Radio's *Fuse*," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 27, no. 3 (2018): 323–43, https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2018.1532305; and "Re-imagining the Nation."

[10] The Access to Information Act (1985) governs access to public documents and information in Canada. As a Crown corporation, the CBC is subject to the requirements of this legislation, excepting exclusions relating to creativity and competition (exemption 68.1) and privacy laws.

[11] Many thanks to the many producers, hosts, and archivists at CBC who supported my research by sharing resources and information about their work, especially *Fuse* producer Caitlin Crockard and hosts Alan Neal and Amanda Putz. I am also appreciative of commentary provided by musicians about their experiences on *Fuse* and for feedback from Rollie Pemberton about the analysis presented in this article. For a fuller treatment of *Fuse* and other examples of fusion programming produced during a similar period, see Draisey-Collishaw, "Curating Canadianness"; "'Traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling'"; and "Re-imagining the Nation."

[12] Cf. Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 5–27; "Which Public, Whose Service?," https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202.

[13] Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End of Times* (New York: Verso, 2010).

[14] Paul A. Taylor, *Žižek and the Media* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010).

Owen Pallett's "This Is the Dream of Win and Regine" (abbreviated as "Win and Regine") that bookend the April 14, 2007, broadcast reinforce or undermine the narrative expectations built into the structure of *Fuse* episodes. However, my engagement with these performances goes beyond broadcast content to account for musician histories and musical priorities, as well as the relationships between musicians, broadcasters, and audiences. Figure 1 provides a graphic depiction of the relationship between texts (individual songs/tracks), intercultural collaborations (the interactions, negotiations, and conversations that happen between musicians), mediated performances (the broadcasts), production (contextual considerations and the "invisible" team who curate performances), and circulation (technologies, audiences, and interpretive contexts). The contexts and influences described in this analytical model should not be considered in finite terms: they simply summarize the elements most important to the analysis featured in this article. More important is the approach of considering the role, responsibilities, and influences of each contributor, as well as the contextual elements involved in the production and circulation of intercultural performances. While the music (i.e., text) is the focal point of this depiction, I suggest that a performance can only be assessed by peeling back the layers of interpretation in which it is couched and exploring the dialectic interactions between contributors, audiences, and contextual influences. In Žižekian terms, this type of granular assessment of the interactions between content, form, and contributors suggests how principles of policy, assumptions about audiences and playback, and cultural (mis)translations fail to "re-imagine the nation" in more equitable terms.[15]

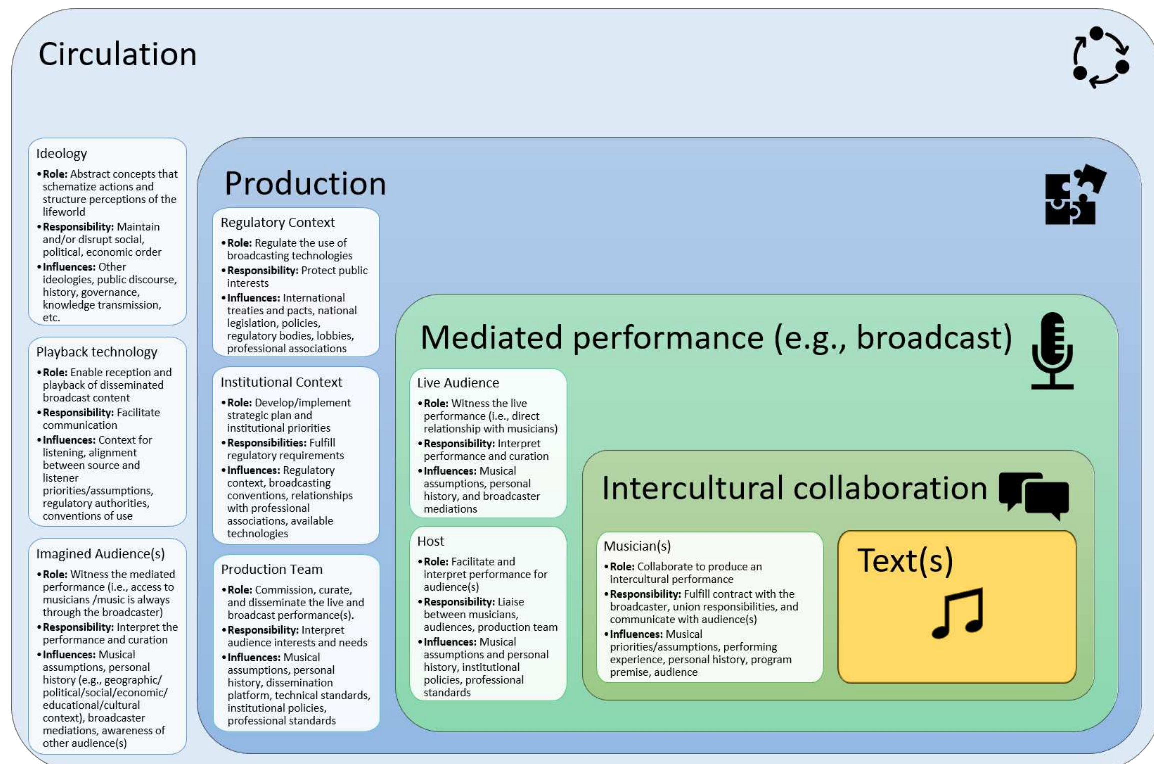

Figure 1: This nested diagram depicts the relationship between texts (e.g., songs/tracks), intercultural collaborations (e.g., musical performances involving two or more musicians), mediated performances (e.g., broadcasts/programs), production contexts, and circulation. It summarizes the analytical approach that is the basis of this article and suggests the entwined relationship between content, structure, and contributors.

[15] Cf. Hall, "Which Public, Whose Service?"

My framing of the performances on *Fuse* as "intercultural collaborations" is deliberate. Musicologist Jason Stanyek explains that intercultural performances involve the intersection of musicians who normally occupy discrete performative spaces; their convergence in time and space holds potential for the "breaking apart of alterity through a kind of rapturous communion."[16] Stanyek's theorization of interculturalism not only models an analytic process that traces the histories of musics and musicians in contact and pays attention to the dynamics of power that shape the conditions of encounter but points to the formal characteristics of intercultural collaborations. Stanyek's approach insists on corporeal copresence as a condition of intercultural encounter: real bodies, after all, communicate differently than those mediated through time, space, and technology.[17] Because they are exceptional, intercultural performances hold the potential to "reinforce differences and rupture continuities."[18] Unlike Stanyek's corporally and temporally copresent musicians and audiences, *Fuse* broadcasts involved musicians performing for both live and imagined audiences. Despite this important distinction, following Stanyek's definition of interculturalism encourages attention to how power is exerted—and narrated—differently for those who are in the room versus those who receive the broadcast from varying degrees of temporal, geographic, and cultural distance.[19] Focusing on the interactions of participants—including musicians, mediators, audiences, and even the analyst—reveals the structures, roles, and responsibilities that shape production and reception of the performance and broadcast. In terms of methodology, understanding the performances as intercultural means considering histories, demographics, and assumptions that musicians, mediators, and audiences make about each other, as well as the nature of performance and reception spaces.

My analysis of how these factors come together in the music performed on *Fuse* hinges on a series of transcriptions. These transcriptions should be imagined as occupying the center yellow block of figure 1: they are the texts through which I read the interactions, assumptions, and contexts that structure the performance. While translating the music in this way is an admittedly artificial method for listening back on broadcasts and, at worst, risks criticism as "an inward-oriented exercise of covert power and ideology,"[20] I suggest that these transcriptions are more than reductive visualizations: they represent a process of reflection about how I have come to understand the music, people, and systems entangled in *Fuse*'s intercultural encounters. They are also tools for identifying absences in the music, sites for problematizing interpretive assumptions and biases, and a means for assessing how ideology is embedded in the form of the intercultural collaborations modeled on *Fuse*.[21] My approach derives from music theorist Mark Butler's ethnographically grounded system of depicting electronic dance music (EDM). Contextualized by participant-observation in the local EDM scene and interviews with producers and DJs, Butler combines graphic and prose descriptions of tracks with elements of western notation in the interest of gaining theoretical insight about creative processes, aesthetic priorities, and consumption practices. He acknowledges that western notation is limited in its capacity to represent elements like rhythm, meter, and texture—musical qualities that are

---

[16] Jason Stanyek, "Diasporic Improvisation and the Articulation of Intercultural Music" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2004), 11.
[17] Ibid., 10–11.
[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] See figure 1 for a graphic depiction of how proximity is more than spatial: while musicians and live audiences are only separated by a stage, imagined audiences can only access the intercultural collaboration through layers of production and mediation.
[20] Marin Marian-Bălaşa, "Who Actually Needs Transcription? Notes on the Modern Rise of a Method and the Postmodern Fall of an Ideology," *The World of Music* 47, no. 2 (2005): 23.
[21] Cf. Regine Allgayer-Kaufmann, "From the Innocent to the Exploring Eye: Transcription on the Defensive," *The World of Music* 47, no. 2 (2005): 71–86; Marian-Bălaşa, "Who Actually Needs Transcription?"

interactive and occupy the sonic foreground of EDM. Western notation also masks the foundational nature of these elements by privileging principles of melody, harmony, and form. And yet incorporating elements of western notation proves a useful shorthand—particularly when, as with this article, the readership is that of a specialist music journal published in North America.

My focus on analyzing intercultural collaboration poses distinct challenges to those faced by Butler,[22] with the result that I have leveraged concepts and representational strategies pioneered by Butler to different ends. While Butler sought to decenter the dominance of melody and harmony in favor of rhythm and timbre, I required an approach that was also flexible enough to enable comparison between music systems that had sometimes overlapping and sometimes disparate priorities. Notably, the analysis presented in this article focuses on performances that feature just two musicians. In theory, this should support a tailored approach to representation and analysis—like that advanced by Butler in relation to EDM. However, Pemberton and Pallett's performances together are singular examples of a much more diverse field. *Fuse* featured more than seventy concerts and collaborations between 351 individual musicians from different places, scenes, and cultures. And *Fuse* was just one example of programming built around intercultural collaboration during the early 2000s.[23] Following Butler, each transcription comprises a "sound palette" and accompanying graphic representations of source and broadcast texts. The sound palette is like the legend on a map: it labels the parts that comprise a performance, describes function, and provides a visual representation of isolated lines/parts. While Butler's version of the sound palette focuses on single tracks, my approach is comparative: I include details about source recordings alongside the elements that constitute the performance on *Fuse* as a way of assessing how musics change through the collaborative process (figures 3 and 6). Graphs representing formal structure, performance timeline, and the voices described in the sound palette have a summary function, enabling comparison between versions of the song (e.g., see figures 4 and 5). In other words, I combine elements of western notation with graphs and prose descriptions in an approach that is customized to the needs of the project, not the qualities of the music: this approach is comparative, focused on musical function, and seeks to understand how a song or track changes in the context of an intercultural encounter (e.g., see figures 3–5 for a representation of "Grim Fandango" and figures 6–8 for a representation of "Win and Regine"). In this sense, the transcriptions are tools for analyzing the relationship between content, forms, and contributors (see figure 1), rather than ends in themselves.

