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**The High Art of Trip Hop:  
Extending the Bristol Sound by Incorporating  
Compositional Approaches from Classical Music**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy in Music**

at  
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**Jeffrey Wragg**



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## **Abstract**

‘The High Art of Trip Hop’ defines the Bristol sound and extends it through new composition techniques. The two-part thesis combines musicological and practice-led research. Part one analyses the Bristol sound, a style of popular music that developed in Bristol, England during the 1990s and is also known as ‘trip hop’. It offers an historical overview of the style’s evolution, and identifies the principal composition, performance, and production traits. Part two is a portfolio of seven original songs that demonstrate ways of extending the style by incorporating compositional approaches from classical music.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one discusses the impetus behind the research and the historical factors that influenced the development of the Bristol sound. It concludes by framing the research goals of the thesis and articulating how the two areas of research are connected. Chapter two discusses the relevant literature that informed the thesis and is divided into five sections. Section one discusses previous examples of popular music that incorporated elements of classical music. Section two addresses previous writings on trip hop, noting the ambiguity of the terms ‘trip hop’ and ‘Bristol sound’, and discusses the problems that arise when these terms are used interchangeably. It also notes the lack of musicological analysis in current writings. After discussing current theories of style and genre in section three, the fourth section clarifies the ambiguity of the terms ‘trip hop’ and ‘Bristol sound’ by positioning the Bristol sound as a style that relates to the trip hop genre. The final section discusses current theories of intertextuality in recorded popular music, and notes these are insufficient in detailing all of the intertextual references commonly found in the Bristol sound. The chapter concludes by offering an expanded model for addressing intertextuality in recorded music.

Chapter three outlines the methodologies used in the thesis, beginning with the analytical methods used to elucidate the Bristol sound style. It then discusses practice-led research and offers a brief overview of the various compositional approaches that were drawn from classical music as a means of extending the Bristol sound style, before discussing how audience feedback was used to consider the merits of each approach. Chapter four provides detailed

musicological analysis of a select corpus drawn from the Bristol sound style, explicating the main recurring composition, performance, and production patterns.

Chapter five presents the original compositions. Each composition is accompanied by a written analysis specifying how the work draws from both the Bristol sound and classical traditions, as well as a discussion of audience reactions to the work. The accompanying CDs contain recorded versions of each of the works, as well as fully notated scores. Chapter six offers some conclusions about the musical character of the Bristol sound, as well as ways in which the style can be extended. The chapter also explores the nature of the relationship between the Bristol sound and classical music within the creative works, before raising potential areas for further research.

This thesis contributes to popular music literature in four ways. First, it provides comprehensive musical analysis of the Bristol sound. This research supplements current historical, cultural, and sociological writings to provide a holistic overview of the Bristol sound style. Second, it explicates the relationship between the Bristol sound and trip hop, providing a practical example of side-by-side comparisons of style and genre in relation to a single musical tradition. Third, this thesis builds on current theories of intertextuality in recorded popular music, and provides a new model for addressing the novel referential practices commonly found in the Bristol sound. Finally, this thesis demonstrates numerous ways compositional approaches from classical music can be incorporated into the Bristol sound to extend the style in a new direction. This makes an original contribution to the evolution of the Bristol sound style, and provides a model for others to explore when incorporating classical elements into popular music.

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## List of Publications

### Journal articles.

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“Illuminating the Intertext: Categorising Signifiers in the Music of Portishead.”

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“Intertextuality and Style Topics in the Music of Portishead.”

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“Tracing the Roots of Trip Hop: How One City’s History Influenced a Global Genre.”

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“Creative Sampling Practices in the Music of Portishead.”

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Research context

As a composer, I have continuously moved between popular and Western art music,<sup>1</sup> composing symphonies and string quartets on one hand while writing and producing popular songs on the other. When working in each of these idioms I am often required to adopt a certain perspective and approach a piece with a particular framework in mind; the conventions that guide composition in one idiom are less relevant when composing in the other. At times, I have made brief forays into the middle realm between popular and classical music by incorporating orchestral instruments and textures into popular songs. However, I have also been intrigued by the idea of exploring classical compositional techniques at a structural level. Like many before me, I have ‘sweetened’ a traditional pop song by adding sweeping string lines or chorale voices but have also been curious about drawing on other classical devices such as alternate forms of pitch organisation and non-Western scales. I am interested in exploring how classical elements can be incorporated into the composition process rather than added to a completed song as part of an arrangement, and I have aspired to explore a variety of classical techniques while producing a substantial body of work that investigates this approach. When selecting a research topic for this thesis I took the opportunity to explore this idea, drawing from both popular and classical traditions in an attempt to unite these seemingly disparate modes of expression.

Blending popular and classical music is not without its controversy, pop stars who venture into high art are often derided as elitist and inauthentic while classical stars are accused of selling out when trying to engage a wider audience. The progressive rock movement attempted to incorporate elements of classical music into rock, yet despite its popular acceptance and commercial success it was widely condemned by most rock critics for betraying its African-American blues roots and working-class socioeconomic status. In *Progressive Rock and the Inversion of Musical Values* John Sheinbaum writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, the more colloquial term ‘classical music’ is used in place of ‘Western art

At its core, rock journalists' reaction against the style stemmed from a countercultural political agenda: rock is supposed to be a rebellious music, a music that shocks the 'establishment' and challenges its conventions. A style of rock so influenced by the music of the establishment – which seemed to aspire to the privileged status held by that music – could only be met with derision. Writers hunted for a mode of criticism that would seem to attack the 'music itself' to justify their preformed final judgment. 'Authenticity' was characteristically the key weapon; the farther a progressive rock album was from rock's rhythm and blues roots, from the ideals of a natural unstudied simplicity, the more seditious and treasonous the result.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, classical artists who have embraced elements of popular music have also faced criticism. Placido Domingo, one of the world-famous Three Tenors, released an album of popular music singing alongside popera star Josh Groban and New Orleans jazz crooner Harry Connick Jr, among others. Despite its commercial success, noted music critic Norman Lebrecht labeled it 'Walmart trash.'<sup>3</sup> Lebrecht argues these type of crossover projects do not deserve a place in the classical music genre as they detract from the 'real' classical music, stating 'crossover is not an aid to classical renewal, rather an act of classical euthanasia.'<sup>4</sup> Such controversy exists because developments in classical music in the early twentieth century left a schism between classical and popular music. However, prominent composers today argue that a dialogue between classical and popular music is actually the natural order of things. In his program notes for *Radio Rewrite* (2012), composer Steve Reich says:

We're living at a time when the worlds of concert music and popular music have resumed their normal dialogue after a brief pause during the twelve-tone/serial period. This dialogue has been active, I would assume, since people have been making music. We know from notation that it was active throughout the Renaissance with the folk song *L'homme armé* used in masses by composers from Froberger and Lully to Bach and Handel. Later we have folk songs in Haydn's 104<sup>th</sup> Symphony, Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, Russian folk songs in Stravinsky's early

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<sup>2</sup> John Sheinbaum, "Progressive Rock and the Inversion of Musical Values." In *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, ed. Kevin Holm-Hudson (London: Routledge, 2002), 21–42.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.artsjournal.com/slippeddisc/2012/11/domingos-new-release-is-beyond-parody.html> (accessed 28 February, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Norman Lebrecht, "How to Kill Classical Music." *Telegraph*, December 5, 2001.

ballets, Serbo-Croatian folk music throughout Bartók, hymns in Ives, folk songs in jazz and Copland, the entire works of Weill, Gershwin and Sondheim and on into my own generation and beyond. Electric guitars, electric basses and drum kits, along with samplers, synthesizers and other electronic sound processing devices are now part of notated concert music. The dialogue continues.<sup>5</sup>

In *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, Alex Ross argues that many composers incorporate elements from both classical and popular music, seeking ‘the middle ground between the life of the mind and the noise of the street.’<sup>6</sup> He suggests that ‘one possible destination for 21<sup>st</sup> century music is a final “grand fusion”: intelligent pop artists and extroverted composers speaking more or less the same language.’<sup>7</sup> This thesis is an attempt toward that final grand fusion.

## 1.2 Research motivations: why trip hop?

A ‘fusion’ of popular and classical music can be achieved in a number of ways. One could follow in the footsteps of the progressive rock artists and work within a popular music framework while incorporating selected elements from classical music. Conversely, one could compose in the classical idiom while borrowing features of popular music, such as Phillip Glass’ Symphony No. 1, based on the album *Low* (1977) by David Bowie, or Steve Reich’s *Radio Rewrite*, which borrows harmonic and melodic fragments from two Radiohead songs.<sup>8</sup> A third approach is to hybridize the two so that the resulting work is not grounded in one idiom over another. Rather, it occupies the middle ground between them. Björk’s album *Vulnicura Strings* (2015), featuring voice, strings, and viola organista is one such example. This thesis takes the first approach, working within a popular music framework while incorporating certain elements from classical music. My reason for following this direction is simply that, as a listener, I find myself drawn to this approach more so than the others. Furthermore, I have grounded my compositions within a particular style of popular music in order to

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<sup>5</sup> Sam Cleeve, “Reich, Radiohead and the Pop-Classical Rift: Steve Reich’s Radio Rewrite.” *Drowned in Sound*, March 11, 2013. [http://drownedinsound.com/in\\_depth/4146144-reich-radiohead-and-the-pop-classical-rift--steve-reichs-radio-rewrite](http://drownedinsound.com/in_depth/4146144-reich-radiohead-and-the-pop-classical-rift--steve-reichs-radio-rewrite). (accessed 8 April, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), p541.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p542.

<sup>8</sup> Those songs being ‘Everything in its Right Place’ and ‘Jigsaw Falling into Place’.

create a cohesive body of work with a consistent aesthetic. I chose to base my compositions in the Bristol sound, a multifaceted style of music that is also widely known as ‘trip hop’. As I discuss later, however, the synonymous use of these terms is problematic.

There are several reasons why I chose to study trip hop in this thesis and ground my compositions within the Bristol sound style. The seed was planted many years ago when I saw a live recording of trip hop pioneers Portishead performing alongside a full orchestra. While I was enamoured with the use of orchestral instruments and textures in their music, I also saw the potential to delve deeper into the classical realm and incorporate approaches in other areas. Second, little scholarly attention has been paid to trip hop. This gap in the literature presents an opportunity to contribute original research to popular music studies, particularly regarding detailed musical analysis of the Bristol sound.

Third, the literature that exists is at times factually incorrect. For example, the entry on trip hop in *Oxford Music Online* states that string sections, guitars, and DJs are not commonly used.<sup>9</sup> This claim is difficult to defend as several well-known trip hop songs feature a string section (Massive Attack’s ‘Unfinished Sympathy’, Tricky’s ‘Hell is Round the Corner’, Portishead’s ‘Glory Box’ and ‘Roads’), the members of Massive Attack all come from a DJ background, and Portishead’s Adrian Utley is a guitarist.

Fourth, there are inconsistencies in the way popular music scholars contextualise trip hop. Brøvig-Hanssen describes it as a subgenre of electronica,<sup>10</sup> while Hesmondhalgh and Melville describe it as a subgenre of hip hop.<sup>11</sup> Clarke suggests its origins are in dance music, yet states that ‘some of it is impossible to dance to, and apparently closer to the contemplative listening aesthetic of electroacoustic music.’<sup>12</sup> Prendergast provides yet another description, suggesting

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<sup>9</sup>Will Fulford-Jones, *Oxford Music Online*, [http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/47223?q=trip+hop&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/subscriber/article/grove/music/47223?q=trip+hop&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit) (accessed 18 February, 2014).

<sup>10</sup>Ragnhild Brøvig-Hanssen, “Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings.” PhD diss., The University of Oslo, 2013.

<sup>11</sup>David Hesmondhalgh and Casper Melville, “Urban Breakbeat Culture: Repercussions of Hip Hop in the United Kingdom.” In *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*, ed. Tony Mitchell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 86-110.

<sup>12</sup>Eric F. Clarke, “Rhythm/Body/Motion: Tricky’s Contradictory Dance Music.” In *Musical Rhythm in the Age of Digital Reproduction*, ed. Anne Danielsen (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p105.

it is a blend of hip hop, dub reggae, slo-mo, soul, and film soundtrack.<sup>13</sup> Music journalists offer little help in providing a clear context for trip hop. *New Musical Express* described Massive Attack's *Blue Lines* (1991) as mixing 'soul, funk, reggae, house, classical, hip hop, and space rock.'<sup>14</sup> The sheer number of often-contradictory labels suggests there is significant doubt over how best to contextualise this music.

Finally, and of particular interest, is the discord between trip hop artists and those in the musical community. Massive Attack, Portishead, and Tricky are overwhelmingly regarded as pioneers of trip hop, yet all completely and consistently reject the notion. Despite the artists' objections, music industrialists, fans, and academics continually brand them with the trip hop label. A quick summary of the artists' sentiments and those in the musical community will showcase the vast divide surrounding the term 'trip hop.'

'Portishead, the British band who spawned the trip hop genre.'<sup>15</sup>

– Guitar Player Magazine

'Massive Attack...pretty well pioneered the sound that would become known as trip hop.'<sup>16</sup>

– Sunday Herald Sun, Australia

'Tricky...having all but invented the trip hop genre.'<sup>17</sup>

– The Times, United Kingdom

'[Trip hop] is just a shit word...any music that was sold as trip hop was shit.'<sup>18</sup>

– Portishead's Geoff Barrow

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<sup>13</sup> Mark Prendergast, *The Ambient Century: From Mahler to Trance - the Evolution of Sound in the Electronic Age* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Dele Fadele, "Review" *New Musical Express* June 1991.

<http://massiveattack.ie/media/gallery/nme-magazine-review-1/>. (accessed 9 August, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Paul Trynka, *Guitar Player* 32.1, January 1998: 24-25

<sup>16</sup> James Wigney, *Sunday Herald Sun*, Australia, 2 July 2010.

<sup>17</sup> David Sinclair, *The Times*, UK, 23 July 1999

<sup>18</sup> Matt Schild. "Portishead's Geoff Barrow." *AV Club* October 26, 2011,

<http://www.avclub.com/article/portisheads-geoff-barrow-63127>. (accessed 30 April, 2015).

‘We called it lover's hip hop. Forget all that trip hop bullshit.’<sup>19</sup>

– Massive Attack’s Mushroom

‘My music’s got nothing to do with that trip hop bollocks.’<sup>20</sup>

– Tricky

Authors in the field of popular music studies have implicitly argued that the validity of labels is not necessarily dependent on acceptance from the artists. Fabbri argues it is the *community* that accepts the rules of a genre, and that community is not limited to artists but also includes fans, journalists, record labels, and academics.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, artists do not have *carte blanche* over how their music is categorised, and yet their opinions cannot be discounted for the same reason; they too are a part of the community. This thesis attempts to mediate in this discussion and reconcile these divergent viewpoints.

### 1.3 Trip hop and the Bristol sound

Trip hop emerged in the South West England city of Bristol in the 1990s, yet despite its popularity and longevity there is still considerable debate and confusion about what trip hop actually is. The term ‘trip hop’ was first used by *Mixmag* in June 1994 to describe the track ‘In/Flux’ (1993) by DJ Shadow, and other similar artists on the Mo’ Wax record label.<sup>22</sup> As a descriptor, it was intended to evoke the qualities of the music with which it was associated - a ‘spacey, down-tempo form of hip hop that’s mostly abstract and instrumental.’<sup>23</sup> Despite initially being aligned with the instrumental music on the Mo’ Wax label, it was subsequently used to describe the song-based music of Bristol artists Massive Attack, Portishead, and Tricky. However, these artists have consistently rejected the tag, claiming their music has nothing to do with trip hop. Due to the controversy surrounding the term, some people prefer ‘Bristol sound’ as a stylistic descriptor. The difficulty is that these terms are either used synonymously or specifics are never given as to what distinguishes them. Within academic

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard Zuel, “The sluggish beats that shook the world.” *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 22, 2006. <http://massiveattack.ie/media/scans/mixmag-magazine-interview/>. (accessed 9 August, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Ted Kessler, “Tricky Up Your Ears.” *New Musical Express*, January 14, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Fabco Fabbri, “Browsing Music Spaces: Categories and the Musical Mind.” In *Critical Essays in Popular Musicology*, ed. Allan F. Moore, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 49–62.

<sup>22</sup> Dom Phillips, *Superstar DJs Here We Go* (Ebury Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p319.

literature, some authors prefer the term ‘trip hop’, others the ‘Bristol sound’, while others go back and forth, implying they are simply two names to describe the same thing. While trip hop is the preferred term within music journalism, other instances can be found where the terms are used interchangeably.<sup>24</sup>

The inconsistent usage of these terms is problematic for two reasons. First, the discursive conflict between those artists that reject the trip hop label and those that insist on applying it raises the issue of whether the label itself is meaningful and appropriate. Second, there is a wide range of diverse artists that are labeled with the trip hop tag, from the song-based music of Portishead to the abstract instrumental music of DJ Shadow. This diversity creates ambiguity about the true nature of trip hop and/or the Bristol sound, and therefore obfuscates which musical tradition should inform the compositions in this thesis. In order to address this discord, I argue that the Bristol sound is best understood as a *style* that relates to the trip hop *genre*. This argument is fully developed in chapter two. However, in the interim the term ‘Bristol sound’ references the musical style that developed in Bristol, England and was chiefly pioneered by the artists Massive Attack, Portishead, and Tricky. A full justification for stipulating these particular artists is presented in section 3.3.1.

#### **1.4 Evolution of the Bristol sound**

The Bristol sound is particularly indebted to the sound system culture of Caribbean music and the sample-based methodology of hip hop, both of which entered Bristol society via the black community. Bristol was a leading port in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and as such has long had a significant Caribbean population.<sup>25</sup> This population was subsequently boosted following the labour shortages and relaxed immigration policies after World War II.<sup>26</sup> Caribbean immigrants transported their culture and music and adapted them to life in Britain, where they were often barred from white leisure institutions due to racial

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Trip hop, also known as “the Bristol Sound,” was born in the U.K. city of Bristol.’ See James Hannaham, ‘Did Portishead Kill Trip Hop?’, <http://www.salon.com/2008/04/17/portishead/> (accessed 31 April, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Madge Dresser, “Remembering Slavery and Abolition in Bristol.” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 30, no. 2 (2009): 223–46.

<sup>26</sup> Hesmondhalgh and Melville, “Urban Breakbeat Culture: Repercussions of Hip Hop in the United Kingdom.”

segregation.<sup>27</sup> Faced with such exclusion, they were forced to rely on their own institutions of entertainment and recreation, and one institution that would become highly influential on the Bristol sound was the sound system.<sup>28</sup>

The term 'sound system' describes a small business operated by a handful of DJs and MCs who transport large stereo systems from venue to venue, providing music for house parties, dance halls, and other community events. They first appeared in the late 1940s in Kingston, playing American R&B records on radiograms, but they soon gravitated toward local ska and reggae as R&B gradually evolved into rock and roll, a style which held less appeal for Jamaicans.<sup>29</sup> Sound system culture appreciates recorded music over live performances by musicians, and the public performance of recorded music is a central theme. Records become raw material for spontaneous performances of cultural creation and the DJ and MC emerge as the principle agents of cultural expression.<sup>30</sup> Reggae offered a sense of ideological and cultural solidarity to the Caribbean community in Bristol, making critical and political commentaries that were relevant to the time and place.<sup>31</sup> As racial barriers began to come down, leading to greater integration of white and Caribbean society, the sound system culture moved into the clubs and bars, allowing reggae to spread throughout the wider community. The infamous Dug Out club became a main fixture of the sound system culture in the 1980s where DJs mixed reggae, funk, soul, and hip hop, attracting a diverse audience and sowing the seeds that would later develop into trip hop.<sup>32</sup>

When hip hop music and its culture arrived from America, it was appropriated into the sound system culture that was already firmly established, and the similarities between the two cultures, such as the treating of records as source material and the emergence of the DJ and MC as artist, provided for a natural assimilation. Hip hop was highly influential on music making in Bristol,

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<sup>27</sup> Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition From JA to UK* (London: Macmillan Education, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> Les Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth*.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Aint No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> Ken Pryce, *Endless Pressure: A Study of West-Indian Lifestyles in Bristol* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1979).

<sup>32</sup> Phil Johnson, *Straight Outta Bristol: Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky and the Roots of Trip-Hop* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996).

primarily in relation to DJing and production techniques.<sup>33</sup> The sound system approach of treating records as source material was taken further in hip hop as digital samplers became widely available and the process of sampling and reconstructing drum breaks from soul and funk records became the basis of a new style of production. The cross-genre fertilisation of hip hop, reggae, funk, and soul was developed by the sound systems and showcased at local clubs such as the Dug Out, and it is here that one sound system in particular, known as the Wild Bunch, rose to local prominence before reinventing itself as the group Massive Attack and gaining worldwide popularity.<sup>34</sup> Massive Attack's debut album *Blue Lines* (1991), often credited with creating the trip hop genre, fused elements of reggae, soul, and hip hop, creating a sound-collage style that reflected both the sound system culture and hip hop methodology they had adapted as the Wild Bunch. In addition, *Blue Lines* also introduced two other key players who would be instrumental in developing the Bristol sound. Adrian 'Tricky' Thaws featured as guest vocalist on three of the album tracks and Geoff Barrow, who would go on to form Portishead, worked as the tape operator on the album. Three years after *Blue Lines*' release, Portishead continued the sound-collage tradition with their debut album *Dummy* (1994), while Tricky followed in similar footsteps the following year with his debut album *Maxinquaye* (1995). These three albums are collectively regarded as the consolidation of trip hop and are responsible for elevating the Bristol sound to worldwide popularity.

## 1.5 Research Overview

### 1.5.1 Analysis of the Bristol sound

This thesis primarily focuses on two distinct yet related areas of research. The first is to undertake detailed musicological analysis of the Bristol sound style, examining the composition, performance, and production techniques most commonly used. It is not intended to be a comprehensive study encompassing all of the subtleties and variations that exist, but rather to provide a holistic view of the style that documents the most common recurring themes. The aim is not to focus on those musical qualities that are uniquely found in the Bristol sound above other styles of popular music, but rather to focus on those qualities that are

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<sup>33</sup> Hesmondhalgh and Melville, "Urban Breakbeat Culture: Repercussions of Hip Hop in the United Kingdom."

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, *Straight Outta Bristol: Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky and the Roots of Trip-Hop*.

most representative of the style as a whole. This task is approached qualitatively, drawing from a number of current theories in popular music analysis, and is discussed in more detail in sections 3.2 to 3.4.

The first task is to differentiate between the Bristol sound style and the trip hop genre. This distinction is detailed in section 2.5 but a quick summation here is useful. When considering the music of the Bristol sound and other trip hop artists through the lens of genre, there are a number of unifying factors, such as method of production, highlighted use of technology, and significant use of quotation. These commonalities not only justify the wide applicability of the term ‘trip hop’ but also strengthen the argument that trip hop is best considered a genre rather than a style. However, when considering the same music through the lens of style there are significant musical differences, particularly in terms of timbre, texture, and vocal persona. These differences validate the Bristol artist’s rejection of the trip hop label and strengthen the argument that the Bristol sound is best considered a style that relates to the trip hop genre.

The analysis focuses on the musical qualities of the Bristol sound and does not include detailed lyrical analysis. This is not to suggest that lyric analysis is not a fruitful area of inquiry, but rather because the aim of the thesis is to discover which musical traits are indicative of the Bristol sound style. Having said that, it is possible for a style of music to use recurring lyrical themes, such as urban poverty in hip hop or anarchistic tendencies in punk. Accordingly, lyrical analysis was restricted to any recurring patterns that are found throughout the songs under analysis and could therefore be considered a common trope in the Bristol sound style.

### **1.5.2 Composition**

The second area of research is to extend the Bristol sound by incorporating compositional approaches from classical music. The goal is to arrive at new understandings of the ways in which this can be achieved. This task is approached using practice-led research by composing a number of works that each explore a different method of drawing from the classical tradition, and is discussed in greater detail in section 3.4. Classical music idioms were appropriated in areas of harmony (tone clock, pitch class sets); melody (alternate scales, thematic

development); rhythm (aleatoricism, odd meters); form (discursive, extended); instrumentation (orchestral instruments); and texture (polyphonic, pointillism) among others. Each composition focused on one primary classical device and one or two secondary devices. Each composition is accompanied by a detailed analysis that describes which musical elements were retained from the Bristol sound and which were appropriated from classical music. This thesis does not attempt to extend the performance or production techniques of the Bristol sound, rather these techniques are retained as a means of grounding the compositions within the appropriate tradition.

As the Bristol sound is strongly influenced by the intermediary use of technology in the production process, discussed in greater detail in section 2.5, 2.6, 4.7, and 4.8, the compositions were realised as studio recordings. While it would not be difficult to realise these works in a live performance, capturing them as a studio recording allows for greater retention of many Bristol sound characteristics. A number of different singers were used throughout the recordings, primarily based on how their vocal characteristics suited the aesthetic quality of the song.

The lyrics for each song were written by the composer. However, given the research aims greater emphasis was placed on the musical content of the original compositions than the lyrical content. Where common lyrical themes were found throughout the Bristol sound, these influenced the lyrical writing in the original compositions. Furthermore, the lyrics avoided any themes that are exceedingly inconsistent with the Bristol sound style. As lyric writing is not a central issue of this thesis, the lyrics are included as an appendix along with a brief discussion of their thematic direction.

### **1.5.3 Audience feedback**

A final area that was not central to the primary research goal but did influence the research process was audience feedback. Audience feedback was incorporated into the thesis as a means of offering an outside assessment of each composition. Specifically, whether or not listeners familiar with the Bristol sound felt the compositions were grounded in that tradition while simultaneously extending the style by incorporating elements of classical music. Accordingly, audience

feedback was restricted to those participants that are knowledgeable about the Bristol sound style. The audience feedback also distinguished between those participants that are music practitioners and those that are not. This was based on the principle that a person's musical background might inform their response to a work, and that practitioners may perceive musical qualities in the original compositions that non-practitioners may not. The results of the audience surveys were useful in suggesting which musical elements are essential in retaining the Bristol sound character and also which compositional approaches are effective in suggesting a classical influence, and thereby extending the style in a new direction.

The composition process did not constitute an iterative cycle of composing a work, receiving audience feedback, and applying feedback toward successive compositions. While this would be a sound approach, the practical necessities of producing completed works means that they often overlap and more than one project is often under development at any given time. Furthermore, the goal was not to compose an idealized work based on the feedback of others but rather to test the relative merits of each compositional approach. Therefore incorporating audience feedback into the composing process in a linear fashion was not required. Audience feedback was occasionally considered in subsequent compositions but not as part of a systematic process.

Audience feedback was conducted using a questionnaire that was distributed alongside a recording of a completed composition. This questionnaire is discussed in greater detail in section 3.5 and is included as appendix three.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

Given the intended aims and motivations discussed above, this thesis addresses the following research questions:

1) Which composition, performance, and production techniques are most commonly used in the Bristol sound, and how are they used in relation to each other?

2) How can one extend the Bristol sound by applying techniques and devices from classical music?

3) Which compositional devices appropriated from classical music are effective in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener?

## 1.7 Chapter Summary

Given these research questions, the thesis is laid out as follows. Chapter one concludes by specifying how this thesis contributes to existing literature on popular music. Chapter two then discusses aspects of the literature that informed this thesis, and is divided into five sections. Section 2.2 discusses previous examples of classical incorporation in popular music. While not intended to be an exhaustive study, this discussion helps to situate the research amongst similar musical endeavours.<sup>35</sup> Section 2.3 addresses previous writings on trip hop music and pays explicit attention to the ambiguity of the terms ‘trip hop’ and ‘Bristol sound’, as well as the lack of musical detail in current writings. Section 2.4 discusses current theories of style and genre, which informs the discussion in section 2.5 that argues the Bristol sound is a style that relates to the trip hop genre. Section 2.6 discusses current theories of intertextuality in recorded popular music and notes that they are insufficient in dealing with the numerous types of intertextual references found in the Bristol sound. Therefore, the chapter concludes by proposing an expanded theory of intertextuality in order to gain a deeper understanding of the Bristol sound style.

Chapter three outlines the methodologies used in this thesis. Section 3.1 outlines the overall approach for analysing the Bristol sound style, while section 3.2 discusses how a corpus was selected for analysis. Section 3.3 details the specific analytical techniques used to extrapolate the musical information contained within the Bristol sound, before section 3.4 discusses performative research and the practice-led framework that guided the composition process. Section 3.5 concludes the chapter by outlining the methodology for the audience feedback component.

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<sup>35</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Karen Garvin “The Crossover Conflict: Creating a Framework for Combining Classical and Popular Music in the 21st Century.” (Masters diss., American University, 2012).

Chapter four presents a detailed analysis of the Bristol sound using the techniques discussed in section 3.3. The analysis focuses on areas of form, harmony, time, functional layers, soundbox, persona, timbre, and intertextuality in order to provide a holistic overview of the Bristol sound style. Recurring lyrical patterns are also discussed. Rather than analysing each song in the corpus and then attempting to unify the results, the analysis progresses along the lines of recurring themes and patterns that are evident in the Bristol sound. Each section concludes with a brief summary that explicates the most commonly used patterns and devices.

Chapter five presents the original compositions. Each piece includes written analysis detailing which musical elements were retained from the Bristol sound and which were appropriated from classical music. The accompanying CDs also contain recorded versions of each of the compositions as well as fully notated scores.

Chapter six offers some conclusions, discusses the research limitations, and raises potential applications towards future research.

## **1.8 Contributions to the literature**

This thesis contributes to existing popular music literature in four ways. First, it provides comprehensive musical analysis of the Bristol sound, explicating its main stylistic features in terms of composition, performance, and production practices. Second, it clearly explicates the relationship between the Bristol sound and trip hop, providing a practical example of side-by-side comparisons of style and genre in relation to a single musical tradition. This specification also addresses the discord between those artists that reject the term and those in the musical community that apply it. Third, this thesis builds on current theories of intertextuality in recorded popular music and provides a new model for addressing the novel referential practices commonly found in the Bristol sound. Finally, this thesis demonstrates numerous ways classical music can be incorporated into the Bristol sound style. This not only makes an original contribution to the evolution of the Bristol sound, it also provides a model for other attempts at incorporating classical elements into popular music.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview

This chapter discusses relevant literature that has informed this thesis. Section 2.2 discusses previous examples of incorporating classical idioms within popular music and looks at various ways this has been achieved. Section 2.3 addresses previous writings on trip hop and notes the lack of musicological detail and the ambiguity of the terms ‘trip hop’ and ‘Bristol sound.’ Section 2.4 discusses the terms ‘style’ and ‘genre’ and outlines their similar points of reference while also highlighting their different areas of inquiry. This sets up the discussion in section 2.5, which positions the Bristol sound and trip hop according to this framework and explicates the unifying characteristics of trip hop before noting specific differences found in the Bristol sound. This section raises another issue to be addressed. One of the unifying characteristics of trip hop is the extensive use of intertextuality, which is discussed using Lacasse’s model of transtextuality.<sup>36</sup> While this model is often cited in academic literature, it does not account for all the referential practices found in the Bristol sound. Therefore, section 2.6 offers an expanded version of Lacasse’s model and discusses this with reference to several Bristol sound songs.

Before continuing, it is prudent to offer some specificity regarding the term ‘classical music’ as it has a wide variety of meaning.<sup>37</sup> Musicologists typically use the term to refer to the musical period from 1750 to 1825, particularly in Vienna, typified by the music of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.<sup>38</sup> However, this definition has not been employed here. Rather, the term is used to cover the musical tradition of European Western art music from 1600 to the present day that is commonly associated with performance in a concert hall on acoustic, orchestral instruments.<sup>39</sup> There is an enormous amount of stylistic variety within this time frame, which is one of the reasons the label is problematic. However, Tagg notes some specific characteristics of classical music, in a broad sense, as part of his

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<sup>36</sup> Serge Lacasse, “Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music.” In *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 35-58.

<sup>37</sup> See Jonathan Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), and Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?: Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) for a discussion on the difficulties of the label.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Hickok, *Exploring Music* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 1993).

<sup>39</sup> Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?*

axiomatic triangle of folk, art (classical), and popular music.<sup>40</sup> He argues that classical music can be distinguished from popular music in the following ways:

- 1) Classical music is typically conceived for small-scale distribution whereas popular music is conceived for mass distribution.
- 2) Classical music is primarily stored and distributed in written form (notation) whereas popular music is stored and distributed in non-written form (primarily sound recordings).
- 3) Classical music is possible in both agrarian and industrial societies, whereas popular music is only possible in an industrial, monetary economy where it is traded as a commodity.
- 4) Classical music is often the subject of written theory and aesthetics, whereas popular music is typically not.<sup>41</sup>

Accordingly, the term ‘classical music’ is used as an umbrella term to denote ‘art music’ as opposed to ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ music. While the classical label is problematic, as many authors acknowledge, it is widely used in the vernacular sense in academic literature, particularly when seeking to engage a non-specialist audience.<sup>42</sup> The analysis of each composition in chapter five adds further specificity by detailing the classical idioms used and noting the specific period in which they were often employed.

## 2.2 Classical influence in popular music

Incorporating classical music into popular music is not a new concept and has been implemented in a number of ways. This thesis focuses on artists who composed within a popular music framework but sought to expand the boundaries of their musical language by appropriating elements from classical music. It is from this tradition that the compositions in this thesis have been approached, rather than incorporating popular music into classical music or attempting to

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<sup>40</sup> Phillip Tagg, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice.” *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 37–65.

<sup>41</sup> While this was a valid point at the time of writing (1982), it is less relevant today.

<sup>42</sup> See Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music?*, Tagg, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice.”, and Norman Lebrecht. *The Life and Death of Classical Music: Featuring the 100 Best and 20 Worst Recordings Ever Made* (New York: Anchor books, 2007).

hybridise the two. Accordingly, the discussion excludes any musical works that fall outside of this tradition.<sup>43</sup>

## 2.2.1 Quotation

Many popular songs drew their inspiration from classical works, however there are also many songs that directly quote a work from the classical canon. For example, Frank Zappa frequently quoted the music of Stravinsky in his compositions, claiming that ‘such gestures were philanthropic, intended to bring “serious music” to a lay audience.’<sup>44</sup> ‘Status Back Baby’ (1992) is a straightforward, doo-wop infused pop song, yet also contains several melodic fragments from the first tableau of *Petrushka*. Similarly, ‘In-A-Gadda-Stravinsky’ (1988) combines the opening melody from *The Rite of Spring* with the famous bass riff from ‘In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida’. These references to high and low art are common in Zappa’s music and are often forcefully juxtaposed, something Zappa evidently took great pleasure in doing. Zappa was open in his acknowledgement of quotations, arguing that the listener must recognise these borrowings to understand the musical irony.<sup>45</sup>

Conversely, some popular music artists will quote a work from the classical canon to invoke a broad cultural association. Such quotations are intended to impart a generalised atmosphere and help create a mood, whether or not the listener identifies the source.<sup>46</sup> Williams argues that Xzibit’s ‘Symphony in X Major’ (2002), a track that quotes Carlos’ *Switched on Bach* (1968) version of J.S. Bach’s *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, should more appropriately be interpreted as a generic association to classical music, rather than focusing on the direct link to J.S. Bach.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Metzger argues that ‘quotation performs as a cultural agent ... When a musician borrows from a piece, he draws upon not only the melody but also the cultural associations of that piece.’<sup>48</sup> Such cultural

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<sup>43</sup> See section 1.2 for examples of works outside of this tradition.

<sup>44</sup> Andre Mount, “Does Serious Music Belong in Pop? Borrowings From Stravinsky in the Music of Frank Zappa.” *American Musicological Society Northern California Chapter Conference*, February 6, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Phillip Keppler Jr., “Some Comments on Musical Quotation.” *The Musical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1956): 473–485.

<sup>47</sup> Justin A. Williams, “Theoretical Approaches to Quotation in Hip Hop Recordings.”

*Contemporary Music Review* 33, no. 2 (2014): 188–209.

<sup>48</sup> David Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge:

associations frequently fall under the guise of patriotism, nationalism, or religion, and are often used by a composer to ally a work with a particular place, period, or event.<sup>49</sup> For example, Sting and Robbie Williams both quoted Russian composer Prokofiev in ‘Russians’ (1985) and ‘Party like a Russian’ (2016) respectively,<sup>50</sup> presumably to add a sense of Russian flare to their work.<sup>51</sup>

## 2.2.2 Instrumentation/texture

There is a large body of popular music that references classical music by way of instrumentation and texture. This approach resonates with Hatten’s theory of stylistic intertextuality, which occurs when a composer adopts distinctive features of a style without referencing a specific work within that style.<sup>52</sup> For example, The Beatles appropriated classical instruments and textures in many of their songs, such as the string-octet in ‘Eleanor Rigby’ (1966), the Baroque-inspired piano solo on ‘In My Life’ (1965), and the string quartet on ‘Yesterday’ (1965).<sup>53</sup> These stylistic references were an attempt to push the boundaries of rock and roll formalism, alongside explorations of Indian and experimental music, and move beyond their ‘mop-top popstar image into counterculture icons and modernist artists.’<sup>54</sup> Many other popular music artists followed similar trajectories, working within well-established traditions during their early career before expanding their musical boundaries in later works with increased sonic colours and experimentation with texture and form. The Beach Boys were ‘initially perceived as a potent pop act [but] later gained greater respect as muses of post-World War II American suburban angst.’<sup>55</sup> The trajectory from ‘pop act’ to ‘muses’ is personified in the sonic explorations on the critically acclaimed *Pet Sounds*

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Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Keppler, “Some Comments on Musical Quotation.”

<sup>50</sup> ‘Russians’ quotes *Lieutenant Kijé* while ‘Party like a Russian’ quotes *Dance of the Knights* from *Romeo and Juliet*.

<sup>51</sup> The use of quotation in music is discussed further in section 2.6.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Hatten, “The Place of Intertextuality in Music Studies.” *American Journal of Semiotics* 3, no. 4 (1985): 69–82.

<sup>53</sup> During the recording of ‘In My Life’, John Lennon asked George Martin to come up with something Baroque sounding for the bridge section. Martin composed the brief piano excerpt and recorded it at half speed. He then doubled the speed of the tape player, transposing the music one octave higher and also giving a harpsichord quality to the piano timbre. See Walter Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians: The Quarry Men Through Rubber Soul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Doyle Greene, *Rock, Counterculture and the Avant-Garde, 1966-1970: How the Beatles, Frank Zappa and the Velvet Underground Defined an Era* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016), p10.

<sup>55</sup> Timothy Thomas-Anthony White, “The Beach Boys”, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/the-Beach-Boys> (accessed 2 December, 2016).

(1966). Composer Phillip Glass stated ‘the introduction of classical elements in the arrangements, production concepts in terms of overall sound which were novel at the time - all these elements give *Pet Sounds* a freshness that, 30 years later, is immediately there for the listener.’<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Guns ‘n’ Roses’ debut album *Appetite for Destruction* (1987) was firmly ensconced in the hard rock tradition with the typical instrumentation of vocals, guitar, drums, bass, and keyboards. However, their third album complemented the traditional rock ensemble with a full orchestra on the nine minute long ‘November Rain’ (1991). Aerosmith also moved beyond the blues-rock roots that dominated their earlier albums with the orchestral accompaniment on their single ‘I Don’t Want to Miss a Thing’ (1998).

### 2.2.3 Rearrangement/orchestration

The previously mentioned examples feature orchestral instruments as integral elements of a song’s initial production. An offshoot of this phenomenon is the practice of orchestrating and re-arranging established popular songs, often for the purposes of a live album where an artist performs a concert of previous material with the backing of a full orchestra. Table 2.1 shows some of the better-known examples.

**Table 2.1: Orchestration examples in popular music.**

Artist	Album	Orchestra	Date
Kiss	Symphony: Alive IV	Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	2003
Eric Clapton	24 Nights	National Philharmonic Orchestra	1991
Metallica	S & M	San Francisco Symphony	1999
Scorpions	Moment of Glory	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	2000

While these examples fit within the tradition of incorporating classical music into popular music, they are distinct from the previous examples in that they cannot be considered original compositions; rather they are rearrangements of existing songs. Accordingly, rearrangement and orchestration was not a technique used in this thesis.

<sup>56</sup> Brian Wilson, <https://www.kennedy-center.org/Artist/A18317> (accessed 2 December, 2016).

## 2.2.4 Compositional techniques

Perhaps the most overt example of classical incorporation within popular music is found in the progressive rock movement. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, groups such as King Crimson, Yes, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake & Palmer (ELP) attempted to inject elements of high art music into rock, often using complex harmonic structures, unusual metres and extended forms. Many progressive rock artists were explicit in their desire to extend the boundaries of rock by drawing from the classical tradition. King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp notes:

I was listening to Hendrix, Clapton with John Mayall's Blues-breakers, the Bartok string quartets, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Dvorak's *New World Symphony*...they all spoke to me the same way. Perhaps different dialects, but it was all the same language...My interest is in how to take the energy and spirit of rock music and extend it to the music drawing from my background as part of the European tonal harmonic tradition. In other words, what would Hendrix sound like playing Bartok?<sup>57</sup>

The English middle class background of many progressive rock artists goes a long way in explaining their familiarity and affinity for classical music. Classical music plays a more important role in the lives of European middle class than their American counterparts, and the members of many progressive rock groups attended private schools and studied music at post-secondary level.<sup>58</sup> Greg Lake, of ELP, commented it was as natural for them to draw on their European classical heritage as it was for American popular musicians to draw on their native blues, jazz, and gospel heritage.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps due to its association with high art, progressive rock is often the subject of academic discourse, where musicologists attempt to pin down the

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<sup>57</sup> John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge', and the Boundaries of Style." In *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, ed. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3-31, p8.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p148.

precise ways in which the style borrowed from the classical tradition. In his discussion of Yes' 'Close to the Edge' (1972), Covach notes the use of a pseudo baroque figure played by electric sitar, electric bass, and pipe organ. He suggests 'while this passage is not likely to be mistaken for authentic baroque music, the texture, instrumentation, and counterpoint make clear reference to the baroque style.'<sup>60</sup> He also notes the track's frequent use of metrical dissonance, where contrasting time signatures are used simultaneously in a manner similar to Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, and the use of traditional harmony and voice leading techniques, describing them as 'stereotypically "classical".'<sup>61</sup> The song is also nearly 19 minutes in length, well beyond the conventional length for popular song.

Spicer similarly notes many references to classical music in his discussion of *Supper's Ready* (1972) by Genesis. He suggests the tonal ambiguity of the opening tableau is reminiscent of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* in its mixture of sonorities drawn from parallel modes. He also notes the use of distant modulation and a recurring use of an F<sup>#</sup> half-diminished seventh chord, a transposed 'Tristan chord',<sup>62</sup> which he suggests is used at crucial moments within the song in the manner of a Wagnerian *leitmotif*. Spicer proposes *Supper's Ready* is an example of Genesis' craft for composing complex compositions where 'multiple shifts of texture, affect, and tonality echo those typically found in a nineteenth-century symphonic poem.'<sup>63</sup> Indeed, in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, John Covach writes:

Among the most ardent fans of progressive rock at the time, there was the perception that these musicians were attempting to shape a new kind of classical music – a body of music that would not disappear after a few weeks or months on the pop charts, but would instead be listened to (and perhaps even studied) like the music of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms for years to come. In their sometimes uncompromising adherence to what they took to be lofty art-music standards, progressive rock musicians often seemed to be more

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<sup>60</sup> John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge', and the Boundaries of Style." p10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p11.

<sup>62</sup> The 'Tristan chord' is the informal name given to the chord in the opening phrase of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

<sup>63</sup> Mark Spicer, "Large-scale Strategy and Compositional Design in the Early Music of Genesis." In *Expression in Pop-rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Garland, 2000), 77-111, p78.

interested in standing shoulder to shoulder with Richard Wagner or Igor Stravinsky than with Elvis Presley or Little Richard.<sup>64</sup>

These examples provide models for the ways one can incorporate classical music into popular music, and explicate the effect each approach has on the overall character of a song. The creative works in this thesis are most closely aligned with progressive rock in that many of the references to classical music exist at a structural level, such as the use of alternate forms of pitch organisation, synthetic scales, metrical dissonance, and extended forms. However, further references to classical music are also frequently made by way of quotation, instrumentation, and texture. A further similarity between the creative works and progressive rock is that both are grounded in a very specific style. Progressive rock artists expanded traditional rock music by appropriating structural elements from classical music, while this thesis expands the musical language of the Bristol sound.

### **2.3 Previous writings on trip hop**

The amount of academic writing on trip hop is comparatively small, and the majority of writing that exists focuses on the historical, sociological and cultural aspects of trip hop while offering only broad statements when discussing the actual music. Brøvig-Hanssen has made significant contributions regarding the *sound* of trip hop, particularly in regard to her notion of opaque mediation,<sup>65</sup> however formal musical qualities such as harmony, rhythm, form, and melody have yet to be addressed.

#### **2.3.1 Historical**

Only one full-length book has been devoted to trip hop, written by music critic Phil Johnson. In *Straight Outta Bristol: Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky and the Roots of Trip-Hop*, Johnson provides a comprehensive history of the emerging Bristol scene and development of trip hop. He argues the emergence of a Bristol scene can be traced to the jazzy funk music of artists such as Pigbag, and Rip Rig + Panic in the 1980s. He discusses the interconnected social scene in

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<sup>64</sup> John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge', and the Boundaries of Style." p4.

<sup>65</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

Bristol and focuses on the famous Dug Out club, where DJs and live bands attracted a diverse clientele by playing a mixture of punk, reggae, funk, and hip hop. Johnson stresses the importance of the Dug Out scene as the breeding ground for the cross-genre fusions that were picked up by sound systems like the Wild Bunch, who later evolved into Massive Attack.<sup>66</sup> Johnson cites Massive Attack as the originators of the Bristol sound and pays particular attention to the stylistic multiplicity of their music and sample-based methodology, both of which he argues are the result of their time spent mixing music at the Dug Out. After devoting a chapter to Massive Attack, he gives similar attention to Tricky and Portishead who, along with Massive Attack, brought trip hop to international attention.

The strength of Johnson's book lies in the historical detail regarding the emergence of the Bristol sound and the biographical information of the key players involved. He discusses several events in Bristol's history, such as the St Pauls riot in 1980 and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and discusses the impact of these events on the city's music and culture. He also interviewed several of the artists he discussed in the book, providing invaluable insight into the sociological and cultural make up of the Bristol scene. While Johnson's book does an excellent job of documenting the history of trip hop, it is intended for a general audience and does not offer any specific musical details in terms of analysis. Instead, he makes rather broad statements meant to convey an overall impression of trip hop, describing it as 'dance music that you actually listen to' and 'hip hop beats whose customary urgency is deconstructed into dreamy, erotic soundscapes.'<sup>67</sup> Johnson's colourful prose is consistent with his journalistic background and is entirely appropriate given his intended audience, however it offers little to the musicologist seeking to understand the specific musical characteristics of trip hop. Furthermore, Johnson does little to address the discord between the Bristol sound and trip hop, regarding both the contrasting labels and discursive nature of the music grouped under the trip hop moniker. Though he seems to prefer the term 'trip hop' he also uses the term 'Bristol sound' synonymously throughout his book. His one brief foray into the possible difference is his argument that 'the Bristol boys tend to favour songs while trip hop proper goes for long, dreamy

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<sup>66</sup> Johnson likens the importance of the Dug Out to the Bristol sound as that of Milton's Playhouse to the development of bebop.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, *Straight Outta Bristol*, p11.

loops.’<sup>68</sup> Although he seems to acknowledge a difference, his distinction lacks detail and he offers no definition for ‘trip hop proper’.

