



## Artist Co-Management For The World: Building A Platform For The Facilitation Of Song Writing And Record Production

Guy Morrow

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### Introduction

This article draws an analogy between open-source software development and artist co-management networks, networks that form a platform for the facilitation of artists' song writing and record production efforts. In the international popular music industry, the online environment is leading to more pressure being placed on artists and managers, rather than record labels, due to the fragmentation of the media landscape and the downsizing of recording labels. This is affecting the way in which song writing and record production are facilitated. In order for artist managers to help their clients to build and maximize their recording careers, the volatile environment that record labels are in means that artist managers must engineer new methods to effectively resource their clients' album production.

As the artist management role becomes even more central it brings extra overheads and responsibilities. An international network of co-managers is a possible solution for increasing management service provision for artists in this context. This is a context in which there is a lot more work for artist managers to do that perhaps requires expertise that artist managers do not necessarily have individually. This will arguably lead to the need for greater scale, particularly when artist managers are dealing internationally in order to assist their client's song writing and record production efforts.

This could lead to artist management becoming corporatized, or to the development of an extensive international co-management network (or both). Corporatization could come internally by way of the Manager/Agent/Record Label model or externally by way of major record label 'land grabs', whereby the record company demands a part or full ownership of the management entity and therefore a '360 degree' participation in all aspects of the artist's/manager's income, an example includes Universal Music's new artist management company Twenty-First Artists /Universal Management (UK) that has been set up by Colin Lester. While another possible solution for addressing the increased workload caused by the centralisation of responsibilities with the artist manager concerns decentralising responsibilities through co-management and the decentralised decision making that this enables.

This article employs Watson's (2002) argument that the unique relationship between artist and manager is the nucleus around which a successful musical career revolves. In order to develop this argument further, Watson uses a bicycle wheel analogy to describe the structure that evolves due to the fact that (if successful) eventually the manager and the artist will assemble a network of other relationships to try and further the artist's career. Watson claims that the artist and manager might build a team that includes record company staff, booking agents, live crew, publicists, accountants, music publishers, record producers, merchandisers and many other specialists. His analogy involves the unique combination of the artist and manager constituting the hub in the middle of a wheel. The artist and manager together work out where they want to go and how they want to get

there. They then start assembling the additional members of the team around the hub like the spokes of a wheel.

While the individual spokes themselves are important, the artist/manager hub remains pivotal in every situation. An international artist's career often involves a different network of people in each territory and so co-management is often proposed as a solution to this because there is a belief that an artist management hub is needed in each territory. This is known as split-territories co-management. This article will however explore an alternative to this, which involves co-management for the world. Co-management for the world involves having one artist management hub that consists of a network of co-managers.

## **Best Practices And Conduct**

Artist managers' attempts to form international co-management networks are hampered by a lack of consistency in relation to best practice and conduct across different territories. This research project therefore also examines the research question: What are the pros and cons of a Code of Conduct for artist managers in the popular music industry?

This project is encouraged by the International Music Managers' Forum (IMMF), which is a voluntary body seeking to create new standards in relation to artist management practices and to the enforcement of international copyright law. Although in recent years they have drafted an Aspirational Code of Conduct (included later), their aim is constrained by lack of empirical research. This research project attempts to alleviate this through a comparative study of regulation (self-regulation and/or governmental) and best practices in the UK, Canada, Australia and the US and in the first half of 2010 I received a Macquarie University research grant that enabled me to travel and conduct research interviews for this.

## **Research Method**

It is important to note the manner in which this article approaches the issues of artist management, song writing and record production. This article is not a neutral, disengaged reflection; the approach taken herein will analyse the subject in order to illuminate cultural practice and inform both internal and external theorisation of the cultural space in which artist management occurs. In other words, it is important to note at the outset that the author is an artist manager.

This article therefore uses a participant-observer method of research, a tradition that is well established in qualitative research practices. Such an auto-ethnography will be used in conjunction with ethnographic research interviews that were conducted by the author (Greene and Porcello, 2005). In assuming a participant 'non autonomous' (Titon, 1997) role in the processes of artist management, song writing and record production, this article will use an interaction model (Shelemay, 1997). In this context, the researcher's own immersion in the project is required and therefore the 'shadow' of the researcher will be cast here (Macionis and Plummer, 2005; Rice, 1997).

To this end, this article is in part a case study of the Australian Indie Folk band Boy & Bear. I have been co-managing Boy & Bear for the world with Rowan Brand since 2008. Boy & Bear's recordings are licensed to Universal Music Australia's Island imprint in Australia and New Zealand, while for the rest of the world the band is signed directly to Universal Motown in the US with a release commitment for Universal Mercury in the UK. Their song publishing is with SonyATV world wide, their booking agent in Australia is Stephen Wade at Select Music, their booking agent in the UK and Europe is Lucy Dickins at International Talent Booking (ITB), and their booking agent in the US is Bobby Cory at CAA. Boy & Bear won the Triple J Unearthed J Award in 2010, was named Rolling Stone Magazine's 'Artist to Watch' for 2011, and sold out 15 of the 17 shows on their debut headline Australian tour in October/November 2010. They have toured Australia with Mumford & Sons, Laura Marling, Angus & Julia Stone, The Hungry Kids of Hungary, Lisa Mitchell and in April 2010 they toured the UK with Laura Marling. Laura Marling also used Boy & Bear's rhythm section as part of her backing band for the entire tour, which included Europe. In November and December 2010 Boy & Bear performed a capacity showcase at the Mercury Lounge in New York City and they completed their first headline (eight-date) tour in the UK with sold out performances in Oxford, Brighton and London. In April 2011, the band recorded their debut album at Blackbird Studios in Nashville with 10 time Grammy award winning producer Joe Chiccarelli (My Morning Jacket, The Shins, Elton John, U2, Beck, Frank Zappa, The White Stripes, Young the Giant, The Strokes).

## **Open Source Software Development/Artist Co-Management Analogy**

While co-management and team management are not new to the music industry and have previously been discussed by Rogan (1988) and others, new technologies such as the Internet, and all this enables, present artist managers with new possibilities regarding the potential of international co-management networks. An analogy can be drawn here between co-management networks and open source software development. As Jarvis (2009) notes:

Distributed armies of programmers created the most important software underlying the internet, from the Linux operating system that powers most internet servers ...

