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All Access: YouTube, the History of the Music Video, and its Contemporary Renaissance

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All Access:

YouTube, the History of the Music Video, and Its Contemporary Renaissance

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Brian A. Smith
B.A., Appalachian State University, 2003

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An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

All Access:
YouTube, the History of the Music Video, and Its Contemporary Renaissance
by Brian A. Smith

This dissertation traces the history and evolution of what is currently referred to as the music video. Thanks to YouTube, The Prelinger Archives, fans, users, academics, hobbyist historians, and archivists, this history is now coming to light; it is currently being digitized and increasingly available to a global audience since 2006. The art form is often mistakenly thought to begin with The Beatles or MTV, but predecessors to the music video begin with musical shorts in the early 20th century. Through the 1940's, several soundies were produced in America, which were also staged musical representations. Their momentum is carried on through various performances on variety television shows, generally from the 1950's through the 1970's. By the 1970's, enough music videos were being produced to conceive of a channel like MTV, followed by VH1, CMT, and others. And in the 21st century, the advent of YouTube has provided a platform for the new music video renaissance as well as a platform for digitizing, archiving, and viewing early predecessors to the music video. Situated primarily in an American context, the many histories that comprise the music video are outlined and analyzed, offering a new vantage point in the history of American music.

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Introduction:

The History of the Music Video in Perception, Production, and Pedagogy

All access. There is perhaps no time in American musical history where the ability to have digital access to any and all music – written, produced, filmed, recorded, lost, performed, shunned, or once dusty on the shelf - is as close to a reality as now. We have more and more access to art, music, information, discourse, and perhaps even cross-cultural understanding than ever before. Finances, profit margins, legalities, consumer demands, resource availability, social networking trends, breakthroughs in computer programming, and the fact that companies are finite entities that come and go by nature all create this ebb and flow of the access to new information, as well as new access to old information. The eight factors I have listed above have, in various ways, recently come together, and one of the strongest forces in the global, digital music economy is YouTube, and what several have deemed the 21st century video boom. In 2013, the Huffington Post reported that, according to Google Inc's YouTube, "1 billion unique users were now visiting the video-sharing website every month, or nearly one out of every two people on the internet."[i] Just after the end of 2013, Business Insider reported that the amount of traffic YouTube receives from mobile devices jumped from six percent to forty percent in two years.[ii] Music videos are, by far, the most popular kind of videos on YouTube.

The world is now in a full blown music video renaissance, and now, thanks to fans, users, archivists, amateur and professional historians, record labels, and YouTube

itself, we are now beginning to have access to what one might call the history of the music video. Music videos are very rarely something a person can purchase, and therefore collect. Soundies were viewed on Panorams, musical performances on variety shows were viewed on television, channels like MTV, VH1, or CMT aired music videos all day long, and now YouTube allows users to upload music videos for free. While albums were purchased, owned, and collected by fans, music videos and their predecessors were not. The Prelinger Archives has a wonderful collection of soundies digitally available to the public, but YouTube presents the public with a format that, among other things, allows one to see and explore the entire history of the music video, and that history continues to grow as fans and users upload content they may have once had on VHS and have now digitized it, record labels are reissuing and uploading music videos made over twenty years ago and monetizing them on YouTube's platform, and fans 'collect' them by creating YouTube channels. The history continues to develop not simply because time goes on and new or established artists create new music videos, but older content continues to be digitized and uploaded, and to a magnitude no one could have predicted.

My own interest in the history and evolution of what came to be known as the music video is not merely academic, nor the simple fact I also happen to be a musician, but from working in the music industry doing, among other things, professional videography. It became the most popular aspect of my work because touring musicians were already or quickly realizing the importance of video to their careers, to building their audience, to booking shows at larger venues, and to further establish or mark changes in their own artistic identities and directions. This not only entailed directing

music videos, but work for internationally renown and large scale music festivals, crowd-sourcing material, multi-camera live shoots, interviews, backstage performances and behind the scenes material, and documentary work. Within a short amount of time, artists ranging from Matisyahu to the multi-Grammy award winning Alison Krauss, from New Orleans' most popular band Galactic to MacArthur Fellow composer and performer Chris Thile, from Guy Clark to Gary Clark Jr., from Old Crow Medicine Show to bluegrass legend Peter Rowan. The latter I was hired to film as a special guest with the Grammy Award winning Steep Canyon Rangers in Asheville, NC; it is a town that is now internationally renown for its contemporary music scene, and it is no coincidence that it is situated in the Appalachian mountains of western North Carolina, an area that is historically significant in terms of its blend of Celtic, Scottish, old time, or what some generally refer to as 'traditional mountain music'. Later, I would be hired to film Steep Canyon Rangers with multi-Grammy award winning musician Sam Bush, who has been named Mandolin Player of the Year four times at the International Bluegrass Music Association and was presented with a Lifetime Achievement for Instrumentalist Award by the Americana Music Association; on of the founders of the New Grass Revival, Sam Bush has had a dramatic impact on countless musicians. My own experiences at the Americana Music Festival in Nashville and International Bluegrass Music Association, recently held in Raleigh, NC have certainly informed my own understanding of the contemporary music industry, as well as working at major music festivals like MerleFest in North Carolina or Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago, as well as smaller music festivals across the east coast.

I began to work closely with Carolina Chocolate Drops who have revived a relatively neglected aspect of traditional American music, notably African-American folk songs, instruments, and musical techniques that were common in the early part of the twentieth century. Their album *Genuine Negro Jig* won a Grammy for Best Traditional Folk Album and their popularity has generated greater interest in the history from which they borrow and to which they compliment, contribute, and pay tribute. And in one way or another, I have worked with nearly every genre of popular American music, with the exception of jazz which seems to be on the decline since its own popular renaissance in the 1990's and early 2000's with artists like Karl Denson, Medeski, Martin, and Wood, John Scofield, or Charlie Hunter.

Living in musically vibrant cities like New York City, Paris, Atlanta, and even Asheville, NC has certainly informed my experiential knowledge, but more importantly being a musician in those places provides a working knowledge of the realities of the music industry itself. Having been a self-taught multi-instrumentalist for many years and later developing an academic interest in music and what has come to be known as 'theory' or 'critical theory', I began to notice a severe lack in academic contributions to music. One reason for this lack is undoubtedly that professors in music departments are not often not expected to produce books, but rather music and musicians. Ethnomusicology departments are of course more rare than English or philosophy departments, and several of the technological developments in the twentieth century led to many academics focusing on what came to be known as 'visual culture', despite Americans being increasingly saturated with audio-visual technologies and experiences for over a century. Music has its own language, its own vocabulary that escapes many

non-musicians, and the result is either to not write about it at all, consult the likes of Nietzsche or Adorno, or to focus on particular elements of the music that do not require a working knowledge of music itself, like sexuality, racial representation, or any number of very important academic and public concerns or topics.

But the 1980's and 1990's revealed a renewed academic interest in popular music due to the popularity of MTV itself. Music had become visual again, but instead of being in soundies, films, or variety television shows, it was in swing as a full-fledged entertaining art form capturing the minds of young Americans for as long as they cared to watch. But unfortunately some of that academic interest was a bit flawed. Fredric Jameson, in his conclusion to *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* claims that "what MTV does to music…is not some inversion of that defunct nineteenth-century form called program music but rather the nailing of sounds (using Lacan's carpet tacks, no doubt) onto visible space and spatial segments: here, as in the video form more generally, the older paradigm – that lights up in genealogical hindsight as this one's predecessor (but not the basic influence on it) – is animation itself."[iii] But music videos are precisely the opposite, they are images nailed to sound, to use Jameson's wording; in other words, music videos, especially in the MTV and contemporary eras, are videos filmed and edited to prerecorded sound. What MTV does is play those videos, initially by inserting a VHS tape; this is not nailing sounds (music) to a visible space (television), but taking an audio-visual art form (music video) and playing it on a device where audio-visual material is able to be viewed and heard (television). Jameson's understanding is in the context of a heavily theoretical purview, but is essentially wrong.

Lev Manovich writes in his book *The Language of New Media* that, "the genre of the music video came into existence precisely at the time when electronic video-effects devices were entering editing studios". He later states that, "a detailed analysis of the evolution of music video imagery (or, more generally, broadcast graphics in the electronic age) deserves a separate treatment, and I will not try to take it up here."[iv] It is a good thing he does not, because the genre of the music video and its evolution begins with soundies and evolves through variety TV show performances; in other words, music videos did not begin with video-effects devices. He simply is not aware of the rich history and evolution of the music video and spends very little time mentioning them. Despite attempting to explain the "language of new media", Manovich what would become the most popular type of video on the second largest search engine in the world. The language of new media has changed dramatically since Manovich's 2001 publication.

The title of this work, All Access, partially takes its title from a mistake made by Mark Taylor in his book *Nots*. Giving Madonna a lot of attention on his larger analysis on art and religion, Taylor intertwines his analysis of Madonna's music and music videos and her sexual and religious representations with references to theorists like Deleuze and Bataille. And in the middle of his 'critique', he begins to theorize a photograph of Madonna taken by Steven Meisel. In the photograph, Madonna has her bare back turned to the camera and her tight shorts are slightly unzipped in the back. On her back is drawn a very simple image: two vertically aligned rectangles, one within the other, a small oval at the top between the two rectangles, and the words 'all access' written inside the smaller of the two rectangles. Mark Taylor is obviously confused at to what this object is

that is drawn on her back. He writes, "on her back is superimposed what could be the outline of a picture frame, television screen, or video terminal." He continues to write that, "in the middle of the empty box is written 'ALL ACCESS'", and concludes that "the image deconstructs itself, for the words subvert the image and the image contradicts the words."[v] Nearly anyone who has ever worked in the contemporary music industry in any English speaking country (artists, photographers, videographers, venue hospitality, talent-buyers, booking agents, press, stage managers, tour managers, musicians, etc) know what this object is; so do certain concert-goers, VIPs, and special guests of the artist or venue. It is certainly not a picture frame, television screen or video terminal, though those are all quite imaginative guesses. It is simply an all access pass, what is generally called a laminate (since there are different kinds of passes inserted into the laminate and then given out at concerts), and they almost always come with a string (to wear it around one's neck) or a clip (to attach it to a piece of clothing). Madonna, along with her band and crew, would receive one at every show, as I would receive one at every show I worked. Some receive media passes, artist passes, staff passes, photo passes, VIP passes, etc. An all access pass is what any artist receives at his or her own concert, and Madonna has, in this photograph, elected to have the image drawn on her back. But even though Mark Taylor does not know what this image is, and therefore must not have been in the habit of attending musical performances, he continues with his critique and even has the photograph inserted into his text. Whether or not the image deconstructs itself or whether the image is subverted or the words contradicted now takes on a whole new light, given that the image is obviously not a picture frame or TV. Had someone drawn the string with the laminate around Madonna's neck, there is no telling how Mark Taylor would use

Bataille or Deleuze to misinterpret an image in some sexual way, the ‘rope’ around her neck as some masochistic metaphor in her ‘adverteasing’, as he often calls it.

In 2006, I had the pleasure of speaking at a conference at the University of Melbourne, Australia called “Music and Postmodern Cultural Theory”. Having delivered talks at a number of graduate student and American Comparative Literature Association conferences at Princeton, Columbia, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Puebla, Mexico on the topics of music, media, and history, it was this conference in particular where I would find myself at a conference designed precisely for the topic of which I was investigating or theorizing at the time. I completed my lecture on the long plane ride from Atlanta to Los Angeles, from Los Angeles to Aukland, New Zealand, and from Aukland to Melbourne. But having the pleasure of speaking last at a tremendously wonderful conference, I continued to alter the final version of my talk as the conference progressed due to one insight or response that I kept having when listening to the other attendants behind the podium, over tea, at the hotel, the restaurant, or the bar. There was a general tendency, one that I was once guilty of leaning toward, to take theoretical principles, conclusions, or maxims from some of the more famous French intellectuals from the structuralist / post-structuralist philosophical movements and attempt to make certain musical examples, genres, performances, or phenomena fit into those ideas. It was as if somehow, studies in music needed to catch up to the theoretical landscape of what was generally referred to as postmodern cultural theory; there were ways of talking about music that would, in some sense, prove those ideas right. I did not like that idea, out of some kind of unexplainable intuition, and that feeling stayed with me throughout the conference up until the final panels.

When I spoke, I was surprised to see ethnomusicologist Susan McClary and Deleuzian scholar Claire Colbrook rushing into the room, fleeing the other panel to hear me speak. I was nervous, not due to their added presence to the small crowd before me, but because I had altered my lecture so drastically over the course of the few days leading up to the end of the conference. While still speaking heavily on artists such as John Zorn, new phenomena in music and new multi-media experiences, or the nuances of diegetic and non-diegetic sound, I found myself speaking more about the severe lack of theoretical or academic work on music compared to the other arts. In terms of the US, music has for a very long time been an extremely vibrant, culturally significant art form that has, at times, been the force behind significant shifts in American society. But music departments were doing what they were supposed to do, producing musicians and music, not theoretical books on music. And professors in, say, philosophy, anthropology, English, or comparative literature departments were also doing their jobs, which was producing research within the parameter of their respective fields as well as trying to be 'interdisciplinary'. Nevertheless, not only was there a lack of theoretical discourse on music, but what was out there or being written seemed to fall into the same tendency mentioned above, namely attempting to fit certain musical pieces, examples, or genres into what the conference was generally referring to as postmodern cultural theory (most commonly, the work of figures like Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan, Baudrillard, and others).

Despite my own interest and academic training in structuralist and poststructuralist theoretical discourse at Emory University, I have always been a musician first and an academic second. In my lecture, I argued that was not the job of

contemporary intellectuals and academic to attempt to take music and make it fit into the popular theoretical discourse of the time, but to approach music in ways that provoke new theories and new explorations beyond the assigned reading for even the best 'Introduction to Theory' graduate course. The point is not to make music 'catch up' to theoretical discourse written two, three, or four decades ago; instead, theoretical discourse needed to catch up to music, which continues to happen with or without it. Even the most famous of recent French intellectuals, save perhaps Deleuze, have relatively little to say about music. Many American academics tended to focus on the 'visual' nature of musical artists like Madonna in the 1990's, but lacked the proper training or interest in the language of music itself. And some academics who are not musicians lack the confidence to say much about music at all, save perhaps musical lyrics. In other words, at the end of the Music and Postmodern Cultural Theory conference in Melbourne, I concluded that what we call or may include under the term 'postmodern cultural theory' is relatively inadequate in understanding both contemporary and historical musical phenomena. After my lecture, Susan McClary immediately walked up to me, shook my hand, and thanked me for saying what I had said. I was twenty-six years old at that time.

It was the same year Google bought YouTube, and what would happen, no one foresaw, not even myself. The digital music revolution, already well in the works, would begin to shift given three factors: the increased popularity of streaming services, the advent of the smart-phone, and to a major resurgence in the production of music videos thanks to YouTube. Much like Pitchfork Media was becoming the new Rolling Stone Magazine, VEVO was becoming the new MTV, and it would be powered by YouTube

and partially owned by Google. But most artists are not on the VEVO platform, and YouTube would, among other things, provide a format in which independent musicians (whose numbers drastically increased in the US in the 21st century) could upload and share their music videos, live performances, and so on. Music would become visual again, and to proportions that far outshined the likes of MTV or even historic performances on The Ed Sullivan Show by Elvis or The Beatles.

Earlier in 2006, I had the opportunity to fly from Atlanta to New York City to see the unformidable jazz legend Ornette Coleman perform at The Lincoln Center, and John Zorn's quartet Masada was the opening act. Ornette Coleman needs no introduction here, and John Zorn was one of the independent warriors, owning his own label and often speaking out against the decisions and greed of major music labels. Just before leaving, I learned that, for the first couple of nights, I would be staying with a friend of a friend of a friend, so to speak, in Brooklyn. He was the CFO of a major music label, and I will omit both the name of the CFO and the label here for a number of reasons. Upon landing in New York City and taking the train to Brooklyn, I and my company arrived late in the evening and had the chance to converse with this person before the family's departure to upstate New York for the weekend. I was surprised to find that he had never heard of Ornette Coleman, let alone John Zorn. There was not a musical instrument in the house, no musical paraphernalia. This person was very gracious and welcoming as we entered the home, travel weary and carrying heavy bags. In our conversation that evening, this person told the story of how he or she came to become the CFO of this particular label, confessing that when interviewed for the job, admitted that he or she only owned a

handful of CD's and didn't really listen to music or know much about it. Their response was, according to this person, a sort of 'we don't really care, we just need to move units'.

On the night of the show, we arrived early so as not to miss any of John Zorn's set with Masada, seated just right of center near the front row. The rest of the seats continued to fill as Zorn's set drew to a close and were nearly full as Ornette Coleman began. He and the musicians did not walk out to the stage together to greet the audience as many performers do. The stage was set, the lights were down, and then there was a faint noise that caught at least those near the front row by surprise. The noise repeated again, reverberating in what became an otherwise silent theater. By the third time the noise was heard, it was louder and recognizable as a human imitating a chicken. It continued and increased in volume. Ornette Coleman finally reached the stage, squawking on his way from the green room. His long green socks were pulled up over his pants, he wore no shoes, and he walked hunched over, elbows out and up and back and forth, he strutted with his knees high in the air, and he continued to squawk like a chicken as he slowly approached the piano. The audience gave a confused applause for his entrance, many wanting to cheer for him, others wanting to remain quiet in order to hear him. Once he passed between the drum kit on stage right and the upright bass and amp in the center of the stage, arriving at his piano bench, he ceased to imitate a chicken and began punching the keys of the piano with his fists. The notes he hit were random, improvised, his body often rising from the piano bench as his clinched fists quickly bounced all over the piano keys for approximately ten minutes.

The other two musicians were bassist Henry Grimes and Ornette Coleman's son Denardo Coleman on drums. Henry Grimes was infamous for being so poor that he did

not play the bass for many years because he could not afford to buy one. His amplifier that night was not working properly, so he borrowed the bass amp belonging to Greg Cohen of Masada. As the two walked out one stage, the audience again applauded, and the trio began what would be over an hour of free jazz. The members of Masada remained perched in an unseated portion of the Mezzanine just to the side of the stage during Coleman's performance. They were watching a hero. But in the rest of seats, as time went on during the set, The Lincoln Center began to empty out, season pass holders and middle-aged couples out on a date had decided they had heard enough. By the end of the set, The Lincoln Center was nearly empty.

I learned a lot that weekend, more from emotions than information, and it both changed and augmented my thinking on American music, the music industry, the present and the future, and most importantly here, the power of the visual experience of music. It was one of the greatest performances I had ever seen, in person or on the screen. And again, this was the same year Google bought the fledgling company YouTube; people in America were not habitually watching, sharing, or creating videos. College kids at the turn of the new century listened to all kinds of music that they would never see in any form with the exception of the occasional live show by one of their favorite bands or a documentary featuring bands from a decade or more in the past. I was part of that age demographic; I was one of those college kids. As a musician, as an academic, and as someone who very rarely watched television, the advent of YouTube had a tremendous personal impact on me. There was this feeling of having all access to anything and everything musical: music videos, music instruction videos, live concert footage, vintage television performances, and so on. There was also the revolutionary possibility that

anyone could make a video and anyone else could see it. So for the first time in my life, instead of buying a new musical instrument (my favorite instrument is always the one I don't know how to play yet), I bought a video camera.

At the same time, I had lived in various places in the US and had played nearly any genre of music that I could, from rock to funk to Arabic electronic to classical to experimental jazz, but eventually I would relocate to my native western North Carolina and not only began to play but also work in the handful of genres that have been such a part of the geographic area of the US for so long: old time, bluegrass, and folk music. I had returned to my roots, as they say. It would not be long until some of the artists or professionals with whom I was working had won Grammy's and were internationally renown artists, and others I worked with were amazingly talented regional artists. There was one moment in particular that would change how I thought about the relationship between music and video.

In 2011, I was filming a performance by Doc Watson in Boone, NC, where a life-sized bronze statue was being erected and unveiled in his honor; his home town of Deep Gap, NC is just miles away from Boone and Doc Watson used to play on King Street in Boone as a kid. As for the unencumbered or anyone unfamiliar reading this, there is no introduction or short description that will adequately depict the significance, the importance, or the life of Doc Watson. I will simply quickly state that he was a blind folk, country, gospel, bluegrass, and blues musician who has won as many Grammy's as The Beatles, and has also been a major influence on thousands and thousands of artists. I was honored to be filming Doc Watson, and thanks to his musical partner, David Holt, I was able to do so. After the performance, I simply turned off the camera, closed the

tripod and began walking down King Street toward the venue in which the after-party, or, VIP dinner was going to be held. On the way to this particular destination was Doc Watson's statue. Little did I know that, as I was walking around the block in one direction toward the venue, Doc Watson had been escorted around the other side of the block, had bypassed the venue for the VIP dinner, and sat beside his own statue just as I had arrived there. I was waiting to arrive at the dinner before packing up my camera, so it was ready in hand. This was unannounced, and only a handful of people from the large audience in attendance noticed that Doc Watson had sat beside his own statue. As they began taking pictures, I began filming and subsequently captured the first time Doc Watson sat beside his own statue.

In other words, I was filming a blind musician sitting on a beside a life-sized statue of himself that he cannot see. The statue is of Doc Watson sitting on a bench playing a Gallagher guitar, and Doc Watson himself was sitting beside it, touching the statue with his hands, making jokes, and responding to questions and comments by those standing around the two Doc Watsons. He was interacting with a reproduction of himself, and I was making a reproduction of that experience.

Doc Watson would pass away later that year in May, one month after what would be his final performance at MerleFest on the campus of Wilkes Community College. I subsequently edited the footage and composed, performed, and recorded the music. It is a relatively unclassifiable short piece, perhaps a documentary short of some kind, called "Doc Watson Sitting Beside Himself".[vi] Stills from the video were first premiered at Echo Mountain Recording Studios during a panel I was on that was hosted by WNCW radio host Joseph Kendrick and streamed live; as part of that panel, I was speaking on the

history of the music video. The actual premiere was at a regional music video awards ceremony called Music Video Asheville, and was selected as the closing piece for the event. It was officially released on the first day of MerleFest in 2013, the first MerleFest in which Doc Watson would not be in attendance.

Sometimes learning the power of the moving image requires actually making it, producing one that brings tears to your eyes as you are editing it, and feeling proud about such a seemingly simple thing.

It was around this time that I began working with some of the artists I mentioned earlier in the introduction as well as regional artists and less well established bands that were trying to get off the ground, so to speak. Mostly, I worked in video production since that seems to be what everyone wants or needs. For the first time since the 1940's, touring musicians have been actively seeking out professionals to record them in whatever moving picture fashion, for whatever purpose, be it a music video, live performance, or for some other promotional purpose. We are in the 21st century video boom and music is the driving force of that.

In Chapter 1, I trace the changes in the music industry regarding album sales and evolutions in both streaming and downloading technologies and software, namely in order to paint a picture of what kind of music industry YouTube would inherit. Music is, by far, YouTube's most popular genre or content category, with the vast majority of the videos with the most views being music videos. In the early 2000's, it was lamented by some that, with the waning presence of MTV, the music video as an art form or a cultural phenomenon was dying out. No one could have predicted the immense popularity the music video would garner with the advent of YouTube; and the declining prices of video

cameras, computers, and editing software has been making music video production more accessible, more democratic, and, thanks to YouTube's availability across the world, more global. As it will be further described in Chapter 1, the world is in a full blown music video renaissance, with video production and viewing rising to gargantuan proportions that outshines any other era of the production of music videos or their predecessors.

New content is certainly not the only content uploaded to YouTube. Musical shorts from the 1920's and 1930's, soundies and Scopitone films from the 1940's, television variety show performances from the 1950's, musical promotional films from the 1960's and 1970's, and the music videos from the MTV, VH1, and CMT era of the 1980's and 1990's are being archived, uploaded, ripped from VHS, pulled off the dusty shelves in whatever analog format they were stored.

Chapter 2 is an analysis of this phenomenon and a look at the earliest predecessors to music videos: the musical shorts of the late 1920's and 1930's, and the soundies of the 1940's. Thanks primarily to The Prelinger Archives, many of these have been collected and are now digitized. Thanks primarily to fans, hobbyist historians, and otherwise average and normal civilians, these predecessors to what we know as the music video are available on YouTube, with more being discovered, digitized, and/or uploaded every year. But this is all relatively recent and is still evolving, the oldest in the history and evolution of the music video somehow feeling like the newest, the content that is surrounded by less collective historical knowledge than other eras.

Chapter 3 traces the evolution of the concepts of musical shorts and soundies into television itself from the 1950's though the 1970's. Initially, musical performances in the

wide array of variety shows in the US not only keep the concept of the staged musical performance in moving pictures alive, but also present them to a wider audience. *The Ed Sullivan Show* was of course one of the longest running and most popular, and artists like Elvis and The Beatles would find their fame and popularity in American exploding after performing on the show, capturing the eyes of significant percentages of the American population. In this era, we can now see the visual birth of rock and roll, the visual force of the British Invasion, the first television performances by a number of historically significant musical artists of the time, and unfortunately sometimes the last television performances of artists like Hank Williams. By the 1960's and 1970's, what we now think of as a music video are being produced by several artists for promotional purposes, from Bob Dylan to The Beatles, and we can now revisit this otherwise somewhat invisible history of what would, on the one hand, continue to shape American culture through this era and, on the other hand, produce the momentum necessary for a television channel like MTV to exist.