### 2.3.2 Sociological

Webb discusses the Bristol sound through the lens of sociology in his book chapter ‘Interrogating the Production of Sound and Place: the Bristol phenomenon, from Lunatic Fringe to Worldwide Massive.’ He stresses the importance and influence of locality on popular music, viewing Bristol as the site of a musical ‘milieu’ situated within a ‘cultural field of production.’<sup>69</sup> He draws heavily from cultural studies and ethnomusicology and pays explicit attention to the networks of location, production, and national and global influences. Like Johnson, Webb pays careful consideration to the diverse sociological make up of the Dug Out, describing it as ‘an ethnically mixed club, with Rastas, African-Caribbeans, Clifton Trendies, Punks, Soul Boys and Girls.’<sup>70</sup> He briefly credits the Dug Out for bringing together many of the people who would develop the Bristol sound, but unlike Johnson he does not credit the diverse music of the Dug Out for the stylistic multiplicity of the Bristol sound. Rather, Webb cites the individual music scenes that existed in Bristol, such as the jazz scene, reggae scene, and punk scene. While he is obviously knowledgeable about such localised music scenes, he does not draw explicit connections between each scene and the Bristol sound beyond mentioning certain personal that were active in both communities. For example, he dedicates a paragraph to the Bristol reggae scene and notes some of the better-known performers. Webb seems to imply that the reggae scene aided in the development of the Bristol sound, however all he offers in support are tenuous connections, for example that local reggae band Restriction included engineer Dave McDonald who would later act as engineer for Portishead.

Webb’s subsequent examination of other musical scenes offers little more. He describes Bristol’s jazz scene and discusses the more prominent musicians but rests his argument on the genre-swapping activities of one or two individuals,

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p17.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Webb, *Exploring the Networked Worlds of Popular Music: Milieu Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p69.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p72.

such as jazz trumpeter Andy Hague who played on Portishead's first two albums, or Portishead's Adrian Utley who began his career as a jazz guitarist. The weakness in Webb's writing is that, while in many cases his statements are actually correct, the arguments rely solely on artist's biographies to demonstrate the various stylistic connections. He puts forward:

Tracing their individual histories and movements across and through different spaces of musical, artistic, and aesthetic development, and how the narrative of each particular milieu became entwined and utilised in their music can provide us with a theoretical understanding of the gestation of specific musical milieu.<sup>71</sup>

Like Johnson, there is no specific detail regarding the musical characteristics of the Bristol sound, rather an over-reliance on generalised statements such as 'the genre...was a combination of slow hip hop beats, heavy dub-reggae-influenced bass lines, big string arrangements that were either sampled from film soundtracks or composed, indie/alternate rock guitar lines, jazz trumpet or sax flourishes and soulful jazz-influenced vocals.'<sup>72</sup> He also fails to address the distinction between the Bristol sound and trip hop, viewing them as two words that describe the same thing. While he prefers the term 'Bristol sound', which is to be expected given his focus on location, he notes that the music press applied the term 'trip hop.'

### 2.3.3 Cultural

In *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*, Hesmondhalgh and Melville discuss trip hop as a result of the cultural connection between black communities in England, America, and the Caribbean, drawing from Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic.<sup>73</sup> Rather than viewing trip hop as a British appropriation of American hip hop, they suggest that 'black cultures in Britain, the Caribbean and the US [are] linked in a complex network of cultural flows.'<sup>74</sup> By considering trip hop music as part of a diaspora that links black British,

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p80.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p84.

<sup>73</sup> See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Hesmondhalgh and Melville, "Urban Breakbeat Culture: Repercussions of Hip Hop in the United Kingdom.", p87.

American, and Caribbean cultures, they provide a theoretical context for understanding the mixture of sample-based methodology, the importance of sound system culture and the unique, English style of rapping that can be heard in the Bristol sound. They argue that hip hop emerged into a British scene that was already strongly rooted in a sound system culture that fostered black self-expression and channeled critiques of racism and colonialism, obviating the need for wholesale conversion.<sup>75</sup> Rather than widespread appropriation, hip-hop's practices, technologies, and aesthetics were assimilated into a black cultural institution that, by the time of hip-hop's arrival, already had a longstanding tradition.

While this assimilation did not completely avoid the imitation of American hip hop, it did call into question the extent to which it should serve as a model and raised two important issues. English rappers must decide whether to adopt a Brooklyn accent and risk being accused of inauthenticity, or try to rap convincingly in an English accent that could potentially sound unfamiliar, and again be viewed as inauthentic when compared to the American totem. Likewise, if an English rapper were to adopt American hip hop's often misogynist lyrical themes that reference guns, cars, and personal wealth, it would rob British hip hop of its ability to speak to, and for, the black community where guns and cars are rare and self-aggrandizing is somewhat less acceptable.<sup>76</sup> Early efforts which were deemed to be derivative of American hip hop failed to capture the public's attention, leading British rappers to try and develop a style and message that was more obviously rooted in British culture. This new, English, style of hip hop is evident in the music of Massive Attack and Tricky, who rap in English accents and reference English culture. Hesmondhalgh and Melville's discussion is extremely insightful and elucidates how hip hop and reggae informed the development of trip hop. However, their discussion focuses entirely on the 'how' of trip hop at the expense of the 'what' and foregoes any specific musical analysis. Like Johnson and Webb, they rely on generalised statements that are high on imagery but low on detail, describing trip hop as 'disparate...laid back, downbeat, even "miserabilist".'<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p104.

Hesmondhalgh and Melville briefly address the overreach of the term ‘trip hop’ and draw a distinction between two different types, though they refrain from using the term ‘Bristol sound’. They describe the first type of trip hop as instrumental hip hop, associated with the Mo’ Wax label, while the second type is a synthesis of hip hop sensibilities and the format of conventional rock, citing Portishead’s *Dummy* as the prime example.<sup>78</sup> Here one begins to see a distinction between the abstract, instrumental music of Mo’ Wax artists like DJ Shadow and the song-based approach of artists like Portishead, Massive Attack, and Tricky. This distinction is similar to that proposed by Johnson, though like Johnson it lacks detail and fails to address specific musical qualities that unite trip hop artists or the numerous distinctions between trip hop and the Bristol sound.

### 2.3.4 The sound of trip hop

The most significant writing that addresses specific musical qualities of trip hop is a chapter in Brøvig-Hanssen’s doctoral dissertation. She focuses on the *sound* of trip hop, paying particular attention to its lo-fi quality, and discusses this characteristic within the framework of mediation - ‘the process of recording, editing, and treating sounds with various signal processing effects.’<sup>79</sup> She distinguishes between transparent mediation, which seeks to hide the intermediary existence of technology, and opaque mediation, which draws explicit attention to the mediation process. She cites the Bristol sound artists as examples of opaque mediation, where the sonic signatures of pre-digital equipment, such as a vinyl record player, were used to create an aesthetic effect. Brøvig-Hanssen offers an in-depth analysis of the Portishead song ‘Strangers’, noting the forceful juxtaposition of analogue signatures and digital silence, and argues that while Portishead ‘plunder the analog past, they overtly embrace the digital present as well.’<sup>80</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen convincingly argues that many of the cultural and historical references that are found in Portishead’s music are further supported by exaggerated analogue noise, such as a vinyl record or limited frequency response of a transistor radio. Thus, her analysis is viewed through both a technological as well as cultural lens and she places the music as part of the wider retro movement.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p105.

<sup>79</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, “Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings.” p14.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p95.

While Brøvig-Hanssen provides significant detail regarding the musical characteristics of trip hop, her focus is on the sound rather than any formal musical elements. Indeed, areas of harmony, rhythm or melody are never addressed. In addition, she does not provide any distinction between trip hop and the Bristol sound and addresses the discord only in passing, stating that ‘several of the artists since identified with this subgenre of electronica prefer the label “Bristol sound,” since it was in this small town on the west coast of England that this particular musical style emerged.’<sup>81</sup> Implicit in this statement is her view that the two terms are interchangeable.

To summarise, none of the above works offer a comprehensive analysis of the musical qualities of trip hop. The majority of writing focuses on cultural and sociological aspects of the genre, which though they provide a good starting point for addressing musical characteristics, offer little detail to the analytical musicologist. Brøvig-Hanssen makes a considerable contribution to understanding the sonic qualities of trip hop music but chooses to forgo analysis of formal musical qualities such as rhythm, harmony, or form. Her analysis also focuses on Portishead, mentioning the work of Massive Attack and Tricky only briefly. Additionally, none of the previous authors offer comprehensive details in how the Bristol sound differs from trip hop, indeed a number of them simply use the terms synonymously, nor do they address in any detail the artists’ rejection of the label. This thesis addresses the gap in the literature by offering specific musical analysis of the Bristol sound, as well as explicating how the Bristol sound is related to, yet distinct from trip hop.

## **2.4 Style and genre**

Before outlining the argument that the Bristol sound is a style that relates to the trip hop genre, the following section briefly discusses how the terms ‘style’ and ‘genre’ are used throughout this thesis. Genre and style function as categorical conventions, serving to identify similar traits across a range of musical works and artists. As they share common areas of inquiry, difficulties arise when attempting to distinguish between the two terms and, if they are different, articulating how they relate to one another. Fabbri argues ‘in most musicological

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p96.

literature...the formal and technical rules seem to be the only ones taken into consideration, to the point where genre, style and form become synonymous.<sup>82</sup> In order to distinguish between genre and style, Fabbri defines genre as ‘a set of musical events whose course is governed by rules accepted by a community.’<sup>83</sup> The term ‘community’ accounts for the creators of a musical work and also those responsible for its organisation, distribution, and reception.<sup>84</sup> By emphasising the notion of community, the musical events he describes refer not only to formal musical events such as tempo, form, or instrumentation, but also extra-musical events such as behaviour, ideology, and semiotics. These events are governed by the rules collectively agreed upon by the community, and such rules may be explicitly communicated or implicitly understood. These rules aid the listener in understanding the kind of music they are listening to, suggesting how it should best be interpreted, and can lessen the unfamiliarity experienced when encountering a new genre of music. Kallberg argues genre can be understood as a kind of generic contract between composer and listener, stating ‘the composer agrees to use some of the conventions, patterns, and gestures of a genre, and the listener consents to interpret some aspects of the piece in a way conditioned by this genre.’<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, labeling a type of music as a genre describes certain musical details that are expected to exist within a work as well as certain social conditions that are expected to inform the interpretation of that work.

If genre describes a musical work with regard to both musical and extra-musical practices, this suggests that the notion of style is unnecessary. Fabbri defines style as ‘a recurring arrangement of features in musical events which is typical of an individual, a group of musicians, a genre, a place, a period of time.’<sup>86</sup> Here the emphasis is on the formal musical code, whereas genre relates to all kinds of codes, therefore the two terms cover different semantic fields. The distinction between genre and style can be understood in terms of scope and level of articulation. Genre has a wider scope of inquiry, accounting for musical and non-musical properties, while style focuses on formal musical properties. While

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<sup>82</sup> Franco Fabbri, “A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications.” *Popular Music Perspectives* (1981): 52–59.

<sup>83</sup> Fabbri, “Browsing Music Spaces: Categories and the Musical Mind.” 49–62.

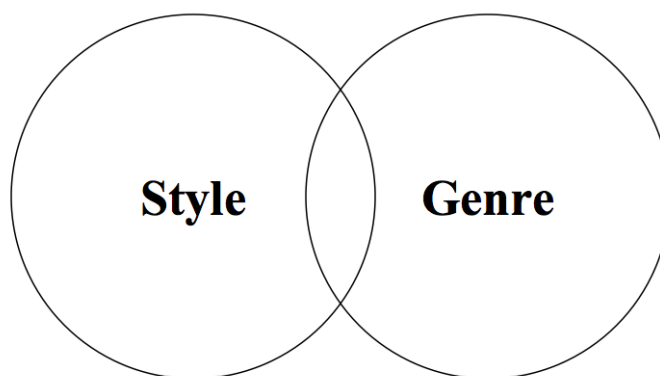
<sup>84</sup> Thus a community includes composers, performers, fans, critics, record labels, journalists, and academics.

<sup>85</sup> Jeffrey Kallberg, “The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin’s Nocturne in G Minor.” *19th-Century Music* 11, no. 3 (Spring, 1988): 238–61.

<sup>86</sup> Fabbri, “Browsing Music Spaces: Categories and the Musical Mind.” 49–62.

genre accounts for musical properties in terms of a common musical competence, style articulates these musical properties with a higher degree of specificity and an expanded musical competence.

Relating genre and style in this way suggests the possibility that style is nested within genre, implying a hierarchal relationship. This unequal relationship leads Moore to suggest alternate definitions, where genre and style operate on equal levels and involve different areas of inquiry. Moore defines style as the ‘manner of articulation of musical gestures’ while genre refers to the ‘identity and context of those gestures.’<sup>87</sup> For Moore, genre does not account for musical gestures, merely the context of those gestures, whereas for Fabbri, genre also accounts for musical gestures, though to a lesser degree of specificity. Throughout this thesis, the definitions of genre and style follow Fabbri. Style accounts for the specific musical detail that is identifiable in a work with regard to performance, composition, and production norms. Genre accounts for the interpretation of these norms with regard to reception, behaviour, and semiotics, while also providing a broad assessment of the musical traits one can expect to hear. Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of the way style and genre are related.



**Figure 2.1: Relationship between style and genre.**

The benefits of defining genre and style in this way are two-fold. First, it allows a genre to describe not only musical factors but also social factors. For example, to discuss a genre of music such as punk, it is necessary to consider notions of youth counterculture, fashion sense, and anti-establishment sentiments.

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<sup>87</sup> Allan F. Moore, “Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre.” *Music & Letters* 82, no. 3 (2001): 432–42.

It is also necessary to discuss certain basic musical elements such as unsophisticated use of rhythm, melody, and harmony, lack of extended instrumental solos, overdriven power chords, and untrained vocals. It is not until these varying aspects of punk music are brought together that one can understand comprehensively what punk music is. As Fornäs argues, ‘both sounds and human beings (both musical and social factors) are possible and indeed *necessary* elements of any genre definition.’<sup>88</sup> Secondly, it allows for multiple styles to be brought under the umbrella of a single genre, highlighting the similarities and differences that exist between songs by various artists. Punk, as a genre, suggests certain modes of behaviour, communication, and appearance, and also broad musical conventions. Styles such as pop punk, post punk, hardcore, and oi! are related to the punk genre in that they all share commonality of behaviour, semiotics, ideology, and economy, and also broad musical characteristics (aspects of genre). The differences between pop punk, post punk, hardcore, and oi! lie in the musical details such as tempo, rhythm, and performance practices (aspects of style). Defining genre and style in this way not only accounts for the musical and extra-musical elements which are governed by socially accepted rules, it also accounts for the subtle variations that exist between styles of music within the same genre, avoiding the need for excessive categorisation.

## **2.5 The trip hop genre and the Bristol sound style**

Having defined the terms genre and style, the next section situates trip hop and the Bristol sound according to this framework and discusses the work of nine trip hop artists, beginning with three areas that relate to genre: the prevalence of producer-led outfits, opaque mediation,<sup>89</sup> and intertextuality. This section specifies common areas among the nine trip hop artists, therefore lending validity to those that use the trip hop label, while also supporting the notion of trip hop as a genre. The section then discusses trip hop music through the lens of style, and groups the nine trip hop artists into three distinct yet related styles; the Bristol sound, post-trip hop, and instrumental hip hop. Post-trip hop and instrumental hip hop are discussed to offer a reference point as a means of highlighting both the similarities and differences between distinct styles that relate to the trip hop genre.

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<sup>88</sup> Johan Fornäs, “The Future of Rock: Discourses That Struggle to Define a Genre.” *Popular Music* 14, no. 1 (1995): 111–25. My italics.

<sup>89</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, “Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings.”

Many compositional practices in trip hop can also be found in electroacoustic music,<sup>90</sup> therefore tools from electroacoustic analysis can yield fruitful results. Drawing from Smalley's theory of spectromorphology,<sup>91</sup> trip hop music is discussed regarding notions of gestural surrogacy, spectra, and spatiomorphology. This does not suggest that these three concepts are afforded greater significance over Smalley's other spectromorphological tools, but rather they are appropriate for distinguishing the sonic differences between the three styles. The distinctions revealed by these analytical tools are sufficiently robust for explicating the sonic differences between the trip hop related styles, therefore Smalley's other analytical tools were not deemed necessary. While these three tools do not represent Smalley's complete model of spatiomorphology, they are fit for the purpose of distinguishing between the styles.

Each of the concepts drawn from Smalley's theory are discussed in relation to an example from the trip hop genre. This is not to suggest that conclusions have been drawn from a single musical work, rather the ideas put forward are the result of a wide range of analytical listening, with individual works put forward as representative models. This is not to suggest either that each musical work belonging to the Bristol sound style, for example, will adhere to the approaches described, rather these observations are more likely to relate to works that fall under the Bristol sound umbrella. This section specifies the differences between these styles and clarifies which musical tradition informed the compositions in this thesis.

### **2.5.1 The trip hop genre**

The following section applies Fabbri's rules of genre and identifies common traits that exist throughout trip hop. Portishead, Massive Attack, and Tricky represent the Bristol sound. Morcheeba, Sneaker Pimps, and Lamb represent post-trip hop, a style that followed in the success of the Bristol sound but incorporated elements from rock and pop. DJ Shadow, DJ Krush, and U.N.K.L.E represent instrumental hip hop.

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<sup>90</sup> Music produced or altered by electrical means. See entry on Electroacoustic Music from *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>91</sup> Denis Smalley, "Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes." *Organised Sound* 2, no. 2 (1997): 107–26.

### 2.5.1.1 Producer-led outfit

One of Fabbri's social/ideological rules of a genre is 'division of labour.'<sup>92</sup> Within trip hop this can be characterised by the prevalence of producer-led outfits (PLO). A PLO is either an individual or a core group of two to three people that are at the centre of a group's writing and production activities. Music that emanates from a PLO is the result of the interaction between individuals and technology, rather than the interaction between several individuals; the music is conceived (and realised) in the studio, not in the rehearsal space. Consequently, the studio moves from being an archiving centre and becomes a laboratory for sculpting.<sup>93</sup> Whereas previously the realisation of music relied on a complex network of composers, arrangers, musicians, engineers, and producers, technology has enabled an individual to perform all the roles necessary to make a successful recording.<sup>94</sup> All of the artists mentioned above can be characterised as PLOs. DJ Shadow has dispensed with the traditional separation between artist, engineer, and producer, making himself the embodiment of all three.<sup>95</sup> The same could be said for DJ Krush, likewise U.N.K.LE has featured a revolving group of people with James Lavelle the sole consistent member. The core production team in Morcheeba is Paul and Ross Godfrey, who are responsible for writing and production. They feature a cast of guest vocalists across their eight studio albums and recruit additional musicians for live performances. Liam Howe and Chris Corner form the core of Sneaker Pimps, while Lamb consists of Andy Barlow and Lou Rhodes. The founding members of Massive Attack, Robert Del Naja, Grant Marshall, and Andrew Vowles all come from a DJ background, as opposed to being instrumentalists, and all three are credited as writers and producers on their debut album. Tricky is also not an instrumentalist, but is generally credited as a composer and producer. Portishead consists of Barrow (DJ), Utley (guitar) and Beth Gibbons (vocals), yet a wide variety of instruments can be heard in their music and they did not perform live until after their debut album *Dummy* was released.

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<sup>92</sup> Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications." p5.

<sup>93</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

<sup>94</sup> Paul Théberge, *Any Sound You Can Imagine: Making Music/Consuming Technology* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Virgil Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

### 2.5.1.2 Opaque Mediation

Mediation describes the technological process that occurs during the recording, editing, and processing of sound, and while it is always involved in popular music production it is evident to greater and lesser degrees. Transparent mediation describes the attempt to conceal the technological process, whereby music is recorded, edited, and processed in a way so as not to draw attention to the intermediary existence of technology. Alternatively, opaque mediation specifically draws attention to the intermediary effect of technology, thus foregrounding the medium rather than attempting to conceal it.<sup>96</sup> Foregrounding medium can be understood as a type of semiotics, one of Fabbri's rules of genre, in that the associated sounds of a medium can convey meaning to a listener. Yochim and Biddinger write 'throughout both their history and in the contemporary moment, vinyl records have been articulated with human characteristics, such as fallibility, warmth and mortality, which, for record enthusiasts, imbue vinyl with authenticity.'<sup>97</sup>

While opaque and transparent mediation are useful categorisers to describe the production process, they also represent aesthetic choices made by the producers. Rather than attempt to conceal the technological mediation, trip hop artists explicitly draw attention to it. Reacting against digital technology's victory over low fidelity, their recordings feature the sound of pre-digital recording and playback media and exaggerate sonic signatures that were once meant to be ignored.<sup>98</sup> The crackling sound of a vinyl record can be clearly heard in Tricky's 'Hell is Round the Corner' (1995), Massive Attack's 'Teardrop' (1998), Morcheeba's 'Never an Easy Way' (1996), Sneaker Pimps' 'Becoming X' (1996), and U.N.K.L.E's 'Lonely Soul' (1998). Brøvig-Hanssen describes this as a kind of 'schizophonic experimentation',<sup>99</sup> whereby the characteristic signature of earlier media is split from its source and inserted into a new, digital context to produce an aesthetic effect.

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<sup>96</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

<sup>97</sup> Emily Yochim and Megan Biddinger, "'It Kind of Gives You That Vintage Feel': Vinyl Records and the Trope of Death." *Media, Culture & Society* 30, no. 2 (2008): 183–95. p183.

<sup>98</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p94.

Opaque mediation is evident in many ways throughout trip hop, such as extreme time stretching, abrupt edits, or the creation of surreal spaces through contradictory applications of reverb. Portishead's 'Biscuit' (1994) takes a vocal sample from 'I'll Never Fall in Love Again' (1959) by Jonnie Ray and reduces the original tempo of 102bpm to a languid 68bpm; the resulting changes in vocal timbre drawing explicit attention to the artificial manipulation. Abrupt edits in DJ Krush's 'What's Behind Darkness' (1995) highlight that the recording is not of a continuous, human performance but rather an assembly of various sound sources, collected and artificially fused together. Additionally, the vocals on Lamb's 'Gabriel' (2001) are seemingly positioned in a consistent environment - medium-sized room with hard, reflective surfaces - yet they are occasionally treated with a contrasting reverb suggesting an open, cavernous space with many reflective surfaces. Opaque mediation is a consistent thread running through trip hop, leading Brøvig-Hanssen to suggest 'the most characteristic aspect of trip hop may in fact be the particular ways in which the music foregrounds its mediation.'<sup>100</sup>

### 2.5.1.3 Intertextuality

Intertextuality describes the presence of a specific and identifiable work within another work. Frith discusses intertextuality as one of Fabbri's rules of semiotics, as it refers to 'how music works as *rhetoric*... [and] the ways in which "meaning" is conveyed.'<sup>101</sup> Intertextual references are common throughout trip hop and not only reference other works but also other styles, periods, and cultures. Intertextuality directly informs trip hop's stylistic multiplicity, as references to hip hop, soul, reggae, jazz, and film music intertwine. Additionally, intertextual references occur in a number of different ways, which are discussed using Lacasse's terminology.<sup>102</sup> The most common intertextual reference is *autosonic quotation*, whereby the recording of a pre-existing work is inserted into a new work, a practice commonly known as sampling. The Sneaker Pimps' '6 Underground' (1996), Morcheeba's 'Trigger Hippy' (1996), DJ Krush's 'Big

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p96.

<sup>101</sup> Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p91. Italics and quotation marks in original.

<sup>102</sup> Lacasse, "Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music."

City Lover' (1994), Lamb's 'Górecki', and U.N.K.L.E's 'Celestial Annihilation' (1998) are just a few examples.

*Allosonic quotation* describes a work that quotes another work, but not the recording of that work, for example the way Massive Attack's 'Angel' (1998) references Horace Andy's 'You Are My Angel' (1973). *Allosonic allusion* describes a work that references another work without directly quoting from it, for example the way Portishead's 'Half Day Closing' (1997) references 'The American Metaphysical Circus' (1969) by the United States of America. A *cover* is a work that remakes another work in the style of the covering artist, such as Tricky's cover of 'Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos' (1988) by Public Enemy. Finally, *plunderphonics* describes a work that is assembled from a large number of pre-existing works, such as DJ Shadow's 'In/Flux'. Intertextuality is one of the most significant traits of trip hop, evidenced by the sheer number of specific intertextual references that exist as well as the variety of ways they are implemented.

## 2.5.2 The Bristol sound style

Having identified three common traits that may help define trip hop as a genre, it is possible to note differences in musical style within this label. The following section applies electroacoustic analysis techniques and identifies specific musical differences that suggest the existence of three distinct styles related to the trip hop genre. While trip hop may be an appropriate umbrella term, it does not account for the variations that exist between artists. Analysis of form, rhythm, and harmony may assist in drawing distinctions between the various styles, however a more relevant focus may be the manner in which trip hop artists manipulate the sonic and spectral elements of their work. This is not to diminish the significant musicological differences that exist within trip hop, however it is the *sound* that can identify a tune, band, or musician.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ragnhild Brøvig-Hanssen and Anne Danielsen, "The Naturalised and the Surreal: Changes in the Perception of Popular Music Sound." *Organised Sound* 18, no. 1 (2013): 71–80.

### 2.5.2.1 Gestural Surrogacy

The first area of analysis distinguishes the Bristol sound through its deeper engagement in *gestural surrogacy*. Gestural surrogacy concerns the ways in which the vocabulary of sound is expanded beyond known sources and known gestures. When we listen to traditional instrumental music we not only perceive the sound, we also infer the sounding body and physical gesture that produced it; thus the production of sound and the perception of sound are interconnected. When the relationship between a sound and its source is unclear it draws the listener's attention to the distinctive features of the sound, as well as heighten the instability of the listener's perception;<sup>104</sup> they have difficulty identifying the source of the sound or the gesture responsible for the sound's behaviour.

The relationship between sound, source, and gesture can be blurred, stretched, or broken entirely. The various stages of gestural surrogacy describe increasing remoteness of a sound from its source, gesture, or both.<sup>105</sup> *First order surrogacy* refers to sonic objects outside of the traditional musical structure, sounds that are not intended for musical use though we can recognise both the source and gesture. *Second order surrogacy* describes traditional instrumental/vocal activity where an acknowledged performance skill is employed and both source and gesture can be recognised. *Third order surrogacy* describes sound whose source and/or gesture is unknown; the relationship between sound, source, and gesture is ambiguous. *Remote surrogacy* refers to the remnants of gesture when human interaction disappears completely, source and gesture are unknown and unknowable. All trip hop artists rely primarily on second order surrogacy, known instruments and gestures. The extent to which first, third, and remote orders are explored are good indicators of one particular style over another, as is the manner in which these explorations function within a work.

Instrumental hip hop primarily relies on first and second order surrogacy. Known instruments provide the bulk of the texture, however sounds not typically associated with music are also frequently used. References to third order surrogacy can be found, however they are more decorative than functional in that

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<sup>104</sup> Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>105</sup> Smalley, "Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes."

their presence is not essential in maintaining the work's structure and they are less indicative of the overall sound, though they may heighten the aesthetic value. For example, DJ Shadow's 'What Does Your Soul Look Like (Part 1 - Blue Sky Revisit)' (2004) opens with the sound of radio chatter over an electronic communications network. After 20 seconds, first order surrogacy gives way to known instruments using known gestures. Second order surrogacy continues until 1:31, when an unknown sound enters the sonic space before disappearing after a few seconds. The track continues in this manner for the next five minutes. Second order surrogacy creates the texture while third order surrogacy decorates it. The final 70 seconds consists of a radio transmission of spoken word, and it is the continual presence of first order references in the opening and closing sections that suggest they are integral elements of the texture.

Post-trip hop primarily relies on second and third order surrogacy, and explores the third order to a greater extent than instrumental hip hop. Known instruments comprise the texture of a work while unknown sounds frequently decorate the space to create interest. For example, the Sneaker Pimps song 'Low Place Like Home' (1996) opens with several sounds, the source or gesture of which are unknown. The onset of the opening sound is compressed, creating a 'pushing' effect, which is then followed by a percussive sound with an extended onset and an immediate termination. Two distinct percussive sounds follow whose gesture can be inferred as a striking motion though the source is unclear. At 0:23 known instruments replace the unknown sounds and continue until 1:20 when the opening unknown sounds return. These sounds continue through the second verse before being replaced by known instruments at the second chorus (2:00). Known instruments continue to create the texture for the remainder of the song while the unknown sounds reappear at strategic points to maintain momentum.

The Bristol sound primarily relies on second and third order surrogacy, however unlike post-trip hop, references to third order surrogacy are functional rather than decorative. Their absence would fundamentally change the texture of the work. Unknown sounds often work in concert with known instruments to define the texture, and are therefore more indicative of the overall sound. Massive Attack's 'Risingson' (1998) opens with three distinct sounds whose source and gesture are unknown. The onset of each sound varies, sometimes sudden,

sometimes gradual, and the continuation descends in pitch before fading out. At 0:09 an undulating ‘mechanical’ sound moves around the foreground space in centrifugal motion for ten seconds before appearing to morph into an explosive sound emerging from the centre, its spectral energy pulsating before fading out. At 0:30 the verse begins, however rather than relinquishing space to known instruments, the unknown sounds continue, drawing the listener’s attention as they explore the sonic space, left to right, background to foreground. During the first verse the only sounds we recognise are vocals, drum set and electric bass, and of the three only the bass provides a pitch reference, with the exception of decorative vocal swells at 0:47 and 1:13. The second verse continues in a similar manner, with second and third order surrogacy equally responsible for defining the texture. At 2:35 a new sound is introduced, its ‘artificial’ source and pulsating gesture are unknown. This sound provides the basis for the next two minutes of the song until the initial unknown sounds return at 4:30 to close the track.

### **2.5.2.2 Spectra**

The second area of analysis concerns the artists’ treatment of spectral information and space. A particularly useful tool to distinguish between the styles is the notion of *inharmonic saturation* - the adding of spectral components to move a harmonic note towards inharmonic noise. A note has an absolute pitch that can be precisely identified, whereas noise does not and must be described spectromorphologically. However, the border between the two extremes is not clear. Spectral components can be added to a note to move it toward noise, just as the colour and resonance of noise can be manipulated to imply a specific musical note. If the composer takes an interventionist approach, the balance between note and noise can be manipulated and as a note moves toward noise the listener’s attention shifts away from the fundamental pitch and toward the spectral qualities. Consequently, the sound that the listener perceives is not dictated by a harmonic instrument’s natural timbre, rather it arises as a result of the composer’s intervention in the mediation process. Alternatively, if the composer takes a naturalist approach, the natural timbre of an instrument is largely responsible for its spectral quality.

The notion of *spectral space* is also pertinent. Here, spectral space may refer

to the distance between the highest (*canopy*) and lowest (*root*) audible sounds. Important factors concern the distribution of sound within this spectral space - whether it is densely packed or sparsely filled, and whether the sounds are distributed evenly, concentrated, or separated into streams with intervening spaces. Findings in each area help to shape how the listener perceives the sound.

Within instrumental hip hop, spectral components are rarely added to a note. Rather, the instruments' natural timbres are mostly responsible for their colour and character. This is not to suggest that the note's timbre is not important, rather that it is perceived as unmediated and 'pure', and can be easily reconciled with the original source. The song 'Unreal' (1998) from U.N.K.L.E is indicative of this approach. The structural texture of the song is composed of drum set, string bass, and organ, and in each of the instruments the spectral quality appears to be unimpeded, as can be heard at 1:08. An acoustic guitar is frequently employed to provide decoration and its timbre is likewise unmediated. One may suggest that the listener does not focus attention on the particular sound of the guitar, merely identifies it as a guitar. Spectrographic analysis of 'Unreal' demonstrates important details regarding the spectral space commonly found in instrumental hip hop. The spectral space is extensively filled, the *density* is compressed, and there is little evidence of empty space. The spectral energy becomes slightly more concentrated as we move from the canopy, through the *centre*, and down to the root, however it is generally diffused throughout the space. There are traces of horizontal streams of energy, though they do not stand out in stark relief and there appears to be no intervening spaces separating them.

Post-trip hop employs a similar approach with respect to inharmonic saturation. Instrumental timbres are left unmediated, allowing the listener to perceive the natural sound of the instrument. The purity of the instrumental tones is one of the factors that give post-trip hop its 'polished' sound, suggesting great care has been taken to preserve the richness of the original timbre. This approach can be seen in 'Trigger Hottie' by Morcheeba. The structural texture of the song is comprised of vocals, electric bass, drum set, and synthesiser - playing sustained notes with a gentle organ sound. Each instrument projects a pure sound, unaltered by spectral interference. An electric slide guitar plays melodic fills as embellishments and the timbre is clean and pure, as can be heard at 1:20.

Within the post-trip hop style one begins to find examples of spectral space that, while dense, start to become more opaque than those found in instrumental hip hop. 'Trigger Hottie' serves as a useful model and spectrographic analysis shows a more diffuse spectral space with less concentration toward the root and a less compressed density; one can perceive gaps in the texture. Some horizontal streams of spectral energy can be observed, with a small degree of space separating them.

Artists working in the Bristol sound style employ a different approach in terms of both inharmonic saturation and spectral space. Spectral components are often added to a given note, thus shifting it towards noise and altering the balance between pitch and timbre as they vie for the listener's attention. The composer's hand is evident in the mediation process from source to listener, and the sound that we are finally confronted with differs from the original source. A common approach in the Bristol sound style is to overload a signal pathway in the mediating process, resulting in an overdriven preamp that fuses the note with distorted noise. This has the effect of creating a very 'dirty' sound and may encourage the listener to pay greater attention to the spectral quality of a note. For example, Portishead's 'Wandering Star' (1994) opens with a bass whose timbre is noticeably distorted, produced from the fusion of note and noise. The bass retains this sonic signature throughout the track, suggesting that this particular spectral quality of the bass functions as an integral element of the texture. This approach can encourage the listener to consider the actual sound of the bass, rather than simply identifying it as a bass.

Noise that moves toward note is also frequently heard, and often functions as part of a track's texture. For example, on Portishead's 'Elysium' (1997) a continuous noise accompanies the drums, and its resonance gives the suggestion of pitch (0:12). Its continued presence along with the drums significantly alters their tone and draws the listener's attention toward the kit. Each of these types of sound often appear as integral aspects of a track's texture, rather than as decorative embellishments.

Turning to the treatment of spectral space, one begins to find a much more transparent density in the Bristol sound. As demonstrated by spectrographic analysis of ‘Wandering Star’, spectral energy is often concentrated around the root, opening up significant gaps in the centre and canopy. Horizontal streams are clearly evident and are compacted and separated by intervening areas of space. These approaches can give an impression of emptiness to a listener but also allow for a more nuanced perception of micro-level details. If ‘high density is the enemy of low-level detail’,<sup>106</sup> then transparent density can be its ally.

### 2.5.2.3 Spatiomorphology

Spatiomorphology is concerned with the exploration of spatial properties and spatial change within a musical work. The focus here is on spatial properties as they exist within Moore’s model of the soundbox, the three dimensional space revealed by the ‘laterality of the stereo image, the perceived proximity of aspects of the image to a listener, and the perceived frequency characteristics of sound-sources’.<sup>107</sup> Spatial properties can reflect actual physical environments that the listener relates to a previously experienced space, such as a room or concert hall, or they can reflect artificial spaces that do not exist in nature. Artificial spaces can become surreal to the extent that ‘what is heard departs from the convention for normal sound production within a particular context.’<sup>108</sup> Smalley develops six categories to discuss the spatial style of a work, two of which are pertinent to this analysis. A *single spatial setting* relates to music that is situated within a single spatial environment. The environment can be perceived at the outset or it may be revealed over time as the work progresses. ‘Spatial awareness is cumulative, and the listener eventually realises that there is a global spatial topology into which the whole work fits.’<sup>109</sup> *Spatial simultaneity* relates to music that is situated within different spatial environments simultaneously. For example, a listener may perceive a very direct and intimate sound where low-level detail is evident, suggesting a tightly enclosed space, while simultaneously perceiving a distant sound obfuscated by large reverberation and/or echo.

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<sup>106</sup> Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes.”, p121.

<sup>107</sup> Allan F. Moore, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2012, p31.

<sup>108</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen and Danielsen, “The Naturalised and the Surreal: Changes in the Perception of Popular Music Sound.” p75.

<sup>109</sup> Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes.”, p124.

Smalley also raises the idea of microphone space, which he describes as a ‘compositional tool for creating proximate spaces which beam to us small and microscopic presences and details of spectral space.’<sup>110</sup> Microphone space therefore becomes a means of creating what Moore calls the *intimate* zone within his model of proxemics, whereby the vocalist is within touching distance of the listener by virtue of microscopic vocal nuances.<sup>111</sup> The use of microphone space to create intimacy between singer and listener is a frequent occurrence in the Bristol sound.

Instrumental hip hop is generally enclosed within a single spatial setting, and the listener is aware of this space within the first few moments of a work. Vocal narratives are not often heard in instrumental hip hop, however when they are the vocalist generally inhabits the *social* zone (medium distance from the listener and situated in the centre of the soundbox). ‘Big City Lover’ (1994) by DJ Krush serves as an example. The track opens with saxophone and vocals and the reverb suggests a large, empty space with numerous hard surfaces. As the drums enter the long reverb tail of the snare drum is consistent with the elongated space and we perceive the drummer positioned toward the center of the soundbox. At 0:36 the instruments suddenly stop playing and the reverb decay is clearly heard for two seconds, giving the listener a clear sense of the enclosed space. As the track progresses the listener perceives each instrument as being placed at a specific location within the soundbox. Certain instruments such as the saxophone are perceived as being at a greater distance from the listener while others, such as the vocals and bass guitar, are perceived as being closer, yet each instrument can be situated within the same environment. The spatial properties are explicitly communicated to the listener within the first 30 seconds of the work and, once stated, do not deviate throughout the remainder of the track. The vocalist is positioned in the social zone, there are no microscopic vocal sounds, and she is integrated within the space rather than being positioned in front of it.

Post-trip hop is also generally enclosed within a single spatial setting. At times the spatial properties are revealed to the listener at the onset, however they can also be revealed over time as the work progresses. Vocalists tend to inhabit

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<sup>110</sup> Smalley, Denis. “Space-form and the Acousmatic Image.” *Organised Sound*, 12, no.1 (2007): 35-58. p43.

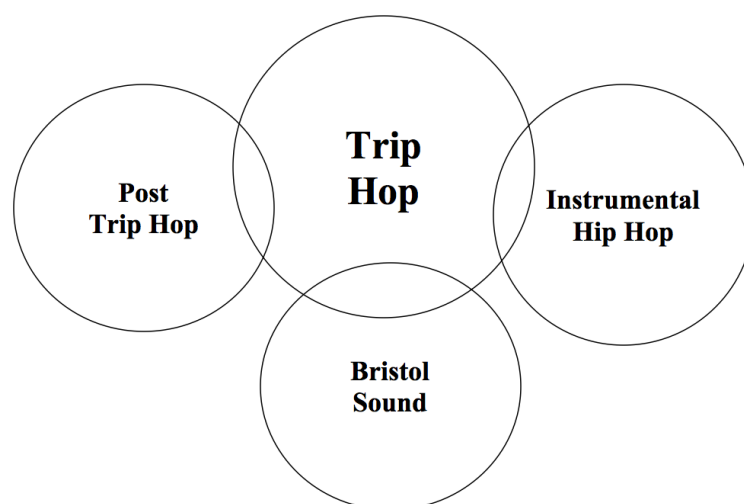
<sup>111</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

either the social or *personal* zone, whereby the singer is within arms length from the listener near the front of the soundbox. In Lamb's 'Górecki' (1996) the opening suggests a large hall with a medium-long decay. At 0:41 hand drums enter and widen the stereo spread and at 1:18 a string bass enters and expands the depth of the space. At 2:00 decorative percussive hits expand the vertical space and the listener perceives the soundbox as expanding gradually as the work progresses. At 2:30 the drum set enters and the full scope of the spectral space is revealed. The vocalist is positioned within the personal zone, slightly back from the front of the soundbox. The vocalist's projection varies from soft to medium and we can perceive occasional vocal nuances such as a breath intake before singing a phrase. Like instrumental hip hop, different instruments are placed strategically around various points of the soundbox but each instrument can still be reconciled into a singular spatial setting.

In the Bristol sound one is more likely to find examples of surreal spaces created by the simultaneous presence of contradictory acoustic environments. These environments do not fit easily into Moore's model of the soundbox and a work can often not be resolved into a single spatial setting. Rather, the listener is aware of multiple environments simultaneously. Vocal performances are often based within the intimate zone, the singer is placed touching distance from the listener and microscopic vocal nuances can be perceived. The immediate opening of Tricky's 'Suffocated Love' (1995) suggests a tight enclosed space with a reasonable amount of absorbent material. The bass guitar and hi hat are very dry and positioned very close to the listener, suggesting a very small reverb with a fast decay. Three seconds into the track the first snare drum hit carries a noticeably larger reverb and longer decay, and we can clearly perceive the reverb tail as it dissipates. During this time the listener is aware of two spaces occurring simultaneously, the tightly enclosed space of the bass and hi hat and the larger open space of the snare drum. When the vocals enter at 0:35 they are positioned extremely close to the listener with only a minimal amount of reverb, suggesting the vocalist is placed within a small room whose surface absorbs most of the reflections. At 1:00 a string section enters and their implied space is very large with multiple hard surfaces spaced some distance apart. This creates a recycling echo effect that obscures the attack of the strings and highlights the vast number of reflections. At 1:24 a female voice enters and the reverb suggests a larger room

than her male counterpart, with more reflective surfaces. The listener is now aware of five simultaneous spaces; (from near to far) male voice, bass and hi hat, female voice, snare drum, string section. The whispering quality of the vocal performance and the audible intakes of breath place the vocalist within the intimate zone. The close placement of the vocalist and minimal reverb allow for a nuanced listening of many low-level details, such as the grainy quality of the voice when he sings the word ‘love’ at 0:42.

The preceding analysis relates to the *sound* of trip hop as it is the sound that may lead to identification of an artist or style. The analysis shows there are three distinct areas in which the sound of the Bristol sound differs from other trip hop-related styles. When listening to the Bristol sound, one is more likely to encounter sounds whose source and/or gesture is unknown, creating an ‘otherworldly’ impression. Furthermore, timbres will often be distorted, resulting in a ‘dirty’ and ‘grainy’ sonic quality. Finally, surreal spatial environments contribute to the ‘otherworldly’ quality, while perceptions of space and emptiness allow for greater recognition of low-level details, offering more subtle nuances to the listener. While there are numerous aspects of genre that unite these artists, there are significant musical differences that separate them. Accordingly, rather than grouping these artists under a singular moniker, a more accurate depiction is to situate them within distinct styles that are related to the trip hop genre (Fig. 2.2). The creative works in this thesis are grounded within the Bristol sound style, rather than the trip hop genre, and having distinguished the Bristol sound from trip hop a corpus can be selected for analysis in chapter four.



**Figure 2.2: Three distinct styles related to the trip hop genre.**

## 2.6 Intertextuality

Discussed in section 2.5.1.3, Lacasse's model of transtextuality (Fig. 2.3) provides a useful way of understanding different referential practices. However, it must be expanded if it is to accommodate all of the referential practices found in the Bristol sound, specifically the use of self-quotation and transformation of medium.

	<b>Syntagmatic</b> (Subject/Content)	<b>Paradigmatic</b> (Style/System)
<b>Autosonic</b>	Autosonic Quotation Autosonic Parody <i>Plunderphonics</i> Cento Instrumental Remix	Remix
<b>Allosonic</b>	Allosonic Quotation Allusion Allosonic Parody	Transtylistation <i>Copy</i> <i>Cover</i> <i>Travesty</i> Translation Pastiche

**Figure 2.3: Lacasse's model of transtextuality.**  
Reprinted with permission. See Lacasse (2000).

Lacasse's model places each referential practice within one of four quadrants based on two pairs of distinctions. The first criterion is the distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic references. A syntagmatic reference transforms the subject of the initial work, such as Weird Al Yankovich's 'Smells Like Nirvana' (1992). This parody of the Nirvana hit 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' (1991) retains the stylistic features of the original but transforms the lyrical content, or subject matter. Conversely, a paradigmatic reference transforms the style of a work, for example Jeff Buckley's version of 'Hallelujah' (1994) by Leonard Cohen retains the content of the original work but is transformed to reflect Buckley's personal style.

The second criterion is the distinction between allosonic and autosonic. An allosonic reference recreates a musical gesture that can be found in another musical work. For example, in jazz it is common for a soloist to quote a melody from a different tune, which can then be embellished, played in a different style or played on a different instrument. Here the quotation is of an abstract nature and there is no tangible connection between the two works. Conversely, an autosonic reference inserts an actual recording of a work into a new composition, thus referencing not only the gesture but also the *recording* of that gesture, a practice commonly understood today as sampling. Here the quotation is of a physical nature, it is the recording itself that is common to both works.

The significance of quotation is that it not only references musical gestures but also the cultural and historical associations of that gesture, and in the same way that a musician can transform a quoted melody, cultural and historical associations can also be transformed.<sup>112</sup> These transformations have the power to recontextualise traditional relationships, such as those between East and West, black and white, and past and present. Metzger suggests that in order for these transformations to occur, the listener must be able to identify the original work so as to understand its cultural and historical associations; simply put, ‘if a borrowing is not detected then it and its cultural resonances go unheard.’<sup>113</sup> However, composers often reference another text in order to borrow its cultural associations, rather than to comment on a specific work, person, or event. The associations implied by a work’s style, performance technique, or timbre often carry cultural resonance as listeners often associate certain musical gestures with specific cultures and eras, even if only subconsciously.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, cultural resonances can still be heard without knowledge of the exact work being borrowed. For example, an unfamiliar listener is unlikely to listen to Portishead’s ‘Sour Times’ and identify the sample from the soundtrack of the *Mission: Impossible* television series. However, they may well suggest ‘it sounds like spy music.’

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<sup>112</sup> David Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> For example, in order to bolster a sense of American patriotism, Charles Ives strategically quoted the patriotic tune ‘Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean’ (also known as ‘The Red, White, and Blue’) in his work ‘They Are There’, written to support the American efforts in World War II (see Thurmaier, “When Borne By the Red, White, and Blue: Charles Ives and Patriotic Quotation.”).

Lacasse's notion of allosonic quotation and autosonic quotation is certainly useful, though with regard to Portishead, for example, it does not capture the full range of their compositional practices. In addition to sampling other artists, Portishead developed a novel approach to composition by sampling themselves. This involved composing, performing, and recording multiple musical gestures and printing them onto tape or vinyl in order to build a library of musical ideas. This library then became a source for musical material that could be sampled and manipulated to form new compositions. Portishead's Geoff Barrow states 'everything started with myself and Ade [Adrian Utley] in the studio playing instruments and really pushing ourselves to create a sound that at the beginning was not ours, and then had to be developed into our sound. We had to literally make ourselves our own huge record collection to sample from, which took about 14 months.'<sup>115</sup>

This method of self-quotation meets Lacasse's definition of intertextuality, in that a recording of a musical gesture from a previous text makes an appearance in another. It is important to note that, although these initial recordings were never released to the public, they can still be classified as a 'text.' This understanding of the word 'text' follows Horn, who states that the term is often used to denote a 'discrete musical object.'<sup>116</sup> Although this usage of the term is not without its problems, as Horn admits, it will suffice in terms of relating the practice of self-quotation to Lacasse's model of transtextuality. While Lacasse refrains from offering an explicit definition of the term 'text,' it is used here to describe a discrete, identifiable musical object, with a sense of original identity that is the outcome of an endeavour by an identifiable author or collaboration between authors. Although Portishead's practice of sampling their own work relates to Lacasse's model, it does not neatly fit into the notion of autosonic quotation, which implies that the quotation is of another artist. Rather, *autosonic self-quotation* is a more accurate descriptor.

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<sup>115</sup> Jason Anderson, "Portishead: The Same, Only Better." *Space Age Bachelor*, August, 1998. <http://www.space-age-bachelor.com/archives/portishead-the-same-only-better>. (accessed 6 September 2016).

<sup>116</sup> David Horn, "Some Thoughts on the Work in Popular Music." In *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 14-34. p14.

## 2.6.1 Autosonic self-quotation

Autosonic self-quotation can be heard in numerous Portishead songs and, like other types of quotation, carries cultural and historical associations. As previously mentioned, these associations can be understood by a listener without knowledge of the exact source of the borrowing. This is an important distinction to keep in mind as, in the case of Portishead, their original sources are unknown to everyone except the band themselves. Sampling promotes the idea of author as editor, mediator, and hybridiser,<sup>117</sup> and the notion of author as hybridiser is especially relevant to Portishead where references to jazz and hip hop, analogue and digital, and past and present are often forcefully juxtaposed. These juxtapositions are occasionally the result of contrasting quotations of an outside work, such as ‘Only You’ (1997), which combines the film noir-infused *Inspector Clouseau* soundtrack with the hip hop track ‘She Said’ (1995) by The Pharcyde. However, they are more often directly informed by Portishead’s practice of autosonic self-quotation. By drawing from a library of unrelated gestures, Portishead are able to create a musical bricolage resulting in contrasting styles, timbres, and recording and performance techniques within a single track. These contrasting gestures stand apart by virtue of being out of context, and help create the unique character and stylistic multiplicity of their music.