While label services have declined and this has led to the relative centralisation of responsibilities with the artist manager, the increase in workload to which this has led has also been exacerbated by the fragmentation of the media landscape. The paradigm shift from a mass-market mentality to a niche market one has led to the need for a management structure that works in the new paradigm, and an international network of co-managers is a structure that could work. Networks of open source software developers are not chaotic, they are instead examples of elegant organization at work and therefore, in a similar way, an international network of co-managers could be a way to address the fact that ideas regarding song writing and record production, amongst the other areas of an artist's career that managers' oversee, come from everywhere.

Contrary to the common misperception, open-source projects are not anarchies. They have leadership and structure. Furthermore, a network of co-managers is potentially more efficient than a corporation. Coase (1937) reasoned that firms exist and grow when internal friction is less than external friction (cited in Jarvis, 2009). That is, when it is easier and cheaper to deal with insiders than with outsiders. In the contemporary music business, co-management networks exist because it is easier to deal with outsiders than to have a cumbersome corporate structure:

In a networked world, it's easier for us to work with outside people than inside people ... agencies and other companies ... will look more like Hollywood studios, where 80 percent of what goes into a movie comes from outsiders ... Google doesn't change just the essence of advertising. It changes the essence of the company. The network is becoming more efficient than the corporation. (Ibid)

The primary goal of artist management companies is to build platforms or networks that help artists to prosper. An international network of co-managers would expand this 'platform'. Record companies too are realising that growth will come less from owning assets inside one company and amassing risk there, than from enabling others in a network to build their own value, reducing their cost, and sharing the risk. Therefore they too are seeking to expand their networks by becoming involved in all aspects of their artists' careers.

The Internet offers new opportunities for managerial talent and new stages for voices that could not emerge in the old systems of control. Artist management and co-management involves building a platform or network that artists can use to create and disseminate their work. However, for such a network of artist managers to operate efficiently and smoothly, consistency in relation to best practice and conduct needs to be achieved.

A code of conduct for the IMMF concerns how this platform or network functions. Openness and transparency are directly linked to notions of best practice and conduct as artist management practices are now located in a new paradigm in which we are witnessing the growth of the trust industry (Ibid). A network of co-managers would need to be a system of trust:

Google found value in trust. Others are creating systems of trust as the core of their businesses. Facebook helps us build lists of those we know and trust. eBay turned internet commerce's disadvantage – fear of being robbed by merchants we do not know – into a unique opportunity by becoming the platform for trusted transactions of physical goods among strangers.

The code of conduct for the IMMF would provide a reference point for the establishment of the mutual trust that would be needed to realise the potential of a network of co-managers. This could help to facilitate a practice of open innovation within such a broad network of social interactions. Such a network is needed to build musical careers because the idea for a new product may spring from the mind of an individual, but only a collective effort can carry that idea through prototyping and launch (Ibid) and the paradigm shift from mass marketing to niche marketing requires a management structure that can service the many different niches.

Furthermore, the Internet has the effect of making people and companies more accountable and transparent anyway, whether they chose to be or not. This is because the voice of the consumer can be amplified through the practice of blogging (for example) and because there are now any number of means for a dissatisfied consumer to broadcast their views. In the case of artist managers, the consumer of their services is the artist and therefore without any consistency in relation to best practice and conduct that a code would help to enable, the artist manager is open to critical attack and they would not be able to easily defend themselves because without a code of conduct there would be no reference point for them to refer to in relation to best practice and conduct.

## Research Results

Artist co-management is very delicate and can be difficult. The decentralised nature of co-management brings with it a number of pitfalls that need to be addressed. The establishment of co-management networks has great potential for addressing the issue of a lack of management service provision. New technologies such as Google Docs can increase this potential through the way in which they can lead to the establishment of international 'virtual offices'. However, Keith Harris<sup>1>2</sup> (2010) noted that the following pitfalls exist:

On the one hand it sounds like a great idea. But on the other hand, what you are at risk of ending up with is what I like to call a race to the bottom. For instance if you are negotiating something and the people who are doing the negotiating know that the manager over here is much more of a soft touch then they will end up negotiating with the manager they feel they can get the best deal out of, and also, from a commissioning point of view, there will be an incentive on each manager to get the deal done because they will almost certainly commission what they bring in. And unfortunately to get the deal done you work to get it done quicker, so you make the offer cheaper. So hence you get a race to the bottom of having five or six different managers and the artist ends up getting the cheapest deal.

One way to address the issue of how to share the management commissions is to co-management for the world. This has the effect of providing an incentive for the co-managers to do the best deals for the artist internationally because they share, and profit from, having the same global vision. Two managers who are managing one artist who is successful in three major territories can be more profitable for the managers than if they were to individually manage three artists in their home territory. It also means that the artist managers have a competitive advantage; they can move faster and be more creative because the artist-manager ratio is two to one. This however does not address the aforementioned issue of opponents in a negotiation figuring out which manager has the "softer touch". Co-managers need to address this issue through communicating with one another. While co-management does require more communication between the managers, if they are co-managing for the world and communicating efficiently then the issues Harris outlined can be negated.

Interestingly, Danny Goldberg<sup>3</sup> (2010) noted that his management firm co-manages artists internally and that contemporary artist management necessarily involves co-management or team management:

Every artist is different, that's one thing I can say without equivocation. Some artists have somebody in their life who has a particular skill set, sometimes its somebody who goes on the road with them and has a greater role than just the road manager who's an appropriate co-manager sometimes – you know I look at some of the people who work here as co-managers of artists because it's a team effort and as people develop seniority here they get financial incentives that are the equivalent of being a co-manager. I think management is more and more of a team effort than just an individual effort because the services you have to provide are in most instances hard for one individual to do. However you characterize it, I mean all of our clients in one way or another are co-managed in the sense that they're not just dealing with me they're dealing with 5 other people ... Again, at the beginning of a career, that's not the most practical option for an artist but over time I think that's a model that works, especially when dealing with international careers, you know, its hard to be in two places at the same time in different time zones. It's really very difficult for one individual to do it all.

