1. Introduction

Boy & Bear’s album 

Moonfire

was released in Australia via Universal Music Australia’s Island Records imprint on August 5, 2011 and reached Gold sales status (35,000) within 3 weeks. It achieved Platinum sales status (70,000) in December 2011. It was released in the UK via Co-op/V2 on January 16, 2012. The album was released digitally in the US via Universal Republic on August 9, 2011 but it is yet to be released physically there. Yet despite the success of the album, the recording sessions for it were tense. Therefore this article will address the question of whether the conflict that occurred in this creative group was necessary for the production of an album that became critically and commercially successful.

I co-managed Boy & Bear with Rowan Brand from September 2008 until December 2011 and therefore this article uses a participant-observer method of research, a tradition that is well established in qualitative research practices. The artist manager is “the only other individual, besides the artist, who gets to see and touch all the jigsaw puzzle pieces that fit together to create the artist’s career” (Frascogna and Hetherington, 1997: 6). In terms of participant observation, the artist manager is therefore in a useful position for generating a broad understanding of the social network surrounding an artist’s career. However, it must be noted here that managers ‘executive produce’ albums and therefore they are often not in the actual studio producing the album. Therefore in this case study, as an artist manager, I observed the broader interactions surrounding the production though I will rely on a secondary source of data, the video documentary made of the session, to examine the in-studio interactions. Furthermore it must be noted that in terms of the discussion of the broader business relationships surrounding Boy & Bear’s career, I am biased toward the band’s point of view. Such an auto-ethnography will be used in conjunction with ethnographic research interviews that I conducted (Greene and Porcello, 2005). This case study will explore the social dynamics and power relationships of the studio environment, as well as those within the broader collaborative web surrounding the project, in order to analyse how these dynamics and relationships affect levels of motivation and inspiration in the studio.

Before Boy & Bear went into the studio to record with Chiccarelli, numerous press articles were published stating that while The Strokes had started working with Chiccarelli at Avatar Studios in New York in 2010, there was so much conflict and frustration in the studio that the band and producer parted ways. The Strokes recorded the rest of their album with engineer Gus Oberg at a converted farmhouse in Upstate New York. This led to anxiety regarding the Boy & Bear sessions at Blackbird Studios concerning whether there would be conflict between the band and Chiccarelli, and if there was, whether this conflict would be creative or destructive. Through this case study, this article will argue that heterogeneity enhances performance only when group flow factors are present, including some degree of shared knowledge; a culture of close listening and open communications; a focus on well-defined goals; autonomy, fairness and equal participation (Sawyer, 2007: 71). However, from the band members’ perspectives, such group flow was lacking in the studio in Nashville.

2. Literature Review And Theoretical Model
Csikszentmihalyi (1990) coined the term ‘flow’ to describe a particular heightened state of consciousness and discovered that extremely creative people are at their peak. He noted that 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). While authors such as Gauntlett (2011) have criticized Csikszentmihalyi as being an elitist, his work has been selected from the broad field of creativity research for use in this article because it provides the foundation for Sawyer’s work, which provides the theoretical framework for this article. Sawyer (2007) discovered that improvising groups attain a collective state of mind that he called ‘group flow’: “Group flow is a peak experience, a group performing at its top level of ability” (43). He noted 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.

Before the people participating in a recording session can move into group flow, the members have to share tacit knowledge and demonstrate comparable skill levels. However according to Sawyer (2007), if the group members are too familiar with each other, interaction is no longer challenging and group flow fades away (71). For Sawyer, only by introducing heterogeneity can we avoid the groupthink that results from too much conformity; diversity in terms of the group’s membership makes teams more creative because the friction that results from multiple opinions drives the team to more original and more complex work. Conflict keeps the group from falling into the groupthink trap, though conflict is difficult to manage productively because it can easily spiral into destructive interpersonal attacks that interfere with creativity.

Sawyer (2007) noted that the engine that drives innovation is conversation and so he combined creativity research with the work of conversation scientists in linguistics, psychology, and anthropology such as Silverstein (1954) and Dunbar (1997). The psychologist Dunbar took a video camera into biology labs to observe scientists thinking out loud. He concluded that the type of collaborative conversation he observed accelerates the innovation process because the creative sparks happen in real time and therefore such collaborative teams are the incubators of innovation. It is in this way that the bringing together of the sciences of creativity and of conversation enables a deeper understanding of collaboration than either science can develop alone. Sawyer noted that often the most surprising insights result from connections among different bodies of knowledge, that occur through conversation. Therefore the reason groups are so effective at generating innovation and creativity is that they bring together far more concepts and bodies of knowledge than any single person can.