Before turning to my discussion of *Fuse*, a final note is needed about the people and music who feature in this article. As with my previous work on this topic, my intention is to point to the gulf that exists between intention and realization as a means of positively engaging the operationalization of multiculturalism, as outlined in Canada's Broadcasting Act (1991) and Multiculturalism Act (1988). "Multiculturalism," in this sense, is an official approach to depoliticizing difference for the purpose of achieving social harmony in the context of cultural plurality.[24] As suggested by a variety of legislative moves dating from the 1990s, creating the conditions in which difference can be depoliticized means countering overt expressions of racism and inequality, as well as recognizing and dismantling structures of systemic racism and bias. The analysis presented in this article should not be read as a targeted critique of the production team or musicians, but as an engagement with a larger discursive field. It is an attempt to better understand how we might

---

[22] Mark Butler, "Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2003); Butler, *Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[23] See Draisey-Collishaw, "Curating Canadianness" and "Re-imagining the Nation."

[24] Cf. Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz, *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Educational, 2001).

meaningfully engage the diversity of performers and audiences, create equitable conditions that will allow for the depoliticization of difference, and avoid "reimpos[ing] a unity and homogeneity which has long since departed."[25]

The Ideology of Forms

Communications scholar Paul Taylor points out that "despite our familiarity with Marshall McLuhan's adage 'the medium is the message,' in practice we tend to consume media content with the presumption that it represents relatively objective, neutral news reporting, or overtly fictional, ideology-free formats which can be enjoyed harmlessly."[26] And yet ideology—defined by Žižek as "the very texture of the lifeworld which 'schematizes' the propositions [of abstract ideology], rendering them livable"[27]—is embodied in mediated forms, naturalizing their propositions as the way things are. Žižek's analysis of the media frequently focuses on apparently "non-ideological" objects—films, human interest stories, and reports of philanthropic activities—addressing formal characteristics to demonstrate how "feel-good" elements or calls to action foregrounded in content mask and sustain the root causes of social, political, and economic inequalities. Žižek consistently demonstrates that it is not enough to analyze the content that occupies the foreground (e.g., texts, intercultural collaboration); instead, attention must be paid to the formal characteristics of that content. Form organizes the discursive field, providing a constant, familiar, and invisible backdrop that discourages attention to the ideas, people, and situations that challenge the status quo. In the case of *Fuse*, the form of the episode (i.e., mediated performance) celebrates the diversity of the performers and their musics, while simultaneously distracting from the complex power dynamics that emerge in the staged musical encounter.

My discussion in this section focuses on the narrative structure of the mediated performance and the role of production decisions in privileging particular tellings of the intercultural collaboration. I then step back from the episode to consider who the musicians are, their musical priorities, and the trajectories that led them into the *Fuse* space. Finally, I return to the April 14, 2007, broadcast, this time focusing on the texts that begin and end the episode. Concentrating on these songs enables attention to the complex power dynamics that are realized through intercultural musicking and masked in slippages between form and content of the mediated performance. Paying attention to these points of tension, I suggest, reveal the systemic biases that ultimately impede both equitable representation and a true reimagination of social hierarchies.

Only two of the seventy-six episodes of *Fuse* begin with a discretionary warning. In most other respects, the April 14, 2007, broadcast follows the conventions of the series. The introduction begins with commercially recorded samples of each musician's music and voiced-over reflections about the nature of

---

[25] Hall, "Which Public, Whose Service?," 36. Only a few years after *Fuse* was cancelled, another CBC-produced concert program hit the air waves and the internet. Broadcast during short runs in 2011 and 2012, *Rendez-Vous* brought a disparate range of performers together for the explicit purpose of intercultural collaboration. While there were striking similarities to *Fuse*, changes in technology had implications for form, content, and imagined audience. French and English versions based on the same content broadcast on the radio, but the stories that producers and musicians told did not have to fit into a finite time slot as there was an accompanying website that included videos from rehearsals and the concert, as well as lengthy interview segments with musicians. While there is neither time nor space to address *Rendez-Vous* with the detail it deserves, what should be noted is that approaches to broadcasting are fluid and that at least some of the form and content issues flagged in this article were addressed in the later production.

[26] Taylor, *Žižek and the Media*, 98.

[27] Žižek, *Living in the End of Times*, 3.

those sounds. The first clip—"This Lamb Sells Condos" by Owen Pallett[28]—features a syncopated bassline played on the piano before the treble line, again on piano, enters. The style is minimalist, with repetitions and elaborations of a basic motif. Over this, Pemberton describes his initial impressions:

> The first time I heard Final Fantasy, I thought, "Why does my roommate always listen to shit like this?" Like, maybe elf rock? I don't know, maybe the male equivalent to Joanna Newsom. It sounds kind of like video game music. You know, for an RPG,[29] and actually totally works that way.[30]

Pallett's song continues for a few seconds, with the vocal line entering just as the sample crossfades into the sound of a drum machine: Pemberton's "Sharks."[31] While the 8-bit-video-game-inspired music continues in the background,[32] Pallett states:

> First time I heard Cadence Weapon, I felt I was listening to hip hop the way it was when I was in high school—or more grade school even. I'm not trying to call him, you know, retrogressive. Maybe I just haven't enjoyed it as much since then! If I had to describe the sound of Cadence Weapon to anybody, I'd probably describe seagulls bursting into flame, crashing into rivers of blood.[33]

Taken together, the voiceovers suggest an adversarial relationship between the musicians—and an opportunity to overcome their differences through proximity and intercultural collaboration.

These brief statements function as a sort of preface: this is content that is clearly pre-recorded and used to frame the "live" concert element of the broadcast. The performance proper follows, beginning with an anonymous female voice welcoming audiences to Studio 40 in the Ottawa Broadcast Centre and introducing the host for the episode, Alan Neal. From this point on, the 54-minute episode is a continuous flow of conversations and performances, seemingly only interrupted by applause from the audience. But this reality is carefully constructed. Though recorded in front of a live audience, the broadcast version of *Fuse* (mediated performance) is an abbreviation of a 2- to 2.5-hour performance at the Ottawa Broadcast Centre (intercultural collaboration). Post-production prioritized the creation of a brief encounter with a comprehensible storyline and entertaining content. Decisions about what to keep and what to cut were shaped by an imperative to make audible the process of collaboration and awareness that audiences might not be familiar with at least one of the featured musicians. If audiences did not know how musicians sounded before they met, how could they assess the process of change instigated through their encounter? In other words, the production team's imagination of their audience, including the technologies through which the broadcast would circulate, dictated the five-part form of a typical *Fuse* episode (see figure 2).

---

[28] https://youtu.be/9ZK8nmwoVVY.
[29] RPG is an acronym for "role-playing game," a game in which players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting. Actions taken by players are shaped according to a system of rules that guide the players as they create/play out the narrative of the game.
[30] *Fuse*, April 14, 2007.
[31] https://youtu.be/7ZH1EawyB3E.
[32] The term "8-bit" refers to the sound processors that were typical of early video game consoles (like the Atari 2600 and Commodore 64). Rather than the sampled instruments and imported loops that later became typical of video game soundtracks, sounds were synthesized by the 8-bit chips themselves. The result was a finite number of sounds, limited numbers of simultaneous sounds, and content that was more frequently composed by game developers than trained musicians (Stephanie Lind, "Sounding Nostalgia in Video Games," Dan School of Drama & Music Colloquium, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, January 10, 2020).
[33] Owen Pallett, *Fuse*, April 14, 2007.

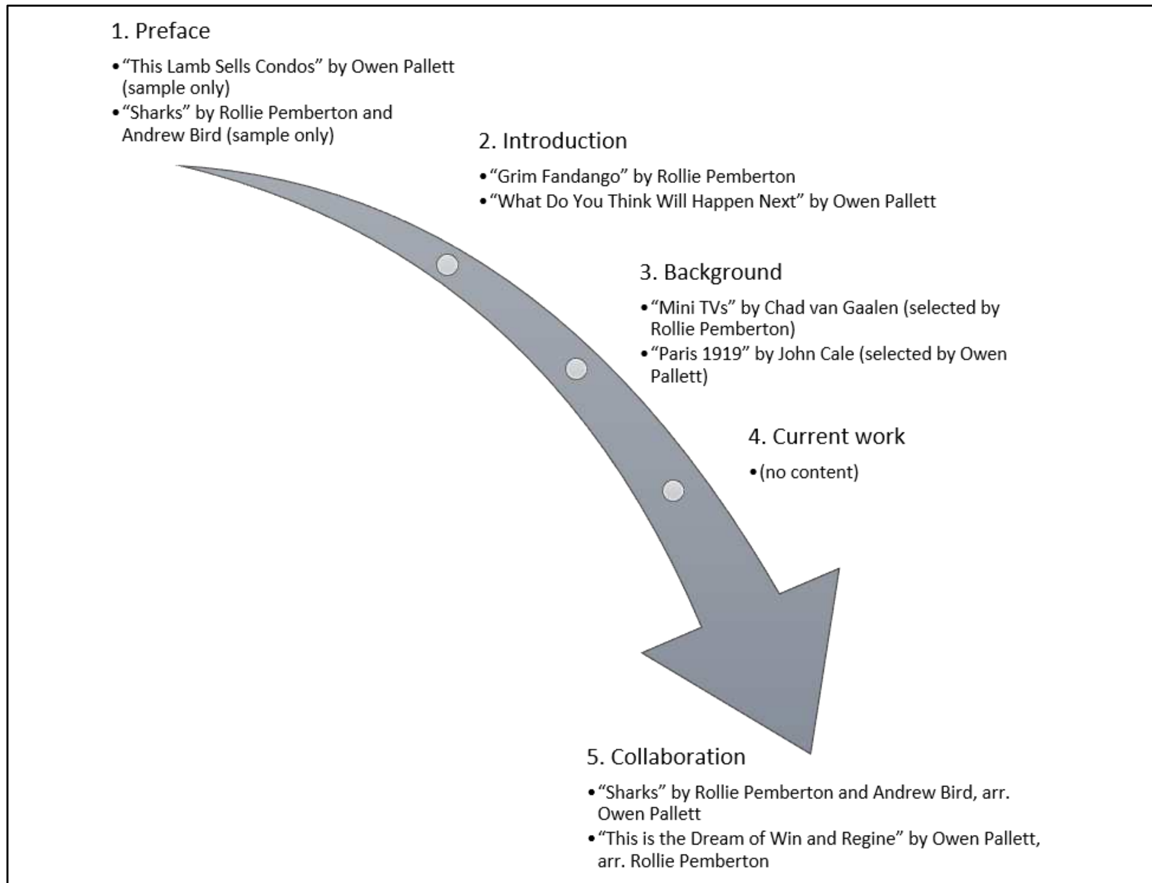

Figure 2: Example of the flow of content in a typical episode of *Fuse* (based on content broadcast April 14, 2007).