Rowan Brand and I have found a simple but elegant solution to this problem. With our client Boy & Bear we have been somewhat of an international 'tag-team'. We have both been able to travel from Sydney Australia to be based in New York for

approximately 6 months at a time each. We have swapped places four times which means that by mid-2011 we will have had a management presence in New York for approximately 2 years. By co-managing for the world we have been able to double our pool of contacts and while one of us may be able to establish a relationship, the other manager is able to follow up and manage that relationship. Working in different time zones means that the management service provision is provided for more hours of the day. One misconception about co-management is that it does not work because the decision making process is not centralised. However, decentralised decision-making can work well. Furthermore, artist management is a creative process, as Sawyer explains: "it's group genius that generates break through innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (2007)." Just as a band of musicians is often said to be greater than the sum of its parts, so too can a band of co-managers. While there can be tension, if the right people are chosen to constitute the group then this tension can be creative.

Split territories co-management and co-management for the world are quite different. Co-management for the world involves collaborating across all aspects of an artist's career in all territories in which they are active, while split-territories co-management literally involves carving up the world between managers. Angus Vail, a US based music business manager, noted that:

Co-management is such a difficult thing. We had one situation where we had three managers involved. We had a West coast guy, an East coast guy and an Australian manager, and it turned out to be a disaster because nobody knew who was doing what and things were just falling through the cracks all the time. It's a really difficult thing. Co-management is a really difficult thing, especially for bands that are coming from overseas, you almost need one, but so often I have seen that it doesn't work. It's a really, really hard thing.

Co-management for the world works better because the managers are able to realise the potential of group creativity and group flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) coined the term 'flow' to describe a particular heightened state of consciousness and discovered that extremely creative people are at their peak when they experience a unified flowing from one moment to the next "in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future (cited in Sawyer, 2007)." Basing his research on Csikszentmihalyi's seminal work, Sawyer (2007) discovered that improvising groups attain a collective state of mind that he calls 'group flow': "Group flow is a peak experience, a group performing at its top level of ability." He notes that the key to improvised innovation is managing a paradox: "Establishing a goal that provides a focus for the team – just enough of one so that team members can tell when they move closer to a solution – but one that's open-ended enough for problem-solving creativity to emerge (Ibid)." Decentralised decision-making is necessary because participants in the group must always be willing to defer to the emergent flow of the group.

It is also necessary because group flow increases when people feel autonomy, competence and relatedness. It is important to note here that the role of the artist manager is to guide the artist or band towards a series of informed decisions. Artist management involves consensus decision-making and/or decentralised decision processes because a group of people is necessarily involved. Sawyer notes that: "managers can participate in groups in flow, but they have to participate in the same way as everyone else by listening closely and granting autonomy and authority to the group's emergent decision processes (2007)." Co-management for the world can work well if the conditions for group flow are realised. Not only does this form of co-management address issues relating to workloads and different time zones, it enables managerial creativity to emerge through conversation.

Group flow requires constant communication and according to Sawyer it flourishes when people follow the first rule of improvisational acting, they: "listen closely to what's being said; accept it fully; and then extend and build on it (2007)." Interestingly, differences in style are also necessary for group flow as is a certain amount of tension because if everyone functions identically and shares the same habits of communicating: "nothing new and unexpected will ever emerge because group members don't need to pay close attention to what the others are doing, and they don't continually have to update their understanding of what's going on (Sawyer, 2007)."

For these reasons, open artist management platforms or networks would arguably promote innovation and diversity more effectively than the proprietary ones controlled by record companies. However, by drawing an analogy between the architecture of the iPhone platform and that of international co-management networks, the more complicated reality is that the closed

architecture of the iPhone has contributed to its facilitation of innovation in important ways (Johnson, 2010)<sup>4</sup>. Consumers are willing to experiment with new apps because they know they have been screened for viruses, mal-ware and other stability problems as part of the app store's approval process (Ibid). In a similar way the code of conduct would give co-managers a finite number of reference points for best practice and conduct in different territories. This would help artists to 'trust' the network because the behaviour of the participants in the management of their career is self-regulated by the IMMF. Having consistency in relation to best practices and conduct would hypothetically enable international artist managers to meet up and work together in a similar way to the way in which the iPhone's platform has facilitated innovation:

The fact that the iPhone platform runs exclusively on Apple hardware helps developers innovate, because it means they have a finite number of hardware configurations to surmount. Developers building apps for, say, Windows Mobile have to create programs that work on hundreds of different devices, each with its own set of hardware features. But a developer who wants to build a game that uses an accelerometer for control, for example, knows that every iPhone OS device in the world contains an accelerometer. (Ibid)

In a similar way the following code of conduct would give co-managers a finite number of reference points for best practice and conduct in different territories. This would help artists to 'trust' the network because the behaviour of the participants in the management of their career is self-regulated by the IMMF. The following 'Aspirational' Code of Conduct, that was developed for and by the IMMF, is a broad outline of conduct:

### **(Aspirational) Code Of Conduct Of The IMMF**

Music Managers must aspire, at all times and to the best of their ability to:

1. Devote sufficient time so as to properly fulfill the requirements of good management in the interest of the artists as they understand them;
2. Not knowingly act in any fashion which is detrimental to their clients' interests;
3. Conduct themselves in a manner which is professional and ethical and which abides by best business practices and methods accepted in their country.
4. Conduct all of their affairs with their clients in a transparent manner;
5. Protect and promote the interest of their clients to the highest possible standard;
6. Exercise the rights and powers implied or granted to them by their clients in a written agreement for the client's best interest as the manager understands them.
7. Ensure that no conflict of interest shall infect the discharge of their duties towards their clients.

Music Managers shall respect the integrity of other managers in their relationships with their artists and not actively interfere with same except directly with the manager. If approached by an artist who was previously the client of another manager, a manager shall endeavour to confirm that the artist has fulfilled his, her, or their legal obligations to the previous manager before entering into a management relationship with the artist.

Where a manager acts as publisher, agent, record producer or in any other capacity as well as a manager for his, her, or their clients, they shall declare such interests so that the artist has the ability to determine for themselves if they feel it constitutes a conflict of interest.