Such an approach to the study of creativity is relatively new when considering the history of research into creativity. Weisberg (1999) noted that:

> The literature on creativity was until relatively recently dominated by what one could call the ‘genius’ view of creativity, which also pervades our society. (Weisberg in Sternberg: 148).

According to McIntyre (2003), in many of the conceptions of genius there is not only an emphasis on the biological or genetic root of superior ‘intellectual powers’, there is also an association with God-given or spirit-like talents. He argued that this perception is still embedded in western belief systems.

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1988) schema will be employed in this article because it combines a consideration of the individual involved in the creative process with an analysis of the social context in which they are located. Csikszentmihalyi located creativity in a highly complex multidimensional space that incorporates the person, field and domain in a system of circular causality. His theoretical framework enables one to perceive the creative process by investigating moments within it, and each component of this system can be studied as an entry point into an analysis of the system. While in terms of creativity a consideration of the individual is important here, the role of the individual will not be over-emphasised. A musical idea or product arises from the synergy of many sources and not only from the mind of a single person (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Therefore it is easier to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the environment the artist is located in, than by trying to make artists think more creatively. However, if conflict is a condition of the studio environment that can enhance creativity, how can it be managed?
3. Methodology And Process Of Data Analysis

Sawyer (2007) realised that the psychology of the individual mind could not explain what he calls ‘group genius’. Therefore he used an alternative approach to studying creativity, “interaction analysis”, which is a research tool that allows scientists to chart the minute-to-minute interactions that make collaboration so powerful. Applying this method to the Boy & Bear recording sessions for their album *Moonfire* will reveal whether unexpected insights emerged from conflict within the group. Australian artists and filmmakers Jefferton James⁴ and Byron Quandary⁵ were commissioned by Universal Music Australia to fly to Nashville in April 2011 to film a documentary of the recording sessions. The footage for this documentary will be used to conduct the interaction analysis.

In addition to interaction analysis, the research methods of participant observation and ethnographic research interviews will be used. This case study also employs a variety of evidence, including participant observation. Co-managing Boy & Bear has given me unique insights into the band’s recording processes, as I was part of the broader collaborative group that produced the *Moonfire* album. This broader collaborative group provides another example of improvisational group creativity in that Rowan Brand and I were somewhat of an international ‘tag-team’. We were both able to travel from Sydney, Australia to be based in New York, USA for approximately 6 months at a time respectively. We swapped places four times which meant that by mid-2011 we had a management presence in New York for approximately 2 years and this enabled us to build an international team around the band.

By co-managing for the world we were able to double our pool of contacts and while one manager was able to establish a relationship, the other manager was able to follow up and manage that relationship. In this way, just as record production is a collaborative process, artist management is also a creative process, as Sawyer explained: “it’s group genius that generates breakthrough innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (2007). The broader collaborative team that Rowan and I built to develop the band’s career and produce the album also at times experienced conflict that led to group flow, as well as conflict that undermined the creative process of management. Therefore this article will also examine the conflict that occurred within this broader group and the affect it had on the production of the album.

4. Results And Analysis

As previously discussed, Sawyer noted that often the most surprising insights result from connections among different bodies of knowledge, and that the reason groups are so effective at generating innovation and creativity, is that they bring together far more concepts and bodies of knowledge than any single person can. However, this also makes groups such as bands difficult to manage. In order to generate insights into Boy & Bear’s recording sessions, and the different knowledge and beliefs that the members of this group brought to the recording session, sections from the documentary of the session will now be analysed. The documentary begins with bass player Jacob Tarasenko discussing genres. He said:

> I heard a story once, I don't know if it's true, but genres were invented so that music could be sold more easily. While that may have been well intentioned at the beginning, these days labeling is such a detrimental thing.

This fairly common anti-marketing and anti-commercialisation discourse suggests that Tarasenko’s own beliefs about what the recordings should sound like would not be in line with any attempt to produce slick recordings that could gain US commercial radio airplay. It was also evident that lead singer, songwriter and rhythm guitarist David Hosking was also concerned with comparisons to artists from within the same genre:

> I don’t think you can have a career in the shadow of another band, or other bands. We’ve definitely been thrown in that box a couple of times, but that’s cool, it’s just the way it plays out I guess, so I think one of the biggest challenges is more and more defining your own sound to some extent. You know that is literally all I have been thinking about for the last 18 months, shifting everything and tipping it on its head and trying to find new territory, which is a hard thing to do.
Hosking was determined to define the band’s own sound and to avoid comparisons to bands in the Nu-Folk genre, such as Fleet Foxes, Mumford & Sons and Midlake, to which the sound of their first EP ‘With Emperor Antarctica’ is often compared. He wanted to take the band’s sound left of centre towards more of an ‘indie’ aesthetic.