Chapter 4 is about the era that follows, which is of course the era of MTV, VH1, and CMT (though there were other, less popular stations). This is the era from which the term 'music video' is derived and marks yet another cultural shift in music video production and how they are viewed or, more specifically, how often. MTV during the 1980's and 1990's remained one of the most popular (and at times the most popular) television program in the US. Visual representations of music would continue, as they always had in the US, to shock, to shape adolescent identities, to reflect certain lifestyles, to provoke cultural shifts, and to promote the artist. The major music video channels took music video production, broadcast, and consumption to a new heightened level and

genres like rap and alternative rock would be born out of this era. As was the case with musical shorts, soundies, television variety shows, and other predecessors to the music video, dance would continue to be an important component in music videos during this era, helping to elevate the careers of artists like Madonna or Michael Jackson that so commonly incorporated dance into their live performances in their own signature ways. "Video Killed the Radio Star" is famously the first music video aired on MTV, the title serving as a metaphor for the future of the music industry and music video production. Video would not necessarily kill the biggest artists on the radio, but would become the litmus test for what would be popular on the radio and drive CD sales. At the end of this era, the music video seemed to lack a particular outlet or viewing format as channels like MTV drifted away from constantly airing music videos and shifted toward reality television. But the end of this era only brings us back to the present. YouTube not only allows us to access this history, but is itself the primary format or interface for new music videos to be seen.

In the spring of 2014, I had the pleasure of teaching a course on the history and evolution of the music video at Emory University, and each chapter ends with pedagogical reflections on the content and the course. This is a new history, or rather many histories, now available to us in an overwhelming amount of content and musical evolution. These histories compliment and augment other histories, like the history the Civil Rights movement, the Harlem Renaissance, culture during the Eisenhower era, the counterculture movement, the history of fashion, of dance, and the history of music itself. Given our current and recent 21st century video boom and the advent of YouTube, a course like the one I taught is possible whereas it would not have been adequately

possible in the early 2000's. New historic examples continue to be digitally available, and music videos are currently being produced in astronomically large numbers across the world. This is perhaps the most exciting time in the history of music video production, because now we can access that very history at our fingertips.

Chapter 1:

YouTube, the Music Industry, and the 21st Century Video Boom

As Tim Berners-Lee aptly worded it with his own musicality in *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web*, "some companies will rise, some will fall, and new ones might spring from the shadows and surprise them all".[vii] It was in 2006 when Google acquired what was originally designed to be a simple way to share videos, the largest purchase in Google's history. In a republished article from The Associated Press, NBC News posted that "internet search leader Google is snapping up YouTUbe for $1.65 billion, brushing aside copyright concerns to seize a starring role in the online video revolution", and continued to state that "although some cynics have questioned YouTube's staying power, Google is betting that the popular video-sharing site will provide it an increasingly lucrative marketing hub as more viewers and advertisers migrate from television to the Internet". The fears of those cynics are described as YouTube having "less flattering comparisons to the original Napster, the once-popular music sharing service that was buried in an avalanche of copyright infringement lawsuits filed by incensed music companies and artists", and that "while most videos posted on YouTube are homemade, the site also features volumes of copyrighted material – a problem that has caused some critics to predict the startup eventually would be sued into oblivion". But even prior to finalizing negotiations with Google, YouTube had recently established partnerships with major labels like Universal Music Group, CBS, Sony BMG, and Warner Music Group. Despite YouTube's youth as

a company, only founded in 2005, the article reports that the YouTube co-founders have "spent months cozying up with major media executives in an effort to convince them that YouTube could help them make more money by helping them connect with the growing number of people who spend most of their free time on the Internet."[viii] That was then.

Now YouTube has become not only the largest force in the 21st century video boom, and not only the second largest search engine (again, owned by Google, which is the largest search engine in the world) but increasingly a major force in the music industry. In terms of the history of the music video, YouTube is the predominant format / interface for uploading video in the world and, given that it is also a search engine and social media platform, has been integral in the formation of several artists' careers as well as a medium for user generated fan archives of older historical pieces that were once only available in analog format, collected in archives, or even just a dusty VHS in someone's home.

YouTube is certainly not the only platform, as Vimeo has attempted to compete with the video giant and appeal to more corporate entities and video production professionals, touting a higher quality video experience. Archive.org, or more specifically, The Prelinger Archives, is of course not attempting to compete with YouTube or Vimeo but is geared toward digitally archiving older historical artifacts such as Soundies and old variety show programs. YouTube is not merely a video platform, a social media platform, a search engine, or a platform for user-generated content, but it is also a monetization platform, particularly in the music industry. As different as all video platforms may be, YouTube is having the largest impact on the contemporary music industry in the US as well as internationally, and to understand the particular ways in

which YouTube has expanded, financial gaps it continues to fill, and ways in which it has shaped the broader financial landscape of the industry, it is important to understand what has happened to the music industry since the advent of digital media and digital music recording developments, particularly in the US.

According to the Recording Industry Association of America, "in the decade since peer-to-peer (p2p) file-sharing site Napster emerged in 1999, music sales in the US have dropped 47 percent, from $14.6 billion to $7.7 billion". [ix] Consumers getting their music for free was nothing new to the industry with dual cassette decks and the advent of the mix tape in the 1980's and early 1990's; the late 1990's and the popularity of the compact disc as well as computer companies implementing compact disc burners into their designs led to the phenomena of legally copying entire LP's onto writable discs and then illegally giving them to other people. But these illegal consumer trends in their embryonic stages soon led to an exponential downturn in the music industry by the early 2000's. The Recording Industry Association of America claims that, "from 2004 through 2009 alone, approximately 30 billion songs were illegally downloaded on file-sharing networks".[x] If one were to take the iTunes standard pricing of $.99 per song, that comes to an approximately $29.7 billion dollar loss over the course of five years, or $5.94 billion dollars annually. But not all songs are $.99 if the pricing of compact discs are taken into account, as some twelve-song LPs can easily sell for $16.00 to $18.00 in various major or local retail stores. Therefore, in the same report, the Recording Industry Association of America cites an estimate by Frontier Economics that "US internet users annually consume between $7 and $20 billion worth of digitally pirated recorded music". [xi] So why are the major digital music marketplaces like iTunes or Amazon seemingly doing so

well? The Recording Industry Association of America's report concludes that "while the music business has increased its digital revenues by 1,000 percent from 2004 to 2010, digital music theft has been a major factor behind the overall global market decline of around 31 percent in the same period". [xii] In other words, while it has increased by 1,000 percent during that time, in 2004, digital revenues were nearly nothing; the iTunes music store had only launched in the spring of 2003.

But it was partially the digital marketplaces that set the stage for the contemporary conveniences of music theft. First of all, the digital files that are burned into compact discs are WAV files, but digital marketplaces like iTunes have increasingly emphasized the MP3 format, which is a much lesser quality and remarkably smaller file. A digital track that is three minutes long would be approximately 45-50 MB as a WAV file, but the same track in an MP3 format would be as low as 3 MB, or an approximately 90-95 percent decrease in file size. The logic is that the smaller the file, the faster the download, and the more of those files that can fit onto new emerging products such as the iPod. But the faster the legal download, the faster the illegal upload, and consequently the faster the illegal download from another party. Secondly, very few efforts or agreements were made on copyright / file protection. As the film industry changed from VHS to DVD, protections were put in place that made it much more difficult to pirate films from DVD (VHS piracy only required another VHS recorder). But as the music industry transitioned from tape to CD, virtually none of those physical / digital restrictions applied, only conceptual legal restrictions. And as the music industry has transitioned from CD to a web-based digital marketplace, virtually no digital restrictions exist and ones that do pale into comparison of the restrictions that have accompanied

films transition from the DVD to web-based digital marketplaces like NetFlix. The "No Electronic Theft Act" of 1997 applies to electronic theft of any medium, and while illegal downloading and file sharing has been detrimental to the music industry, music is only one genre of electronic theft, and a small one at that. According to GO-Gulf, the statistics/percentages regarding consumer electronic theft are 35% pornography, 35.2% movies, 14.5% TV shows, 6.7% PC/console games, 6.7% software, and only 2.9% music (E-books round it all out at 0.2%).[xiii] But that 2.9% is financially astronomical. In 2007, the Institute for Policy Innovation stated that "because of sound recording piracy, US workers lose $2.7 billion in earnings annually", and "of this total, $1.1 billion would have been earned by workers in the sound recording industry or in downstream retail industries while $1.6 billion would have been earned by workers in other US industries". Furthermore, "as a consequence of global and US-based piracy of sound recordings, the US economy loses $12.5 billion in total output annually.[xiv] The analysis estimates that each year the US loses just over 71,000 jobs, $2.7 billion in workers' earnings, a $422 million in tax revenues, $291 million in personal income tax, as well as $131 million in lost corporate income and production taxes.[xv]

YouTube, in its initial formation, had no intention to correct this landscape, nor even concern itself with its existence. In the beginning, the point was for users to share videos, nothing more. But another problem with online digital marketplaces would present YouTube with an external problem it still finds itself to be solving, i.e., revenue. The ten year birthday of iTunes in April of 2013 finally drew some retrospective criticism beyond, shall we say, watching a small storm roll in every day. Three days before the ten year anniversary of the iTunes launch in 2003, Adrian Covert, a writer for CNN,

published an article titled "A decade of iTunes singles killed the music industry". A quite scathing and simultaneously informative short article, its fourth sentence paints a different picture of the success of the online market music marketplace and its effect on the industry as a whole; he writes, "since the introduction [of] the iTunes Music Store on April 28, 2003, music sales have plummeted in the United States – from $11.8 billion in 2003 to $7.1 billion last year, according to the Recording Industry Association of America."[xvi] In line with a number of statistics and reports, Covert follows with an insight that those in the music industry have at least noticed, and often decried, for years.

> Interestingly, during that same time, people have been buying more music than ever. How is that possible? Its because the iTunes Music Store popularized the cheap digital single.
>
> After manhandling the major record labels during a series of now-legendary negotiations, the-Apple CEO Steve Jobs was able to initially offer digital albums or $10 and any individual track off that album for 99 cents.
>
> That changed the music industry forever. When music sales reached their peak in 2000, Americans bought 943 million CD albums, and digital sales weren't even a blip on the radar. By 2007, however, those inexpensive digital singles overtook CDs – by a wide margin – generating 819 million sales to just 500 million for the CD.
>
> Last year, there were 1.4 billion digital singles sold, dwarfing CD sales by a factor of 7. More than three-quarters of all music-related

> transactions were digital singles last year, according to the RIAA [Recording Industry Association of America].
>
> Apple's iTunes is behind that sea change. According to NPD estimates, iTunes is currently responsible for 63% of all digital music sales. Even after the emergence of competition from Amazon and Google.
>
> The popularity and ease of downloading cheap digital singles has transformed the industry. Not since the vinyl era has the single been this popular. The smaller, cheaper "45" record dominated music in the 1950's and '60's, but the music industry wised up in the '70's.
>
> Vinyl, cassette and CD singles were always cheaper for consumers, but manufacturing costs were not. Nor was the space required to house them in stores. Thus, the single became harder and harder to come by.[xvii]

Some of Covert's numbers are a little different than those reported by Nielsen SoundScan, but the theme is, nevertheless, correct: iTunes, in retrospect, had been bad news for most musicians, labels, and composers. Regarding the latter, classical composers who have been working in the tradition of composing pieces that are fifteen, twenty, thirty, or more minutes long found themselves in a financial bind in the early days of iTunes; the 'album' could be purchased for ten dollars, but the two or three movements that comprised the album could be purchased individually for ninety-nine cents each (if they were purchased at all). The culture that rushed to CD stores in the local indoor mall and happily paid sixteen dollars for digital files stored inside and on plastic had shifted its perspective within a decade and felt that paying ninety-nine cents

for a song was, on occasion, viable, and on other occasions, okay to steal. According to Grabstats, in February of 2006, the Associated Press and Rolling Stone magazine commissioned Ipsos Public Affairs to conduct a study on the matter of what are American adults' perspectives or attitudes regarding the price of ninety-nine cents for purchasing a song. According to the study, only fifty-two percent of Americans found it to be a fair price. On one hand, another nineteen percent of those who participated in the study found it to be too expensive while, on the other hand, nineteen percent thought of the price as being a bargain and, according to the study, the remaining one out of every ten American adults were not sure.[xviii] Looking at the charts provided by Nielsen SoundScan, the numbers speak for themselves. CD album sales in 1995 were at 360,000,000 and reached their peak in 2001 at 712,000,000; but a decade later in 2011, CD album sales had fallen to 223,500,000 or roughly two thirds less. Meanwhile in 2004, the year following the iTunes launch, digital album sales got their start at 5,500,000 and by 2011 were at 103,100,00. Regarding total album sales, in 2004 there were 656,500,00 and by 2011 only 326,000,000. That is roughly a fifty percent decline. And to continue with Covert's theme, individual digital track sales have increased, but not enough to compensate for the loss. In the year of iTunes' launch, 19,000,000 individual digital tracks were sold. The following year in 2004, over seven times that amount were sold, 143,000,000. 2008 saw individual track sales reach over 1 billion, and in 2011, 1,271,000,000 individual tracks were sold, or, seventy times the amount sold in 2004.[xix] As an experiment, one could divide the total number of individual tracks sold by twelve, which is an approximate average length of a CD, to see a theoretical difference between the amount of music sold in 2004 and 2011. All combined, the total number of

theoretical ‘albums’ sold in 2004 would be 658,083,000 and the total for 2011 would be 432,517,000. Nearly all factors surrounding the industry have increased: population, digital access, number of artists producing albums, inflation. But sales saw a dramatic decrease. Even if one were to account for vinyl sales, which has seen a large increase in sales and popularity on its own, it would only be a difference of approximately 3.5 million.

As the music industry continued to suffer in the mid to late 2000’s from peer to peer sharing and consumers opting for singles over full albums, music streaming was beginning to become more popular with companies like Spotify and Pandora (or its predecessor, The Human Genome Project). YouTube was already streaming so to speak, but in a video format. The other companies strictly provided music and began to satiate the consumer’s need for more musical options. They became interactive digital radio stations, providing the consumer with certain amounts of control, social interaction, and feedback on what could be played, Spotify giving users full control with a paid subscription. By 2011, Spotify users had “streamed 1500 years worth of music”, according to Pigeons and Planes.[xx] In 2013, as stated in the IFPI Digital Music Report, Pandora had risen to become the “best-known radio service in the US with 66 million active listeners and accounting for eight percent of all radio listening”.[xxi] And between those landmark years, “revenue from music subscription and streaming rose from 650 million US dollars to 1.0 billion US dollars”.[xxii] Though it may seem counterintuitive at first, this actually helped to boost an increase in music sales. The Nielsen Company and Billboard’s 2012 Music Industry Report concluded that “overall music purchases surpassed 1.65 billion units in 2012, up 3.1% vs. the previous record high set in 2011,

driven by digital music sales, which continue to be a key growth element within the market."[xxiii] In other words, greater exposure to the immense array of music available on streaming online subscription radio services contributed to a higher growth rate in actual sales. This is of course not the only factor involved in driving overall music purchases, as the continued expanding markets for internet access, computers, and mobile devices across the world draw a larger and wider audience. Newly pressed vinyl has skyrocketed in popularity compared to its virtual non-existence in the 1990's, whether for contemporary artists and albums or for newly re-mastered and re-printed classic albums of the 1960's and 70's; The New York Times reported that "SoundScan has tracked 4.6 million domestic LP sales in 2012, an 18% increase over 2011".[xxiv] Asian markets have been booming overall. And in the American market, access has further expanded into rural markets, driving the sales and popularity of country music; in 2012, Country Music Television was happy to post results from the Nielsen SoundScan Report which claimed that, in terms of digital sales of individual tracks, "country increased from 143.7 million to 1.62.1 million, a rise of 12.8 percent".[xxv] Part of the popularity could be credited to the mass appeal of Taylor Swift, who has certainly embraced her own YouTube presence and music videos; she was the most-streamed country artist of the year and the only country artist making the Top Ten.[xxvi] One is hard pressed to find an extremely successful artist in the late 2000's and early 2010's that does not have a strong YouTube presence. By this time, YouTube was quite successfully monetizing music videos, cutting deals with major labels, and artists were increasingly promoting the potential singles to be sold on the digital market place by creating music videos for them and uploading to YouTube.

But YouTube's contributions to the industry beyond monetization are not well understood in terms of the greater effect it has beyond mere dollars.

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry provides an astute summary of recent market trends in terms of revenue outlets and their growth or decline, but is an example of only understanding YouTube as revenue among other possibilities, i.e. singular unto itself as an advertising supported streaming service.

> The industry's digital revenues grew by 4.3 per cent in 2013 to US$5.9 billion. There was steep growth in both revenues and user numbers for subscription services, continued revenue growth from ad-supported services and stable income from download sales in most markets. Globally, digital now accounts for 39 per cent of total industry global revenues and in three of the world's top 10 markets, digital channels account for the majority of revenues.
>
> Subscription services, part of an increasingly diverse mix of industry revenue streams, are going from strength to strength. Revenues from music subscription services — including free-to-consumer and paid-for tiers — grew by 51.3 per cent in 2013, exceeding US$1 billion for the first time and growing consistently across all major markets.
>
> Global brands such as Deezer and Spotify are reaping the benefits of geographical expansion, while regional services such as Rdio, KKBOX and WiMP continue to attract new users. New entrants including Beats

Music and YouTube launched, or announced plans to launch, subscription services in early 2014.

The subscription model is leading to more payment for music by consumers, many of whom appear to be shifting from pirate services to a licensed music environment that pays artists and rights holders. The number of paying subscribers to subscription services rose to 28 million in 2013, up 40 per cent on 2012 and up from only eight million in 2010.

Revenues from advertising-supported streaming services, such as YouTube and Vevo, are also growing — up 17.6 per cent in 2013. Music video revenues in particular increased as the industry extended the monetization of YouTube to more than 50 countries, adding 13 territories in 2013. Vevo has performed strongly, hitting 5.5 billion monthly views in December 2013, a 46 per cent year-on-year increase, and attracting 243 million unique viewers worldwide.

Record companies have adapted their business to a model increasingly based on access to music, and not only ownership of music. This reflects in the growing share of subscription and streaming revenues as a percentage of digital revenues globally. The industry now derives 27 per cent of its digital revenues from subscription and ad-supported streaming services, up from 14 per cent in 2011.

The digital download model remains a key revenue stream, however. Downloads still account for a substantial two-thirds of digital revenues (67 per cent) and are helping to propel digital growth in certain

> developing markets such as South Africa, Hong Kong, Philippines and Slovakia. Downloads have seen a slight decline in overall value globally, although digital album sales remain on an upward curve as consumers still show strong demand for owning the album format. Revenues from downloads globally fell slightly by 2.1 per cent in value, the decline being offset by increases in streaming and subscription revenue to generate overall digital revenue growth in the majority of markets.[xxvii]

YouTube was already playing a major roll in a number of these factors. First of all, it quickly became the second largest search engine in the world as a video platform, and therefore became a major outlet and marketing tool for musical artists producing music videos, radio interviews, live concerts, and so on. It was seen by the industry as an obvious tool for newer bands to be discovered as well as one more way to generate revenue through advertisements or the Vevo platform for larger, more established artists. Either way, YouTube became *the digital platform* for the revival and resurgence of music video production of the early 21st century. Enabled by the diminishing cost of video cameras, hard drive space, and editing software, YouTube has helped make music video production and consumption democratic and widely accessible, more so than any other time in the history of the art form. For some, this led to the unexpected.

In 2012, Nielsen Holdings N.V. collected data from 3,000 online consumer surveys using their "proprietary, high-quality ePanel" in the US. The topics of the survey included "where/when music is consumed, through which device(s), apps and services; digital vs. physical purchases; the process of discovery, and how/when discovery

converts to purchase; insights around spending, share of wallet, and retailer preferences; live events" and more.[xxviii] The "Music 360" report offered a plethora of statistics ranging from the correlation between age demographics and the purchase of concert T-shirts to the various influences of music purchase decisions. But the most surprising statistic, and the one that begins Neilsen's summary of the report, is that more often "teens listen to music through YouTube than through any other source".[xxix] In terms of all age demographics, according to the survey, forty-eight percent *discover* music most often via radio, ten percent via friends/relatives (i.e. word of mouth) and seven percent via YouTube. But among the teenage demographic and how they *listen* to music, sixty-four percent of teen listen to music via YouTube, fifty-six percent via radio, fifty-three percent via iTunes, and fifty percent listen via CD. A new future was beginning. The youngest consumers are, most currently, 'listening' to music through an audio-visual platform. YouTube was never designed as a listening service, but in terms of *listening*, it had become more popular among teens than actual listening services, which themselves were booming in revenue and new users.

This does not mean that one can jump to the conclusion that American teenagers are most often watching music videos instead of simply listening to Pandora or their own CDs. Two things should be noted here. First, just because a song is on YouTube does not mean it has a video accompanying it. Often, songs are implemented into a video format but the 'video' is a constant still image, at times bearing the album cover for the duration of the entire song (and this is often executed and uploaded by fans and not the artists or labels owning the rights to the music). This phenomenon is most often the case for albums that do not have music videos for any of the tracks, or, the 'videos' are other

songs on an album that have one or more singles where a music video or music videos have been produced but the other songs on the album do not, and this allows the consumer to access the entire album for free. And secondly, if the song does have a music video accompanying it, this does not necessarily mean that any given teenage consumer is 'watching' it on YouTube for the sake of actually watching it. If a given consumer does not have a paid subscription to a radio/music streaming service, then listening to the consumer's song of choice upon immediacy is often not an option (that option is reserved for users who have paid for a subscription instead of having the free application). Therefore, if a given teenage consumer simply wants to listen to a specific song by Miley Cyrus or Justin Beiber, the fastest and economically free way to do that is to load the music video (or still image) for that song on YouTube.

But if the singles, the hit songs, the most popular tracks of each major label artist are the ones to which most people listen, then they are much more likely to have a music video, and here the music industry context that YouTube has inherited or was born within comes full circle. While, early in the first decade of the 20th century, iTunes began to sell more and more singles and less and less full length albums, artists who were producing those singles were also producing music videos for them, even prior to the advent of YouTube and especially during its growth and increased popularity. And it worked.

From July to December of 2009, Sysomos conducted an analysis of "2.5 million unique YouTube videos along with blog posts that embedded videos or linked to them", and they found that Music was the most popular category at 30.8%, Entertainment being second at 14.59%, followed by People and Blogs at 10.77%, and all other categories including News and Politics, Sports, or Comedy each fell below the 10% margin.[xxx] It is

no coincidence that Vevo was launched on December of 2009 (a service powered by YouTube), and according to comScore's "April 2010 U.S. Online Video Rankings", Vevo had attracted "43.6 million viewers in April, representing a quarter of the US online video audience."[xxxi] The vast majority of those visitors were watching via YouTube, and by 2010, YouTube had started to account for roughly 10% of all internet traffic.[xxxii]

The next few years would be astoundingly significant for music videos, social media and the 21st century video boom. In 2012, Jeff Bullas posted in an infographic titled "Mind Numbing YouTube Facts" that 500 years of YouTube video are watched every day on Facebook, and that over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter each minute. YouTube, which is in itself a social media platform, became an extremely popular medium within other forms of social media. In other words, big social media platforms began to converge, and as Henry Jenkins aptly words it,

> Convergence doesn't just involve commercially produced materials and services traveling along well-regulated and predictable circuits. It doesn't just involve the mobile companies getting together with the film companies to decide when and where we watch a newly released film. It also occurs when people take media in their own hands…The American media environment is now being shaped by two seemingly contradictory trends: on the one hand, new media technologies have lowered production and distribution costs, expanded the range of available delivery channels, and enabled consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content in powerful new ways. At the same time, there has been an

> alarming concentration of the ownership of mainstream commercial media, with a small handful of multinational media conglomerates dominating all sectors of the entertainment industry. No one seems capable of describing both sets of changes at the same time, let alone show how they impact each other.[xxxiii]

There is no doubt that users were driving its popularity, and YouTube continued to answer to the demand. It is important here to continue to stress the medium; video is not merely an audio track, text, or photographs, all of which are much smaller files and therefore consumer technology could handle and develop those faster. Video can and often is all of those combined. And over the course of its existence, YouTube began to find itself not only in Facebook and Twitter, but on the homepages of professional websites, embedded in newspaper columns, within personal and professional blogs, replacing scrolling photos on the homepage, replacing laborious textual descriptions in online newspaper stories, replacing FAQs or a 'how-to' description, and the list goes on. And as stated before, for some it was beginning to replace music as merely an audio experience (again, music is YouTube's most popular category, or, watching music videos is the most popular activity on the site). YouTube was converging with, within, or upon several facets of the internet at large, but YouTube had not quite converged with mobile devices, or, not yet.