Where a manager acts in any other capacity as well as manager for his, her or their clients where such activity ordinarily involves the charging of fees or commissions, the manager shall not charge multiple fees or commissions, instead charging either the agreed management commission alone or the fee or commission usually charged for that other activity and forgoing their management commission. Where the manager elects to charge a fee or commission other than the management commission they shall first gain the consent of their artist.

Managers must ensure that all monetary transactions made on behalf of or in the interest of the client and all books of account and records must always be reasonably open for the inspection of the artist or their appointed representative.

Where a manager engages an artist under a written agreement, the manager shall endeavour to ensure that their client seeks and receives expert legal advice on the terms of such agreement before signing it.

Managers will endeavour to keep themselves well informed of current events and legislation, both national and international, as it pertains to the proper exploitation of their client's career and the proper administration of their client's business.

## Conclusion

This article has drawn an analogy between open-source software development and artist co-management networks, networks that form a platform for the facilitation of artists' song writing and record production efforts. While co-management and team management are not new to the music industry, new technologies such as the Internet, and all this enables, present artist managers with new possibilities regarding the potential of international co-management networks. The code of conduct for the IMMF would provide a reference point for the establishment of the mutual trust that would be needed to realise the potential of a network of co-managers. This could help to facilitate a practice of open innovation within such a broad network of social interactions.

The argument here is that traditional split-territories co-management deals are more fallible than co-management agreements that involve co-management for the world. This is because the latter is more likely to generate group creativity and group flow than the former because it generates a culture of collaboration that is based on flexibility, connection, and conversation and makes improvised innovation standard business practice. Such a culture seemed unnatural to some of the artist managers interviewed for this article because improvisation seems to imply that the co-managers do not have a plan and many believed that decentralised decision-making is dysfunctional. Many experienced artist managers have generated theories based on their experience, experience which has its roots in previous decades when adaptability and innovation were not as important as they are today because the sale of recorded music was a more profitable endeavour. There is a need for new research into artist management practices that will generate theories that will help us in today's rapidly changing music economy in which the relatively stable monopolies that major record labels had are increasingly rare and new technologies are opening up formerly stable sectors of the industry to radical new competition.

Artist co-management for the world is an increasingly viable business model due to the advent of new technologies such as Google Docs and Skype. This is beneficial because having different co-managers can lead to the development of more analogies, which are essential to collaborative creativity, as these are more common when participants bring their various experiences to a group. Conversation between managers is also key: talking about building a global career with a co-manager leads to richer and more effective management solutions than solitary artist managers are able to generate. The most creative conversations concerning an artist's management are like improvisational theatre dialogues; each manager reinterprets what was said before and builds on it in a new direction so that unexpected creativity emerges from the group.

## About The Author

Guy Morrow  
Macquarie University, Sydney Australia  
[guy.morrow@mq.edu.au](mailto:guy.morrow@mq.edu.au)

## Notes

1 Keith began work in the record industry in 1974. The first record company for which he worked was a small independent UK label called Transatlantic records. The label represented mainly British folk musicians but also distributed the Blue Note and Milestone Jazz labels. In 1976 he joined EMI Records where he initially worked for several in-house EMI labels in the promotions department. These labels included Rocket where he worked on the Elton John album 'Blue Moves', Fantasy, Ariola

and EMI International. He then joined Motown which was an EMI licensed label. He worked for Motown for two years ending up as General Manager for the label. During this period at the label he worked with artists such as Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, The Commodores, Rick James, The Supremes, Thelma Houston and Stevie Wonder. He left Motown in 1978 and moved to Los Angeles to work with Stevie Wonder and became operations manager for Stevie's companies. On his return to the UK in 1982 he formed his own management company and has been involved in the management of various UK based artists since. He has managed Junior Giscombe, Junior Tucker, Paul Johnson, & Omar. Keith managed Lynden David Hall until his recent death, and still represents Stevie Wonder. He is a Senior Fellow of the University of Westminster school of music film and fashion. He is a former Chairman of the MMF, the Chairman of Musictank and he is also the chairman of the African and Caribbean Music Circuit, a music touring organisation funded by the Arts Council of England. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts (FRSA). Keith is now Director of Performer Affairs at PPL. (Source: <https://www.musictank.co.uk/resources/speaker-biographies/keith-harris-keith-harris-music-ltd-musictank-chairman-ppl-director>).

2 All comments attributed to Keith Harris, Danny Goldberg and Angus Vail were taken from personal correspondence with the author conducted in April and May 2010.

3 Over a period of 40 years, Goldberg has held senior executive positions with a number of major and independent record companies (including Led Zeppelin's Swan Song Records), managed artists from Nirvana to the Beastie Boys, worked in film, and is also an author. He is currently President of Gold Village Entertainment (GVE) and manages roster of artists including Steve Earle, Allison Moorer, David Broza, Rickie Lee Jones, The Hives, and Tom Morello.

4 New York Times, Sunday Business p.7 11 April 2010, Steven Johnson.

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# Journal on the Art of Record Production

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### Editorial

## Change And Continuity: Transformations, Innovations And Tensions In The Art Of Record Production

Justin Morey, Robert Davis

There is a strong probability that the last conference you went to was the best you have been to, at least that is, until the next one. The sixth annual Art of Record Production Conference which we had the privilege to host was very much a case in point. With a record number of papers submitted to the conference it proved to be a stimulating event building on the thinking and experience of five previous conferences while opening up new avenues of thought for our field. In this way, there was an element of continuity between this and previous conferences while, at the same time new presenters provided fresh perspectives on the issues concerning those of us interested in the Art of Record Production. Change and continuity is an inherent feature of any annual conference and the same theme provides the focus for the papers in this edition of JARP.

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### Conference Papers

## Celluloid Heroes: Fictional Truths Of Recording Studio Practice On Film

Alan Williams

In the post-war era, many Hollywood films have utilized the recording studio as the setting for decisive dramatic action. For most viewers, these scenes serve to advance the plot. But for aspiring musicians, glimpses into the recording studio provide access to an otherwise closed world, a place where the music they know and love is created. When the protagonists struggle, their lack of experience is revealed, just as the hopeful musicians in the audience fear would occur to them in such a foreign environment. And when stars onscreen overcome their fears, the audience experiences the moment vicariously – their idol's triumph is their own triumph.