Keyboardist and backing vocalist for the band, Jonathan Hart, was originally happy to bring in the outside influence of a producer because he envisaged that this would help the band to break new ground creatively:

We just want to do something that’s fascinating that we can listen to and think that it makes a statement of where we were at that point in time, and that we didn’t do the things we did last time and instead chose to push ourselves again. Last time we did a lot of the production of the album ourselves, but this time we have somebody else in … an outside creative influence which has been a really different thing to experience. So we wanted to be open to that.

It is evident that these band members shared the tacit knowledge and comparable skill levels required for group flow. However, after working together for 2.5 years they were potentially too familiar with each other and without the influence of a producer they may have been subject to the groupthink that results from too much conformity with a singular opinion concerning how the project should proceed. By having Chiccarelli work with the band as producer, more diversity was introduced to the group. While ostensibly this would be true with bringing in any producer, outside musician, manager, or other industry practitioner into the group, the band specifically chose Chiccarelli because of his passion for the project and because they particularly liked the sounds he recorded for the band The Shins. They also at the time believed that he would help them to record a left-of-centre ‘indie’ sounding recording that would differentiate them from bands such as Fleet Foxes and Mumford & Sons. Theoretically speaking, such heterogeneity had the potential to make the team more creative because the friction that would result from the multiple opinions would drive the team to more original and more complex work. However, while such conflict may have kept the group from falling into the groupthink trap, the subsequent conflict that occurred during the session was difficult to manage productively because it at times spiraled into destructive interpersonal attacks that interfered with the creative process.

In order to better understand the conflict that occurred in the Nashville studio between Boy & Bear and Chicarrelli, it is therefore useful to conduct an interaction analysis of a conversation that occurred between Chicarrelli and the band:

Joe Chicarrelli: *I was thinking about it the other day and I think that we need to embrace the banjo wherever possible. No seriously, I think that we should put it on wherever we can put it on.*

Killian Gavin: *He’s being a cock, for sure.* [Laughs].

Joe Chicarrelli: *I’m dead serious. I really think that we try it in a couple of spots. I’m really serious.*

Tim Hart: *You’re about 3 seconds from me giving you a big hug.*

Joe Chicarrelli: *I’m dead serious. I’ve been thinking about it the last few days. I think that we should put it on wherever possible, and then mute it wherever possible.*

[Band collectively laughs].

During this exchange, the band members’ body language is tense while both Chicarrelli and the band attempt to mask the conflict inherent in the situation with humour. The fact that a band member called Chicarrelli “a cock” was not taken personally because the facade of humour belied the statement’s offensiveness. The end result of this situation was that the band resisted Chicarrelli’s request to record the “banjo wherever possible” and they did not record banjo on many tracks.

While the band did hold their ground on many of the creative decisions, to the extent that Chicarrelli insisted on the producer credit being “Produced by Boy & Bear and Joe Chicarrelli” instead of “Produced by Joe Chicarrelli”, this tension did result in a change to how they would have, in the absence of Chicarrelli, been creative together. From my perspective as a participant observer, the differences of opinion did lead to a more creative, and marketable, result when considering the demo recordings that were taken into the session and A/Bing these with the finished album. Many of the arrangements for songs such as Golden
Jubilee changed dramatically. While numerous other factors could account for the success of the album; the experience of being in Nashville, more (or less) time to work on the production than on previous albums, better gear in the studio, the argument here is that the differences of opinion and the resulting friction in the studio led to an outcome that was qualitatively different than the norm for this group.

Scholars who study conversation explore the relationship between each participant’s actions and the conversation that emerges from the entire group. According to Sawyer (2007), conversation analysis gives us the tools to study how individual sparks of insight combine during collaboration. Arguably, a lot of what transpired in the conversation between the band and Chicarrelli is indirect speech. Indirect speech, unlike explicit speech, is impossible to understand out of context. Sawyer noted that this context-dependence is called indexicality and that the most creative speech is highly indexical in that it is embedded in the immediate social context.