Following the voiceover "preface," the host greets audiences and introduces the featured musicians. In addition to basic biographical information, the "introduction" section includes "unfused" performances that exemplify the performing style of each musician for audiences. The next "background" section elaborates biographical details, performance histories, and influences. Accompanying performances often explore these influences, sometimes suggesting points of commonality between the paired musicians through inclusion of cover songs. The penultimate section of the episode, "current work," is the least clearly defined element of the form and may be omitted depending on the length and scope of other sections. The episode culminates in a "collaboration" section: conversations reflect on the experience of learning about a collaborator's musical priorities, finding points of commonality, and the inspirations that result from trying out new ideas. The episode concludes with a performance that is the ostensible culmination of this process.

The April 14, 2007, broadcast departs slightly from this narrative arc by replacing the first "unfused" performance in the lineup with a collaborative iteration of Rollie Pemberton's "Grim Fandango." This initial performance, Owen Pallett specifies, is not about trying something new, but about "playing it safe" and simply replicating the commercial release.[34] This substitution shifts the narrative slightly but still emphasizes a trajectory that involves encounter and familiarization with a new sonic language, culminating in a final collaborative text—in this case, a remix of Pallett's "Win and Regine" (see figure 2). The flow of music and conversation enables audiences to witness a supposedly natural—even inevitable—progression of events.

[34] *Fuse*, April 14, 2007.

This narrative arc, iterated weekly with only minor variation, reinforces the message that cultural differences can be overcome given the necessary commitment to realizing a multicultural reality. Diversity is posed in teleological terms as the basis for creativity and progress: incompatibility or erasure are seemingly impossible. As Žižek insists, form is laden with ideology, distracting attention from contrary narratives in foreground content that complicate existing hegemonies.[35]

Popular music scholars Susan Fast and Kip Pegley point out that there is a tendency to think about music as somehow at a distance from the mundane negotiations of everyday social life—as non-ideological, innocuous entertainment.[36] The authors acknowledge that music might not always "tell a linear, or teleological story" but suggest that "its formal and gestural signs" are, nevertheless, "socially meaningful."[37] Indeed, figure 1 depicts music as embedded in an intricate web of social interactions and layers of mediation, and contextualized in the complex negotiation of ideologies, regulations, influences, and responsibility. While the form of each episode of *Fuse* suggests a linear narrative, the music ensounds these complexities. Each performance involves acts of cultural translation—a process that communications scholar Kyle Conway cautions is not transparent or politically neutral.[38] Neither are such acts perspective-free or wholly inclusive. Acts of cultural translation require complex negotiations between musicians, production teams, and audiences, and risk misunderstandings, confusion, and even coercion in the name of communication. Spaces of contact are crosscut with dynamics of power[39]—what Žižek defines as "a function of human relations. Power in social relations results from the human ability to act in concert to persuade or coerce others."[40] Power is "psychological, a moral force that makes people want to obey."[41] Each text might have the capacity to tell a story of intercultural contact and the power dynamics that shape the collaboration, but this narrative is obscured by the form of the mediated performance (i.e., the broadcast). Close attention to the gestural language of the musicians, however, reveals the tensions, incompatibilities, and struggles for agency that mark processes of intercultural collaboration.

For the remainder of this article, my focus narrows to the two performances that bookend the April 14, 2007, episode of *Fuse*: "Grim Fandango" and "Win and Regine." Analyzing texts in relation to the musicians' performances on *Fuse* (intercultural collaboration) and in dialogue with the larger formal structures of the episode (mediated performance) reveals the hegemonic elements of multiculturalism as an ideology, illuminating a narrative that unwittingly maintains an unequal status quo.

False Friends and Other (Un)Shared Perspectives

Musicians are the most visible and audible figures in a mediated performance. While they have a significant stake in the actions and outcomes of their encounter, their performances do not happen in a vacuum. Their capacity to make music together is structured by their familiarity with each other, the assumptions they make about their respective musical priorities, and their disposition toward

---

[35] Žižek, *Living in the End of Times*; cf. Taylor, *Žižek and the Media*.
[36] Susan Fast and Kip Pegley, eds., *Music, Politics, and Violence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012).
[37] Ibid., 20.
[38] Kyle Conway, *Everyone Says No: Public Service Broadcasting and the Failure of Translation* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).
[39] Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction: Criticism in the Contact Zone," in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1–12 (New York: Routledge, [1992] 2008), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203932933.
[40] Žižek, *Living in the End of Times*, 388 (italics in the original).
[41] Ibid.

collaboration—what ethnomusicologist Ian Goldstein terms a "multimusical sensibility."[42] Their approach is influenced by their understanding of the broadcaster's priorities and the terms of their commission. Their willingness to test new ideas is guided by awareness of the live audience who are present and listening audience who are imagined. Perhaps most significantly, musicians are shaped by their backgrounds and previous musical experiences (see figure 1). If intercultural collaboration is understood as a type of cultural translation, then some consideration must be given to the position from which each musician speaks and performs. Ostensibly the voiceovers and commercial samples that prefaced episodes of *Fuse* cued imagined audiences to each performer's "home" scene; in reality, such a brief exposure to "unfused" sounds leaves most listeners without adequate tools to appreciate the aesthetics and conventions of unfamiliar genres and styles. This section begins by introducing the biographies of Rollie Pemberton and Owen Pallett and contemplating the genres in which they, respectively, perform. This kind of detailed contextualization in performer identities would not (in most cases) have informed the listening experiences of *Fuse* audiences; indeed, the potential for direct communication between musicians and audiences was almost always limited by broadcaster curation. However, approaching the performances in this admittedly artificial way enables consideration of how gestures translate and the nature of the power dynamics that shaped both reception and performance of the intercultural encounter.

Known professionally by the moniker Cadence Weapon, Pemberton (b. 1986) is a rapper, producer, poet, and critic from Edmonton, Alberta. Described variously as a "cerebral rapper,"[43] a producer of "brainy dance rap,"[44] and an "iconoclastic weirdo rapper who sings and screams and makes electronic music,"[45] Pemberton and his music are difficult to pigeonhole—though it is safe to say that hip hop and EDM are important influences. After dropping out of journalism school, Pemberton released his first commercial album, *Breaking Kayfabe*, in 2005. The album was critically acclaimed, nominated for a 2006 Polaris Prize,[46] and re-released in 2007 on Epitaph Records' Anti- label in the United States and Big Dada in the United Kingdom. Describing Pemberton's debut album, one critic wrote:

> *Breaking Kayfabe* revels in clashing the two worlds of hip-hop together, the self-awareness of Rollie's underground-leaning lyrics spilling over gargantuan synth riffs and decidedly non-boom bappy beats. Imagine a less-irritating Slug if produced by a Three 6 Mafia inspired by Sparks[47] instead of cough syrup, and you're somewhere near Cadence Weapon's aesthetic. Rollie's electro clatters and clangs, but not at the cost of rhythm, as many of the underground's boundary testers would have you believe is necessary.[48]

---

[42] Ian Goldstein, "Experiencing Musical Connection: Sonic Interventions in Mediterranean Social Memory" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2017).
[43] The Coast, "Rollie Pemberton, AKA Cadence Weapon," April 10, 2008, https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/rollie-pemberton-aka-cadence-weapon/Content?oid=962658.
[44] Sheldon Pearce, "Cadence Weapon: *Cadence Weapon*," *Pitchfork*, January 22, 2018, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/cadence-weapon-cadence-weapon/.
[45] Pemberton quoted in Ben Rayner, "Cadence Weapon reintroduces his rap," *The Star*, March 28, 2018, https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2018/03/27/cadence-weapon-reintroduces-his-rap.html.
[46] Established in 2006, the Polaris Music Prize is an annual music award given to the best full-length Canadian album based on artistic merit regardless of genre, sales, or record label. It is modeled on the United Kingdom's Mercury Prize and sponsored by a variety of industry interest groups, including the CBC, FACTOR, SOCAN, and the Government of Canada. Details are available at https://polarismusicprize.ca/ (accessed August 12, 2019).
[47] An alcoholic energy drink.
[48] Peter Macia, Cadence Weapon: *Breaking Kayfabe*," *Pitchfork*, May 3, 2006, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/1801-breaking-kayfabe/.

The references to Slug and Three 6 Mafia suggest a blend of, respectively, underground and southern crunk leanings for the album without explicitly defining Pemberton in those terms.[49] Pemberton attributes the eclecticism of his style to his upbringing in a musical family: his father, DJ Teddy Pemberton, hosted the pioneering CJSR radio show *The Black Experience in Sound* and sometimes is credited with introducing hip hop to Edmonton;[50] his uncle, Brett Miles, was a funk musician active on the professional jazz circuit. Pemberton told one journalist that he "grew up in a library of music" and from an early age had an encyclopedic engagement with hip hop and electronic music.[51] After his initial successes with *Breaking Kayfabe*, Pemberton released three more albums and garnered two other Polaris Prize nominations (2012, 2019). He was named the poet laureate for Edmonton from 2009 to 2011, published his *Magnetic Days* collection of poetry in 2014, and contributed cultural criticism to publications like *Pitchfork*, *Vice,* and *Hazlitt*.

Pallett (b. 1979) was born and raised in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario. He studied piano as a child and later took up the violin. As a teenager, he started writing music and went on to complete formal training in composition at the University of Toronto.[52] He has received commissions from groups like the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Ballet of Canada, and Bang on a Can, and his work with Arcade Fire on the soundtrack for the Spike Jonze film *Her* was nominated for a 2014 Academy Award. His output also includes arrangements for a variety of indie and popular musicians, including Arcade Fire, The National, and Taylor Swift.[53] Pallett is a central figure in Canada's indie music scene and is known for a live performance style that combines vocals, keyboards, violin, and a looping pedal. He released his debut album, *Has a Good Home*, in 2005. His second album, *He Poos Clouds*, garnered him the 2006 Polaris Prize—and led to his collaboration with Rollie Pemberton.

In an interview published in *Drowned in Sound*, Pemberton observed that he and Pallett share a general orientation to making music that pushes the boundaries of their respective performing scenes:

> I feel like both of us are trying to break down the walls of what is typically considered okay in our genres. I'm trying to get people past what they think a typical rap show has to be like and he's doing the same sort of thing for the indie scene. It was a really good match that people wouldn't expect.[54]

This shared sensibility created a space for coming together, first on *Fuse* and subsequently as part of a joint tour of the United States and Europe.[55]

They also shared sources of inspiration. The sounds of video games permeate Pemberton's output, ranging from 8-bit bleeps, plot narrations, and game soundtrack samples to visuals that resemble game

---

[49] Crunk is a subgenre of hip hop that originated in Memphis, Tennessee, during the early 1990s. Though specifically characterized by drum machine rhythms, heavy basslines, and shouting vocals, since achieving mainstream popularity in the early 2000s, crunk has become a blanket term for any style of southern hip hop.