In an article written for Reuters in January of 2012 called "Exclusive: YouTube hits 4 billion daily video views", writer Alexei Oreskovic reports: "YouTube…is streaming 4 billion online videos every day, a 25 percent increase in the past eight

months, according to the company. The jump in video views comes as Google pushes YouTube beyond the personal computer, with versions of the site that work on smartphones and televisions, and as the company steps up efforts to offer more professional-grade content on the site."[xxxiv] Numbers in the billions are not something the world is used to seeing in the press unless it is regarding economics, evolutionary time, population, or astronomy, but YouTube would increasingly find itself in the press with 'billions' in the title. At the end of 2012, a new and unforeseen landmark in music history was reached or, if one prefers, breached by a Korean artist under the moniker 'PSY' with his music video for "Gangnam Style". *The first YouTube video to reach a billion views was a music video.* In December of that year, UK newspaper the Independent reported on the development:

> Korean pop star [PSY]'s "Gangnam Style video has become the first YouTube video to surpass a billion views. The achievement came just 27 days after it broke Justin Bieber's record of 803 million views for hit single "Baby". That means "Gangnam Style" had an average of 6.5 million views per day for nearly four weeks…"Gangnam Style" has spawned a litany of video imitations, notably by schoolboys at Eton and dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. It has even been performed by UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon…PSY's video featuring his horse-riding dance was posted on YouTube in July, while "Baby" was uploaded in February 2010.[xxxv]

Looking back on 2013, Alexander Bell writes a post in The Examiner titled "Year 2013 in music: YouTube core stats", reporting that the "PSY 'Gangnam Style' music video remains an absolute popularity champion currently totaling 1.865+ GigaViews (prefix Giga stands for a billion)", and continues to state that "this astronomical number is getting closer to the entire global Internet users' base (the latter is about 2.267 billion) and now exceeding the population of both Americas (North and South) and Europe combined." He continues on to the second video with the most views in YouTube's history at that time, the aforementioned "Baby" by Justin Beiber, and writes that "his iconic musical video clip…is totaling 958+ MegaViews, closing to the psychologically important 1 billion mark", calculating that "this stratospheric popularity index far exceeds the entire population of USA, Canada, and Mexico combined, accounting for more than 1/3 of the global Internet users' base."[xxxvi] But Justin Bieber's impact and YouTube popularity was also, in some sense second to none. What Bell failed to include was a comparative statistic posted by Jon Tanners for Pigeons and Planes in late 2012, namely that "according to 2011 census estimates, the combined population of China and India totals roughly 2.6 billion" and, "according to a quick YouTube search, Justin Bieber's official Vevo account has garnered 3,169,095,207 views." He further calculates that, "including videos with other artists (such as Chris Brown's 'Next to You') the number creeps close to 4 billion, approximately 1 ½ times as much as the combined population of Chine and India, roughly 4/7 of the earth's current population".[xxxvii] Nevertheless, after listing the top ten videos with the most views on YouTube, Bell concludes with two very important observations. First, he asserts that "the grand total number of views calculated for [the] Top100 most popular YouTube videos currently exceeds 32.9

GigaViews…which is more than 4 times greater than [the] entire population of the planet." His second observation is more obvious but extremely important, stating that "as it's been for many years, 19 items in [the] YouTube Top20 are of music-video genre".[xxxviii] Not only is the YouTube video with the most views a music video, but all of the top twenty save for one.

YouTube had some technological assistance, so to speak, with its success, namely in 2012, the same year "Gangnam Style" hit one billion views and the Independent reported that Google had been pushing versions of the YouTube site for mobile devices.[xxxix] YouTube's popularity on mobile devices would begin to skyrocket, and nay-sayers of the smartphone had been proved wrong. Pip Coburn, author of *The Change Function: Why Some Technologies Take Off and Others Crash and Burn*, echoed many of the nay-saying maxims and predictions of the mid 2000's:

> The mobile phone industry…created extremely expensive, feature-laden, computeresque gizmos called smartphones. These phones have a variety of attributes, so the definition is quite fuzzy, but any phone allowing a user to run an Excel spreadsheet and featuring a Windows or Symbian operating system certainly qualifies as one.
>
> Smartphones have continually undersold expectations, much to the dismay of technologists, while "bare bones" phones that accommodate nonserious and nonsmart activites such as $2 ring-tone downloads will likely explode to nearly 800 million units sold in 2005.[xl]

That is of course not how history went, and much to the advantage of YouTube. According to Business Insider in early 2014, "some 40% of YouTube's traffic now comes from mobile" compared to "just 25% last year and a paltry 6% only two years ago." The article, titled "The Mobile Video Revolution: How Netflix, Vevo, And YouTube Have Thrived On Smartphones And Tablets", states that "thanks to ultra-fast 4G networks and dazzling HD screens, mobile video has proven to be far more popular than anyone might have guessed." Findings of their report claimed that, "about 50 million people in the US now watch video on their mobile phones", and "fifteen percent of all video hours globally are viewed on tablets and smartphones." In terms of bandwidth, "YouTube accounts for nearly one-fifth of *all* mobile data traffic." But perhaps most surprisingly, the report found that Vevo's "mobile and TV app audience exploded by 184%" with half of its views coming from mobile devices.[xli] The irony is that, as YouTube progressively built up the availability of high definition quality video, consumers were, more and more, watching videos on small devices that did not require high definition. When writers or technicians refer to high definition quality, the 'quality' to which they refer is actually size; the smaller the screen, the less size (or quality) the video needs to be. And this makes watching video on a mobile device so appealing, in that there is no waiting for the HD setting to load; the poorest quality setting (the smallest size) is the fastest to load, and producers have already been creating, filming, and/or directing music videos with this in mind. Nevertheless, the progression of the 21st century video boom became something we carried along the way in our pockets.

But the phenomenon and popularity of YouTube came with a particular consequence, namely that, where once films were produced for the big screen, music

videos had to at least account for a significant amount of the population viewing them on screens that are only inches in length and width. The viewers of course may only be listening and glancing at the video here and there, and the viewer may not watch the entire video. There are a number of studies on the latter regarding the average number of viewers who watch past twenty seconds, the percentage of viewers who view past the first minute, and so on. Those various studies are of little importance here, save any study's natural conclusion that the number of viewers who begin a video are always lesser than the number of viewers who will watch all of the way through. Therefore, in response to the technological shifts that have been discussed, the use and popularity of utilizing prolonged headshots in music videos has seemed to have had an increase. It is the logical practice in attempting to establish a face with the sound on a device a few inches wide.; it is also representative of other ways in which music videos have changed their approach, so to speak, given YouTube's popularity of small mobile devices.

There are a number of examples being produced, but one of the most extreme, yet simple, and therefore one of the most interesting is the music video "Water Me", by English electronic singer-songwriter FKA twigs. Nearly the entire video only features her face. Nothing but a flat, toned down, green screen color is utilized for the background. With her eyes closed, she waves her head back and forth, and finally opens them just before the first minute of the video has expired. The image remains the same, the close up of her face singing the words, until just under two minutes into the video when a tear (created with CGI) quickly wells up in her right eye (the darker side of her face, in terms of lighting); it swells to an outlandish size and slowly falls and swirls off of her face. The camera cuts to the tear falling in front of the green background (FKA twigs

is not in this clip, and it is the only brief moment the viewer does not see her face). The next cut, her face rises again into the screen, the tear falls onto her head and the splash quickly disintegrates. For a few seconds, her face remains normally proportioned as it has been throughout the entire video, but at approximately two minutes and twenty-six seconds, the proportions of her face have changed; her eyes are significantly larger and more open. They remain that way through the rest of the song, and such are the simple contents of a music video with almost 5 million views. It compliments the simple ambience of the song, but it also ensures that the audience, whether viewing or playing the video for the purposes of listening, know the face of FKA twigs, even when viewed on the smallest of mobile devices.[xlii]

Bjork was one of the more successful artists to break into the American market and utilize this kind of close up style in her music videos. Her video for "Hidden Place" mostly features close shots of portions of her face; the first minute showing the topless Bjork from the low shoulders and above as her hair is blown and the video has been reversed.[xliii] At approximately one minute, real time (as opposed to reversed) computer graphics flow in and out of her lips, nose and eyes: liquids, lines, and designs. The graphics are much more utilized in "Hidden Place" compared to FKA twigs' "Water Me", but stylistically they are quite similar. Bjork's music video for "Moon" only features her from the hips up for approximately two minutes and then begins to slowly transition to closer shots, still encapsulating her white face and oversized red wig; computer graphics of the phases of the moon are periodically overlaid on her own image.[xliv]

And of course Miley Cyrus's music video for "Wrecking Ball" is another recent and also controversial example (controversial not because of the headshots but for other provocative close up antics).[xlv] The headshots, while utilized at different moments during the video, also function as bookends for the video, the beginning utilizes a shot so close that only her face is seen and the end uses a shot less close so that her bare shoulders are revealed, giving her the allure of being nude. One might say that "Wrecking Ball" is the mobile music video par excellance in terms of pop music video production. Even the clips utilized in the video that are not headshots are mostly close ups; when viewed on a mobile device, no objects are lost to the eye, nothing looks small, every important detail is communicated. And it worked, becoming one of the most viewed and one of the most viral videos the year of its release.

Looking back, it is relatively easy to notice that the close up or headshot of the lead singer is nothing new to the music video or its predecessors and can be seen throughout the decades. But, as TV screens became larger throughout the 1980's and 1990's, it could be argued that headshots were of less prominence. Particularly in the 1990's, headshots may exist in a music video but are not often occupying half or the majority of the music video, and I am currently unaware of any music video of that era that utilizes a headshot as extensively as examples by Bjork and FKA twigs. Only in live performances were headshots utilized so heavily, and that is due to the nature that there are only so many visual options on a multi-camera live shoot, and the lead singer's face is often the most important. But in the contemporary world of music video production, we have yet to see such a range of screen sizes or displays on which the videos could be viewed, or, on which YouTube is available and being utilized.

And there is of course now the phenomenon of actually controlling cameras with mobile devices (the newest GoPro cameras offer this feature), but more importantly filming music videos with the mobile devices themselves; it is a practice that is occurring all over the world, particularly with artists who do not have large budgets for music videos or want to maintain a lo-fi aesthetic that distinguishes itself from the slick and sexy looks of major productions. As if Jacques Attali's prediction long ago that everyone, so to speak, would become a musician weren't already true, now anyone with a smartphone and a computer can make their own music video, and millions are doing it.

Pedagogical Reflections: Many Histories

Pedagogically, this latter point is crucial for a proper understanding of the contemporary music video landscape, beyond the millions and billions of dollars or millions and billions of video views. The music industry is not only made of the biggest labels and the biggest artists pulling in the biggest numbers. Despite being able to trace the growth of YouTube, its inheritance of iTunes' transformation of the single, and our contemporary music video renaissance, it is important to also understand that music videos are also art forms that are made on local levels for regional bands and are also made by nationally and internationally touring artists that, while making a decent or good living by American standards, do not receive the kind of press that the pop stars consistently maintain. In the classroom, I wanted to offset and compliment our knowledge and understanding of YouTube's big picture and the most successful of music

videos with knowledge that was more 'on the ground' so to speak, knowledge that included everyday working experiences as well as knowledge of traditional American forms of music that are still prevalent today. Aside from telling my own stories about working in the music industry in an attempt to convey a kind of realism about the contemporary music industry, I also instructed the class to conduct industry interviews, and to present the results of those interviews alongside videos related to the interviewee in whatever way was appropriate. Assembled in teams, each group of students was assigned an industry professional (each of whom I had worked with before and gained permission from them to be interviewed ahead of time), and given that I knew these individuals, I provided a framework of questions for my students to ask. This did not mean that the students simply had to recite the questions verbatim and record the answers, but the questions were a beginning point, a way to start the conversation, and the students were encouraged to continue that conversation forward, to see where it would go, to follow the lead of the interviewee, and to invent other questions along the way. Each interview was conducted via phone at a time when the interviewee was available.

I first approached Tim Duffy of Music Maker Relief Foundation. As co-founder of the foundation and the former general manager of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, we had often been in communication. As Peter Jennings succinctly described in an article about Tim as he was named "Person of the Week" by ABC News, "Tim Duffy is trying to preserve the work of America's older blues musicians."[xlvi] The 501c3 non-profit was founded in 1994 to "preserve the musical traditions of the South by directly supporting the musicians who make it, ensuring their voices will not be silenced by poverty and

time", giving "future generations access to their heritage through documentation and performance programs that build knowledge and appreciation of America's musical traditions."[xlvii] The initial planning with the Music Maker team led to their choice of having the class interview Dom Flemons, one of the founding members of the Carolina Chocolate Drops with whom he won a Grammy for Best New Traditional Folk Album, *Genuine Negro Jig*. Having just embarked on a solo career and recording a new album, Dom took the time to be interviewed by my class. This was terrific because my students were able to hear first hand what it is like to be a touring musician, they were told the story of winning the Grammy and subsequently Dom teaching Herbie Hancock how to play the bones while standing in the Grammy lines backstage, as well as to gain insight into both Music Maker Relief Foundation as well as the tradition of blues and 'black string music' that Dom is helping to keep alive. Given that the course traversed from the 1920's to the present, it was essential for the class to understand older and more traditional forms of music and how they have continuously influenced artists across the decades all the way up to some of the biggest music stars of today.

Wanting to have each interviewee represent a different facet of the music industry, I chose a man by the name of Steve Johnson who is the talent-buyer for a very historically important music festival, MerleFest. The students learned what talent-buying is, what factors play into certain decisions, and the historical importance of MerleFest as a bluegrass festival and the legacy of multi-Grammy award winning musician, Doc Watson. Given that MerleFest was going to occur at the end of the semester, the students were able to see the current line-up of artists for that year (the ones that Steve Johnson had selected), and watch music videos or performances of some of the artists. Most

notably, the students viewed Steve Martin performing with Steep Canyon Rangers on *The Tonight Show with David Letterman*, many of whom were quite surprised to find that the actor/comedian was not only a musician, but a very talented banjo player and lover of bluegrass music. The Carolina Chocolate Drops were playing that year, which built some cohesion between these two teams, as well as Old Crow Medicine Show, whose music video for "I Hear Them All" was discussed in class, namely as an example of a music video that has a social cause or attempts to build awareness. In this case, Old Crow Medicine Show's music video is filmed in New Orleans and attempts to, post Hurricane Katrina, build awareness of and show the contact information for Common Ground Relief / New Orleans.[xlviii]

Another interviewee is a music publicist, Erin Scholze of Dreamspider Publicity. One of the taglines for her company has been, 'these things just don't happen by themselves', which is precisely what the students learned. While it may seem that, on a consumer level or an amateur musician level, the press finds the artist and subsequently posts news or write articles, it is often the other way around or a two way street where the publicist works for the artist / management team and with various press outlets. Sometimes a publicist works with a team and other times he or she works alone as the hired mediator between artists and press outlets, and Erin has worked with internationally renown artists like Zac Brown and The Wood Brothers, hired by adult rock and Americana radio promotion and marketing team Songlines (the American company, as opposed to the British one of the same name), worked with major American music festivals, and has also worked with regional artists. She tends to work strictly in Americana or music associated in one way or another with American roots music. For

years, she has been the publicist for Americana icons Donna The Buffalo, who also happened to by playing MerleFest that year. Therefore, collectively, the students were being introduced to a new world of Americana music that is easily one of the most exciting and fastest growing music scenes in the US. The Americana Music Fest in Nashville (which occurs alongside the Americana Music Association annual conference and the Americana Music Awards) was deemed by Rolling Stone Magazine as "music's most authentic – and seemingly fastest growing – festival".

The fourth interviewee is a sound engineer. Susan Gibson has worked independently and for StageSound, a large stage and sound production company based in Virginia. In other words, in contrast with the other interviewees, she works with the artists prior to and during their actual performance. She has worked sound for over 3,000 artists, ranging from Method Man and Redman to Britney Spears, large scale music festivals to a cappella ensembles. Lip synching is a topic that was certainly discussed in the class because almost all groups lip synch to the music in music videos, save the rare exceptions when a group decides that a video recording of a live performance is also their 'official music video' (recent examples would be Old Crow Medicine Show's official music video for "Tell It To Me", filmed live at The Station Inn in Nasheville, TN).[xlix] And lip synching was a topic that arose in the interview with Susan, as she has been the sound engineer for numerous concerts where the performer was lip synching to pre-recorded vocal tracks. This has typically been looked down upon by fans and concert-goers, but when lip synching to a music video, it is to be expected and never questioned. Their report, or their response to Susan's interview and the conversations it provoked, was about performance itself. It is clear that musicians are acting in their music videos,

but often fans want to believe that musicians are not acting on stage, that the emotion is pure. But some performances and the bodily movements that have been choreographed, the actions they are acting out, do not allow for adequate breathing necessary for singing well; sometimes choreographed positions or locations on or off stage produce less than stellar audio/technical results if the microphone is on. Most artists play instruments and sing on stage, others deviate from that and the result is something like a live music video, but both, according to the interview, are based on what kind of live performance the audience demands.

The interviews were the only strict guidance given in the course in terms of research. For all writing assignments, students had to choose their own videos and choose their own paths of research for each video. Each student in the course was allowed to write on two music videos produced between the year 2000 to the present. Needless to say, many of the students found this part the most exciting and the most difficult. They found it exciting because they were able to choose contemporary artists in which they follow, to whom they already list, and with whom they are either very familiar or have recently discovered. This part was also somewhat difficult for a number of the students because they could only choose two and felt the pressure of choosing the two they liked the most. And, again, once any student had chosen a particular music video, no other student could choose to write about that music video. The choices the students made were remarkably a wide array of contemporary American music as well as some British entrances into the American market. These included Arcade Fire's "The Suburbs"[l], Green Day's politically charged "Wake Me Up When September Ends"[li], Rhianna's "Disturbia"[lii], the collaboration between Brittish artists Naughty Boy and Sam

Smith with a video for "La La La"[liii], "Electric Feel" by MGMT[liv], Coldplay's "Violet Hill (Dancing Politicians)"[lv], T.I.'s 2008 music video for "Dead and Gone"[lvi] as well as the collaboration with Robin Thicke and Pharell for 2013's "Blurred Lines",[lvii], Johnny Cash's music video for his cover of "Hurt" written by Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails) and produced just before Johnny Cash's death[lviii], "The Kill (Bury Me) by 30 Seconds to Mars[lix], the autobiographical outcry by P!nk aptly titled "Family Portrait"[lx], Adele's remarkable music video for "Chasing Pavements"[lxi], the collaboration between A Great Big World and Christina Aguilera for "Say Something"[lxii], indie rock icons and blues influenced guitarist and drummer duo The Black Keys and their music video for "Your Touch"[lxiii], "Baby One More Time" by the infamous Britney Spears[lxiv], British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran's music video for "Lego House"[lxv], M.I.A's controversial short film/music video for "Born Free" directed by Greek French director Romain Gavras[lxvi], and Kanye West's "Homecoming".[lxvii] My own lectures or examples given in this era ranged from CocoRosie and their slow motion masterpiece "We Are On Fire",[lxviii] to OutKast's take on variety show performance with their 2003 music video for "Hey Ya!"[lxix], and "Dani California" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, which represents the band in a number of different past eras and decades of music video production, as well as being dressed as other musicians from the present and past.[lxx] A number of these music videos raised very interesting questions and provoked a number of conversations on contemporary video production and technology, green screens, animation, computer programs like Adobe Flash, digital information, and the practice of viewing video on mobile devices. On a more cultural and less technological side (as if it is that easy to distinguish), numerous music videos provoked questions and conversations regarding

sexual representation, gender, race, ethnicity, class, religious representation, globalization, multimedia marketing, popular culture, fan culture, the often arbitrary relationship between visual and lyrical content, as well as musical genre and evolution. Several of theses conversations were difficult given the personal nature of the students' choices. Conversations about gender representations in, for example, 19th century European literature are a different classroom experience than discussing gender representations in music videos of which many of the students are avid fans, the music and musical stars partially comprising of the students' own personal identity.

Like other courses I have taught that have a 'cultural studies' element to them, the students find it surprising that their own knowledge of their everyday lives (here, the music they listen to every day and the artists they follow) is not only viable but very vibrant subject matter for academic discussion. A classroom full of students who want to learn a particular subject is a great classroom. A classroom full of students who are already involved in the subject matter everyday but have never had the opportunity to share and learn more in an academic setting and are eager to do so makes for one of the best classrooms one could ever find. Some of this knowledge came from reading online reviews from entities like Pitchfork, some from documentaries on rock, jazz, or blues, some knowledge was from Twitter, from posts on Facebook, or from firsthand experiences at live concerts and music festivals. And some knowledge was from a curiosity about the lives and careers of their favorite musical artists, which most often led them to reading about them on the artists' websites, reading artist interviews, and reading the Wikipedia page for a particular artist. All of these are interesting in their own right and useful in research if used properly. Regarding the latter, the use of Wikipedia has

been debated since its inception regarding its accuracy (it is user-generated content) and whether it is a viable source for students to use in their research, or even for teachers to use in the classroom. In this particular class, I enthusiastically encouraged students to utilize Wikipedia, especially when researching contemporary artists, for a handful of reasons.

Firstly, reading Wikipedia pages about successful contemporary musical artists is something my students were already doing in their free time. Several of my students in all of the courses I have taught about music-related material, claim that, when wanting to know more about a musical artist, they are much more likely to read the Wikipedia page for that artist (if one exists) than the Bio on the artist's website. The reason being is that the students felt the Wikipedia pages were often more informative and, more often than not, longer than the artist's Bio. Both the artist's Bio and the Wikipedia page are 'official' in their own distinctive ways, and teaching or discussing how both are written and managed can provide numerous insights into the music industry. Some students were surprised to find that most artists do not write or contribute much to their own Bio, even smaller regional acts, but Bio's are most often written, managed, altered, debated, and updated by a publicist, a publicity team, or in collaboration with the publicist, management, label, and the artist. To several of the students, this made sense given that nearly all Bio's are written in third person, but it also felt less 'genuine' to them. One very astute question that I was asked was, 'if artists' Bios are updated periodically anyway, why do artists not simply use a link to their Wikipedia page on the website in place of a Bio link in the site menu, or either periodically copy and paste the content from the Wikipedia page and use that as the Bio's content?' And this question led directly to

distinction between a Bio and a Wikipedia page. A Bio is a small amount of information whose audience includes current and potential fans, but whose target audience is other professionals in the music industry. A Bio is a document that has an industry standard, albeit loose, format and presents a combination of elements; most notably these are the origins of the artist, notable landmarks in the artist's career, stylistic descriptions regarding genre and signature sound, notable press, and most importantly any recent, current, and future developments. It is current and updated information that industry professionals like talent-buyers, large scale festivals, magazine and newspaper writers, etc. need to know; fans and potential fans are free to read it as well. Some students, by default, seemed to think that the Wikipedia page for a given artist is therefore written by fans and not by those affiliated with the artist's marketing, management, or publicity team, which is often not true. In fact, a number of musical artists acquire a Wikipedia page in the first place because numerous people from their affiliated teams contribute. But other unaffiliated contributors may be informed fans, dedicated followers, critics, or other types of professional writers in the music industry. While the members of the artist's affiliated support teams obviously do not have control over what content is contributed, they do help to ensure that false information or material unfit for Wikipedia is flagged or reported. Many industry professionals understand exactly what many of my students were doing, which is reading the Wikipedia page instead of, or prior to, reading the artist's Bio.

Secondly, given that the information on Wikipedia for a musical artist is official according to Wikipedia and any watchdogs that are part of the artist's affiliated team or amateur experts, it is at least a reliable beginning for any student research on professional

musicians in the public eye and is often full of credible quoted sources that are viable and accepted by companies, writers, and publications in the music industry. I therefore encouraged the students to begin with Wikipedia and, when finding an interesting quotation or citation relevant to their writing topic, to then consult that literature. It is a process that is more reliable and less time consuming than a simple Google search, but which I also encouraged. When it comes to contemporary music stars, there is such an inordinate amount of material from posts, blogs, opinion articles, rumors, chat rooms, etc, that sifting through any significant amount of that is confusing in terms of gaining reliable facts.

And the third reason is that, in the music industry, change happens quickly and constantly, so for research of this nature, it is also imperative to have the most contemporary sources and information. For example, a very credible and informative article written about Alison Krauss in 2009 would have certainly made mention that her collaboration with Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) for the album *Raising Sand* won a Grammy Award for Album and their single "Raising Sand" won a Grammy Award for Record of the Year in 2009. But if one is interested in Alison Krauss and Grammy Awards, an article in 2009 would not suffice, given that she won another Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album in 2012, which tied her with Quincy Jones for having the second highest number of Grammy Awards from a living recipient.[lxxi] Therefore, Wikipedia pages like 'List of awards and nominations received by Alison Krauss' can become crucial resources.[lxxii]

Unfortunately, the resource that is the least reliable in terms of accuracy for many of the videos chosen for the class was YouTube itself, especially for the pieces ranging

from the 1920's through the 1970's in terms of their descriptions, year produced or recorded or filmed, and even the song title. But for other music videos produced in the 1980's and 1990's, major record labels still maintain the rights to them and have uploaded and often monetized them. Whether it be Warner, Universal, Sony, EMI, or an offshoot still under the label's umbrella, these videos may offer very little in the YouTube description, but at least it is official and can often have pertinent information regarding production credits, especially the director. Nevertheless, for research purposes on music videos, YouTube itself is either not very reliable or informative. I especially iterated that user comments on music videos can often not be trusted, as some users post falsities or speculations that sometimes other users correct. And unless this phenomenon is a particular focus of a paper topic, user and fan comments tend to be of little value (though the topic of this phenomenon is quite interesting in its own right). In the end, Wikipedia remains one of the most important, if not the most important research tool for contemporary music and artists. Specifically, there are even Wikipedia pages dedicated to a single song or music video, and these pages are extremely helpful in beginning to understand the context of the music video in terms of issues like production costs, production credits, financial aspects of the making that swayed production decisions, set locations, trials and errors, intentions and outcomes, initial press reactions, controversies, statistics – in other words, the music video's factual history, which is most often not cohesively or broadly written anywhere else.

The class quickly learned that there is not one history to the music video, but many histories, and in our discoveries we were making new connections. The history of the art form cannot be limited to the most popular examples, or else so much more is

neglected. And the current path the history of the art form is not conceivable; currently, according to YouTube, one hundred hours of video are uploaded every minute[lxxiii]; that would be the equivalent of 6,000 days or just under sixteen and a half years worth of video being uploaded every day. Some of those videos are moments in the history of the music video we have not seen digitally, whose existence was once analog and will at some point in time awake from an archive or be digitally converted by an avid fan or collector. This has been happening in recent years, but only recent. This history is new to us, the future will only reveal more history, and the new history being made with new music videos is immense. Only since before audio recording technology did music have such a visual presence; to hear it was to see it. Today that is becoming similarly true but with far more technological complexities. Not only the US but several other parts of the world as well are together in a full blown music video renaissance, and the numbers of producers, artists, fans, consumers, views, and videos are unprecedented in music history.