In addition to the immediate social context in the studio, the broader social context, that includes the business entities involved in the production, also informs the indirect speech in the studio and the level of conflict the process involves. As discussed, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) located creativity in a highly complex multidimensional space that incorporates the person, field and domain in a system of circular causality. In this case study, the field includes the record labels involved in the production, the artist managers, the producer manager, the studio managers, and the lawyers representing both the label and the artist. Just as conflict in the studio can at times be creative or destructive, so too can conflict within the broader collaborative group surrounding a record’s production.

In contrast to Hirsch’s (1970) ‘filter flow’ model and argument that the process of record production starts with the selection of ‘raw materials’ that are produced in isolation by creative artists from a near infinite number of potential recordings (and therefore music industry practitioners are similar to bureaucratic administrators, in that they just administer the material and do not add anything to it), Frith (1988) noted that the argument concerning music making being an essential human activity that has been colonised by commerce is flawed. He notes that it involves “the suggestion that music is the starting point of the industrial process – the raw material over which everyone fights – when it is, in fact, the final product” (Frith, 1988: 12). Because musical recordings are located at the end point of an industrial process, conflict in the field does affect it.

The deal making surrounding the recording session was complex. My co-manager Rowan Brand and I had set a plan in motion 2 years earlier to procure a direct signing to a label in a larger territory than Australia (in this case the US or the UK) and the first step in this process was to arrange a license agreement for Australia and New Zealand only. After long negotiations with multiple labels we signed the band to Universal Music Australia’s Island imprint. This left the rights on the label side clear for the rest of the world. We then signed the band’s publishing to SonyATV for the world and this gave the band the funding to tour the UK with Laura Marling in April 2010, and to do a headline tour of the UK in December 2010. On the way through to the December 2010 UK tour we organised for the band to play a showcase at the Mercury Lounge in New York City. This showcase resulted in the band receiving 4 US label offers from Glassnote, Universal Republic, Universal Motown and Atlantic.

After the independent label Glassnote decided that they wanted to wait to hear the finished album, this left 3 offers, one from Universal Motown, one from Universal Republic and another from Atlantic. Then Universal Republic withdrew their offer because they felt that we were taking too long to get back to them while the Atlantic offer was not as attractive as we would have liked, and so we moved to close out with Universal Motown. Meanwhile, we had organised the producer agreement with Chicarrelli based on the contribution from Universal Music Australia. Chicarrelli had agreed to reduce his fee to produce what he originally envisaged was a low budget Australian album. In this context he would also have arguably produced the album that the band wanted to produce, i.e. a left of centre ‘indie’ sounding record.

However, when Universal Motown president Silvia Rhone, A&R of International Kirk Harding, and A&R Corey Roberts flew down to the studio from New York to ‘sit in’ on the sessions, this dramatically changed the social dynamic. Chicarrelli then became determined to produce a more polished sounding record, one that would receive US commercial radio airplay. This meant that while the band continued to attempt to pull the sound of the recordings left of centre, Chicarrelli started to pull them to the right. He had also agreed the producer deal premised on the Australian label’s contribution, and we had likewise budgeted the album based on this contribution, but now there was a much larger deal in the making and he probably thought that this deal had already closed out. However, while this deal making had led to additional conflict in the studio, the deal had not actually closed out yet.
While the band had signed the contract and had mailed it back to Universal Motown's offices in New York, and Chicarrelli was increasing the recording budget because he thought there was extra money to use, it was at this point that Universal Motown was folded into Universal Republic. Silvia Rhone, Kirk Harding and Corey Roberts all eventually had their employment contracts terminated and because we had thought that we had a deal and disclosed budgets to Universal Motown so that we could pay the studio bills, Universal Republic at that point noted that they had not counter signed the deal and wanted to re-negotiate. Because the original budget was premised on the Australian label’s contribution, the project was potentially receiving more money than was needed to complete the album. Universal Republic thought that they were paying too much for the band and furthermore they were no longer subject to the competitive bidding process that had preceded the deal making; from their perspective the deal was unsustainable.

However, since the budget had since increased and we were depending on the money from the US deal to come in, this meant that the band’s company would either become insolvent, or we needed to agree to re-negotiate the deal. At this point, we went to the band’s Australian partners looking for a bail out. While the band’s publisher SonyATV were exploring possibilities, Universal Music Australia refused to bail the band out at that stage because of the politics between them and their US affiliate.