Consider, for example, the song ‘Western Eyes’. The track begins with a repeating string figure that is made into a two-bar loop. The strings have a grainy timbre and are very tightly equalised to occupy a well-defined bandwidth, reminiscent of the limited frequency response of earlier recording technology. As the loop repeats, one can hear a slight disruption as the string dynamics and surrounding space are abruptly cut off before the passage begins again. The repetition, timbre, and sonic disruption of the string passage bears all the hallmarks of a typical sample, potentially pointing to a suspenseful film soundtrack or classical recording as the source. In fact, the string passage was born out of Portishead’s own aforementioned musical library; a brief snippet from some strings originally recorded for their debut album *Dummy*.<sup>118</sup> After four bars

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<sup>117</sup> Jason Toynbee, *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity, and Institutions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>118</sup> Ken Micallef, “Pioneer Trip-Hop Band Portishead Survives a Long Night of the Soul.” *Pulse!*, 1997. <http://www.oocities.org/sunsetstrip/studio/8424/port19.html>. (accessed 6 September, 2016).

a grand piano enters with a repeating minor chord, one of the few newly composed gestures in the track and one that was in fact the genesis of the song.<sup>119</sup>

After one and a half minutes of Beth Gibbons' delicate torch singing, a hip hop-flavoured drum beat enters. The accompanying tape hiss and repeating four-bar loop similarly suggest an outside source, though it was in fact sampled from an earlier recording session with regular drummer Clive Deamer. While the practice of borrowing from outside sources is subtly hinted at via these sonic clues, it is in the closing section of the song (3:12) where the illusion of sampling is explicitly stated. Some vinyl scratching sets up the relocation of what appears to be a dated recording of an anonymous American crooner, accompanied by a clean, hollow-body guitar and some distant piano fills. The timbral quality of the voice suggests that the recording has been slowed down and pitched lower, a common feature of sampled music, and along with the continual tape hiss and introduction of new harmonic material, points to an outside source that has been transported into a new musical environment. The effect is very much of a 1940s style ballad that has been somewhat haphazardly tacked on to the end of the song.

The confluence of cinematic strings, hip hop drums, and 1940s style crooning suggests the track has been assembled from outside sources, and is therefore partially in debt to other artists, however all of the material was composed by the band. The illusion is further supported by a credit in the album liner notes, which states that the song uses a sample of 'Hookers and Gin' by The Sean Atkins Experience from 1957. However, this is merely an inside joke on the part of Portishead. There is no such group The Sean Atkins Experience, Sean Atkins is in fact an acquaintance of the band and receives credit for additional vocals on the song.<sup>120</sup> This suggests that the fake sample credit is a poke at the sub-culture who relish the challenge of identifying and locating obscure samples. In this regard, Portishead are commenting on the culture of sampling without participating unreservedly in that culture.

While the practice of sampling supports notions of stylistic multiplicity, it also raises concerns regarding authorship, not only from a legal perspective but

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

also an aesthetic one. Portishead's use of autosonic self-quotation allows them to engage with sampling's more creative aspects, such as transformation of culture and history, while sidestepping the common charges of thievery and inauthenticity. Accordingly, autosonic self-quotation allows for the stylistic multiplicity that arises from the *mélange* of previously unrelated gestures, while still retaining the Romantic notion of composer as sole author. As a unique type of practice, autosonic self-quotation offers an additional type of reference not currently included in Lacasse's model.<sup>121</sup> Autosonic self-quotation parallels with what Leydon calls a style topic, a 'newly composed, newly performed, stylistic allusion',<sup>122</sup> intended to foster a kind of stylistic plurality. Like autosonic self-quotation, style topics promote notions of hybridisation and mediation while still allowing for compositional skill and authorial agency. Unlike style topics however, the practice of autosonic self-quotation does involve sampling, just not from another artist, and the quoted musical gestures are composed by the artist, but not newly composed.

Additionally, *allosonic self-quotation* can be found in the work of other Bristol sound artists. Tricky's vocal performance on 'Overcome' (1995) is an allosonic self-quotation of his earlier performance on Massive Attack's 'Karmacoma' (1994). Similarly, Massive Attack's collaboration with Horace Andy on 'Angel' reuses the lyrics from Andy's 1973 recording 'You Are My Angel', albeit with a new vocal melody.

## 2.6.2 Phonematic transformation

The Bristol sound artists were part of the 1990s counterculture that rebelled against digital technology's victory over low fidelity, often employing analogue recording equipment, instruments, and playback media in the production process.<sup>123</sup> As previously discussed, Portishead's music makes frequent reference to other cultures and eras and these references are often given further significance by the medium through which they are presented. For example, Portishead will

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<sup>121</sup> Portishead are by no means the first to quote from their earlier material. Robert Plant, Prince, James Brown, Strauss, Mahler, and Beethoven also reused material from previous works.

<sup>122</sup> Rebecca Leydon, "Recombinant Style Topics: The Past and Future of Sampling." In *Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music*, ed. John Covach and Mark Spicer (USA: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 193–213.

<sup>123</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

often heighten the historical reference of a musical gesture by presenting it in an analogue environment such as the crackling of a vinyl record or limited frequency response of a transistor radio. In this way, medium also carries meaning and, like style and subject, that meaning can be transformed. Therefore, Lacasse's model can be expanded by introducing the term *phonematic reference*, the transformation of medium.

This section discusses three types of phonematic reference, although this is by no means a complete list. The first is *retronormativity*, to borrow a term from Askerøi, who defines it as 'the mechanism of placing the past in the present.'<sup>124</sup> *Retronormativity* can be understood as the coalescing of different carriers of meaning by referencing a combination of stylistic traits, instrumentation, and/or medium, all of which possess their own sonic markers that are emblematic of certain eras. The second type of phonematic reference is *vinyl aesthetics*. Williams discusses this term as a 'signifier of hip hop authenticity associated with the sounds of vinyl.'<sup>125</sup> The term is extended here to include associations of warmth, authenticity, and humanity when compared with the perceived cold, disembodied character of digital recordings.<sup>126</sup> *Vinyl aesthetics* describes the process where sonic references to an analogue medium are added to imbue a track with a warm, authentic, or 'retro' feel in the absence of any other sonic markers to previous musical eras. Finally, *analogue allusion* describes brief sonic deviations that reference previous instrumental and/or recording technologies, highlighting the contrast between historical and contemporary and exposing the inauthenticity of the historical reference.<sup>127</sup> The key distinction here is the juxtaposition of contradictory media and the brevity of the reference. Having discussed new referential practices regarding quotation and medium, Lacasse's model can now be expanded. The expanded model situates the practice of self-quotation, both autosonic and allosonic iterations, and adds to the syntagmatic/paradigmatic dichotomy by including phonematic references (Fig. 2.4).

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<sup>124</sup> Eirik Askerøi, "Reading Pop Production: Sonic Markers and Musical Identity." PhD Diss., The University of Agder, 2013. p42.

<sup>125</sup> Justin Williams, "Theoretical Approaches to Quotation in Hip Hop Recordings.", p194.

<sup>126</sup> See Yochim and Biddinger, "'It Kind of Gives You That Vintage Feel': Vinyl Records and the Trope of Death."

<sup>127</sup> Joseph Auner, "Making Old Machines Speak: Images of Technology in Recent Music." *ECHO* 2, no. 2 (2000).

	<b>Syntagmatic</b> (Subject/Content)	<b>Paradigmatic</b> (Style/System)	<b>Phonematic</b> (Medium/Technology)
<b>Autosonic</b>	Autosonic Quotation Autosonic Parody <i>Plunderphonics</i> Cento Instrumental Remix Autosonic Self- quotation	Remix	Autosonic Retronormativity Autosonic Vinyl Aesthetics Autosonic Analogue Allusion
<b>Allosonic</b>	Allosonic Quotation Allusion Allosonic Parody Allosonic Self- quotation	Transtylisation <i>Copy</i> <i>Cover</i> <i>Travesty</i> Translation Pastiche	Allosonic Retronormativity Allosonic Vinyl Aesthetics Allosonic Analogue Allusion

**Figure 2.4: Expanded model of transtextuality.**

The model includes autosonic and allosonic iterations of phonematic practices, as these references can be achieved in different ways. Vinyl aesthetics, for instance, initially required an actual vinyl record in order to capture the distinctive crackling sound. The presence of a physical object that links two separate texts suggests the reference should be categorised as autosonic. However, there are now many digital plug-ins, such as iZotope's Vinyl, that recreate the sound of a vinyl record. Therefore it is possible to reference an analogue medium without ever straying from the digital environment. The abstract nature of this type of reference suggests it should be categorised as allosonic. Additionally, referencing the sound of a transistor radio can be achieved by recording an actual transistor radio (autosonic) or by applying a specific type of equalisation to create the illusion of a transistor radio (allosonic).

The following section analyses a number of Bristol sound songs to demonstrate the applicability of the expanded model, beginning with three examples of autosonic phonematic references and concluding with an example of an allosonic phonematic reference. To reiterate, an autosonic phonematic reference involves a physical object, such as a vinyl record, and is bound to other

autosonic practices, either syntagmatic or paradigmatic. It can be applied when one text makes an autosonic reference to another text and in addition to transforming the style or subject of the original text it also transforms the medium. Conversely, an allosonic phonematic reference does not involve a physical object and is bound to other allosonic practices. It applies when one text makes an allosonic reference to another text and, like autosonic references, transforms the medium in addition to the style or subject of the original text. Each of these practices requires some type of reference to a previous text in order to be discussed within the general framework of transtextuality. Of course, there are many examples of music that transform or otherwise highlight medium without making any reference to an outside work.<sup>128</sup> While many of the techniques used in these songs can be aligned with the terminology discussed above, the expanded model is solely focused on those works that reference another identifiable work.

### **2.6.2.1 Autosonic retronormativity**

Portishead's 'Strangers' makes several references to previous texts, most of which are self-quotations, and the transformation of medium reinforces the historical and cultural associations of these references. The song begins with a brief autosonic quotation of 'Elegant People' (1976) by Weather Report, though it is the self-quotations that make the greater impact on the character of the track. Following the Weather Report sample, the song continues with a distressed drum beat that displays several identifying markers of a typical sample; it is comprised of a repeating one-bar loop, the sound quality is generally poor, and a continuous vinyl crackle is clearly evident. In reality, the drums were first performed by regular Portishead drummer Clive Deamer and subsequently sampled, edited, and manipulated in the manner typical of sampling.<sup>129</sup> The drums are heavily compressed, evidenced by the snare drum that appears to get louder after the initial attack, and the accompanying analogue synthesizer and fuzz guitar also have a distorted timbre.

The combined timbre of the instruments, along with the obvious vinyl crackle, create a harsh atmosphere yet also establish the strong identifying

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<sup>128</sup> For example, the implied sound of a transistor radio during the intro of Pink Floyd's 'Wish You Were Here'.

<sup>129</sup> As per the album liner notes.

character of the track. However, rather than continuing in this vein the song makes a dramatic transition to another sound world entirely. At 0:27 a single trumpet note acts as a musical gateway and the harsh atmosphere of noisy drums, synth, guitar, and vinyl is immediately replaced with a clean, hollow-body guitar and Beth Gibbons' vocals. There is a significant amount of background noise, suggesting someone else is in the room with the band, which associates the music with a typical live recording setup, particularly that which was common before multi-tracking became available.<sup>130</sup> Gibbons' vocals have also been prominently filtered to recreate the limited frequency response of earlier recording technology and we can hear a great deal of sibilance, which again references the low-fidelity recording techniques of the past.

While presented as an outside sample, in regard to both the poor sound quality and forceful juxtaposition of contrasting styles, this section is another example of autsonic self-quotation. The phonematic reference can be categorised as an example of retronormativity in that the historical reference is implied through instrumentation, performance techniques, and also medium. These three elements work together to create a complete sonic picture that transports the listener to an entirely different sound world. At the end of this section three synthesizer notes, separated by brief moments of digital silence, act as a second musical gateway as the drum loop returns, the vocal filter is removed and the listener is transported back to present day. The contrasting style of that section acts as a cultural and historical signifier, relocating the listener to another time and place, and the transformation of medium reinforces that relocation. Brøvig-Hanssen arrives at a similar conclusion and states 'the frequency-filter changes applied to the voice in 'Strangers' also signify that the music shifts between medium eras, and, similarly, the crackling, gritty drum-and-alarm sequence seems to belong to a different era from the clean acoustic guitar.'<sup>131</sup>

### **2.6.2.2 Autosonic vinyl aesthetics**

Phonematic references do more than reinforce syntagmatic or paradigmatic references, they can also carry their own sense of meaning. Massive Attack's

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<sup>130</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p101.

‘Teardrop’ is an example of vinyl aesthetics. The song opens with a synthesized sound and a repeating one-bar drum groove. There are no obvious stylistic indicators in the drum groove and the timbres of each instrument do not suggest an historical period, however there is an obvious vinyl crackle running alongside the drumbeat. A harpsichord enters after 12 seconds and, while the instrument carries historical implications, there are no obvious sonic references to suggest a particular period, such as a limited frequency response or degraded timbre. The production quality of the track has a very polished sound to it, indicating that great care has been taken to preserve and enhance the natural timbres of the instruments.

The juxtaposition between the pure, unmediated timbre of the instruments and the obvious vinyl crackle transforms the analogue medium into a new, digital, context. Vinyl aesthetics is partly defined by the ‘absence of any other sonic markers to previous musical eras’<sup>132</sup> and yet one could argue that the harpsichord does indeed reference a previous musical era. However, the vinyl crackle is not tied to this historical reference as it is only evident when the drums are playing. At 4:03 the drums are tacit while the harpsichord riff continues and the vinyl crackle is similarly silent, only to resume when the drums re-enter. Therefore, the reference to the analogue medium is firmly embedded within the drum track that by itself does not carry any historical connotations. Had the vinyl crackle been tied to the harpsichord it would more appropriately be classified as retronormativity.

### **2.6.2.3 Autosonic analogue allusion**

An example of analogue allusion can be found in Portishead’s ‘Only You’ (1997) where a cut and paste technique highlights the stark contrast between the sound of the analogue medium and that of the digital. At 2:21 we hear brief snippets of a sample from ‘She Said’ (1995) by The Pharcyde that are punctuated with brief moments of digital silence. The clean sound of digital silence is in stark relief to the warm sound of crackling vinyl previously heard, as the silence is achieved not in the usual way of performers simply quieting their instruments but by an abrupt clipping of the sound file. No effort has been made to clean up the

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<sup>132</sup> See section 2.6.2.

audio or dirty up the silence in order to smooth out the transition. Instead, a conscious decision was made to highlight the contrast between the warmth of the analogue sample and the cold cleanness of the digital silence. This immediate juxtaposition reminds the listener that each medium not only carries its own signifier but also reinforces the other. The emptiness of the digital ascribes greater meaning to the warm analogue while the warm analogue renders the digital silence that much more barren. It is important to note that these juxtapositions should be heard as aesthetic choices rather than technological limitations. The analogue sound aligns the music with an earlier era, while the brief moments of digital silence place the music firmly in the present.<sup>133</sup>

#### **2.6.2.4 Allosonic retronormativity**

Portishead's 'Half Day Closing' (1997) references a song by the psychedelic group The United States of America, titled 'The American Metaphysical Circus' (1969). Portishead's song does not directly quote from the original, rather it alludes to it by incorporating certain musical gestures and then transforming them. These common gestures can easily be heard when comparing the two songs (the bass line and recurring drum fill being the most prominent), and the liner notes of the Portishead album includes the phrase 'inspired by The United States of America' after the list of performers on 'Half Day Closing'. This reference is an example of allosonic allusion, one of Lacasse's original referential practices, and is just one of the elements that gives 'Half Day Closing' a strong psychedelic character. It is also an example of allosonic retronormativity.

One of the most striking features of 'Half Day Closing' is the treatment of Gibbons' vocals. Her voice is tightly equalised to resemble the limited frequency response of earlier recording technology and there is also a great deal of static in her performance, again a nod to the noisy recording mechanisms of the past. There is a significant amount of distortion added to her voice which becomes increasingly drastic as the track progresses, to the point that by the climax of the performance at 2:57 her voice is no longer recognisable as a human vocal sound. Further effect was added by recording the vocal track through a rotating Leslie speaker and this effect also intensifies as the track progresses. Accordingly, the

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<sup>133</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, "Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings."

medium through which Gibbons' vocals are presented starts off distorted and of very poor sonic quality but the voice is still easily recognisable. Throughout the track that medium is slowly transformed, drawing further attention to itself until finally it completely obfuscates the voice and all sense of recognition is lost. A very similar technique is found in 'The American Metaphysical Circus'. One point of difference is that the vocal is relatively unmediated at the start of the song, it is thin but clear and free from distortion. At the beginning of the second verse the voice is suddenly distorted, though like the Portishead song the vocal performance is still easily recognisable. As the track progresses the vocal becomes more distorted, peaking around 3:50, to the point that the lyrics are unintelligible. The degree of distortion is not as drastic as that of 'Half Day Closing', however the effect is the same. The voice is slowly transformed and degraded until it approaches the point of sounding non-human.

Another element common to both works is the positioning of the drums, which is in stark relief to the rest of Portishead's music. In 'Half Day Closing' the drums are panned hard left so as to only emanate from the left speaker. This unusual positioning is not evident on any other track in Portishead's recorded output and was not common practice in recorded music at the time. However, it was relatively common in the experimental music of the 1960s and can also be found in 'The American Metaphysical Circus', though in this case the drums are panned hard right. Accordingly, 'Half Day Closing' not only references 'The American Metaphysical Circus' in terms of style and subject, it also references the track by way of medium. This reference exemplifies allosonic retronormativity in that there is no use of sampling, the medium is transformed in addition to the subject, and the two practices work in concert to invoke the psychedelic music of the 1960s.

Lacasse's model of transtextuality is a useful way of classifying referential practices and can help decode the myriad cultural and historical signifiers found in the Bristol sound. However, there are many other meaningful references that cannot be accounted for within Lacasse's model. The addition of autosonic self-quotation shows how stylistic multiplicity can be achieved through contrasting musical material, instrumentation, performance practices, and recording and playback media, while avoiding charges of thievery and inauthenticity.

Additionally, various types of medium have acquired aesthetic values through their history of use, affording musicians the ability to comment on these values by way of transformation and relocation. The inclusion of phonematic references as an intertextual practice allows for greater understanding of the various ways these transformations can be achieved. Style and subject are the two integral elements that make up a work, yet what is missing from Lacasse's model is the medium through which these elements are presented. By including these referential practices, Lacasse's model can not only account for transformations of style and subject but also be applied to those texts that transform the medium when quoting an outside work.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This thesis addresses several gaps in the trip hop literature, both in terms of academic writing and also the nature of creative works in the Bristol sound style. Regarding academic writing, the most significant gap is the lack of musicological analysis of the Bristol sound. However, before conducting the analysis it was necessary to address other gaps in the literature. First was the discord between the trip hop artists that reject the label and those in the community that apply it, as well as the confusion between the terms 'trip hop' and 'Bristol sound'. This confusion had to be overcome to select an appropriate corpus for analysis and avoid over-extending the investigation by including too diverse an array of artists. The terms 'trip hop' and 'Bristol sound' are primarily used synonymously, despite the significant musical differences amongst the artists attached to these labels. On the rare occurrences where a possible difference is suggested, specifics are never given as to what those differences may be. Rather, authors rely on a generalised statement that lacks detail. Clarification of the Bristol sound and trip hop was offered in section 2.5, noting the genre-specific similarities and stylistic musical differences. This section addressed the gap in current literature and also suggested an appropriate corpus for analysis.

A second gap that needed to be addressed was the lack of an appropriate model for describing the intertextual references that occur in the Bristol sound. The Bristol sound is known for its stylistic multiplicity, often as a result of intertextual references, yet current models do not provide an adequate framework

for contextualizing these references. Therefore, an expanded model of transtextuality was offered in section 2.6. Providing this framework allowed for deeper understanding of the ways intertextuality contributes to the Bristol sound character and the ways in which multiple intertextual references are used in relation to each other. It also provided a terminology for discussing intertextuality in the analysis chapter.

Having addressed these gaps, a thorough investigation of the Bristol sound could commence. A number of theorists have approached the style from a cultural, sociological, historical, or sonic perspective, yet none have addressed the formal musical qualities that contribute to the style's unique character. Many colourful words have been used to describe the Bristol sound, such as 'miserabilist', 'disparate', and 'lo-fi', yet no studies have addressed how the musical qualities of the style might inform such interpretations. This thesis addresses the gap by providing detailed musicological analysis to a number of works in the style and showing how musical qualities such as form, harmony, melody, timbre, and quotation can give rise to such descriptors.

Regarding the creative works in the Bristol sound style, an opportunity exists to extend the style in a new direction by incorporating compositional approaches from classical music. Despite the Bristol sound's stylistic multiplicity, classical music is not a style that informs its disparate character. While some trip hop artists have incorporated orchestral instruments into their works, particularly as a rearrangement for live performance,<sup>134</sup> none have appropriated compositional devices from classical music as part of the composition process. This thesis addresses this gap by experimenting with a number of ways this can be achieved. Much like the way progressive rock expanded the musical boundaries of rock music, this thesis expands the musical boundaries of the Bristol sound. In addition to furthering the musical landscape of the Bristol sound and making an original contribution to the world of popular music, this thesis also serves as a model for how one can use practice-led research to incorporate compositional devices from classical music into a popular music framework beyond the use of orchestral instruments.

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<sup>134</sup> For example, Portishead's *Roseland NYC Live* (1998) and Hooverphonic's *With Orchestra* (2012).

### **3 Methodology**

The following chapter outlines the various methodologies that were used throughout this thesis, beginning with the method for analysing the Bristol sound. The chapter then discusses the creative method for composing the original works in the thesis and frames this approach within the guidelines of practice-led research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of audience feedback as a means of offering outside assessment of the works and testing the merits of each compositional approach, both in terms of referencing the Bristol sound and classical music.

Section 3.1 discusses the overall approach to analysing the Bristol sound, noting the focus on formalist musical analysis while also considering the opinions of those in the community. Section 3.2 outlines the method for selecting an analytical canon, both in terms of key Bristol sound artists and key tracks from each artist. Section 3.3 then outlines the specific analytical techniques that were applied to each work in the canon. Section 3.4 discusses performative research and notes some of the distinctions between artistic research and artistic practice, as well as the distinction between practice-led and practice-based research, before providing a brief summary of the compositional methods used in the creative process. Section 3.5 concludes the chapter by outlining the method for obtaining audience feedback and discussing its contributions to the research.

#### **3.1 Analysing the Bristol Sound**

Before beginning the composition process, it was necessary to understand the stylistic traits of both the Bristol sound and classical music. There is a plethora of literature on classical music, however there is no academic research on the musicological aspects of the Bristol sound, hence the need for musical analysis. The aim was to produce musicological analysis that contributes to existing literature on the Bristol sound and also informs the composition process.

The first step was to determine how to analyse the Bristol sound, as different researchers have utilised different methods to define a style of music. Ahlqvist analysed fan discourse in his attempt to establish authenticity in progressive rock, arguing that in any genre fans can become highly knowledgeable about its

identifying musical traits.<sup>135</sup> Fan discourse involves judgments about what listeners like, how sharing those likes and dislikes contribute to the knowledge of the community, and how that knowledge in turn shapes what fans like about progressive rock. Thus, he argues fans have a role in shaping expectations about what truly progressive rock should sound like. Ahlkvist cites Howard Becker, who argues that ‘what audiences choose to respond to affects the work as much as do the choices of artists and support personnel.’<sup>136</sup> Following this argument, any attempt to define the Bristol sound should take the fans’ opinions into consideration.

Conversely, Faris focused on musical analysis in his attempt to define the Chicago sound, analysing several songs by three bands associated with the style.<sup>137</sup> He selected the three bands based on their association with Steve Albini, the Chicago-based musician and engineer often credited as originator of the Chicago sound. Although there is significant weakness in this methodology, in that Farris could have chosen three bands that supported a pre-formed opinion, finding the common thread that unites the artists in spite of their musical differences is a sound approach. Faris analysed the selected songs in areas such as form, harmony, and rhythm, and also the recording techniques that were commonly employed by the bands, specifically the DIY approach popularised by punk music. Faris drew several conclusions from this analysis and offered a set of recurring musical practices that can identify the Chicago sound.

This thesis combines these two approaches, employing formal musical analysis while also considering the opinions of those in the trip hop community. The first step was to select a body of work for analysis, as analysing the work of every artist associated with the Bristol sound is impractical and there would be disagreement over which artists to include in the corpus. Therefore, three artists were chosen as being most representative of the Bristol sound and from each of these artists three songs were selected for analysis.

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<sup>135</sup> Jal Ahlkvist, “What Makes Rock Music “prog”? Fan Evaluation and the Struggle to Define Progressive Rock.” *Popular Music and Society* 34, no. 5 (2011): 639–60.

<sup>136</sup> Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982).

<sup>137</sup> Marc Faris, ““That Chicago Sound”: Playing With (Local) Identity in Underground Rock.” *Popular Music and Society* 27, no. 4 (2004): 429–54.

This raised the issue of how to determine which three artists are most representative of the Bristol Sound style. De Clercq and Temperley faced a similar dilemma in selecting a corpus for their analysis of rock harmony, in that the classification of a song as ‘rock’ can vary widely between individuals.<sup>138</sup> Their solution was to consult a ‘greatest rock songs’ list generated by fans and industry, therefore basing the results on the opinions of many individuals rather than just one. This thesis uses a similar approach in determining which artists and subsequent songs should be selected for analysis by consulting a range of sources such as fan discourse, critical acclaim, music journalism, chart performance, and academic literature. This avoids what Covach calls the ‘fan mentality’<sup>139</sup> and the potential for personal bias.

### 3.2 Key Artists of the Bristol Sound

After consulting a wide range of sources, discussed in detail below, the artists selected for analysis were Portishead, Massive Attack and Tricky. Within fan literature, these artists are consistently put forward as definitive trip hop artists. The website [www.red-lines.co.uk](http://www.red-lines.co.uk) describes them as ‘the three most recognised practitioners’ of trip hop,<sup>140</sup> while [triphoppin.net](http://triphoppin.net) describes Massive Attack’s *Mezzanine*, Portishead’s *Dummy* and Tricky’s *Maxinquaye* as ‘the holy trinity’ of trip hop.<sup>141</sup> Factmag’s list of 50 best trip hop albums of all time lists Tricky’s *Maxinquaye* at number one, Portishead’s *Dummy* at number two, and Massive Attack’s *Blue Lines* at number four (DJ Shadow’s *Endtroducing* is number three).<sup>142</sup> Ranker.com features a list of the top trip hop artists determined by user votes and Massive Attack, Portishead, and Tricky are the top three artists respectively.<sup>143</sup> Within the music press, these three artists are consistently hailed as pioneers of trip hop, seen in the press excerpts below.

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<sup>138</sup> Trevor De Clercq and David Temperley, “A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony.” *Popular Music* 30, no. 1 (2011): 47–70.

<sup>139</sup> John Covach, *What’s That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History* (New York: Norton, 2006). p7.

<sup>140</sup> *Red Lines*, “Trip Hop (Still) Don’t Stop”. <http://www.red-lines.co.uk/reading/melodymaker231205.htm> (accessed 9 February, 2016).

<sup>141</sup> *Ousted Productions*. <http://oustedproductions.net/triphop/what.htm>. (accessed 9 February, 2016).

<sup>142</sup> *FactMag*, “50 Best Trip Hop Albums”. <http://www.factmag.com/2015/07/30/50-best-trip-hop-albums/>. (accessed February 9, 2016).

<sup>143</sup> *Ranker*, “The Best Trip Hop Bands”. <http://www.ranker.com/list/trip-hop-bands-and-musicians/> accessed February 9, 2016.

‘New albums from Portishead, Massive Attack and Tricky may be a flashback to Bristol’s 1990s heyday...’<sup>144</sup>

‘In the last few years, three major trip hop artists - Massive Attack, Portishead and Tricky - have emerged from Bristol, leading many rock critics to anoint this medium-sized city in Western England the world capital of trip hop.’<sup>145</sup>

‘Massive Attack, Tricky and Portishead were at the vanguard of what they hated to be called trip hop.’<sup>146</sup>

The only full-length book devoted to trip hop follows the same line of thought, aptly titled *Straight Outta Bristol: Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky, and the Roots of Trip Hop*.<sup>147</sup> Academic literature also presents these three artists as most representative of trip hop. *Grove Music Online* states ‘Protection by Massive Attack, Portishead’s song-based eponymous debut album and *Maxinquaye* by Tricky... are the three albums that best define the style.’<sup>148</sup> The entry on trip hop in the *Oxford Companion to Music* states ‘Tricky, Massive Attack, and Portishead associated the term [trip hop] with more songlike music.’<sup>149</sup> Finally, Brøvig-Hanssen’s PhD thesis states ‘Portishead, along with Massive Attack and Tricky, among others, are often described as pioneers of the trip hop movement that took place in the early 1990s’<sup>150</sup>

### 3.2.1 Critical and Commercial Success

Massive Attack’s *Blue Lines* placed 65 in a Q magazine list of ‘100 Greatest Albums Ever’,<sup>151</sup> and according to *Acclaimed Music*, a site which uses statistics to

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<sup>144</sup> Anonymous, *Irish Times*, Ireland, April 11, 2008.

<sup>145</sup> Simon Reynolds, “Another City, Another Sound.” *The New York Times*, May 28, 1995. <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/28/arts/pop-view-another-city-another-new-sound.html?mcubz=0>. (accessed 9 February, 2016).

<sup>146</sup> Nick Hasted, “Bristol Time: the Return of a Trip Hop Legacy”. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/bristol-time-the-return-of-a-trip-hop-legacy-807612.html> (accessed February 9, 2016).

<sup>147</sup> Johnson, *Straight Outta Bristol: Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky and the Roots of Trip-Hop*.

<sup>148</sup> Will Fulord-Jones, *Grove Music Online*, “Trip Hop”. (accessed February 9, 2016).

<sup>149</sup> Kenneth Gloag, “Trip Hop”, *Oxford Companion to Music*. (accessed 9 February, 2016).

<sup>150</sup> Brøvig-Hanssen, “Music in Bits and Bits of Music: Signatures of Digital Mediation in Popular Music Recordings.”

<sup>151</sup> *Q Magazine*, “100 Greatest Albums Ever”. <http://www.discogs.com/lists/Q-Magazine-100-Greatest-Albums-Ever/118720?page=2>. (accessed 10 February, 2016)

numerically represent critical reception, it is the 38<sup>th</sup> best-received album of all time and the 3<sup>rd</sup> best-received of the 1990s.<sup>152</sup> They have been nominated for seven Brit Awards, winning Best British Dance Act in 1996;<sup>153</sup> three MTV Europe Music Awards (winning Best Video in 1995 and 1998),<sup>154</sup> and have won two Q awards.<sup>155</sup> Their debut album *Blue Lines* was voted #397 in a *Rolling Stone Magazine* 500 Greatest Albums of All Time,<sup>156</sup> and has sold over 11 million copies worldwide.<sup>157</sup>

According to *Acclaimed Music*, Portishead's *Dummy* is the 65<sup>th</sup> most well received album of all time, and eight most well received of the 1990s.<sup>158</sup> It won the Mercury Music Prize in 1995,<sup>159</sup> and was voted 419 in *Rolling Stone Magazine*'s 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.<sup>160</sup> *Q Magazine* described *Dummy* as 'perhaps the year's most stunning debut album'<sup>161</sup> and included it in their 90 Best Albums of the 90s list<sup>162</sup> and also placed it at 61 in their 100 Greatest British Albums Ever.<sup>163</sup> *Dummy* sold over two million copies in Europe alone,<sup>164</sup> while *Melody Maker* described Portishead as 'undeniably the classiest, coolest thing to have appeared in the country for years.'<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Acclaimed Music*, "The All Time Top 3000 Albums". <http://www.acclaimedmusic.net/>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>153</sup> *Brit Awards, 1996*. <http://www.brits.co.uk/history/shows/1996>, (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>154</sup> Neil Wilkes, "In-depth: MTV Europe Music Awards".

<http://www.digitalspy.com/tv/news/a1398/in-depth-mtv-europe-music-awards/>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>155</sup> *Every Hit*, "The Q Awards". <http://www.everyhit.com/awardq.html>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>156</sup> *Rolling Stone*, "500 Greatest Albums of All Time".

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/500-greatest-albums-of-all-time-20120531/massive-attack-blue-lines-20120525>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>157</sup> *Last.fm*, "Massive Attack". <http://www.last.fm/music/Massive+Attack/+wiki>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>158</sup> *Acclaimed Music*, "The All Time Top 3000 Albums". <http://www.acclaimedmusic.net/>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>159</sup> *BBC*, "Highs and Lows of the Mercury Music Prize".

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/guides/456900/456975/html/n1page5.stm>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>160</sup> *Rolling Stone*, "500 Greatest Albums of All Time".

[http://web.archive.org/web/20090430073251/http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5938174/the\\_rs\\_500\\_greatest\\_albums\\_of\\_all\\_time/5](http://web.archive.org/web/20090430073251/http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5938174/the_rs_500_greatest_albums_of_all_time/5). (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>161</sup> Martin Aston. "Portishead: *Dummy*." *Q*, October, 1994. p. 125.

<sup>162</sup> *Q Magazine*, '90 of the 90s'.

<http://www.rocklistmusic.co.uk/qlistspage2.html#Q%290%20Of%20The%2090%E2%80%99s>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>163</sup> *Q Magazine*, "100 Greatest British Albums Ever". <http://www.rocklistmusic.co.uk/qlists.html>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>164</sup> *IFPI Platinum Europe Awards*.

[https://web.archive.org/web/2013112714333/http://ifpi.org/content/section\\_news/plat2007.html](https://web.archive.org/web/2013112714333/http://ifpi.org/content/section_news/plat2007.html). (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>165</sup> Simon O'Connell. "Review: Portishead - *Dummy*." *Melody Maker*, September 3, 1994, 45.

According to *Acclaimed Music*, Tricky's *Maxinquaye* is the 170<sup>th</sup> most well received album of all time, and 31<sup>st</sup> most well received of the 1990s.<sup>166</sup> It is ranked 36 on *Q Magazine*'s 100 Greatest British Albums Ever,<sup>167</sup> and is also included on *Rolling Stone Magazine*'s Essential Recordings of the 90s.<sup>168</sup> It reached #3 on the British album charts, and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide.<sup>169</sup>

This broad agreement of sources strongly indicates that Massive Attack, Portishead, and Tricky are the most reliable artists to analyse when attempting to define the Bristol sound, as can be evidenced by the opinions of fans, journalists, and academics.

### 3.2.2 Key Musical Works

The next task was to select three tracks from each artist for analysis, which again used a combination of fan forums, chart success, sales figures, and critical acclaim, discussed in detail below. The selected songs were: 'Sour Times', 'Roads', 'Glory Box' (Portishead), 'Angel', 'Unfinished Sympathy', 'Teardrop' (Massive Attack), 'Hell is Round the Corner', 'Aftermath', and 'Overcome' (Tricky).

'Sour Times' appears on *Dummy* (Go! Disks/London, 1994). It was first released as a single in 1994 and reached #57 in the UK Singles Chart, however a re-release in 1995 peaked at #13.<sup>170</sup> It is their only song to appear on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart (peaking at #53).<sup>171</sup> It is frequently included in top ten lists of trip hop songs<sup>172</sup> as well as fan generated top ten lists of Portishead

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<sup>166</sup> *Acclaimed Music*, "Tricky". <http://www.acclaimedmusic.net/>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>167</sup> *Q Magazine*, "100 Greatest British Albums Ever". <http://www.rocklistmusic.co.uk/qlists.html>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>168</sup> *Rolling Stone*, "Essential Recordings of the 90s". <http://www.rocklistmusic.co.uk/rstone.html#Recordings%20of%20the%20%E2%80%9890s>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>169</sup> *Official Charts*, "Tricky". <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/29831/tricky/>. (accessed 10 February, 2016).

<sup>170</sup> *Official Charts*, "Sour Times". <http://www.officialcharts.com/search-results-album/sour+times>. (accessed 27 November, 2014).

<sup>171</sup> *Billboard*, "Portishead". <http://www.billboard.com/artist/347028/portishead/chart>. (accessed 27 November, 2014).

<sup>172</sup> *Last.fm*, "Trip Hop Tracks". <http://www.last.fm/tag/trip-hop/tracks>. (accessed 21 August, 2013).

songs.<sup>173</sup> The video has received almost 400,000 views on YouTube<sup>174</sup> and, along with ‘Roads’, is their second most popular song on iTunes. *Rolling Stone* called it ‘sad and sexy, provoking cinematic images - lonely lovers in cocktail lounges, light slipping through venetian blinds.’<sup>175</sup>

‘Roads’ (*Dummy*) was not released as a single but it remains ‘one of the most beloved album tracks of all time.’<sup>176</sup> Along with ‘Sour Times’, it is Portishead’s second most popular song on iTunes, and a live performance on YouTube has been viewed over 24 million times.<sup>177</sup> It frequently appears on fan top ten lists of Portishead songs.<sup>178</sup>

‘Glory Box’ was released as a single off *Dummy* and reached #13 on the UK Singles Chart.<sup>179</sup> It frequently appears on fan generated top ten lists of Portishead songs.<sup>180</sup> It is their most popular song on iTunes and the video on YouTube has almost 1.7 million views.<sup>181</sup> *LA Weekly* called it ‘the Portishead song that wooed the masses.’<sup>182</sup>

‘Angel’ was the third single from the album *Mezzanine* (Virgin/ London, 1998). It reached #30 on the UK Singles Chart<sup>183</sup> and is regularly included on fan forums regarding top ten trip hop songs.<sup>184</sup> Along with ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ it is their second most popular single on iTunes. One reviewer notes ‘Angel showed the competently dark, twisted side of Massive Attack; arguably the sound that

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<sup>173</sup> *Last.fm*, “Portishead”. [http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/\\_/153061/2](http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/_/153061/2). (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>174</sup> *You Tube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7gutsi1uT4>. (accessed 12 February, 2016).

<sup>175</sup> *Rolling Stone*, “Portishead:Dummy”, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/dummy-19>. (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>176</sup> R.J. Wheaton, *Dummy* (New York: Continuum, 2011).

<sup>177</sup> *You Tube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg1jyL3cr60>. (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>178</sup> *Last.fm*, “Portishead discussion group”, [http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/\\_/15061/2](http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/_/15061/2). (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>179</sup> *Official Charts*, “Portishead”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/30605/portishead/>. (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>180</sup> *Last.fm*, “Portishead discussion group”, [http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/\\_/153061/2](http://www.last.fm/group/portishead/forum/783/_/153061/2). (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>181</sup> *You Tube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ylDDs3mdJE>. (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>182</sup> Phillip Mlynar, *LA Weekly*, “The Top Five Portishead Cover Songs”.

<http://www.laweekly.com/music/the-top-five-portishead-cover-songs>. (accessed 11 February, 2016).

<sup>183</sup> *Official Charts*, “Massive Attack”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/28023/massive-attack/>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>184</sup> *Dummy*, “The 10 Best Trip Hop Tracks, According to Nouvelle Vague’s Marc Collin”. <http://www.dummymag.com/lists/the-10-best-trip-hop-tracks-according-to-nouvelle-vague-marc-collin>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

they had had always been destined to fill.’<sup>185</sup> The official video has over 13 million views on YouTube.<sup>186</sup>

‘Unfinished Sympathy’ is frequently included in fan generated top ten lists of Massive Attack songs.<sup>187</sup> It was the second single from their debut album *Blue Lines* (Virgin/ London, 1991) and reached #13 on the UK Singles Chart.<sup>188</sup> Along with ‘Angel’ it is their second most popular single on iTunes. *New Musical Express* made it single of the week and called it ‘an intense, warm-blooded dance track that boasts more fire in its balls than the Pixies ever dug for.’<sup>189</sup> The official video has over 21 million views on YouTube.<sup>190</sup>

‘Teardrop’ was the second single from *Mezzanine*. It reached #10 on the UK Singles Chart<sup>191</sup> and is frequently included in fan top ten lists of Massive Attack songs.<sup>192</sup> It frequently occurs on top ten lists of the best trip hop songs<sup>193</sup> and a BBC music review called it a ‘jewel of a song’.<sup>194</sup> It is their most popular song on iTunes and the official video has been viewed over 31 million times on YouTube.<sup>195</sup> It was used as the theme music during the opening credits of the American medical drama *House*.

‘Overcome’ was the third single from *Maxinquaye* (Fourth and Broadway/London, 1995) and reached #34 on the UK Singles Chart.<sup>196</sup> It is regularly included on fan forums regarding top ten trip hop songs. It is Tricky’s

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<sup>185</sup> *Beats per Minute*, “Massive Attack Mezzanine”. <http://beatsperminute.com/reviews/second-look-massive-attack-mezzanine/>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>186</sup> *You Tube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbe3CQamF8k>. (accessed February 12, 2016).

<sup>187</sup> *The Tops Tens*, “Best Massive Attack Songs”. <http://www.thetoptens.com/best-massive-attack-songs/>, and <http://www.ranker.com/list/top-10-massive-attack-tracks-/atomic80>. (accessed May 6, 2016).

<sup>188</sup> *Official Charts*, “Massive Attack”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/26801/massive/>. (accessed May 6, 2016).

<sup>189</sup> Barbara Ellen, *NME*, “Singles”. London:IPC Media, February, 1991.

<sup>190</sup> *You Tube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWmrfgi0MZI>. (accessed February 12, 2016).

<sup>191</sup> *Official Charts*, “Massive Attack”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/28023/massive-attack/>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>192</sup> *The Tops Tens*, “Best Massive Attack Songs”. <http://www.thetoptens.com/best-massive-attack-songs/>, and <http://www.ranker.com/list/top-10-massive-attack-tracks-/atomic80>. (accessed May 6, 2016).

<sup>193</sup> *The Tops Tens*, “Best Massive Attack Songs”. <http://www.thetoptens.com/best-massive-attack-songs/> and <http://www.ranker.com/list/top-10-massive-attack-tracks-/atomic80>. (accessed May 6, 2016).

<sup>194</sup> *BBC*, “Massive Attack Mezzanine review”. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/reviews/mh8c>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>195</sup> *You Tube*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7K72X4eo\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7K72X4eo_s). (accessed February 12, 2016).

<sup>196</sup> *Official Charts*, “Tricky”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/29831/tricky/>. (accessed February 11, 2016).

second most popular single from iTunes<sup>197</sup> and the official video has nearly 270,000 views on YouTube.<sup>198</sup> It has been called ‘one of [trip hop’s] finest examples.’<sup>199</sup>

‘Hell is Round the Corner’ (*Maxinquaye*) was not released as a single, however it is Tricky’s most popular song on iTunes and the official video has nearly 1.5 million views on YouTube.<sup>200</sup> It has been called ‘one of the trip hop genre’s all-time classic songs’<sup>201</sup> and regularly features on fan forums discussing the best Tricky songs.<sup>202</sup>

‘Aftermath’ is regularly included on fan forums regarding top ten trip hop songs.<sup>203</sup> It was initially released independently and then re-released as the first single from *Maxinquaye* after Tricky signed with 4<sup>th</sup> and Broadway Records. It is Tricky’s third most popular single from iTunes<sup>204</sup> and has over 300,000 views on YouTube.<sup>205</sup> It reached #69 on the UK Singles Chart.<sup>206</sup>

This broad agreement of sources suggests these songs are an appropriate representation of the Bristol sound style and avoids the potential for personal bias that could arise were nine songs selected at the author’s discretion.

### 3.3 Analytical Techniques

Popular music analysis has made significant advances since its inception in the 1980s, and is now a firmly established discipline within academia. However, despite several noteworthy books devoted to techniques of popular music

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<sup>197</sup> Excluding ‘Black Steel’, which I have discounted as it is a cover of a Public Enemy song.

<sup>198</sup> *You Tube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViHiOopNTlc>. (accessed February 10, 2016).

<sup>199</sup> *All Music*, “Tricky: Overcome”. <http://www.allmusic.com/song/overcome-mt0004841614>. (accessed May 5, 2014).

<sup>200</sup> *You Tube*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3R\\_3h6zQEs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3R_3h6zQEs). (accessed February 11, 2016).

<sup>201</sup> *All Music*, “Tricky: Hell is Round the Corner”. <http://www.allmusic.com/song/hell-is-around-the-corner-mt0001914>. (accessed May 6, 2014).

<sup>202</sup> *Last.fm*, “Tricky discussion group”, [http://www.last.fm/group/Tricky/forum/1927/\\_/446035](http://www.last.fm/group/Tricky/forum/1927/_/446035). (accessed May 6, 2014).

<sup>203</sup> *Listology*, “Trip Hop Classics”. <http://www.listology.com/barttf/list/official-trip-hop-classics-top-100> (accessed August 21, 2013), and <http://www.npr.org/blogs/therecord/2012/01/31/142607358/local-groove-does-good-the-story-of-trip-hops-rise-from-bristol?sc=fb&cc=fp>. (accessed August 22, 2013).

<sup>204</sup> Excluding ‘Black Steel’.

<sup>205</sup> *You Tube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWNOzFnYCI4>. (accessed February 10, 2016).

<sup>206</sup> *Official Charts*, “Tricky”. <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/29831/tricky/>. (accessed May 5, 2014).

analysis, a well-defined methodology is yet to be widely agreed upon.<sup>207</sup> Gracyk forcefully argues that ‘different audiences approach the text in terms of their own interpretive framework. If they can make sense of it from within that framework, their reading is no better than the reading of someone employing a different framework.’<sup>208</sup> Accordingly, the first step is to develop an appropriate analytical methodology that will best serve the needs of the analysis.

The primary goal was to elucidate the main stylistic traits that distinguish the Bristol sound from other styles of popular music. In other words, what is it that makes the Bristol sound *sound* the way it does? This raised the question of which elements make the greatest contribution to the Bristol sound, and should therefore be subject to analysis. Moore argues that popular music analysis is framed by two types of questions; the first relating to musical experiences and the second relating to the meaning of those experiences.<sup>209</sup>

The primary focus here was on the formal musical experiences (such as harmony, rhythm, and melody) as they were deemed to be more fruitful in terms of meeting the aims of the analysis. Accordingly, analytical techniques were chosen that focus on formal, musical analysis with less focus on aesthetics or interpretation. In Moore’s analysis of popular music he divides musical elements into two categories, form and shape. Form represents those musical experiences that ‘are normally felt to constitute music’s formalist nature.’<sup>210</sup> These experiences relate to matters of harmony, pitch, time, and form; musical aspects that can all be easily notated. Analysis in these areas was conducted using techniques from traditional musicology, typically applied to classical music. This is not to suggest that classical music enjoys a normative position in relation to popular music, but it is a style of music whose analytical techniques are well understood.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> See Moore, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*, Walter Everett, *The Foundations of Rock: From “Blue Suede Shoes” to “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and Ken Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock: A Stylistic Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>208</sup> Theodore Gracyk, *I Wanna be Me: Rock Music and the Politics of Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), p.38.

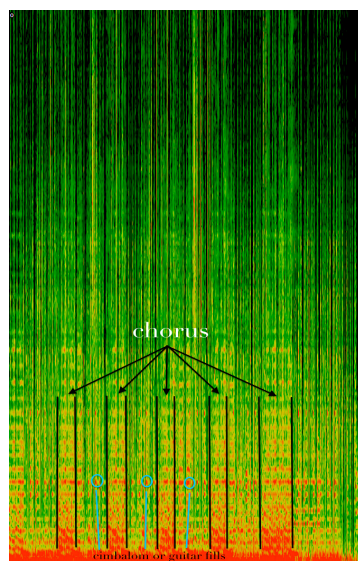
<sup>209</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.* p51.

<sup>211</sup> David Temperley, “The Melodic-Harmonic ‘Divorce’ in Rock.” *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007): 323–42.