[50] The Coast, "Rollie Pemberton." CJSR is a community radio station based at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Formerly identified under the call letters CKUA and CKSR, the station has been in operation since at least 1946.

[51] Pemberton quoted in Sarah MacDonald, "The optimist rapper: How Cadence Weapon keeps himself going—and stays excited about the future," CBC Arts, *I Fell Out of Love*, April 23, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/arts/the-optimist-rapper-how-cadence-weapon-keeps-himself-going-and-stays-excited-about-the-future-1.5107451.

[52] Stephen M. Deusner, "Final Fantasy," *Pitchfork*, March 8, 2005, https://pitchfork.com/features/article/5985-final-fantasy/.

[53] Ian Cohen, "Owen Pallett," *Pitchfork*, March 18, 2014, https://pitchfork.com/features/update/9358-owen-pallett/.

[54] Pemberton quoted in Adam Anonymous, "In Search of the Youth Crew: Cadence Weapon's here to call out hipsters," *Drowned in Sound*, last modified February 15, 2008, http://drownedinsound.com/in_depth/2928170-in-search-of-the-youth-crew--cadence-weapons-here-to-call-out-hipsters.

[55] Upper Class Recordings, "Tours, Cadence goes UK, XM, Juices!," *Upper Class Recordings*, September 6, 2007, http://www.upperclassrecordings.com/_blog/News/page/14/.

worlds in his music videos.[56] Pallett's music engages with gaming, but through references to characters and game worlds that more abstractly meditate on the aesthetics of game music, elements of narrative, and the philosophical plight of characters. For example, before 2009 he recorded under the name "Final Fantasy," a title shared by a Japanese RPG owned by Square Enix. Commenting on the aptness of the analogy, Pallett explained, "The games are ridiculously overwrought and convoluted emotionally," qualities that he identifies in his own music.[57] His award-winning *He Poos Clouds* (2006) is a song cycle about the schools of magic in the RPG *Dungeons and Dragons* and his 2010 *Heartland* album pays tribute to the 1986 Odin Computer Graphics video game of the same name through a series of existential monologues.[58] Game music—an incredibly heterogeneous genre in its own right—may be an important influence for both Pemberton and Pallett, but inspiration manifests in distinctive ways in their creative outputs.

Indeed, while they might have much in common in terms of orientation toward experimentation and interest in video games, there are also significant distinctions in Pemberton and Pallett's musical experience and training. This means that the detailed meanings they attach to gestures, sounds, and processes cannot be presumed as similar. For example, Pemberton explains that his creative process involves consciousness of melody:

> Whenever I'm chopping, it's more of a trial-and-error thing, but it's always based on melodic elements. . . . It's always based on interesting high sounds and interesting low sounds and trying to keep those frequencies in a way that makes sense . . . it's basically what sounds cool to me.[59]

But what Pemberton describes as melody is not the same as the harmonically driven melody typical of Pallett's western classical training: Pemberton's comments speak to timbral and textural distinctions as motivating melodic development. Speaking to compositional practices for techno, music theorist Mark Butler observes that the lines of melodic patterns are generally conceived independently; when combined, producers "tend to choose combinations that are relatively consonant, but they do not seem to be especially concerned with creating a sense of harmonic progression or tonal motion."[60] Unlike most North American popular music genres, EDM (and some genres of hip hop) is not constructed around a melody and harmonic accompaniment, instead privileging prominent beats and textural change as the basis of musical structure and development. There are, of course, exceptions to this tendency, not to mention important distinctions between techno and Pemberton's dance-influenced hip hop. Nevertheless, it seems clear that musical forms, gestures, and structures are themselves ideological with tremendous potential to complicate the process of cultural translation.

Analyzing Intercultural (Mis)Translations

Performing together on *Fuse* required correspondence, research, and experimentation. It involved learning new vocabularies and interpreting musical gestures that might not always translate between scenes and styles. It also involved approaching intercultural collaboration in different ways. In Pemberton's words:

---

[56] Max Herman, "Cadence Weapon," *Electronic Musician: Record, Produce, Perform*, March 1, 2008; updated November 29, 2017, https://www.emusician.com/gear/cadence-weapon.
[57] Deusner, "Final Fantasy."
[58] Ibid.
[59] Pemberton quoted in Herman, "Cadence Weapon."
[60] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove," 233.

> Like I mean we had talked about it before, you know, previously of course. You know, there's different ways we've been doing it. Like there's one where I actually took one of [Pallett's] songs, and kind of made a remix of it. And I kind of had to teach him—like re-teach him how to sing to it again . . . in a different way because it's kind of like—well, it's like slower in a way. It's kind of like a crunk version of one of his songs. Or, in the case of like, redoing one of my songs, it's like, you know, he would play me like his approximation of it over the phone or something. . . . Believe me, we're not all making this shit up as we're going along.[61]

The broadcast begins with Pemberton's "Grim Fandango." The musicians focus on what Pallett describes as "playing it safe": simply replicating the style and sound of the commercial track. By the end of the mediated performance they are ready to start pushing their boundaries by reinterpreting their respective repertories through alternative stylistic lenses—Pemberton's "crunked up" version of "Win and Regine." This section puts these two texts under the microscope to assess the "hierarchy of beats" that result, including how music changes through the process of collaboration and the power dynamics that shape how these changes are realized and received.

Before turning to the songs, a few words are necessary about my approach to representing the performances that featured on *Fuse*. In a study of an EDM scene in the US, Mark Butler demonstrates the necessity of adapting frameworks of analysis to the cultural priorities of music scenes.[62] While this observation may seem obvious to many ethnomusicologists, the challenge of finding modes of analysis that enable meaningful communication across and between cultures while also supporting awareness of the biases inherent in systems of representation nevertheless remains.[63] In a parallel observation, EDM scholar Luis-Manuel Garcia points out that "a common criticism of EDM as a genre is that it is 'just beats', prioritizing elements that would conventionally be considered functional at the expense of musical 'content' such as melody and harmony [. . .] But that which signals this genre's emptiness to its detractors is also what conveys a sense of fullness to its adherents."[64] Biases based on unconscious cultural assumptions get in the way of understanding and appreciating EDM on its own merits. Garcia's comments pertain to consumption of EDM in general, but the sentiment is apt for performers attempting to collaborate on an intercultural performance—not to mention the analyst trying to understand what is created through collaboration.

Both Butler and Garcia demonstrate the limits of understanding and unconscious biases that impede appreciation when there are mismatches between systems of representation, aesthetic standards, and music.[65] Accordingly, in representing the music performed on *Fuse*, I have tried to avoid unconsciously replicating biases and listening across genres according to aesthetic priorities that simply do not pertain by focusing on musical function, performer priorities, and changes between iterations of "the same" music. Following Butler's approach to deconstructing and assessing relationships between the layers of electronically generated loops that typify EDM, each of my transcriptions includes a "sound palette": a "key" that represents, describes, and categorizes the individual sounds heard within a track and/or performance by function.[66] While Butler suggests three categories—"rhythmic," "articulative," and "atmospheric"—based on the qualities and musical priorities of EDM, I have added "melodic," "narrative," and "harmonic" categories to account for the wider range of musics implicated in situations of intercultural collaboration.

---

[61] Rollie Pemberton, *Fuse*, April 14, 2007.
[62] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove" (2003); and *Unlocking the Groove* (2006).
[63] Cf. Allgayer-Kaufmann, "From the Innocent to the Exploring Eye"; Marian-Bălaşa, "Who Actually Needs Transcription?"
[64] Luis-Manuel Garcia, "Beats, flesh, and grain: sonic tactility and affect in electronic dance music," *Sound Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 61, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20551940.2015.1079072.
[65] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove," and *Unlocking the Groove*; and Garcia, "Beats, flesh, and grain."
[66] *Unlocking the Groove*, 179.

"Rhythmic" sounds tend to be repetitive and short patterns. While these patterns may have melodic elements, their repetitive nature emphasizes the articulation of time.[67] "Articulative" sounds are "brief and intermittent" and tend to be heard "at or near structural boundaries."[68] Speaking specifically to EDM, Butler gives the example of a sampled sound bite as an articulative element. As both Rollie Pemberton and Owen Pallett use looping technologies and other electronic mediations (including sampling) to construct their respective musics, samples may constitute articulative sounds. Their music is not, however, created exclusively through electronic loops, so features like cadences, silences, changing timbres, or recurring motifs may also have an articulative function at structural transition points. "Atmospheric" sounds function to "fill in the texture and contribute to the mood" of the music. These sounds tend to be "hazy and dynamically soft" and often "lack clear rhythmic articulations."[69] "Melodic" sounds are longer linear patterns of pitches that form a clear unity. Melodic sounds may include repetitions or rhythmic motifs, but their length discourages them from being heard in primarily rhythmic terms. The "narrative" category acknowledges that much of the music performed on *Fuse* is song. "Narrative" sounds are texted and form coherent messages. This category does not include texts that are used for articulative or rhythmic purposes (e.g., EDM producers sometimes sample words or even single phonemes to create loops or articulative patterns). Finally, "harmonic" sounds are groups of pitches that have melodic qualities, but that are intended to be heard in combination with other pitches and often have a structural function: a bassline, for example, structures understanding of where sections of the song/track/performance begin or end.

Butler's version of the sound palette defines the qualities of the individual loops that comprise a single EDM track, however the different analytical priorities that shape my project mean that I have employed a comparative approach: I include details about commercial recordings alongside the elements that constitute the performance on *Fuse*; banded rows emphasize the relationship between source materials and translation on *Fuse*. Voices are numbered according to the order in which they enter the mix (see figure 3). As there are similarities in voicing between the commercial release and *Fuse* performance of "Win and Regine," letters (not numbers) have been used to label the voices present in the *Fuse* version (see figure 6).

