

OXFORD

MUSICAL CREATIVITIES

in practice



PAMELA BURNARD

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Oxford University Press 2012

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published in 2012

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Library of Congress Control Number: 2012932684

ISBN 978-0-19-958394-2

Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd
Croydon, CR0 4YY

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this work
are as complete, accurate and up-to-date as possible at the date of writing,
Oxford University Press is not able to give any guarantee or assurance that
such is the case. Readers are urged to take appropriately qualified medical
advice in all cases. The information in this work is intended to be useful to the
general reader, but should not be used as a means of self-diagnosis or for the
prescription of medication.

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

Musical Creativities in Practice

Pamela Burnard

Faculty of Education,
University of Cambridge,
Cambridge, UK

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Fig. 5.3 DJ Rob Paterson performing at a New York club.
© Arnaud Stébé, 2011.

as he says, 'when things heat up I can also transition into more pounding, tougher sounding material, even breakbeats. He does not play what many people call 'trance'. Nor does he play hip hop, though, as he says, 'a lot of these musical boundaries are getting blurred these days'.

The creative process is determined by the moment, via the musicalized marking out of urban spaces, and a lot of things are unscripted. XUAN's own sound comprises samples of Asian instrumental phrases, which are put over rhythms to make them into dance music. Dance musics coexist in Taiwan through the interplay of style, space, and commercial and cultural influences from underground venues and commercial clubs,⁹ a pattern that we see again with Rob Paterson.

Introducing Rob Paterson

Rob was born in Manhasset, New York, and went to a suburban public school in Setauket, also in New York, and then to college in New York. His first big gig as a live performer was at the Metro

⁹ For a fascinating discussion of different styles of clubs and practices in mainstream underground and subcultural underground scenes, see Toop (2004, pp. 233–46).

(Chicago) in July 2002. He has since worked in many dance settings.¹⁰ Rob shuns definitive social categorization, preferring to describe himself as a creative artist whose life's ambition is summed up in the following extract (Fig. 5.3):

Rob: As a musician, I make and perform music . . . I find that being labelled as 'a producer' is one thing but I could equally be called 'an engineer' or a DJ. But whatever I call myself it all boils down to music, audiences, crowds, production types and wanting to put something very special on and developing my own sound.

As with all of the DJs featured in this chapter, Rob was considered by those around him to be talented in music. He came from a family that was not established in the music industry and achieved high levels in grade music examinations for at least one of the several instruments he played, which included piano, trumpet and guitar. In his first year or two of college he performed as a solo singer-songwriter, playing guitar and singing original songs with a loop sampler. He describes himself as 'a musician whose musical practice is the product of free, individual expression'. He stresses his own individuality and uniqueness in terms of what it means to be a musician, and the positive effects of digital technologies, insofar as it can be used to disrupt the trajectory of the conventional musician. Being diverted this way is something that often happens to traditionally trained musicians.

Rob explains the competition for capital within fields with reference to the transition between one field and another, by which means he suddenly gained capital (public recognition, status, and the ability to take creative control) through access to digital technologies that inspired and facilitated his creativity. Creating music within a field, with new rules, discourses and creativities, corresponded to a logic that was clearly offering him new ways to earn a living from something he loved doing. This is what followed:

Rob: In my junior year at college but I kind of had this revelation—an epiphany—with a little bit of help from my friends. I got some exposure to the right stuff by two friends who I pretty much owe everything to at this point. They showed me how to record with a computer, and it blew my mind. Until then, I'd felt imprisoned by my own creativity and yet really nervous about the riskiness of music-making which often felt like you were going out on a limb. The fact is that prior to that I was working with little tape decks and stuff. You know, like where I had no control over what I was doing, except for the 'live' take. So that really kind of set me off on a new path. It was a new start. It set me up with new networks and sources to new challenges and tasks . . . So, in my junior year I switched colleges, and I switched to music . . . What I could do exploded with newness. What I could trial and taste expanded into new territories. It was like learning an instrument all over again. It fascinated me . . . I'm the type of person where it's all about ideas. I'm always kind of on the edge of the next idea, I guess, and this was the biggest 'next set of ideas'.

The 'new path' was important, too, in terms of affordances, which is to say the tools and networks that entered his life due to his peer networks, as was also his openness to change. Rob's sets range from funky-breaks to 'nu soul' to 'electro'. His style deviates from the standard house, electro, trance mega-club genres because of his musical background and interests.