Shape refers to sonic experiences that cannot be easily notated, such as timbre, texture, and technological mediation.<sup>212</sup> These elements are crucial determinants as it is the ‘sound-world set up by a track that frequently forms the point of entry for a listener, that first triggers a sense of recognition.’<sup>213</sup> Though popular song is sometimes circulated as an oral tradition, it is the *recording* of a song that is viewed as the definitive version, rather than a score or live performance.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, complete, accurate transcriptions of popular songs are the exception, and instead vocal lead sheets are the primary form of written popular music. When considering those aspects of popular song not easily notated, analytical techniques from popular music and electroacoustic music were used, while a number of computer programs also aided in the analysis.

*Sonic Visualiser*, developed at the Centre for Digital Music, Queen Mary, University of London, provided highly detailed spectrograms that were useful in analysing the texture of a track in terms of density and dispersal of energy. These spectrograms also revealed the ways in which certain musical parameters reinforced others. For example, in Portishead’s ‘Sour Times’ the episodic and repetitive nature of the harmony, melody, and overall form is also represented in the sound of the track.



**Figure 3.1: 'Sour Times' spectrograph.**

<sup>212</sup> Philip Tagg, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice.” 37–65.

<sup>213</sup> Moore, *Song Means*, p19.

<sup>214</sup> There are of course exceptions, as some songs exist in so many different versions that they become disassociated from their original recording, and often from the original recording artist. See Alan Light’s discussion of Leonard Cohen’s ‘Hallelujah’, Alan Light, *The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley and the Unlikely Ascent of “Hallelujah”* (New York: Atria, 2012).

In Figure 3.1, the contrasting verse and chorus sections are immediately apparent and one can determine the form of the track simply by looking at the spectrogram. Additionally, *Digital Performer*, developed by Mark of the Unicorn, aided in analysing the mix of a track, particularly in determining the arrangement of the soundbox. The *Spatial Maximiser* plug-in within *Digital Performer* analyses a stereo audio file and differentiates between those sounds placed at or near the centre and those that are panned to the left and right, allowing the listener to hear each area of sonic space separately. By combining analytical techniques from both traditional and popular musicology, a standardised methodology was developed and applied to each of the selected works in the same way.

### 3.3.1 Form

When analysing form, there were two issues to be resolved. The first was how to decide that one section of the song has finished and another one has started. Stephenson argues that changes in text, instrumentation, rhythm, and harmony are the best indicators of a change of section, and he suggests that form becomes ambiguous when change occurs in one or more of these areas but not the others.<sup>215</sup> For Stephenson, text is the most reliable means of distinguishing sections, particularly when certain sections of text repeat.<sup>216</sup> For example, a chorus is typically identified by consistent use of the same words during each repetition, while a verse tends to vary the text with each iteration. Moore also emphasises the text, arguing that ‘it is the nature of the lyric (repeated or not) that distinguishes verse from chorus.’<sup>217</sup> Conversely, Covach argues that harmony is the most pertinent element in determining form,<sup>218</sup> while Summach suggests it is the length of the section and its sense of completeness.<sup>219</sup> Everett also stresses the role of harmony in determining form but also acknowledges the location of a section within a song as an important determinant.<sup>220</sup> Following Moore and Stephenson, the text is the main determiner in distinguishing sections, though

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<sup>215</sup> Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock: A Stylistic Analysis*. p122.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. p124.

<sup>217</sup> Moore, *Song Means*, p83.

<sup>218</sup> John Covach, “Form in Rock: A Primer,” In *Engaging Music: Essays in Musical Analysis*, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65-76, p66.

<sup>219</sup> Jason Summach, “The Structure, Function, and Genesis of the Prechorus.” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3 (2011).

<sup>220</sup> Walter Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians: Revolver Through the Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p15.

changes in harmony, instrumentation and texture are also considered.

Once clear sections were established, the next task was to label these sections. One possible route was to use letters (A B C), which can be useful for noting the occurrence or rejection of certain commonly used musical forms such as binary (AB), rondo (ABACA), or ballad form (AABA).<sup>221</sup> Terms that are more commonly associated with popular music, such as verse, chorus, bridge, can also be employed but are problematic for several reasons. First, two listeners may disagree over the label of a section due to different interpretations of the function of that section. For example, the function of a pre-chorus is to build tension and momentum heading into the chorus, therefore some listeners may refrain from labeling a section pre-chorus if it is not immediately followed by a chorus. Second, the terminology employed is not always consistent. For example, coda, tag, and outro are all commonly used to describe the section that serves to end the song. Finally, there are some sections for which no widely-used term exists, such as the brief instrumental passage that occasionally separates the first chorus and second verse. Despite these limitations, popular song terminology was the preferred method as it allowed for a more detailed reading of form, accounting for sections that may be as short as two bars, and also conveyed information about the function of each section.

Accordingly, the analysis employed the terminology listed below, and largely followed Endrinal with some notable exceptions.<sup>222</sup> First, Endrinal uses the term ‘transition’ instead of pre-chorus on the basis that sections labeled pre-chorus frequently don’t precede the chorus. However, this is often a compositional choice designed to deny expectation and heighten the anticipation of a listener, therefore the term ‘transition’ has not been adopted. Also, Endrinal uses the term ‘interverse’ instead of bridge, arguing that the section often doesn’t function in the way the word implies (a means of connecting two points). This was also not adopted as the term ‘bridge’ is widely used in the popular music lexicon and its function within a song is well understood (providing contrast by introducing new harmonic material based away from the tonic). In summary, below is a list of the

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<sup>221</sup> Also known as 32-bar form. It is often associated with jazz standards from the Tin Pan Alley era but was also very common during the period of the American popular ballad.

<sup>222</sup> Christopher Endrinal, “Burning Bridges: Defining the Interverse in the Music of U2.” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3 (2011).

terms used in the analysis followed by a brief description.

### *Introduction (I)*

The opening of the song. Typically instrumental and can vary in length from a few seconds to one-and-a-half minutes. Establishes the meter, key, tempo and mood of the song, and also frequently provides the hook.

### *Conclusion (Con)*

The conclusion serves to end the song. It may feature lyrics or be instrumental, and will generally bring textual, harmonic, and melodic closure to a song, either with a cadence or a fade out.

### *Verse (V)*

The verse occurs several times throughout the song and will usually have different lyrics each time. Each verse typically has a similar melody, rhythm, harmonic progression, and instrumentation, although variations in melodic contour and rhythmic patterns of lyrics are quite common. It will typically unfold the narrative of the song.

### *Link (L)*

A brief instrumental passage that occurs between two major sections, for example the first chorus and second verse.

### *Chorus (C)*

The section of a song comprised of several lines of text that are distinct from the verse, pre-chorus or transition. It occurs several times throughout the song, usually with the same or similar lyrics, melody, harmony, instrumentation, and texture. The chorus generally resolves any musical or lyrical tension established in the preceding sections. It typically has greater emotional energy than other sections of the song.

### *Pre-Chorus (PC)*

A short passage, typically two to eight bars, that features lyrics and is harmonically unstable and is intended to resolve into the stable chorus. It generally precedes the chorus but exceptions do occur.

### *Refrain (R)*

One or two lines of text that function as a lyrical hook. It is repeated several times throughout the song, usually in the middle or at the end of a verse. A refrain usually has very similar texture and instrumentation as the preceding verse. Unlike a chorus, which is lyrically, texturally, and often harmonically different from a verse or transition, a refrain is not its own section. Rather, it is the tail end of the material that precedes it. Songs typically use either a refrain or a chorus, rarely both.

### *Instrumental (Ins)*

Features instrumental solos or a group of instruments and often includes variations in texture. Non-texted vocals may also occur.

### *Bridge (B)*

Provides contrast by introducing new harmonic material based away from the tonic. Usually features lyrics and occurs once approximately two thirds of the way through a song.

### *Transition (T)*

A short instrumental section that is used to segue between sections.

Graphic representations of the form of each song were created, using colour coding on the upper level to denote the various sections. The numbers on the lower level indicate the number of bars in each phrase. Colour coding was also used on the lower level to represent the recurring use of thematic material. For example, Figure 3.2 shows the form to Portishead's 'Sour Times'. The song begins with an eight-bar introduction followed by a repeating cycle of verse/chorus/link, with an instrumental passage replacing the fourth link before ending with a 20-bar conclusion. The song is based on two different thematic motifs, one for the verse and link sections and one for the chorus. The verse sections are constructed of three two-bar phrases while the chorus is constructed of two two-bar phrases.

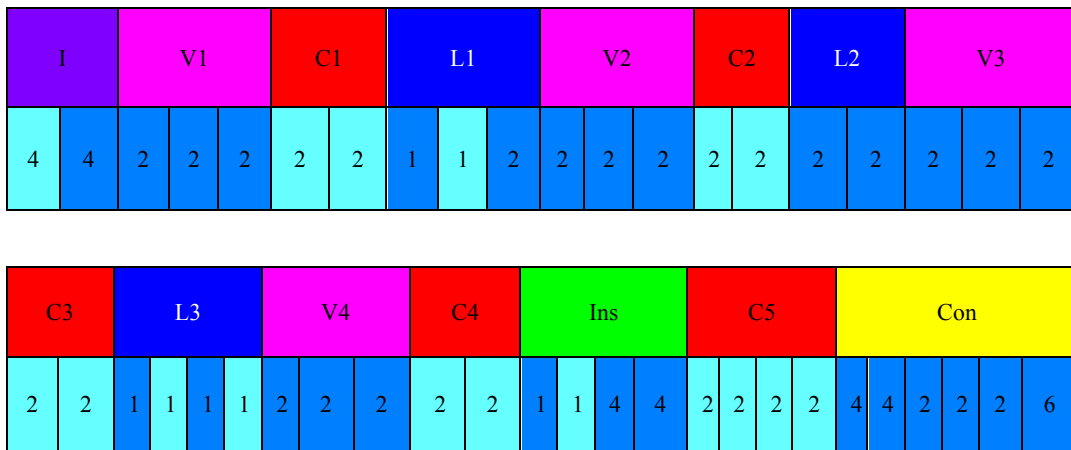


Figure 3.2: 'Sour Times' form.

### 3.3.2 Harmony

Roman numerals were used to denote harmonic function, as is common in popular music analysis.<sup>223</sup> The way Roman numerals function in harmonic analysis varies between scholars, with the use of upper case numerals for major chords and lower case for minor being one of the few consistencies. Moore uses what he calls the harmonic modal system, where a particular mode is ascribed to a song based on the root notes of the harmony.<sup>224</sup> Thus, the chord progression Am G F would be analysed i-VII-VI in A aeolian, while the progression A G F would also be considered A aeolian and be analysed as I'-VII-VI. The comma denotes the fact that the major I chord differs from the minor i chord generated by the aeolian mode, what Moore calls a modification. This system has its limitations, particularly as the root notes of many chord progressions could be made to fit into a number of modes. As an example, Moore offers two competing analyses of Kate Bush's 'Wuthering Heights', in particular the progression A-F-E-C#. Using Moore's system this could be analysed in A aeolian, giving a roman numeral analysis of I'-VI-V'-#III', or as A ionian I-bVI-V-III'.

Stephenson avoids the modal approach, instead ascribing chords a numeral based on their function according to one of three systems: the natural minor scale, the chromatic minor scale, or the major scale.<sup>225</sup> The natural minor scale includes six diatonic chords (he does not include the second, diminished chord as it is

<sup>223</sup> See Moore, *Song Means*, Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock*, and Temperely, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock." to name just a few.

<sup>224</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

<sup>225</sup> Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock*, p124.

rarely used in popular music) with each assigned a number based on their respective scale degree. For example, Am-G-F would be analysed as i VII VI. The chromatic minor scale is a series of major triads based on the root notes of the natural minor scale, though the tonic chord can be either major or minor. Therefore, the progression A G F E would be analysed as I VII VI V. The major scale includes six diatonic triads (again avoiding the diminished triad), plus the flattened seventh major triad (designated VII), and also includes secondary dominants, in particular V/ii, V/V, and V/vi. Thus, the progression A G F<sup>#</sup>m E would be analysed as I VII vi V.

A third approach is to number chords according to their relationship to the tonic as it pertains to the major scale, so the progression Am-G-F-E would be analysed i-<sup>b</sup>VII-<sup>b</sup>VI-V. This is the method followed by Everett,<sup>226</sup> Temperley and De Clercq,<sup>227</sup> and was also used here.<sup>228</sup> Upper case numerals denote major chords while lower case denote minor, and the root notes of each chord are described in relation to their scale degree in a major scale. Inversions are notated using lower-case letters, for example Ib, except where the bass note is a non-chord tone, for example in the key of C major a G major chord with a C note in the bass would be labeled V/C.

In addition to analysing the harmonic function of each chord, progressions were either defined as period structure or open-ended gestures.<sup>229</sup> Period structures are progressions that have goal-orientated direction, with particular importance placed on the ending of the progression. For example, a 16 bar section may consist of two eight-bar halves. The first half may be a question with an open ending, that is to say it ends on a non-tonic chord, while the answering section may have a closed ending that finishes on the tonic. In this case the two halves have an open-closed relationship, though open-open and closed-closed pairings are also possible.

Open-ended gestures describe progressions where a sequence of chords is repeated, either for a section or for an entire song. The most common sequential

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<sup>226</sup> Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*.

<sup>227</sup> De Clercq and Temperley, "A Corpus Analysis of Rock Harmony."

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

patterns are four equally spaced chords (usually one chord per bar), two equally spaced chords (usually one chord per two bars) or three chords where one is twice as long as the others.

### 3.3.3 Time

Rhythmic analysis primarily focused on the groove, which Spicer defines as ‘the complex tapestry of riffs - usually played by the drums, bass, rhythm guitar and/or keyboard in some combination - that work together to create the distinctive harmonic/rhythmic backdrop which identifies a song’<sup>230</sup> Groove can refer to both an object and a process, and each conceptualisation has its benefits and shortcomings.<sup>231</sup> Theorising the groove as an object allows for easier description and comparison to other grooves. Theorising a groove as a process allows for greater consideration of the human participatory element, that is that grooves are a result of the interaction between humans. On one hand grooves repeat, thus creating a circular motion, however grooves can also have goal-directed motion and create a sense of moving forward in time. This distinction is described by Kramer as linear versus non-linear time.<sup>232</sup>

Groove analysis was conducted using Krebs’ notion of consonance and dissonance.<sup>233</sup> Krebs views rhythmic motion as a combination of levels and a groove can be said to be consonant when there is a high degree of alignment between these levels, or dissonant when there is not. Krebs divides music into a ‘pulse level’ and one or more ‘interpretive levels.’ The pulse level is the fastest level while the slower levels are interpretive in that they impose a metrical interpretation on the pulse level. Krebs uses the term ‘cardinality’ to refer to the number of attacks in the pulse layer between two attacks in the slower interpretive layer, and argues a state of consonance exists when the cardinality of each level is a multiple of the cardinality of each slower level.

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<sup>230</sup> Mark Spicer, “British Pop-rock Music in the Post-Beatles Era: Three Analytical Studies.” PhD. diss., Yale University, 2001.

<sup>231</sup> Robin Attas, “Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music.” PhD Diss., The University of British Columbia, 2011.

<sup>232</sup> Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1988).

<sup>233</sup> Harold Krebs, “Some Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance.” *Journal of Music Theory* 31, no. 1 (1987): 99–120.

On occasion, drum patterns were notated using the Time Unit Box Systems (TUBS) system of notation. TUBS is a system of notation devised by ethnomusicologist Philip Harland as a way of representing rhythm in the music of West African drum ensembles. It is clearer than traditional notation, which often implies duration where there is none. This system can be useful for identifying the symmetrical or asymmetrical division of a measure and also for noting the degree of syncopation. Following Stephenson, the analysis also considered phrase rhythm, particularly the relationship between phrase (defined as a melodic passage that might be notated under a single phrase marking) and hypermeter (defined as the smallest morphological, i.e. formal, division larger than a measure).<sup>234</sup> The definition of phrase follows Attas, who defines it as ‘a musical unit with goal directed motion towards a clear conclusion, created through the manipulation of text, harmony, rhythm, and melodic contour.’<sup>235</sup>

*Sonic Visualiser* was used to map the tempo of a song based on the time between beats.

### 3.3.4 Melody

Melodic analysis focused on two aspects, the first of which is the distinction between what Moore calls contour-rich and period structure.<sup>236</sup> Contour-rich melodies use a repeating melodic pattern that is often independent from the harmony, and tend to be found in songs that use open-ended harmonic gestures. Period structure melodies work in tandem with harmonic sequences and avoid repeating patterns, instead relying on voice leading within available chord tones. The relationship between melody and harmony can indicate one style over another. In styles derived from Tin Pan Alley, such as ballad style, the song is often carried by the harmony while the melody functions more as decoration to the underlying harmonic structure (period structure). In styles derived from blues and gospel, the melody tends to dominate and is supported by the underlying harmony.

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<sup>234</sup> Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock*, p7.

<sup>235</sup> Robin Attas, “Sarah Setting the Terms: Defining Phrase in Popular Music.” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3 (2011), [6].

<sup>236</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

The relationship between melody and harmony was also considered, particularly regarding the ‘melodic harmonic divorce’;<sup>237</sup> those melodies that frequently employ non-chord tones that do not resolve by stepwise motion. This leads to the ‘loose-verse/tight-chorus’ model, where songs employ a stratified melodic organisation in the verse and a unified organisation in the chorus, conveying what Temperley argues is ‘a very basic expressive message: a contrast between unity and individual freedom.’<sup>238</sup> The loose verse signifies individuality by giving relative independence to the parts of the ensemble, particularly to the vocal, which is able to wander rather freely without being tied to the harmonic changes. During the tight chorus the parts of the ensemble ‘come together’ under the unifying guidance of the harmonic structure, signifying coordination and unity of purpose.<sup>239</sup>

### 3.3.5 Functional Layers

The preceding sections discussed musical analysis in terms of ‘form’,<sup>240</sup> the formal elements of music that can be easily notated. The following sections discuss the analytical techniques used in regard to ‘shape’; the sonic qualities of the song that are not so easily notated. One such tool is what Moore terms ‘functional layers’, a means of analysing a song in regard to four discreet layers. Moore argues that it is the nature of these layers and the way they are articulated that can help define a style of music.<sup>241</sup>

#### *Explicit Beat Layer*

The function of this layer is to articulate an explicit pattern of beats, forming the major constituent of the groove. In popular music this is primarily served by the drums. The key feature of this layer is that it is nominally unpitched. This layer also serves to distance popular music styles from those of the western concert tradition.

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<sup>237</sup> Temperley, “The Melodic-Harmonic ‘Divorce’ in Rock.”

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p337.

<sup>239</sup> For simplicity, the melodic analysis is presented in the Melodic Layer section with the other functional layers in section 4.4.4.

<sup>240</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

### *Functional Bass Layer*

The functional bass layer details the melodic relationship to the harmony and rhythmic relationship to the groove. This is traditionally the role of the bass guitar and can be melodic, riff-based or harmonic in nature. It acts as a tether between the harmonic and rhythmic information within a track.

### *Melodic Layer*

The melodic layer consists of primary and secondary melodic lines, both vocal and instrumental. The role of this layer is to articulate the lyrics and to provide melodic ‘hooks’. This layer tends to be the primary focus for listeners when trying to recall a song.

### *Harmonic Filler*

This is where one would typically find guitars, piano or other keyboard instruments providing the harmonic structure. It is also the constitution of this layer and the way it is realised that has the greatest impact on the association with a particular style.

## **3.3.6 Soundbox**

The soundbox is a three dimensional model useful for conceptualising the sonic space that a track inhabits.<sup>242</sup> That space can be metaphorical, if listening through headphones, or actual if listening through speakers. The x axis of the soundbox reflects the left to right continuum of the stereo field, meaning an instrument or sound source placed in the centre of the stereo field will appear in the middle of the soundbox, while an instrument panned hard left will appear at the left most edge. The y axis refers to the register of a sound source; an instrument with a low register will sit near the bottom of the soundbox while higher pitched instruments will sit near the top. The z axis reflects the depth of the sonic space and indicates a sound source’s perceived distance from the listener.<sup>243</sup>

Placement on the y-axis is largely predetermined by the sound source and its melodic range. A bass guitar will naturally sit near the bottom of the soundbox

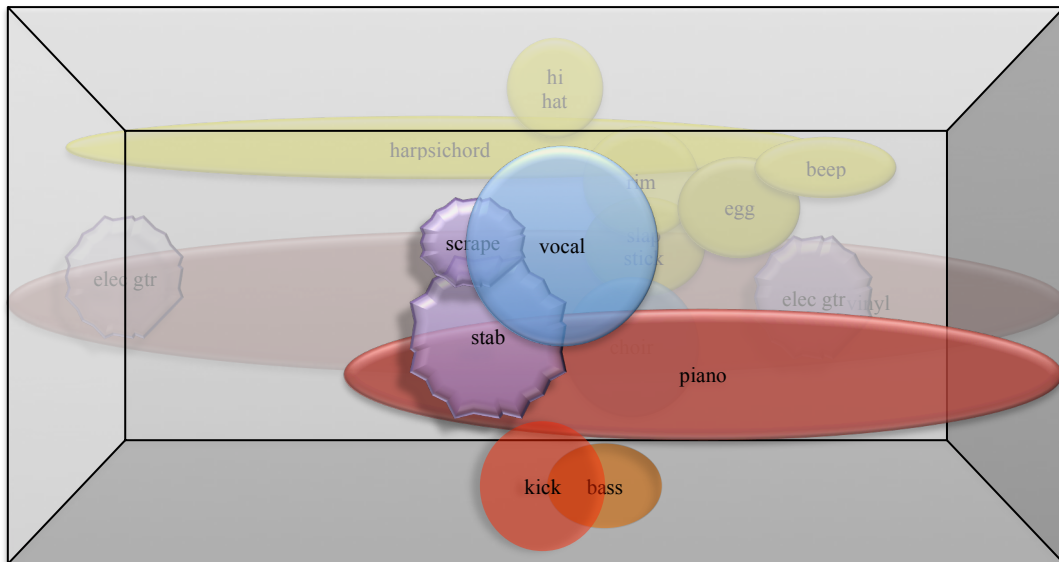
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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> While all sounds will emanate from the same place at the same time, the illusion of depth can be manipulated with volume, reverb and delay.

while cymbals will naturally occur at the top. However, these positions are open to a degree of manipulation through equalisation. Left/right placement occurs through the use of panning and can also be manipulated. The location of a sound source within the left/right divide must be interpreted by the listener and can only practically be done by wearing headphones or listening through speakers that are placed some distance apart. Identifying a sound source's place along the z-axis is also a matter of interpretation. Decreasing the volume of an instrument appears to push it further into the distance, as does adding reverb. These three elements, up/down (pitch), left/right (panning) and near/far (volume/reverb) are used in the production of a track to give it a well-balanced sonic picture where each sound source inhabits its own unique position in space and does not compete with other sound sources. The manipulation of these three elements plays a large role in the way a track will be sonically received by a listener.

Within the analysis, Moore's model of the soundbox has been modified in three ways (Fig. 3.3). First, colour has been used to indicate the timbre of each sound source, using warm to bright colours to depict warm to bright tones. The correlation of adjectives such as warm or bright with colours or instrumental timbre is arbitrary and is important only as a means of describing the methodology. Second, shapes and labels have replaced pictorial representations to denote the instruments in the soundbox. Third, the degree of distortion of the edges of each shape depicts the degree of distortion of the sound source. For example, a shape with smooth lines represents a sound that has a natural tone while a shape with distorted lines represents a sound that has been distorted in some way.



**Figure 3.3: 'Teardrop' soundbox.**

### 3.3.7 Persona

When considering the nature of the artist persona, Moore refers to the notion of proxemics. Proxemics ‘describes and analyses the distances (social, public, private, intimate) between individuals-in-interaction.’<sup>244</sup> In the context of a sound recording, this refers to the distance between the persona and the listener and also the persona and their environment. Table 3.1 shows the four types of persona and gives brief descriptions of each type.

<sup>244</sup> Moore, *Song Means*.

**Table 3.1: Moore's model of proxemics.**  
 Reprinted with permission. See Moore (2012).

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Distance</b>		<b>Articulation of persona</b>
	<b>Persona/listener</b>	<b>Persona/environment</b>	
<b>Intimate</b>	<p>very close to listener (ie. touching distance)</p> <p>no intervening musical material</p>	<p>persona set in front of environment</p> <p>normally high degree of separation between persona and environment</p> <p>vocal placed at front of soundbox</p>	<p>close range whisper</p> <p>clarity of vocal sounds (coughs, breath intake)</p> <p>lyrical content suggests intimacy/potential physical contact</p>
<b>Personal</b>	<p>close to listener (within arms length)</p> <p>possibility of intervening musical material</p>	<p>persona in front of environment</p> <p>still a certain degree of separation but less than in intimate zone</p> <p>vocal not at forefront of soundbox</p>	<p>soft to medium vocals</p> <p>less clarity of vocal sounds</p> <p>lyrical content addresses two or three people</p>
<b>Social</b>	<p>medium distance from listener</p> <p>intervening musical material</p>	<p>persona within the environment</p> <p>little separation and more integration</p> <p>vocal placed within the center of soundbox</p>	<p>medium to loud vocals</p> <p>few, if any, vocal sounds heard.</p> <p>lyrical content addresses small group of people</p>
<b>Public</b>	<p>large distance from listener</p> <p>high degree of intervening musical material</p>	<p>persona engulfed and towards rear boundaries of the environment</p> <p>high degree of integration</p> <p>vocal toward rear of soundbox</p>	<p>full loud vocals</p> <p>no vocal sounds heard</p> <p>vocals address large group</p>

### 3.3.8 Timbre

Smalley's theory of spectromorphology was used to analyse timbre,<sup>245</sup> particularly regarding gestural surrogacy, spectral space, inharmonic saturation, and spatiomorphology.<sup>246</sup> These tools were useful for investigating the sonic quality of the Bristol sound and were particularly helpful in the production and mixing stages of the composition process.

### 3.3.9 Intertextuality

Instances of intertextuality used the expanded model of transtextuality discussed in section 2.6 (Fig. 2.4). The analysis not only considered quotations of outside works but also how quotation was used in conjunction with phonematic references.

### 3.3.10 Lyrics

As with popular music analysis, there is not yet a standardized approach to analysing lyrics in popular song, and different authors focus on varying aspects of a musical text. Machin places considerable emphasis on the participants (characters) of the text, and also whether it offers a discourse schema or an ideological narrative.<sup>247</sup> Griffiths discusses verbal space, the means by which the lyrics populate a musical phrase,<sup>248</sup> and also emphasises the rhyme structure and perspective of the narrator. Middleton offers three distinctions when discussing lyrics – affect (words as expression), story (words as narrative), and gesture (words as sound).<sup>249</sup> These approaches, alongside other concepts such as comparisons of literal and figurative language, can provide a holistic overview of a lyrical text and offer insights into how a particular lyrical meaning can be conveyed. Furthermore, the relationship to lyrics and music can further reveal how a musical environment can contribute to the lyrical meaning. For example, the shape or pace of a melodic phrase often works in concert with the lyrical

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<sup>245</sup> Smalley, "Spectromorphology" 107–26.

<sup>246</sup> These terms were clearly defined in section 2.5.2.

<sup>247</sup> David Machin, *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text* (London: Sage, 2010).

<sup>248</sup> Dai Griffiths, "From Lyric to Anti-Lyric: Analyzing the Words in Pop Song." In *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39–59.

<sup>249</sup> Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990).

content, and the relationship between melody and harmony can influence the underlying tone of a lyrical message.

While there are a number of tools available for analysing lyrics, the analysis in chapter four offers only cursory investigations of the lyrical content in the Bristol sound. This is because the aim of the analysis was to discover which musical traits are indicative of the Bristol sound style, rather than presenting a detailed analysis of each specific song. Lyric writing was not a primary focus of this thesis, though it did influence the compositions, therefore lyric analysis was restricted to any recurring patterns that are found throughout the songs and no attempt was made to interpret any possible meanings behind the text.

These techniques comprise the methodological approach for the musicological component of this thesis. The following section discusses the method for the creative component.

### **3.4 Performative Research**

The creative works in this thesis were composed within the framework of performative research. Research has traditionally taken one of two approaches, quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative research is ‘the activity or operation of expressing something as a quantity or amount, for example in numbers, graphs or formulas.’<sup>250</sup> This is the approach most often used in traditional sciences and mathematics and involves objective observation where the presence of the researcher is not expected to influence the results. Qualitative research concerns ‘all forms of social inquiry that rely primarily on...nonnumeric data in the form of words.’<sup>251</sup> It embraces a variety of methods such as case studies, interviews, reflective dialogue and peer review, and accounts for the perspective of both researcher and participant.<sup>252</sup> This is the approach generally used within the humanities. Norris states the need for qualitative research arose ‘as we came to realise how much life was squeezed out of human experience when we attempted

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<sup>250</sup> Thomas Schwandt, *Dictionary of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001), p215. Cited in Brad Haseman, “Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm.” In *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 147-57, p150.

<sup>251</sup> Schwandt, *Dictionary of Qualitative Research*, p213, cited in Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Brad Haseman, “A Manifesto for Performative Research.” *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy*, no. 118 (2006):98-106.

to make sense of it in a numeric, non-contextual way.’<sup>253</sup> The limited binary of these paradigms, with their emphasis on written outcomes, gave rise to performative research. Practitioners working in creative fields sought methodologies that allowed for research through practice, as restricting oneself to reporting knowledge through numbers or words would undervalue the contribution the arts make to new knowledge. This approach places practice itself as the primary method of research, and it is through the practice of a discipline that conclusions are drawn. To that end, research output is reported through forms specific to each discipline. The three research paradigms are displayed below (table 3.2),<sup>254</sup> showing the different ways research outcomes are expressed.

**Table 3.2: Three research paradigms.**  
Reprinted with permission.

<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Performative Research</b>
‘The activity or operation of expressing something as a quantity or amount – for example, in numbers, graphs, or formulas’ (Schwandt 2001, p215).	‘All forms of social inquiry that rely primarily on qualitative data, i.e. nonnumeric data in the form of words (Schwandt 2001, p213).	Expressed in nonnumeric data, but in forms of symbolic data other than words in discursive text. These include material forms of practice, of still and moving images, of music and sound, of live action and digital code.
The scientific method	Multi-method	Multi-method led by practice

A key characteristic of performative, or artistic, research is that art practice is not merely the subject matter of the research, but is central to the research process itself. It provides the methodological vehicle through which new understandings and products arise, and also specifies the relevant context for the research. Unlike qualitative research, where artistic practice may be the subject of the research but not its outcome, artistic research produces output in the forms of artworks, performances, and other artistic practices. Accordingly, artistic research ‘derives its significance not only from the new insights it contributes to the discourse on

<sup>253</sup> Judy Norris, “Meaning Through Form: Alternate Modes of Knowledge Representation.” In *Completing a Qualitative Project: Details and Dialogue*, ed. Janice M. Morse (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 87-116, p89.

<sup>254</sup> Haseman, “Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm.”

art, but also from the outcomes in the form of new products and experiences which are meaningful in the world of art.<sup>255</sup> We can therefore speak of artistic research when the artistic practice is paramount as the subject matter, the context, the method, and the outcome.<sup>256</sup>

Of course, not all artistic practice can be considered artistic *research*; practitioners will often draw from well-established areas of knowledge in the creation of their artistic works without making an original contribution to new knowledge. To justifiably present a creative process as artistic research, one must consider how it fits within the framework of the research process discussed above. Artistic research begins with ‘an idea, a context, a set of questions and a body of knowledge.’<sup>257</sup> Thus, the research subject should be articulated with a clear set of aims and questions before the creative work can begin. Webb and Brien argue that ‘once the research starting point has been clarified it is possible to begin making the creative work and then, using the lines of thought that it generates, to tease out and analyse the contextual, theoretical or formal questions that are likely to deliver the required “stocks of knowledge”.’<sup>258</sup>

Furthermore, the artistic practice should be situated within the appropriate context, including an understanding of the field, the rules or conventions, the main discourses, and the historical and current trajectory.<sup>259</sup> It is through the understanding of this context that the researcher is provided the opportunity to develop new creative approaches and perspectives.

To be considered artistic research, the practice should also include a clearly explicated methodology. While the creative process will always include a degree of intuition and artistic impulse, it can also be supplemented with critical reflection and clear documentation of the methods employed. Indeed, Webb and Brien argue that ‘in any discussion of the knowledge content of a work...it is

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<sup>255</sup> Henk Borgdorff, “The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research.” In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (New York: Routledge, 2011), 44-63, p46.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Jen Webb and Donna Lee Brien, “Addressing the ‘Ancient Quarrel’: Creative Writing as Research.” In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (New York: Routledge, 2011), 186-203, p195.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, p196.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

important that the writer interrogate not only the work, but also the methods and epistemological frameworks used to produce that work.<sup>260</sup> Finally, the artistic outcome should be realised in a form that is open to dissemination and peer review, including critical discourse and scholarly analysis.

Performative research has its roots in what Winter calls 'action research'.<sup>261</sup> While his work was not specifically focused on research within the arts, he notes six fundamental characteristics of action research. Following Winter, artistic research is likely to follow these principles, while artistic practice is not.

1) Reflexive Critique - The researcher reflects on issues and processes and makes explicit the interpretations, biases, and assumptions upon which judgments are made.

2) Dialectical Critique - The researcher conceptualizes in dialogue those relationships within phenomena and those between phenomena and its context.

3) Collaborative Resource - The researcher values the interpretive analysis of others.

4) Risk - The researcher embraces the risk to ego stemming from critique of their work.

5) Plural Structure - The researcher embraces a multiplicity of views, leading to multiple possible interpretations.

6) Theory, Practice, Transformation - The researcher uses theory to inform practice, and uses practice to refine theory.

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p202.

<sup>261</sup> Richard Winter, *Action-Research and the Nature of Social Inquiry: Professional Innovation and Educational Work* (England: Gower Publishing, 1987).

### 3.4.1 Practice-led and Practice-based Research

It should be noted that the distinctions between artistic practice and artistic research discussed above have not been universally embraced. Indeed, debate continues about the extent to which artistic output constitutes knowledge. Two competing arguments are often made within the field; first, that practice itself constitutes research and generates observational outputs, and second, that practice can lead to specialised research insights that can then be generalised and written up as research. Different commentators emphasise each approach to varying degrees. Haseman argues that an artwork embodies research findings that are symbolically expressed, rather than through the use of words or numbers, and the artwork and the surrounding practices are the research.<sup>262</sup> He argues ‘symbolic data work performatively. They not only express the research but in that expression become the research itself.’<sup>263</sup> Barbara Bolt places less emphasis on the artwork as a form of research, instead prioritising the research insights that can arise out of practice and be applied more generally. In this regard, practice-as-research must involve writing up to avoid the confusion between practice and practical knowledge.<sup>264</sup> Bolt argues that when research is written up, ‘particular situated and emergent knowledge has the potential to be generalised so that it enters into dialogue with existing practical and theoretical paradigms.’<sup>265</sup>

In an attempt to elucidate the distinction between these theories, Candy uses the terms ‘practice-based’ and ‘practice-led’ research, both of which are subsets of performative research.

Practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. In a doctoral thesis, claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the forms of design, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to the

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<sup>262</sup> Haseman, “A Manifesto for Performative Research.”

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, p6.

<sup>264</sup> Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean. *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

<sup>265</sup> Barbara Bolt. “The Magic is in Handling.” In *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 27-34, p33.

outcomes. The textual description includes documentation of the research process, as well as textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection.

Practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. In a doctoral thesis, the results of practice-led research may be fully described in text form without the inclusion of a creative work. The primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice. Such research includes practice as an integral part of its method and often falls within the area of action research.<sup>266</sup>

While this distinction has not been unanimously accepted, it does distinguish the varying ways practice can constitute research. This thesis uses practice-led research to arrive at new understandings of how elements from classical music can be incorporated into the Bristol sound. Several creative works were composed as a means of conducting these experiments and audience feedback provided outside assessment of the merits of each approach. The process of composing/distributing a work and receiving audience feedback could be documented without the inclusion of the creative works. However, the works have been included here to supplement the written material. While the creative works themselves form an integral part, they are not the sole focus of this thesis.

### **3.4.2 Composition**

The following section provides a holistic overview of the compositional method for creating the original works in the thesis, as well as a brief synopsis of the compositional approach for each piece. Each of the works was realised in a professional Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) using a combination of live audio and MIDI sequencing. In addition to composing, arranging and producing all of the music, the composer played the piano, guitar, and bass parts, performed all of the MIDI sequencing, composed the lyrics, and sang on a number of tracks. Live string players were used to replace MIDI strings and other vocalists were also

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<sup>266</sup> Linda Candy, "Practice Based Research: A Guide." *Creativity and Cognition Studios Report 2006-VI.0* Sydney: Creativity and Cognition Studios, University of Technology (2006).

used when a different vocal timbre was desired. A variety of methods were used to produce the drum tracks, including programming drums with Propellerheads' *Reason*, recording a live drummer playing written charts, and editing digital audio files of drum grooves purchased from the internet.<sup>267</sup> This follows the Bristol sound tradition that uses both programmed and live drums and also samples drums from other records. One point of difference is that none of the drums in the creative works were sampled from another artist's record. The mixing and mastering of each track was also done by the composer and was again influenced by common tropes that exist in the Bristol sound.

Each composition was an opportunity to explore a different compositional approach borrowed from classical music; therefore no two pieces adopted the same technique. The specific musical elements that were retained from the Bristol sound also varied with each song. This provided variety within the body of work and was also used as a method to determine if any musical elements are essential in retaining the authentic Bristol sound style, according to audience feedback.

The compositional approaches borrowed from classical music broadly fell into categories of harmony, melody, time, and texture. Although each approach was used only once, a number of approaches fall into the same broad category. For example, pitch class sets and tone clock were both explored as a means of generating harmonic structure. Each technique was selected based on its potential to introduce new musical language to the Bristol sound without severing fundamental links to the Bristol tradition. A systematic approach was not used in determining the order of compositional approaches. Rather, each compositional approach was employed without consideration for the previous or subsequent approach. The thesis focused on various ways of incorporating compositional approaches from classical music, therefore a systematic order of approaches was not deemed necessary.

In addition to focusing on one primary approach, secondary approaches were also employed in the majority of pieces. Each composition therefore employs a combination of techniques, though one is typically more important than the

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<sup>267</sup> For example, professional drum tracks recorded as a stereo file can be purchased from [www.drumtracks.com](http://www.drumtracks.com) and then digitally edited to create the desired groove.

others. The audience feedback, discussed in the following section, was useful in determining which approaches were more successful in terms of suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener. Though audience feedback was occasionally considered when composing subsequent pieces, it was not a fundamental part of the compositional strategy. The precise compositional techniques used in each composition are discussed in detail in chapter five. However a quick summary is listed below.

**Composition one - ‘Autumn’** uses the tone clock theory of pitch organisation as a means of generating harmonic structure.

**Composition two - ‘When Evening Falls’** introduces thematic development into the largely repetitive framework of popular music and also features greater use of polyphonic texture.

**Composition three - ‘Solitaire’** relies heavily on the use of quotation by taking a work for solo piano from the classical repertoire and adding additional instruments and lyrical vocals.

**Composition four - ‘She Moves’** uses pointillism as a means of creating texture and also incorporates aleatoric rhythms in that it does not employ a fixed time signature and there is no discerning underlying pulse.

**Composition five - ‘Wistful Deeds’** uses a harmonic structure that is derived from a synthetic scale. The scale itself is created from the pitch class set 0, 1, 3, 4.

**Composition six - ‘Storm’** uses sequential, non-diatonic harmonic movement and also explores rhythmic dissonance between the pulse layer and various interpretive layers.

**Composition seven – ‘End of Season’** incorporates a number of elements from classical music using a broad approach instead of one specific approach. Elements include instrumentation, texture, harmony, form, and development.

The analysis accompanying each composition also explains in detail which elements were retained from the Bristol sound, and demonstrates the features typical of both the Bristol sound and classical music with reference to the written score.

### 3.5 Audience feedback

As stated in the introduction, the objective was to compose works that are based in the Bristol sound and recognised as such to listeners familiar with the style. Simultaneously, an attempt was made to extend the Bristol sound in a new direction rather than simply compose within the given framework of the style. The audience feedback was intended to provide outside assessment of each of the works and gauge how well each piece meets these objectives. Drawing from the collective wisdom of those familiar with the Bristol sound can provide a robust benchmark, as fans can be highly knowledgeable in the identifying traits of a musical style.<sup>268</sup> Indeed, Bennett argues in his study of the Canterbury sound that ‘fans take an active role in the definition of the Canterbury Sound’,<sup>269</sup> while Allkvist relies heavily on fan testimony in his discussion of authenticity in progressive rock.<sup>270</sup> Accordingly, fan wisdom plays a significant role in determining whether a new work meets the expectations of a given genre. Furthermore, Frith suggests that fans evaluate new music by relating it to authentic examples from the genre,<sup>271</sup> and the result of this comparison can often determine if the work deserves inclusion in the corpus. As such, audience feedback offers another degree of reference between the creative works and the Bristol sound style, beyond the author’s analytical comparisons.

Research participants were recruited at musicological conferences and also from the author’s personal and professional network. Each participant was asked to listen to a recording of a completed work and complete an accompanying questionnaire. When not conducted in person, audience participation was conducted online using the free survey tool Google Forms, with links to the audio recordings on YouTube. The questionnaire first asks for an indication of the participants’ degree of familiarity with the Bristol sound. Given the discussion above on the value of fan wisdom, feedback was only sought from those familiar with the style, and responses from those unfamiliar with the style were discarded. Furthermore, significant familiarity with classical music was not a prerequisite, as

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<sup>268</sup> Ahlqvist, “What Makes Rock Music “prog”? Fan Evaluation and the Struggle to Define Progressive Rock.”

<sup>269</sup> Andrew Bennett, “Music, Media and Urban Mythscapes: A Study of the ‘Canterbury Sound.’” *Media, Culture & Society* 24 (2002): 87-100, p93.

<sup>270</sup> Ahlqvist, “What Makes Rock Music “prog”? Fan Evaluation and the Struggle to Define Progressive Rock.”

<sup>271</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*.

the compositions were purposefully grounded in the Bristol sound style while elements from classical music were simply used as an attempt to extend the style.

The questionnaire also asked about the participants' experience with composing or producing music, regardless of any specific musical genres. It was not deemed necessary to distinguish between specific types of musical activities, for example between practitioners of trip hop or classical music, but rather to simply distinguish between those that are active music practitioners and those that are not. This is based on the principle that music practitioners, of any genre, will often hear details in a musical work that non-practitioners will not, therefore a person's musical background might inform their response. Accordingly, a distinction is made between practitioners and non-practitioners when discussing the survey results in chapter five.

Furthermore, the participants' style preferences or listening habits were not solicited. As the respondents were not asked to give any aesthetic reactions to the works or state whether they personally 'liked' them, style preferences were not deemed important. Similarly, no demographic data was sought regarding age, gender, location, or nationality, as this information was not deemed significant to the research aims. Also, as many participants had the potential to know the author personally, all responses remained anonymous in an attempt to avoid personal bias.

After listening to the accompanying recording, participants were asked if the composition reminded them of the Bristol sound in any way. Several possible responses were offered to aid the participant in articulating the ways in which the piece reminded them of the Bristol sound. Participants had the option to add their own reasons, as well as the option to respond the piece did not remind them of the Bristol sound. They were then asked if the composition reminded them of classical music, and the same possible responses were offered. As before, they had the option to add their own reasons as well as the option to respond that the piece did not remind them of classical music. They also had the option to add any further thoughts about the piece.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> The information sheet and questionnaire are included as Appendix two and three, and the ethical approval is attached as Appendix four.

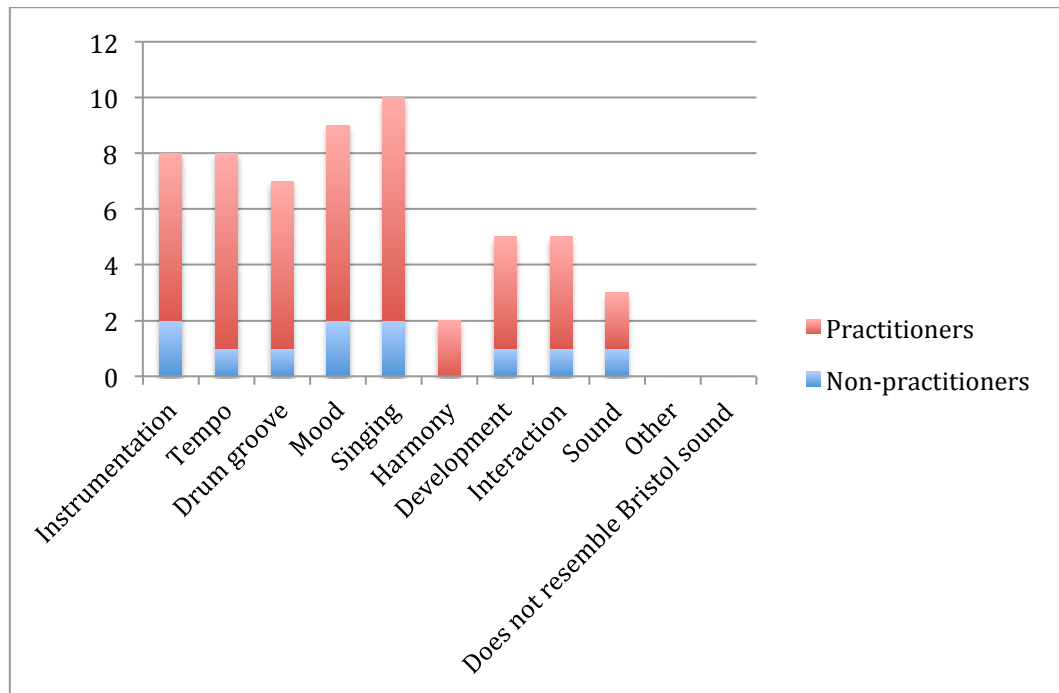
The audience feedback contributes to the thesis in the following ways:

- 1) It offers an external assessment of each composition's connection to the Bristol sound style.
- 2) It offers an external assessment of each composition's connection to classical music, and therefore suggests whether or not the composition extends the Bristol sound in a new direction.
- 3) It gauges which composition approaches in particular are successful in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener.

The results of each survey are represented in graph form, showing how many respondents heard a connection to the Bristol sound and/or classical music, and if so in what way. A piece can be seen as meeting its objective if the majority of respondents heard connections to both the Bristol sound and classical music. Furthermore, as each composition began with a clear approach in mind, that approach can be viewed as successful in terms of suggesting a classical influence if the majority of respondents perceive a connection to classical music in a way that aligns with the prescribed approach. For example, Table 3.3 and 3.4 show the results from the survey accompanying the piece 'Autumn'. Table 3.3 shows that all of the respondents heard a connection to the Bristol sound. From this, one can surmise that the attempt to compose a piece of music grounded in the Bristol sound style was successful.

**Table 3.3: Audience response to connection with Bristol sound.**

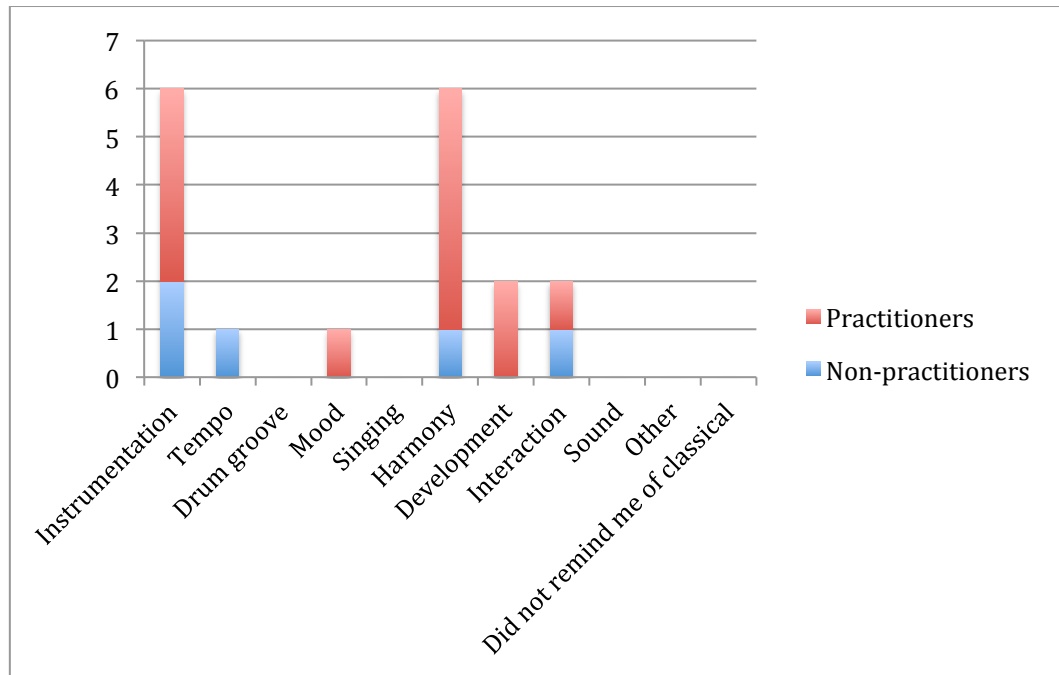
Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?