Chapter 2:

Musical Shorts, Soundies, and the Origins of the Music Video

Musical shorts and soundies are some of the first productions of what we now call a music video. Like the music videos of today, musical shorts and soundies were promotional films produced and edited to pre-recorded music (though there are some exceptions here with both soundies and contemporary music videos). They often had simple narratives, created sets, and featured the musical artists within them. With soundies, they tended to be as long as the song, no more no less save a short visual introduction. With the musical shorts that preceded soundies, the logic was the same but they would often be as long as three or four songs by one artist and have a higher production budget and value. The musical shorts were more like short films, whereas soundies were either shown on Panorams or prior to films in the theater. Before the popular advent of the television, the Panoram was a refrigerator-sized film jukebox of sorts, housed in a high quality art deco style wooden cabinet; it had a small glass screen at the top for viewing while standing, its own internal machinery, and a coin slot. Drop in a dime and the 16mm reel would begin; often consisting of around eight soundies in one reel, these Panorams were popular in bars, taverns, factory break rooms, train stations, and the like. Before televisions would be found in the living rooms of American homes, Panorams were in public places and served, for the audience, as a new and

revolutionary form of entertainment and, for the artists, as a new way to be heard, to be seen, and be discovered.

Thanks to YouTube and the Prelinger Archives, they are now digitally available to us as of the past handful of years, works that are nearly a century old that have been housed away in various analog formats are now as available as the music videos produced today. One can now readily access thousands of musical shorts and soundies without traveling to various archives across the country or continent; within the past decade, they have been increasingly digitized and even reformatted for high definition viewing.

The Prelinger Archives, digitally housed within Archive.org, have made numerous and substantial donations to the Library of Congress, and many fans as well as hobbyist and professional historians have downloaded these public domain films and uploaded them to YouTube, many of them having less than 2,000 views and none of them garnering the amount of popularity that videos from other eras have accumulated, likely because there are so many people unaware of their existence. But there are fans and YouTube users who archive their own playlists, attempt to discover its origins or an historical significances in the YouTube 'comments' sections, and marvel at what is now more widely known as the origins of the music video. They are often more elaborate than the variety show performances of the 1950's and 1960's with complex sets, including other actors, and incorporating a narrative to be acted out that comparatively resemble musical numbers in films, only the soundie *is the film*, with no developing narrative before or after. They often capture what the audio could not, the distinct visual appearances and actions by the artists themselves, the dance moves of Cab Calloway or

the immense beauty and charisma of Dorothy Dandridge. As is often said in the music industry, 'it's not just about the song, but about the song's delivery', and the visual presentations of the live shows were critical to several artists' success. Soundies were an outlet to act out that delivery in a new way, to mix the stage with a film set, to in a sense 'one-up' their own show, providing a more filmic type of entertainment for the song than would be possible in the music hall.

Part of the magic of soundies or the Panoram is that it functioned similarly to the early days of MTV; the viewer would watch, but the viewer did not know what he or she was going to watch in the eight song reel, what was first or last, what would come next. And the reels tended to change each week. This was good for most musicians, particularly musicians of an underrepresented class, in that, like it or not, that artist is in the reel for which the viewer paid ten cents to watch. Not everyone would necessarily be loved, but they would be seen. And in that sense, soundies worked particularly well for African-American and female artists, the former of whom, despite the Harlem Renaissance and the new cosmopolitan fascination with the 'exotic', were not getting the high paying gigs on Broadway or appearances in films, which was a major outlet for the musical stars of the time period.

Some soundies are not well known, and others visually connect what have been separately well-known dots. Regarding the latter, Duke Ellington is undoubtedly one of the most famous jazz musicians in American history, and "I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good" is easily one of his most well known hits, having been covered by an extraordinary number of artists ranging from Billie Holiday to Cher, from John Coltrane to Carly Simon, from Frank Sinatra to Shirley Horn. Yet the soundie for Duke

Ellington's "I've Got It Bad And That Ain't Good" currently has approximately 30,000 views.

This particular soundie includes the actresses Louise Franklin, Artie Young, and Millie Monroe, and features Ivie Ivy Anderson on vocals. It begins, like many others, with the title and production credits, as if it were a Hollywood film. Produced by Sam Coslow, directed by Josef Berne, and distributed by Soundies Distributing Corporation of America, Inc., the text of the introduction rests against the background silhouette of a city skyline. As the soundie begins, the camera pans the length of an artificial set recreating a city patio many floors above the ground level, the singer sitting in the window as she mimics the lyrics. Louise Franklin leans against Duke Ellington's upright piano in a rather gawking manner, some of the band members have women beside them or leaning on them; but other than Ellington himself, the focus remains on Ivie Ivy Anderson sitting in the windowsill. Only two minutes and forty four seconds long, the soundie changes scenes at one minute and thirty four seconds, or just over half way through the piece. This scene is inside a living room, Ellington lying down on a loveseat, fully clothed but without his jacket, head leaning on one arm, his feet propped on the other. Ivie Ivy Anderson leans down to massage his shoulders; as she does, the camera zooms to her face and then fades to another headshot of her singing in the windowsill. Some couples begin dancing, Artie Young touches face to face with one of the musicians, others begin dancing, and the last remaining six seconds are given to Duke Ellington's smiling face.

But just as MTV launched after the momentum of music video production had been built in the 1970's, the production of soundies and the invention of the Panoram were only possible given the momentum in production prior to the 1940's. In this sense,

soundies were not the first form of music video, since musical shorts and Vitaphone short subjects were being produced throughout the mid to late 1920's. Duke Ellington himself was one of the first successful African-American artists to obtain roles in films that represented African-Americans in a non-offensive or stereotypical way. And as Harvey Cohen describes in *Duke Ellington's America*, "the Ellington orchestra's appearance in the film short *Black and Tan* (1929) marked one of the first by any black band in the age of sound films, certainly the first respectful portrayal of a black band."[lxxiv] His *Bundle of Blues* was produced in 1933 and features not only Ivie Ivy Anderson but also dancers Florence Hill and Bessie Dudley. Comprised of three songs, "Rockin' in Rhythm", "Stormy Weather" and "Bugle Call Rag", Ivie Ivy Anderson's vocals are featured in "Stormy Weather" while the dancers are featured in "Bugle Call Rag". The set is a tiered stage in one large room, Ellington's piano center on the floor, the horn section split on his left and right. The trombones on the stage offset the guitar and upright bass on the opposite side of the stage, with the drummer and his elaborate ensemble centered on the highest tier of the stage above Ellington's piano. When Ivie Ivy Anderson enters the room, she does so just after the band's intro into "Stormy Weather", walking through curtains just in front of stage left. In a long, elegant, floor-level sheath dress, she slowly walks to a column in the room and begins to sing. The film then fades to a scene where she is in more humble clothing and is standing by the window inside of a room filled with only two separated chairs, a small table, a shelf with dishes, a small picture hanging on the wall, a vase, a broom; in other words, she is in humble but clean and not impoverished living quarters. As the camera cuts closer to Anderson, capturing her from the waist up with the window in the background, it becomes apparent that it is raining

outside. The clip then swipes to a shot outside where rain is falling in a puddle outside of a barn. That clip fades in such a way that it appears that the next clip is in liquid form and runs down the previous clip until it fills the screen, a savvy technological trick for its time period, making it seem as if the footage were rain or water itself. What is revealed is the image of an axe wedged in the top of a log, followed by another liquid like fade into a shot of rain falling the leaves of a tree, and once again back to Ivy Ivie Anderson standing by the window. And by the last line, the scene by the window fades into Anderson standing by the column, once again in her long elegant dress, and she slowly walks away and through the curtains. The camera returns its focus to the band, and the scenes taking place outside of the studio hall seem to be over until the camera cuts to exterior shots of the home where Anderson was previously seen standing and singing, then to the rural road that leads to the house, to a shot of the edge of a forest where rain is falling in the pond, then to a close up of the pond itself. The camera then returns to the orchestra for the close of "Stormy Weather".

The third and final song, "Bugle Call Rag" features a historic moment whose significance would only be realized or relevant in the past few years. As the song begins, the scantily clad Florence Hill and Bessie Dudley enter the room, each from opposite sides. One dressed in black, the other in white, they come together in the center of the room and perform their choreographed introduction. Shortly thereafter, Florence Hill dances off to the side and out of the camera's view, leaving Bessie Dudley to perform solo before the camera. It is not long until Florence Hill returns to the center, dancing Hill off to the side, and the exchange continues, seeming no longer choreographed but partially improvised and certainly stylistic of the Charleston. But for a moment,

seemingly uncommon in jazz dance, Bessie Dudley's legs will stand in one place, and then her buttocks will begin to quickly shake.

As for those who have been interested in the possible African-American roots of the contemporary practice called 'twerking', which has been a phenomenon in a number of contemporary music videos, this is one of the first instances of the dance move caught on film. While the contemporary versions typically include the female bending over to perform the move, Bessie Dudley is standing straight up, and even begins to bend backward with her hands in the air as she completes this short segment. There are of course similar dance moves in other cultures and time periods, certain styles of belly-dancing being one of the obvious. In November of 2014, the BBC begged the question with an article titled "What do twerking and the Charleston have in common?", revealing the similarities and crediting Josephine Baker for bringing the Charleston to Britain.[lxxv] World War I and early jazz would do for women what the Women's Liberation Movement and changes in the 1960's musical forms of rock and roll and funk would also later do for women, namely free them from having to dance with a man. Bessie Dudley and Florence Hill were certainly some of the best jazz dancers of the time, and Josephine Baker, often deemed 'the first black superstar', would find her audience in France and other parts of Europe.

Nevertheless, there are elements to what is happening in this particular musical short that go well beyond the 'twerking' moment, as *A Bundle of Blues* produces in some sense the map or architecture of music video production itself. It builds in ways that provide a seemingly simple structure, a building within which all future music videos will be built. The metaphor is not accidental, as Ellington was known for being inspired by

the city skyline, architecture, trains, or technology, but the result here is more from intuition than intention. As Wynton Marsalis states in an interview with Robert O'Mealy regarding the music of Duke Ellington, he makes the useful claim that it is based on a skyscraper.

> The point I always try to impress on educators about the music of Duke Ellington is that it's music that is significant to teaching students about living in this country and in this time.
>
> Duke Ellington's music is based on a skyscraper and on conceptions that come out of the American experience. It's based on the blues; his system of harmony comes out of the blues. It's not a simple form of harmony; it's only simple if you don't examine it. Indeed, his form of harmony is just as complex as any that's ever existed.
>
> When I say the music is like a skyscraper, what I mean is that jazz is organized in choruses, so each chorus will represent something like a floor of a skyscraper. It has the same structure, but something very different goes on in each floor. So if you try to say, "Well, let's compare Duke Ellington's music to a Beethoven Symphony," you can't do that because Beethoven's music comes from agrarian culture, addressing a monarchy, that type of a political situation, and Duke Ellington's music deals with democracy and a technological culture….We don't understand that there are common threads that run through all of us. Duke Ellington's music is an important key to understanding that, because he is the central

> figure in the central achievement of American culture, which is jazz music.[lxxvi]

Although Marsalis is referring to the actual music Duke Ellington produces, in *A Bundle of Blues*, there is something visually and thematically different on each floor. Each song becomes something unique in one singular musical short, and not simply because they are different songs, but because Duke Ellington and those who produced the short present the essential rubric for all future music videos, step by step. Early predecessors to music videos like musical short films or soundies are comprised of at least one of three elements that any contemporary music video utilizes, with a fourth 'element' being the glue holding everything together. Duke Ellington's *A Bundle of Blues* utilizes the first three elements in sequentially in each of the three songs. The first element is *musical performance*, and this is the sole focus of the first song in *A Bundle of Blues.* "Rockin' in Rhythm" only features Duke Ellington and the orchestra, and the visual content is the performance of the song itself by the musicians who recorded it. Any music video or its predecessor can utilize musical performance as the entire piece or in combination with the others. The second song represents the second element, namely that of *thematic narrative*. Ivie Ivy Anderson's performance in the studio with the band is an element of musical performance, while the scenes with her in the house and the footage of rain and rural life are all elements of thematic narrative, a sort of painting a picture outside of the bodily act of performing the song in relation to the content of the lyrics. It is the element that gives it depth beyond musical performance, and any music video or its predecessor can utilize only thematic narrative or in combination with any of the other elements. The

third element is none other than *dance*, which is delivered by the performances of Florence Hill and Bessie Dudley in the third song "Bugle Call Rag". While it is a performance all its own, it is extremely rare that dance is part of an audio recording prior to becoming a musical short, soundie, or music video. In other words, it is an element as a visual addition to the original musical performance; it itself is not musical performance, but a type of additional performance, secondary to the music but primary in its visual nature, and thousands of music videos, as well as some of the most important in the history of music videos, contain the element of dance, from the Duke to the King of Pop to the next big video released tomorrow. And the fourth and final 'element', or the glue holding everything together which all music videos possess in their own way, is of course *visual effect*. How shots are shot, how transitions are made, how the lighting is treated, how the set is designed, how the wardrobes are designed and how they move, how the pace feels in contrast to the music (or, to put it in its most basic and realistic terms, how the whole thing looks), are all a necessary element for any video, and often some of the best are the ones that were more technologically progressive for their time.

Duke Ellington was not the first artist, per se, to do this, and of course one could argue that *The Jazz Singer* itself does this and therefore sets the tone for thousands of films to come. But *A Bundle of Blues* presents the elements in an unintentionally didactic fashion; or, again, it builds the house in which all music videos and their predecessors are made, the song is the foundation, then the first floor, the second, the third, and the pieces that hold it together. Producer Sam Coslow and director Josef Berne worked on a whole host of soundies in the 1940's, including soundies for Martha Tilton. Nearly all of their

work together integrates musical performance with thematic narrative and dance, setting the tone for soundie production and therefore the music video itself.

In other words, *A Bundle of Blues* is, in a sense, a complete bundle of any combination of elements a music video will ever use up until the recent present of the 21st century. It gives the audience the musical performance in the first song, the thematic narrative in the second song (combined with the first), dance in the third song (again, combined with the first), and visual effect throughout all of the songs, from realistic and what is still considered to be standard camera shots to, at that time, state of the art transitions. All other soundies, variety television show performances, and music videos will always utilize the fourth element and, in the vast majority of cases, at least one of the other elements. Some of the most historically significant visual representations of music will incorporate all four, like Elvis's filmic sequence in *Jailhouse Rock* performing the song of the same name, Michael Jackson's "Thriller", Madonna's "Material Girl", Radiohead's "Street Spirit", and nearly every music video Lady Gaga has ever produced.

They are all born, in one way or another, out of late 1920's American musical shorts, and the first wave to follow in the footsteps of the musical short was the soundie. Aside from the complex technological and economic considerations that surrounded the phenomenon, the transition was quite simple: film for one song instead of three or five and allow the consumer to venture through footage of a handful of different artists in less than ten minutes instead of just one artist for eight or fifteen. Artists that are offered smaller budgets have at least one advantage on their side, which is they pose a smaller business risk. Just because not all musicians can be in films does not mean they cannot

be filmed, and just because it is a short musical representation does not mean it cannot look like a film. To this day, that still remains true.

Soundies, as low budget productions, were most often produced with one camera, and while soundies did not have the big budgets that feature length films had, there was nevertheless a desire to produce a multi-camera effect by doing several takes of the same scene, or in this case one could more appropriately say the same chorus, verse, part, or solo. This is easier or more convenient to do when the sound is prerecorded, but it is also more necessary given that the sound is not produced within the visual recording process; therefore, multiple takes become imperative in case the musician did not adequately replicate the motions that would correspond to the pre-recorded sound. Jazz musicians are of course notorious for not only being capable of altering the same song every night, but taking much delight in doing so. Playing the song exactly as it was recorded takes a bit more practice, short-term memory, and finesse than if the song were already played the exact same way every night and consequently the shoot for the soundie would simply be mimicking sounds already established in rote memory. This is much more simple to do with an instrument like the trumpet than the piano, given the different complexity in finger movements, and narrative elements outside of the musicians playing offer not only extra entertainment value, but also content to use when the footage and the audio recording do not line up to preferred standards.

The heyday of soundies was between 1940 and 1946, though there are works that resemble soundies prior to the invention of the Panarom, as well as choreographed full songs within films that, while not musicals per se, did incorporate full songs into the narrative. The first of course was *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, the first feature-length film

with synchronized sound and dialogue, or, the first talkie. It is no wonder that the first feature film with synchronized sound was a film about music, about a musician, and featured six song performances in the narrative. While silent films did not immediately subsist, nor were all films produced after *The Jazz Singer* talkies, it nevertheless helped pave the way for the future of film, long or short, talkies or soundies.

Unfortunately, Black Tuesday was not far around the corner. The stock market crash that would begin in October of 1929 in the US, and the decade long Great Depression that followed, also had major consequences for the film and music industries. Nevertheless, talkies featuring musical acts and performances, as well as what would become known as soundies with the advent of the Panoram were being produced. Born the year after the release of *The Jazz Singer*, Shirley Temple would be featured in her first film at the age of three, receive international fame, and become in a sense America's greatest distraction from the economic woes outside of the theater, the walking, talking, singing, dancing, happy, and funny emblem of American innocence. While film production companies certainly suffered during The Great Depression, they also succeeded in not only surviving but successfully entertaining the American audience, maintaining a certain amount of popularity, making the relatively full conversion from silent film to talkies, and of course filling the films with music.

Actual soundies not only reflect and document the music of the 1940's, they document the music still evolving from the Harlem Renaissance, they reflect an economically wounded and yet healing America, they document American patriotism and the entertaining appeals to wartime sailors in the tavern, they document a new liberation for American women as well as common gender stereotypes, they document the

momentum of the blossoming African-American identities and musical forms of the time as well as often reflecting racial stereotypes common in the 1940's, they document the increased popularity of female musicians and their productions are celebrations in the midst of their own struggles, the reflect the fashion of the era whether cosmopolitan or rural and of each race and gender, they document the types of humor and the levels of romance that were deemed appropriate by an American audience, they document the types of dances performed to certain genres and styles of music, they document the performances of many famous artists as well as presenting us with performances by those who have until recently been forgotten in history, they document the technological advancements and limitations of the time period, and most importantly they document a profound and early moment in the history of what we now call the music video.

On the one hand, soundies have been collected by the Prelinger Archives; on the other hand, soundies are in control of YouTube fans and users. When searching for soundies on YouTube, it is easy to see that they are being uploaded by an immense variety of unofficial channels (i.e. record labels, production companies, etc.) and instead are uploaded, and therefore titled and described, by everyday people; some are obviously hobbyists, some are record store owners, some are free-lance video producers, and for many it is difficult to tell.

Some soundies have become extremely popular, like Duke Ellington's "C Jam Blues" with well over 1 million views.[lxxvii] Many remain relatively obscure, like an upload of "Your Feet's Too Big" by Fats Waller at approximately 2,000 views[lxxviii]. Some were once obscure but have recently gained popularity. "Cocktails for Two" was a song co-written by Sam Coslow, who was the producer for many soundies during the

1940's, and was covered by Duke Ellington. Spike Jones and City Slickers adapted the song to be more humorous, cheeky, and featured sound effects within the recording, including sound effects produced by the human voice. The soundie for "Cocktails for Two"[lxxix] by Spike Jones and City Slickers remained relatively obscure until the soft-drink company Schweppes chose the song for one of its commercials and later Jimmy Fallon lip-synched to the song, specifically the sound effects, on The Tonight Show in September of 2014. Reg Kehoe and his Marimba Queens have been a relatively unknown ensemble for decades until the soundie for "A Study in Brown" surfaced on the internet.[lxxx] The Marimba Queens are a cast of female marimba and maracas players, led by Reg Kehoe also on the marimba, and backed only by a male upright bass player and a female maracas player. Aside from seeing so many females playing instruments, which was quite rare in the 1940's, it is upright bass solo that seems to attract so much online attention. The song is an instrumental tune, and the soundie features the band spread out behind and around leader Reg Kehoe, the upright bass player flamboyantly plucking the notes far in the background. When it is time for his solo, he picks up the bass, carries it to the front of the stage, and begins to emphatically slap it repeatedly while performing what has now come to be known as head banging. While there is relatively little known about the band, they have their own WikiPedia page with currently no citations, and no other videos of the band are on YouTube. Nevertheless, multiple versions of the soundie have found their way to YouTube, including a version reproduced in 720p High Definition and numerous remixes, including rock, electronic, and metal songs.

One cannot of course download videos to remix on YouTube; they would have to be obtained from another source, the largest of which is undoubtedly the Prelinger

Archives, which has collected and archived hundreds of soundies, among other things. A simple search for "soundie" in the Prelinger Archives, a vast array of soundies appear for viewing as well as download. As of December 2014, no soundie comes anywhere close to being downloaded as many times as Reg Kehoe and his Marimba Queens' "A Study In Brown". Several soundies have less than 100 downloads. A number of other soundies seem to range between 1,000 and 8,000. There are only a few exceptions that have over 12,000 downloads. "A Study in Brown" has over 80,000 downloads, leaving all other soundies in the dust.

In the collection are soundies by Three Canadian Capers, Emil Coleman and His Orchestra, The Three Suns, Ginger Harmon, the Lorraine Page Orchestra, Del Casino and his orchestra, The Mel-Tones, Thelma White and Her All-Girl Orchestra, Rosalie Allen, Maya's Pan-American Orchestra, Meyer Davis, the June Taylor Girls, Louis Jordan, Dorothy Dandridge, Carolyn Grey, and many others. Soundies are but a piece or a part of the Prelinger Archives. According to the site,

> Prelinger Archives was founded in 1983 by Rick Prelinger in New York City. Over the next twenty years, it grew into a collection of over 60,000 "ephemeral" (advertising, educational, industrial, and amateur) films. In 2002, the film collection was acquired by the Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. Prelinger Archives remains in existence, holding approximately 5,000 digitized and videotape titles (all originally acquired since 2002. Its goal remains to collect, preserve, and facilitate access to films of historic significance that haven't

> been collected elsewhere. Included are films produced by and for many hundreds of important US corporations, nonprofit organizations, trade associations, community and interest groups, and educational institutions. Getty Images represents the collection for stock footage sale, and over 2,800 key titles (now in the process of increasing to over 5,000) are available here.

We are therefore now able to understand soundies and musical shorts in the context of other filmic phenomena of their time period. And while this exploration deserves a different study or historiography all its own, it is noted here, as understanding the evolution of the music video is in part understanding the cultural evolution of the use of film and video in a wider context, particularly in terms of representations of race and gender, and the Prelinger Archives provide just that.

Nevertheless, in light of the recent popularity of Reg Kehoe and his Marimba Queens, the all female orchestras, the women musicians found in musical shorts and soundies from the 1920's through the 1940's, it is important to note the power of the filmic image here. It was obviously a turning point in terms of female musicianship and public exposure; many women who were musicians in private became musicians in public in the period during and after World War I and into the economic recovery of the Great Depression. The live shows represent the image of the woman playing an instrument, the audio recordings do not; one cannot tell the difference between a man playing trombone and a woman playing the same instrument. And it was the power of both the live performance and the filmed representation that began to change the minds of

some chauvinist American men, and if not change their minds then at least create some controversy and inspire other young women to do the same.

But The International Sweethearts of Rhythm broke the rules. As the first integrated all-female jazz group, the band would endure, on the one hand, severe disdain from certain white populations, and, on the other hand, immense popularity among venues catered toward African-Americans. They were not only integrated in terms of black and white, but of various ethnicities from around the world. The International Sweethearts of Rhythm produced a handful of soundies. All soundies available on YouTube are performance based in a studio setting, the musicians aligned on a tiered stage covered with images of musical notes; "I Left My Man", "How 'Bout That Jive", and "Round and Brown Blues" all filmed in the same studio, while "She's Crazy with the Heat" and "Jump Children" filmed in a different studio. Thematic narratives are not used, rather the audience witnesses the ethnically eclectic group of women play their instruments just like the male groups.

The immense and remarkable story of Josephine Baker during this time period and after offers a distinct contrast to racial contexts in the music and film industry in the US. The documentary for a series on BBC Wales called *Josephine Baker: The 1st Black Superstar* highlights her struggles as an entertainer in the US and her subsequent success upon moving to Paris in the mid 1920's, a country that lacked anything similar to the Jim Crow laws in her home country. She was the first African-American woman to be the star of a feature-length major film and went on to become the highest paid woman in the world, all the while refusing to play for a segregated audience. During World War II, she helped the French resistance in numerous ways, one famously being that members of the

French resistance would be smuggled into other countries as members of Josephine Baker's band, information about the locations and movements of armies hidden in her sheet music. With her wild, erotic, and vivacious musical and dance performances, combining the shimmy, the mess-around, the Charleston, and others, she began to wow the French audience, at times performing almost or practically nude. She would gain the attention and admiration of artists like Grace Kelly, Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Colette, and others, while at the same time being bashed by the American media. Despite living in France, she was very involved with the Civil Rights movement and the NAACP.[lxxxi]

In terms of her performances, she is perhaps most famous for her 'banana dance' or 'banana skirt'. As provocative as it was, the irony is that the only thing separating the male gaze from Baker's lower sexual parts are a collection of phallic objects. And she was also famous for performing topless and/or nearly nude. By the 1930's and 1940's, Josephine Baker was an African-American woman that had become a sex symbol among whites, and she somehow did this with Jazz in a European country that held itself in high esteem for its culture. Jazz and culture did not mix well in the early 20th century. As Lawrence Levine has described it in terms of American culture,

> Jazz was, or at least seemed to be, the new product of a new age; Culture was, or at least seemed to be, traditional – the creation of centuries.
>
> Jazz was raucous, discordant; Culture was harmonious, embodying order and reason.