In the end the band decided that they did not want to proceed with Universal Music Group and we rang to inform them that we were going to send a letter of direction rescinding the band’s signatures. At which point they said that we could not because they had counter-signed the agreement and that the band would end up with Universal Republic. This meant that we closed out the original deal and could pay the studio bills and finish the record, though most of the relationships involved were strained, particularly the relationship between Chicarrelli and the band.

6. Theoretical And Management Contribution

Through this case study, the argument has been made that heterogeneity enhances performance only when group flow factors are present. These factors include some degree of shared knowledge; a culture of close listening and open communications; a focus on well-defined goals; autonomy, fairness and equal participation (Sawyer, 2007: 71). From the perspective of David Hosking from the band, group flow was lacking in the studio in Nashville. When interviewed concerning whether the conflict in the studio was creative, he said simply that: “It wasn’t that type of conflict” and noted that he found the experience to be stressful.

While it is easy to conclude that group flow does not occur when everyone within the core creative group, and also within the broader collaborative web, is on a war footing, when interviewed Australian artist manager Gregg Donavan noted that:

If the band and producer don’t hate each other by the end of the session then the producer is not doing their job … In my experience, particularly with rock albums, the best albums often come out of sessions that involve a lot of tension between the producer and the band … Often, if the record is going to be any good, at least one band member will hate the producer by the end of the session … when the band and producer get along really well the whole time often the end product is mediocre.

Therefore with regard to the question of whether the conflict that occurred in this creative group was necessary for the production of an album that became critically and commercially successful, while the band members themselves believe that the conflict was negative and destructive, a commercially successful album was the result of the process. The tension caused by the band pulling left and the producer pulling right arguably led to the production of an album that was not as well received critically as the band would have liked, but one that did connect with a broad audience.

The following question arises: how much conflict is too much conflict? For Sawyer, only by introducing heterogeneity can a team avoid the groupthink that results from too much conformity because the friction that results from multiple opinions drives the team to more original and more complex work; therefore is there only too much conflict when the friction causes the group to disintegrate? Conflict keeps the group from falling into the groupthink trap, though is there a conflict barrier, or a pain threshold? These are questions that could be explored in further research.

7. Conclusion And Implications For Future Research
For Sawyer (2007), the key to understanding creativity and innovation is to realize that collaborative webs are more important than creative people. In order to fully understand the Boy & Bear recording sessions it was necessary to locate them within, and to analyse, the broader collaborative web surrounding them; in addition to conducting an interaction analysis of the actual sessions. Discussing collaborative webs in a broad sense, Sawyer noted:

Of course, creative people play an important role as the active elements of collaborative webs. But in today’s economy, most of the action is in the webs, where everyone’s creative power increases so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts … To realise your full creative potential, you must move beyond the linear creativity mindset and tap into the power of collaborative webs. (2007: 185)

He noted that when information is shared through collaboration, and decision-making is decentralised, there’s no need for a hierarchy to gather and channel information to a single decision maker, as in the 1950s bureaucratic company. Instead, the music producer, and the people working within the broader collaborative web, become catalysts and facilitators, acting as connectors between groups, cross-pollinators and carriers of knowledge (173), rather than being an autocratic dictators.

Universal Music Group’s consolidation process, that occurred mid-album production for Boy & Bear, is an example of what is happening in today’s rapidly changing music economy, in which the relatively protected monopolies of major labels are becoming increasingly rare as new technologies open up formerly stable sectors of the industry to radically new competition. Through the consolidation process Universal shed staff in an attempt to reallocate capital to the signing of more artists. This means that their system has become more reactive. The new staff-to-artist ratio means that they are releasing albums digitally and then waiting to see what connects with tastemakers immediately. Then the one in ten artists that benefit from this ‘star system’ become the priority artists. The remaining artists become what they call ‘work bands’, meaning that they have to allocate their minimal resources to forming strategies for developing these artists’ careers. As a result, many of the ‘work bands’ are subsequently dropped by Universal.

It is in this context that artists themselves, and their managers, need to form collaborative webs that have a culture that is based on flexibility, connection, and conversation; making improvised innovation standard business practice. Sawyer argued that such a culture seems unnatural to many managers because improvisation implies that you do not plan ahead:

Many organisational theories have their roots in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when adaptability and innovation weren’t as important as they are today. Those theories are best at explaining companies and markets with stable structures that rarely change. (2007: 156)

Although planning and structure have been the dominant trend in organisation theory, there has always been a countertrend. Weick (1969) argued that smaller, “loosely coupled” organisations – formed of autonomous building blocks that can be brought together, disconnected, or re-formed with relatively little disturbance – are more innovative than planned organisations (cited in Sawyer, 2007: 156). Druker (1988) and Kanter (1983) extended Weick’s insight and demonstrated that when companies use smaller teams with fewer hierarchical levels, they are more innovative. In the music business, team-based, and often artist-run, companies will begin to perform better than traditional bureaucratic major labels with their rigid hierarchies.