Similarly, Table 3.4 shows that all respondents heard a connection to classical music. From this, one can surmise that the attempt to extend the Bristol sound by incorporating elements from classical music was likewise successful.

**Table 3.4: Audience response to connection with classical music.**

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?



Finally, the most common areas in which respondents heard a connection to classical music were in regard to harmony and instrumentation. These were the main areas in which elements from classical music were appropriated when composing ‘Autumn’,<sup>273</sup> therefore there is a strong alignment between the intent as a composer and the audience’s reception of the work. From this, one can surmise that appropriations in areas of harmony and instrumentation are successful in terms of suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener.

Having outlined the methodologies used in this thesis, the following chapter presents the main stylistic traits of the Bristol sound based on the analysis of the works listed in section 3.2.2 and the analytical techniques discussed in section 3.3. The focus was on elucidating the primary musical traits that define the Bristol sound style.

<sup>273</sup> See section 5.1 for a detailed analysis.

## **4 Analysis of the Bristol Sound**

Rather than presenting the analysis of each song separately and summarising the results, the analysis is grouped according to the musical parameters discussed in section 3.3. Additionally, each section is further categorised according to common tropes that exist within the Bristol sound. For example, the analysis of form shows that songs within the Bristol sound can be grouped into one of three categories: popular song form, strophic form, and episodic form. Accordingly, the analysis progresses along the lines of common themes that exist within each musical parameter rather than addressing each song on a case-by-case basis.

To present the findings at the forefront, each section begins with a table that expresses the most common patterns. The following sections then articulate how these patterns coincide with the works under analysis. The intention is to demonstrate the musical techniques that are most commonly found in the Bristol sound, therefore each section concludes with a brief summary that specifies the most prominent analytical findings.

### **4.1 Form**

The selected songs can be grouped into three separate formal structures: popular song form, strophic form, and episodic form (Table 4.1). Popular song form typically consists of an intro followed by a succession of verses and choruses and occasionally makes use of a contrasting bridge or instrumental section before closing with a final chorus or conclusion, for example ABABCB. Strophic form is based on a single repeating idea that may or may not include variations, for example AAA'AA'A, while episodic form is based on a series of separate sections that may or may not repeat, for example ABCDBE.

Table 4.1: Form in the Bristol sound.

	Popular Song Form	Strophic Form	Episodic Form	With Variation
<b>Portishead</b>				
Roads	X			X
Glory Box	X			X
Sour Times	X			
<b>Massive Attack</b>				
Angel			X	
Unfinished Sympathy			X	
Teardrop	X			X
<b>Tricky</b>				
Aftermath		X		
Overcome	X			
Hell is Round the Corner		X		

### 4.1.1 Popular Song Form

The majority of songs employ popular song form, although they often deviate from the standard pattern. ‘Sour Times’ (Fig. 4.1) provides an example of the most conventional type.

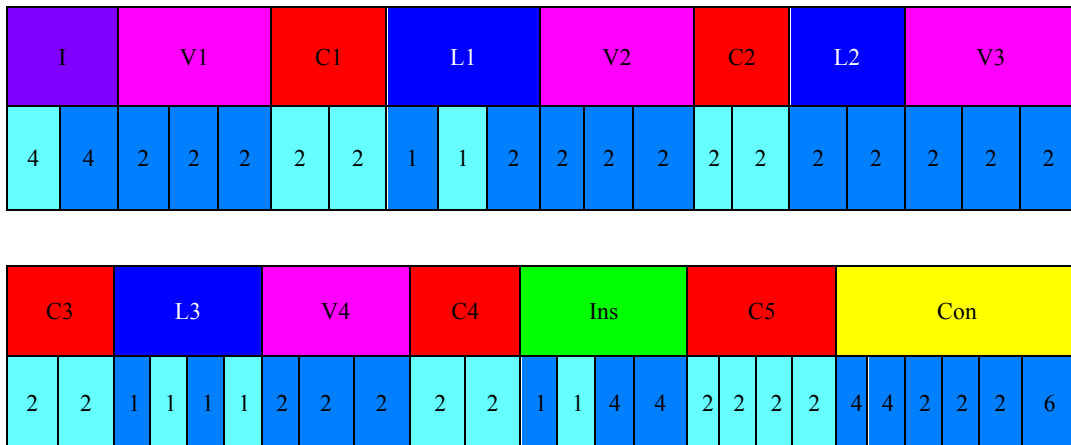


Figure 4.1: ‘Sour Times’ form.

Following the intro, the song begins a cycle of verse, chorus, and link sections that repeats three times, with an instrumental section replacing the final link. After the instrumental, the song concludes with a double chorus and an extended conclusion. The individual sections are quite short; the verse is just six bars long while the chorus is only four. The brevity of each section helps to maintain a sense of momentum throughout the song and avoid the sense of stasis that may otherwise result from the limited harmonic movement.<sup>274</sup> ‘Sour Times’ is based on only two separate sections, an A section for the verse and a B section for the chorus, while the intro, link, and instrumental sections employ a combination of the two. Accordingly, while it fits into a conventional popular song form it also follows a repeated AB binary form. Some listeners may regard the instrumental section as a third section, however it uses the same harmonic material as the chorus. The positioning of the instrumental suggests it could be categorized as a bridge. However, while it meets one of the definitions of a bridge, occurring two thirds of the way through the song, it fails to meet the other; the introduction of new harmonic material based away from the tonic.

‘Overcome’ (Fig. 4.2) follows a similar form. After the intro the song progresses through two verses followed by a chorus and link section. A third verse precedes a slightly longer chorus and link, followed by two more verses identical to verse one and two. An instrumental section follows the final double verse before a double chorus and conclusion end the song. Like ‘Sour Times’, there are only two harmonic patterns used in the song, an A section for the intro, verse, link, and part of the instrumental, and a B section for the chorus, conclusion, and the first four bars of the instrumental.

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<sup>274</sup> See section 4.2.

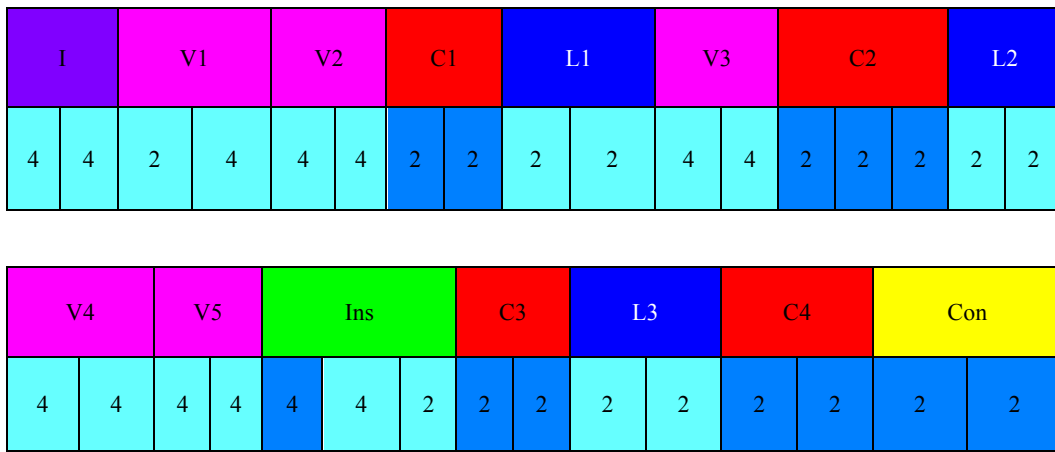


Figure 4.2: 'Overcome' form.

Other songs follow an overarching popular song form but also deviate from the standard pattern. 'Roads' (Fig. 4.3) uses a refrain in lieu of a chorus, following the definitions discussed in the methodology; it features two lines of text, is appended to the end of each verse, and is analogous to the verse in terms of texture and instrumentation. The harmonic structure is similarly based on two different patterns.



Figure 4.3: 'Roads' form.

'Teardrop' (Fig. 4.4) also uses a refrain in lieu of a chorus and deviates from conventional popular song form in that the length of each section changes throughout the song. The second verse is half the length of the others and the length and phrase structure of the refrain changes each time it occurs. The first refrain is based on two, two-bar phrases; refrain two is based on a three-bar phrase followed by a one bar extension and two, two-bar phrases; and refrain three is based on two, three-bar phrases. Likewise, the first link section is half the length of the remaining two. Unlike the previous songs, 'Teardrop' uses three musical patterns. The first pattern is used in the intro and link sections, the second pattern provides the verse while the third provides the refrain, instrumental, transition and conclusion.

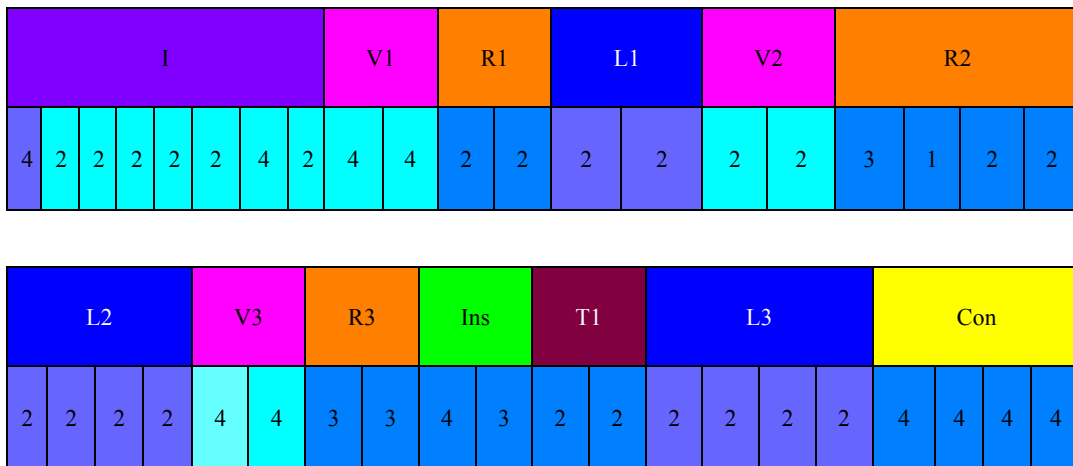


Figure 4.4: 'Teardrop' form.

'Glory Box' (Fig. 4.5) also deviates from conventional popular song form in that it uses both a chorus and refrain. It is also the only song that has a definitive bridge section. It appears to suggest strophic form when simply considering the harmonic material, yet when following the lyrical narrative there is a clear delineation between the verse sections and the chorus/refrain sections.

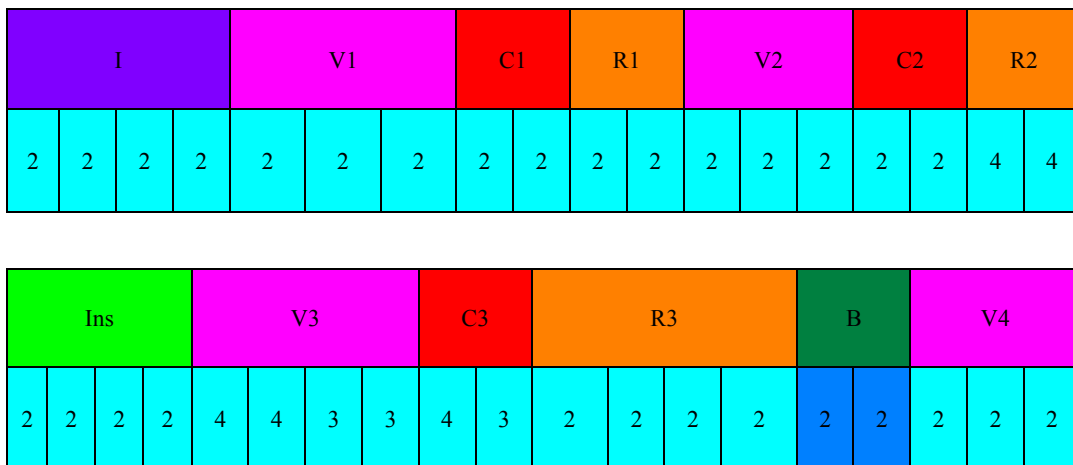


Figure 4.5: 'Glory Box' form.

### 4.1.2 Strophic Form

Tricky's 'Hell is Round the Corner' and 'Aftermath' are both in strophic form. 'Hell is Round the Corner' (Fig. 4.6) is based on a continuous verse over one repeating musical pattern. There is no clear point at which one verse begins and the next one ends, although the break in the drums at the end of each verse helps to set up the next section. There are no link sections between the verses and the only deviation in the material is the two-bar breakdown in the middle of verse six, where only the snare drum and vocal remain. The two bars following the

breakdown feature a slowed down vocal sample and this is the only point throughout the track that does not feature lyrical rapping.

V1			V2				V3		V4					V5				V6		Con								
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	3

Figure 4.6: 'Hell is Round the Corner' form.

'Aftermath' (Fig. 4.7) is based on a repeating bass figure that continues uninterrupted throughout the track. An electric piano figure in the intro is taken up by the guitar at the beginning of verse one and also features prominently throughout most of the song. A flute riff is used as a repeating hook throughout the song and also features in the link sections to break up the verses, while other musical gestures are used to decorate the texture and provide thematic variety. There is no distinct chorus or refrain, rather the song follows a repeating A A' A' A' pattern, with the flute lick delineating the sections.

I				V1		L1		V2		L2			V3		
10	8	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
L3		V4				L4			Con						
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	8	8	8	10	8	15	

Figure 4.7: 'Aftermath' form.

### 4.1.3 Episodic Form

The remaining two songs, 'Angel' and 'Unfinished Sympathy' (both by Massive Attack), are in episodic form. 'Angel' (Fig. 4.8) begins with an extended intro before continuing to the first verse, which is built on three four-bar phrases and a two-bar extension. Verse two follows a short link section, this time using

the same three four-bar phrases but without the two-bar extension. Instead of the expected chorus, an extended instrumental section follows the second verse before continuing to a third verse, this time built on two four-bar phrases with a three-bar extension. Following the third verse is a second instrumental section, longer than the first, before the song ends with an extended conclusion. The lack of a chorus or refrain, along with the extended instrumental sections and relatively limited lyrical content, suggests that 'Angel' functions more as an instrumental song than it does a vocal narrative, with the vocal simply functioning as a melodic instrument. The majority of the song is based around a single musical idea yet there are clear delineations between the sections. Unlike the previous songs, 'Angel' does not use a repetitive cycle and three of the sections occur only once throughout the song.

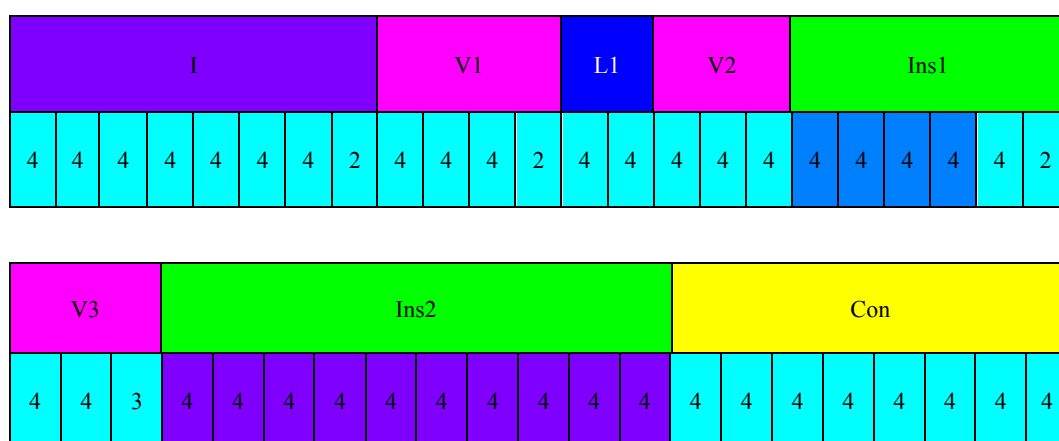


Figure 4.8: 'Angel' form.

'Unfinished Sympathy' (Fig. 4.9) initially suggests popular song form, following a typical intro, verse, link, verse, link pattern. However, at the arrival of the third verse it becomes apparent that a chorus is unlikely to occur. The repetitive verse/link cycle that existed throughout the first half of the song is interrupted by a short instrumental, followed by another verse. This verse is distinct from the others as it is based on different harmonic material and does not develop the lyrical narrative, rather it repeats a single lyrical phrase. A longer instrumental section follows before a link and extended conclusion end the song. The form of the song appears to be in two halves, the repetitive cycle during the first half suggesting popular song form while the divergent sections of the second half suggest episodic.

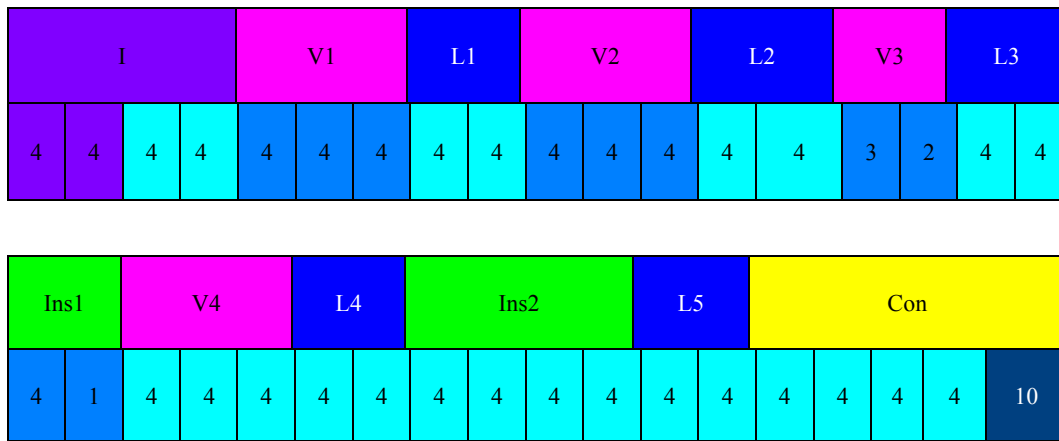


Figure 4.9: 'Unfinished Sympathy' form.

#### 4.1.4 Summary

Most of the songs employ popular song form, however the majority of these deviate from the conventional pattern, such as the refrain in 'Roads' and 'Teardrop' and the use of refrain and chorus in 'Glory Box'. While other types of formal structures were found, popular song form was the only type to be used by all three artists. The songs in strophic form were by Tricky and those in episodic form were by Massive Attack. This may suggest these particular devices correspond to the respective artists, rather than the Bristol sound overall. Those songs that do not employ popular song form are more likely to vary the length of the repeated sections, often using asymmetrical phrases. Conversely, those songs in popular song form typically keep the length of each section consistent and use symmetrical phrasing.<sup>275</sup> A hypothetical 'textbook' song based in the Bristol sound tradition would likely employ popular song form, yet would also deviate from the conventional pattern.

## 4.2 Harmony

### 4.2.1 Surface Harmonic Structure

Each of the nine songs has a strong tonal center, with eight of them based in a minor tonality.<sup>276</sup> Eight of the songs are in a distinct key, and each of those use a triadic harmonic structure derived from the major scale. Although many of these

<sup>275</sup> Phrase structure is discussed in greater detail in section 4.2.2.

<sup>276</sup> Modulation does not occur in any of the songs under analysis.

songs use chords that include sevenths and added tensions, each can easily be analysed with Roman numeral harmonic analysis. Of the eight songs that are in a defined key signature, six make use of non-diatonic harmony as an integral part of the harmonic progression (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Harmony in the Bristol sound.**

	Defined Key Signature	Triadic Harmony	Non-diatonic Harmony	Open-ended Gesture	Period Structure	Symmetric Harmonic Rhythm
<b>Portishead</b>						
Roads	X	X		X		X
Glory Box	X	X	X	X		X
Sour Times	X	X	X	X (Vs)	X (Ch)	
<b>Massive Attack</b>						
Angel	X	X	X	X		X
Unfinished Sympathy	X	X	X	X (I)	X (Vs)	
Teardrop	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Tricky</b>						
Aftermath	X	X		X		X
Overcome				X		X
Hell is Round the Corner	X	X	X	X		X

Non-diatonic chords are common in the Bristol sound, though the manner in which they function within a song varies. In some cases they are used to add harmonic colour to a larger, otherwise diatonic chord progression, while in others they are part of a shorter, principal chord progression. ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ provides an example of the former. It is in the key of D minor but also uses modal interchange chords throughout the song to provide additional harmonic colour.<sup>277</sup> The song opens with the progression | Dm | Dm | F | G<sup>(add9)</sup> |, or | i | i | III | IV<sup>(add9)</sup> | (Fig. 4.10). The IV chord functions as a modal interchange chord from D dorian.

<sup>277</sup> A modal interchange chord is a non-diatonic chord that is borrowed from a parallel mode.

Figure 4.10: 'Unfinished Sympathy' opening chord progression.

This progression also occurs during the link sections, verse four, the second instrumental, and the first 16 bars of the conclusion. The first verse introduces a second harmonic progression | Gm<sup>7</sup> | C | Gm<sup>7</sup> | C | Am | Am | Dm | Dm | Gm<sup>6</sup> | Gm<sup>6</sup> | A<sup>(sus4)</sup> | A<sup>(sus4)</sup> |, or | iv<sup>7</sup> | <sup>b</sup>VII | iv<sup>7</sup> | <sup>b</sup>VII | v | v | i | i | iv<sup>6</sup> | iv<sup>6</sup> | v<sup>(sus4)</sup> | v<sup>(sus4)</sup> | (Fig. 4.11).

Figure 4.11: 'Unfinished Sympathy' verse chord progression.

The verse briefly suggests a modulation to G minor with a | i | IV | progression, however the D minor tonality quickly returns with the Am to Dm in the following four bars. The Gm<sup>6</sup> chord, also borrowed from D dorian, precedes the A chord which cadences into the following link section in D minor. This progression provides the harmonic structure for verses one, two, and three.

A similar approach is used in 'Teardrop' (Fig. 4.12). It is in the key of A major but uses several modal interchange chords throughout the song. The verse progression is | A | G<sup>(add9)</sup> | D | A |, or | I | <sup>b</sup>VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | IV | I |, with the <sup>b</sup>VII<sup>(add9)</sup> chord being borrowed from A mixolydian. The introduction uses the same progression but adds two extra chords to extend the phrase, | I | <sup>b</sup>VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | IV | I | <sup>b</sup>VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | IV |.

I                     $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup>                    IV                    I                     $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup>                    IV  
 A                    G<sup>(add9)</sup>                    D                    A                    G<sup>(add9)</sup>                    D

Figure 4.12: Teardrop intro.

The first refrain (Fig.4.13), | F<sup>(maj7)</sup> | G<sup>(add9)</sup> | A | A |, or |  $\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup> |  $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | I | I | also uses a modal interchange chord,  $\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup> from A aeolian. Refrain two (Fig. 4.14) is twice as long and adds an additional modal interchange chord, the minor iv chord from A aeolian, |  $\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup> |  $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | I |  $\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup> | iv |  $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup> | I | I |.

$\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup>                     $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup>                    I  
 F<sup>(maj7)</sup>                    G<sup>(add9)</sup>                    A

Figure 4.13: 'Teardrop' first refrain.

$\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup>                     $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup>                    I                     $\flat$ VI<sup>(maj7)</sup>  
 F<sup>(maj7)</sup>                    G<sup>(add9)</sup>                    A                    F<sup>(maj7)</sup>

iv                     $\flat$ VII<sup>(add9)</sup>                    I  
 Dm                    G<sup>(add9)</sup>                    A

Figure 4.14: 'Teardrop' second refrain.

‘Glory Box’ and ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ use non-diatonic harmony in a slightly different way. Both songs use a sample from ‘Ike’s Rap II’ by Isaac Hayes so share the same chord progression. ‘Glory Box’ is in the key of E<sup>b</sup> minor while ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ is in D minor, a result of the sample being played slower and therefore pitched lower. For simplification, the analysis discusses ‘Glory Box’ only. ‘Glory Box’ features a single progression of four chords that continuously repeat throughout the song (Fig. 4.15).



Figure 4.15: ‘Glory Box’ harmonic progression.

One possible interpretation is | E<sup>b</sup>m - Gb/D<sup>b</sup> - | Cm<sup>7b5</sup> - C<sup>b</sup> maj<sup>7</sup> - | or | i - IIIc - | vi<sup>7b5</sup> - <sup>b</sup>VI<sup>maj7</sup> - |. This suggests a diatonic chord progression with the exception of the Cm<sup>7b5</sup>, which can be analysed as a modal interchange chord from E<sup>b</sup> dorian or as a chromatic passing chord driven by the voice leading in the bass. A second interpretation suggests a variation of a minor line cliché, a compositional device where a middle voice moves chromatically by step over a stationary tonic minor chord (Fig. 4.16).



Figure 4.16: Standard model of a minor line cliché.

Following this interpretation, the harmony consists of a stationary E<sup>b</sup>m chord over a descending bass line to create the illusion of harmonic movement - |E<sup>b</sup>m - E<sup>b</sup>m/D<sup>b</sup>-| E<sup>b</sup>m/C - E<sup>b</sup>m/C<sup>b</sup> - | or | i - i<sup>7</sup>d - | i<sup>6</sup>d - i<sup>b6</sup>d - |.<sup>278</sup> This differs from the standard minor line cliché in that the movement is in the bass part rather than a middle voice, and it does not move chromatically.

<sup>278</sup> I personally hear it as a variation of a minor line cliché.

A similar effect is created in ‘Sour Times’ (Fig. 4.17). The verse progression is  $i | i | i^{maj7} d - i^7 d ic$ , effectively a descending bass line beneath a stationary  $i$  chord. The progression is suggested rather than explicitly stated and the listener’s ear fills in the harmonic content suggested by the bass, cimbalom and guitar. Although it does not fit the standard model of a minor line cliché, it does have a similar effect, providing a sense of momentum to a stationary tonic chord.

The musical score for 'Sour Times' intro/verse is presented in five staves. Above the staves, the chord progression is indicated as  $i$  (C#m7),  $i^{(maj7)}d$  (C#m(maj7)/C),  $i^7d$  (C#m7/B), and  $ic$  (C#m7/G#). The Cimbalom part consists of a single chord in the first measure, which is sustained throughout the piece. Guitar 1 plays a melodic line with a long note in the first measure and a descending line in the second. Guitar 2 plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Bass part features a descending line of eighth notes. The Dr. part provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Figure 4.17: ‘Sour Times’ intro/verse.

The chorus progression,  $| ivc - i - | II^7 |$ , also uses non-diatonic harmony. Following typical harmonic practices one would expect the  $II^7$  to precede the  $V^7$  chord before resolving to  $i$ , whereby the  $II^7$  is functioning as an extended dominant  $V^7/V^7$ . Instead, the  $II^7$  resolves over the section break to the  $i$  chord in the verse.

‘Overcome’ has an entirely different harmonic structure. It has a strong tonal center based on B but does not use a conventional harmonic progression. The harmony is implied by a melodic synth line rather than being explicitly stated by a harmonic instrument. The one-bar melody implies a B minor chord with a minor 6 resolving to the 5<sup>th</sup> at the end of the phrase. This melody is then transposed down a half step, suggesting a B<sup>b</sup> minor chord with a minor 6<sup>th</sup> (Fig. 4.18).



Figure 4.18: Primary melodic theme in 'Overcome'.

One could analyse this progression as  $| i^{b6} | vii^{b6} |$ , however a more accurate interpretation is to consider it a melodic phrase that moves down by half step and is repeated. It is the sequential movement that links the two phrases, rather than a diatonic harmonic structure, so while there is a strong tonal center it would not be accurate to describe it as being in a key.

The remaining three songs predominantly use diatonic harmony, although only one of them can be described as conventional. The verse in 'Roads' uses a four-bar harmonic progression,  $| Am | G^6 | F | E |$ , or  $| i | ^bVII^6 | ^bVI | V |$ .<sup>279</sup> Each of these chords can be considered diatonic to the key of A minor as the use of a dominant V chord in a minor key is common practice in Western music. The refrain is a retrograde of the verse, without the V chord, and there is a repeating melodic figure that slightly alters the quality of the chords (Fig. 4.19).

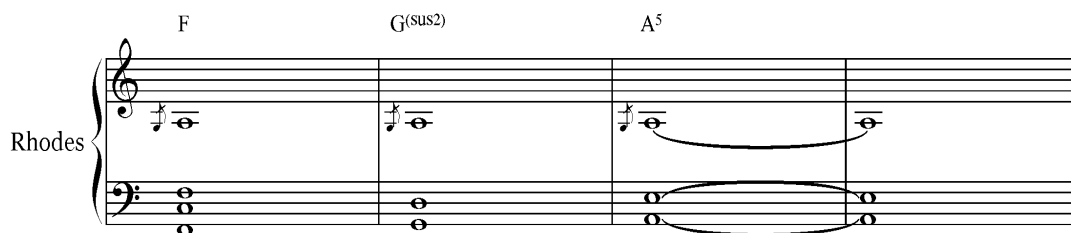


Figure 4.19: 'Roads' refrain.

The harmony in 'Aftermath' consists of a single B<sup>b</sup> minor chord (Fig.4.20). There is no harmonic progression per se, however additional gestures offer some harmonic colour.

<sup>279</sup> This progression is often used in popular music. 'Sultans of Swing' (1978) by Dire Straits, 'Good Vibrations' (1966) by The Beach Boys, and 'Smooth Criminal' (1987) by Michael Jackson are just a few examples. It is known as the Andalusian progression and is based on flamenco and Andalusian folk music. See Peter Manuel, "Modal Harmony in Andalusian, Eastern European, and Turkish Syncretic Musics." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 21 (1989): 70–94.



The image shows a musical score for the song 'Angel'. It consists of three staves: Voice, Synth., and Bass. The Voice staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It shows a vocal line with a box labeled 'V2' above it. The lyrics 'Her eyes' are written under the voice line. The Synth. staff is in treble clef and shows a synthesizer line with sustained notes. The Bass staff is in bass clef and shows a bass line with a repeating eighth-note pattern.

Figure 4.23: Tonal ambiguity in 'Angel'.

The image shows two lines of vocal melody for the song 'Angel'. The first line has the lyrics 'Her eyes' and 'She's on the dark side'. The second line has the lyrics 'Neu-tral ize' and 'ev-ery man in sight'. The melody is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats.

Figure 4.24: Tonal ambiguity in 'Angel', verse vocal melody.

## 4.2.2 Phrase Harmonic Structure

Six of the nine songs use open-ended harmonic gestures exclusively throughout the song: 'Overcome', 'Hell is Round the Corner', 'Glory Box', 'Roads', 'Angel', and 'Aftermath'. Each of these songs are based on a progression of no more than four bars that repeats, either for an entire section or throughout the entire song. 'Overcome' uses a repeating two-bar melodic phrase to imply the harmonic structure while 'Hell is Round the Corner' and 'Glory Box' use a repeating four-bar progression. 'Roads' uses a repeating four-bar progression for the verse and another for the refrain while 'Angel' is predominantly based on a repeating four-bar progression. 'Aftermath' does not feature a harmonic progression as such; rather it consists of a single repeating chord.

'Sour Times' uses an open-ended gesture in the verse and a period structure in the chorus while 'Unfinished Sympathy' uses a period structure in the verse

and an open-ended gesture in the intro. 'Teardrop' is the only song that uses a period structure throughout the song.

The majority of songs feature regular phrasing whereby the number of bars in a phrase is consistent throughout the section. For example, 'Sour Times' uses a 2+2+2 pattern in the verse and a 2+2 pattern in the chorus. 'Overcome' uses a 4+4 pattern in the verse and a 2+2 pattern in the chorus while 'Roads' uses a 4+4 pattern throughout the song. 'Glory Box' uses a 2+2+2 pattern in the verse and a 2+2 pattern in the chorus while 'Unfinished Symphony' follows a similar pattern of 4+4+4 in the verse and 4+4 during the link. 'Hell is Round the Corner' uses a 2+2 pattern throughout, with one minor deviation at the end of verse four when an extra bar is added to the final phrase. These 'extra' bars are what Everett calls 'floaters', a short unit of one or two bars that is attached to the front or back of an otherwise symmetrical phrase.<sup>280</sup> A similar technique is used in 'Unfinished Symphony' with the 4+1 pattern in the first instrumental and a 3+2 pattern in the third verse. 'Teardrop' is the only song that embraces irregular phrasing. The instrumental section uses a 4+3 pattern and the refrain sections differ with each iteration. Refrain one uses a 2+2 pattern, refrain two uses a 3+1+2+2 pattern while refrain three uses a 3+3 pattern. It is surprising to note that none of the songs use foursquare phrasing whereby a section is constructed of four four-bar phrases.

### 4.2.3 Harmonic Rhythm

Although the harmonic structures found in the Bristol sound can lean toward the exotic, often borrowing chords from other keys, the harmonic rhythm is fairly straightforward. The majority of songs use a stable harmonic rhythm where the number of chords in the progression equals the number of bars in the phrase and each chord is spaced evenly, such as the verse in 'Roads', 'Overcome', 'Teardrop', and 'Aftermath'. Other examples can be found where the number of chords in the progression is double the number of bars and the chords are distributed evenly with each chord receiving two beats, such as 'Hell is Round the Corner' and 'Glory Box'. Similarly, one can find examples where the number of

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<sup>280</sup> Walter Everett, "Any Time At All: The Beatles' Free Phrase Rhythms." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 183–202.

chords is half the length of the number of bars and each chord is distributed evenly with one chord receiving two bars such as ‘Angel’. The only examples of nonsymmetrical harmonic rhythm are ‘Sour Times’, where the progression is two bars long and the first bar contains one chord while the second bar contains three, and ‘Unfinished Sympathy’, where the first four bars of the progression receive one chord each while in the remaining eight bars each chord is held for two bars.

#### **4.2.4 Summary**

Every song in the analysis has a strong tonal center and all but one use a minor tonality. The majority of the songs can be clearly analysed in terms of a tonic key signature but also use non-diatonic harmony, either as a fundamental part of the primary chord progression or as a means of providing harmonic colour. With the exception of ‘Overcome’, each of the songs use a harmonic structure that is based on a triad of root, third, and fifth, though sevenths and tensions often occur. Open-ended gestures are more commonly used than period structures, only ‘Teardrop’ uses a period structure throughout the song while ‘Overcome’, ‘Hell is Round the Corner’, ‘Glory Box’, ‘Roads’, and ‘Angel’ solely use open-ended gestures. The harmonic rhythm tends to be very symmetrical, the chords are evenly distributed throughout the phrase and typically receive two, four, or eight beats. While additional ‘floater’ bars are evident, phrasing tends to be regular and consistent. A textbook Bristol sound song would use triadic harmony in a minor key but would also incorporate non-diatonic harmony. It would likely use open-ended gestures and a regular pattern of two or four-bar phrases with occasional use of floater bars.

### **4.3 Time**

#### **4.3.1 Tempo, Meter, and Duration**

Slower tempos are typically used in the Bristol sound, with the most common tempo in the range of 60-70 bpm (Table 4.3). Once established, the tempo remains consistent throughout the entire song, most likely due to the prevalent use of repeating, sampled drumbeats.<sup>281</sup> There is very little use of half time, half time

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<sup>281</sup> This is discussed further in section 4.4.

feel, double time or double time feel. The one exception is ‘Angel’ which maintains a half-time feel throughout the song. Each of the songs use a 4/4 time signature, there is no use of metric modulation, odd time signatures or even brief deviations from 4/4 such as an extended bar of 6/4 or shortened bar of 2/4. Songs tend toward the longer side compared to the stereotypical 3:30 length of many popular songs, with the most common duration between five and six minutes.

**Table 4.3: Time in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Tempo (BPM)</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Rhythmically Consonant</b>
<b>Portishead</b>			
Roads	76	5:05	X
Glory Box	60	5:02	X
Sour Times	95	4:13	X
<b>Massive Attack</b>			
Angel	106	6:22	X
Unfinished Sympathy	115	5:08	X
Teardrop	78	5:33	X
<b>Tricky</b>			
Aftermath	61	7:39	X
Overcome	62	4:30	X
Hell is Round the Corner	60	3:47	X

### 4.3.2 Rhythmic Consonance

In addition to predominantly slower tempos, one of the most common timing traits in the Bristol sound is the high degree of rhythmic consonance. Rhythmic structures are organized around a repeating groove, defined as a ‘musical pattern from one to four bars long that is repeated continuously throughout a song or song section, with particular rhythmic and pitch motives played by the instruments of the pop ensemble (most typically drums, bass, guitars, and keyboards).<sup>282</sup> The

<sup>282</sup> Attas, “Meter as Process in Groove-based Popular Music.”, p3.

groove in 'Hell is Round the Corner' (Fig. 4.25) exemplifies the most basic type of rhythmic organisation and demonstrates the high degree of rhythmic consonance.

The figure shows a musical score for three instruments: Elec. Org., Bass, and Dr. (Drums). The Elec. Org. part consists of four chords in a 4/4 measure, with notes on beats 1 and 3. The Bass part consists of a sequence of notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, with an eighth-note pick-up before each chord. The Dr. part shows a hi-hat pattern with 'x' marks on every eighth note and a kick/snare pattern with 'x' marks on every quarter note.

Figure 4.25: Groove in 'Hell is Round the Corner'.

Applying Krebs' notion of consonance and dissonance,<sup>283</sup> the fastest (pulse) level is the eighth note, explicitly stated by the hi hat. The first interpretive level is the quarter note which arises from the alternating strong and weak beats articulated by the kick and snare respectively. This level has a cardinality of two, in that there are two attacks occurring at the pulse level for every one attack at the interpretive level. The second interpretive level is the half note, which is expressed by the electric organ playing on beats one and three and the bass guitar that follows the same grouping, though with an additional eighth-note pick up before every chord. This level has a cardinality of four, in that there are four attacks occurring at the pulse level for every one attack at the interpretive level.

The third interpretive level is the whole note and is implied by the duration between the strongest beat, beat one, and the next occurrence of that beat. This level has a cardinality of eight. The final interpretive level, the slowest tempo at which one is likely to hear the groove, is the double whole note. This is the length of time it takes before the entire groove repeats and has a cardinality of 16. The cardinality of each interpretive level is a multiple of the previous level and every rhythmical occurrence coincides with one of the attacks of the pulse level, resulting in perfect temporal consonance with a high degree of alignment between the levels.

<sup>283</sup> Krebs, "Some Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance."

The degree of alignment between the interpretive layers of ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ is a consistent thread running through the rhythmic structures of the Bristol sound, however the majority of grooves do not follow such a simplistic arrangement. A more common type of groove follows the same pattern but with additional syncopated attacks on the kick drum, snare, or both. While these syncopated attacks may suggest a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level, they are generally insufficient in number to override the eighth note pulse level explicitly articulated by the hi hat. ‘Aftermath’ (Fig. 4.26) exemplifies this approach with the additional attacks on the kick and snare drum adding a slight syncopated feel to the groove without overriding the eighth note pulse level. The same approach is used in ‘Glory Box’, though the 16<sup>th</sup> note syncopations are played with a swing feel.

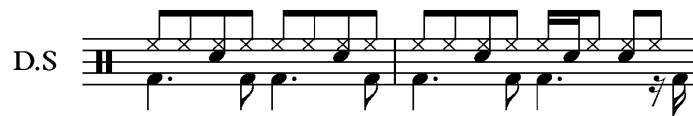


Figure 4.26: Drum pattern in 'Aftermath'.

‘Roads’ (Fig. 4.27) uses a similar approach, with an extra hi hat attack at the end of the bar to push the groove into the next bar.

Figure 4.27: Groove in 'Roads'.

Other songs whose pulse level exists at the 16<sup>th</sup> note show the same degree of alignment between the pulse and interpretive layers. ‘Teardrop’, ‘Overcome’, ‘Sour Times’, and ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ have a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level although only ‘Teardrop’ (Fig. 4.28) explicitly articulates this level throughout the song.

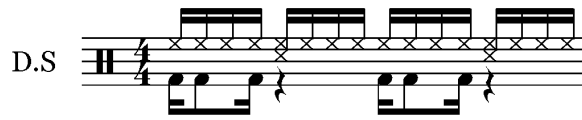


Figure 4.28: Drum pattern in 'Teardrop'.

'Sour Times' implies the 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse through the combined syncopated attacks on the kick and snare drum. Using the TUBS system of notation, the 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level is clear, despite the lack of an explicit 16<sup>th</sup> note pattern (Fig. 4.29).

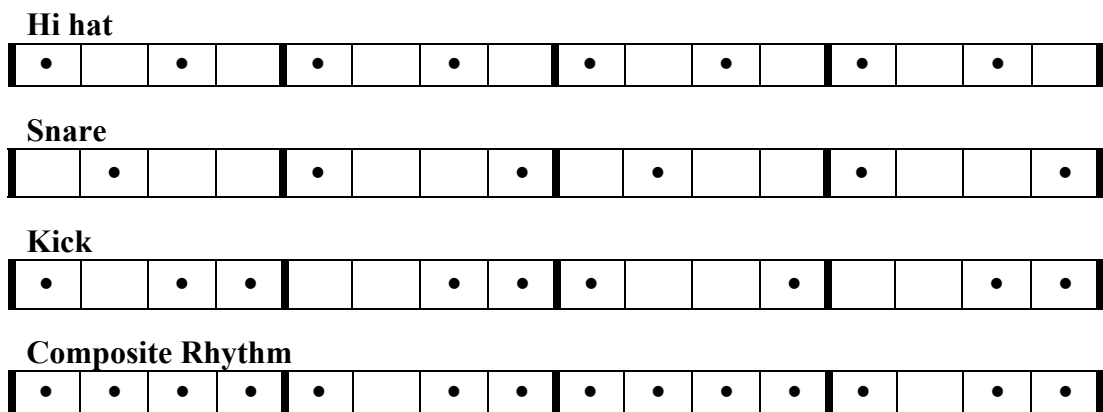


Figure 4.29: Bar 1 of the groove in 'Sour Times'.

'Unfinished Sympathy' uses a similar approach (Fig. 4.30), the 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level is implied by the composite rhythm rather than explicitly stated.

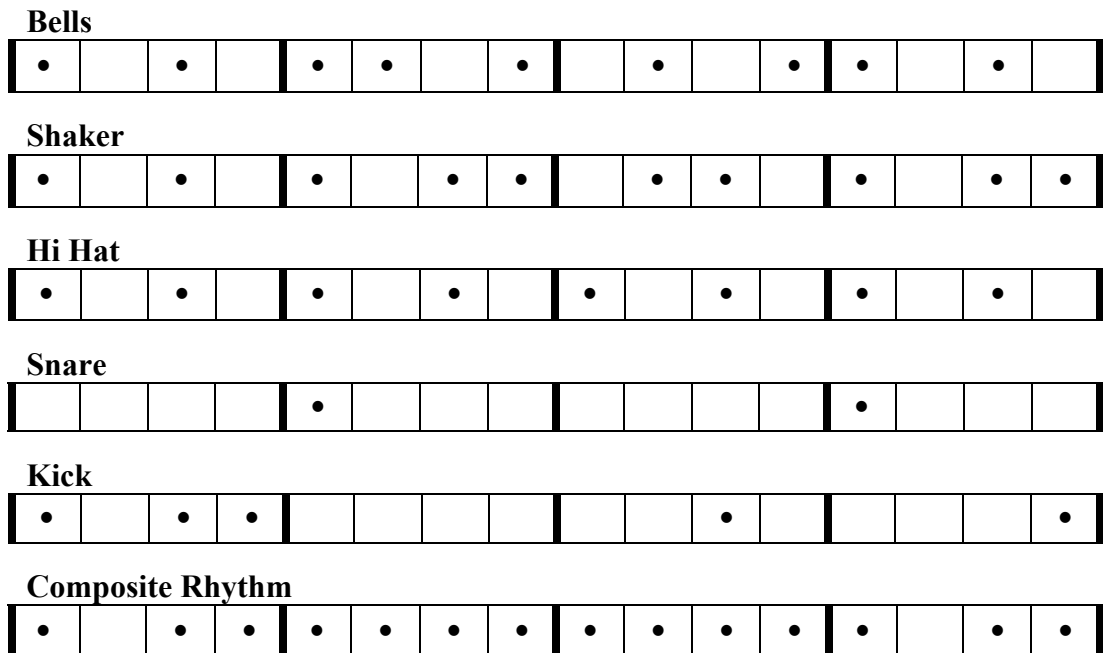


Figure 4.30: Bar 1 of the groove in 'Unfinished Sympathy'.

### 4.3.3 Summary

Songs in the Bristol sound use a 4/4 time signature exclusively with no evidence of extensions or cuts to disrupt the 4-beat pattern. They are approximately five minutes in length with the most common tempo between 60 and 70bpm. There is a high degree of rhythmic consonance in the groove, the interpretive levels are closely aligned and the cardinality of each level is a multiple of that of the previous level. The pulse level can occur at the eighth note or 16<sup>th</sup> note and either be explicitly stated by a single instrument or implicitly implied through the composite rhythm of several instruments. Unlike form and harmony, where common patterns emerge despite several divergences, all of the songs under analysis follow the same basic pattern; 4/4 time signature throughout, fixed tempo, and a high degree of rhythmic consonance.

## 4.4 Functional Layers

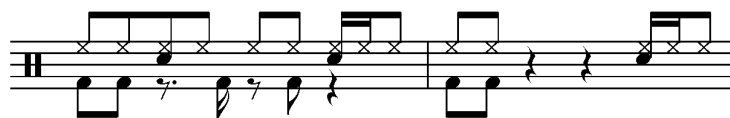
### 4.4.1 Explicit Beat Layer

The explicit beat layer is predominantly expressed by a drum set groove and is based on a repeating pattern that is one, two, or four bars long. It follows a familiar pattern of alternating strong and weak beats with the kick and snare drum, but as previously discussed can include additional syncopated attacks (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Explicit beat layer in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Drum Set</b>	<b>Repeating Pattern</b>	<b>Alternating Strong/ Weak Beats</b>
<b>Portishead</b>			
Roads	X	X	X
Glory Box	X	X	X
Sour Times	X	X	X
<b>Massive Attack</b>			
Angel	X		X
Unfinished Sympathy	X	X	X
Teardrop	X	X	X
<b>Tricky</b>			
Aftermath	X	X	X
Overcome		X	
Hell is Round the Corner	X	X	X

Once the drum groove has been established, the pattern continues uninterrupted throughout the song without decorative fills or embellishments. Accordingly, the dynamic energy of the drums tends to stay at a constant level throughout the song without the build up and release of tension that one commonly hears in popular music. While decorative fills are often used in popular music to help elucidate the form and push the music into the next section, songs within the Bristol sound are more likely to play an abbreviated form of the drum pattern, leaving one or two beats of silence, to help mark the transition from one section to the next (Fig. 4.31).