Film representations of recording studio practice are important precisely for this reason. The actions depicted and the narrative tropes enacted on screen served to help formulate the novice's conception of recording practice. Such movie scenes serve as a cornerstone for recording studio mythological narratives, and result in a number of assumptions regarding conflict and power struggle among recording studio participants. Inspired and intimidated by the images of studio work they have digested from

adolescence through early adulthood, many recording participants utilize practices and enact mythologies first encountered through film representation. This paper [presented as a video] examines the formulation of film narrative tropes and mythologies, and the impact of these mythologies on recording studio practice.

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## **Creation Of Media Based Learning Material For Audio And Music Technology**

**Dr Rob Toulson**

Audio and Music Technology courses have become well subscribed in UK Higher Education, but, being a rather modern academic field, these courses have not benefited from substantial research, analysis and development of learning and teaching strategies. Furthermore, a successful career in this industry relies on a number of cross-disciplinary academic skills coupled with entrepreneurial ability and professional experience, which makes effective learning and teaching a considerable challenge. This article explores the particular education strategies which can effectively promote deep learning in Audio and Music Technology. The article further describes developed media based learning materials for assisting teaching in Audio and Music Technology and discusses their merits for enhancing the student learning experience.

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## **Remixing Modernism: Re-Imagining The Music Of Berg, Schoenberg And Bartók In Our Time**

**Paul Draper, Stephen Emmerson**

This paper examines the recent recording of solo piano music composed in 1908. The project offers the premise that there are liberating and research-worthy possibilities for combining the two traditions of Western art music performance and contemporary sound manipulation as a compelling language to amplify artistic interpretations. This challenges a predominant approach to the recording of Classical music which promotes the illusion of capturing a concert experience and that the production decisions appear to be transparent. The paper concludes that these new recordings offer a promising route for audiences to experience the music as a virtual artwork in its own right, where the creators interrupt production conventions and otherwise spontaneous assumptions. In documenting these processes in an ongoing way, the authors seek to contribute to the understanding of artistic practice as research within the contemporary academic landscape.

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## **Primary Sources In Music Production Research And Education: Using The Drexel University Audio Archives As An Institutional Model**

**Toby Seay**

With Drexel University in Philadelphia acquiring the Sigma Sound Studios Collection in June 2005, an opportunity arose to establish this resource as a basis for research into modern music production techniques, recording technology and archival techniques as they relate to multi-track audio recordings. Sigma Sound Studios was the paramount recording studio in Philadelphia from 1968 to 2003 and was instrumental in the creation of what became known as the 'Sound of Philadelphia'. Using this example as a model, this paper will outline how an educational institution can best preserve and use multi-track collections for music production research and will include examples from the collection as well as discuss the complications of keeping a commercial recording collection.

The Sigma Sound Studios Collection consists of 6119 magnetic tape-based recordings in twelve different recording formats. These differing formats represent the evolution of modern music production. The collection starts in the late 1960's with analog 4-track and progresses through the 1990's to digital 48-track. With this breadth of formats, it is possible to study how advances in technology may have influenced the creative process of musicians, engineers and producers as they performed and adapted their art. Researchers of musicology and popular music will find having access to such a collection a valuable resource for the study of music, music technology and culture. With changes in the music industry and recording media, this paper will show how having primary sources for research can enhance the connection between music production and music technology.

**Issue 5 | Conference Papers |**

## **The Cultural Economy Of Sound: Reinventing Technology In Indian Popular Cinema**

**Carlo Nardi**

Scholarship on record production has largely neglected non-Western music practices and their products. In particular, the countries in which most technological devices are invented and patented still exert hegemony over the music market and over discourse about music; consequently, alternative sound aesthetics are often disregarded. More recently, ethnomusicology has paid some attention to marginal areas of production, especially in relation to digital technology; in order to fill this gap in the scholarship, however, it is necessary not only to recognise the role of user agency but also to acknowledge that technology is better understood as a process rather than an object. For this purpose, I will focus on the use of the Clavioline by the Indian musician Kalyanji in the film 'Nagin' (1954), as an instance in which the potential of an instrument is redefined according to local aesthetics, arguing that regional record production practices are more noteworthy than conventional theories about them seem to imply. More precisely, I will analyse the microeconomic context in which Kalyanji operated, and then propose a cultural explanation of his aesthetic choices from the point of view of the

participants (desi) and within the specific mode of production of the Hindi film.

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## **Adult MP3 Users' Perspectives On Past And Present Consumer Audio Technology: Does The Music Still Matter?**

**Heidi Gerber**

Now that MP3 has established itself as the primary means by which music fans consume their programming, what shifts in consumers' perceptions about the listening process, if any, have occurred? Do today's listening experiences with MP3 technology differ from listening experiences of the past?

This exploratory study investigates adult audio consumer culture using in-depth qualitative interviews. Adult MP3 users who have used older audio technologies (such as phonograph, 8-track, cassette, and compact disc) discussed their past and present listening habits. The study found that adult MP3 users perceived today's listening experiences as similar to those they had with older consumer technologies.

The paper also introduces the new theoretical concept of "experiential peripherals," which refers to experiences connected to but not directly involved with the listening function in audio consumption.

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## **'Working Out The Split': Creative Collaboration And Assignment Of Copyright Across Differing Musical Worlds.**

**Justin Morey, Phillip McIntyre**

It has been theorised (e.g. Hennion 1990, Wicke 1990, Zak 2001), and there is mounting empirical evidence (e.g. Davis 2008, McIntyre 2008, Moorefield 2005, Howlett 2008), that record production is a highly collaborative process. When records are made producers, engineers, musicians, programmers and A&R personnel all cooperate in a creative process that can be characterised using a number of models (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, Paulus and Nijstad, 2003). Songwriters, however, are an ever present but little mentioned presence in the studio, although their work is crucial to studio output.