The sound palette accompanies two corresponding graphic transcriptions: the first represents the commercial recording and the second describes the iteration broadcast on *Fuse*. Each graphic consists of three parts: details of formal structure; timeline and waveform; and summary of voices (e.g., see figure 4). The black band at the top of each diagram summarizes major formal sections, to the extent possible relying on culture-appropriate terminology. Directly under the black band is a timeline and accompanying waveform for the entire song. The waveform represents the amplitude of the sound, often providing information about texture, rhythm, and the balance of voices in the mix. It also represents what is heard by imagined audiences—not the live audience. Examining the waveform in conjunction with the recording is revealing of the process of mediating performances. For example, cuts in the waveform may indicate where content has been censored or other editorial interventions (see figure 5). The third section of each graphic depicts the different voices that comprise each song version. The voices listed in the left column correspond to those listed in the sound palette. This part of the diagram is visibly akin to Butler's "textural graphs."[70] Despite visual similarities, this element functions according to different analytical priorities: Butler's textural graphs demonstrate textural change on a bar-by-bar basis, whereas my graphic transcriptions facilitate

[67] Cf. "Unlocking the Groove," 227; *Unlocking the Groove*, 180.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove"; *Unlocking the Groove.*

comparison between performances. To this end, each unfilled block represents eight beats (typically two measures) of music and aligns with the timeline and waveform listed above. Some of the filled blocks do not include eight-beat subdivisions; this relates to the duration of rhythmic, articulative, atmospheric, narrative, melodic, or harmonic materials. For example, Sample 1 from the commercial version of "Grim Fandango" is sixteen beats in duration (see figure 4). When loops/repetitions are four beats or fewer in duration, the block is subdivided by a vertical line (e.g., see Drum Machine in figure 4). The relationship between source material and iteration broadcast on *Fuse* is demonstrated by the patterns of the filled blocks. Voices and materials that are not present in both versions of the song are indicated with untextured gray blocks.

"Grim Fandango"

The story told in "Grim Fandango" references LucasArts' critically acclaimed adventure video game of the same name (released for PC in 1997). In the commercial release, Pemberton raps descriptions of crime, corruption, and the exploits of skeletal characters in the land of the dead over dense beats, 8-bit video game sounds, changing textures, and scratches crafted by DJ Weez-L. For listeners familiar with Pemberton's music, the "playing it safe" iteration on *Fuse* is instantly recognizable: Pemberton's vocals are strikingly similar; the form of the song remains recognizably strophic; and the rhythm and meter are roughly the same (both performances have a four-beat feel at around 94–96 bpm). However, the *Fuse* rendition does not include a DJ. Instead, Pallett creates a richly textured accompaniment to Pemberton's vocals using his violin, a range of percussive and melodic performance techniques, and a looping pedal. There is an obvious timbral shift as a result and an overall lightening of the sound between the two versions, but the melodic content of the lines appears to translate in straightforward ways: the mandolin lines from the commercial version become violin lines for the *Fuse* version, for the most part maintaining the original harmonic and melodic relationships and imitating the tremolos of the source recording to fill out the texture.

While it certainly is possible to account for the distinctions that exist between the two versions of the song in terms of the vagaries of live performance and adaptations necessitated by differences in personnel, this interpretation neglects important changes in function that point to divergent musical priorities and understandings of the creative process. Before reading any further, I suggest listening to the commercial version of "Grim Fandango."[71] The version performed on *Fuse* is available for download on the Owen Pallett fan site.[72] The relationships and distinctions between the two versions of the song are summarized in the sound palette for "Grim Fandango" (see figure 3) and visually depicted in graphic transcriptions of the commercial version (figure 4) and *Fuse* version (figure 5). Importantly, the sound palette is more than a legend for the graphic transcriptions; each voice is classified according to function and accompanied by a description that explains the rationale for that choice (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Sound palette for "Grim Fandango." The voices that feature in Rollie Pemberton's commercial release are summarized in the four columns on the left; the four columns on the right describe the performance on *Fuse*.

Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0015.102

[71] https://youtu.be/RrEB0x2_Mbo.
[72] http://alpentine.com/recordings/2007-04-14-cadence-weapon.

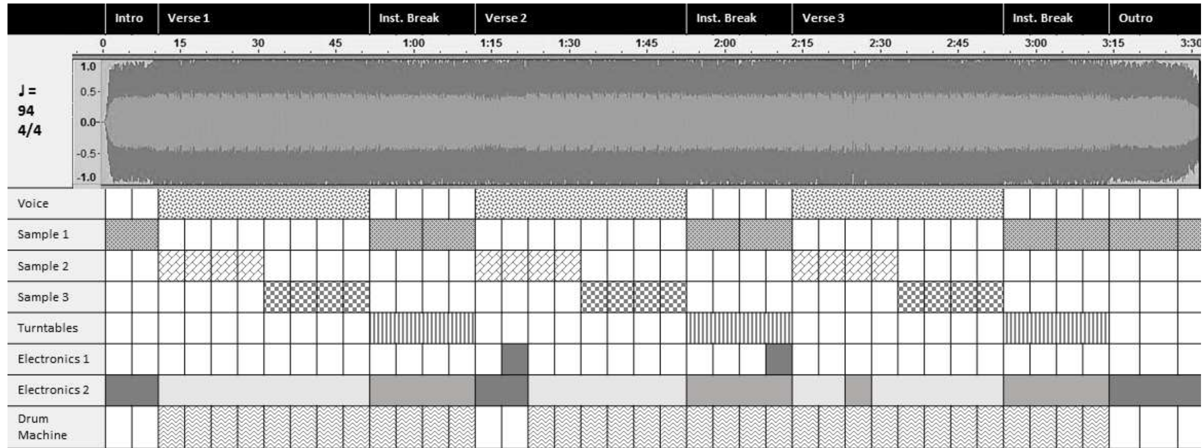

Figure 4: Graphic transcription of the commercial release of Rollie Pemberton's "Grim Fandango." The listed voices correspond with descriptions in figure 3.

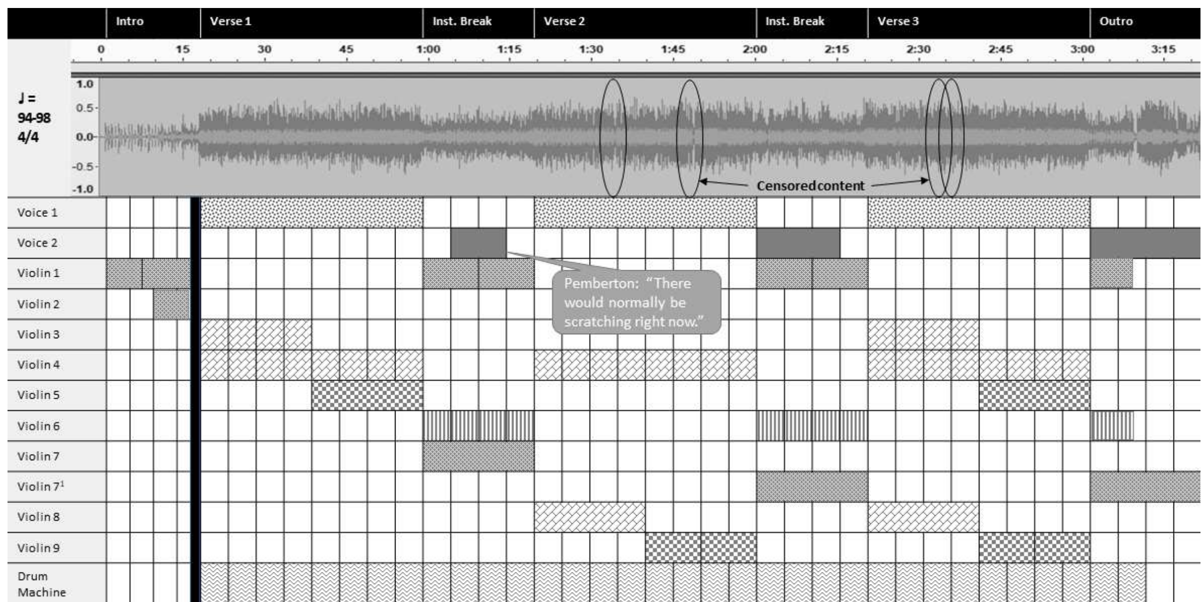

Figure 5: Graphic transcription of "Grim Fandango," as broadcast on *Fuse* (April 14, 2007). The listed voices correspond with descriptions in figure 3.

Visualizing the music in this way makes the changes in voicing immediately apparent: the number of voices present in the *Fuse* performance is significantly greater, signaling a change in function for the voices that comprise the accompanying string texture. In the commercial version, the instrumental texture is based on a 20-second sample from the soundtrack of the iconic survival horror video game, *Silent Hill*.[73] The treble line of the sampled theme—played as a tremolo on solo mandolin—descends chromatically over the

[73] I suggest listening to the first 20 seconds of the original soundtrack to appreciate how the sample is manipulated and changed through sampling. The original soundtrack is available at https://youtu.be/I4J2gBFiM0A. Since its original release in 1999, *Silent Hill* has become a significant franchise that includes sequel and spin-off games, fan fiction, videos, and a variety of other related materials that sketch the parameters of the game world. *Silent Hill* was created by Konami and released in North America, Japan, and other regions for PlayStation. According to William Cheng, *Video Games and the Musical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), game play is accompanied by a soundscape and music crafted by Akira Yamaoka.

picked broken chords of the bassline (see Sample 1-3, figure 3). While this brief sample can be heard in terms of strongly directional melodic motion and clear harmonic progressions, the distinct treble- and basslines have a different function when recontextualized as the foundation for "Grim Fandango." The sample is broken down into three separate loops that cycle to define the different sections of the track: Sample 1 loops during the introduction, instrumental breaks, and outro; Sample 2 accompanies the first half of each verse; and Sample 3 signals the end of the verse and transition back to the break (see figure 4). Repetitions of these brief loops within each section of the track undermine a sense of melodic or harmonic progression, instead emphasizing steady subdivisions of the beat and timbral change as a means of structuring time and articulating form.[74] Effects like reverb and distortion, speed changes (with implications for pitch), and alterations to the mix that bring out or background elements of the sound similarly shift the emphasis away from harmony and melody in favor of timbre, rhythm, and articulation of structure. My decision to transcribe the voices in the commercial version of "Grim Fandango" in terms of samples (and not the lines that comprise those samples) speaks to how the sounds were sourced and manipulated, as well as their function within the track.

When the content of the samples is translated to violin for presentation on *Fuse,* the lines are deconstructed to enable performance of separate bass and treble parts, as well as manipulation of register and the layering of voices as a form of intensification that has melodic and atmospheric elements (e.g., see Violin 1-3, figure 3). In this sense, the performance on *Fuse* is more referential of the source of the samples (*Silent Hill*) than the commercial version of "Grim Fandango." When each voice is taken separately—not as a block of sound that fills out the texture between narrative and beats—the lines exist in relation to each other as well as the narrative, rhythmic, and atmospheric elements of the track. Pallett's performance demonstrates an awareness of melodic and harmonic progression, which manifests in slight stresses on dissonances that require resolution, inclusion of leading tones at transition points, and the addition of moments of rubato to set up octave leaps (e.g., see Violin 5, figure 3). In other words, the lines take on a more pronouncedly melodic function.