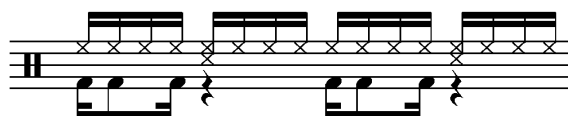


**Figure 4.31: 'Roads', one bar of groove with transitional pattern.**

Following the hip hop tradition, the drum grooves in the Bristol sound are often sampled from other recordings, hence the prevalence of repeating patterns.<sup>284</sup> However, even those songs that do not use sampled drums follow the same methodology. ‘Roads’ and ‘Glory Box’ both feature live drums but are similarly based on a repeating pattern of one and four bars long respectively. ‘Glory Box’ provides an interesting example of the adherence to repeating patterns. While the drumbeat uses a four-bar pattern, the form of the song is not built on four-bar phrases. The first verse is six bars long, therefore the following chorus enters on bar three of the drum pattern. Likewise the second verse also enters on bar three of the pattern. When the second chorus enters, after another six-bar verse, it is again synched up with the drum phrase, entering on bar one of the pattern. Accordingly, the relationship between the phrasing of the drums and the harmonic and melodic phrasing changes during each section.

The only song that does not feature a continuous pattern is ‘Angel’, which uses a repeating two-bar pattern until the first link section when the timbre of the drums dramatically changes and the accent on beat three moves from the x-stick to the snare. The original pattern then returns for the final eight bars of the second verse before reverting again at the onset of the first instrumental section. At this point the drum performance becomes much more fluid and decorative fills are used to establish four or eight bar phrases in a manner similar to rock drumming.

The nature of the groove varies somewhat between songs but certain consistencies begin to emerge. The beat layer typically articulates an eighth note pulse level, though 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse levels are not uncommon and can either be explicitly stated by a single instrument (Fig. 4.32) or implied by a group of instruments (Fig. 4.33).



**Figure 4.32: 'Teardrop' explicit beat layer.**

<sup>284</sup> The use of sampling and other types of quotation is discussed in section 4.8.

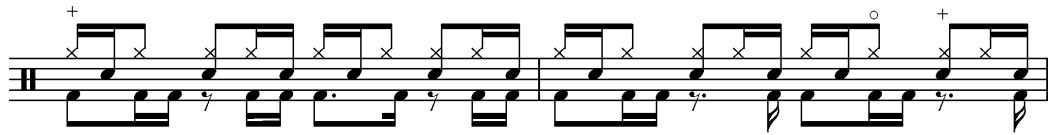


Figure 4.33: 'Sour Times' explicit beat layer.

The beat can often be syncopated but is always highly stable due to the constant reinforcement of alternating strong and weak beats. As can be seen in the drums in 'Sour Times' (Fig. 4.33) and 'Glory Box' (Fig. 4.34), the kick and snare continuously reinforce beats one and three and two and four respectively, even when a large number of syncopated hits are present.

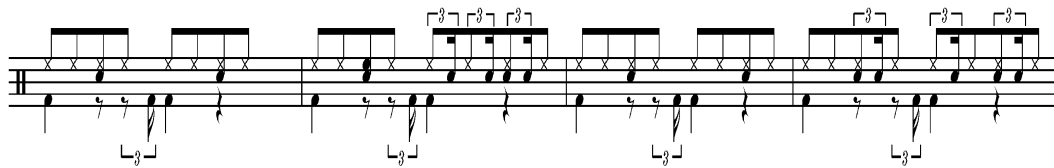


Figure 4.34: 'Glory Box' explicit beat layer.

The only significant outlier within the corpus was 'Overcome', where the beat layer is formed by several percussion instruments rather than a drum set (Fig. 4.35). The groove is less symmetrical than that which is typically found in the Bristol sound, the first two beats are articulated at every 16<sup>th</sup> note while the third beat is comparatively empty. There is no single instrument that outlines the pulse level and also no emphasis of alternating strong and weak beats. The 32<sup>nd</sup> note attacks on the floor tom accent beat one and three, in a manner typical of a kick drum, and there is a distinctive metallic clapping sound on beat two, possibly emulating a snare drum. However, there is no attack on beat four to balance out the bar, resulting in an asymmetrical groove. Like the remaining songs in the analysis, the beat layer uses a repeating pattern but there is also a prominent fill at the end of most sections to help elucidate the form.

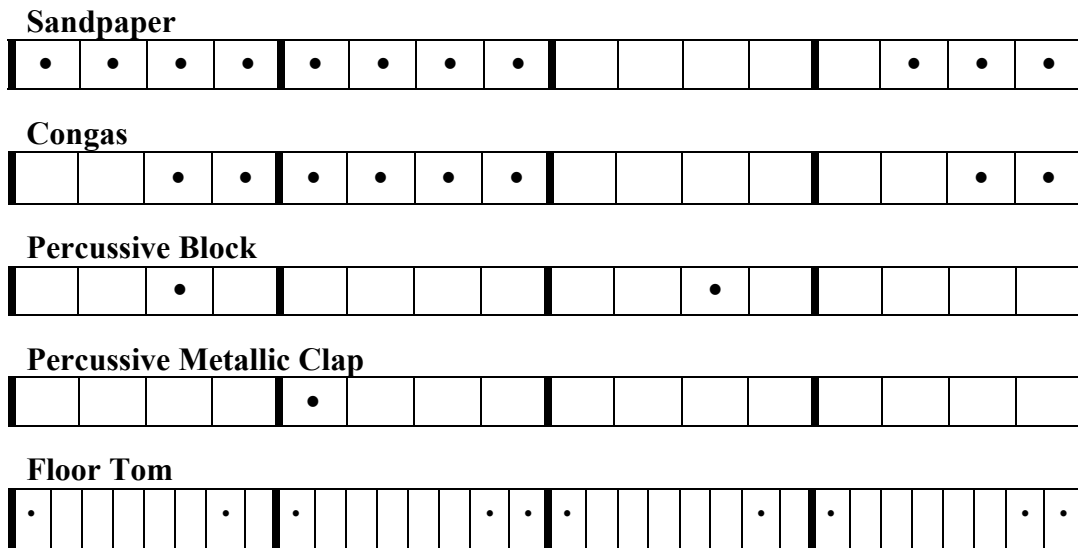


Figure 4.35: 'Overcome' explicit beat layer.

#### 4.4.1.1 Summary

The explicit beat layer typically consists of a drum set playing a repeating pattern of one, two, or four bars. Percussive instruments can be used, however they are not common and when present generally compliment the drum set and articulate the pulse level. Once the drum pattern has been established it typically repeats throughout the song without the use of decorative fills, embellishments, or a contrasting groove. Accordingly, the drums tend to have a very consistent dynamic energy throughout a track. When the main pattern is varied, the change is typically achieved by inserting one or two beats of silence. The beat layer is highly stable and continually reinforces the alternating strong and weak beats even when a large number of syncopated attacks occur.

#### 4.4.2 Functional Bass Layer

Similar to the explicit beat layer, the functional bass layer often consists of a one or two-bar riff that repeats uninterrupted throughout the song. As a result, the bass layer can often be independent from the harmonic structure of the song, functioning more as a kind of tonic or dominant pedal (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5: Functional bass layer in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Repeating Pattern</b>	<b>Harmonically Driven</b>	<b>Riff-based</b>
<b>Portishead</b>			
Roads		X	
Glory Box	X		X
Sour Times	X	X (Ch)	X (Vs)
<b>Massive Attack</b>			
Angel	X		X
Unfinished Sympathy	N/A	N/A	N/A
Teardrop	X		X
<b>Tricky</b>			
Aftermath	X		X
Overcome	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hell is Round the Corner	X		X

The riff in ‘Angel’ exemplifies this approach (Fig. 4.36); it is based on a repeating C note and continues in the same vein throughout the song, regardless of the changing harmony.



**Figure 4.36: 'Angel' functional bass layer.**

‘Teardrop’ (Fig. 4.37) follows the same approach, though in this instance the riff gravitates around an E note creating a dominant pedal under the changing harmonic progression.



**Figure 4.37: 'Teardrop' functional bass layer.**

The bass line in 'Aftermath' (Fig. 4.38) similarly gravitates around a B<sup>b</sup>, however this is unsurprising as the harmony consists of a stationary B<sup>b</sup>m chord. Perhaps the only striking feature of the riff is the accented A<sup>b</sup> notes occurring on beat one, creating an unstable pull toward the tonic at the beginning of every bar.



Figure 4.38: 'Aftermath' functional bass layer.

The bass line in 'Glory Box' and 'Hell is Round the Corner' is also based on a repeating two-bar pattern, from the original bass line in 'Ike's Rap II', and rather than following the harmonic progression it creates the harmony by playing a moving line over a stationary tonic chord.<sup>285</sup> The verse of 'Sour Times' follows the same pattern, playing a moving line over a stationary tonic chord and effectively creating the harmonic progression.

It is only during the instrumental section of 'Roads' (Fig. 4.39) and the chorus of 'Sour Times' (Fig. 4.40) that the bass follows the harmonic progression articulated by the harmonic filler instrument. In 'Roads', the bass plays an arpeggiated figure that outlines the chord tones before concluding the phrase with a melodic fill, while the bass line in 'Sour Times' is primarily based on the root and fifth of each chord.

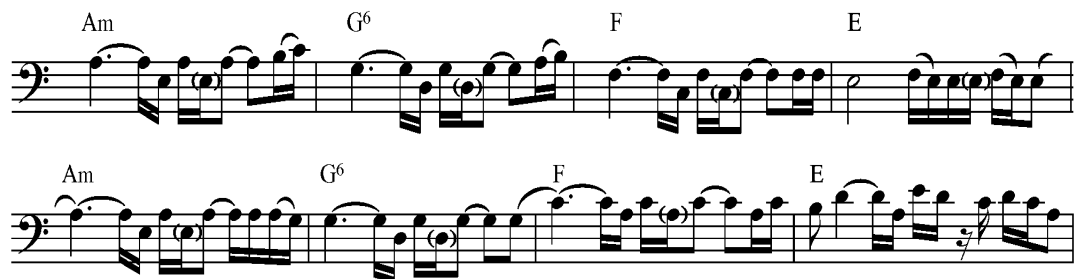


Figure 4.39: Bass line during instrumental section of 'Roads'.

<sup>285</sup> See section 4.2.1.



**Figure 4.40: Bass line during chorus of 'Sour Times'.**

The bass is tacit during the remaining sections of 'Roads' and the left hand of the Rhodes piano supplies the functional bass layer with sustained root notes. 'Overcome' does not use a bass instrument while 'Unfinished Sympathy' uses a string bass as part of the string section and is discussed in more detail in section 4.4.3.

#### **4.4.2.1 Summary**

The functional bass layer predominantly consists of a repeating riff, one or two bars long, that repeats throughout the song without fills or embellishments. In this regard it is very similar to the explicit beat layer. The bass line is often harmonically independent from the chord progression and functions more as a kind of pedal device under the changing harmony. In 'Sour Times', 'Glory Box', and 'Hell is Round the Corner', the bass creates the harmonic movement and approaches a role typically reserved for the harmonic filler layer. Only two of the songs use the functional bass layer in the conventional way of following the harmonic progression dictated by a harmonic instrument, and it is only during certain sections of those songs that the bass behaves in this manner.

#### **4.4.3 Harmonic Filler Layer**

Analysis of the harmonic filler focused on the texture of the layer, either sparse, dense, or a combination of the two, and also looked at how the layer develops throughout the course of the song. A 'static' layer is one that is consistent throughout the song, while an 'episodic' layer changes in texture according to the sections of the song. A 'climactic' layer gradually builds from sparse to dense throughout the song while a 'fluid' layer changes between sparse and dense irrespective of the sectional changes (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Harmonic filler layer in the Bristol sound.

	Sparse	Dense	Static	Episodic	Climactic	Fluid
<b>Portishead</b>						
Roads	X →	X			X	
Glory Box	X			X		
Sour Times	X			X		
<b>Massive Attack</b>						
Angel	X →	← X				X
Unfinished Sympathy	X →	X			X	
Teardrop	X			X		
<b>Tricky</b>						
Aftermath	X		X			
Overcome	X			X		
Hell is Round the Corner	X		X			

The majority of the songs have a sparsely populated harmonic filler layer, though there are a number of different means by which this is achieved. In ‘Aftermath’, the harmonic filler layer is present throughout the entire song but merely consists of a single repeating riff (Fig. 4.41) with occasional use of a secondary gesture for decorative effect (Fig. 4.42).



Figure 4.41: 'Aftermath' harmonic filler layer.



Figure 4.42: Additional harmonic gesture in 'Aftermath'.

Conversely, the harmonic filler layer in ‘Overcome’ exists only during the refrain section and consists of a sustained D major to C major triad (Fig. 4.43).



Figure 4.43: 'Overcome' harmonic filler layer.

'Sour Times' works in a similar fashion. The harmonic filler layer is empty during the verse, while during the chorus it consists of brass pads, a guide-tone line on the guitar, and a tonic pedal on the cimbalom (Fig. 4.44).



Figure 4.44: 'Sour Times' harmonic filler layer.

Similar to 'Aftermath', the harmonic filler layer of 'Hell is Round the Corner' is consistent throughout the entire song; consisting of an electric organ and strings (Fig. 4.45), however both of these instruments are very low in the mix and it is the remaining three layers that take precedence.

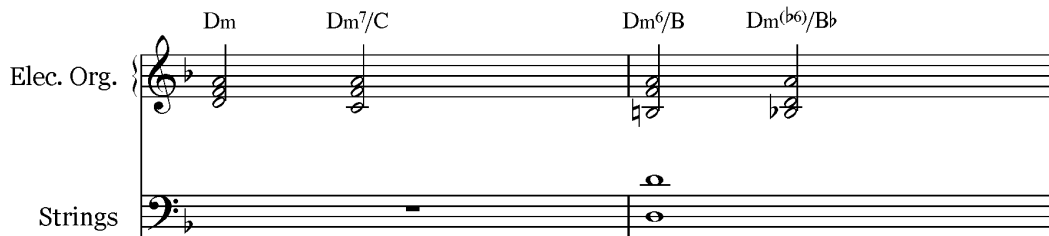


Figure 4.45: 'Hell is Round the Corner' harmonic filler layer.

Within these four songs there are two distinct methods for creating a minimal harmonic filler layer. 'Aftermath' and 'Hell is Round the Corner' populate the harmonic filler layer throughout the track, however the musical material is either very minimal or mixed at very low levels, while 'Overcome' and 'Sour Times'

only populate the harmonic filler layer during the chorus/refrain section of the song. In each example, the treatment of the harmonic filler layer is highly consistent as the track unfolds. In ‘Aftermath’ and ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ the layer remains unchanged throughout the song while in ‘Overcome’ and ‘Sour Times’ the harmonic filler layer alternates between two states, with each verse sounding the same and each chorus/refrain sounding the same.

A slight variation of the same effect can be seen in ‘Glory Box’. The harmonic filler layer is populated throughout the entire track but also grows in density during the chorus. It begins with an electric piano during the verse (Fig. 4.46) before two electric guitars join in during the chorus (Fig. 4.47).

The musical notation for Figure 4.46 shows a single staff for the Electric Organ (E. Org.) in the key of E-flat major. The staff contains four chords: E-flat minor (Ebm), E-flat minor 7 with D-flat in the bass (Ebm7/Db), E-flat minor 6 with C in the bass (Ebm6/C), and E-flat minor with a flat 6 and C in the bass (Ebm(b6)/Cb). The chords are written in a sequence from left to right across the staff.

**Figure 4.46: 'Glory Box' harmonic filler layer - verse.**

The musical notation for Figure 4.47 shows three staves: Electric Organ (E. Org.), Guitar 1 (Gtr. 1), and Guitar 2 (Gtr. 2). The E. Org. staff contains the same four chords as in Figure 4.46: E-flat minor (Ebm), E-flat minor 7 with D-flat in the bass (Ebm7/Db), E-flat minor 6 with C in the bass (Ebm6/C), and E-flat minor with a flat 6 and C in the bass (Ebm(b6)/Cb). The Gtr. 1 staff shows a simple accompaniment with chords and some melodic lines. The Gtr. 2 staff shows a more complex accompaniment with a melodic line and chords.

**Figure 4.47: 'Glory Box' harmonic filler layer - chorus.**

‘Glory Box’ also differs from the preceding songs in that each repetition of a section is not exactly identical; at the third verse a Hammond organ plays the same chords as the electric organ but uses different voicings (Fig. 4.48).

Ebm
Ebm7/Db
Ebm6/C
Ebm(b6)/Cb

E. Org.

Hammond

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

**Figure 4.48: 'Glory Box' harmonic filler layer - instrumental.**

The harmonic filler layer in 'Teardrop' (Fig. 4.49) is more prominent than that of the previous songs, mainly due to the high presence in the mix of the harmonic instruments. The piano plays sustained chords while a harpsichord plays an arpeggiating figure based on an A<sup>sus4</sup> chord. As the progression continues, the harpsichord figure repeats and adds additional colour to the harmonic structure.

A
G(add9)
D
A

Piano

Harpsichord

**Figure 4.49: 'Teardrop' harmonic filler layer.**

'Unfinished Sympathy' and 'Roads' are the only songs where the harmonic filler layer is gradually developed over time and avoids the static nature or episodic repetition found in the previous songs. The harmonic layer of 'Unfinished Sympathy' is provided almost entirely by a string section. It is primarily composed of sustained harmonic pads with occasional use of passing and neighbour tones, though during the transition section there is increased melodic and rhythmic activity in the bass. As the song progresses into the second

instrumental section, the upper strings increase in melodic activity, creating a greater sense of movement with a wider melodic range (Fig. 4.50).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string section. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system is labeled 'Strings' on the left. Above the treble staff, the following chords are indicated: Dm<sup>9</sup>, Fmaj<sup>9</sup>, G<sup>9</sup>, Dm<sup>11</sup>, Fmaj<sup>9</sup>, and G<sup>9</sup>. The second system is also labeled 'Strings' on the left. Above its treble staff, the following chords are indicated: Dm<sup>11</sup>, F<sup>#11</sup>, G<sup>9(sus4)</sup>, Dm<sup>13</sup>, F<sup>#11</sup>, and G. The notation shows sustained chords in the bass line and more active, moving lines in the treble line, with various note values and slurs.

**Figure 4.50: 'Unfinished Symphony' harmonic filler layer – 2nd instrumental.**

'Roads' uses a similar technique, beginning with a Rhodes piano playing sustained chords and occasional grace notes. During the second verse an electric guitar enters along with a string section that gradually increases the density of the harmonic filler layer by expanding the melodic range and increasing the number of voices (Fig. 4.51). The strings reach a climactic point at the end of the instrumental section before diminishing in intensity during the final refrain.

Am G F<sup>6</sup> E Am G<sup>6</sup> F E

F G(sus2) Am F<sup>6</sup> G(add9sus4) Am

Am G<sup>6</sup> F E Am G<sup>6</sup> F E

F<sup>6</sup> G(sus2) Am F G(add9) E

Am G<sup>6</sup>(add9) Fmaj7 E<sup>7</sup> Am G<sup>6</sup> F E<sup>7</sup>

F<sup>6</sup> G(sus4) A<sup>5</sup> F G(add9sus4) E

Figure 4.51: 'Roads', strings verse two to refrain four.

'Angel' is the only song with a fluid harmonic filler layer comprised of multiple parts playing gestures that imply the harmony, rather than explicitly state it. There is no single instrument that continuously articulates the harmonic progression and the texture of the layer constantly changes as various instruments enter and exit the soundbox. The verse sections are sparsely filled and emphasise the reverberant space and the texture gradually thickens during the instrumental

sections with increased melodic and rhythmic activity in the guitar parts (Fig. 4.52).

The image displays a musical score for the first instrumental of 'Angel'. It consists of two systems of staves. Each system has two staves: E. Gtr. 1 (top) and E. Gtr. 2 (bottom). The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C). The first system shows E. Gtr. 1 playing sustained chords and a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while E. Gtr. 2 plays a series of chords. The second system shows E. Gtr. 1 playing a melodic line with eighth notes and E. Gtr. 2 playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks indicating muted notes.

Figure 4.52: 'Angel' first instrumental.

#### 4.4.3.1 Summary

The harmonic filler layer is generally sparsely populated and only occasionally thickens in texture as the track progresses. While static, climactic, and fluid textural changes occur, the most common type of development is episodic, whereby the texture changes abruptly as the song moves from one section to the next. This is also the only approach that is employed by all three artists. The harmonic structure is typically explicitly stated by one instrument, though may be implied by several simultaneous instruments. In either case, there is generally little rhythmic activity in the harmonic filler layer. Keyboard instruments tend to play sustained chords and there is no use of a continually strummed guitar. A textbook Bristol sound song is likely to feature a sparse harmonic filler layer with little rhythmic activity that changes in texture according to the sectional changes of the song.

#### 4.4.4 Melodic Layer

The following section addresses the melodic layer with respect to the individual singers, as the nature of vocal melodies is highly aligned to the personal style of the vocalist. The most consistent thread running through the corpus is that each artist embraces a number of approaches regarding phrasing,

melodic contour, and melodic harmonic divorce, rather than favouring one type of approach over another (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7: Melodic layer in the Bristol sound.**

	Contour-rich	Period structure	Melodic Harmonic Divorce	Counter-melodies
<b>Portishead</b>				
Roads		X	X	
Glory Box	X			X
Sour Times	X (Vs)	X (Ch)	X	
<b>Massive Attack</b>				
Angel	X			X
Unfinished Sympathy		X		
Teardrop		X	X	
<b>Tricky</b>				
Aftermath	X (Vs 1)	X (Vs 2)	X	X
Overcome	X		X	X
Hell is Round the Corner	N/A	N/A	N/A	X

With Portishead, the melodic layer typically consists of Beth Gibbons' vocals. Gibbons does not favour period structure or contour-rich melodies, rather she moves freely between the two. She uses a period structure in 'Roads' (Fig. 4.53) and a contour-rich melody in 'Glory Box' (Fig. 4.54), while 'Sour Times' uses a period structure melody in the chorus (Fig. 4.55) and a contour-rich melody during the verse (Fig. 4.56).

Am G<sup>6</sup> F E

Oh\_ can't an-y - bo-dy see\_ we've got a war\_

Am G<sup>6</sup> F E

\_to fight\_ ne-ver found\_our way re-gard-less of what they say\_

**Figure 4.53: 'Roads' vocal melody - verse.**

I'm so ti-red of play ing play-ing with this bow and ar row gon-na give my  
heart a- way leave it to the oth-er girls to play  
for I've been a tempt ress to long mmm yes

Figure 4.54: 'Glory Box' vocal melody - verse one.

Gibbons' melodies are predominantly drawn from the natural minor scale ('Roads') or the minor pentatonic scale ('Glory Box') with occasional use of chromatic approach notes. At times the melody is closely aligned with the underlying harmony and all non-chord tones resolve by step to chord tones (see 'Glory Box' Fig. 4.54), while at other times the non-chord tones do not resolve by step or do not resolve to chord tones. In the chorus of 'Sour Times', Gibbons sings three E notes against a D<sup>#7</sup> chord, creating a minor 9<sup>th</sup> interval that eventually resolves down a minor third into the i chord in the next bar (Fig. 4.55).

'cause no bo-dy loves me it's true not like you do

Figure 4.55: 'Sour Times' vocal melody - chorus.

To pre-tend no one can find fal-la - cies of morn ing rose for-  
 bid-den fruit\_ hid-den lies\_ cour-te - sies\_ that I des-pise in\_  
 \_ me take a ride take a shot

Figure 4.56: 'Sour Times' vocal melody – verse one.

Gibbons occasionally phrases her melodies following an SDRC<sup>286</sup> structure but also often varies the pattern. The verse in 'Roads' opens with an initial statement followed by a departure phrase, however rather than the expected restatement there is a repetition of the departure before ending with the conclusion (Fig. 4.57).

Statement Departure  
 Oh\_ can't an-y - bo-dy see\_ we've got a war  
 Redeparture Conclusion  
 \_ to fight\_ ne-ver found our way\_ re gard less\_ of what they say\_

Figure 4.57: 'Roads' vocal melody - verse one.

Other times her vocal melody follows the three-phrase structure of bar form (Fig. 4.58), commonly found in 12 bar blues.<sup>287</sup>

<sup>286</sup> Statement, Departure, Restatement, Conclusion.

<sup>287</sup> Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*.

Figure 4.58: 'Sour Times' vocal melody - verse one.

Of the three Portishead songs included in the analysis, 'Glory Box' is the only one that features additional melodic lines. A repeating violin phrase continues throughout the track (Fig. 4.59) and a repeating piano lick based on the E<sup>b</sup> blues scale plays during the verse, though it is very low in the mix (Fig. 4.60).



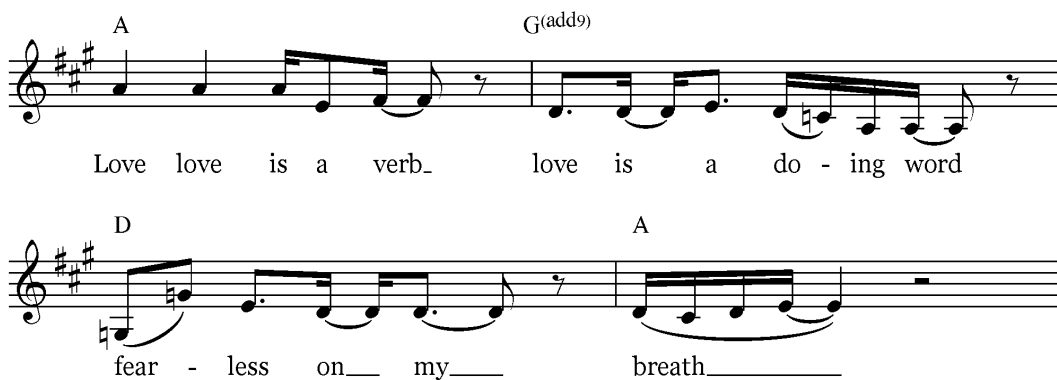
Gm7 C Gm7  
I know that I've i mag - ined love be fore and how it could be

C Am  
with you\_\_\_ Will it hurt me ba - by Will it hurt me ba - by

Dm Gm6  
How can you have a day\_\_\_with out a night You're the book that I\_\_\_have op

A(sus4)  
- ened\_\_\_ and now I've got to know much more\_\_\_\_\_

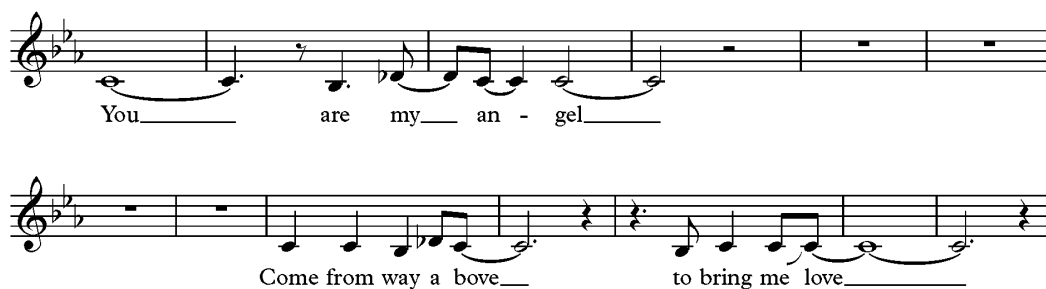
Figure 4.61: 'Unfinished Sympathy' vocal melody - verse one.



A G(add9)  
Love love is a verb\_ love is a do - ing word

D A  
fear - less on\_\_\_ my\_\_\_ breath\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 4.62: 'Teardrop' vocal melody - verse one.



You\_\_\_ are my\_\_\_ an - gel\_\_\_

Come from way a bove\_\_\_ to bring me love\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 4.63: 'Angel' vocal melody - verse one.

These three songs were each performed by a different vocalist, therefore many of the contrasting features can be ascribed to their different singing styles. ‘Angel’ has a particularly small melodic range with a very flat contour while ‘Teardrop’ has a much larger range and a wide melodic contour. ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ also has a relatively flat contour but uses a wide melodic range.

The relationship between the melody and the harmony also varies between the songs. The melody in ‘Angel’ is closely aligned to the harmony and all non-chord tones resolve by step to chord tones, for example the D<sup>b</sup> in bar two resolves by step to the root note. Conversely, in ‘Teardrop’ there is a greater disconnect between the two. The F<sup>#</sup> in bar one resolves down a major 3<sup>rd</sup> and the A in bar two and G natural in bar 3 do not resolve to a chord tone. ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ also has a strong connection between the melody and the harmony with non-chord tones resolving by step to chord tones.

Similar to Portishead, the melodic layer primarily consists of the main vocal without countermelodies or backing vocals.<sup>288</sup> One common trait that is evident in the Massive Attack songs is the phrase structure. They are all in bar form, however it would be an overstatement to suggest this is a stylistic trait of Massive Attack, much less the Bristol Sound.

Tricky’s music follows similar lines as that of Portishead and Massive Attack; the most consistent trait is that there is no consistency. There is no significant preference for period structure melodies or contour-rich melodies, rather both are freely employed. The lead vocal in ‘Aftermath’ uses a contour-rich melody during verse one (Fig. 4.64) and a period structure during verse two (Fig. 4.65). The melody in ‘Overcome’ (Fig. 4.66) is also contour-rich, while ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ primarily consists of Tricky’s non-pitched rapping, therefore melodic shape does not apply.

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<sup>288</sup> The one exception is ‘Angel’, which uses occasional backing vocals to create a call and response effect.

For world\_\_\_\_\_ for some-one for him for\_ she

For world\_\_\_\_\_ for some-one for him for\_\_\_\_\_ me\_

Figure 4.64: 'Aftermath' vocal melody - verse one.

Your eyes re- sem - ble mine\_\_\_\_\_ you see as no oth-ers can\_\_\_\_

here in-herit my king-dom speak of our peo - ples plan\_\_\_\_\_

I'm here for\_ my ba - by\_ for my ba-by I'll\_ be near\_

so ma-ny things I need to tell you\_ things you need to hear

Figure 4.65: 'Aftermath' vocal melody - verse two.

Bm(b6) Bbm(b6)

You sure youwan-na be\_with me\_ I've no-thing to give\_ Won't lie

Bm(b6) Bbm(b6) Bm(b6)

and say this lov-ing's best Whoah\_\_leave us in e-mo tion-al peace mm take a

Bm(b6) Bm(b6) Bbm(b6)

walk take a rest and taste the rest

Figure 4.66: 'Overcome' vocal melody - verse one.

Regarding the melodic/harmonic divorce, the vocal melody in ‘Overcome’ is closely aligned with the harmony during the verse but divorced from the harmony during the chorus. The B at the end of bar one resolves up a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> while the melodic phrase over the C major chord consists entirely of non-chord tones (Fig. 4.67).

Figure 4.67: ‘Overcome’ vocal melody - chorus.

The melody in ‘Aftermath’ is similarly divorced from the underlying harmony and features significant use of chromaticism (Fig. 4.68).

Figure 4.68: ‘Aftermath’ vocal melody - verse one.

In terms of the melodic layer in Tricky’s music, the most significant departure from Portishead and Massive Attack is the presence of two vocalists. ‘Aftermath’ and ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ feature both Tricky and his frequent collaborator Martina Topley-Bird, though there are a number of ways in which the two vocals are incorporated. In ‘Aftermath’, Topley-Bird sings solo during the

first verse before Tricky joins in for the second verse, rapping the same lyrics but with a slightly varied rhythm. During the third verse Tricky raps the first four bars before Topley-Bird sings during the final eight. In ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ Tricky raps throughout the majority of the track with Topley-Bird singing a two-bar phrase in the second verse and a four-bar phrase in the fifth verse.

The other significant difference is the prominent use of counter-melodies. ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ retains the repeating string figure from the original ‘Ike’s Rap II’, and ‘Overcome’ uses a repeating synth melody throughout the track, as well as a flute riff that acts as a melodic hook (Fig. 4.69). Likewise, ‘Aftermath’ uses a flute riff as a melodic hook during the link sections (Fig. 4.70).



Figure 4.69: 'Overcome' flute figure.



Figure 4.70: 'Aftermath' flute figure.

#### 4.4.4.1 Summary

The most consistent trait throughout the Bristol sound regarding the melodic layer is neither an adherence to or rejection of any one type of melodic construction, rather numerous techniques are employed and contrasting strategies can often be found within a single song. One significant note is that none of the songs within the corpus employed backing vocals in the conventional manner of harmonizing the lead vocal. Tricky is the only artist that features multiple vocal lines occurring simultaneously and his method of singing and rapping together suggests the presence of two equal personas rather than one supporting the other. Tricky is also the only artist to prominently feature counter-melodies or melodic hooks. The main vocal line is typically the only element of the melodic layer in the music of Portishead and Massive Attack.

## 4.5 Soundbox

There are a several traits regarding the soundbox that are common across the Bristol sound and typically reference the ‘lo-fi’ approach the artists employed. At the time of production, digital audio was firmly established, stereo mixing had been normative for over 20 years, and dynamic mixes where sound sources move throughout the soundbox had a long tradition. Accordingly, the sonic character of these songs is the result of aesthetic decisions rather than technological limitations. The analysis focused on the way the soundbox was populated, either densely packed in the middle or with a wide stereo spread, and how it changed throughout the track. An ‘episodic’ soundbox is consistent throughout the track, meaning each verse sounds the same and each chorus sounds the same. A ‘fluid’ soundbox is not consistent throughout the track, meaning each chorus may sound different. In a ‘static’ soundbox, each sound source remains in its ascribed position throughout the track, while a ‘dynamic’ soundbox changes as the track progresses as certain sound sources move throughout the three-dimensional space (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8: Soundbox in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Dense Middle</b>	<b>Wide Stereo</b>	<b>Episodic</b>	<b>Fluid</b>	<b>Static</b>	<b>Dynamic</b>
<b>Portishead</b>						
Roads	X			X	X	
Glory Box	X		X		X	
Sour Times	X		X		X	
<b>Massive Attack</b>						
Angel		X		X	X	
Unfinished Sympathy		X	X		X	
Teardrop		X	X			X
<b>Tricky</b>						
Aftermath	X			X	X	
Overcome	X		X		X	
Hell is Round the Corner	X		X		X	

One exemplary example of the 'lo-fi' approach is the soundbox of 'Sour Times', which is entirely in mono (Fig. 4.71).

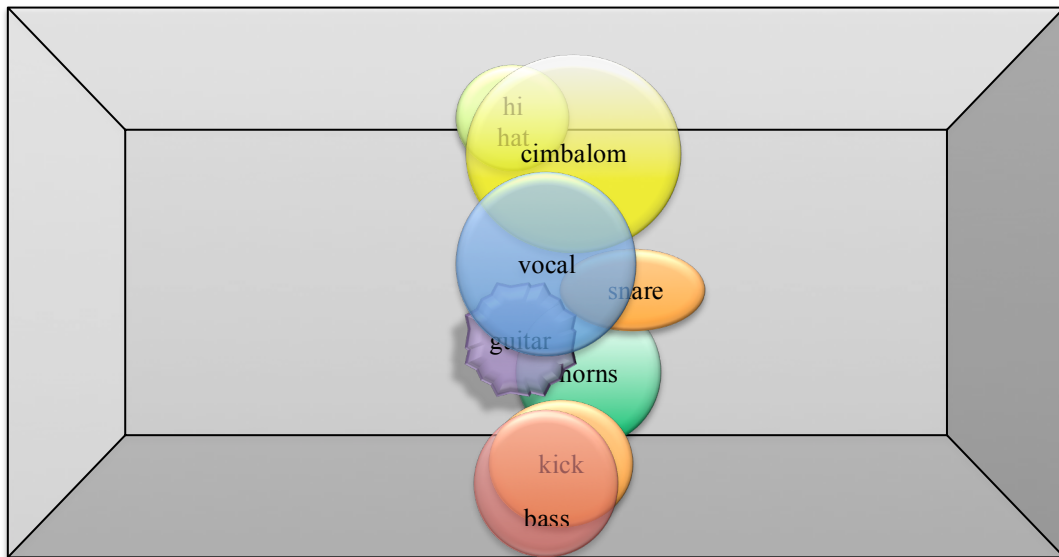


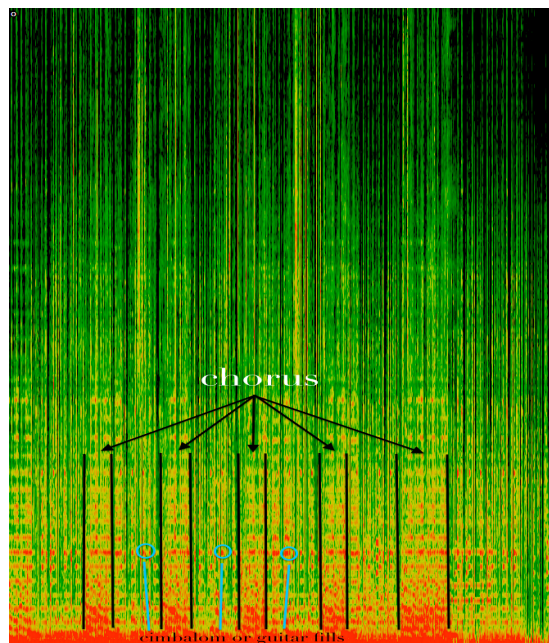
Figure 4.71: 'Sour Times' soundbox.

Fig. 4.72 shows spatial analysis of 'Sour Times' using the *Spatial Maximizer* plugin. The meter readings to the right of the window show there is no substantial input on the lower pane and when listening to the lower pane in solo mode only the occasional reverb artifacts are audible. The soundbox remains consistent throughout the song. The only changes are the addition of the horns during the chorus and the guitar embellishments that occur throughout the song.



Figure 4.72: 'Sour Times' *Spatial Maximizer* analysis.

The arrangement does not develop over time but is instead revealed in the opening sections and the distinction between verse and chorus can be clearly seen in the spectrogram below (Fig. 4.73). The chorus has greater spectral energy, however rather than gradually increasing or decreasing the changes in energy are immediate. Likewise, the spectral energy in each section is consistent with each later repetition, each chorus sounds the same and each verse sounds the same. Accordingly, the episodic and repetitive nature of the harmony, melody, and form is also represented in the sound of the track.



**Figure 4.73: 'Sour Times' spectrograph.**

'Hell is Round the Corner' uses the same approach. It is entirely in mono and there are no reverb artifacts or noise of any kind panned toward the sides. Like 'Sour Times', the soundbox is revealed in the opening sections of the song and does not develop over time, rather each verse has the same sonic signature.

Another common trait found throughout the corpus is a soundbox that, while not technically in mono, has very little use of stereo panning. 'Glory Box' is not in mono but is very heavy in the center, with only the two guitars and Hammond organ panned to the sides and the main vocal panned slightly to the right (Fig. 4.74). The Hammond only plays during the instrumental section and the two guitars play only during the chorus so during the verse the mix is heavily centered. The soundbox is entirely static, each sound source does not move from

its original position and the sonic quality of each section is consistent throughout the track.

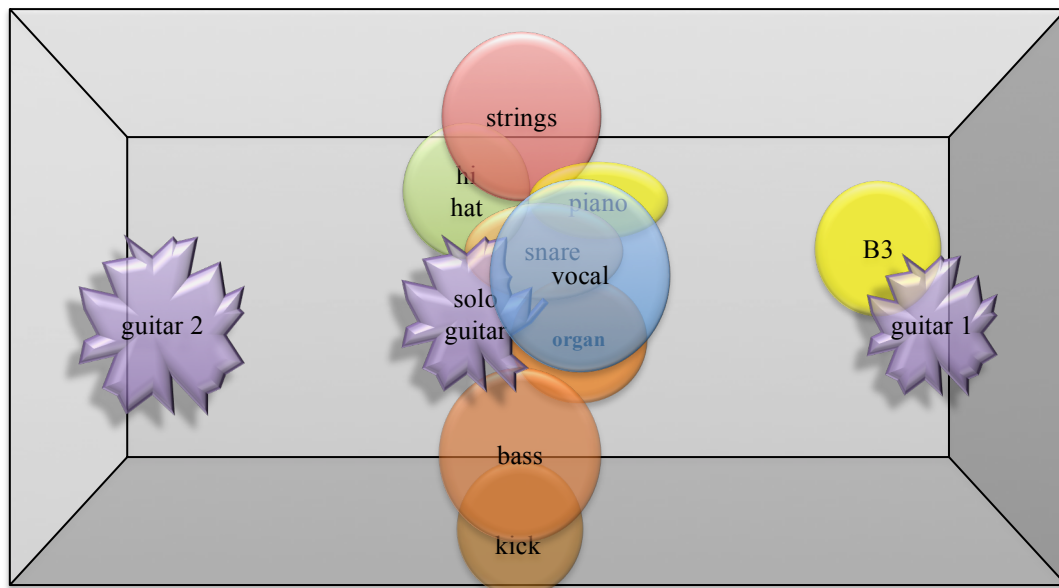


Figure 4.74: 'Glory Box' soundbox.

This kind of minimal stereo mixing is also found in 'Overcome', 'Aftermath', and 'Roads'. 'Overcome' is essentially in mono with only the reverb panned left and right, while in 'Aftermath' only the two guitars are panned slightly to the left. In 'Roads', the strings are panned left and right and the guitar is panned slightly to the left with all other sound sources in the middle.<sup>289</sup> Unlike the previous examples, the soundbox for 'Roads' is not made entirely explicit during the opening sections, rather it grows in density as the string arrangement develops throughout the track. When the strings first enter they take up a relatively small amount of room within the soundbox. However, at their peak at the end of the instrumental section they fill the space extensively (Fig. 4.75).

<sup>289</sup> The vocal reverb is also in stereo but this is not evident under normal listening conditions.

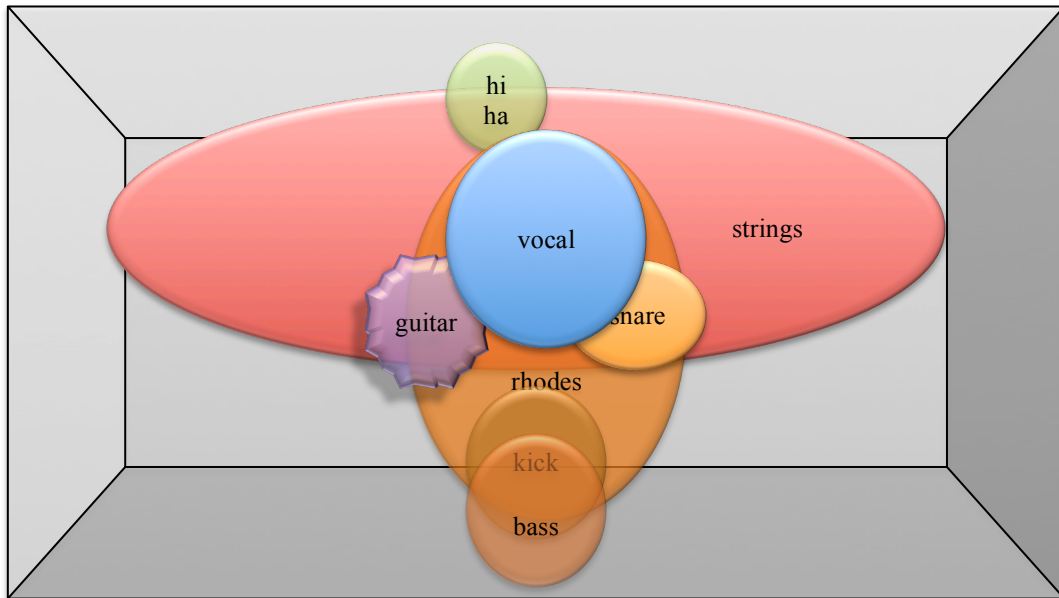


Figure 4.75: 'Roads' soundbox.

It is only with Massive Attack that one begins to see normative mixing practices. The soundbox for 'Angel' (Fig. 4.76) shows wide stereo panning with a great deal of separation between the sound sources. The majority of the instruments in 'Angel' also play very sparsely and there is typically only four to five instruments playing simultaneously, resulting in a considerable amount of empty space.

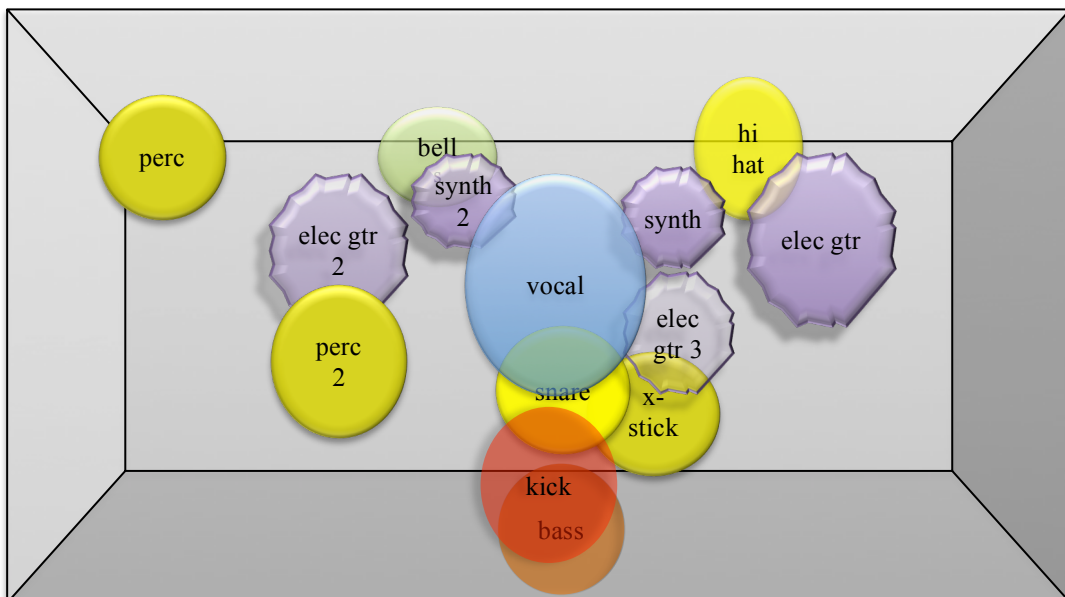


Figure 4.76: 'Angel' soundbox.

The remaining Massive Attack songs also follow normative mixing practices, utilizing a wide stereo spread and careful placement of each sound source so as to not encroach on the sonic territory of another. ‘Teardrop’ is the only song whose soundbox is not entirely static (Fig. 4.77). It is densely packed in the center though several of the sound sources are used for gestural effect rather than continuing uninterrupted throughout the track. The piano plays in a low register, occupying the majority of the low end while the harpsichord fills out the top end. The guitar occurs only during the introduction and second link section and it moves around the stereo space, moving from left to right then back again. There is a deep vertical spread however the soundbox is densely packed in the middle of the lateral space with the drum set, bass, vocal, choir, and several of the synth sounds placed in the centre. The harpsichord is panned slightly to the left while the piano is panned slightly to the right. The vocal reverb is also panned left and right, but this is not evident under normal listening conditions.

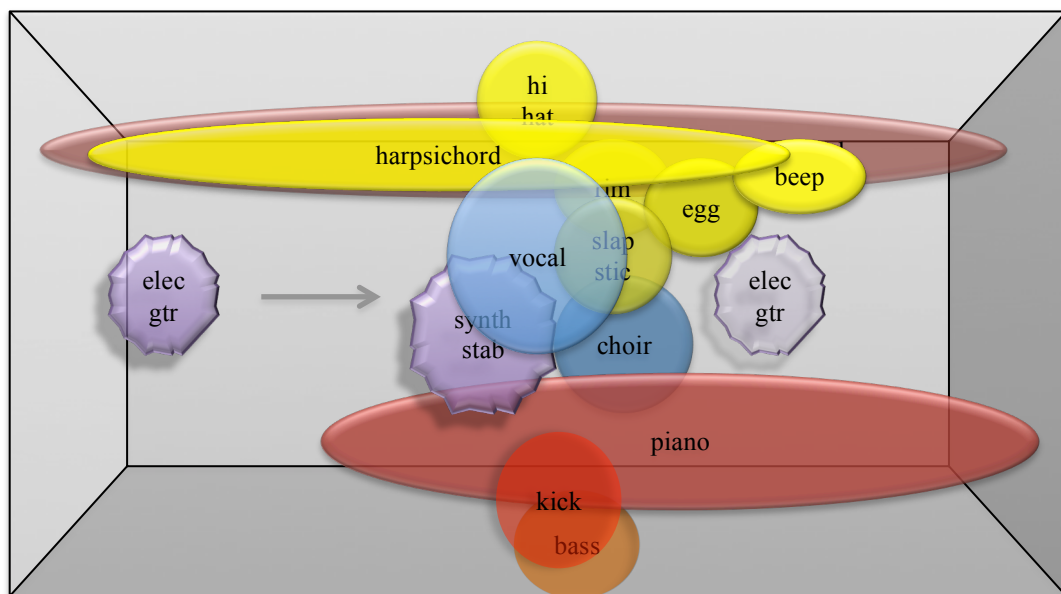


Figure 4.77: 'Teardrop' soundbox.