It can be claimed that the development of technological possibilities within the studio has afforded collaborative songwriters an increasing variety of creative methods, and this has led in turn to a range of views concerning the kind of contributions that can be considered to be songwriting among music creators. Calculating the 'split' or financial remuneration for the work involved, then, depends upon a set of complex commercial, legal, moral, social, cultural, ideological and discursive factors coupled with certain common sense myths. This paper presents empirical evidence of how current practice compares to some of the older models of creativity that still appear to predominate in the promotion and consumption of recordings.

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## **Sound At Source: The Creative Practice Of Re-Heading, Dampening And Drum Tuning For The Contemporary Metal Genre**

**Mark Mynett**

A review of academic literature on drum recording and production will reveal significant discussion of microphone choice and placement. However, there is little presented that specifically relates to the studio production of contemporary metal, and even less concerning the concepts and techniques to achieve the genres drum sound at source. This can be problematic due to the often dense and complex performances involved, and the very specific weight, clarity and definition required of these drum tones.

This paper will firstly focus on the physicality of drums, their components and their impact on timbre. The nature of drumheads, re-heading, dampening and tuning, which is at the core of the drum sound producers endeavor to capture, will then be explored. Discussion will be provided throughout as to broad principles that can be applied to gain the most appropriate tonalities, at source, for the genre.

Drum tuning can therefore be seen as an art in itself and its importance cannot be overlooked, as even the best quality drum kit is still going to sound poor unless properly tuned.

This body of work will reflect the author's nine years experience producing within contemporary metal production, including releases through Sony and Universal, and working alongside some of the most successful and respected producers from the genre, including Colin Richardson, Andy Sneap and Jens Bogren.

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## **Virtual Oasis – Thoughts And Experiences About Online Based Music Production And**

## Collaborative Writing Techniques

**Mike Hajimichael aka Haji Mike**

This paper explores the dynamics of online music production through a case study analysis of the CD release 'Virtual Oasis' (2010), made entirely online by producer/author Dub Caravan, and poet/author, Haji Mike. It will be argued that for this process to develop and succeed the authors used the tool of the Internet to engage in continuous, constructive rhetorical and creative exchange/dialogue. This happened over a period of 8 months in 2010, which eventually led to meeting physically for the first time and touring live in Cyprus and UK. Such collaborations are now occurring throughout the world as a by-product of the Web 2.0 and virtual digital audio revolutions which have impacted music production and the music industry world-wide. While it is made clear one case study is not all embracing methodologically, it is argued that this kind of ethnographic work which focuses more on the actual 'culture of production' (rather than the production of culture) is important in understanding key changes and shifts in processes of music creation and communication online.

**Issue 5 | Conference Papers |**

## Fine Tuning Percussion – A New Educational Approach

**Phillip Richardson, Robert Toulson**

The tuning of acoustic drums rarely has a formal education method yet the quality of drum sound can have a significant effect on the success of a recording project. Drum tuning is a largely subjective matter and is often considered something of a 'dark art' amongst emerging drummers.

One popular method involved in drum tuning is to 'clear' or 'equalise' the drumhead, to ensure an even response by tapping the drumhead around the perimeter of the drum and checking that a consistent sound is achieved at all locations. This technique is discussed in a number of popular texts and magazine articles, but to date has not been evaluated in a scientific context. Thus, no formal or quantifiable method of educating a technician in clearing the drumhead has previously existed. It is shown that it is possible to quantify how uniform the drumhead tuning is via simple acoustic analysis; i.e. with a drumstick and microphone. Furthermore, a drumhead with a non-uniform response exhibits beat-frequencies, producing an uneven profile to the drum response decay envelope.

It is apparent that while many expert musicians have the ability to tune drums by ear, an intelligent tuning aid provides benefits to those who are still learning their trade. The visual feedback produced by the novel and bespoke analysis software used in this paper can help musicians and producers make more informed choices with regards to their drum sound. Furthermore, the developed methods for drum tuning allow the development of a standardised education method for assisting and accelerating the learning of this skill.

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## The Effect Of Spatial Treatment Of Music On Listener's Emotional Arousal

**Michael Fletcher**

An experiment was carried out to discover whether altering the spatial attributes of recorded music resulted in a measurable difference in the Electro-Dermal Activity (EDA), and therefore the emotional arousal, of listeners. A recording of Schubert's Ständchen D920a was made in a recording studio. Two mixes differing only in their spatial treatment were produced from this recording. These mixes were presented to a sample of listeners under experimental conditions, in a repeated measures design experiment. The EDA of the listeners was recorded. Statistical comparisons of the number of EDA change events, and the strength of EDA events at cluster points was made. This comparisons failed to demonstrate statistical significance, however the results were encouraging enough to warrant a rerunning of the experiment with altered methodology to compensate for ordering effects which contributed to large standard deviations in the statistical analysis. Analysis of the musical triggers for EDA changes helped support results from previous studies on the musical sources of the chills/thrills response.

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## Collaborative Songwriting – The Ontology Of Negotiated Creativity In Popular Music Studio Practice

**Joe Bennett**

The relationship between songwriting practice and song product is an under-explored one in popular musicology, still less so in a studio-based environment. Our research sources are accordingly limited, drawing mainly on first-hand retrospective interviews with artist-songwriters, who may have an incentive for self-mythologising, or at least romanticising their songwriting methods to preserve fan perceptions of authenticity. There are no available real-time observations of the collaborative processes involved in creating popular song, despite the huge economic and artistic successes of songwriting partnerships throughout the history of our field. Sloboda (1985) identifies the reluctance displayed by composers of any sort to participate in detailed analyses of their processes; these difficulties are exacerbated further by some songwriters' apparently deliberate mystification of their craft. Attempts to analyse processes of musical composition have generally focused on single-composer models (Nash 1955); even studies relating to collaboration remain concerned with instrumental art music (Hayden & Windsor 2007) or educationally-based observation subjects (Burnard & Younker 2002).

This paper builds on the single-songwriter research of McIntyre (2009) and the theoretical definitions of creativity provided by Csikszentmihalyi (1996). It explores, through

analysis of 'hits' and examples of emerging practitioner-based research, the inferences that can be made by comparing historical and current songwriting practice with the finished product, and attempts to identify commonly-used collaborative models, including a discussion of the effect of the presence (or absence) of studio technologies as mediator of the songwriting process.