Rob: I used to be a singer-songwriter, my favourite artist was Nirvana, I had never heard good electronic music. During my freshman year at college I was exposed to artists like Boards of Canada,

¹⁰ Rob has his own home studio in Stony Brook, New York. Rob also produces music as a solo artist, ranging from downtempo to dance and grunge music. He is developing a career portfolio writing music for films, producing audio clips for various websites and working part time as a music producer with Philip Shearer at Communicate Media Studios for Many Records, located in the South Bronx. He also freelances as an audio engineer, producer and performer, and works regularly as a professional DJ.

Atari Teenage Riot and Massive Attack. I saw Radiohead during their Amnesiac tour in Toronto and it turned my world upside down. I had never heard or seen live sampling and it left me inspired. I bought turntables, a sampler and a Roland 909 drum machine to take my performances into a new direction.

Rob realized his new direction was catching on when he started winning competitions:

Rob: I won the 'Art for Progress Clash of the Artists' DJ competition in 2007. The main prize was a spot DJing at the Winter Music Conference, which was an amazing experience. I am very fortunate to have such a loyal fan base as a fairly new DJ, especially on the web. I remember entering the contest and letting as many people know as possible about the vote, but not necessarily to vote for me. The last thing I want to do is be some selfish, self-promoting performer. I managed to place in the top three during the online vote and went on to win the competition at the live event.

Success in competition is a cultural capital whereby artists are allowed entry into or repositioning in the field itself. For Rob, being recognized at the time for what he is doing as a DJ in this way has been pivotal evidence of support. What he is talking about here is not simply an abrupt challenge to the conventional art of the day, but a symbolically different way of DJing, analogous to a different way of seeing the crowd and co-creating new forms, sounds and social conditions, which together constitute the elements (or logic in Bourdieuan terms) of the domain of creativity, which is vested in his DJ practice at this point in time.

Rob: It's your job to get people to dance and to get people excited. And you really have to understand how to read people and read a crowd . . . there's no better feeling than getting a crowd to completely lose themselves in what you're doing. Everybody wants to have a good time and if you can be part of that in some way, and do your job which is, you know, playing the right music, or paying attention to what's being played and reacting . . . It's very community-driven . . . like my fans here are people that I met out at clubs or online boards. It all stems from this really amazing network that happens. And there's something about dance music and clubs. There's definitely a drug component that's always there with nightlife and all that. But that's not really what's driving the need to want to come together. It's a scene where you don't have to change who you are to fit in, let's say. It's not about fitting in at all, it's not cliquey, it's not like that at all. It's a really good feeling to be connecting to that same kick drum. It's not just about the shaping of the sound . . . You have the power to really shape the way that the night is going to go. It seems to me it starts off as a technical thing, being able to beat, match and play records together. But then it blossoms for me in terms of going way beyond that.

Indeed, as will be demonstrated shortly, for the most part, DJing is associated not only with musical fragments heard in urban dance mixes, but also with the whole issue of musical taste and what it signifies for young people. In this context acknowledging drug culture is important since it fits in with a philosophy of 'shaping the experience' and certain dance music styles. Being free to choose, not only between various musical styles and combinations of sounds, but also how such choices are lived out, and what they are made to stand for, is implicit in this type of DJ performance. It is not rigidly bound, but rather assumes a fluid character in terms of what is actually going on in subcultural dance music events. As with DJ performance, clubbing is not a singularly definable activity and consists of different crowds moving between different musics in different rooms (e.g. house music on one floor and hip hop on another), wherein DJs simultaneously compose, arrange, produce, and perform by remixing other artists' existing recordings. Significantly, the differentiating principle is never the 'thing' in itself, but it is rather the *performance* creativity that uncovers the extent to which various DJs hold similar capitals in the field.

Rob: What you know and knowing a lot about a lot of things is synonymous with being successful. It's not just about having ideas. The farther you get along the path the more you realize this. I work with

music probably between 12 and 15 hours a day. I've really come to learn that it doesn't matter what you make, or what style or genre you make it in, there's always rules you must follow, rules you can push, and rules to break. Let's take 'techno'. It has always been a style of music that is technology-driven; I mean it gets its name, you know, really from the process of people who were building their own drum machines and synths. And, the farther that they pushed the technical side of it, the more they were respected. But when the creativity side is not tech-driven, it is something very different. People who are always pushing to get the new software, or the new synth, they'll actually appreciate in value ... I think what I try to do is make the 'normal' conspicuous and the 'new' mundane.