While it may be tempting to read similarities in form, meter, melody, harmony, and lyrics as acts of replication that account for the available performing resources, this interpretation privileges western musical values by emphasizing the congruence of melody and harmony over distinctions in musical function that implicate rhythm, timbre, and texture (see figure 3). Indeed, Pemberton's interjection during the first interlude—"There would normally be scratching right now"—could be read as a statement of (unconscious?) discomfort with the translation of his music according to an aesthetic that privileges melody and harmony over beats and texture (see figure 5). Indeed, the beats practically disappear in the *Fuse* version of "Grim Fandango," and originally complex interactions of texture and timbre are reduced to a melodic holding pattern. This rebalancing of aesthetic priorities might have been an active decision on the part of the performers—a move that creates space for Pallett in an otherwise dense sonic mix. Equally, it might have been the result of intercultural (mis)translation of musical concepts that do not have direct equivalencies in the performers' respective genre worlds.

The assumptions made by members of the production team influence the capacity of audiences (and the analyst) to interpret the intercultural collaboration. In her account of the female comparative musicologists who made some of the earliest recordings of North American Indigenous peoples at the turn of the twentieth century, anthropologist Roshanak Kheshti notes the significance of the relationship between

[74] Cf. Butler, "Unlocking the Groove," 234.

the recordist, the new recording technology, and her imagined audience.[75] The ethnographer used new recording technologies to translate her impressions of racial noise into recordings that would be understandable as music to her presumedly middle-class, White, and predominantly female audience. Her decisions about how to start and end recordings, how to privilege or background sounds and voices, and what was important enough to record were based on the assumed interests and needs of that imagined audience. In this sense, her recordings are not just archival records of the people whom she recorded; they capture "aural traces" of the recordist herself. In Kheshti's words, "the recordings chronicle not the meaning that the comparative musicologist perceived but the way that she perceived it, conveying the phenomenology of her perception, with all its racialized and gendered intonations."[76] In the context of this case study, aural traces of the production team (recording engineer, host, producer)—and the CBC more broadly—are found in decisions about which musicians to feature and how to position them in relation to each other, the audience, and the nation.

Aural traces can be heard as sounds, but more often are present in the absence of voices, the censorship of words, or imbalances in the sonic mix. Sonically, the most noticeable distinction between the two iterations of "Grim Fandango" is the timbral shift from the bass-heavy beat-dominated commercial release to the violin-based loops of the "playing it safe" version (see figure 3). Visually, this distinction is marked in the maxed-out amplitude of the waveform for the commercial release (figure 4) and the much more sectional appearance of the *Fuse* version (figure 5). It's perhaps not surprising that the "live" iteration has a more transparent texture; after all, there are limits to the capacity of two performers to cover every voice and institute the full range of effects that are layered onto the track in the post-production stage of the recording process (e.g., Electronics 2 is omitted from the *Fuse* performance; see figure 3 and 5). In figure 4, dark gray fill indicates thick reverb and delay and light gray is used to indicate the light reverb that is omnipresent in the overlay on the voice. Medium gray indicates all other effects: this includes electronic noise, chirps, and samples during Interludes and the use of the pan to create a hocketing effect between the left and right channels during Verse 3. In the *Fuse* version, some of these effects are incorporated into the various violin lines as timbral ornamentation (see figure 3). In other words, the performers compensate for the absence of a voice by redistributing elements of the part. Distinctions in the mix also may result from how the *Fuse* performance was recorded and decisions made in post-production about mix and maximum gain. Policies that govern recording quality result in a uniform "CBC sound" across broadcasts. This includes predetermined settings that determine when the limiter kicks in. The final mix of the broadcast version of "Grim Fandango" rested with the recording engineer and producer—an aural trace that rehabilitates the dense noise of beats to the assumed interests of the imagined radio audience.

Also notable in figure 5 are the breaks in the flow of sound that reveal where "objectionable" phrases and words have been censored. Much like the discretionary warning that prefaces this broadcast of *Fuse*, such obvious censorship is an unusual, though not unique, feature of the episode. While the decision to censor Pemberton's music probably came down to those same policies about permissible language during daytime listening slots, within the mediated performance his voice is the only one to receive this treatment. Indeed, within the series as a whole, Pemberton belongs to a very small minority of performers whose music

---

[75] Roshanak Kheshti, *Modernity's Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World Music* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

[76] Ibid., 32.

and language are overtly censored.[77] While this decision may seem innocuous—just one of those things that bureaucracy imposes—such regulation reflects norms that relate to class, culture, education, and race. Moreover, the immediate result is that Pemberton is marked out and branded as somehow objectionable to the sensibilities of the imagined audience.

"Grim Fandango" is the intended starting point in a dramatic arc that takes listeners through a process of encounter, exploration, and discovery, ultimately resolving in a performance that demonstrates the capacity of the musicians to communicate beyond cultural differences. This narrative depends on "Grim Fandango" being heard as an act of replication, which in turn relies on the assumed primacy of melody and harmony in the construction and performance of music. Reinterpreting the samples that structure the commercial track as distinct melodic lines reinforces a hierarchy of musical elements without acknowledging the possibility of alternative ways of constructing (or hearing) music. Moreover, the prospect of listening according to Pemberton's aesthetic standards is all but foreclosed by a recorded mix that emphasizes a transparent blend of vocals and supporting harmonies at the expense of dominant beats and thick texture; his distinctive voice is silenced and rehabilitated to the assumed sensibilities of the imagined audience before he is properly heard. Simply put, as a basis for understanding where Pemberton and his music are coming from, the mediated performance is problematic.

"This Is the Dream of Win and Regine"

If "Grim Fandango" demonstrates where performers come from, "Win and Regine" is scripted to reveal where intercultural collaboration can take performers and listeners. The performance is posed as a live remix, a concept that comes out of the disco era, when DJs would take the most danceable sections of funk and soul recordings, "cut them up, and rearrange them so that the most danceable parts were extended."[78] Remixes use content by other artists as "raw material" for new tracks, with results that range from slight tweaks on originals to radical reconstructions that make the source materials almost unrecognizable.[79] Pemberton poses his collaboration with Pallett as a "crunked up" version of "Win and Regine"—an approach that involves translating content created according to an indie pop aesthetic to the sensibilities of a club genre. The notion is appropriative, but also creates an opportunity for the musicians to learn about the distinctive ways in which they think and perform. The potential for listening differently similarly exists for audiences.

Figure 6: Sound palette for "This Is the Dream of Win and Regine." The voices that feature in Owen Pallett's commercial release are summarized in the four columns on the left; the four columns on the right describe the performance on *Fuse*.

Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0015.102

[77] The other episode that includes overt censorship—a chicken squawk inserted to cover objectionable words—was broadcast on November 18, 2006 and featured Kids on TV and Ohbijou. Kids on TV are a Toronto-based punk and electronics band comprising, among others, Scott Kerr on guitar and vocals and John Caffery on bass and vocals. On their now-defunct website, the members described their approach to art and activism as "apocalyptically gay." Ohbijou (who disbanded in 2013) were a seven-piece Toronto-based indie band with an orchestral sensibility. Their music was based in the sensibilities of North American popular song, though they were sometimes described as "sounding multicultural"—a description they dispute—because of the multiple ethnicities, genders, and sexualities represented in their roster.
[78] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove," 13.
[79] Ibid., 54.

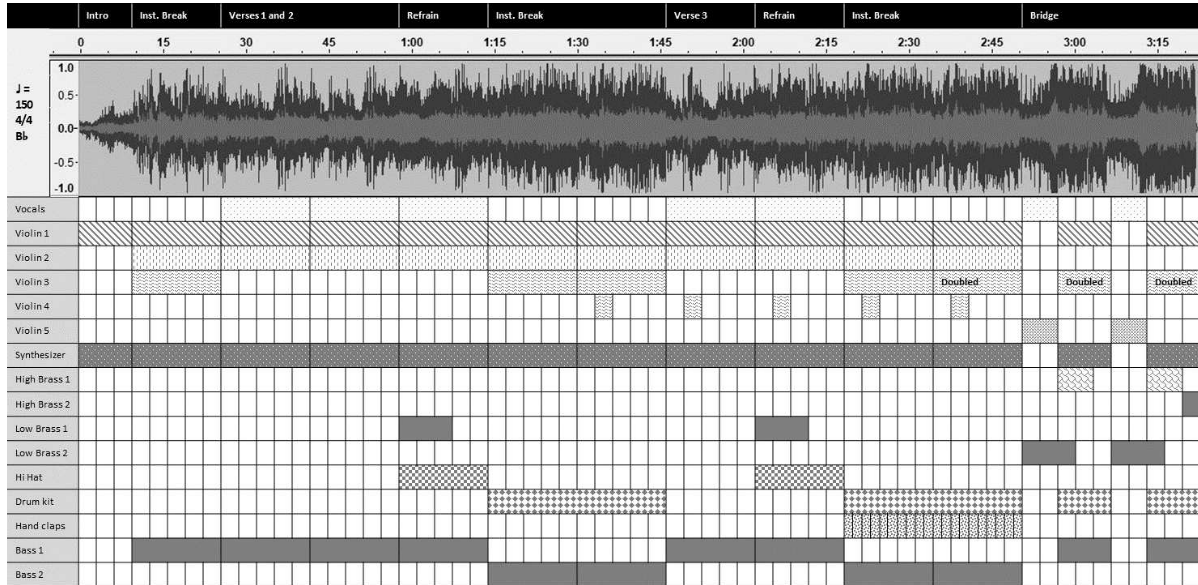

Figure 7: Graphic transcription of the commercial release of Owen Pallett's "This Is the Dream of Win and Regine." The listed voices correspond with descriptions in figure 6.