> Jazz was accessible, spontaneous; Culture was exclusive, complex, available only through hard study and training.
>
> Jazz was openly an *interactive*, participatory music in which the audience played an important roll, to the extent that the line between audience and performers was often obscured. Culture built those lines painstakingly, establishing boundaries that relegated the audience to a primarily passive role, listening to, or looking at the creations of true artists. Culture increased the gap between the creator and the audience, jazz narrowed that gap.[lxxxii]

The 'culture' to which Levine is referring is of course the European notions of 'high' culture America inherited, not 'culture' in the anthropological sense, but culture as refinement.[lxxxiii] Duke Ellington was one of the few African-American artists that could blur that distinction in the US, while Josephine Baker was able to, more or less, shatter it in France – at least for the moments the audience remained captivated by her strange French accent, her swinging arms and legs, her bare chest and bizarre costumes, her animated facial expressions, her stage antics, her voice, and of course her dark skin. But despite the creation of the Scopitone in France, which was much like the Panoram, she was not featured in any Scopitone films. Footage of Josephine Baker during this time period is rare, but we are now able to revisit some of those performances that were, for numerous reasons, not welcome by many whites in the US.

The Great Depression and World War II, the Harlem Renaissance and the advent of jazz, the technological innovations of the talkie and the soundie, post WWI culture and

the increasing number of female musicians and performers, the racial integration of musical performances with Benny Goodman or The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, the early racial integration of the audience and artists' fan base, all are the markers and contexts of the origins of what is now called the music video. It marks the transition from the stage to the film studio, and as raw materials became more in demand during WWII and the television later becoming more available to a large percentage of the American population, the Panoram would fade out in America in the late 1940's, but over two decades of musical shorts and soundies had been produced, solidifying the combination of musical performance, acting, and musical promotion via the moving image. All production of what is now known as music videos would follow in the footsteps of this era.

Pedagogical Reflections – When The Oldest History Is The Most Brand New

In the classroom, teaching soundies are both exciting and a challenge. In terms of excitement, first of all the students have encountered the earliest predecessor to the contemporary music videos they follow, having never known they existed. There is a magnificent sense of discovery that is related to their own personal lives (and often, as I was told, the subject matter of many discussions at a party, in the dorm, or with the family – the latter being the case given the many decades the class touched upon prior to the 1980's or the 1990's). Many were surprised to find so many soundies by African-American artists, which led to conversations about the music industry at the time.

Soundies were an outlet for underrepresented musicians who were not getting the big shows on Broadway, and were augmented by the white cosmopolitan interest or fascination with the exotic in the 1920's and the Harlem Renaissance. Many were surprised to find so many female artists, the importation or appropriation of Hawaiian musical influences, the humor behind the themes and narratives of several soundies, the similarities of the progressions and choruses of the music to songs of today. Some were surprised to find versions of familiar Christmas songs they remember from being a child, or performances by the late Shirley Temple, who passed away during the course of this class.

Excerpts from films were not exempt from the class when discussing musical shorts or soundies of this era, given that, as will be further observed in the next chapter, are also formative in the evolution of the music video; unlike today's films, where music comes and goes in the background, separated from the character's audible experience in the narrative but there to heighten the emotions of the viewer, songs were 'performed' often in their entirety in early film, becoming part of the narrative itself, and scripted and acted just like any other soundie or music video. Numerous examples of Shirley Temple in the 1930's or something like Judy Garland's "Over The Rainbow" carry on remnants of the musical in that they are scripted performances of, quite often, entire songs.

Smaller historical nuances that somehow related to more contemporary works arose. In order to teach soundies or musical shorts of the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's, one not only needs to begin with Edison's famous fiddle and dance recording as the first known recording of synchronized sound and film (or rather, the attempt that was finalized a century later), but silent film itself, or, why silent film was not always 'silent'. One

very astute student gave a presentation on a music video from the MTV era, namely The Smashing Pumpkins' music video "Tonight, Tonight", which is heavily influenced by the Georges Méliès silent film "Le Voyage dans la Lune", or "A Trip to the Moon", which became a conversation about silent film itself and the cultural intuition to often have live music performances during the projection of the film, not only for entertainment's sake, but also to cover up the noise of the projector.[lxxxiv]

Another student chose to write on a soundie titled "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby" by Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five, of which it was mentioned that the title and its idiom is revived in the movie *O' Brother Where Art Thou?* in the classic line "Now is you is or is you ain't my constituents?".[lxxxv] Other versions of this song would range from Dinah Washington to Diana Krall, and even in an episode of Tom and Jerry. The students were therefore *seeing* certain kinds of musical history unfold that would not have been possible earlier in the 21st century and perhaps not at all in the 20th century unless it were a pre-packaged history is some kind of documentary style. And of course there are an overwhelming plethora of wonderful and informative documentaries tracing various histories of American music; but part of the nature of this class was to create and discover new ones, however big or small, given the framework of YouTube as both a video interface and a search engine. Again, Vimeo did come into play more when contemporary videos were being sought and researched, but for soundies, Archive.org was an amazing resource, however different of an interface it is to navigate.

Out of this general pre-television era, students were allowed to choose soundies, single songs from musical shorts, or musical excerpts from films, and were encouraged to us The Prelinger Archives as well as YouTube. They found that their choices were not

easy to make, having very little knowledge of any artists during this time period. In terms of research, they often found there was information on the internet but it, at times, was thin, and information provided on YouTube descriptions or even the titles themselves may be incorrect. Sometimes, the user uploading the video would admit in the description that he or she did not have permission to record and upload the copyrighted material. With this era, I provided more guidance and assistance in helping the students choose and research certain prominent and historically important artists.

Their selections included "Underneath the Harlem Moon" by The Brown Sisters, "Animal Crackers in My Soup" by Shirley Temple, "Keep Sweeping the Cobwebs Off the Moon" by The Ingenues, "Jump Children" by The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, "When The Saints Go Marching In" by Louis Armstrong, "I've Got A Heart Full of Music" by Benny Goodman, "Over the Rainbow" and "I'm Nobody's Baby" by Judy Garland, the final musical scene from the film *42nd Street*, "Swinging on a Star" and "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby, "In the Mood" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo" by Glen Miller, "Jukebox Dance" by Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell, "Night and Day" by Frank Sinatra, "Pass the Biscuits Mirandy" and "Cocktails for Two" by Spike Jones, "I Got it Bad and that Ain't Good" by Duke Ellington, "A Zoot Suit" by Dorothy Dandridge, "A Study in Brown" by Reg Kehoe and his Marimba Queens, "Tangerine" by Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, "Jukebox Saturday Night" by Glenn Miller and The Modernaires, "A Little Jive is Good for You" by Martha Tilton, "Afro Mood" by Amalia Aguilar, "Jumpin' Jive" by the Nicholas Brothers, "Caldonia" and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" by Louis Jordan, "Nature Boy" by Nat King Cole, "Minnie the Moocher" by Cab Calloway, "Hollywood Boogie" by Thelma White and Her All Girl

Orchestra, and "Baby It's Cold Outside" from *Neptune's Daughter* and written by Frank Loesser.

Representations of gender did not seem to surprise many of the students, to where as some of the representations of race did. It provides interesting context and conversation in the case of an artist like Dorothy Dandridge who is dressed as a cowgirl in the strangely contemporary-seeming "Cow Cow Boogie", and yet in a soundie by Hoagy Carmichael called "Lazybones", she and an African-American man play as servants to the white Carmichael and his two beautiful white companions close by him at his piano. Of course, nothing is intended to be offensive, per se, but humorous, and the racial stereotypes of the day certainly sometimes surfaced through attempts at humor. One of the most prime examples is "Harlem Revue"[lxxxvi], apparently produced in 1932 according to IMDB.[lxxxvii] Featuring peformers like The Brown Sisters, Bill Powers, and Zazzy, the initial dialogue and set design seem to be the most offensive by today's standards, but it is always important to note that soundies or musical shorts that mostly feature African-American artists are most often created for African-American audiences. There are certainly also white stereotypes found in soundies and musical shorts, particularly those that depict rural white characters, and "Turkey in the Straw" by The Original Schnickelfritz Band is but one of them.[lxxxviii]

With soundies and musical shorts of the pre-television era, the oldest history of what we now call the music video seems to be the most brand new. They are only recently rising to the digital surface, and including artists that were either forgotten over the decades, or artists that have remained relevant and studied but now their own histories need to be revised, augmented, reevaluated, and visually understood. Jazz is one of those

American genre's that would not often produce narrative-like music videos that popularized other genres late in the 20th century; their visual representations tended to be all realism, documenting the actual performance itself with real-time audio. It is therefore ironic that many of the earliest forms of the music video were for jazz songs and artists.

Attempting to teach this era of production only reveals that more work, more history, more digitizing, and more investigation needs to be done. New histories need to be documented, and YouTube alongside The Prelinger Archives are making that possible, but we are still in the early, embryonic stages of their creation. Most academic works on the music of this era make little, if any mention of musical shorts and soundies, likely due to an understandable lack of awareness of their existence or sheer inaccessibility. Now these new histories are not in the hands of historians or archivists, but in the hands of civilians.

As mentioned before, many of these uploads on YouTube are produced by fans and enthusiastic hobbyists; the history has become collective and produced by those who were not alive during this era. It also makes it perhaps the most exciting era of production due to the newness of the soundies and musical shorts to the digital world, as well as to the fact that the early part of this era is the original moment itself, the invention of a concept and format that, still in practice, contemporarily constitutes the most popular videos in the world. It was not only the beginning of what we call the music video, but the beginning of its circulation and globalization that now, almost a century later, is full blown and more vibrant than ever. The power of the visual, the power of filmic musical performance, the power of jazz to shake the dusty traditions of American music, would

not fall or fade away; it would transition into, among other things, the birth of rock and roll and the phenomenon of musical performances and acts been seen by millions of people at once. What were musical shorts and soundies would transition into television, with immense and historic cultural consequences for American music.

Chapter 3:

Music on Television: Evolutions After Soundies from the 1950's to the 1970's

Like all of the arts in American culture, music often reflects, documents, and even creates cultural changes. One may even argue that, among all of the art forms in America, music has had the largest impact in shifting and shaping 20th century American culture, and has had significant impacts on various cultures and musical communities around the world. Whether it is as specific as James Brown touring Africa, as powerful as the influence of American blues on bands of the British Invasion, as complex as the many faces and changes of American jazz, or as general as the increasingly global phenomenon of rock and roll during the mid 20th century, America would come to be known for, among other things, its music, particularly from the 1950's through the 1970's. These three decades, thanks in part to the popularity and accessibility of the home television, marks a major shift in American music being not simply heard but seen as well, and sometimes seen by millions at once. Some of the most important and culturally profound performances of this era have been accessible only through analog archives or documentary films, but now we are able to visually witness some of the most groundbreaking audio-visual experiences in American music history, which in part and quite often became American television history.

According to Amy-Mae Elliot writing for Mashable in 2011, "more video content is uploaded to YouTube in a 60 day period than the three major U.S. television networks created in 60 years."[lxxxix] This means that if each of those television networks uploaded

everything that was ever produced, it would still remain a tiny fraction of what is uploaded. But thankfully, some of that content (as well as content produced by companies other than ABC, CBS, and NBC) is uploaded and we are seeing more and more of it appear on YouTube. Prior to the MTV era, or from the 1950's through the 1970's, the history of music and television is immense: from the many variety show formats like American Bandstand, the Grand Ole Opry, Ozark Jubilee, Soul Train, or Shindig to experimentations with music videos from artists like The Beatles or the Velvet Underground's collaborations with Andy Warhol. Music videos and their evolution also include films in this era, since that, unlike today, it was more common for entire songs to be acted out in films even if they were not musicals; one of the most famous music videos from this era is technically not a music video, but a scene in the movie *Jailhouse Rock* starring Elvis Presley. *Rock Around The Clock; Rock, Rock, Rock; Mister Rock and Roll;* and *Don't Knock the Rock* are also classic examples as films that are about rock and roll itself, featuring full-length staged performances, the first named after and capitalizing on the success of "Rock Around The Clock" by Bill Haley and His Comets, the last one famous for, among other things, introducing Little Richard to a wide audience. In other words, the history that was once viewed in real time can now be reviewed, and thanks to users and fans, that history is expanding.

This was, of course, unexpected. Just two years before YouTube was invented, the Museum of Modern Art held an exhibition called "Golden Oldies of Music Video" from April 17th through May 1st, 2003. In the description for the exhibition, it is stated that "the top thirty-five hits of 1965-85, drawn from the Museum's extensive collection of music videos, are presented in three programs." It continues to say that, "the videos,

which after offbeat beginnings later gained a wider broadcast on public-access cable and early MTV, reveal the dynamic collaboration that occurred between artists and musicians during an era of rapidly changing technologies."[xc] The exhibition garnered a write-up in the New York Times prior to its premiere, noting that the exhibition was the same as the one MoMa produced in 1985, but with a 'coda' at the end. As for the years prior to MTV, artists like The Beatles and Queen were featured, and although the only videos shown were part of MoMa's collection, the description and New York Times article do little to address whether 1965 is either an appropriate date for the 'beginning' of the music video or simply the fact that MoMa had nothing in its collection prior to that year. Nevertheless, Michael Agger, writing for the New York Times, laments the end of the era of the music video as the article concludes.

> The decline of MTV as a video platform is what makes the coda to the MoMa show so heartbreaking. With a few exceptions, videos don't reach a mass audience in the manner of the old MTV. The art form seems to be following in the footsteps of short films, which were once played before feature films but now are mor commonly seen in museum screenings, on Internet sites, or on DVD compilations.[xci]

Little did Agger know that, not only would music videos have an enormous renaissance in the 21st century, but thousands of older music videos would be digitally available around the world.

We can now revisit the visual birth of rock and roll. Frankie Lymon and The Teenagers take the stage in the mid 1950's on The Frankie Laine Show with their hit "Why Do Fools Fall In Love"; it was their first television performance, now digitized and having over three million views. The song would be covered, altered, rewritten, and serve as a metaphor in the work of many artists for years to come. Jerry Lee Lewis's early performances of hits such as "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" and "Great Balls of Fire" remind us not only of the visual nature of performances like these, but of the audience's reaction and participation. Unlike live shows today, occurring every night in countless towns and cities, where the audience cheers during the artists entrance on stage or at the end of each song, there are numerous examples spanning decades of the evolution of rock and roll where the audience is screaming and cheering throughout the entire song. Few artists have possessed the ability to garner those responses from an audience in the past couple of decades, but now we can witness the newness and excitement young Americans felt at the earliest rock and roll performances. In some ways visually similar to soundies, the live television performances bear the roar of the artists' success.

After soundies, jazz musicians and record labels would not produce what we now call music videos in the sense that rock music did, particularly the instrumental versions. It would find itself in numerous films, and artists like Cab Calloway who had been featured in several films in the 1930's and 1940's would only be featured in four films in the 1950's and 1960's and had moved on to stage appearances. Not only was America's tastes gearing more toward the new blues influenced rock and roll performed by white musicians, but jazz itself was changing, often to more experimental soundscapes. Miles

Davis was of course responsible for a number of changes and shifts in jazz; despite being on of the most famous jazz artists, he has very little digitized video presence. One music video that exists and perhaps stands out the most is the stark video for the song "So What" from the album *Blue* with just under two million views.[xcii] Live music videos, of which "So What" is one, are clearly much more common as jazz has progressed, as well as performances on television variety shows. Among a few interesting exceptions would be Joni Mitchell's music video for "Heijira"[xciii] from her 1975 album of the same name, and later the full length VHS release of *Shadows and Light*. But one of the great benefits of being able to view live jazz music videos is that it also reveals the musicians' respective playing techniques in one of the most difficult musical genres to play. It is now readily available to study artists like Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, or Charles Mingus visually.

We are now able to revisit television performances by some of country music's first stars like Uncle Dave Macon, The Carter Family, Hank Williams, Grand Ole Opry's Roy Acuff, the four foot eleven inch star Little Jimmy Dickens, the great Ernest Tubb, and even Jimmie Rodgers who is considered to be the first country superstar and the 'Father of Country Music'. We can now revisit The Carter Family's "Wildwood Flower" on the Grand Ole Opry, or Patsy Cline performing "Three Cigarettes in an Ashtray" on Ozark Jubilee (later becoming Jubilee USA), one of the first American television network programs to feature country artists. From Doc Martin to Chet Atkins, Jubilee USA has had a number of its clips from the 1950's appear on YouTube. Some are less staged than others. Chet Atkin's performance features him sitting in a stool playing the guitar; a drummer is accompanying him but is never seen on camera, and one can hear coughing

in the audience.[xciv] But Patsy Cline's "Three Cigarettes In An Ashtray" is quite different. The set is staged as the inside of a café, Patsy Cline singing while sitting at a table alone, a dimly lit male stranger dines behind her.[xcv] She is likely lip-synching to the original recording of the song, but this is difficult to confirm. Carl Perkins made his television debut on Ozark Jubilee and can be seen performing "Blue Suede Shoes" on the Perry Como Show at the height of the song's popularity, and long before Elvis Presley would record it.[xcvi] And we can now watch the literal birth of bluegrass music and the 'Father of Bluegrass'; Bill Monroe and The Blue Grass Boys, which featured Earl Scruggs and his three-finger banjo-picking style, are considered to be the first commercially successful group to establish the bluegrass sound that still exists today. Much of this material has reached YouTube thanks to the amazingly wonderful FolkStreams collections. Later in history, Charley Pride would give his first television performance. Being an Africa-American country singer, his management apparently would not allow any photos of Charley Pride to be circulated for the first couple of years of his career. His performance of Hank Williams' "Love Sick Blues" on the Lawrence Welk Show is one of the most underrated moments in music video history.

As for those who loath aspects of contemporary culture and new media developments for its own short attention span, for those who were uncomfortably bewildered by MTV and the consistent stream of short form videos, for those who imagine that entertainment earlier in the 20th century somehow tended toward provoking long thoughts and deeper cultural understanding by not being so 'schizophrenic' or fast paced, one would only need to revisit a handful of variety shows from the 1950's to see that contemporary forms of entertainment reside in a certain tradition of musical

performances that, while in a different format, bear the mark of what has always been a trait of many American stages: good, fast-paced, music oriented entertainment. Out of many televised gems in American music history, now available to the world on YouTube, one stands out in particular as one of the rare moments the late Hank Williams, Sr. was featured on television before his unfortunate and premature death in 1953.

"Glory Bound Train" may be the last song Hank Williams performed on television, joined by Mother Maybelle and The Carter Sisters, as well as the Grand Ole Opry cast on The Kate Smith Evening Hour in New York City. It would be the third song he performed within that half hour, the prior two being "Cold, Cold Heart" and "I Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You". Roy Acuff, known as the 'king of country music' serves as the master of ceremonies and, after Kate Smith's introduction, kicks off the program with "Living On The Mountain, Honey Babe", which he states is commonly played on Saturday nights at the Grand Ole Opry. Once the song is over, June Carter comes running from behind and is subsequently introduced to the audience. As per her stage personality, she immediately begins with anecdotes in her distinct southern drawl, this time about her clothing and her family. They are actually staged left of June Carter and, as Roy begs for a tune, June joins the rest of the group to perform "Looking For Henry Lee"; while June plays with her dress, the others play accordion, upright bass, and acoustic guitar. By the time they have completed their song (along with the initial commercial for BAB-O dish soap, Kate Smith's introduction, Roy Acuff's introduction, the performance of "Living On The Mountain, Honey Babe", and the dialogue between June and Roy), only just over six minutes have passed.

A performance by The Cedar Hills Square Dancers follows, lasting less than one minute. Brother Oswald and the Smokey Mountain Boys follow with "Good Old Mountain Dew", co-written by a North Carolina lawyer in the 1920's who defended clients accused of making moonshine during prohibition.[xcvii] Roy Acuff then introduces Hank Williams, and the latter informs the audience that he will be playing his most financially successful song, "Cold, Cold Heart". The sequins on his shirt glisten on the black and white screen as he begins just before the ten minute mark. Once the song is finished, the camera cuts to June Carter who tells the audience that her sister, Anita, is "awful struck on how Hank Williams sings them pretty little love songs" and is somewhere sitting on a bunch of straw and is about to sing one herself. Hank Williams, of course, joins Anita Carter for the performance of "I Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You". The star-struck Anita Carter makes one small mistake in the lyrics, and the song closes with the two looking at one another, though Anita Carter is so nervous that she has a difficult time keeping her eyes on Hank Williams.

After two slow country ballads, there seems to come a third from the slapstick trio that follows, namely the Grand Ole Opry's notorious Lonzo and Oscar, with Cousin Odie (later he would be known as Cousin Jody). The performance features the lap steel slide guitar antics of Cousin Odie between Lonzo and Oscar's vocals. They are followed by the next to last performance of the show, which is the last performance with Hank Williams, the Carter sisters, and members of the Grand Ole Opry cast; they are all backing Roy Acuff on "Glory Bound Train", and such was what may have been Hank Williams' last televised appearance.[xcviii]

Dance of course was something that could not be adequately captured by photography, let alone audio recording; it is a tradition passed on through practice alone, save the films that integrate certain types of dancing into the narrative itself or the rare dance documentary. But, as with soundies, variety shows and music videos in the mid to late 20th century often feature dance performances along with the music, and therefore the richness of that history has now been greatly heightened. It is a history that can now be written, or re-written, now that it can be adequately seen in so many details and so many contexts throughout the decades New dance moves and forms would of course be invented over the course of this era, and Elvis Presley was easily the most famous for this in the early days of rock and roll with his controversial swinging of the hips. According to Rolling Stone, Elvis made his first television appearance "on a local version *Hayride* in March 1955."[xcix] But on September 9th in1956, "nothing compared to his debut on The Ed Sullivan Show when 60 million viewers tuned in. It was a high profile cultural moment and national event when 82% of the television viewing audience watched Elvis on The Ed Sullivan Show".[c] Contrary to many Elvis myths, in his first and second appearances on the show, Elvis's full body was shown. But after his second appearance, "which again enjoyed huge ratings, Elvis was burned in effigy by angry crowds in Nashville and St. Louis."[ci] By his third appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show, "Elvis's sexy gyrations had stirred up enough controversy across America that CBS censors demanded he be shot only from the waist up."[cii] But there was no stopping Elvis, there was no stopping rock and roll, there was no stopping teenagers from dancing, and later there would be no stopping the British Invasion.

On February 9th, 1964, eight years after Elvis's appearance, millions of people tuned into The Ed Sullivan Show to see The Beatles make their American television debut. Seventy-three million is the estimated number, making it "one of the seminal moments in television history."[ciii] According to *The Official Ed Sullivan Site*,

> The television rating was a record-setting 45.3, meaning that 45.3% of households with televisions were watching. That figure reflected a total of 23,240,000 American homes. The show garnered a 60 share, meaning 60% of the televisions turned on were tuned in to Ed Sullivan and The Beatles.[civ]

Their second appearance on February 16th nearly reached the record-setting statistics of their first appearance and captured the eyes and ears of forty percent of the American population. On February 24, the edition of *Newsweek* featured The Beatles on the cover with the title 'Bugs About Beatles' and would give a scathing review of the band, predicting that they would fade out in time. They of course were wrong. The Beatles, in fulfilling their initial contract, appeared a third time (though this footage was actually taped before the first), again alongside other artists, among them Cab Calloway. In 1965, The Beatles returned again; it would be the last time The Ed Sullivan Show would be broadcast in black and white, and it would be the last time they played 'live', although the footage was previously taped. All of their other appearances on The Ed Sullivan Show at the end of the 1960's and into 1970 would be music videos they had sent to the show via mail.[cv]

The British invasion also of course included bands like The Who, The Kinks, The Rolling Stones, and later artists like Led Zeppelin and Cream. The latter band's low budget music video for "Sunshine of Your Love" from 1967-68 (their most popular song in America) features the trio performing the song live in a small room, and one camera zooms in and out on each of the members and instruments, panning back and forth, in a very hand-held, amateur cameraman style. The Who's music video for "The Seeker" is similar in fashion, yet it includes words on the screen. The Rolling Stones on the other hand produced several music videos during this era, including "Start Me Up", "Angie", "Miss You", "It's Only Rock 'N' Roll (But I Like It)", and "Far Away Eyes". Many of these artists were listening to African-American blues recording artists like Buddy Guy and Howlin' Wolf; Elvis Presley had paved the way in terms of popularizing this kind of music and, in some sense, was responsible for making the British Invasion into American culture possible.

The young Bob Dylan would have had his first nationally televised performance on The Ed Sullivan Show had he not walked out after being censored, or, asked not to play "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues". In his first actual television performance, Dylan played the traditional song "Man of Constant Sorrow" in 1963, the same year he would perform at The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom with Joan Baez by his side, prior to Martin Luther King giving one of the most famous speeches in American history. By 1965, Dylan would tour in England, and D.A. Pennebaker was producing a black and white documentary of that tour titled *Don't Look Back*. The opening segment was used as a promotional video for the documentary and features Bob Dylan flipping intentionally misspelled and/or humorous cue cards as the lyrics to Subterranean

Homesick Blues progress. Allen Ginsberg and Bob Neuwirth are featured having a conversation in the background. It has been widely regarded as one of the best music videos of all time and, among other things, was used in a promotional video to launch Google Instant in 2010.[cvi] Rolling Stone ranked it 7th in the top 100 music videos for its list in 1993; it was the only music video released before 1980, with the exception of Devo's "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction", which was ranked 100th.[cvii] But Dylan was never much for lip synching, has produced very few music videos over his career, and never appeared on Dick Clark's long-running music show American Bandstand.