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## **Modes Of Production, Modes Of Listening: Alternative Realities And The Sonic Divide**

**Robert Davis**

Bob Katz suggested that while the 20th century concentrated on the 'medium' our 21st century concerns should more profitably focus on the 'message'. Discourse around the medium and the message have focused and polarised debate on sound recording since the 1960s. This paper continues this debate in the context of the tensions that develop not only in the processes of creating a recording, but in the reception of the recorded product.

The discussion draws on semiotic theory to explore the nature of the message, how it is communicated and what it means. In doing so, the paper formulates ways of thinking about the codes involved not only in the production process but also in their reception. The discussion looks at the tensions created through extensions to the sonic bandwidth, especially frequency, volume and timbre, and modes of listening. From a semiotic perspective, the paper asks if these tensions are representative of codal confusion, competence or indifference and draws on concepts of reality and hyper-reality to provide a way of understanding our engagement with recorded music.

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## **Artist Co-Management For The World: Building A Platform For The Facilitation Of Song Writing And Record Production**

**Guy Morrow**

This article draws an analogy between open-source software development and artist co-management networks. While co-management and team management are not new to the music industry, new technologies such as the Internet, and all this enables, present artist managers with new possibilities regarding the potential of international co-management networks. These networks can be used to facilitate artists' song writing and record production efforts. The argument here is that traditional split-territories co-management deals are more fallible than co-management agreements that involve co-management for the world. This is because the latter is more likely to generate group creativity and group flow than the former because it generates a culture of collaboration that is based on flexibility, connection, and conversation and makes improvised innovation standard business practice.

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## **Experiencing Musical Composition In The DAW: The Software Interface As Mediator Of The Musical Idea**

**Mark Marrington**

My paper discusses the effect of the DAW environment upon student attitudes to musical composition with reference to pedagogical research that I have conducted over the past two years at Leeds College of Music. I focus in particular upon nature of the graphical interfaces provided by certain DAW platforms, considering their relationship with the 'traditional' media they are often modeled upon, and their impact upon the conceptualization of musical ideas. Much of the discussion is focused upon the musical thought processes that users of DAWs bring a priori to their chosen platform and how contact with the software both modifies these ideas and impacts upon creative flow. The issues arising from the paper have interesting implications for ideologies of composition teaching per se and aim to raise debate in regard to the special challenge presented by new technologies to received ideas in this area.

**Issue 5 | Conference Papers |**

## **Jazz/Hip-Hop Hybridities And The Recording Studio**

**Dr. Justin A. Williams**

Since the first jazz/hip-hop collaborations in the early 1980s (Max Roach w/Fab 5 Freddy, Herbie Hancock w/Grandmiser D.ST), and the flowering of the so-called 'jazz rap' subgenre in the early 1990s (A Tribe Called Quest, Digable Planets, Guru's Jazzmatazz), a new generation of young jazz musicians have responded to this unique marriage of African-based genres. My paper engages with two twenty-first century jazz musicians who attempt to merge jazz and hip-hop styles in strikingly divergent ways: U.S. trumpeter Russell Gunn and U.K. saxophonist Soweto Kinch, two contemporary artists that fuse hip-hop and jazz but contrast in terms of recording studio practices, marketing/promotion, and their intra- and extra-musical discourses on genre. For example, Russell Gunn adopts a style of jazz that incorporates hip-hop, dance music, and overtly celebrates the recording studio as musical instrument. The use of trumpet and rap vocal effects demonstrates what I call 'studio consciousness', aspects of a recording which draw attention to its studio source rather than stage an illusion of 'liveness'. Kinch, in contrast, arguably does stage a form of 'liveness' on his first

album *Conversations with the Unseen* (2003), whether the individual tracks reflect jazz or hip-hop. Using this particular comparative case study, I propose that an investigation of studio techniques may be an additional way to categorize and analyse genre and its fusions in popular music.

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## Microphone Practice On Bon Iver's "Skinny Love"

**Amanda Lewis**

"Record making is a recent art form," writes Albin Zak (2001: 26), "and many of its artistic roles belong to no prior tradition – we know what songwriters do, but what about sound engineers?" This paper attempts to answer Zak's question, if only in part. Specifically, it addresses microphone practice, and the role it plays in the creation of the sonic character of a record. The analytic model used in my master's thesis, titled *Towards a Model for Analyzing of Microphone Practice on Rock Recordings* (Lewis, 2010) will provide a structure with which to outline and analyze a case study of the microphone techniques used on Bon Iver's *For Emma, Forever Ago* (2007).

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## Reducing Comb Filtering On Different Musical Instruments Using Time Delay Estimation

**Alice Clifford, Josh Reiss**

Comb filtering occurs when a signal and a delayed version of the same signal are mixed, for example when the signals from two microphones reproducing a single audio source are summed. This effect can be reduced by applying a compensating delay so there is ultimately no delay between the audio signals. This can be made automatic by using time delay estimation. This paper explores the effect on the accuracy of the time delay estimation when using bandwidth limited source signals, such as a variety of musical instruments with different frequency content. It is found that the smaller the bandwidth of the source signal, the less accurate the time delay estimation and comb filter reduction.

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## Lateral Dynamics Processing In Experimental Hip Hop: Flying Lotus, Madlib, Oh No, J-Dilla And Prefuse 73

**Jay Hodgson**

This paper is part of a broader ongoing effort to elucidate signal processing as musical communication. In it, I draw an aesthetic distinction between three species of lateral dynamics processing which regularly recur in modern experimental hip hop, specifically, side-chain pumping, ducking and envelope following. I explain how these techniques relate on a procedural level, even as they serve different musical functions; and, finally, I consider why so little is written about these techniques in current research on popular music recording practice.