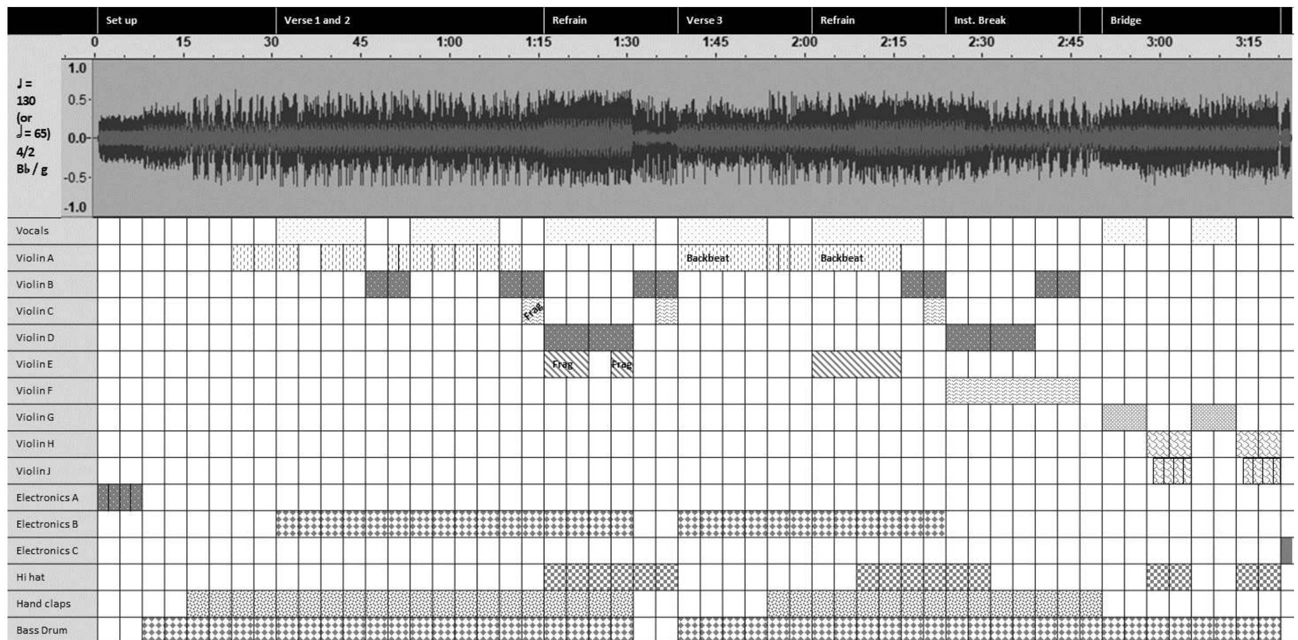

Figure 8: Graphic transcription of "This Is the Dream of Win and Regine," as broadcast on *Fuse* (April 14, 2007). The listed voices correspond with descriptions in figure 6.

Figure 6 summarizes the similarities and distinctions between Pallett's commercial release of "Win and Regine" and Pemberton's remix on *Fuse*, as well as tracking changes in function for individual voices. Both versions are represented in graphic transcriptions: figure 7 represents the commercial recording, which can be heard on his 2005 *Has a Good Home* album,[80] and figure 8 represents the *Fuse* performance, which

[80] Also available at https://youtu.be/KY4uuCgMiKI.

is available for download on the Owen Pallett fan site.[81] Both versions of the song can be heard as modified AAB forms: the commercial version includes an extended intro and rondo-like recurrences of the Violin 3 theme (see figure 7); the remix features an extended set-up that functions like an intro for listeners,[82] and the violin theme is heard as a single instrumental break before the B section (see figure 8). The texture of the commercial release is thick, comprising layered loops performed principally on violin and synthesizer (see figure 7). The main melodic and harmonic loops are typically ten measures long, though shorter subdivisions based on phrasing and timbral shifts are also audible within the loop structure. Fills in the percussion and changes in texture reinforce these smaller subdivisions, though the grouping is not primarily driven by rhythm or meter. Violin 2, for example, can be heard as 6+2+2 based on shifts in register, motivic change, and rhythmic patterns. Violin 3 can be heard as 4+4+2 based on melodic phrasing and changes in texture. The larger ten-measure groupings are reinforced by the harmonic movement of the Violin 1 and Synthesizer lines. Each section begins with an almost inaudibly low B-flat drone in the bass that progresses through G, E-flat, and back to B-flat—a very common progression in western harmony and one that confirms a tonal center of B-flat, particularly if that motion is heard as implying a V-I cadence to B-flat (see Bass 1-2, figure 6).

Pallett describes the songs from his *Has a Good Home* album as "impossible to play live" because the mix and loops are too complex to replicate on stage.[83] Performing this repertoire live means varying the order in which the loops are introduced, simplifying the mix, and including less timbral variety and fewer instruments. The most prominent melodies (e.g., Voice, Violins 1, 2, 3, and Synthesizer) are retained and the overarching harmonic framework for the song remains consistent, enabling audiences who are familiar with North American popular song genres to hear the adapted version of the song as essentially "the same" as the source recording (see figure 6).

The changes imposed by Pemberton's remix are somewhat different in nature. He retains the main vocal and violin lines (Vocal becomes Vocal, Violin 3 becomes Violin F; see figure 6), which makes the remix recognizable as "Win and Regine." But he reimagines the music according to a fundamentally different set of aesthetic principles—that is, the function of the voices is translated according to the musical priorities of crunk, a subgenre of hip hop that emerged during the late 1990s and early 2000s in the southern United States (see figure 6). Music in this genre typically features slow tempos according to the standards of rap (only c. 75 bpm). The slow, sparse beats are accented with double-time hi-hat lines and bass drum fills, and viscerally low-pitched beats and basslines are elaborated with minimalist synthesizer riffs.[84] Crunk producers typically rely on drum machines, sequencers, and other instruments rather than sample-heavy textures. In pop music scholar Matt Miller's words, producers "design spare music with club sound systems in mind, which are capable of producing an intensely physical experience."[85] That is, the music is designed to include almost inaudibly low-pitched beats that are experienced more as a physical impact on the entire body than a slight stimulation of the eardrum. The texture of Pemberton's remix reflects the stripped back, beat-oriented, and intense physicality of crunk.

Achieving these qualities involved thinning the texture of the song. Indeed, one of the most obvious observations that can be made when comparing the graphic transcriptions of "Win and Regine" is the relative

[81] http://alpentine.com/recordings/2007-04-14-cadence-weapon.
[82] The set-up serves the practical purpose of allowing the musicians to lay down the loops that structure the performance.
[83] Pallett quoted in Deusner, "Final Fantasy."
[84] Matt Miller, "Dirty Decade: Rap Music and the US South, 1997–2007," *Southern Spaces*, June 10, 2008, https://doi.org/10.18737/M78P5T.
[85] Ibid.

sparsity of voices in the remix version of the song (see figures 7 and 8). One of the ways that this textural transparency is accomplished is through strategies such as deconstructing the violin loops. Violin 2, for example, is a ten-measure countermelody to the Violin 3 theme. It comprises octave jumps, fragments of the vocal melody, and is performed in a pizzicato style to contrast the long legato lines of the theme. In Pemberton's remix, the melodic content of this loop is simplified to repeated octave leaps between a middle and a high B-flat—a motive that is instantly recognizable from the source recording but also has an important function in confirming the rhythm and meter of the song (see Violin A, figure 6). In addition, the density of the texture is reduced by eliminating certain voices. Perhaps most notably, the Low Brass and Bass voices that together form the bassline for the commercial "Win and Regine" mix are not included in the remix. The absence of competing voices in the bass range means that percussive sounds, like the Bass Drum, alone occupy these frequencies and consequently assume prominence in the mix.

The prominence of the beats creates a quality of "ambiguity" in the remix. As Butler explains, this is a quality that is "both broadly based and positive."[86] Ambiguity means that two or more equally plausible meanings are available to listeners; elements of ambiguity can support a nuanced experience of music that does not rely on conclusion or resolution, instead leaving open the possibility of difference—and requiring the active participation of the listener in constructing meaning.[87] The example of tempo is illustrative. The commercial release of "Win and Regine" is quite upbeat—about 150 bpm. In their introduction to the remix, Pallett and Pemberton discuss dropping the bpm by a few points. While posed nonchalantly, the change is profound. The preserved vocal and violin lines can be heard as a slightly slower version (c. 130 bpm) of the source recording, but the metric structure for the song is fundamentally altered. Reinforced by rhythmic articulations in the Bass Drum, Electronics 2, Hi Hat, and the prominent pizzicato high B-flats in Violin A, the structure of the beat is augmented to a very slow 65 bpm. In other words, while the song retains its upbeat tempo and 4/4 feel if the listener focuses on familiar melodic content, it may simultaneously be experienced in a slow 4/2 if the listener prioritizes the visceral not-quite-four-on-the-floor feel of the beat.

The removal of the bassline creates another type of ambiguity in the remix: in the commercial version, the bassline's function is harmonic—a quality that is typical of North American popular song repertoire. However, the remix is structured according to different organizational priorities that privilege beats and texture over harmony and melody. Melodic materials are still oriented to a tonal center of B-flat, but without the strong bassline, the song can be heard gravitating toward g-minor and, during the bridge section, tonal ambiguity and dissonance. Similar to the experience of tempo and beats, the listener may opt to focus on the harmonies implied by the melody, but the absence of a bassline during the bridge (and, indeed, the rest of the song) opens up the possibility of focusing differently—of lending attention to the percussive effects and changes in texture and timbre that result from the layered rhythmic loop patterns of the Bass Drum, Hi Hat, and Violins G, H, and J (see figures 6 and 8). Moreover, the elimination of lines with melodic and harmonic functions in this final section means that the song appears to end without clear harmonic cadence. The electronic whirl of the Electronics C loop provides a sonic stopping point, leaving the listener with the possibility of an alternative to harmony-driven structure and articulation.

My reading of this performance is based on an attempt to radically decenter my listening biases through contextual research about performer biographies, genre worlds, and the function of musical elements. This is one way of listening and certainly not innocent.[88] Audiences, equally, bring unique

[86] Butler, "Unlocking the Groove," 154.
[87] Butler, *Unlocking the Groove*, 256.
[88] Cf. Allgayer-Kaufmann, "From the Innocent to the Exploring Eye."

perspectives to their listening experiences. Listeners familiar with sample-based musics might be inclined to listen in terms of danceability and affect; from this position, there is a negation of Pallett's voice through the emptying out of harmonic dimension and the limited duration of solo violin lines. Other members of the audience might listen according to the priorities of popular song repertories or western art music, leading them to focus on melodic content without appreciating the timbral variations and rhythmic complexities introduced in the remix. And, too, the space in which the performance happened—a broadcast-center studio with a stage and seated audience—might encourage members of the live audience to listen according to a particular set of priorities. Alternatively, Pemberton's invitation to members of the audience to get up and dance, voiced at the end of "Grim Fandango," might suggest another disposition to the music.

Equally, the broadcaster's aural traces, including the recording, mixing, and balancing of voices, potentially privilege one interpretation of musical meaning over another.[89] Comparing waveforms generated from each performance is revealing on this front. There are prominent and regular transients (high amplitude spikes in the waveform) indicative of bass drum hits in the *Fuse* remix—a quality that is not present in the commercial version of "Win and Regine" (see figures 7 and 8). It is also clear that either an equalization algorithm has been applied or a limiter set to ensure that the amplitude of the sound does not exceed 0.5 dB. The result is a flattening out of the overall dynamic range of the broadcast remix. Pallett's commercial mix, on the other hand, shows a much wider range of amplitudes (though these are exploited to very different ends). Distinctions between the contours of each waveform point to assumptions about how the recording will be used: an album track is mastered with a best-case listening scenario in mind, as well as the assumption that users will set up their playback systems according to the aesthetic priorities of the genre in mind. For example, crunk tracks typically are designed for club sound systems that include subwoofers capable of amplifying bass beats that are more felt than heard. Pemberton includes strong bass beats in his performance that show up in the broadcast mix, but production standards limit the extent to which the effect is experienced in playback. CBC production standards assume playback on car radios, on home audio systems, over office PAs, or, by the time *Fuse* was cancelled in 2008, via online streaming services, smartphones, and television. Audio, accordingly, must be playable on a variety of systems that often do not include high-quality speakers or headphones. Sounds are mixed with this consideration in mind: low range frequencies are limited and higher frequencies are boosted to make the vocals—the most important part in most North American popular music—more distinctly audible. The visceral experience of beats made possible through Pemberton's remix, in other words, probably was not available to most radio listeners. The broadcast mix reduces elements of ambiguity and limits the possibility of listening differently.