And lip synching is something every artist would have to do if performing on American Bandstand was of any desire. Spanning from the early 1950's to the late 1980's, the show featured artists lip synching and often dancing to one of their songs, surrounded by an audience of teenagers; the show included interviews in the studio and via telephone as well as dance segments to songs by artists not on the show. Artists such as Jerry Lee Lewis, The Byrds, Jefferson Airplane, The Doors, Danny and the Juniors, ABBA, Al Martino and The Young Rascals, The Beach Boys, Stevie Wonder, Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly, The Time, Falco, LaToya Jackson, Captain Beefheart, The Beatles, Neil Diamond, The Temptations, Jack Blanchard, Misty Morgan, 13th Floor Elevators, Van Morrison, Rufus and Chaka Khan, Cheech and Chong, The Sylvers, Neil Sedaka, Bobby Vee, Gap Band, Mary Jane Girls, Yvonne Elliman, The Commodores, Alabama, Burton Cummings, The Jackson 5, Chubby Checker, and even Pink Floyd have all somehow been featured on American Bandstand. In 1967, The Beatles' music videos for "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" were broadcast on the show by being played for the studio audience (and also the television viewer) and subsequently

interrupting the videos to interview members of the audience for their responses and opinions.[cviii] All of the artists above and their appearances on American Bandstand can now be viewed on YouTube, several of them uploaded by fans and a significant number of them uploaded by Dick Clark Productions.

Countless other similar music shows would come and go, including Shindig!, Hullabaloo, the folk-centered Hootenany, Hollywood A Go-Go, Shivaree, the urban artist-centered Soul Train, the country music-centered Hee Haw, Rollin' On The River (Rollin), The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, Premiere, Jazz Casual on National Educational Television, The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour, The Johnny Cash Show, Laugh-In, The Lawrence Welk Show, and a whole host of others; remnants of their existence, their highlights or what has been randomly discovered, are now digitally available to us for our own entertainment or anthropological gaze.

What we are not able to see is the first commercial television broadcast in color. Patty Painter, or "Miss Color Television", had been modeling in CBS's color television tests and developments for approximately five years since 1946. Finally, in the summer of 1951, the very first commercial CBS Color System telecast appeared on television in America. It was a music variety show called Premiere, and guests that day included Ed Sullivan, Robert Alda, Garry Moore, Arthur Godfrey, Wayne Coy who was Chairman of the FCC, Frank Stanton who was the president of CBS, and several others. Unfortunately there were only a handful of televisions in the country that could view it. The advent of color television had already been delayed by legal complaints from RCA, and more would follow. Given a whole host of legal issues to come as well as the need for raw materials during the Korean War, color television in the US was stalled for years; Ed

Sullivan unable to see his own show in color for, again, nearly fifteen years after his appearance on Priemere.[cix]

But as the US transitioned from monochrome to color broadcasts in the mid to late 1960's, America's most popular music had drastically changed from that of the early 1950's, and the new visual format would only augment the new directions the music had taken, particularly rock and roll. The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour of the late 1960's is one of those unexpected outlets for what was becoming psychedelic rock, or at least psychedelic visuals in variety show performances. The Who performing "I Can See for Miles and Miles" or Steppenwolf performing "Magic Carpet Ride" represented or reflected the new visual imagery with the new electric sounds of rock and roll, not simply in niche counterculture music festivals or the LSD laden concert venues, but in American living rooms. Lights were no longer an incandescent white, but red, green, yellow, purple, blue. Artists' wardrobes often continued to deviate from the suits, sweaters, jeans, or t-shirts of both everyday life and early rock and roll. The new ethereal and electric sounds, the newly developed analog production sounds, the new reverb effects, the new musical color palates now had a new visual color palate that would change the face of music video production from the late 1960's onward. Color television and psychedelic rock and roll had become a perfect marriage, and all other American musical genres would adapt in their own unique ways.

One of the most notable aspects of music videos and variety show performances from the mid-sixties through the present is that, given the new color visual format and advancing technologies in film, artists began to rely less on dancing as visual content, and when dance was utilized, there was something remarkably different about it. Women

were dancing by themselves, not as performers like Josephine Baker, not dancers like Florence Hill or Bessie Dudley performing with Duke Ellington, but as participants dancing to the music, whether in the audience or otherwise. The revolution of psychedelic rock's coincidence with color television also coincided with the feminist revolution and cultural shifts in American female identities. With this new wave of rock and roll, there was no partner dancing to The Doors, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Kenny Rogers and The First Edition, Buffalo Springfield, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Cream, Fleetwood Mac, The Who, or Bob Dylan. Women did not need men to dance to America's most popular music anymore.

The appearance on the second episode of Laugh-In by Kenny Rogers and The First Edition with their hit "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)" is an example that carries on the departures made by The Beatles but in a distinctly different and new way: the inclusion of darkness, death, or the morose in a music video. The music video is filmed in what appears to be a taxidermists office, riddled with animal skulls, bones, horns, and teeth, mounted deer, bears, crows, an ostrich and other animals. Filmed in black and white and featuring the band wearing the latest style in suits, the music video certainly did not fit the rest of Laugh-In's general humor and aesthetic and is one of the first 'scary' music videos ever produced. It is also a departure from their first television appearance, which was on The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour and may perhaps be the most visually psychedelic performance from the show that is digitally available to us. As a song about the dangers of LSD, Kenny Rogers at times appears to be under the influence of the drug, or at least some type of drug. The video features a myriad swirl of moving colors and lights beneath Kenny Rogers as the video begins, and

strangely features an extremely oversized bed. Popularized again in the late 1990's and early 2000's by the Coen brothers' hit film *The Big Lebowski,* followed by Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings recreating the 1968 rendition by Bettye LaVette, the video has been uploaded by a handful of fans, with some reaching over 1.5 million views. Unfortunately there is not a filmed version digitally available of Jerry Lee Lewis or Teddy Hill and the Southern Soul performing the song, as it was also recorded by these artists just before Kenny Rogers and The First Edition released it. Distinctly different than the other versions, Kenny Rogers' version begins with a guitar played backwards, another popular guitar effect of the psychedelic and counterculture era, and this version apparently capturing the attention of Jimi Hendrix, who allegedly told Kenny Rogers that it was his favorite song.

There could perhaps be no greater compliment in the music world, assuming it is true. Jimi Hendrix would take not only the electric guitar and rock and roll to completely new heights, but he would take the music video to an uncharted psychedelic distance with Voodoo Child. Consisting of black and white with distorted color overlays and delays, the music video looks more like a series of moving paintings than anything resembling reality. It is his most drastic contrast from any of his black and white televised lip-synching of songs like "Hey Joe" or the live clip mash-up that makes the music video for "Little Wing". It was hard for listeners to imagine but easy to see, Jimi Hendrix was playing a right handed guitar left handed, and therefore upside down. And while The Beatles were still scandalizing American audiences with their hair cuts, Jimi Hendrix was already burning his guitar and playing it with his teeth. Photos of Jimi Hendrix lighting his guitar on fire at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 are some of the most iconic photos

in rock and roll history, and now in the past few years one is able to see the forty-five minute set in its entirety and its climactic end with “Wild Thing”.

These and a handful of other artists paved the way for 1970’s music video production, and the amount of music videos produced would be the momentum MTV needed to be able to air videos all day long. Some of the more popular or historically important would certainly be “American Woman” by Guess Who, Elton John live at the BBC performing “The Greatest Discovery”, “Question” by Moody Blues, “Close to You” by Carpenters, Deep Purple on UK television performing “Child In Time”, various videos by Yes including “No Opportunity Necessary, No Experience Needed” and “Everydays”, “Imagine” and “Mind Games” by John Lennon, numerous videos by David Bowie including “Space Oddity”, “Heroes”, and “Life On Mars?”, “Angie” by The Rolling Stones, “Elected” by Alice Cooper, “Another Brick In The Wall” and “Money” by Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin’s promotional video for “Over the Hills and Far Away”, “Melinda More Or Less” and “Back Street Luv” by Curved Air, “Keep Yourself Alive” and “Bohemian Rhapsody” by Queen, numerous videos by ABBA including “I’ve Been Waiting For You” and “I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do”, “Fly By Night” and “Xanadu” by Rush, ““Moviestar” by Harpo, numerous music videos by Genesis including “Ripples” and “Robbery, Assault, and Battery”, “Bring The Funk” by Parliament Funkadelic, “(Make Me Do) Anything You Want” by A Foot In Coldwater, “More Than A Feeling” by Boston, “Dust in the Wind”, “Carry On Wayward Son” and “The Point of No Return” by Kansas, “Barracuda” and “Dreamboat Annie” by Heart, “The Whistler” and “Life’s A Long Song” by Jethro Tull, “Solsbury Hill” by Peter Gabriel, “Wuthering Heights” and “Moving” by Kate Bush, “Because The Night” by Patti Smith, “The Robots” by

Kraftwerk, “I’ve Never Been To Me” by Charlene, “Ain’t No Love In The Heart Of The City” and “Come On” by Whitesnake, “Black Betty” by Ram Jam, “I Want Your Love” and “Le Freak” by Chic, “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor”, “Killing Machine” and “Evening Star” by Judas Priest, “Pandora’s Box” by Procol Harum, “I’m Not In Love” by 10 CC, “Dreaming” and “Heart of Glass” by Blondie, “Yes Sir, I Can Boogie” by Baccara, “Desperado” by Linda Ronstadt, “Honesty” by Billy Joel, “Baker Street” by Gerry Rafferty, “Starship 109” by Mistral, “Winter Tree” and “Secret Mission” by Renaissance, “Fish Out of Water” by Chris Squire, “Love Is The Drug” by Roxy Music, “My Sharona” by The Knack, “Don’t Stop ‘Til You Get Enough” by Michael Jackson, “Cars” by Gary Numan, “We Don’t Talk Anymore” by Cliff Richard, “London Calling” by The Clash, and 1979’s “Video Killed The Radio Star” by The Buggles, which will become the first music video to air on MTV in 1981.

The many histories that comprise the era of music on television (and of course within film) was relatively unavailable prior to YouTube and is now rich with fan chronologies, new uploads, hobbyist historians, digital archivists, and a general and collective desire to make what had come and gone or was lost on the fringes accessible and available to anyone with a computer. These three decades bear the weight of intense and diverse cultural history: the feminist movement, the Civil Rights movement, breakthroughs in television and broadcasting technology, transitions from acoustic to electric musical instruments in different genres, evolutions in film technology, the continued globalization of American music, political upheavals, cultural breakthroughs and transitions, the growth of the recording industry, drastic changes in fashion, the counter culture movement, the relationship between music and cultural phenomena like

drug use, sexuality, and personal identity, musical reactions to racism, war, and other forms of oppression, and consequently music that become new topical expressions of freedom and socio-political change. Again, there are many histories within the greater history and evolution of the music video, and my students, albeit with guidance and assistance, would have to discover, research, and write about these many histories.

Pedagogical Reflections – Cultural Shifts

While many students have a working knowledge of American and world history during this time period, they often do not have a working knowledge of music history during the same eras. While being familiar with changes in American culture post-Eisenhower, post-WWII, the Red Scare, the political and racial turmoil of the late sixties, the counter culture movement, and so on, they are often not familiar with musical artists of the time period that are reflecting or even instigating some of those changes. While many students have certainly have heard of artists like Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Little Richard, The Beatles, Marvin Gaye, and so on, they can also be unfamiliar with other significant artists of the time period like The Spaniels, Frankie Lymon and The Teenagers, The Temptations, Frankie Yankovic, or Édith Piaf. When teaching the history of the music video throughout these particular decades, the two begin to compliment one another in remarkable ways, as American cultural history and American musical history are in many instances inseparable.

The choices my students made for their writing selections proved to be amazingly diverse, and of course they had a bit of help. As stated above, many students were somewhat familiar with the 'big names' of the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's but most did not listen to them habitually. I, as part of my approach to teaching this course, purposefully gave them little guidance, given that an element of the magic learning about this three decade span is the processes of searching and discovering on one's own. And once again, once someone had chosen a video, no one else in the class could write on that choice, but each selection could serve as a reference point for the other students. Consequently, a strange phenomenon occurred when several students began confessing that they had been asking older family members who lived during one or more of these decades as to what artists should they search.

I must confess here that, when I was telling non-academics that I am teaching a course on the history and evolution of the music video, I typically received one three responses: either great interest in the subject matter and an expression of a desire (whether realistically possible or not) to sit in on the course, an honest expression about the lack of knowledge that person may have had regarding its history and evolution (and often the subsequent surprise that it certainly does not begin with MTV), or the 'are you kidding me' response that expressed a sort of loathing or laughable feeling that a course on such subject matter would be taught at the collegiate level, let alone at such a prestigious institution as Emory University (their words). The last response of course always bothered me in however small of a way, as if the subject matter were trite, too easy, too fun, not dense enough, or unimportant. If average citizens might feel this way, then perhaps so might the students, or often worse, the students parents, caretakers, legal

guardians, family members, and so on. But when the students confessed as to consulting their elder family members as mentioned above about this particular era or span of time, an aura of respect seemed to be gained. And if any students signed up for the course with the idea that it would be an easy course, all fun, and provide an enjoyable lack of depth compared to other courses in the humanities, they quickly discovered otherwise.

The amount of cultural weight and density surrounding some of the history and musical performances during this time is immense, and resources for research on many of the artists or music videos that were chosen is often very abundant. If any students tended to only be fans of contemporary artists, here they would discover those artists' influences and heroes, here they would discover the evolution of their own personal favorites in terms of genre and tradition, here they would discover the power that the televised visual representation of music would have on American culture, and here they would discover that history was in the making as music was in the making. I never discouraged them with the old, boring epithet that 'writing about music is like dancing about architecture', because it doesn't make sense. Writing is a way of recording thought, and there is writing within music. Of course people do not habitually dance about architecture, which is part of the intentionally discouraging point of the epithet, but people do certainly dance to music within architecture all of the time, every night of the week across a myriad of American cities and music venues. The stage itself is its own architecture, and so is the set of any music video. Now that that history is being revealed to us in a way whose immediate access is unprecedented, it should be written about; there are many histories of the music video that beg for it, and my students had to, in some ways, discover those histories and write it themselves.

"Why Do Fools Fall In Love" by Frankie Lymon and The Teenagers, "Minnie The Moocher" by Cab Calloway, "Mambo Italiano" by Rosemary Clooney, "Lovesick Blues" by Hank Williams, "Jailhouse Rock" by Elvis Presley, "Hokey Pokey Polka" by Frankie Yankovic, "Tu vuò fa' l'Americano" by Renato Carosone, "So What" by Miles Davis, "Tears on My Pillow" by Little Anthony and the Imperials, "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" by Jerry Lee Lewis, "Tutti Frutti" by Little Richard, and "Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight" by The Spaniels were some of the selections generally from the 1950's. From the 1960's, some of the selections included "Mony, Mony" by Tommy James and the Shondells, "I Heard it Through the Grapevine" by Marvin Gaye, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" by Bob Dylan, "Piano Man" by Billy Joel, "My Girl" by The Temptations, "Sunshine of Your Love" by Cream, "Girl Watcher" by The O'Kaysions, "Wild Thing" by The Troggs" as well as a handful of selections from The Beatles such as "Hello, Goodbye", "Hey Jude", "Strawberry Fields Forever", and "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away". From the 1970's, the selections included "Take A Chance On Me" by ABBA, "Y.M.C.A." by Men At Work, "Your Song" by Elton John, "I'm Waiting for the Man" by The Velvet Underground, "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough" by Michael Jackson, "Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye, "Ooh Child" by The Five Stairsteps, "Young Americans" by David Bowie, as well as "Nights on Broadway" and "Stayin' Alive" by The Bee Gees. Of course some of these are official music videos, some are television performances, and some are choreographed performances in films. In terms of their classification in certain decades, some of course straddle the line, like The Velvet Underground's "I'm Waiting for the Man" which was released on an album in the late 1960's but was released as a single in the early 1970's.

This particular selection from The Velvet Underground is of course one of the handful of collaborations between the band and Andy Warhol who not only produced music videos for them, or as one might say, filmic experimentations with their music, but also produced their album artwork and served as their manager for some time. Though relatively unsuccessful after the debut album's release, the cover art remains far more iconic than any video Warhol produced for the band. It is the simple image of a banana, which has now been re-envisioned and mimicked since the album became a cult classic years afterwards. And on the original printings of the album, the banana was in fact a sticker that could be peeled off, revealing the fruit itself.[cx] Many years later, there would be a dispute over who owned the rights to the image. According to Jon Blistein writing for Rolling Stone, the Warhol Foundation had accused the Velvet Underground of copyright infringement by licensing the design and "the band…countered that the image was a band trademark and sued…after they discovered the Warhol Foundation had licensed the image for a line of iPhone cases." Apparently a settlement was reached but the terms were not disclosed.[cxi] Still, there seems to be no controversy over the music videos produced by Warhol, though all seem to be fan uploads at this point which, in the course, was somewhat related to a perhaps even more curious phenomenon.

One of my students came to me and said that she wanted to write on the music video for Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven". I responded to her stating that there was not an official music video for "Stairway to Heaven", though I was of course aware of numerous live performances and was curious as to which one she would choose. Led Zeppelin had become a hot topic again given the copyright infringement lawsuit filed by the band Spirit in May of 2014; "Stairway to Heaven", specifically its introduction,

apparently bore too strong of a resemblance to a song by Spirit called "Taurus". As CNN reported, "the suit, filed on May 31 in the United States District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania, was brought by the estate of the late musician Randy California against the surviving members of Led Zeppelin and their record label."[cxii] At the end of the article, reporter Lisa Respers France invites the reader to listen to the songs, and subsequently embeds a video for "Stairway to Heaven" and a video for "Taurus". The two videos selected are 'audio only', or, the music with a still image in place of an actual video (though "Stairway to Heaven" does have introductory titles that come and go, as well as the lyrics appearing in the top left as the song progresses). This video containing the studio version of "Stairway to Heaven", which does not appear to come from any official Led Zeppelin or music label source, has nearly 52 million views and has not been flagged for using third party content.

The student responded that there was indeed a music video for the song, so I asked her to send me the link. I thought in my head that, how could it be possible that what is considered to be one of the greatest rock songs of all time has a music video as well, and neither I nor anyone else I know is aware of it. Once she had sent me the link to the version to which she was referring, I watched in both awe and confusion. Like the video posted by CNN, it is also not uploaded from an official source, it uses the studio version of the song, and is not flagged for using third party content. But unlike the version posted by CNN, it is an actual video that features Led Zeppelin. The footage used for the music video is mostly black and white footage of the band traveling and is professionally edited. The video begins with a plane landing and is followed by numerous clips of the band outside of the plane at the airport, the band conversing,

climbing into cars, the band backstage, landscapes and cityscapes. Most notably, it features the band meeting Elvis Presley on the airport runway. Despite being published in December of 2012, this video only has just over a meager 120,000 views, meaning that very few people know of its existence compared the number of Led Zeppelin fans, the number of Elvis Presley fans, to the 52 million views that the 'audio only' version of "Stairway to Heaven" has received, and compared to the many who would want to see a music video for one of the greatest rock and roll anthems in history. There is another version on YouTube called "Led Zeppelin meets Elvis at the Airport" with just under 200,000 views.[cxiii]

Its existence or production is a phenomenon that cannot be readily explained at this point in time, and examples like these go against intuition, in that video uploads can sometimes precede its historical understanding. On the one hand, there has been so much historic knowledge of Miles Davis' "So What" that to be able to finally watch it be performed somehow completes the picture, so to speak. But, as described in Chapter 2, sometimes a soundie is digitally archived before many even know who the artist was, the background of their career, the significance, large or small, that the artist had at the time of its production. This music video, produced retroactively, is somewhere in the middle. But one can deduce from Corbin Reiff, writing for Ultimate Classic Rock, that at least some of this footage is from Led Zeppelin's fourth and final encounter with Elvis Presley. On the forty year anniversary of Led Zeppelin's initial meeting with Elvis, he writes, "the final meeting between Zeppelin and Elvis took place on the Baltimore airport tarmac while both were on tour in 1977."[cxiv] Led Zeppelin has often credited Elvis as being a major influence and, the night after being honored by President Obama and

receiving an all-star tribute at the Kennedy Center Honors, the three living members of Led Zeppelin would pay humorous homage to Elvis Presley on The Late Show with David Letterman, located in the historic Ed Sullivan Theater in New York City.

When teaching this particular span of music videos and music history, students learn how integrated American music has become, how respect and collaboration crosses the barriers of time, genre, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, gender, and even nationality. As a smorgasbord or melting pot, as it is commonly described, American music is not only a collection and mixture of its own different traditions and styles, but also the importation and influence of music from all over the world. The longstanding barriers of gender and racial inequality are transgressed. Regarding the latter, the documentary *Muscle Shoals* is a recent and remarkable example. While it was not required viewing in the classroom given that its subject matter is not specifically related to music videos, it is an amazing story regarding music production in the small town of Muscle Shoals, located in northern Alabama and just over one hundred miles south of Nashville, TN. Music production most often precedes music video production, and the music studio itself is one of those remarkable places where, when the musicians enter the room, cultural prejudices often had their own coat rack, so to speak, being left at the door.

The song "We Shall Overcome" and its many varieties, its evolution over the decades of the 20th century, is perhaps the most important song of the civil rights movement. In 1999, Noah Adams traced the history of the song for an article for the National Public Radio website and found the title making its way into speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr. and even President Lyndon Johnson; it was a song that was sung at several protests and demonstrations, a song whose popularity Pete Seeger helped to

spread, a song now sung around the world.[cxv] As of just a few years ago, we can now revisit or discover live and historic performances of the song by artists like Pete Seeger, Dianna Ross, Mahalia Jackson, Joan Baez, Bruce Springsteen, or Alla Pugacheva with the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. We can also revisit the historic speech where President Lyndon Johnson uses the phrase, revisit and view a number of speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., and even watch the recent phenomenon of contemporary American congressional leaders singing the song.

But of course not all songs related to the Civil Rights movement are so uplifting, and now those can be viewed rather than just heard in the classroom: examples like Billie Holiday performing "Strange Fruit", a song about the lynching of blacks; Nina Simone performing "Mississippi Goddam", written in response to the murder of Medgar Evers, an African-American civil rights activist; Nina Simone performing "Revolution" at the Harlem Cultural Festival; or John Coltrane performing "Alabama", a song written in response to the Klu Klux Klan bombing of an African-American church in Birmingham that killed four young girls.

It is also essential that, while giving such attention to white artists who were influence by the blues and one way or another became extremely famous (even if they were British) to revisit rare footage and performances of those African-American blues pioneers that later gained recognition but, during the decades of a still racist and segregated America, never reached the level and fame or success as artists like Elvis Presley, Janis Joplin, The Rolling Stones, or Bob Dylan. Knowledge about the past, particularly underrepresented elements of the past, informs, heightens, and often changes our understanding of the present, and in the classroom, being able to now view so many

moments in American musical history that were so revolutionary, culturally poignant, politically volatile, aesthetically modern in their own time, left on the fringes, and hallmarks in the evolution of American musical styles all shed new light on what the old photographs, the best documentaries, the textbooks, the interviews, the academic essays, and of course the recordings of the artists themselves offered us in terms of 'what happened'. American music video production since the advent of MTV has been built on this widely diverse cultural momentum and, thanks to digital archiving through YouTube and the access it presents, that history can begin again; we can now watch what was watched, we can now see how some of these revolutions, large and small, actually were televised.

Chapter 4

"Music Videos and Music Television: the Power of Exposure"

YouTube, for some artists and labels, provides the ability to re-capitalize on previous work from the 1980's and 1990's, or, the era of MTV, CMT, TNN, and VH1. It provides the infrastructure for music videos to be revisited; for some viewers who where in their adolescence in America during this time, they can revisit music videos they remember watching on a television, and for younger viewers, they are now discovering some of those artists and the music videos they made. Given that there is a financial benefit in doing so, artists and labels are uploading those videos and therefore, by default, contributing to a vast archive of music videos. It documents the era of a second British invasion into American mainstream music, a phenomenon that was significantly aided by MTV itself. It documents the era of the rising popularity of rap and hip-hop musical forms. It documents an era of visual controversy. It documents the early work of filmmakers like Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, Jonathan Glazer, Mark Romanek, who directed the most expensive music video ever made for Michael and Janet Jackson's "Scream", or Martin Scorsese who, early in his career, directed the music video for Michael Jackson's "Bad". It documents the rise of the King of Pop himself, whose increased popularity was augmented by the visual representations of his dancing, his choreography, and style of dress in his music videos. Despite his popularity with The Jackson 5, his music video for "Billie Jean" struggled in the early days of MTV but later he would pave the way for artists of color to have greater representation on MTV, and

subsequently produce what many consider to be the greatest music video of all time, the long and haunting "Thriller".

It also documents the inclusion of female stars in rock and roll and pop music. On August 1st, 1981, the first day MTV aired, artists like April Wine, Louise Goffin, Kate Bush, The Pretenders, Stevie Nicks, Carly Simon, Pat Benatar, and Blondie were all featured, some more than once. "Just Between You And Me" by April Wine was the first video by a Canadian artist that aired that day, and it was also played five times (along with Phil Collins video for "In The Air Tonight" and "You Better You Bet" by The Who), and the music video for Blondie's "Rapture", while not a rap video, was the first music video on MTV to feature rap.