#### 4.5.1 Summary

Although a number of instruments are commonly used within the Bristol sound, there is no standardized ensemble. As a likely consequence there is no standardized manner of shaping the soundbox. However, a recurring theme throughout the Bristol sound is the willingness to move beyond the normative

mixing practices of the time. There are insufficient examples of mixing in pure mono to call it a typical practice, but the fact it exists at all and is found in the work of two different artists is a notable departure from contemporary mixing techniques. Perhaps more common is a soundbox that, while not strictly in mono, is very dense in the center with minimal use of stereo panning. Despite the competition for space in the middle of the soundbox the texture is generally clear, largely due to the traditionally minimal instrumentation and sparse arrangement. The soundbox is typically static with little evidence of sounds moving throughout the sonic space. The soundbox is also generally made explicit within the first few sections of a track and will alternate between two or three slightly varied versions as the song moves from section to section.

## 4.6 Persona

In four of the songs the persona is situated within the intimate zone, while three are in the personal zone and one in the social zone. ‘Aftermath’ features two personas that occupy two different zones, one intimate and the other personal (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Persona in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Intimate</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Portishead</b>				
Roads	X			
Glory Box	X			
Sour Times		X		
<b>Massive Attack</b>				
Angel		X		
Unfinished Sympathy			X	
Teardrop		X		
<b>Tricky</b>				
Aftermath	X (Tricky)	X (Topley-Bird)		
Overcome	X			
Hell is Round the Corner	X			

'Roads' provides a fairly typical example of how a persona can be situated within the intimate zone. Gibbons' voice is positioned in front of the soundbox and appears slightly detached from the surrounding musical environment. The intimate presence in her voice conjures up images of her leaning closely into the microphone, appearing to address the listener directly. The intimacy is apparent from the onset. At 0:52 she sings the first word 'oh' and one can hear a drawn out exhale after she finishes singing the word. The timbre of her voice is delicate and at times appears to be on the verge of breaking, such as when she sings the word 'fight' at 1:04. Vocal noises such as breathing are clearly evident, such as at 4:28, and at times she appears to be struggling to push out the last breath in order to vocalize a final syllable. At 4:38 she can be heard moistening her lips, an act that suggests an explicit attempt to render an intimate sounding performance due to the ease with which one could remove such a sound.

Gibbons also occupies the intimate zone in 'Glory Box'. Her voice has a breathy quality and there are moments where she can be clearly heard pushing her breath out at the end of a phrase, for example when she sings the word 'woman' at 1:20. Her voice has also been significantly equalized. The mid frequencies are boosted to give it a 'telephone' quality that adds to the retro feel of the song. Topley-Bird similarly occupies the intimate zone in 'Overcome', where the breathy quality of her voice is also used for rhythmic effect with the sharp inhale and exhale that runs throughout the track. Her voice does not have the same detached quality as in 'Roads' or 'Glory Box' but her timbre is very gentle with little projection.

'Hell is Round the Corner' is perhaps the most exemplary example of the intimate zone. Tricky's voice is barely above a whisper and the intimate attention enables microscopic detail to come through the mix. His vocal performance resembles that of sing-speech and the intimacy reveals a grainy quality to his voice, most evident when he says the words 'my life' at 0:27. Sharp intakes of breath can also be clearly heard before he sings each phrase, for example at 0:17, further enhancing the intimacy of the vocal track. Topley-Bird also makes a brief appearance, doubling Tricky's lyrics during the second verse although she sings rather than using sung speech and is pushed much farther back in the soundbox.

‘Aftermath’ is somewhat of an outlier as the song uses two personas that each occupy a different zone. Topley-Bird occupies the personal zone, her voice is close to the listener and positioned in front of the soundbox, however she exhibits none of the vocal utterances such as breathing that are normally associated with the intimate zone. Tricky enters during the second verse speaking the same lyrics as Topley-Bird but in a varied rhythm. His voice is barely above a whisper as he quietly speaks into the microphone, placing him firmly within the intimate zone.

The second most common type of persona is the personal zone, and ‘Sour Times’ provides a good example. Gibbons’ voice is positioned just in front of the surrounding musical environment without being detached from it. Her tone has a thin, almost fragile quality, and it is only during the chorus that her voice begins to project. However, there are none of the intimate vocal sounds such as breathing or whispering that would place her in the intimate zone. ‘Teardrop’ follows the same pattern. Fraser inhabits the personal zone in her vocal delivery, she does not project forcefully but also does not whisper. One can hear the intake of breath before each phrase (1:05) but no other vocal sounds are noticeable and her voice is positioned near the front of the soundbox without being detached from her musical environment. Her enunciation of the lyrics is unclear, rendering some words almost unintelligible. Horace Andy also occupies the personal zone in ‘Angel’, the vocals are soft to medium though there are few discernable vocal noises. He has an unusual staggering kind of vibrato at the end of each note and one can hear the breath being pushed out at the end of each phrase.

The only song that does not fall into one of these two categories is ‘Unfinished Sympathy’. Nelson is placed within the social zone, centered within the soundbox with no intervening musical material between her and the listener. There are very few vocal sounds and her voice projects very strongly, particularly when singling the line ‘and now I’ve got to know much more’ at 0:56.

#### **4.6.1 Summary**

The persona most commonly occupies the intimate zone, positioned at the front of the soundbox and slightly separated from the surrounding musical environment. Intimate vocal sounds such as breathing, whispering, and other noises are common and suggest a close recording position that allows for nuanced

details to be perceived in the mix. It is rare for a vocalist to project forcefully; rather a delicate and fragile timbre is preferred, allowing for a more personal connection with the listener.

## 4.7 Timbre

### 4.7.1 Gestural Surrogacy

All of the songs feature second order surrogacy, however only three use it exclusively throughout the track (table 4.10). In ‘Unfinished Sympathy’, ‘Roads’, and ‘Glory Box’, each sound can be easily reconciled with both the source and gesture that produced it and the instrumentation is comprised of largely familiar instruments such as drums, bass, guitar, keyboard, strings, and vocals.

**Table 4.10: Timbre in the Bristol sound.**

	Gestural Surrogacy		Spectral Space		Inharmonic Saturation	Surreal Space
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Order	3 <sup>rd</sup> Order	Opaque	Dense		
<b>Portishead</b>						
Roads	X		X		X	
Glory Box	X		X		X	X
Sour Times	X	X	X		X	
<b>Massive Attack</b>						
Angel	X	X	X			X
Unfinished Sympathy	X		X			X
Teardrop	X	X	X			X
<b>Tricky</b>						
Aftermath	X	X	X		X	X
Overcome	X	X	X		X	
Hell is Round the Corner	X	X	X		X	

The six remaining songs rely predominantly on second order surrogacy but also employ third order references, either for decorative effect or as functional elements of the composition. ‘Teardrop’, ‘Angel’, and ‘Overcome’ each rely on

known sounds to create the texture of the track while using unknown sounds to decorate the sonic space and maintain interest. 'Teardrop' opens with a sound of unknown origin and gesture that appears to dissipate with several delay taps before ending abruptly. Known instruments then take over and begin to build the texture of the track until the unknown sound returns at the end of the first refrain to mark the transition into the first link section. The alternating pattern of known sounds during the verse and refrain and the unknown sound during the link section then continues throughout the track. While the gesture is more decorative than functional, it does help the listener navigate through the form.

'Angel' opens with a bass guitar and drum set but at 0:20 unknown sounds begin to populate the space and thicken the texture. The timbre of the unknown sounds has a metallic quality and appears to be produced with a striking gesture, similar to a percussive instrument. At 1:25 a new unknown sound is introduced that has a gradual onset, building to a sudden termination with a single delay tap in a large reverberant space before disappearing completely. These sounds continue throughout the track and are used at strategic moments to maintain listener interest and shape the texture while helping to elucidate the form.

'Overcome' uses unknown sounds during set sections of the song to help clarify the form, such as the percussive sounds that occur at the end of each verse. Their gesture can be inferred as a striking motion, however the sound appears to get louder after the initial onset rather than decaying.

The remaining three songs use third order surrogacy in a functional manner rather than decorative. The unknown sounds work in concert with known instruments to define the texture and are therefore more indicative of the overall sound. The groove in 'Hell is Round the Corner' includes a distorted scraping sound that occurs on beat two and the 'and' of four and continues throughout the majority of the track, giving the drums a coarse and dirty timbre and contributing to the track's unpolished sound.

'Aftermath' similarly uses third order references that function as part of the texture, such as the extended rumbling sound that first occurs at 0:04-0:06 and continues throughout the track. Gestures such as this are not merely decorative,

rather they shape the overall timbre of the track and contribute to the identifiable sound of the song.

‘Sour Times’ is a slightly different case in that one of the main identifying traits of the song is the prevalent use of the cimbalom which, although not strictly speaking a reference to third order surrogacy, is likely to be unfamiliar to most Western listeners.

#### **4.7.2 Inharmonic Saturation**

The three Massive Attack songs make no use of inharmonic saturation and this is one of the main features that distinguish their music from that of Portishead and Tricky. Each of the instruments within these three tracks has an unmediated tone, giving the track a very pure and polished sound. Much like the normative mixing practices that are evident in the Massive Attack tracks, it is clear that great care has been taken to maintain the sonic integrity of each instrument during the recording and mixing process. Within the remaining six songs however, inharmonic saturation is evident to a greater or lesser degree. With ‘Sour Times’ the degree of inharmonic saturation is relatively low, compared to many other Portishead songs. The tone of the instruments is generally unmediated and the instrumental timbre is largely dictated by the naturally occurring sound of the instrument. However, specific incidents of inharmonic saturation occur in the guitar at 2:22, 2:47, and 4:05, when subtle distortion from an overdriven pre-amp can be heard.

The instrumental sounds in ‘Overcome’ are generally unmediated, however there is a high degree of saturation in the drums from 2:03 to 2:16. Likewise in ‘Glory Box’, Gibbons’ voice has a high degree of inharmonic saturation during the transition section into the bridge while the snare is heavily distorted during the bridge section. The sound of the snare lasts the entire duration of the beat and gets slightly louder at the tail end, suggesting it has been heavily compressed. The remaining songs use inharmonic saturation throughout the track. In ‘Roads’, the Rhodes piano distorts at several places, particularly during the intro (0:00-0:50) as the preamp is overloaded with signal, while in ‘Aftermath’ the guitar, drums, and flute are similarly distorted. The distorted scraping in ‘Hell is Round the Corner’,

discussed above as a reference to third order surrogacy, is primarily comprised of noise and has very little pitch content.

### 4.7.3 Spectral Space

Spectrogram analysis of 'Glory Box' (Fig. 4.78) demonstrates several traits that are indicative of the Bristol sound.

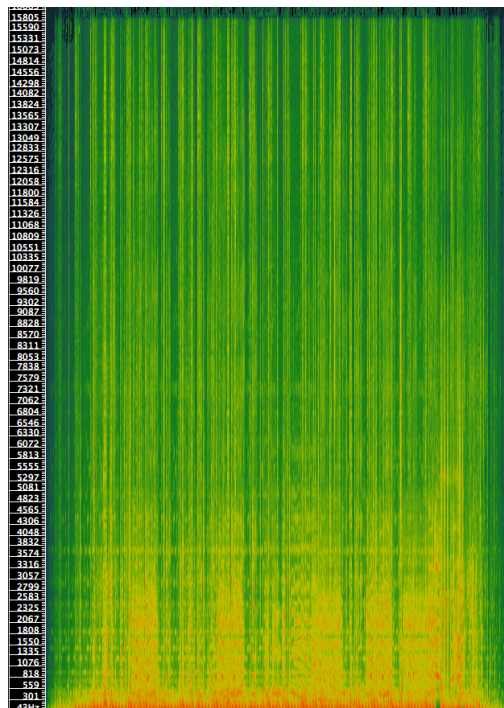


Figure 4.78: 'Glory Box' spectrograph.

There is a high concentration of spectral energy around the root area, something that is common within the Bristol sound due to the high positioning in the soundbox of the kick drum and bass guitar. The energy is strongest below 300hz where most of the presence of the kick drum and bass guitar resides, followed by considerable concentration of energy between 300hz and 500hz where much of the presence of mid-range instruments such as a guitar and the middle register of a keyboard lie. From this point the energy becomes gradually more dispersed as it moves up through the middle area and into the canopy. The texture is also very opaque and clear gaps can be perceived in the spectral energy. This is due to the limited instrumentation that one often finds in the Bristol sound. The other notable feature is that the changes from one section to the next are highly visible and are consistent throughout the song. In the spectrogram above, the chorus sections can

be easily recognized for their greater spectral energy around the mid range, and every iteration of the chorus is the same. This is another common feature within the Bristol sound. The songs are often arranged in a very episodic manner with only minimal development of each section as the song progresses.

This can be further evidenced by spectrogram analysis of ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ (Fig. 4.79). As discussed in section 4.1, ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ is in strophic form, consisting of a continued repetition of verses. The spread of the spectral energy remains consistent throughout the track and the lack of identifiable sections within the form of the song are also corroborated by the consistent distribution of spectral energy.

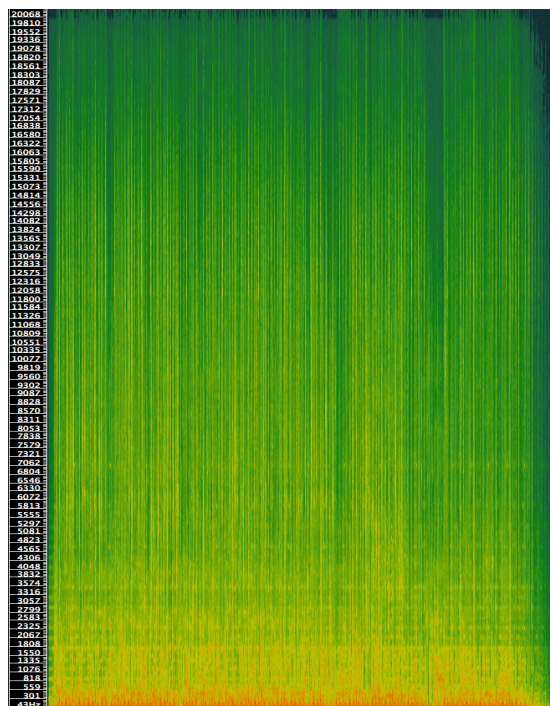


Figure 4.79: "Hell is Round the Corner' spectrograph.

#### 4.7.4 Surreal Space

‘Angel’, ‘Teardrop’, ‘Aftermath’, and ‘Unfinished Sympathy’ use contrasting spaces simultaneously throughout the track. In contrast, ‘Glory Box’ uses two contrasting spaces but they do not occur simultaneously, while the remaining four songs do not make use of surreal space. In ‘Angel’, when the drum set enters at 0:10, the x-stick has a very short reverb and suggests a tightly enclosed space with a significant amount of absorbent material. When the guitar gestures enter at 0:20

they have a much larger reverb with a longer decay, suggesting a large cavernous space. As the voice enters at 1:08 there are subtle reflections but without the large room size and elongated decay, suggesting a small room with many reflective surfaces. During the verse, three spaces are clearly evident and occur simultaneously; the tight enclosed space of the drum set, the larger reflective space of the vocals, and the cavernous space of the guitars and synths.

The opening sound in ‘Teardrop’ has a reverb with a long decay time and the tail is easily perceived, suggesting a wide-open space. Conversely, the drum set is very dry with no audible reverb. The main vocal often has an echo effect, suggesting a larger space with many reflective surfaces and the synthesized choir also sits within a large reverberant space. In the intro of ‘Aftermath’ the drums suggest a medium sized room with reflective surfaces while the extended rumbling sound suggests a much larger, open space and the echo of the flute suggests a wide open space with numerous hard reflective surfaces. In ‘Unfinished Sympathy’, the vinyl scratching at 0:04 has a long diffused reverb and the reflections can be easily heard, suggesting a large cavernous space with many reflective surfaces, while the drum set has minimal reverb and suggests a close space with absorbent surfaces. The vocal sample at 0:17 similarly has a long-decay reverb, though without audible reflections, suggesting a large open space.

Rather than using contrasting spaces throughout the track, ‘Glory Box’ maintains a consistent sonic environment and each instrument can be resolved into a single space. However, during the bridge the booming quality of the kick drum and the reflections in the main vocal suggest a larger space in contrast to that previously heard. This non-simultaneous presence of two contrary spaces is what Smalley refers to as a multiple spatial setting, where two contrasting virtual spaces can be heard concurrently within a single song.<sup>290</sup>

#### **4.7.5 Summary**

The Bristol sound typically uses second order surrogacy to create the musical texture, however third order references are common and can be either decorative

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<sup>290</sup> Smalley, “Spectromorphology” 107–26.

or functional. Inharmonic saturation is also very common, either occurring at specific places within a song to highlight a change of section or used to colour an instrument's timbre. Spectral analysis reveals significant concentration of spectral energy around the root area and an overwhelmingly opaque texture, allowing for low-level details to be perceived in the mix. The episodic nature of the songs is also reflected in the sound of the track as sections within the song can be clearly identified from dramatic changes in the spectrogram. These changes are also generally consistent throughout the track. The use of surreal space is common, either with respect to contrary spatial settings that occur simultaneously or with respect to songs that use different spatial settings in different sections of the song.

## 4.8 Intertextuality

### 4.8.1 Autosonic Quotation

While a wide variety of intertextual references exist in the Bristol sound, the most common type is autosonic quotation, occurring in eight of the nine songs (Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11: Intertextuality in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>Autosonic Quotation</b>	<b>Allosonic Quotation</b>	<b>Vinyl Aesthetic</b>
<b>Portishead</b>			
Roads			
Glory Box	X		X
Sour Times	X		
<b>Massive Attack</b>			
Angel	X	X	
Unfinished Sympathy	X		
Teardrop	X		X
<b>Tricky</b>			
Aftermath	X	X	X
Overcome	X	X	
Hell is Round the Corner	X	X	X

Occasionally these quotations have limited impact on the overall sound and feel of the track and simply function as an alternative source for musical ideas, however at times the impact can be quite significant. In the case of ‘Sour Times’, the harmonic structure, bass line, horn pads, and cimbalom are sampled from ‘The Danube Incident’ (1969), a television cue composed by Lalo Schifrin for the *Mission: Impossible* television series and the sample has a profound effect on the sound and feel of the track. Schifrin’s score is highly evocative of European spy culture, summoning images of mystery and intrigue, and the inclusion of the cimbalom creates an ‘otherworldly’ association that contributes to the tracks antiquated feel.<sup>291</sup> One possible reason for the track’s association with spy music is the implied minor line cliché during the verses; the most famous use of a minor line cliché being the theme music to the James Bond movies composed by Monty Norman. The references to spy music and culture are further embellished in Utley’s guitar part; in mm 8 he plays a minor chord with an added major 7<sup>th</sup>, a chord that is so endemic throughout the James Bond films that it is often referred to as the ‘spy chord’.<sup>292</sup> The cinematic feel and cold war images are then fused with the up-tempo funk groove of the drums, which are sampled from ‘Spit-It Jig’ by Smokey Brooks.

Autosonic quotation also has a significant impact on ‘Glory Box’ and ‘Hell is Round the Corner’. Both songs sample ‘Ike’s Rap II’ (1971) by Isaac Hayes, and while there is some editing done by both Tricky and Portishead, the sound and feel of the tracks are heavily indebted to the original. Both songs use the same harmonic structure as the original track as well as the prominent descending bass line and counter melody in the violins, though both songs edit the string melody in a slightly different way. The sparse texture of the original, with the prominent bass line and relatively bare harmonic filler layer, is likewise carried across, as is the slow tempo and hypnotic repetitive groove.<sup>293</sup> As is the case with ‘Sour

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<sup>291</sup> Frith writes of ‘Sour Times’ ‘the sampled track from a Lalo Schifrin *Mission Impossible* LP places the track in space, not time, in the suspended space of the traveler, caught between West and East, past and future.’ Quoted in Joseph Auner, “Making Old Machines Speak: Images of Technology in Recent Music.” *ECHO* 2, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>292</sup> This chord also made an appearance in film music four years earlier in Bernard Herrmann’s score for the Hitchcock thriller *Vertigo*, and is sometimes referred to as the ‘Hitchcock chord’ due to Herrmann’s use of it in numerous Hitchcock films. See Royal Brown, *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>293</sup> Like the violin counter-melody, both Portishead and Tricky make subtle edits to the drum groove.

times', when comparing these songs to the original source of the sample it is impossible to deny the overwhelming resemblance.

Autosonic quotation also plays a significant role even when the similarities between the song and the source of the sample are less obvious. A common technique is to sample a small section, perhaps one or two bars of a larger musical pattern, and use that gesture as the basis of an entire song. 'Aftermath' uses two bars of an electric guitar riff from Marvin Gaye's 'That's the Way Love Is' (1970), which then repeats throughout the song and functions as the main musical hook. The sample has a strong impact in that it serves as the main musical underpinning of the song, even though the remaining musical parameters are left untouched and only an astute listener would recognize the connecting tissue between the two tracks. Similarly, 'Overcome' samples one bar of an extended synth line in 'Moonchild' (1992) by Shakespears Sister, which then becomes the primary musical hook and continues throughout the song while all other connection between the two songs is lost.

In contrast to the previous examples, there are many uses of autosonic quotation where the original source has minimal impact on the subsequent track. The most common example is the use of sampled drumbeats that use one or two bars of the original groove and then repeat the pattern throughout the song.<sup>294</sup> Each of the Massive Attack songs uses this approach. The drums in 'Angel' are sampled from 'Last Bongo in Belgium' (1973) by The Incredible Bongo Band, while 'Unfinished Sympathy' samples 'Parade Strut' (1974) by J.J. Johnson and 'Teardrop' samples 'Sometimes I Cry' (1973) by Les McCann. In 'Teardrop' and 'Angel', the drumbeat is the only sample used on the track while 'Unfinished Sympathy' also includes a brief vocal gesture sampled from 'Planetary Citizen' (1976) by Mahavishnu Orchestra and John McLaughlin.

#### **4.8.2 Allosonic Quotation**

Allosonic quotation can also be found in the Bristol sound, though this is more the result of the intertwined histories of the artists rather than a systematic compositional approach. Tricky began his career working with Massive Attack

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<sup>294</sup> Presumably to capture the human feel of a live performance rather than the metronomic quality of a drum machine.

and contributed lyrics and vocal raps to their first two albums, *Blue Lines* and *Protection*. He then reused some of these lyrics in his debut album. The lyrics from ‘Overcome’ and ‘Hell is Round the Corner’ first appeared on ‘Karmacoma’ and ‘Eurochild’ respectively, both of which were on Massive Attack’s second album *Protection*. In this instance, Tricky is quoting from his earlier work rather than quoting from another artist, and while he reused the lyrics, he recreated the vocal performance rather than sampling the original; an example of allosonic self-quotation. Allosonic self-quotation is also found in ‘Angel’ by Massive Attack. The song features vocalist Horace Andy, a well-known reggae artist, and the lyrics are a slightly edited version of those from his 1973 track ‘You Are My Angel’. Additional allosonic quotation can be heard in ‘Aftermath’, where Tricky makes a passing reference to The Young Rascals song ‘How Can I be Sure’ (1967) by quoting the line ‘how can I be sure in a world that’s constantly changing?’

### **4.8.3 Phonomatic References**

The most common type of phonomatic reference is vinyl aesthetic. ‘Hell is Around the Corner’, ‘Aftermath’, ‘Glory Box’, and ‘Teardrop’ each feature the exaggerated crackling sound of a vinyl record in an attempt to add warmth or an aura of authenticity to the track. Each of these songs features a repeating musical gesture that was sampled from another song and continues throughout the track. Therefore it can be reasonably inferred that the sound of a vinyl record is a legitimate artifact from the sampling process rather than being added artificially during the production process. However, at the time these records were made CDs were widely available and the decision to sample from the original LP, with all its sonic imperfections, should be seen as an aesthetic choice rather than a technological limitation.

### **4.8.4 Summary**

Intertextuality forms a significant part of the Bristol sound, predominantly in the form of autosonic quotation. Allosonic quotation can also be found, though it most often occurs as a self-quotation and is a result of the artists’ intertwined histories. There are numerous other types of intertextual reference that are not evident in the songs under analysis, however they can be found in other songs

within the Bristol sound style.<sup>295</sup>

Phonomatic references also significantly inform the Bristol sound, with vinyl aesthetic being the most common type. While not present in the works under analysis, other types of phonomatic reference can also be found, and were discussed in depth in section 2.6.2.

## 4.9 Lyrics

When considering the lyrics of the nine songs, three recurring patterns can be found. The first relates to the thematic content of the lyrics. While any attempt at interpreting meaning is beyond the aims of the analysis, there are several references to the more melancholic aspects of the human condition. For example, in 'Roads' Gibbons sings 'I got nobody on my side and surely that aint right' while in 'Overcome' Tricky asks 'You sure you want to be with me I've nothing to give.' Similarly, in 'Unfinished Sympathy' Nelsons states the protagonist 'Really hurt me baby, really cut me baby.' This is not to suggest that songs in the Bristol sound specifically embrace lamenting lyrical themes, however it does show a willingness to explore introspective and confessional subject matters.

The second recurring pattern is the use of both literal and figurative language, often within the same song (table 4.12). 'Sour Times' uses figurative language in the verse - 'To pretend no one can find, the fallacies of morning rose. Forbidden fruit, hidden lies, courtesies that I despise in me. Take a ride, take a shot now' - and contrasts this with very direct, literal language in the chorus - 'Cause nobody loves me it's true, not like you do.' Similarly, 'Teardrop' opens with the very direct 'Love, love is a verb. Love is a doing word' and immediately follows this with the metaphorical 'fearless on my breath.' 'Aftermath' opens with the cryptic lines 'For world, for someone, for him, for she' but also includes the direct line 'So many things I need to tell you, things you need to hear.'

The final recurring pattern is the perspective of the narrator. All of the songs are written from a first person perspective and often address a specific individual; 'You sure you want to be with me, I've nothing to give' ('Overcome'), 'Your eyes resemble mine' ('Aftermath'), 'You are my angel' ('Angel'), 'You're the book

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<sup>295</sup> See section 2.6.

that I have opened’ (‘Unfinished Sympathy’), ‘Give me a reason to love you’ (‘Glory Box’). The personal nature of these lyrics helps create an intimate relationship between the artist and listener, and is further supported by the intimate persona that exists in the majority of the songs.

**Table 4.12: Lyrics in the Bristol sound.**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Person Perspective</b>	<b>Literal</b>	<b>Figurative</b>
<b>Portishead</b>			
Roads	X	X	X
Glory Box	X	X	X
Sour Times	X	X	X
<b>Massive Attack</b>			
Angel	X	X	
Unfinished Sympathy	X	X	X
Teardrop	X	X	X
<b>Tricky</b>			
Aftermath	X	X	X
Overcome	X	X	
Hell is Round the Corner	X		X

## 4.10 Conclusion

The preceding sections identified some of the most common stylistic traits of the Bristol sound, summarised in table 4.13. This is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the Bristol sound, therefore does not cover all of the nuances and stylistic variations that exist. Rather, it is intended to offer a broad overview that informs the original compositions and provides a reference point for the analysis in chapter five. While these are the most commonly recurring tropes, it does not suggest that every song in the Bristol sound style will adhere to these approaches, or that a song is likely to address every element and ‘tick all the boxes’ as it were. Indeed, a song that specifically follows each of these approaches is likely to fall into the category of pastiche, and possibly even

cliché.<sup>296</sup> As suggested by the table below, these approaches outline how a hypothetical ‘textbook’ song in the Bristol sound might be realised. Neither the songs under analysis nor any of the original compositions follow these guidelines so rigorously.

**Table 4.13: Main stylistic traits of the Bristol sound.**

<b>‘Textbook’ Song in the Bristol Sound Style</b>	<b>Form</b>		<b>Harmony</b>					
	Popular Song Form	With Variation	Defined Key Signature	Triadic Harmony	Non-diatonic Harmony	Open-ended Gesture	Symmetrical Harmonic Rhythm	
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	<b>Time</b>			<b>Explicit Beat Pattern</b>				
	Tempo	Length	Rhythmically Consonant	Drum Set	Repeating Pattern	Alternating Strong/Weak Beats		
	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	<b>Bass Layer</b>		<b>Harmonic Layer</b>		<b>Melodic Layer</b>			
	Repeating Pattern	Riff Based	Sparse	Episodic	Contour Rich	Period Structure	Melodic Harmonic Divorce	Counter Melodies
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Soundbox</b>			<b>Persona</b>	<b>Timbre</b>			
	Dense Middle	Episodic	Static	Intimate	2 <sup>nd</sup> Order	3 <sup>rd</sup> Order	Opaque	
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	<b>Timbre</b>		<b>Intertextuality</b>			<b>Lyrics</b>		
	Inharmonic Saturation	Surreal Space	Autosonic Quotation	Vinyl Aesthetic	First Person	Literal	Figurative	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

<sup>296</sup> Allan F. Moore, *Analysing Rock: Means and Ends*. Paper presented at the University of Bologna, 1998, p2.

The following chapter presents the creative component of this thesis. Each of the compositions draws on the techniques discussed in this chapter to adhere to the Bristol sound tradition, while simultaneously incorporating compositional approaches from classical music. The specific ways in which a composition references the Bristol sound varies from track to track to create variety in the body of work. Recordings of each of the compositions are included on the accompanying CDs along with notated scores. Each section of chapter five presents an analysis of one of the compositions, outlining the ways in which the work draws from both the Bristol sound and classical music. Each section then concludes with the results of the audience surveys for that track as well as reflections on the degree to which the audience reactions aligned with the intent when composing the work.

## 5 Compositions

### 5.1 Composition One: 'Autumn'

'Autumn' primarily draws from classical music in the areas of harmony, instrumentation, and intertextuality. The primary impetus was to explore an alternative form of harmonic structure beyond the major scale triadic harmony typically used in the Bristol sound. The intention was not for the harmonies to sound overtly 'classical' but rather to create novel tonal colours that are atypical for the Bristol sound to push the style into new sonic areas.

'Autumn' employs a form of pitch organisation known as the tone clock, developed by Peter Schat.<sup>297</sup> The tone clock organises pitches based on all possible three-note chords that exist within the octave. Schat discovered that only twelve types of three-note chords are possible when allowing for inversions. For example, a minor seventh is simply an inverted major second. When following this principle, all conceivable three-note chords can be reduced down to twelve basic forms known as the 'twelve hours' of the tone clock (Fig. 5.1). The Roman numerals indicate the 'hour' while the Arabic numerals indicate the number of semitones between each note within the triad. Each hour produces different tonal colours to create a unique character and can be transposed to any of the twelve pitches within the octave.<sup>298</sup>

Hour	Interval Structure
I	1 + 1
II	1 + 2
III	1 + 3
IV	1 + 4
V	1 + 5
VI	2 + 2
VII	2 + 3
VIII	2 + 4
IX	2 + 5
X	3 + 3
XI	3 + 4
XII	4 + 4

Figure 5.1: Twelve hours of the tone clock.

The instrumentation also borrows from classical music, specifically the acoustic piano and string quintet. Although these instruments are occasionally

<sup>297</sup> Peter Schat, *The Tone Clock*. Trans. Jenny McLeod. (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1984).

<sup>298</sup> In addition to works by Schat, Jenny McLeod has composed over 20 works for solo piano using the tone clock system. See Jenny McLeod *24 Tone Clocks*, Rattle Records, 2016.

used in the Bristol sound, they are not intrinsically associated with the style compared to other instruments such as a Rhodes keyboard or turntable. ‘Autumn’ also includes a quotation of Arvo Pärt’s *Fratres* for violin, string orchestra and percussion. The use of quotation continues the tradition of intertextual references in the Bristol sound and also creates another connection to classical music while further distinguishing the piece from a typical Bristol sound composition, where quotations of classical music are extremely rare. The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition, as shown in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Source of musical elements in 'Autumn'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure		Tone clock
Phrase structure	Open-ended gestures	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Fixed tempo 65bpm	
Meter	4/4 throughout	
Duration	6:20	
Rhythmic consonance	Consonant between all layers	
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases Predominantly 2+2+2+2	
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 2 bar pattern	
Functional bass layer	Repeating 2 bar pattern in verse Sustained notes in chorus	
Harmonic filler layer	Sparsely populated Highly episodic	
Melodic layer	Period structure Melodic/harmonic divorce	
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, guitar, bass, drums	Acoustic piano String quintet
<b>Soundbox</b>	Narrow stereo spread Static mix Episodic	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area Episodic changes in spectra	
<b>Intertextuality</b>	Autosonic quotation	Quotes work from the classical canon Arvo Pärt - <i>Fratres</i> for violin, string orchestra and percussion

### 5.1.1 Classical incorporation

The tone clock was used to create the harmonies using different hours for different sections of the song. The intro and first verse (mm. 1-12) use a repeating chord based on the fifth hour,<sup>299</sup> superimposed over a D pedal (Fig. 5.2).

Figure 5.2: 'Autumn' harmonic structure - intro/verse one.

The first link section and second verse (mm. 13-32) add an additional chord from the fifth hour played in a different inversion (Fig. 5.3).

Figure 5.3: 'Autumn' harmonic structure - link one/verse two.

The chorus (mm. 33-36) is based on the second hour and uses three different inversions to create a sense of harmonic movement (Fig. 5.4). The first inversion occurs in the first bar (G to A is two semitones and A to B<sup>b</sup> is one semitone), the second occurs in bar two (D to E is two semitones and E to F is one), and the final occurs in bar three and four (E to F is one semitone, F to G is two).

Figure 5.4: 'Autumn' harmonic structure - chorus.

<sup>299</sup> In the treble clef of measure 2, the E to F is one semitone and the F to B is five semitones.

This pattern is then repeated - the verse is based on the fifth hour and the chorus is based on the second, though a single chord is borrowed from the third hour at the end of the second chorus. The bridge (mm. 65-72) uses a combination of fourth hour and cluster chords (Fig. 5.5) before reverting to the fifth hour (mm. 73-76) to set up the return of the final chorus (Fig. 5.6).

Figure 5.5: 'Autumn' harmonic structure - bridge.

Figure 5.6: 'Autumn' harmonic structure - bridge ending

The harmonies in 'Autumn' are not intended to be heard as 'tone clock harmonies' as this would obviously presuppose an intimate understanding of the tone clock system. Rather, the intent was to create a harmonic palette that is atypical for the Bristol sound and the tone clock proved an effective means of achieving this.<sup>300</sup>

The string passage that recurs throughout the piece (Fig. 5.7) was sampled from Pärt's *Fratres* for violin, string orchestra and percussion and slightly time-stretched to work within the groove of the song. The passage was sampled

<sup>300</sup> See section 4.2.1 for typical harmonic practices in the Bristol sound.

instead of recreated in order to capture the subtle rhythmic and tuning discrepancies that often occur when a sample is inserted into a new composition. These discrepancies, alongside the introduction of a secondary acoustic space, help to create the ‘displaced other’ element that is a key characteristic of the Bristol sound style. Unlike the Bristol sound, a decision was made not to highlight the mediation and draw attention to the existence of the sample due to the risk of sounding too clichéd.

The image shows a musical score for five string instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). Each instrument has two measures of music. In the first measure, each instrument plays a melodic line starting with a dynamic of *mp* and increasing to *f*. In the second measure, each instrument plays a sustained note with a dynamic of *p*. The staves are arranged vertically, with Vln. I at the top and Cb. at the bottom. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 5.7: 'Autumn' string figure.

While this passage is not a primary theme in Pärt’s original composition, it is presented as thematic material in ‘Autumn’. Rather than develop the theme, which would be the norm in classical music, it is repeated throughout the song as is customary in the Bristol sound tradition. There are also small melodic gestures throughout the piece that were similarly sampled from Pärt’s *Fratres* (Fig. 5.8).

The image shows a musical score for five string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. Each instrument part is written on a five-line staff. The score is divided into two measures. In the first measure, each instrument has a long note with a dynamic marking of *ppp* (pianissimo) and a hairpin indicating a crescendo to *mp* (mezzo-piano) by the end of the measure. In the second measure, each instrument has a long note with a dynamic marking of *ppp* and a hairpin indicating a decrescendo.

Figure 5.8: 'Autumn' additional string figure.

### 5.1.2 The Bristol sound tradition

The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition. The form is based on popular song form with an intro followed by a succession of verses and choruses with a contrasting bridge section (Fig. 5.9).<sup>301</sup>

Section	I	V1	L1	V2	C1	L2	V3	C2	L3	Br	C3	L4	V4
No. of bars	4	8	12	8	8	4	8	8	4	12	8	4	8

Figure 5.9: 'Autumn' form.

Each section is a multiple of four bars and is based on two-bar phrases, giving the song a very even phrase structure. The verse, chorus, and bridge are each based on different musical material, though the phrase structure for each consists of open-ended gestures. The song is rhythmically consonant with a high degree of alignment between the pulse layer and successive interpretive layers.<sup>302</sup>

The most prominent aspects drawn from the Bristol sound are the tempo, drum groove, bass line, and style of singing. The tempo is a steady 65bpm and,

<sup>301</sup> See section 4.1 for a discussion of form in the Bristol sound.

<sup>302</sup> See section 4.3.3.

like the 4/4 time signature, remains consistent throughout the song.<sup>303</sup> The drum groove is based on a repeating two-bar pattern (Fig. 5.10) and similarly continues unchanging throughout.<sup>304</sup> There are no decorative fills or secondary grooves, rather the groove is edited in places to provide rhythmic variety.



Figure 5.10: 'Autumn' explicit beat layer.

The bass line in the verse/link sections is also based on a repeating two-bar pattern (Fig. 5.11) and plays sustained chord tones in the chorus.<sup>305</sup>



Figure 5.11: 'Autumn' functional bass layer - verse.

The vocal persona is situated in the personal zone, singing with minimal projection but also positioned in front of the surrounding musical environment.<sup>306</sup> The intimate performance allows for detailed listening and exposes many vocal nuances for which the Bristol sound style is known. Also like the Bristol sound, there is no strict adherence to period structure or contour rich melodies, rather a liberal use of both and the melody is often divorced from the harmony in that non-chord tones do not resolve by step (Fig. 5.12).<sup>307</sup> In mm 25-28 the melody is contour rich but is then guided by chord tones in mm 29-32. The melody is often divorced from the harmony, such as the non-chord tone E in mm 33 that leaps up by a perfect fourth rather than moving down by step.

<sup>303</sup> See section 4.3.1.

<sup>304</sup> See section 4.4.1.

<sup>305</sup> See section 4.4.2.

<sup>306</sup> See section 4.6.

<sup>307</sup> See section 4.4.4.

**V2**  
25  
Voice  
A sin gle lie\_ to feed\_the wan-der ing eye\_ The break of night to save me

Pno.

29  
Voice  
To lead me on to lead me on\_

Pno.

**Ch1**  
33  
Voice  
Ooh\_

Pno.

35  
Voice  
Sole de si-re feels so long\_ to re-a lise\_ it's true\_

Pno.

Figure 5.12: 'Autumn' vocal melody - verse/chorus.

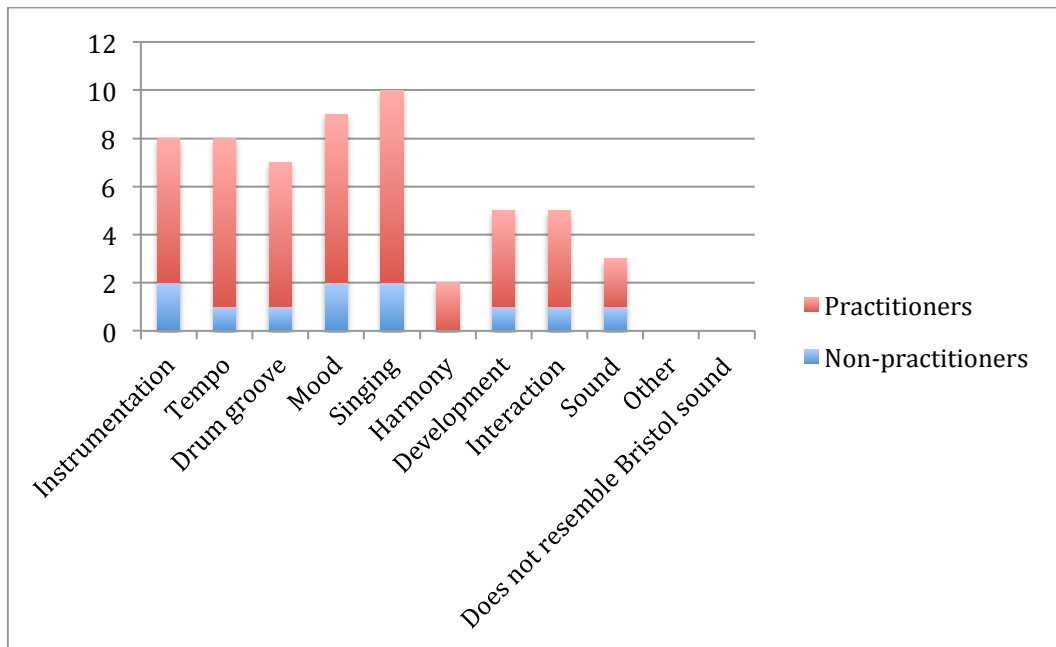
### 5.1.3 Audience feedback

The majority of respondents who completed the audience survey identified themselves as music practitioners. Feedback was generally positive, no participants felt the composition was outside the Bristol sound style or failed to hear any references to classical music. The results of question one are displayed in

table 5.2. Each category was selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound style, however there was a strong connection with the instrumentation, tempo, groove, overall mood and style of singing.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

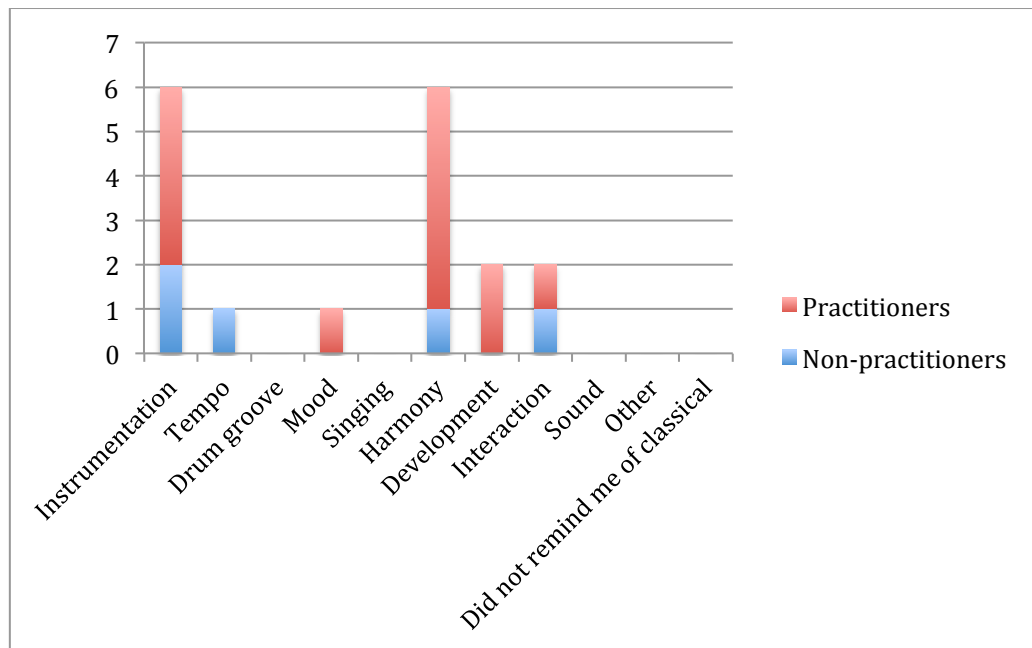
**Table 5.2: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in table 5.3. While there were a number of areas in which the participants perceived connections to classical music, the strongest association was in the areas of harmony and instrumentation.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.3: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



Each of the participants added additional comments to the questionnaire, though some were as succinct as ‘beautiful piece.’ A number of participants specifically mentioned the piano chords as being suggestive of classical music, for example:

‘other elements [of the song] differ [from the Bristol sound], most significantly the piano chords and voicings. When the song started, it reminded me very much of classical music, which was probably the idea, and I thought this gave a very nice twist on the Bristol sound. Instead of being just another Bristol sound song, it brought something new to it and I liked that very much.’

Another recurring theme that emerged regarded the overall timbre, or sound of the piece. A number of participants felt the track lacked the ‘grit’ and/or ‘punch’ of the Bristol sound, commenting that the track felt ‘too clean and

polished.’ These comments pertain more to the production of the track rather than the composition of the work itself.<sup>308</sup>

#### 5.1.4 Reflections

Audience feedback suggests that ‘Autumn’ was successful in both referencing and extending the Bristol sound style. Not only did each participant draw a connection with the Bristol sound, they also perceived elements that reminded them of classical music. Furthermore, the most common area in which the participants heard a connection to classical music was the harmony, followed by the instrumentation. This allied very well with the intent when composing the piece and suggests that appropriations in the area of harmony and instrumentation can indeed suggest a classical influence to an outside listener. None of the participants mentioned the quotation of Pärt’s *Fratres*, and were possibly not aware of its presence within the piece. This is not entirely surprising given that the two-bar section that was sampled from *Fratres* is not a principle theme in the original piece. Also, *Fratres* is not a well-known standard within the classical repertoire.<sup>309</sup> It is entirely possible, and indeed likely, that more participants would react to the quotation had the original piece been more widely recognised.

The track indeed lacks the ‘grit’ for which the Bristol sound is famous, however it should be remembered that not all songs within this style possess the same lo-fi quality.<sup>310</sup> Furthermore, the ‘gritty’ sound was consciously avoided out of concern the track would result in a cliché of the Bristol sound. It is possible that each participant compared the track to a perfect model of the Bristol sound that embodies all of its primary characteristics, and thus picked up on any deviations from this hypothetical model. However, this does not diminish the benefit of the audience feedback. In subsequent compositions the lo-fi quality of the Bristol sound was retained while relinquishing other primary stylistic traits, constantly walking the fine line between pastiche and homage.

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<sup>308</sup> For example, the same drum groove can sound either ‘clean’ and ‘polished’ or ‘gritty’ and ‘punchy’, depending on how it is manipulated in the mixing stage.

<sup>309</sup> Compared to the opening motif of Beethoven’s fifth symphony for example. Ranker.com lists Beethoven’s Fifth symphony at #1 of the 100 most famous classical works. Pärt’s *Fratres* is not listed. <http://www.ranker.com/list/classical-music-most-popular-top-100/kickassclassical>. (accessed March 10, 2017).

<sup>310</sup> See section 4.7.2.

## 5.2 Composition Two: ‘When Evening Falls’

The primary impetus in ‘When Evening Falls’ was to incorporate polyphonic texture into the work via the string orchestra. While there are many definitions of the term ‘polyphony’, it is used here to denote ‘two or more “independent” melodic lines that are roughly equal in their melodic and rhythmic activity and interest.’<sup>311</sup> Polyphony is frequently used synonymously with counterpoint,<sup>312</sup> a style of music composition commonly associated with the Baroque period (1600-1750), and typified by the two-part inventions of J.S Bach (Fig. 5.13).



Figure 5.13: Polyphony in J.S. Bach's Invention No. 1 in C Major.

The piece also borrowed from classical music by incorporating thematic development, a technique that was commonly employed in classical works of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Thematic development is often achieved by ‘changing the rhythm, melodic detail, orchestration, or dynamic character of a theme’,<sup>313</sup> such as the development of the initial motif in the opening of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5. Whereas in the Bristol sound a theme is typically stated up front and repeated exactly throughout the work, the thematic material in ‘When Evening Falls’ unfolds as the piece progresses and is varied and developed throughout the song. Finally, the piece includes rhythmic dissonance by way of simultaneous contrasting tempos during the first verse. This creates a polytempi effect where the beat-level pulses of two simultaneous layers do not coincide.<sup>314</sup> While the

<sup>311</sup> Robert Hickok, *Exploring Music* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 1993).