Just as the concept of DJ performance creativity resides in the positioning, context and sub-cultural capitals built up between the DJ and the distinctive club culture, so, also, does the raw material for blurring the boundaries between production and consumption. Through their use of new types of technology, DJs have radically altered approaches to musical composition, challenging existing notions of musical style. There are examples where a DJ's mix/remix has eclipsed the popularity of a commercial single, sometimes even replacing it altogether! With increasing eclecticism they have created new mixes that fuse elements from contemporary music and the sampled soundtracks of urban dance; mixes that redefine conventional notions of musical taste and break with the field as it exists at that time. We see this pattern again with Simon Lewicki, also known as Groove Terminator, a top-flight Australian DJ/producer, and the first to firmly establish himself as a major international recording artist who has produced, recorded and remixed many of Australia's major recording artists.

Introducing Simon Lewicki (artist name DJ Groove Terminator)

Simon was born in Australia and was originally a hip hop DJ. He was featured in the 2000 Australian edition of the Ministry of Sound's Club Nation Series, as well as on several other Ministry of Sound compilations. While maintaining his career as an active recording artist, multi-platinum producer and DJ, he has also composed and produced TV and radio commercials for Coca Cola, Nike, Vodafone and many others. He currently lives in Los Angeles, where he DJs and produces, and makes frequent tours as a guest international DJ at clubs in Europe, Australia and across the USA. From an early age, within a particular cultural setting and urban youth practices, he has learnt the production and practical operational knowledge required of a DJ. Simon's DJing was characteristically produced within a system of close-knit local networks, crossing over between radio techniques and pioneering club disco work, which uses record mixtures and super-impositions of 'beats' or 'break beats',¹¹ samples of rock music and funk with some MCing over sets.¹² Exercising entrepreneurial skills has proven the viability of the venture, and generated cultural capital from a young age.

Simon: I grew up in Adelaide in Australia. My step-dad was the station manager and he put together the first community radio station in Adelaide. My mum used to do a show on Saturday afternoons, and so I'd go in with her, and sort of mess around in the record library and sort of make myself tapes. And then someone offered to teach me to 'panel', which is to run the equipment in the studio ... I'd also find ways to sneak into the studio during the graveyard shift and make these crazy mix tapes for myself

¹¹ Toop (2004), explains 'drumbeats' eloquently as 'A conga or bongo solo, a timable break or simply the drummer hammering out the beat—these could be isolated by using two copies of the record on twin turntables and playing the one section over and over, flipping the needle back to the start of one while the other played through. The music made in this way came to be known as beats or break-beats' (p. 236).

¹² Simon was one of the first to practise MCing over sets in ways foregrounding 'rave' and 'warehouse' 'arty' techniques.

Musical Creativities in Practice offers a powerful corrective to myths and outmoded conceptions regarding musical creativity, which is often thought of as the practice of an individual artist. It argues the need for conceptual expansion of musical creativities in line with real world practices. It explores how different types of musical creativities are recognized and communicated in the practices of professional musicians including composers, improvisers, singer-songwriters, original bands, DJs, live coders, and interactive sound designers working in the music industry. Drawing on Bourdieu's thinking tools, this book provides the foundation for a sociological analysis of musical creativities, which is designed to transform the ways that music in education is thought about in the future.

Musical Creativities in Practice is a book that everyone with an interest in music, creativity, the music industry, and musical creativity in education, such as teachers, students, scholars, educational politicians, researchers, inspectors and advisors, trainers, policy developers, and parents will find worth reading. It will become a standard work on creativities in the music industry and an essential reader on undergraduate, postgraduate, higher music education, and teacher education courses at all levels. It will also be of great value to professionals in the music business and anyone interested in the future of music and its creativities.

Pamela Burnard is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, UK. Her published works include over 100 research papers, journal articles, and book chapters on a variety of aspects of music creativity. She has presented both in the UK and internationally. She is co-editor of *Teaching Music with Digital Technologies* (Continuum, 2009), *Creative Learning and How We Document It* (Trentham, 2007), *Reflective Practices in Arts Education* (Springer, 2006), and the *British Journal of Music Education*. She is a section editor on 'Creativity' in the *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (Springer, 2007) and the 'Musical Creativities as Practice' section in the *Oxford Handbook of Music Education* (OUP, 2012).



Cover image: *Musical Creativities*, 2011 © Kristian Purcell. The cover painting is the artist's interpretation of a visual representation of the multiple practices of musical creativities discussed in this book. Visual images can be created in many different ways. This painting draws on multiple processes and methodologies in the construction of the composition. www.kristianpurcell.com.
Back cover image: artist Kristian Purcell and author Pamela Burnard.

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

www.oup.com

ISBN 978-0-19-958394-2



9 780199 583942