But most inclusively, it documents the second renaissance of the genre or art form of the music video itself. The first music video aired on MTV, aptly titled "Video Killed The Radio Star" by The Buggles, says it all in the name, though with a bit of an exaggeration. But nevertheless, MTV was showcasing artists that American consumers were often not being exposed to on their local radio stations. It was certainly not the first time music would be viewed on television, but it was the first time television would function like a radio station on a nationally syndicated format; while programming services like HBO and ESPN were well ahead, it had become one of the handful of programming services accepting commercials during the early 1980's along with CNN, the Christian Broadcasting Network, USA, and C-SPAN.[cxvi] To air music videos all day meant that a lot of music videos had to be produced, and certainly not all that were produced were accepted. Rap and hip hop are two very related genres that would see their virtual birth in this era as a commercially successful art form over time, and it is

important to note that heavy metal was already a prevalent force in the music industry, Iron Maiden being featured twice on the first day MTV aired.[cxvii] Not only were American teenagers and young adults becoming exposed to music beyond their local radio stations' daily selections, but, especially for many adolescents, they were often watching more music on television than they were watching live musical performances, if they had ever seen a live musical performance at all beyond the contexts of the school, family, church, or government oriented performances that would occur at a parade or state fair. To echo another song title, the 'cult of personality' in the music industry had a brand new format in the 1980's that would even extend beyond MTV to VH1 and CMT (Country Music Television) in the US. Just as adolescents had been somehow shaped by figures like Elvis and The Beatles due to their visual presence, young Americans now had daily access to an entire smorgasbord of musical identities to which they would be exposed.

Out of that exposure, Madonna quickly became one of the most controversial artists in the 1980's in both the content of her lyrics but more importantly in the imagery and sexuality in her music videos. On of Madonna's first television appearances was on *American Bandstand,* which had been hosted by Dick Clark since the mid-50's. It is as if Madonna arrived just at the eclipse of the variety show format and would become a major force in popularizing (even if in controversy) MTV and VH1. Performing the hit of off her self-titled and first album, "Holiday", Madonna prances around the dance floor at her most innocent. Though a few fans have ripped the performance from VHS and uploaded it to YouTube, the official version available on Madonna's YouTube channel only includes the interview with Dick Clarke and currently has little over 100,000 views. The

official version available on the YouTube channel, Dick Clark Productions, also only includes the interview and has just over 10,000 views. In the interview, Dick Clark asks Madonna what her dreams are, and her response is "to rule the world".[cxviii] By her sixth music video within just a few years, Madonna would become known as ' the material girl.' Based on Marilyn Monroe's dance sequence to "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in the film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Madonna's music video for "Material Girl" would become one of her most iconic. She was also known for wearing a cross or multiple crosses, wearing them as earrings in her performance for *American Bandstand* and wearing at least one in all ten of her first music videos. In that last music video, "Dress You Up", the video begins with fans outside of the venue waiting for Madonna's car to arrive. Several of the young girls are dressed like Madonna, wearing, among other things, crosses. It is not until the music video for "La Isla Bonita", her fifteenth music video, that a cross is even seen, briefly and in the form of a rosary. By her seventeenth music video, "Like A Prayer", a cross is worn, and it is also burned. Madonna would receive numerous outcries from the Vatican and other religious institutions given the imagery of her videos and performances.

Pop and rock music in the early era of music television (MTV/VH1/CMT/TNN) is often simplistic in its lyrics and either shocking, sexual, or somehow otherwise controversial in its music videos. The Confidence Coalition estimates that fifty seven percent of rock music videos "portray women as a sex object, a victim, as unintelligent, or in a condescending way."[cxix] While that may be certainly difficult to quantify, it does speak to a concern that essentially grew out of the 1980's and early 1990's in the US. The problem was that a number of female artists were *portraying themselves* as what

many would perceive to be sex objects, Madonna perhaps being the most famous for doing so. In the music video for "Express Yourself", partially inspired by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, she becomes a chained masochist; in the music video for "Open Your Heart", she is an exotic dancer; and the music video for "Justify My Love", released as a video single, was deemed so sexually explicit that it was banned from MTV.[cxx] But the controversy only fueled the fire so to speak, given that "Justify My Love", according to *Billboard*, "is said to be the best-selling video single of all time" (given that it was before the SoundScan era, one cannot be certain).[cxxi]

Credit to notoriously being the first music video to be banned from MTV was "Body Language" by Queen, "Relax" by Frankie Goes to Hollywood would become another, and while Duran Duran's music video "Girls on Film" was just before MTV's time, it generated much controversy and is known as one of the sexiest music videos of all time. What would be deemed acceptable for the American television audience and what would not be would of course change over time, as the sexually controversial music videos of the 80's and early 90's often pale in comparison to contemporary representations. Cher's 1989 release "If I Could Turn Back Time" is lyrically about as simple as it gets for a love song, but wearing fishnet stockings, a black leather jacket, and, most importantly, a thong swimsuit caused much controversy and channels were reserving it for prime-time viewing only. It was her major comeback hit and charted extremely well. "Crazy" by Aerosmith, "Cherry Pie" by Warrant, "Girls, Girls, Girls" by Motley Crue, "I Want Your Sex" by George Michael, "Free Your Mind" by En Vogue, "Here I Go Again" by Whitesnake, "Simply Irresistible" by Robert Palmer, or "Wicked Game" by Chris Isaak still go down in history as some of the 'sexiest' music videos of all

time, but they also set the standard for new rules to be broken in the years following. "Alejandro" by Lady Gaga is almost literally pulled out of the Madonna handbook; the Queen of Pop changed the realm of possibility for how females represent themselves in music videos, paving the way for artists like Lady Gaga, Beyonce, Britney Spears, Christian Aguilera, or Rihanna.

But controversy is not only sexual in music videos of this era. The music videos of the 1990's would become increasingly driven by aesthetics (as opposed to realistic representations of the artist) and often shock value. Regarding the latter, perhaps the most famous is "Closer" by Nine Inch Nails from 1994 and directed by Mark Romanek; it features, among other things, Reznor, the lead singer wearing a gag ball, a monkey tied to a cross beside a picture of what appears to be Jack Nicholas, a bald and nude woman wearing a black mask with a crucifix on it, a heart with an air valve attached, insects, a toilet, a diagram of the vagina, the carcass/rib cage of what appears to be a bison, Reznor blindfolded and chained, a child, a pigs head on top of a machine that causes it to spin at different speeds (referenced from *Lord of the Flies*, perhaps), eels, lizards, skulls, old men in suits, and a whole smorgasbord 19th century and turn of the century objects and images. The chorus begins with "I wanna fuck you like an animal", and the music is a hard industrial rock. Much of the imagery of the music video is heavily influenced by the photographic work of Joel-Peter Witkin. The bald, nude woman with a white crucifix on her black mask is a direct reference to Witkin's "Journies of the mask phrenologist", which features the same, though the woman in Witkin's photograph reveals a pierced vagina; the monkey on the cross resembles Witkin's "Savior of the Primates".[cxxii] It is also influenced by Francis Bacon, especially the painting "Figure with Meat", which

features a man in the front and a large carcass/rib cage in the background. Much of the set design is influenced by the stop-action short film "Street of Crocodiles" by the Brothers Quay.[cxxiii] Heavily edited for MTV, the unedited version can be seen on Vimeo, and the directors cut is available on YouTube. Posted in Pulsemusic, in a 2006 fan poll conducted by VH1 called "VH1 Classic's – 20 Greatest Videos of All Time", the aforementioned "Girls On Film" was ranked number ten; the music video for "Closer" was ranked number one.[cxxiv]

In a full swing music video renaissance, the envelope would continue to be pushed in terms of sexuality, production value, and rock music's forays with history and high art. Music videos also began to take on social and political issues. In Pearl Jam's music video for "Jeremy", an ostracized boy shoots himself in the classroom; the Frontier Middle School shooting would follow years later, prosecutors claiming the killer had been influenced by the music video. After the Columbine shootings, MTV would rarely play the music video. Rage Against the Machine's music video for "Freedom" reads like a pamphlet at the bottom, telling the story of the controversy around Leonard Peltier, the American Indian Movement, and the 1975 shooting that occurred at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Garth Brooks' music video for "The Thunder Rolls", initially shown on CMT and TNN, depicted a domestic violence scene. Both channels took it off of the air until female fans and women's rights groups complained so adamantly that, not only did the two stations put the video back in rotation, but VH1 also began to air the video, a first for the MTV sister channel that had never aired a country music video. Debates about the degradation of women in rap and hip hop would ensue, catching the attention of television figures like Oprah and countless news programs. N.W.A.'s song and

subsequent music video for “Fuck Tha Police” notoriously garnered responses from the U.S. Secret Service along with the F.B.I.; it was later performed by Rage Against The Machine in awareness for Mumia Abu Jamal. Michael Jackson would use a song and subsequent music video to respond to accusations of child molestation; his duet with Janet Jackson titled “Scream”, directed by Mark Romanek, is was allegedly the most expensive music video ever created. Ten years earlier in 1985, Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Quincy Jones, Dianna Ross, Stevie Wonder, Bob Dylan, Kenny Rogers, Billy Joel, Tina Turner, James Ingram, Paul Simon, Ray Charles, Kim Carnes, Huey Lewis, Cyndi Lauper, Hall and Oates, Steve Perry, Bette Midler, Sheila E., Bruce Springsteen, Bob Geldof, Willie Nelson, Dionne Warwick, Al Jarreau, Kenny Loggins, Dan Aykroyd, Smokey Robinson, Harry Belafonte, the Pointer Sisters, other members of the Jackson 5, Lindsey Buckingham, Waylon Jennings and a whole host of others would come together to form “USA for Africa” and produce the song and music video (as well as a video cassette and other merchandise) for “We Are The World”, raising millions for famine relief in Africa, garnering immense popularity and subsequently winning several awards.

Again, there are many histories, but no past era of music videos or their predecessors have garnered as much attention on YouTube as the era of MTV, VH1, and CMT. It is what millions of American teenagers watched after school, before bedtime, and on the weekends, constant streams of music videos. The power of that exposure during the 1980’s and 1990’s would have a remarkable and immense cultural history all its own and in ways specific to every viewer, musician, or fan. But nothing brought the power of that exposure to American public consciousness than the aftermath of the death of Kurt Cobain. After the MTV star committed suicide in April of 1994, a number of

tributes, ceremonies, candlelight vigils, news stories, and radio announcements followed. Kurt Loder, a reporter for MTV news, was one of the first to report the incident. Matty Karas, in an article for *American Journalism Review* titled "Kurt Cobain's Death: MTV's Persian Gulf War?", describes MTV's reaction and programming:

> Following the discovery of Cobain's body on Friday, April 8, MTV broke into its programming repeatedly with the same two hours of material: recycled features on Nirvana, interviews with two writers (including band biographer and former MTV News staffer Michael Azerrad) who were uniformly upbeat even in discussing Cobain's heroin addiction, and, of course, plenty of videos. The package became a de fact video itself, playing relentlessly like a hit single.[cxxv]

Kurt Cobain was discovered on a Friday, and the coverage of his suicide was reaching the homes of millions of American teenagers throughout the weekend, the following week, and throughout the month - millions of fans, young adolescents who idolized the singer and rock icon, kids who, if their parents and grandparents were alive, had never experienced death so personally. It is still regarded as one of the most publicized, controversial, and important suicides in American history.

The music video for Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was released on MTV in 1991; uploaded on YouTube in 2009, or almost twenty years after its release, the video is approaching 200 million views on the VEVO platform. With a dash of influence from the Ramones' *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, a low budget, a novice director, and several

young extras, the music video portrays the band playing at a high school pep rally, the cheerleaders wearing black dresses with a circled 'A' on the front. The symbol for anarchy becomes 'realized' in the end of the video as the students begin to mosh and subsequently damage the set and the band's equipment.[cxxvi] In terms of play count, it has left all of the other Nirvana music videos way behind, including the controversial "Heart Shaped Box", which features, among other things, a child wearing what resembles a Klu Klux Klan outfit, an old man on a cross wearing a Santa Claus hat, and fetuses hanging from trees in a set resembling the Wizard of Oz.[cxxvii]

Despite the song's success in the 1990's, it is not dramatically more popular on YouTube than "In Bloom", the fourth single from the album *Nevermind,* the music video for which is a parody of American variety shows in the 1950's and 60's, the primary force that kept the concept of the music video alive between the era of the Soundies and late 70's to early 80's music video production. Filmed in black and white, the video portrays the band as being introduced by the show's host in a live variety show studio (dancing poodles were apparently the prior act, and the host mispronounces the band's name); they are dressed in suits and ties, Cobain is wearing thick, dark-rimmed eye glasses, and the audience is full of screaming young girls. As the video progresses, clips of their variety show performance are interspersed with clips of the band wearing dresses and either playing their instruments, walking and running around, or vandalizing the set. The song itself is generally about the underground rock and roll scene and the outsiders who do not understand it; the music video points a finger at a certain age group in that regard. Outkast would mimic a variety show performance many years later with the music video "Hey Ya!", and in a more celebratory fashion. And in "Dani California" by

the Red Hot Chili Peppers, as the video progresses through the history of rock music video aesthetics, Kurt Cobain becomes a character as Anthony Kiedis wears a blonde wig and is dressed as Cobain was during Nirvana's MTV Unplugged performance.

Music videos are not 'advertisements' as Mark Taylor suggests, as he claims that "in spite of the effort to erase the distinction between high and low art, music videos remain advertisements that claim the status of a popular art form."[cxxviii] While in the music industry, music videos and their predecessors are often regarded as promotional materials, they are also products themselves that generate revenue. There are advertisements for music videos, but music videos themselves are not advertisements and this should be readily obvious to anyone giving them serious attention. Not only are they actually a popular art form, they are currently the most popular art form by far on the second largest search engine in the world, and the era to which Mark Taylor refers, the era of MTV, VH1, CMT, and their offspring, was a major force in establishing the contemporary music video landscape. Not only did they become popular art forms, but they began to play with history, other art forms, or film history, as mentioned before. The Smashing Pumpkins "Tonight, Tonight" is heavily influenced by Georges Méliès' turn of the century silent film *Le Voyage Dans la Lun* (ATrip to the Moon). Michael Jackson's "Scream" has flagrant Japanese Anime influences. Or perhaps the collaboration between Godfrey Reggio and Philip Glass on the 1982 film *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* would remind any academic that music videos are not advertisements; having no words or dialogue, *Koyaanisqatsi* is a 'film' that is, in essence, a long form music video produced by the Institute for Regional Education.

It is also during this era that the diversity among different music videos is immense. With soundies and variety television shows, there was certainly diversity as well. But in the era of MTV, there were tremendous explorations in the format itself, and in such a way that their presence on YouTube today is much more significant than music videos or soundies or variety show performances prior. Music videos are not advertisements but works of art in their own right and deserve to be treated as such.

The music video for "Street Spirit (Fade Out)" may be one of the greatest music videos of the MTV era to be filmed in black and white.[cxxix] From their 1995 album, *The Bends*, the song is famously said by lead singer Thom Yorke to be inspired by Ben Okri's novel *The Famished Road*.[cxxx] Rolling Stone magazine ranked it as 111 in their "500 Greatest Albums of All Time", writing that "the first half of Nineties rock was shaped by Nirvana, and the second half was dominated by Radiohead." Regarding the album specifically, Rolling Stone describes it as having "married a majestic and somber guitar sound to Thom Yorke's anguished-choirboy vocals."[cxxxi] "Street Spirit (Fade Out)" certainly matches that description and is, oddly, considered by many fans to be one of Radiohead's darkest or saddest songs. Lyrically, it is quite sparse, and while there are themes and nuances that do bear influence from Okri's novel, it is nonetheless an invention by Thom Yorke. A three stanza song influenced by a 500 page novel could go in many directions, encapsulating the main theme or plot, encapsulating just a scene or conversation, or simply a poetic invention that bears the influence of the experience of reading the book. Yorke seems to describe it as the latter, stating "the song 'Street Spirit' from *The Bends* was completely influenced by Ben Okri's book *The Famished Road*, which I read on tour in America; and also by REM – it was just a straight rip-off."

Referring to REM, Yorke confesses, “I’ve ripped them off left, right and centre for years and years and years and years.”[cxxxii] In terms of the musicality of “Street Spirit (Fade Out)”, the song undoubtedly bears remarkable influence from REM’s “Drive” with its similarly arpeggiated minor chord through the verse. Thematically, there are lines that bear basic resemblances to the novel: the rows of houses, blue hands, the world child, feeling death, etc. But as Yorke explains, it is not as simple as merely being influenced by the book:

> I'II never forget the moment we captured 'Street Spirit'. That stands out for me. The whole reason to be doing this is to arrive at those moments. It makes it worth all the scratching around for months on end in note-books and all the hundreds of thousands of ideas you compile on endless tapes. It's the sole reason you spend your entire life in your bedroom playing to yourself. If I ever forget why I started this as a career, than that's why I started. I do remember the magic moments from The Bends. The 'Street Spirit' moment I remember very, very well. We spent a day going round in circles until I was thinking, 'This is never going to happen'. Then suddenly something happened and I was transported to a place that I'd been willing myself to be in for months on end. I'd finally made the transition. Now you might only be in that place for three minutes and for ever more life'll never be quite as good. But that's fine by me.[cxxxiii]

In another interview, Yorke distances himself even further from intentionality, claiming that he did not write the song, the song wrote itself. Radiohead was "just its messengers", he states, "its biological catalysys." He describes it as a dark tunnel with no light, as hopeless, and its lyrics as "just a bunch of mini-stories or visual images as opposed to a cohesive explanation of its meaning". He admits that he has to detach himself from that song, detach his emotions during the performance, and laments that the audience may or may not know to what exactly they are listening.

> I can't believe we have fans that can deal emotionally with that song. That's why I'm convinced that they don't know what it's about. It's why we play it towards the end of our sets. It drains me, and it shakes me, and hurts like hell every time I play it, looking out at thousands of people cheering and smiling, oblivious to the tragedy of its meaning, like when you're going to have your dog put down and it's wagging its tail on the way there. That's what they all look like, and it breaks my heart. I wish that song hadn't picked us as its catalysts, and so I don't claim it. It asks too much. I didn't write that song.[cxxxiv]

The music video is, therefore, a combination of elements: York's own influence from REM and *The Formidable Road,* the struggle and eventual spontaneous coming together of the song with the band as a whole, Yorke's emotional outpouring as well as his emotional distance (the music video is a performance in itself), the director's own creative inspiration and interpretation, and the technicalities that make it all possible. A close reading of such a complex work of art is no easy feat, yet it is often artistic

complexity itself that begs for such a method or approach. Yet, close readings of music videos is rather uncharted territory compared to textual analyses of this kind, though certainly indebted to them in whatever fashion. Any close reading takes the work of art as its primary source, the work of art itself as its own source of meaning without finding its 'answers' or the 'truth of its meaning' in other texts (though they can, of course, offer great insight). As Yorke noted, this particular work of art, in strictly song form, was not created by them, so to speak; instead they were its messengers. The music video, still in the context of mid-1990's rock, in the context of MTV, now in the context of YouTube, in the context of the novel that influenced it, in the context of Glazer's creative perspective, and in the context of one day in the desert outside of Los Angeles, has the singularity of its existence as a work of art that begins and ends in just over four minutes. It cannot be properly understood without detailed attention to its immense complexity, its immense simplicity, and the aesthetic experience it provokes.

The video begins with a close up of Thom Yorke looking backwards over his shoulder, in the next clip he lifts his arms up and out to his side in a Christ-like, crucified position, and in the third clip, he leans backwards and begins to fall to the ground from the top of a silver RV trailer. Therefore, the video begins with the subtle imagery of the crucifixion of Christ (which would be a repeated theme in several rock videos of the 1990's, ranging from Nirvana's "Heart Shaped Box"[cxxxv] to R.E.M's "Losing My Religion"[cxxxvi] to "Zombie" by The Cranberries[cxxxvii]). As Yorke slowly falls toward the ground, the clip ends just before his body hits; in the following clip he is seen lying on top of slightly wrecked vehicle, as if the impact of his body, having fallen from a much larger height, had created the damage. His arms are still stretched out to his sides, each

hand lying at the outer edges of the vehicle's roof, and both rear doors of the vehicle are slightly open. He now has the appearance of a fallen angel; the lines of his arms combined with the lines of the top of each door now produce the outline of his wings. He is alive, his body slightly moving. Next the audience is given another close up of Yorke, standing, his head bowed and eyes closed, the light turning from one side of his face to the other, as if the sun has passed from dawn to dusk over his head in a matter of a couple of seconds. In the next clip, he is on top of the vehicle and slowly opens his eyes. His only wound is only revealed in the following clip; he sings with the bottom half of his right arm detached, augmented by another trick of the camera as Greenwood, one of the guitarists, jumps out of the door of a small Airstream trailer in slow motion behind Yorke, who remains in real time. Inner tension is given a literal visual image as Yorke, with back to the camera and his hands grasping at his hair, is placed inside a silhouette of the profile of his face. Followed with two repetitious shots of his body lying on the roof of the car, arms (wings) still spread, the audience is then introduced to characters that are not members of the band: women in black dresses and long black head pieces. Then comes one of the most signature an beautiful aspects of the music video. One dancer (resembling a nun) rises and falls in slow motion with two Airstream trailers in the background; her body is composed in a very elegant and modern dance and she is never seen leaving or touching the ground, only rising and falling. She is followed by an overhead shot of Yorke looking up at the camera and a large insect falling toward him. Consequently, before the first minute is over, the audience has seen York fall, Jonny Greenwood rise and fall, the dancer rise and fall, and an insect falling. This allows for the theme of falling to develop with other twists and turns later in the video's narrative.

As Yorke described the song having no meaning other than the melody itself, the music video could be described as having no other meaning than the short visual narratives it creates. The video hardly seems to take the lyrics into account, as will be described further along. By the time the first stanza is finished, the audience has seen no rows of houses as the lyrics describe, only a few Airstream trailers, and no hands touching Yorke. The audience has seen hints of the second stanza, particularly 'these thoughts and the strain I am under'. But already rising and falling have become a narrative theme while the theme of the chorus is 'fading'. The latter is referenced or utilized in visual form on occasion, as headshots of York fade into one another, as in the scene that follows the falling insect.

Accompanying the last lines of the chorus in the first stanza is a similar camera/editing technique utilized when Greenwood leaps out of the trailer in slow motion. Yorke is standing with his back to members of the band singing the lyrics in real time, while Selway rises from his chair and proceeds to run away in slow motion, later returning to real time. The clip is followed by another use of slow motion, as O'Brien, sitting in his chair, has tipped it backwards and falls to the ground. The camera cuts to the Greenwood brothers sitting in chairs in front of a trailer; Jonathan rises from his chair and, in slow motion, leaps up to and through the trailer door while Colin remains seated and looks at Jonathan in real time. Not only are very high speed cameras being used, it is also apparent that a certain lighting technique is being utilized so that a portion of the screen can be slowed down while the other portion remains in real time or at a different speed. Very sharp lighting is used, the source of which is never seen in the music video. Yet, in any scene where one person is moving at a different speed than another, the

imaginary line that divides them (where the image could be cropped, slowed down, and reinserted) never has a moving shadow crossing it.

The video then returns to the fading in and out of multiple headshots of Yorke, followed by a singular image in the music video, almost completely unrelated to the rest of the footage: a large, angular tree with bare limbs occupies and remains still in the center of the frame while the stars above it move quickly in their path. This is one of the few instances where the footage has been significantly sped up. As the image itself fades out, a headshot of Yorke returns with moving light mimicking that passing of the day similar to the clip earlier in the video. And just after the lyric, 'before we all go under', the audience sees two trailers, two different Thom Yorkes; one is jumping from the ground in slow motion, the other is squatting down on the ground waving a stick back and forth in real time beneath the feet of the other Thom Yorke while in mid air. The point of the clip is the camera technique itself and the slight bit of comic relief it provides. After another series of headshot fades, the scene is quickly followed by one of the most beautiful and moving scenes in the video. In slow motion, three dancers leap toward one another, and as they land on the ground, the footage transforms into a faster speed; as they jump in the air again, the footage is slowed down again and they perform a counterpoint, almost sculpture-like dance movement. Falling back to the ground, the footage speeds up again until the dancers are running away from one another where it is again slowed down to the point of hardly any movement at all.

What follows is not only a second element of comic relief, so to speak, but also a visual representation of Yorke's distancing himself from the song, or detaching his 'emotional radar' from it. While singing the words to the chorus, "fade out again", Yorke

stops before the words are finished and, with eyes closed, smiles and shrugs his shoulders. Soon after, a second animal is introduced as well as another character. Respectively they are a Doberman Pincher, wet at the mouth, barking and chained to a stake in the ground, and a boy lacking a shirt, wearing only pants and shoes, his skin tone a far cry from Okri's "Azaro" but nonetheless likely the 'world child' in Yorke's lyrics.. The audience sees the open mouth of the dog, liquid dripping from its mouth, somehow angered, then sees a close up of the boy's face. The scene then changes to the dogs chain moving away from the stake, and what follows may be the most controversial scene in the music video. With the side of one of the trailers serving as a background, the dog runs and jumps in slow motion to the extent that the chain will allow, either biting or barking at the height of the boys face. Meanwhile, in real time, the boy has walked up to the dog as close as two or less feet away, shows no fear or emotion, turns around and walks away. The trailer is heavily lit on its left side with both the lights reflection and the holes or indentions in the trailer's metal exterior resembling the image of a large cross.

In terms of legality and film, the use of either animals or children is quite complex and this scene would certainly be legally questionable if it were actually filmed at once, in other words, if both the dog and the boy were in the shot at the same time. But this is likely not the case due to either a fortuitous mistake or an intentional lighting trick. By the time the dog has reached the extent of its chain in mid air, it is projecting its own shadow on the trailer; with the lighting projected onto the trailer just a few feet behind the dog and the subtler secondary lighting pointed directly at the dog, its shadow extends slightly closer to the boy than the dog itself. As the boy walks toward the dog, his back is heavily lit, and as he approaches the dog, the lighting on the dogs face and chest is never

shadowed by the approaching boy. Furthermore, the boy not only projects his own shadow onto the trailer, but also due to the lightness of his well lit skin, bears a faint reflection on the metallic exterior of the trailer. Given the placement of the lighting, this projection moves slightly ahead of the boy, but just before that projection reaches the shadow of the dog, the projection disappears. Therefore, the footage is likely cropped at that precise line where the projection begins to disappear. What would have been cropped out of the boys footage would be footage of a trailer with no dog, and therefore replaced with the footage of the trailer with the angry dog. What would have been cropped out of the footage of the dog would likely be the trainer legally responsible for the dog on the set, giving it its commands, and therefore replaced with the image of the boy walking towards it. In other words, this image is quite similar to the others that represent Yorke in real time and Selway in slow motion, for example. But those images are not legally questionable and could have been filmed at the same time. In this scene, giving the lighting on the chest of the dog and the disappearance of the boy's shadow, this scene is, in some sense, legal proof that the two were not filmed at the same time.