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## Interviews

### Interview With Nick Blagona

**Ted Peacock**

Nick Blagona is an extraordinary engineer/producer with an impressive list of credits. If it were the practice of the music industry to mention the technicians who worked recording sessions in the 1960s, his list of credits would be even longer. In the following interview, Nick provides insight into a life dedicated to music and technology. Onwards, from his first four-track analog tape session with Tom Jones, to when he assumed ownership, and took over the role of chief engineer, at Le Studio in Quebec, Nick's career has evolved alongside the technological changes of the recording industry. Throughout this interview, Nick unpacks an implicit understanding of sound engineering and music production garnered from professional experiences in Britain, Canada, and the United States. His stories reveal how a natural affinity with sound and music has allowed him to make great recordings by adapting engineering/production processes in response to the demands of artistic diversity, communication media, and industrial change. He describes insight gained from producers Tom Dowd, Phil Ramone and Roy Thomas Baker, and from working with the likes of Deep Purple, Nazareth, Cat Stevens, The Bee Gees, and The Police.

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Wendy Page

**Dr. Richard James Burgess**

Interview conducted July 6, 2004. Originally published at [http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Wendy\\_Page\\_Interview.html](http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Wendy_Page_Interview.html) How long have you been producing? I've been producing for ten years. How did you get started as a producer? I was in a band in the U.K. called Skin Games. We produced our own tracks and co-produced songs with other producers. We felt we had [...]

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Jack Richardson

**Jay Hodgson, Mark Collins**

Jack Richardson remains one of the most celebrated producers in Canadian history. His work with The Guess Who in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the best-selling single of 1970, namely, The Guess Who's "American Woman," which outsold releases by the likes of The Beatles at the time. His credits also include Bob Seger's Night Moves, Alice Cooper's Love It To Death, Muscle of Love and Killer, Kim Mitchell's eponymous debut, Max Webster's Universal Juveniles, Poco's A Good Feelin' To Know & Crazy Eyes, and Badfinger's Say No More, among others. He also dedicated an enormous amount of time and effort to music production & engineering pedagogy, having played a crucial role in the establishment of Fanshawe College's celebrated Music Industry Arts program in London, Ontario. We caught up with Jack at his home in London last November. Jack recently passed away, in early May of 2011. As far as the author is aware, this was his final interview.

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Peter Collins

**Dr. Richard James Burgess**

Interview conducted April 16, 2004. Originally published at [http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Peter\\_Collins\\_Interview.html](http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Peter_Collins_Interview.html) What do you look for when you are evaluating a potential project? I guess I look for an element of originality, whether I think it offers something that is not already out there, something that's going to be fun to record. That's a pretty broad brief. [...]

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Linda Perry

**Dr. Richard James Burgess**

Interview conducted July 31, 2004. Originally published at [http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Linda\\_Perry\\_Interview.html](http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Linda_Perry_Interview.html) What do you look for when evaluating a potential project? I need to have a connection with the artist, a feeling in my heart that our collaboration will be special. It is the artist that inspires the creativity, so it is very important to have a [...]

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Lauren Christy Of The Matrix

**Dr. Richard James Burgess**

Interview conducted June 14, 2004. Originally published at [http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Lauren\\_Christy\\_of\\_The\\_Matrix\\_Interview.html](http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Lauren_Christy_of_The_Matrix_Interview.html) Did you expect to become a producer? No, not at all. Being an artist, all I knew was that I was incredibly interested in it. Apart from the songwriting, which is a whole different thing, the way the finished product would sound...it could so easily go [...]

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With June Millington

**Amanda Lewis, Jay Hodgson**

This interview was conducted at the University of Western Ontario, where June Millington was artist-in-residence. The conversation was largely unstructured, but revolved around determining June's personal approach to production, and examining her career as an influential musician, songwriter and recordist. Along the way, June discussed

encounters with Skunk Baxter, John Lennon, Todd Rundgren, Geoff Emerick, Barbara Streisand, and a host of other respected musicians and recordists. This discussion took place in February of 2011.

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Bill Laswell

**Dr. Richard James Burgess**

Interview conducted July 26, 2004. Originally published at [http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Bill\\_Laswell\\_interview.html](http://www.theartofmusicproduction.com/Bill_Laswell_interview.html) You've had a really interesting career. You swing in and out of the mainstream working with big artists and then some more unusual things. I guess I never really cut anybody loose. A lot of the things are improvised from what people call avant-garde music or [...]

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

## Interview With Josh Leo

**Matt Shelvock**

Josh Leo is a lauded producer, session guitarist, and songwriter based in Nashville, TN. Of the 21 albums Leo has produced which have reached #1 on the charts, some highlights include Lynyrd Skynyrd, Alabama, Emerson Drive, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and Bad Company. As a session musician, Josh's first notable employers were Jimmy Buffet and Glenn Frey of the Eagles. In the years following his tenure with these renowned artists Josh was credited as a musician on over 150 albums. Leo is a skilled songwriter as well, with 6 songs ranking #1 on the charts.

**Issue 5 | Interviews |**

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## Reviews

### The Art Of Digital Audio Production

**Josh Antonuccio**

...one of the better and most accessible overviews of the music production process that we've seen in quite some time. It's refreshing to find an author in the recording industry that continually keeps the focus on the major priorities and gives a solid presentation of how a student should begin developing their paradigm of audio recording.

**Issue 5 | digital audio production, recently published, steve savage |**

### PWL From The Factory Floor: Expanded Edition

**Eddie Ashworth**

PWL From The Factory Floor: Expanded Edition takes an already admirable book and turns it into a truly useful text for a variety of audiences. It works as a research reference, as a potential text for college courses (one can envision a popular music course that examines the record "factories" from the 20th century, such as PWL, Motown, Stax, etc, for which this would be a great resource) and finally, as an entertaining read about a fascinating era in pop music.

**Issue 5 | Book Review, Phil Harding, recently published |**

### Revolution In The Head: The Beatles Records And The Sixties (Third Revised Edition)

**Eddie Ashworth**

Taken as a whole, MacDonald's examination of the Beatles' recorded work and what it represented in its own time remains one of the most cohesive and coherent critiques of their oeuvre in pop music literature. Making clear what he regards as the bands strengths and weaknesses as well as the triumphs and foibles of the era in which they were created, MacDonald provides a first rate understanding of what the Beatles did along with why and how they did it. And it makes for a revealing, vibrant, and fascinating (if occasionally infuriating) read as well. Highly recommended.

**Issue 5 | beatles, popular culture, recommended reading |**

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