Such collaborative organisations need to be creative in all divisions and at all levels, rather than just expecting creativity to emerge from the band and producer team in isolation (Sawyer, 2007: 176). To this end, the choice of Nashville as a location for recording the album was a good one. It not only built a useful marketing ‘story’ around the album, it enabled the producer and band to tap into the power of local collaborative webs that economists call ‘clusters’. While traditionally a centre for the production of country music, Nashville has become a destination for those working in a broad range of genres. The Nashville cluster is a web in which information flows more freely and efficiently, making all of the companies that form part of this cluster more successful (ibid, 2007: 187). Interestingly, just as with group flow, clusters such as this are better when they are not totally connected; for Sawyer the most creative web is the one in which good connections exist among the entities, but the entities still enjoy independence and autonomy (ibid, 2007: 199). In a discussion of the importance ‘connectors’ (people who form ‘weak-ties’ with many people) are to the formation of clusters, Gladwell (2000) argued that the degrees within Milgram’s (1967) famous ‘six
Six degrees of separation doesn’t mean that everyone is linked to everyone else in just six steps. It means that a very small number of people are linked to everyone else in a few steps, and the rest of us are linked to the world through those special few. (37)

Gladwell claimed that ‘connectors’ are people with a special gift for bringing the world together because they have a unique ability to make friends and acquaintances. To substantiate his ideas, Gladwell drew on the work of Granovetter (1974), who argued that when it comes to finding out new information or understanding new ideas, ‘weak ties’ or acquaintances are always more important than strong ties. This is because one's friends (‘strong ties’) occupy the same world as they do whereas one’s acquaintances, by definition, occupy a very different world. ‘Weak ties’ are therefore more likely to give one information they do not already know. Gladwell (2000) stated that ‘connectors’ are masters of the extraordinarily powerful ‘weak tie’. He wrote: “we rely on them to give us access to opportunities and worlds to which we don’t belong” (54). In our experience the Nashville cluster did function in this way.

This article addressed the question of whether the conflict that occurred within the band Boy & Bear, and within the collaborative web surrounding it, was necessary for the production of an album that became critically and commercially successful; it is clear that a certain degree of conflict within creative groups is necessary for artistically successful outcomes. The conflict that occurred during the sessions was at times creative and at other times destructive. While conflict may not be a necessary part of making records in and of itself, group flow does necessitate there being a certain degree of creative conflict. Further research is needed into understanding how conflict in the studio environment can be managed. Conflict within groups of musicians is a significant concern within the field of contemporary music studies and this research therefore has ramifications for music culture, and for the various business entities that derive value from the music that is produced by groups, including record companies, song publishers, and performing rights collecting societies. Therefore the long-term outcome of this activity will be the generation of an Australian Research Council linkage grant application.

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Notes

1 Boy & Bear consists of 5 band members: David Hosking (lead vocals, guitar), Tim Hart (drums, banjo, guitars, backing vocals), Jacob Tarasenko (bass guitar and backing vocals), Killian Gavin (lead guitar and backing vocals) and Jonathan Hart (keys and backing vocals).

2 As I am using a secondary filmed video as a source for primary research in this article it is important to explain the limitations of this approach here. The naturalness of the process may be questioned here, or the ‘acting out’ of the musicians on film playing a ‘part’ for a documentary made about them funded by a major record label. Therefore it must be acknowledged here that the case study of the ‘conflict’ situation looks rather sanitized on film when viewed; compared to how the actual studio conflicts over the artistic content played out.


4 Jeffery Gordon works under the name Jefferton James. His work can be viewed at the following blog:
http://cuteasfudgefactory.blogspot.com/
Byron Quandary is a director, photographer and writer. His work can be viewed at the following site:
http://www.byronquandary.com/

Gregg Donavan is Co-Owner/Director of Wonderlick Entertainment: www.wonderlick.com.au

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Bibliography


**Discography**

The Journal on the Art of Record Production (JARP) is an international online peer-reviewed journal promoting the interdisciplinary study of record production. The journal publishes peer reviewed research papers, conference papers, interviews and reviews with contributions from world-renowned industry professionals.