It is also implied as if this scene were images in Yorke's head. Once the boy walks away and the dog continues to bark and or bite at him, the next clip shown are overlaid close ups of Yorke, hands clasped in his hair once again in some type of mental agony or distress. The audience then sees the dog's chain being pulled away from the stake once more, and then a close up of the boys face looking toward the dog and then toward the camera, again showing no fear or emotion. Followed by another dancer slowly rising and falling and close ups of Yorke, the audience then sees the boy sitting in a child-sized chair, the same large insect that was falling down toward Yorke previously

is now slowly flying toward the face of the boy. As the insect gets closer to the boy's face, the clip to changes to one of York's feet and legs; the insect is falling closer to the ground, which is covered with other smaller, and what appear to be dead, insects.

The audience is then introduced to the second moment that Yorke stops singing the lyrics. In similar lighting used previously in the video where it appears that an entire day is passing over the close up of Yorke, he sings the lyrics 'I can feel death' but then closes his mouth (his eyes are already closed) and does not sing the lyrics 'can see its beady eyes'. He is then seen running toward the boy, still seated in the small chair. He runs in slow motion along the shadow one of the three trailers is projecting; the boy's chair is placed on the line of that shadow. As Yorke runs past the boy, and now behind him from the viewer's or camera's perspective, still in slow motion, the boy sits up out of his chair, picks it up, lifting it to his back, and begins to run in the opposite direction of Yorke in real time. As he exits the screen, Yorke is still seen slowly turning the corner, running around the back of the trailer.

Cracked eggs or dead birds are never visually presented to the audience in the music video, but at just under three minutes into the song, Selway is seen sitting with his eyes closed, his hands held out and palms pointed upward. White feathers float in the air but none fall in his hands as he clasps them at the end of the scene. Yorke is holding his hands out as well in the scene that follows. He is standing, leaning toward either nothing or something out of the viewer's perspective, something outside of the screen, as if reaching for something. Wind is blowing his shirt and hair, but the other band members do not seem to experience this wind. Yorke's movement and singing are slowed down again, and this time to the extent that the lyrics are intentionally off. The word 'fade' is

annunciated but, now slowed down, ‘out’ is not annunciated by Yorke until the exact moment when ‘again’ is sung in the prerecorded track. In other words, with the use of slow motion, Glazer has created the illusion of Yorke singing two out of three words in the chorus correctly and skipping the second, yet because of the slow motion, it is not intended to be a successful illusion per se, given that the way Yorke has annunciated the last does not appear to annunciate a vowel followed by a ‘g’ and then another vowel, but rather a vowel, a ‘d’, and another vowel. This detail may seem insignificant, small, or just a cool editing trick not worthy of deep analysis, but it is actually quite related to the history of film itself, or more specifically, to one of film’s precursors. As Friedrich Kittler reminds us,

> since 1878 [Edweard Muybridge]…had been experimenting with twelve special cameras on behalf of the California railroad tycoon and university founder, Leland Stanford. The location was Palo Alto, which later saw the invention of the vacuum tube, and the assignment was the recording of movements whose speed exceeded the perception of any painter’s eye. Racehorses and sprinters dashed past the individually and sequentially positioned cameras, whose shutters were triggered successively by an electromagnetic device supplied by the San Francisco Telegraph Supply Company – 1 millisecond for every 40 milliseconds.
>
> With such snapshots (literally speaking) Muybridge’s handsome volumes on *Animal Locomotion* were meant to instruct ignorant painters in what motion looks like in real-time analysis. For his serial photographs

> testified to the imaginary element in human perception, as in the positions of horses' legs on canvas or on English watercolor paper.[cxxxviii]

In other words, Muybridge had recorded motion on individual frames; he simply didn't have a way to play them back or else that would have been what would become film. One of the more famous examples used in the Animal Locomotion plates is the running horse. Given that it is the fastest animal recorded (save perhaps the wings of the bird themselves), its movements are the most likely to escape the human eye. Muybridge's running horse consequently corrected some misperceptions on the location of the feet and form of the legs while running. It is as if Muybridge had invented slow motion in film before film, allowing painters to view each step of the horse for as long as the eye cared to perceive and move on to the next snapshot in time.

The high speed cameras utilized in "Street Spirit" were designed for understanding the movements of, among other things, animal locomotion. As Glazer casually states in an interview with Sam Delaney for The Guardian,

> With Radiohead, it's very much about convincing Thom Yorke of your ideas. But once he's chosen you there's not any interference – he wants you to go off and be experimental. I'd had this idea for ages that I'd seen in nature programmes, where they'd film an eagle flying at 1,200 frames per second then cut frames out to slow it down. It's a technique you see in every second ice-cream commercial nowadays but back then it was new.[cxxxix]

It is therefore without irony that, at approximately three quarters of the way through the song and for less than one second, the viewer sees a horse take a step. The horse has not appeared nor will it appear in any other parts of the music video. For Glazer to insert this, to take the time, energy, and finances to have a horse on set, is in some sense inserting the music video's own historiography. If the melody is the meaning of the song, movement is the meaning of the video with Muybridge as its initial author, so to speak.

Following the step of the horse, a new character is introduced: an older gentleman inside a trailer who appears to be profusely bleeding from his head, sitting in a light that slightly fades. The four dancers are outside walking, the camera has sped them up, and they either walk toward him, away from him, or nowhere the viewer will understand. In the next scene, the man is seen shirtless with blood or paint on his face and shoulders and holding a medium sized can. As he glares at Yorke and Yorke glares at the camera, the man throws paint or blood from the can at Yorke. The liquid falls in slow motion to the ground, as Yorke moves out of its way by taking one step back.

More headshots of Yorke follow, the child watches his chair fly through the air in slow motion, and then the viewer is introduced to a completely new context that resembles nothing like the music video's setting. Yorke is standing between two white walls of 'glass', shattering one pane with a hammer on his left, one on his right, steps forward, and again shatters one on his left then one on his right. The shattered panes move in slow motion while Yorke mostly moves in real time. The effect is not perfectly executed, in that one can detect where elements of the footage are being cropped. But

despite the level of its execution and different visual context, the benefits of filming in black and white include being able to insert footage that is distinctly different yet within the greater overall aesthetic, or, color palate consisting of black, white, and a thousand shades of grey. With the use of slow motion, Yorke himself still dressed in his striped collared shirt, and objects (shards of glass) falling, it provides a starkness and yet explosiveness in the climax of the song, as well as an aesthetic compliment to the bare leaved tree and the stars moving above it seen earlier in the video.

More intense and fast-changing headshots of Yorke follow, along with one final dancer in slow motion. For the second time in the video, a dancer is touching the ground, and she is the fourth dancer missing in the counterpoint scene, which is the first. The intense headshots continue, interspersed with images of all four dancers walking away from the camera, and an image of Yorke's back with his arms up and to the side, which will become his own harbinger of the end of the video. In slow motion, Yorke leaps into the air; the camera cuts to a wider shot and Yorke is seen slowly rising in mid air against the backdrop of the trailers, arms out again in Christ-like fashion. Mimicking Christ's death and resurrection, York falls in the beginning of the music video, and rises again in the end.

Pedagogical Reflections – Close Readings and Cultural Transitions

With such a plethora of music videos available now, even from this era, I find that it is important when teaching the history of the music video to not only cover a wide

array of material, but also ensure that students are able to give attention to close detail, writing papers that are comprised of contextual information as well as a close reading like the one presented above. Every music video is different and each deserves its own special kind of attention, reflection, and analysis. It is this era that breaks into the contemporary digital world, and while history is laid out before the viewer on the glossy white YouTube screen, it is important to teach the context of the format itself, the experience of viewing during this era, the feeling of newness, and the power of its exposure. The 1980's and 1990's are certainly not completely foreign to contemporary undergraduates, either due to parental influence, taste in music, exposure on YouTube, Spotify, or Pandora, or the phenomenon of artists of that era still performing, recording, and making music videos today. Madonna is certainly a figure nearly everyone knows, and rock artists like U2, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Radiohead, Pearl Jam, or Nine Inch Nails are still popular on the mainstream music scene. It is also still important to note that MTV still exists but its formatting program has changed significantly. And despite its old age, in 2011, the MTV Video Music Awards "had the audience in the network's history". According to Kara Warner writing for MTV News, "in addition to bringing in a record-breaking 12.4 million total viewers, Sunday night's VMAs now rank as the #1 cable telecast of the year among viewers ages 12 to 34, and the #1 non-sports cable telecast of 2011 with total viewers."[cxl] MTV is in effect capitalizing on what many thought would be its death, which is simply music videos being available on the internet.

Out of the many from which to choose, my students had interesting choices from the 1980's, which included music videos like "99 Red Balloons" by Nena, "Piano Man" by Billy Joel, "You Gotta Fight For Your Right" by The Beastie Boys, "Like A Prayer",

"Material Girl", and "Vogue" by Madonna, "Every Breath You Take" by The Police, "Smooth Criminal" by Michael Jackson, "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Bette Midler, "Take On Me" by A-ha, "Walk This Way" by Run D.M.C., "You Make My Dreams" by Hall and Oates, "Rapture" by Blondie, "Fast Car" by Tracy Chapman, and "You Spin Me Around (Like a Record)" by Dead or Alive. From the 1990's, some of the featured videos were "Tonight, Tonight" by Smashing Pumpkins, "Drop" by The Pharcyde, "Jeremy" by Pearl Jam, "I Will Always Love You" by Whitney Houston, "Just" by Radiohead, "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana, "Be Prepared" by Scar, "Brick" by Ben Folds Five, "When You Say Nothing At All" by Alison Krauss, "Baby One More Time" by Britney Spears, "Scream" by Michael Jackson, "I Believe I Can Fly" by R. Kelly, "Tyrone" by Erykah Badu, "Fade Into You" by Mazzy Star, "Give It Away" by Red Hot Chili Peppers, "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice, and "Everybody Hurts" by REM.

The choice of The Pharcyde's "Drop" made for an interesting discussion about production. Directed by Spike Jonze, the music video required that the group learn how to lip-synch to the lyrics when the song is played backwards, or, in reverse. The effect would be that Jonze could reverse all of the footage taken and, when playing the song not in reverse, the lip-synching would match, yet all of the movements would appear to be in reverse. The group hired a private linguist to help them memorize the lyrics as they are pronounced when played backwards. The song was not only reversed but remixed so that the vocals were higher and the background music was softer, so as to make for better practice material. Jonze transcribed the sounds of the words played backwards and worked in words in English, or 'words' that looked like words so as to create not simply a series of sounds to be mimicked, but as if it were another language.[cxli]

As a teacher who was also teaching at Emory University at the time of the mass shooting at Virginia Tech, the choice of Pearl Jam's "Jeremy" was one that provoked both nervousness and a feeling of necessity. It is important to clarify that the actor in the music video does not kill any of the students but only himself, though many have confused the ending given that the other students are frozen and have blood on them. Nevertheless, this became another moment when the content of a music video generates a wider discussion about suicide, alienation, and the particularly American trend of shootings in schools. Just as Marilyn Manson had been blamed in part for the Columbine shootings, the music video for Pearl Jam has also suffered in related ways. In fact, the group was so output by the controversy the video created that they did not produce any more music videos for years after.

"Vogue" by Madonna, as well as "Give It Away" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers and "Fast Car" by Tracy Chapman, proved to be very interesting representations in terms of the transition from the 1980's to the 1990's. All three videos more or less on the cusp of the changing decade, "Vogue" marks an interesting transition in terms of both production and fashion, "Give It Away" marks a transition in terms of musicality (as the group was famous for not having an '80's rock sound' which tended to feature synthesizers, chorus effects, or gated reverb on the snare drum), and "Fast Car" as an example that represents itself, as both a song and a music video, in a way that resists being dated at all.

As a child of the 1980's and 1990's in America and at that time also a student of music, it was interesting to teach this material on a personal level, to attest to the power, newness, and excitement of new releases, the magic of CD stores in shopping malls, and

falling asleep on any given night while watching Kennedy's 'Alternative Nation' or 'Yo MTV Raps' on television. I recalled testaments of first hearing of Kurt Cobain's death on the radio, subsequently receiving a landline phone call from my sister, the copycat suicide committed at my school by a teenage boy, and the subsequent attempt to ban MTV on local stations; testaments to the growth, evolution, and impact of hip hop and rap on young adolescents, its different appeals to both poor African-Americans in my school as well as the white kids in suburbia, and generally how clothing in music videos began affecting the clothing worn at school (Kris Kross being the most infamous here, not only provoking young teenagers to wear overalls or pants that were way too large, but to wear them backwards); testaments to the power and magic of watching artists in music videos so many times before finally seeing artists like Tori Amos perform on her birthday or being one of hundreds of people who jumped the wall separating the outer lawn from the inner seats when The Beastie Boy's set began at Lollapalooza; testaments to not only listening to but craving music with lyrical meaning that was not easily understood, that seemed more like poetry than catchy phrases, or in the case of Rage Against The Machine, had young adults pulling out the history books and dictionaries; testaments to often listening to music more by watching it on MTV than playing it in the car or on the radio and, as a musician, attempting to discern how to play certain parts by watching the musicians act it out, and buying guitar tablature in book form at the local guitar store; and most importantly, testaments to the many musical transitions from the world of analog television to the world of digital computers. The entire era of MTV, VH1, CMT and any of their imitators before YouTube only leads one to the transition to YouTube itself; the big players in music video broadcasting slowly faded out and/or pursued other avenues

while the astronomically popular and democratic YouTube quickly faded in, still leaving all competitors in the dust. Now everything is more or less in one place, and, in terms of music videos, is becoming the testament to its entire history, taking the momentum of the 1980's and 1990's and turning it into a bigger, faster, more democratic, and more global phenomenon.

Conclusion:

The Many Histories of the Future

All Access. This is the moniker Google now uses for its 'Google Play' music streaming service, which includes a music video streaming service via YouTube. Given certain conclusions and statistics provided in Chapter 1, YouTube/Google is beginning to compete with other popular streaming services like Spotify and Pandora and will revolutionize the way in which people listen to music by offering a music video streaming service that will be free of advertisements; songs that are played will be songs that are seen, and this will undoubtedly be a another new force, following in the footsteps of iTunes, in placing more emphasis on the single.

And as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, production is also drastically changing. While having directed a number of music videos, two that I recently produced involved specific aspects that, while as a present reality, same something about the future. In one music video, I only used a GoPro to film all of the footage. As a camera that is smaller than the average adult human fist, it is extremely versatile given its size and weight. It is primarily designed for extreme sports or outdoor activities like skydiving, snowboarding, mountain biking, scuba-diving, and the like, attachable to racecars, safety helmets, harnesses, and a whole host of other options. A lot of extreme sports footage looks particularly appealing when in slow motion, so the camera is equipped with different and higher than usual frames per second rates. Since I wanted to use a number of slow motion effects similar to the Radiohead video "Street Spirit (Fade Out)" discussed in

Chapter 4, I decided to use a GoPro camera. It currently has three options for viewing. The first option is not to view at all; simply point and shoot and hope for the best. The second option is to attach a viewing screen to the camera, given that it does not have one build in, and this is traditionally how consumer grade cameras are viewed by the videographer. And the third is via a GoPro app on a smartphone, connected to the camera via WiFi. All menu options can be controlled by the phone and the phone's screen is the viewer. This allows the controller to be in a location away from the camera and to still be able to control it. This particular shoot was an interesting experience, given that many of the actors, costume designers, and the musician for whom I was producing the video were not familiar with the technology; it therefore carried a certain quality of being 'unprofessional', as many assumed that the best cameras are still large bulky boxes with big lenses. It also gave the appearance that I, instead of focusing on the project, was often on my phone doing something other paying attention to the action. Finally, the conundrum dawned on one of the actors who asked me, 'are you controlling the camera with your phone?', to which I responded 'yes'. He looked at one of the other actors and said 'Welcome to 2014. Now we can control video cameras with smartphones'. Digital communication and recording devices are increasingly becoming a collection of the same technologies and capabilities.

This particular aspect of the GoPro works very well with filming on stage. Once, when I was producing a multi-camera live shoot of Steep Canyon Rangers with special guest Sam Bush, I hired a camera operator to not only control a hand-held DSLR off the stage, but to also place a GoPro on the stage prior to the beginning of the concert and,

when the target songs began, to turn the camera on remotely from backstage and subsequently turn it off once those songs were over by using the app on his phone.

The smartphone is also, among other things, a video camera. And, on another music video project I produced that year, I filmed the band performing in front of a green screen. Their job was to video their own footage for the background while they were on the road touring. I told them to take footage of anything they saw that they found interesting: landscapes, bridges, trains, highways, signs, buildings, whatever they might encounter. They were, of course, filming any and all of this with their phones. While not the highest quality cameras, contemporary smartphones do possess cameras that are certainly at a high enough quality to be usable; not to mention that a significant amount of actual video viewing occurs on a smartphone anyway. So, in the end, their own smartphone footage of imagery while they were on tour became the black and white background footage of them performing live and in color. And this became their official music video for the song they were trying to promote.

Video cameras on smartphones are not new news, but they are recent and revolutionary cultural developments that have contributed significantly to the 21st century video boom. When once everyone could be a photographer, now everyone can be a videographer, and such was the case with consumer grade film cameras in the mid to late 20th century, but now all smartphone users also own a video camera whether they intended to buy one or not.

Nevertheless, it is how mini-histories are made, and how some music videos are being made. Video is, compared to other arts like literature, painting, or photography, the closest thing we have to representing or reproducing reality, and this has become

increasingly important in the music industry. Booking agents and talent-buyers no longer want to listen to a band, read a bio, and look at a photo before making a decision, they want to see the band perform live, and video becomes the solution to those geographic constraints. The amount of independent musicians making a living producing music has grown astronomically in the past decade, and their ability to produce music videos (whether live or staged) has only become more accessible. The ones who either have the time and/or lack a budget produce their own, while those who are consistently on tour and do have budgets hire one of the increasing number of videographers that do business in whichever town they are based across the US. The music industry is increasingly becoming a video based consumer economy, and there are few major success stories among artists or specific songs that do not utilize or possess a music video.

The history of the music video is therefore not linear, but triangular, beginning at one small point we might refer to as the technological ability to synchronize sound and film, and from there shooting up in several different directions and at larger and larger quantities. Hollywood is, of course, one of those directions that, while too immense of a history to be accounted for here, nevertheless deserves to be mentioned as a major force in the continuation of the concept of the music video. It is as if when music videos were not as popular, films included full staged musical performances within the narrative; but once the music video becomes popularized beyond the television variety show performances, full staged musical performances in film fall to the wayside and music is more often non-diegetic and in the background.

All of the factors above have given strength to the reinvention of the long form music video, which is essentially a music video with longer narrative elements that

extend beyond the time length of the song. While the production costs of a long form music video like Michael Jackson's "Thriller" would be remarkably expensive in the 1980's, the long form videos that have become Lady Gaga's music video trademark do not have to have such high production costs. While musically Lady Gaga's songs are not very complex, her long form music videos are, and represent some of the most remarkably creative combinations of dance, wardrobe, set design, visual effect and narrative.

The good news about the history of the music video is that, at least in certain parts of the world, anything goes. There are hardly any more rules to break or ways to shock, the only consistent barrier being age and what parents and caretakers deem suitable for young adults. The same goes for contemporary movies but, for over-determined reasons, American youth seem to understand that movies are fictional and can often overlook that very aspect of music videos as avid fans of their favorite and most looked-up-to artists. While rock was often blamed for producing overtly sexual music videos in the early days of MTV and rap later in the 1990's, Madonna was undoubtedly the primary force in instituting sexuality in pop music videos and is a standard that is still upheld today in American pop music. Rock music, which his now primarily indie rock in the US, has mostly eschewed overt sexual representations in its music videos in an attempt to aesthetically distance itself from not only the 'overproduced' sounds of its recent predecessors as well as pop music, but from the visual 'overproduced' aesthetic. There are even a number of music videos today that digitally produce a retroactive and anachronistic aesthetic in the final appearance of the music video. Like Nine Inch Nails using old film to capture "Closer", artists like TV On The Radio and Gary Clark, Jr. are

using digital effects to reproduce the look of old film in ways that are more visually extreme than actually using old film. For certain artists, the nostalgic or retroactive appearances attempt to produce a sense of relief from the clean, sharp glistening videos in pop music that, to a number of music lovers, creates and communicates artifice.

Nevertheless, with this new wave of music videos, humor has also returned where it seemed to be lost in the 1990's, particularly in the rap and alternative rock that dominated the industry. Weird Al Yankovic could not have made a career out of parodying the music and music videos of the era without being surrounded by the serious and the dramatic. Humor was the dominant theme in the musical shorts and soundies of the early era of music video production and certainly carried on in a number of variety show formats, and now often the most successful music videos (as well as the most successful of any type of video) are humoristic in some way. It is in fact one of the easiest ways for a video to become viral, or at least to compete with the overwhelming number of other videos being produced, liked, and shared every day.

As any history of the music video should understand, a music video is not just a music video, but a representation within a cultural and technological context. That context today has increasingly been social media (YouTube is itself a type of social media), and the emotional parameters of the various social media provide a cultural atmosphere in which music videos 'happen'. Facebook's success is due in part to its partiality toward the positive – sharing, connecting, liking, and adding friends. As the old epithet remains true, laughter is contagious and some of the most successful music videos have to be successful in the cultural context of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms that are not impartially designed. And any successful artist should remember

that history is no longer in the hands of the producers but in the hands of the fans. The consumer now decides more than ever what is successful.

But again, in the American cultural context of American music, it has become increasingly difficult to create a wave or effect anything close to that of Elvis on The Ed Sullivan Show and one can only hope for a music video that stands out, a hit song, a connection with the social media audience, and to perhaps push the envelope a bit. At the same time, music videos are clearly what a significant amount of the web's population want, and perhaps consequently newness within the video is less important than constantly having access to new music videos. Either way, history will continue to widen its horizon.

The internet is of course filled with countless music videos being produced around the world on a daily basis. YouTube, providing a platform that now allows us to view the many histories of the music video, also becomes the force that is, in a sense, an end of the history of the music video. There are now too many to account for and the newest technological developments will perhaps render the music video to become something else altogether. As described in Chapter 2, all music videos have at least one if not all of four elements (performance, thematic narrative, dance, and visual effect), but now a 5^{th} element is being introduced: that of interactivity within the technological medium itself.

The music video for Bob Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone", produced in 2013 well after the song's release, is an interactive video that allows the user to click through multiple scenarios or television shows lip-synching; regardless of when or which scenario is chosen, the lip-synching remains in time with the song, which never changes despite

clicking on other representations.[cxlii] In other words, it is several videos into one that can be selected and changed in real time. It is possible that, in a sense, the future of video will be interactive video, and several have claimed that the internet will function more like an interactive video than the windows with which we are accustomed. YouTube, like other successful companies, are consistently thinking ahead and catering to the desires of their clients and user base. But what happens when that base is so large that it becomes too global, too unclassifiable? YouTube claims not to target a demographic, but a mindset.

According to Search Engine Watch, over 1 billion hours of video are viewed each month on YouTube and "with 1 billion people visiting YouTube worldwide every month, virtually any audience that content creators or advertisers want to reach is on YouTube".[cxliii] The company, therefore, targets what has come to be known as 'Gen C'. In a research study released by Google, the company coins the term 'Generation C'. The study is called "Introducing Gen C: The YouTube Generation" and provides eight defining characteristics of this particular demographic. As a general description, Google claims that,

> Gen C is a powerful new force in consumer culture. It's a term we use to describe people who care deeply about creation, curation, connection, and community. It's not an age group; it's an attitude and mindset defined by key characteristics. 80% of millennials are made up of Gen C, YouTube's core (though by no means only) audience.[cxliv]

The eight characteristics ascribed to Gen C, according to the study, are that Gen C is "a state of mind", it "strives for expression" and is "a taste-maker", it "defines the social network", it is "constantly connected", it "values relevance and originality", it "connects on YouTube on all screens" (meaning that it connects on laptops, smartphones, televisions, desktops, and tablets), and that "YouTube is Gen C's habitat for entertainment". It claims that "Gen C determines what's going to be popular next", its influence accounting for 5 billion dollars of spending in the US per year (crediting Barkley's for the statistic). It also claims that "Gen C is twice as likely to be a YouTube viewer than the general population" and it is "40% more likely to be only a light TV viewer" (crediting a studies by GfK – MRI).[cxlv] Regarding the characteristic of connecting with YouTube on all screens, the report makes an enthusiastic prediction.

> With falling data costs and rising network speeds, mobile video is set to explode. YouTube has the same reach with Gen C on smartphones as it does on desktop – in fact 80% of Gen C with a smartphone watch YouTube. Year-on-year the number of Gen Cs watching YouTube on smartphones has increased by 74%.[cxlvi]

The future looks remarkably bright for YouTube and for the music video as an art form. And what is implicit in YouTube's description of this Gen C mindset is that, given all of its attributes combined, Gen C as people collectively learn from one another, which is going to be necessary to collect, archive, and understand the many histories of the music video to come.

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