Conclusions

I posed this article as an exploration of the gulf that exists between intention and realization. Specifically, I explored how power is deployed and meaning communicated in situations of intercultural music making as a way of accessing the mechanisms of systemic bias and racism that impede efforts to meaningfully reimagine an equitable nation.[90] My approach prioritizes music as a value-laden text and focuses on a broadcast (i.e., mediated performance) produced at a time when the CBC actively prioritized being "more multicultural" and recruiting a diverse audience base. A product of the period in which it was

[89] Cf. Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media and Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–1979*, 128–38, London: Routledge, 1980.
[90] Cf. Hall, "Which Public, Whose Service?"

produced, the April 14, 2007, broadcast of *Fuse* featured performances by Rollie Pemberton and Owen Pallett and a storyline that introduced unlike musicians, explored their respective home scenes through conversations and samples, and resolved creative differences through collaborative musicking (see figure 2). The foregrounded narrative celebrates disparate musicians performing together in a display of intercultural harmony: the process is teleological—even inevitable—and the potential for miscommunications or irreconcilable tensions seemingly foreclosed. The reality is messier. As Žižek consistently demonstrates,[91] mediated forms have the potential to mask and sustain the root causes of social, political, and economic inequalities. By looking to "non-ideological" entertainment and comparatively analyzing formal characteristics in relation to content, there is potential to gain insight about hegemonic elements of existing systems.

From the formal characteristics of the mediated performance, my focus narrowed to the two tracks that framed the broadcast: "Grim Fandango," which ostensibly introduced audiences to Rollie Pemberton and his musical priorities, and "Win and Regine," the song that the performers reimagined as the outcome of their intercultural collaboration. While the form of the episode assigned meaning to each performance, I was interested in how each song reinforced or contradicted the preferred narrative. Notably, any assessment of the power dynamics at play in the performances on *Fuse* needs to account for the variety of relationships realized through the intercultural encounter. This includes musician histories and stylistic assumptions, as well as the relationship of musicians to the broadcaster and both live and imagined audiences. Musicians, after all, were commissioned to perform together for audiences that may or may not have been regular consumers of their respective musics. Producers, in turn, were answerable to their production standards and the terms of their mandate to serve the Canadian public, responsibilities that influenced how they conceptualized and mixed performances. Detailed comparative analysis of Pemberton and Pallett's performances on *Fuse* that accounts for musician trajectories, stylistic priorities, and the function of musical elements—not to mention the process of mediating content for disparately present audiences—reveals the potential for misunderstandings, appropriations, and unconsciously coercive acts based on assumed commonalities.

Yet Pemberton and Pallett's performances together introduced ambiguities with the potential for upending musical hierarchies given alternative forms of curation and mediation. Indeed, this may have happened for audiences who were physically copresent in the Ottawa Broadcast Centre's Studio 40. There is good reason why Stanyek insists on physical copresence as a condition of interculturalism: proximity offers unique potential for "reinforc[ing] differences and ruptur[ing] continuities."[92] The mediated nature of Pemberton and Pallett's performance on *Fuse* requires attention not just to their capacity to communicate, (mis)translate, and create together—as well as their abilities to author their own stories and offer complications to proscribed narratives—but to the assumptions and priorities of the production team who ultimately privileged a particular hearing of the musicians and their musics.[93] Aural traces in the form of censorship and production standards not equally suited to the musical priorities of each performer undermined the potential for collaborative music making to engender intercultural understanding. That seems a negative assessment, but it also points to opportunities for more equitable curation, creative uses of emergent technologies, and collaborations with performers. Policies on censorship can be reassessed. Affirmative action hiring practices introduce more varied sources of knowledge into the production process.

---

[91] Žižek, *Violence*; *Living in the End of Times.*
[92] Stanyek, "Diasporic Improvisation," 11.
[93] Cf. Hall, "Encoding/Decoding."

And the technical challenges that undermined the potential to hear the ambiguities in the music, especially in "Win and Regine," while still considerations, continue to change. Multiplatform production is now standard, which opens possibilities for a greater range of hi- and lo-fi production that may be better suited to the needs of performers. In addition, different platforms enable alternative forms of curation that enable a diverse imagined audience to engage from a variety of perspectives. Assessing the biases imposed by approaches to mediating content enables approaches to be revised that, ideally, will provide listeners with the necessary tools for listening differently.

Discography

Cadence Weapon. *Breaking Kayfabe*. Upper Class Canada, 2005, compact disc.

Edwards, Kathleen. "I Make the Dough, You Get the Glory." *Asking for Flowers*. MapleMusic Recordings, 2008, compact disc.

Final Fantasy. *Has a Good Home*. Blocks Recording Club, TOM54, 2005, compact disc.

References

Allgayer-Kaufmann, Regine. "From the Innocent to the Exploring Eye: Transcription on the Defensive." *The World of Music* 47, no. 2 (2005): 71–86.

Anonymous, Adam. "In Search of the Youth Crew: Cadence Weapon's here to call out hipsters." *Drowned in Sound*. Last modified February 15, 2008. http://drownedinsound.com/in_depth/2928170-in-search-of-the-youth-crew--cadence-weapons-here-to-call-out-hipsters.

Belanger, Pierre C., in collaboration with Philippe Andrecheck. "CBC's Electronic Radio 3: Connecting with the Elusive Youth." *Journal of Radio Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005): 120–135. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506843jrs1201_10.

Butler, Mark. "Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music." PhD diss., Indiana University, 2003.

———. *Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada. *Strengthening and Renewing the CBC: Our Strategy at Work, CBC Corporate Plan Summary 2002–2003 to 2006–2007*. June 2002. https://site-cbc.radio-canada.ca/documents/vision/strategy/corporate-plan/complete-plan-2002-e.pdf.

Cheng, William. *Video Games and the Musical Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Coast, The. "Rollie Pemberton, AKA Cadence Weapon." The Coast: Halifax's Website, April 10, 2008. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/rollie-pemberton-aka-cadence-weapon/Content?oid=962658.

Cohen, Ian. "Owen Pallett." *Pitchfork*, March 18, 2014. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://pitchfork.com/features/update/9358-owen-pallett/.

Conway, Kyle. *Everyone Says No: Public Service Broadcasting and the Failure of Translation*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.

Deusner, Stephen M. "Final Fantasy." *Pitchfork*, March 8, 2005. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://pitchfork.com/features/article/5985-final-fantasy/.

Draisey-Collishaw, Rebecca. "Curating Canadianness: Radio, Fusion Programming, and Hierarchies of Difference." PhD diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2017.

———. "Re-imagining the Nation: The CBC as a Mediator of Ethnocultural Encounter in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador." In *Contemporary Musical Expressions and Cultural Resonances in Canada*, edited by Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen, and Sherry Johnson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvt6rn0d.22.

———. "'Traveling-in-dwelling, Dwelling-in-traveling': Producing Multicultural Canada through Narrations of Mobility on CBC Radio's *Fuse*." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 27, no. 3 (2018): 323–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2018.1532305.

Fast, Susan, and Kip Pegley, eds. *Music, Politics, and Violence*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012.

Fleras, Augie, and Jean Lock Kunz. *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational, 2001.

Garcia, Luis-Manuel. "Beats, Flesh, and Grain: Sonic Tactility and Affect in Electronic Dance Music." *Sound Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 59–76. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20551940.2015.1079072.

Goldstein, Ian. "Experiencing Musical Connection: Sonic Interventions in Mediterranean Social Memory." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2017.

Herman, Max. "Cadence Weapon." Electronic Musician: Record, Produce, Perform. March 1, 2008. Updated November 29, 2017. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://www.emusician.com/gear/cadence-weapon.

Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding." In *Culture, Media and Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–1979*, 128–38. London: Routledge, 1980.

———. "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202.

———. "Which Public, Whose Service?" In *All Our Futures: The Changing Role and Purpose of the BBC*, edited by Wilf Stevenson, 23–38. London: British Film Institute, 1993.

Kheshti, Roshanak. *Modernity's Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World Music*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Kids on TV. "Bio." *Kids on TV*. Accessed August 14, 2016. http://www.kidsontv.biz/.

Lind, Stephanie. "Sounding Nostalgia in Video Games." Dan School of Drama & Music Colloquium, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, January 10, 2020.

MacDonald, Sarah. "The optimist rapper: How Cadence Weapon keeps himself going—and stays excited about the future." CBC Arts, *I Fell Out of Love*. April 23, 2019. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://www.cbc.ca/arts/the-optimist-rapper-how-cadence-weapon-keeps-himself-going-and-stays-excited-about-the-future-1.5107451.

Macia, Peter. "Cadence Weapon: *Breaking Kayfabe*." *Pitchfork*, May 3, 2006. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/1801-breaking-kayfabe/.

Marian-Bălaşa, Marin. "Who Actually Needs Transcription? Notes on the Modern Rise of a Method and the Postmodern Fall of an Ideology." *The World of Music* 47, no. 2 (2005): 5–29.

Miller, Matt. "Dirty Decade: Rap Music and the US South, 1997–2007." *Southern Spaces*, June 10, 2008. https://doi.org/10.18737/M78P5T.

Pearce, Sheldon. "Cadence Weapon: *Cadence Weapon*." *Pitchfork*, January 22, 2018. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/cadence-weapon-cadence-weapon/.

Pratt, Mary Louise. "Introduction: Criticism in the Contact Zone." In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1–12. New York: Routledge, (1992) 2008, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203932933.

Rayner, Ben. "Cadence Weapon reintroduces his rap." *The Star*, March 28, 2018. Accessed September 28, 2019. https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2018/03/27/cadence-weapon-reintroduces-his-rap.html.

Sahota, Anu. "CBC Radio 3: A Disquieting Radio Revolution." MA Extended essays, Simon Fraser University, 2006.

Stanyek, Jason. "Diasporic Improvisation and the Articulation of Intercultural Music." PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2004.

Taylor, Paul A. *Žižek and the Media*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010.

Upper Class Recordings. "Tours, Cadence goes UK, XM, Juices!" *Upper Class Recordings*, September 6, 2007. Accessed September 28, 2019. http://www.upperclassrecordings.com/_blog/News/page/14/.

Warner, Michael. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49–90, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-49.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008.

———. *Living in the End of Times*. New York: Verso, 2010.