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Editorial

The State Of The Art And The State Of The Discipline

Albin Zak

Seven years ago I traveled to London to speak at a conference convened by a couple of new outfits—one calling itself the Center for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) and the other, simply, the Art of Record Production (ARP). Now called the Association for the Study of the Art of Record Production, […]

Conference Papers

How To Reformat The Planet: Technostalgia And The “Live” Performance Of Chipmusic

Mike D’Errico

“It looks like you’re just pressing buttons.” It is perhaps the most common audience feedback received by the 8-bit chiptune composer, who uses vintage video game consoles to create original music. At a basic level, the chipmusician is “just pressing buttons,” as they control the various parameters of the sound chip using the same equipment […]

Recreating An Unreal Reality: Performance Practice, Recording, And The Jazz Rhythm Section

John Crooks

This paper discusses the effect of jazz recordings on the expectations and performance practice of jazz rhythm section players, especially bassists and drummers. Both
Performing Recordivity: Studio Music In A Live Context

Julian Knowles, Donna Hewitt

Introduction The paper seeks to examine the relationships between the gestural, performative and technological practices of the recording studio and emerging performance practices in the 21st century and propose an initial taxonomy of the major developments in the last 20-30 years. In terms of scope, our focus is on music performance models outside the 'playback [...]"

Creative Conflict In A Nashville Studio: A Case Of Boy & Bear

Guy Morrow

This article examines the issue of conflict in the studio environment, addressing the question of whether conflict in creative groups is necessary for generating artistically successful outcomes. Sawyer's (2007) notion of group flow will be applied in a case study concerning Australian band Boy & Bear's debut album recording sessions at Blackbird studios in Nashville, USA that took place in April 2011. This album was produced by 10 time Grammy award winner Joe Chiccarelli (My Morning Jacket, The Shins, Elton John, U2, Beck, Frank Zappa, The White Stripes, Young the Giant, The Strokes). The resulting album, Moonfire, won 5 Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) awards in November 2011 including: 'Album of the Year', 'Best Group', 'Breakthrough Artist (Album)', 'Breakthrough Artist (Single)' and 'Best Adult Alternative Album'.

From LA To Lisbon: The “LA Sound” As A Referential Production Sound In Rui Veloso’s Recording Career

Isabel Campelo

In the 1980s, a distinctive production sound came to be associated with musicians, producers and sound engineers working in Los Angeles, including, notably, Donald Fagen and Walter Becker of Steely Dan. The "LA Sound" became a reference for musicians and sound technicians around the world. Rui Veloso, a Portuguese singer/song-writer, tried to emulate it in his records over three decades, facing several difficulties because of the lack of studio technology and professional experience. This article regards performance in the studio and the relations involved in the construction of distinctive conceptualizations of production sound in popular music when displaced.

Putting It On Display: The Impact Of Visual Information On Control Room Dynamics

Alan Williams

Introduction In contemporary recording sessions, digital technology mimics that of older analog tape-based processes, so that for the performing musician the experience is nearly indistinguishable. In either case, takes are recorded, overdubs and punches are executed, and the results are auditioned. However, the clearest indication of a computer at work is the presence of [...]"

Achieving Intelligibility Whilst Maintaining Heaviness When Producing Contemporary Metal Music

Mark Mynett
Common denominators and central attributes of contemporary metal music are the intensity and energy of performance, which usually feature aggressive rhythm structures and techniques, and the depth, and density, of the tones involved. These characteristics can present numerous challenges to achieving heaviness and sonic weight, which is the defining feature of this form of music, as well as definition and intelligibility, which are fundamental to providing a high level of sonic clarity for these often-complex performances. Heaviness and intelligibility are the principal objectives of a high commercial standard of contemporary metal music production, and are the focus of this paper.

Capturing That Philadelphia Sound: A Technical Exploration Of Sigma Sound Studios

Toby Seay

Sigma Sound Studios was founded in 1968 by Joseph D. Tarsia and was the site of most major record production originating from Philadelphia, PA during the 1970's and 1980's. As a creative environment, Sigma was instrumental in the production of "Philadelphia Soul" music. While larger markets such as London, New York or Los Angeles have a plethora of recording facilities influencing music production, the recording facilities in smaller markets such as Philadelphia, Detroit and Muscle Shoals can have a greater influence in developing an identifiable sonic character. The musical output from these cities are often associated with their pool of musicians, such as MFSB, The Funk Brothers and The Swampers. However, the creative and technical environment provides its own impact on each city's identifiable sonic character. Such is the influence of Sigma Sound Studios on record production in Philadelphia.

Using materials from the Sigma Sound Studios Collection in the Drexel University Audio Archives and exclusive interviews with Joseph Tarsia, this paper will describe the early technical design that shaped Sigma's environment and recording techniques developed and used by Tarsia and how this environment and these techniques supported the creative musical community. This paper will refer to select recordings that demonstrate the sonic influence of Sigma Sound Studio's creative environment.

The Record Producer As Nexus

Mike Howlett

1. Introduction In this paper I propose the concept of the record producer as a “nexus” between the creative inspiration of the artist, the technology of the recording studio, and the commercial aspirations of the record company. In much of the published discussion of the producer’s role the term “mediator” is preferred, however, I argue [...]

All Buttons In: An Investigation Into The Use Of The 1176 FET Compressor In Popular Music Production

Austin Moore

This paper focuses on the use of the 1176 in popular music production. While this compressor is regularly discussed by engineers in magazines and online forums, there is no academic research into the workings of this famous piece of studio equipment. The first part of the paper investigates the various hardware compression types and goes on to present an overview on the development of the first Urei 1176s. Subsequent chapters investigate the 1176s characteristic sonic identity and research into the approaches engineers and producers use when applying the device in their productions. To test their suggestions a series of short experiments are made using a variety of sound sources. The results are observed using audio analysis tools and subjective observations from aural tests.

Toward A Musical Monograph: Working With Fragments From Within The Improvisation-Composition Nexus

Paul Draper

This paper examines the pre-production stages of a new album of original music entitled Monograph. The project firstly uses the recording studio as an resource analysis device to interrogate a database of live improvisations which have been collected over time. The following phase of the project orients around the research question: how to best move beyond in-the-moment improvisation, to being able to distil, refine, arrange and orchestrate the essence of attractive ideas in fixed recordings? This paper details emergent methods as part of an overarching practice-based research approach to the problem.
Manwel T Meets King Tubby & Marshall McLuhan – Dub Music In A Virtual Age

Mike Hajimichael

This paper explores Dub music as a medium of production, from its inception, through reference to King Tubby, and more contemporary virtual re-mixers, such as Manwel T. Central to the argument in the paper are the ideas that production convergence between analogue and digital methods needs to be contextualised into the broader changes that occurred in Reggae music with regard to studio technology and production. This process, it will be argued was slow and evolutionary. Through this contextualisation, the paper concludes Dub is like a tree with many branches, firmly rooted and ever changing.

Interviews

Interview With Ben Fowler

Matt Shelvock

Ben Fowler is a Grammy-winning producer/engineer in Nashville Tennessee. After receiving a degree in music from Ball State University, he began working as an engineer at New York City’s legendary Power Station (now Avatar studios). Earlier in his career Fowler worked on a session with Eric Clapton which yielded 3 studio albums. Since then he has worked with artists such as Michael McDonald, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Meatloaf, and Bad Company. More recently, he has worked with contemporary artists such as LeAnn Rimes, Rascal Flatts and Paul Brandt for an impressive 8-album run. Whether producing or engineering, Fowler believes that interpersonal skills are an often overlooked key to a successful career. In the following interview he explains how his approach hinges on bringing the best out of album contributors by keeping morale high during sessions. Central to Ben Fowler’s approach as an engineer is to favour the creative over the technical. He views his craft as an endeavour which is primarily artistic. As an extension of this Fowler is less concerned with how equipment is intended to be used, and more concerned with the resulting sound.

Interview With Steve Marcantonio

Matt Shelvock

Steve Marcantonio is an audio engineer who works in Nashville, Tennessee. Since starting his career at The Record Plant in 1978, Syebe has since worked on projects including John Lennon, Brooks & Dunn, Reba McEntire, Kenny Chesney, Gretchen Wilson, Faith Hill, Carrie Underwood, Vince Gill, Paul Brandt, and the Blues Brothers, among others. Currently, Steve is the Studio Manager/Chief Engineer at Sound Emporium studios in Nashville.

Reviews

Max/MSP/Jitter For Music: A Practical Guide To Developing Interactive Music Systems For Education And More

Mark Phillips

V. J. Manzo delivers a definitive primer for audio artists wishing to harness the power of this versatile software suite. If you are a novice who wants to learn Max quickly and develop a solid foundation before striking out in your own direction, this book will provide it. If you are a teacher who is new to teaching Max, or has been thinking about starting a Max class for beginners, I think this would be a worthy choice as a textbook for your class or as a reference when putting together your class.