<sup>312</sup> Percy Scholes, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>313</sup> *Oxford Music Online*. ‘Polyphony’ (accessed June 14, 2017).

<sup>314</sup> J. Kent Williams, *Theories and Analyses of Twentieth-Century Music* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997), p112.

polyphonic texture, thematic development, and rhythmic dissonance were drawn from the classical tradition, the remaining musical elements were retained from the Bristol sound style, expressed in table 5.4

**Table 5.4: Source of musical elements in 'When Evening Falls'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	
Phrase structure	Open-ended gesture Period Structure	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Primarily fixed tempo 60bpm	
Meter	Primarily 4/4	
Duration		6:45
Rhythmic consonance		Rhythmic dissonance Contrasting tempos
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases Predominantly 2+2	
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 1 bar pattern	
Functional bass layer	Harmonically driven	
Harmonic filler layer	Episodic	Polyphonic texture
Melodic layer	Period structure Melodic/harmonic divorce	Thematic development
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, guitar, bass, drums	String orchestra
<b>Soundbox</b>	Static mix Episodic	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area	
Gestural surrogacy	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> order surrogacy	
Spectra	Inharmonic saturation (drums)	

## 5.2.1 Classical incorporation

'When Evening Falls' opens with the initial motif (Fig. 5.14).



Figure 5.14: 'When Evening Falls' initial motif.

This motif then repeats before further developing in bars three and four (Fig. 5.15).



Figure 5.15: 'When Evening Falls' developed motif.

The initial motif then returns, followed by a variation in the following bar, and the complete theme is further revealed in bars seven and eight (Fig. 5.16).



Figure 5.16: 'When Evening Falls' further developed motif.

At this point the theme is temporarily abandoned as the intro moves to the first verse, where the guitar and cello create a polytempi effect by playing at different tempos. Both parts are in a 4/4 time signature but the guitar plays at 60bpm while the cello plays at 50bpm. The guitar holds a fermata at the end of every second bar, allowing time for the cello to catch up before the two parts align again on beat one of the following bar. This creates a temporal displacement wherein the two layers move in and out of synch with each other and two separate pulse levels can be detected simultaneously depending on which layer the ear follows (Fig. 5.17).

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system has a Guitar staff in treble clef with a tempo marking of ♩ = 60 and a Cello staff in bass clef with a tempo marking of ♩ = 50 and the word 'div' above it. The second system is separated from the first by a double bar line. Both systems show the guitar playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and the cello playing a slower, more melodic line.

Figure 5.17: 'When Evening Falls' temporal displacement.

As the verse moves into the first chorus, the two layers no longer synchronize on beat one of every second bar. Rather, the guitar moves ever further ahead of the cello and remains out of synch until the downbeat of the first link section (Fig. 5.18).

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system has a Guitar staff in treble clef and a Cello staff in bass clef. The second system is separated from the first by a double bar line. The guitar part features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the cello part plays a simpler, more melodic line.

Figure 5.18: 'When Evening Falls' continued temporal displacement.

At the beginning of the link section, the 60bpm tempo is established for all layers and remains consistent throughout the remainder of the track. The initial motif also returns in parallel octaves and the entire four-bar theme is finally revealed (Fig. 5.19). This theme is then restated before a solo synth plays a variation of the initial motif to complete the link section (Fig. 5.20).

The image shows a single system of musical notation for Vln. I in treble clef. It includes a tempo marking of ♩ = 60 and the word 'div' above the first few notes. The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Figure 5.19: 'When Evening Falls' complete theme.



Figure 5.20: 'When Evening Falls' varied motif.

The instrumental bridge uses polyphonic texture within the string section to create melodic movement and rhythmic interest. While strings can often be heard in the Bristol sound on tracks such as 'Unfinished Symphony', 'Hell is Round the Corner', and 'Roads', they generally consist of a repeating melodic theme (monophonic) or sustained pads that follow the chord changes (homophonic).<sup>315</sup> In addition to the polyphonic texture, a secondary classical device known as a canon, where one melodic voice imitates another, was also incorporated.<sup>316</sup> In a strict canon the intervals in the imitating voice are exactly the same as the voice being imitated. However, 'When Evening Falls' uses a free canon approach where the intervallic numbers are retained but the quality (i.e major/minor) may vary. Furthermore, the rhythms are not replicated exactly but vary with augmentation and diminution. The imitation occurs between the second violins, violas, and cello, with the first violins playing an independent melody. The melody begins with the second violins (fig 5.21) and at the end of the first phrase the violas imitate the melody down a major 6<sup>th</sup> with varied rhythmic values (Fig. 5.22).



Figure 5.21: 'When Evening Falls' leading canonic voice.



Figure 5.22: 'When Evening Falls' imitating canonic voice.

<sup>315</sup> See section 4.4.4 and 4.4.3 respectively.

<sup>316</sup> As a compositional technique, canon is common in a number of classical musical styles. It can be found in the works of Handel (Chaconne in G major), Haydn (String Quartet in D Minor), and Beethoven (Symphony No. 4) among others.

At the end of the viola phrase, the cello further imitates the melody down a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> with varied rhythmic values (Fig. 5.23).



**Figure 5.23: 'When Evening Falls' additional imitating canonic voice.**

The initial motif expressed by the second violins is then further developed (Fig. 5.24) before being imitated by the violas and cellos.



**Figure 5.24: 'When Evening Falls' thematic development.**

This pattern continues throughout the section with the second violins stating the initial melodic material that is imitated by the violas and then by the cellos (Fig. 5.25).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for 'When Evening Falls'. Each system consists of four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cello). The first system shows the initial polyphonic texture. The second system shows the canonic appropriation where the Violin II part enters. The third system shows further development of the polyphony and canonic entries.

Figure 5.25: 'When Evening Falls' polyphony and canonic appropriation.

## 5.2.2 The Bristol sound tradition

The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition. The form is based on popular song form with an intro followed by a succession of verses and choruses with a contrasting bridge section (Fig. 5.26).<sup>317</sup>

Section	I	V1	C1	L1	V2	C2	V3	C3	L2	Br	C4	Con
No. of bars	8	8	4	10	8	7	8	7	4	18	9	4

Figure 5.26: 'When Evening Falls' form.

<sup>317</sup> See section 4.1.

The verses follow a 2 + 2 phrase structure and consist of two four-bar hyperphrases. The chorus consists of a four-bar phrase and includes a two-bar extension in the second and third choruses. The verse, chorus, and bridge are each based on different musical material with the verse and chorus consisting of open-ended gestures while the bridge uses a period structure.

The most prominent aspects drawn from the Bristol sound are the tempo, drum groove and timbre, and style of singing.<sup>318</sup> As a further reference to the Bristol sound, the song also uses first and third order surrogacy.<sup>319</sup> After the tempo settles at 60bpm at the start of the first link section it remains consistent throughout the song. The drum groove is based on a repeating two bar pattern (Fig. 5.27) and continues unchanging throughout the song without decorative fills or secondary grooves. There is also a high degree of inharmonic saturation in the timbre of the drums, creating the gritty lo-fi tone that is often found in the Bristol sound.



Figure 5.27: 'When Evening Falls' explicit beat layer.

The vocal persona begins in the intimate zone during the first verse and chorus, singing with minimal projection and positioned in front of the surrounding musical environment. The persona then moves to the personal zone for the remainder of the song, singing with greater projection. The vocal melody also moves freely between contour rich and period structure. In the first verse the melody is contour rich, outlining an arc of a perfect fourth between C and F, and follows a SDRC structure (Fig. 5.28).

<sup>318</sup> See sections 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 4.7, and 4.6 respectively.

<sup>319</sup> See section 4.7.1.

Statement Departure

Restatement Conclusion

Lost in all the lies of my dis-guise left a - lone in a ti-dal wave

hold-ing on\_ to long gone good byes breathe in breathe out I'm teth- ered when

**Figure 5.28: 'When Evening Falls' vocal melody - verse one.**

Conversely, the second verse uses a period structure melody guided by the chord tones and follows a question/answer phrasing (Fig. 5.29).

Question Answer

Question Answer

All of the fair-y tales the child-ren learn lost and sold and swept a way\_ and the fears

\_ on which to lay my\_ head trapped in black-ness for - ev er\_ and the sole

**Figure 5.29: 'When Evening Falls' vocal melody - verse two.**

'When Evening Falls' also references first and third order surrogacy. At the end of the first link section (2:08) the ambient sound of an orchestra warming up in a crowded concert hall can be heard. This reference is characterized as first order surrogacy in that it is not typically intended for musical use but the source and gesture responsible for the sound can be easily recognised. There are also third order references during the instrumental section (at 4:55 for example). The source for these sounds, as well as the producing physical gesture, is unclear and cannot be easily reconciled with a normative musical instrument.

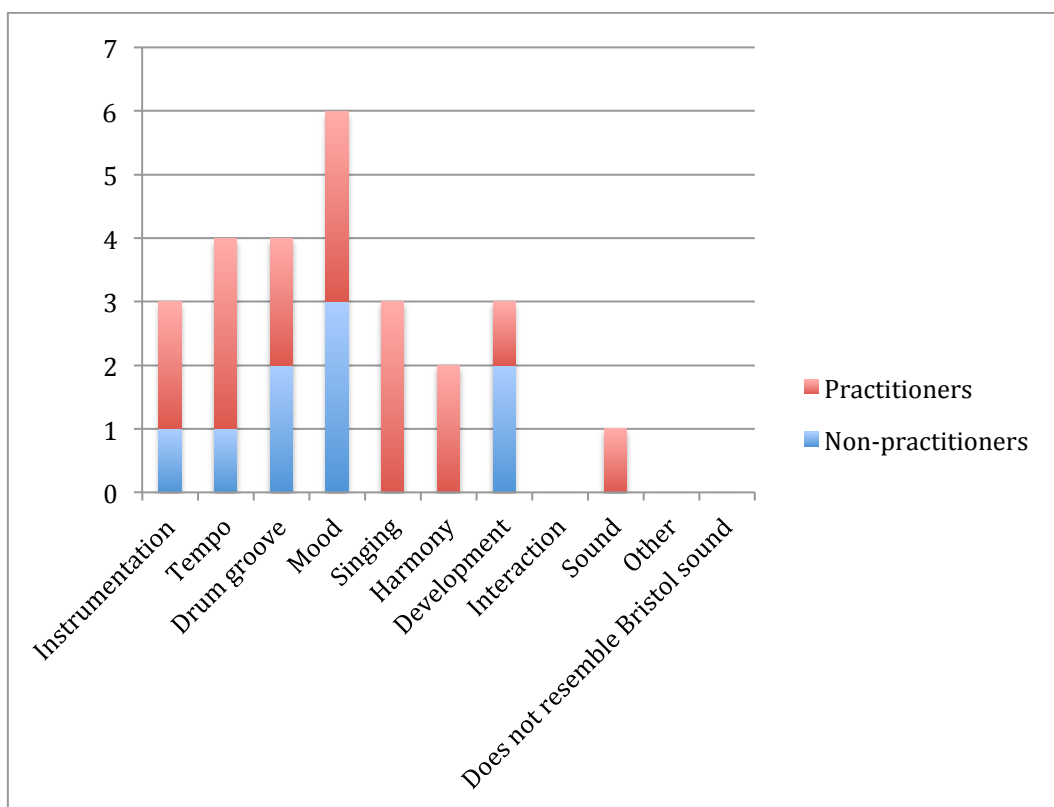
### 5.2.3 Audience feedback

The audience responses were generally evenly split between practitioners and non-practitioners. No participants felt the composition was outside the Bristol sound style or failed to hear any references to classical music, however there was not a strong correlation between the intent when composing the piece and the ways in which participants heard a connection to either style. The results of

question one are displayed in table 5.5. All but one category (interaction) was selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound, however the strongest connection was with the overall mood of the piece. When composing the piece, the focus was on the tempo, drum groove and timbre, and style of singing. While each of these categories were selected, none was the firm favourite in terms of referencing the Bristol sound style.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

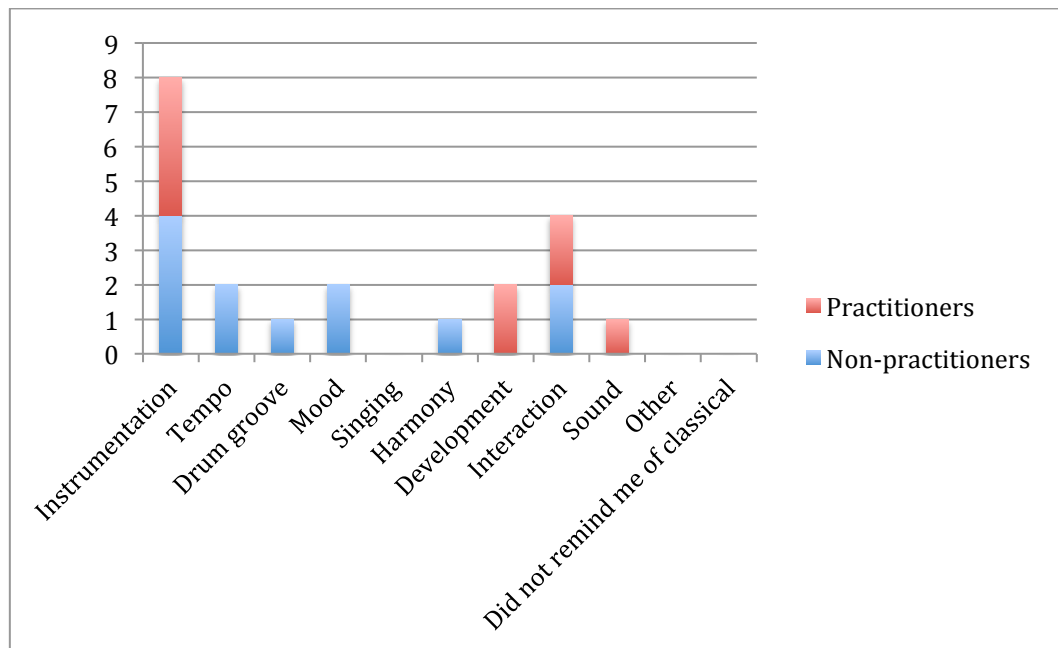
**Table 5.5: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in table 5.6. While there were a number of areas in which the participants perceived connections to classical music, the strongest association was with the instrumentation.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.6: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



Only a small number of participants added additional comments to the questionnaire, with one respondent feeling the piece lacked the ‘vibrancy’ of classical music. Another respondent mentioned ‘the song had many elements of what I would consider the Bristol sound but lacked one crucial element: grit.’

### 5.2.4 Reflections

Audience feedback suggests that ‘When Evening Falls’ successfully referenced the Bristol sound tradition and drew comparisons to classical music. However, the intentions when composing the piece were not necessarily reflected in the audience responses. Despite the use of inharmonic saturation in the drums and third order references to gestural surrogacy, only one participant heard connections to the Bristol sound in the overall sound of the track, while another felt the track lacked the ‘grit’ of the Bristol sound and went so far to describe it as a ‘crucial element.’ This may suggest that the participants identify more with the production qualities of the Bristol sound than the compositional strategies. The fact that the inharmonic saturation of the drums was not necessarily picked up by

the audience also suggests that the timbre of the drums was not immediately identifiable amongst the dense texture of the track.

Similarly, the overwhelming category in which respondents heard a connection to classical music was in the instrumentation, which can confidently be inferred as pertaining to the string section. Only two participants, both of whom identified as music practitioners, identified the thematic development that was inherent in the piece. A slightly larger number stated the way in which the instruments interacted with each other reminded them of classical music, which may pertain to the polyphonic texture of the piece. This suggests that the mere presence of orchestral instruments creates the strongest reference to classical music, more so than the underlying compositional approaches. Accordingly, participants appeared to react most strongly to the sonic qualities of both styles more so than the compositional strategies employed.

### 5.3 Composition Three: ‘Solitaire’

‘Solitaire’ relies exclusively on quotation to reference classical music, quoting *Gnossienne No.1* by Erik Satie. Satie was a French composer and pianist and one of the leading figures of the Parisian avante-garde during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was an originator of minimalist background music, or ‘furniture music’, a term that Satie himself coined.<sup>320</sup> The original piece is composed for solo piano and ‘Solitaire’ supplements this with additional instruments typical of the Bristol sound; namely guitar, bass, drums, and vocals. Quotation is commonly used in the Bristol sound and with ‘Solitaire’ the notion was extended by incorporating an entire work. The impetus was to determine if quotation alone could be successful in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener. To that end, secondary compositional approaches from classical music were consciously avoided.

*Gnossienne No.1* is part of a set of three pieces for solo piano, first published in 1893.<sup>321</sup> Each of the three pieces is in free time, meaning they have no time signature or bar lines and the rhythm is intuitively interpreted (Fig. 5.30). In the context of ‘Solitaire’, a 4/4 meter was imposed on the piano part so that it remains rhythmically consonant with the rest of the ensemble (Fig. 5.31).



Figure 5.30: *Gnossienne No. 1* – opening section.



Figure 5.31: ‘Solitaire’ transposed with imposed meter - opening section.

<sup>320</sup> See Stephen Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian: From Cabaret to Concert Hall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>321</sup> *Gnossiennes 4, 5, and 6* were not published until 1968. Only the first three were published under the title *Gnossiennes* during Satie’s lifetime. See Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*.

The harmonic structure of *Gnossienne No.1* is comparatively simple, consisting of a i, iv, and v chord, however there are several non-diatonic notes in the melody that provide additional colour to the harmony. As this approach is not commonly found in the Bristol sound, the specific devices used within *Gnossienne* (i.e. non-diatonic melodic colour) may further suggest a classical influence.<sup>322</sup> Table 5.7 specifies how the remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition.

**Table 5.7: Source of musical elements in 'Solitaire'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	
Phrase structure	Open-ended gesture	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Fixed tempo 88bpm	
Meter	4/4 throughout	
Duration	5:30	
Rhythmic consonance	Consonant between all layers	
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases, predominantly 2+2+2+2+2	
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 2 bar pattern in verse & chorus	
Functional bass layer	Riff-based	
Harmonic filler layer	Sparsely populated Highly episodic	
Melodic layer	Period structure Melodic/harmonic divorce	
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, guitar, bass, drums	Acoustic piano
<b>Soundbox</b>	Narrow stereo spread Static mix Episodic	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area Episodic changes in spectra	
Gestural Surrogacy	3 <sup>rd</sup> order surrogacy	
<b>Intertextuality</b>	Allosonic quotation Allosonic Retronormativity	Quotes work from the classical canon Erik Satie – <i>Gnossienne No. 1</i>

<sup>322</sup> The inclusion of acoustic piano can further support this reference, as it is not a normative instrument in the Bristol sound.

### 5.3.1 Classical incorporation

*Gnossienne No. 1* provides the harmonic structure for ‘Solitaire’ and serves as the musical foundation on which all the other instruments are based. It comprises three distinct sections, each based on different thematic material. The A section (Fig. 5.32) is based on a tonic pedal with a brief move to the dominant before returning to the tonic at the end of the passage.



Figure 5.32: *Gnossienne No. 1* - A section.

In the original, this section repeats before heading to the B section, which is based on a iv-i cadence (Fig. 5.33) and is played twice to complete the section.

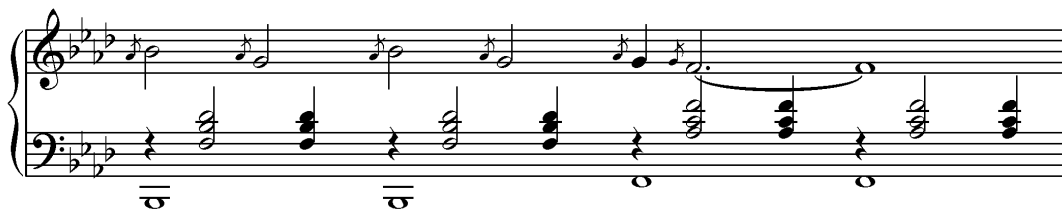


Figure 5.33: *Gnossienne No. 1* - B section.

The B section is immediately followed by the C section, similarly based on a tonic pedal, though the melody uses the melodic minor scale and a natural 11 to create an open, uplifting tonality (Fig. 5.34). It is also played twice to complete the section.

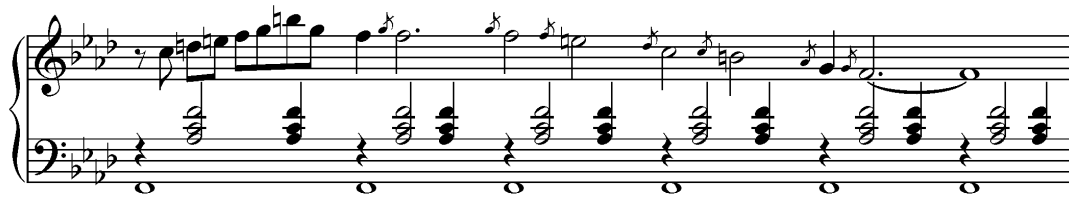


Figure 5.34: *Gnosssienne No. 1 - C section.*

These three sections comprise all of the material in *Gnosssienne* and are arranged in an AABCBA'BCB form.<sup>323</sup>

### 5.3.2 The Bristol sound tradition

The form of 'Solitaire' follows popular song form,<sup>324</sup> with each of the three sections in *Gnosssienne* used for a different section of the song. The A section is used for the intro and verse, the B section serves as the chorus while the C section functions as a bridge and conclusion.

Section	I	V1	V2	C1	V3	V4	C2	Br	V5	C3	Con
No. of bars	8	10	10	8	8	10	8	12	8	8	30

Figure 5.35: 'Solitaire' form.

Each section is based on two-bar phrases. As the A section in *Gnosssienne* implies a nine-bar hyper phrase in 4/4 time, an additional bar was added with a repeated dominant chord to create a symmetrical phrase structure. The song is rhythmically consonant with a high degree of alignment between the pulse layer and successive interpretive layers.<sup>325</sup>

The other prominent aspects drawn from the Bristol sound are the tempo, drum groove, bass line, style of singing, and allosonic retronormativity.<sup>326</sup> The tempo is a steady 88bpm and, like the 4/4 time signature, remains consistent throughout the song. In a slight deviation from the Bristol sound norm, the drum

<sup>323</sup> The varied A section contains only the first half of the prime A section.

<sup>324</sup> See section 4.1.

<sup>325</sup> See section 4.3.3.

<sup>326</sup> See sections 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.6, and 2.6.2 respectively.

pattern comprises three distinct yet similar grooves. Like the Bristol sound however, each pattern is highly repetitive with no use of decorative fills. The verse uses a four-bar pattern that repeats (Fig. 5.36), followed by a two-bar extension to complete the section (Fig. 5.37).



Figure 5.36: 'Solitaire' explicit beat layer - verse.

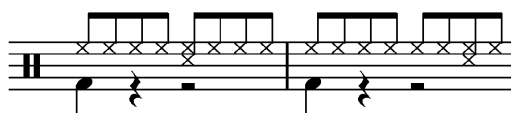


Figure 5.37: 'Solitaire' explicit beat layer - two-bar extension.

The chorus uses a four-bar groove (Fig. 5.38) while the bridge also uses a four-bar groove (Fig. 5.39) with occasional edits for when the accented kick drum was desired.

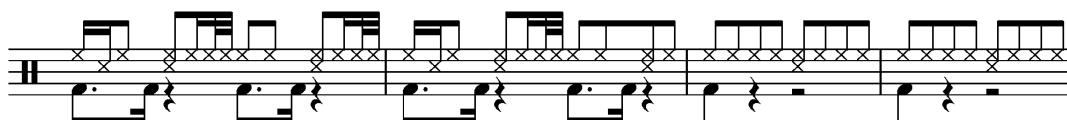


Figure 5.38: 'Solitaire' explicit beat layer - chorus.

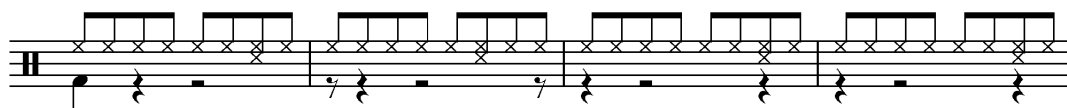


Figure 5.39: 'Solitaire' explicit beat layer - bridge.

Each groove maintains a steady eighth note pulse with occasional additional hits on the hi hat for momentum. The verse groove differs from the others in that it uses half time feel with the medium accent coming on beat three instead of two and four. The same effect is used at the end of the chorus to mirror the relative inactivity in the piano part.

The bass line is riff-based, as is the norm in the Bristol sound, however it includes a number of variations and does not comprise an exact repeating pattern. The verse uses chromatic step-wise motion to mimic the minor line cliché,<sup>327</sup> but also follows the harmonic changes when they occur (Fig. 5.40).



Figure 5.40: 'Solitaire' functional bass layer - verse.

The chorus follows the harmony while incorporating melodic fills (Fig. 5.41) and the bridge mirrors the relative inactivity of the drum part and incorporates the melodic minor scale and natural 11 from the piano part (Fig.5.42).



Figure 5.41: 'Solitaire' functional bass layer - chorus.



Figure 5.42: 'Solitaire' functional bass layer - bridge.

The vocal persona is situated in the personal zone, singing with minimal projection but also positioned in front of the surrounding musical environment. The melody uses a period structure and is often divorced from the harmony. For example, the non-chord tone C<sup>#</sup> in bars two and four below resolves not by step but by a leap of an augmented fourth (Fig. 5.43).

<sup>327</sup> Hinted at in songs such as 'Sour Times', 'Glory Box', and 'Hell is Round the Corner'. See section 4.2.1.

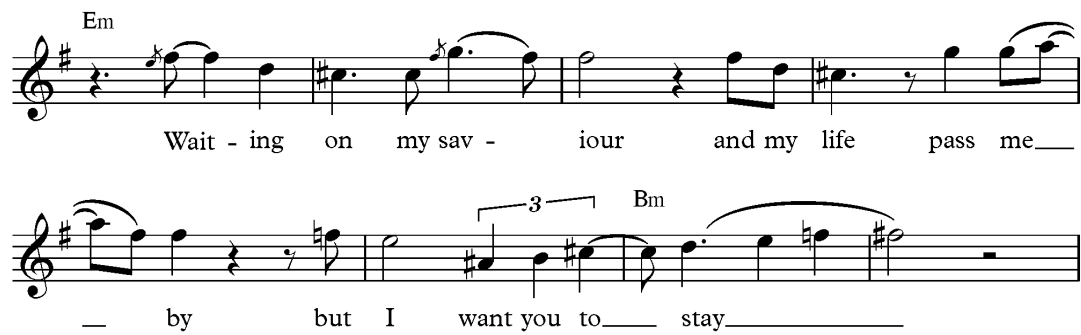


Figure 5.43: 'Solitaire' vocal melody - verse one.

'Solitaire' also incorporates a number of sonic qualities indicative of the Bristol sound. There are a number of references to third order surrogacy where the source of a sound or the gesture that produced it is unknown. This can be heard most easily in the chorus, with a sound that can be described as 'pushing air'. The sound was created by recording the reverb artifacts of a section from the piano part and then time-stretching the audio file. Similar sounding gestures can also be heard in the bridge and conclusion sections. Furthermore, allosonic retronormativity is used in conjunction with the piano part. Although the piano part is a quotation of *Gnossienne No. 1*, it was performed instead of sampled and is therefore categorised as an allosonic quotation. The timbre of the piano was modified by applying a specific type of equalisation and adding pronounced vinyl crackle. The intent was to create the illusion of a sampled 45 record, however no sampling was involved and the effects were created in post-production.

The ambient street noise and sound effects heard in the beginning of the song are a further nod to the Bristol sound. Although foley of this type is not commonly used, abrupt changes in timbre, space, and style are heard in tracks such as 'Strangers', 'Western Eyes' (Portishead), and 'Aftermath' (Tricky).<sup>328</sup> The 'street scene' is intended to act as a 'displaced other', an approach that is often found in the Bristol sound style.

### 5.3.3 Audience feedback

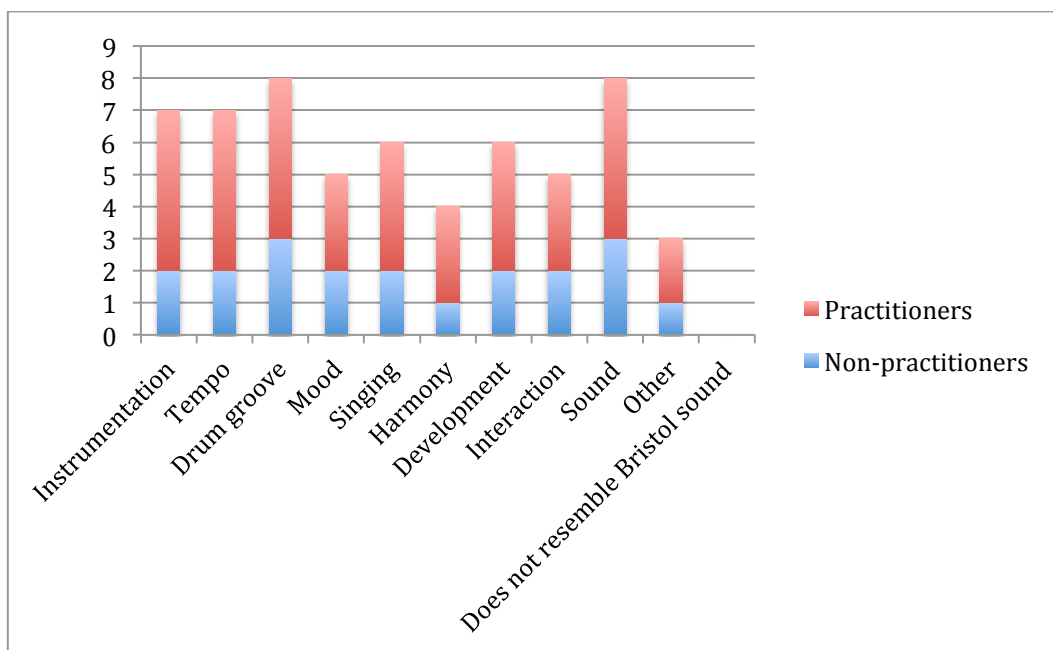
The majority of participants identified as music practitioners. No one felt the composition was outside the Bristol sound style or failed to hear any references to

<sup>328</sup> See section 2.6.2.1.

classical music. The results of question one are displayed in table 5.8. Each category was selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound style, however there was a strong connection with the instrumentation, tempo, groove, and overall sound. Three participants also selected the ‘other’ category and each of them specifically mentioned the bass line as reminding them of the Bristol sound. Interestingly, the non-practitioner stated the bass line ‘reminds me of Massive Attack’ while one of the practitioners mentioned the ‘Portishead type bass line.’

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

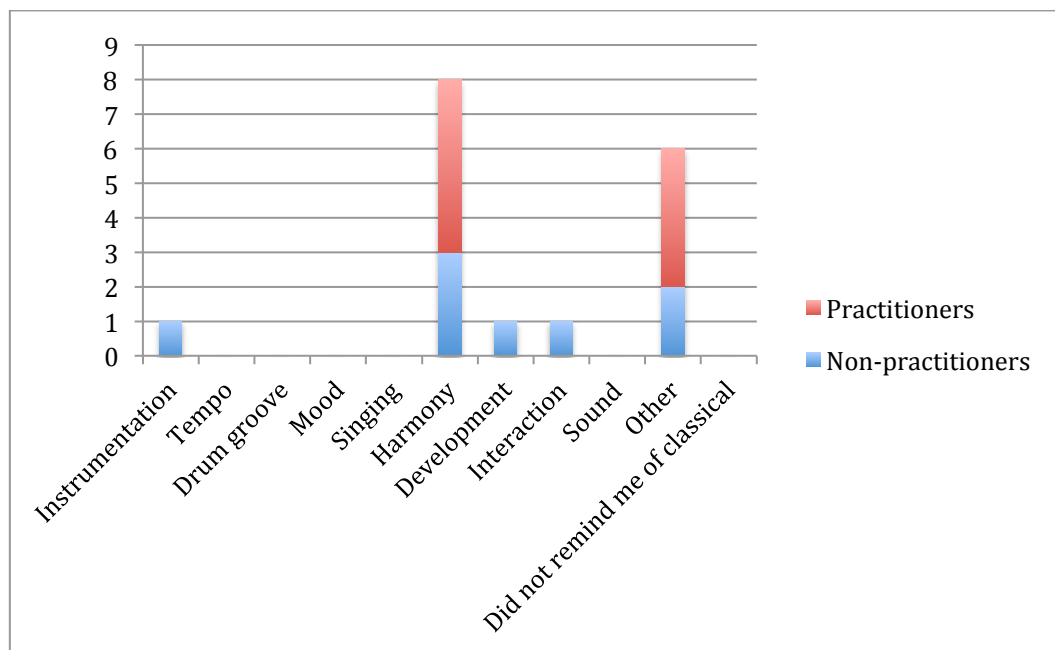
**Table 5.8: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in table 5.9. While there were a number of areas in which the participants perceived connections to classical music, the strongest association was in the areas of harmony and ‘other’.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.9: Audience response to connection with classical music**



Each of the participants who selected the ‘other’ category mentioned the piano in the additional comments. Neither of the non-practitioners mentioned the *Gnossienne* quotation, one of them simply put ‘piano’ in the comments while another stated ‘the piano sounded like classical music.’ Each of the practitioners that selected the ‘other’ category identified the quotation in their additional comments. One participant succinctly stated ‘Satie’ while another added ‘I love that Satie piece, it is one of my favourites.’ Another added ‘I liked the reinterpretation of the Gnossienne, I think it worked really well to add a classical dimension and sat really nicely with the other instruments.’

Another recurring theme mentioned in the comments was the lo-fi sound of the track. One participant mentioned the track ‘sounds old’ while another noted ‘the vinyl record sound is very characteristic of the Bristol sound.’ No participants mentioned the street scene as reminding them of the Bristol sound, and one practitioner mentioned ‘when I hear these kind of juxtapositions in Portishead songs they usually involve different styles of music. It would possibly work a little better if there was a contrasting musical style.’

### 5.3.4 Reflections

Audience feedback suggests ‘Solitaire’ successfully referenced and extended the Bristol sound style. The most common area in which the participants heard a connection to classical music was the harmony, followed by the quotation of Satie, though not all participants recognized the quotation and simply drew attention to the piano part. This suggests that the specific devices used in *Gnossienne No. 1* can suggest a classical influence to an outside listener even if they are not aware of the piece. The Satie quotation and the harmony of ‘Solitaire’ should be considered as a unified whole, as the harmonic structure of the piece is entirely dictated by *Gnossienne*. Therefore, when participants select the harmonic element of ‘Solitaire’ as reminding them of classical music, what they are really responding to is the Satie piece.

Furthermore, participants identified connections to the Bristol sound in a large number of areas and made particular reference to the overall lo-fi sound, which can confidently be inferred as pertaining to the vinyl crackle running throughout the track. The inclusion of the street scene failed to remind any listeners of the Bristol sound, with one respondent specifically mentioning the lack of a contrasting musical style. This is not entirely surprising as the foley nature of the street scene is not typical of the Bristol sound and suggests that abrupt juxtapositions must be based in changes of style or timbre to effectively draw a connection to the Bristol sound style.

## 5.4 Composition Four: ‘She Moves’

The primary motivation behind ‘She Moves’ was to create a work that eschews the majority of musical elements typical of the Bristol sound while retaining a small number of cliché devices. The intent was to discover if certain clichés are suggestive enough to create a connection to the Bristol sound when all other stylistic tropes have been avoided. To that end, ‘She Moves’ employed one of the most common tropes of the Bristol sound; a Rhodes piano with the distinctive crackling sound of a vinyl record. Many commentators mention this trope when discussing the Bristol sound,<sup>329</sup> though it perhaps enjoys a closer association with the style than it deserves. Of all the albums produced by Portishead, Massive Attack, and Tricky between 1991 and 1998, only four songs use a prominent Rhodes piano and they are all by Portishead.<sup>330</sup> Never the less, it is a recurring theme in many periodicals and fan forums.

Previous compositions avoided the use of a Rhodes piano paired with the sound of a vinyl record so as not to fall into cliché. However, ‘She Moves’ deliberately embraced this well-worn trope in the hopes of establishing a connection to the Bristol sound despite the lack of other identifying characteristics. The musical element most obviously lacking from ‘She Moves’ is a fixed pulse or meter. Rather, the entire piece is in free time, a technique mentioned in section 5.3 when discussing Satie’s *Gnossiennes*. Many 20<sup>th</sup> Century composers such as Penderecki, Lutoslawski, and Ives also incorporated free time into their compositions.<sup>331</sup>

As a further departure from the Bristol sound, ‘She Moves’ incorporated elements from pointillism, a type of textural effect where performers sound single notes or short groups of notes in alteration. In ‘She Moves’, the harmonic progression is divided up amongst a number of instruments within the harmonic filler layer rather than being continually carried by one instrument.<sup>332</sup> Table 5.10 provides additional information regarding the source material for ‘She Moves’.

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<sup>329</sup> See Rick Snoman, *Dance Music Manual: Tools, Toys, and Techniques* (Oxon: Focal Press, 2004).

<sup>330</sup> Those songs being ‘It Could be Sweet’, ‘Roads’, ‘Biscuit’ and ‘Undenied’.

<sup>331</sup> See *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, Symphony No. 3, and *Concord Sonata* respectively.

<sup>332</sup> See section 4.4.3.1 for typical articulation of the harmonic filler layer in the Bristol sound.

**Table 5.10: Source of musical elements in 'She Moves'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	
Phrase structure	Open-ended gesture Period Structure	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo		Free time
Meter		Aleatoric
Duration		6:45 (recorded version)
Rhythmic consonance		Indeterminate
Phrase rhythm		Indeterminate
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer		Gestural percussion
Functional bass layer		Occasional gestures
Harmonic filler layer	Fluid	Pointillist texture
Melodic layer		Sung speech
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Rhodes, Elec. Piano	Piano
<b>Soundbox</b>	Static mix	
<b>Persona</b>	Intimate zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area	
Gestural surrogacy	3 <sup>rd</sup> order surrogacy	
Spectra	Opaque Mediation (vinyl crackle)	

### 5.4.1 Classical incorporation

As previously mentioned, 'She Moves' is entirely in free time with no fixed pulse or meter. Unlike the Bristol sound, which typically has a highly consonant rhythmic structure,<sup>333</sup> 'She Moves' has no discernable rhythmic structure and the forward momentum is provided by the harmonic progression and changes in timbre. The lack of meter also introduces an element of indeterminacy in that the performers have a degree of freedom regarding when to play their given notes. Indeterminate music can be divided into three possible groups: 1) where an element of chance influences the composition process; 2) where an element of chance affects the performance; and 3) where a graphic score is created and

<sup>333</sup> See section 4.3.3.

musical instructions are represented with symbols and/or text. 'She Moves' is an example of the second group where a successful performance requires an engaged yet flexible dialogue between each of the musicians rather than adhering to a strict guideline. As each performer interprets both the length and placement of each note (Fig. 5.44), every performance of the piece would be different and the accompanying recording is merely one possible rendition.

**Slow**

**Intro**

Rhodes

Electric Guitar

Tubular Bells

Synthesizer 1

Synthesizer 2

Percussion

*Ebm<sup>7</sup> Ebm<sup>6</sup>*

*mf* subtle gesture

*mp*

*p* (analogue strings)

*p* ————— *mp*

*mp*

(tape noise and low drone) (spacious unpitched bells)

*mp* (continue throughout)

Figure 5.44: 'She Moves' intro.

Figure 5.45 demonstrates the pointillist texture in 'She Moves' as each performer plays a small number of notes, often only a single chord, before another instrument continues the progression. The vocal melody is intended to guide the performers through the piece, offering a point of reference for the approximate placement of each chord and melodic gesture. Unlike many other 20<sup>th</sup> Century pointillist works in which alternating notes are often separated by wide leaps in register and contrasting dynamics,<sup>334</sup> the alternating chords in 'She Moves' are

<sup>334</sup> For example, Webern's Concerto Op. 24 and Stockhausen's *Piano Piece No. 3*.

played in a similar register so as to maintain a strong sense of continuity within the progression. The dynamic levels of the harmonic instruments show slight variations in order to create a sense of depth in the soundbox, though these variations were carefully managed so as not to disrupt the unity between them. The pointillist texture continues throughout the track with one small exception during the bridge where the acoustic piano carries the harmonic progression throughout the section. This was intentionally done to create a drop in texture with one solo harmonic instrument, vocal, and minimalist sound design.

**Vs 1**

The musical score for 'She Moves' is presented in two systems. The first system features three staves: Voice, Rhodes, and E. Piano. The Voice staff contains the lyrics: "A hole in time in a sun-ken dive she dan-ces in sha". The Rhodes staff shows chords Em7 and Em6. The E. Piano staff shows a chord Abm/Cb. The second system features three staves: Voice, Pno., and Gtr. The Voice staff contains the lyrics: "dow like a flick-er-ing flame and in her face". The Pno. staff shows a chord Ebm. The Gtr. staff shows chords Em and Em7.

Figure 5.45: 'She Moves' pointillism.

## 5.4.2 The Bristol sound tradition

‘She Moves’ intentionally retains only a small number of musical elements from the Bristol sound and the majority of these are based in the production of the track rather than the composition of the song. The principle compositional references to the Bristol sound are in the form and harmonic structure and phrasing. The form is based on popular song form with an intro followed by a succession of verses and choruses with a contrasting bridge section (Fig. 5.8).

Section	I	V1	C1	L1	V2	C2	L2	Br	V3	C3	Con
Approx Length	0-1:00	1:00-1:50	1:50-2:25	2:25-2:40	2:40-3:25	3:25-3:55	3:55-4:10	4:10-4:55	4:55-5:45	5:45-6:15	6:15-6:45

Figure 5.46: 'She Moves' form.

The verse, chorus, and bridge are each based on different musical material with the verse consisting of an open-ended gesture while the chorus and bridge use a period structure. The harmonic structure is based on triadic harmony with a minor seventh followed by a major sixth added to the tonic chord when played by the Rhodes piano. While the structure of the chords is reminiscent of the Bristol sound, with its prevalent use of minor chords, the harmonic progression is not. The verse progression, | i | ivb | i | is not a recurring theme in the Bristol sound, nor is the chorus which modulates to a new key a major third away and consists of a | ib | <sup>b</sup>VI/E | <sup>b</sup>III/G | i | progression.

The primary reference to the Bristol sound is the Rhodes piano and crackling vinyl record. To strengthen this reference, the vinyl crackle is embedded in the Rhodes sound so that it can only be heard when the Rhodes is playing. Due to the pointillist texture of the piece the Rhodes is tacit during the majority of the track so the vinyl crackle is only heard in select places. The minimalist usage of both the Rhodes and the vinyl was intentional to test just how persuasive the Rhodes/vinyl trope is in suggesting the Bristol sound to an outside listener.

The vocal persona is also reminiscent of the Bristol sound, positioned in the intimate zone throughout the track. The vocals were recorded with a very close

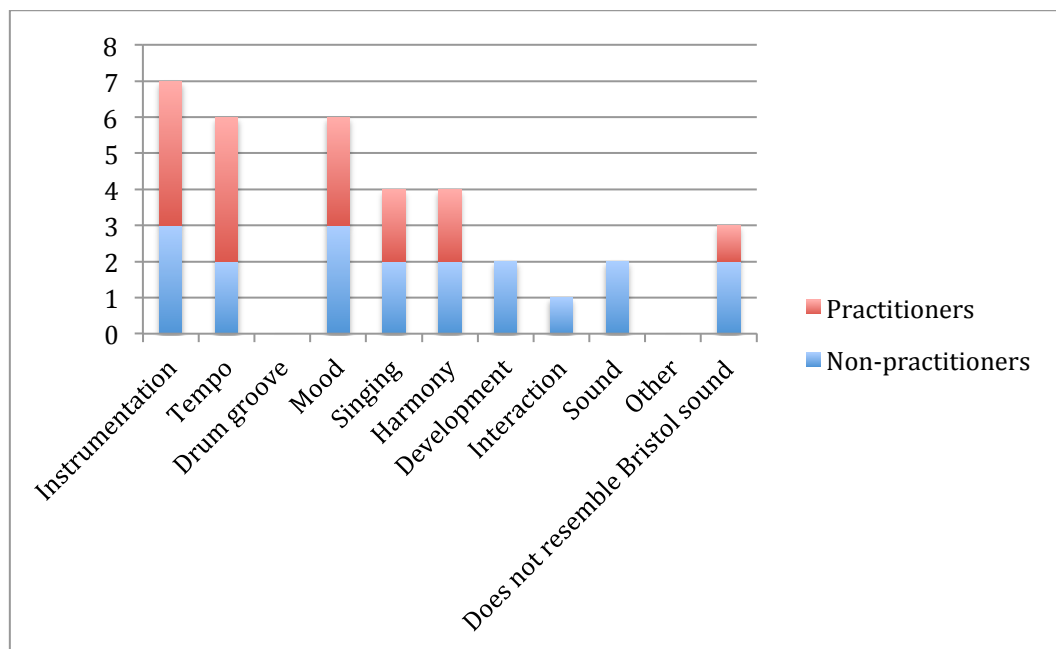
microphone exposing many subtle nuances and grain of voice such as the word ‘cold’ at 4:37. The vocal also uses a mixture of contour-rich and period structure melodies. The final reference to the Bristol sound is in the references to third order surrogacy that can be heard in several places throughout the track, such as the whipping sound at 1:55 and the pulsating sound at 2:30.

### 5.4.3 Audience feedback

Participation was fairly evenly split between practitioners and non-practitioners. While some respondents heard connections to the Bristol sound style in a number of areas, a number felt the track did not remind them of the Bristol sound at all. Furthermore, while some respondents heard a connection to classical music, others stated the track did not remind them of classical music. Both practitioners and non-practitioners were present amongst those that did not hear a connection to the Bristol sound or classical music. The results of question one are displayed in Table 5.11. Amongst those participants that heard a connection to the Bristol sound style, the strongest correlation was in the instrumentation, tempo, and overall mood.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

**Table 5.11: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**

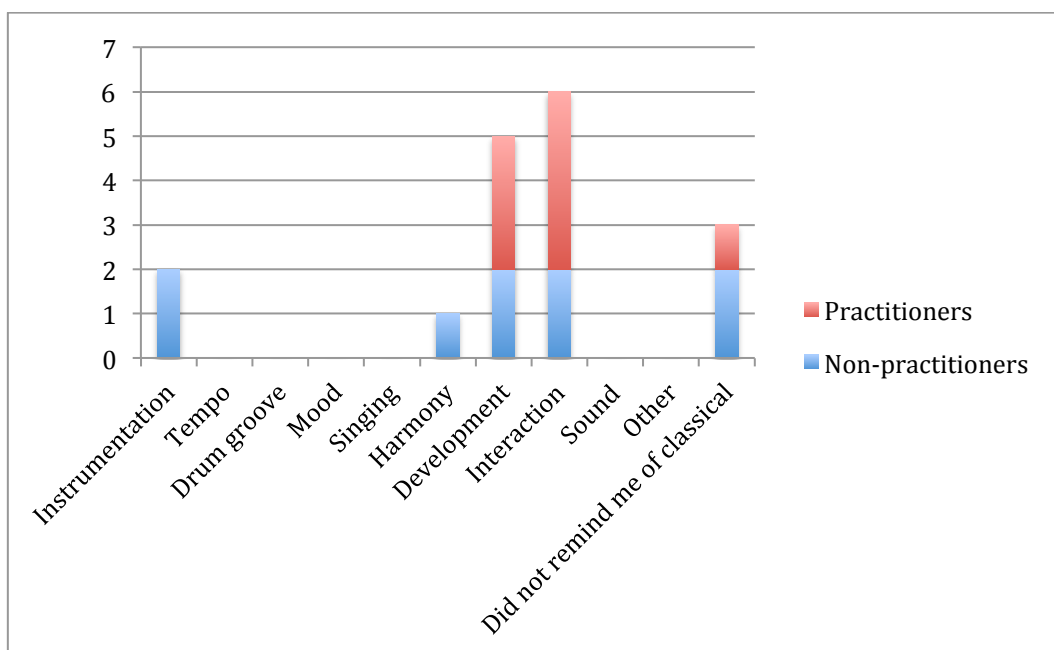


Amongst those participants that felt the track did not remind them of the Bristol sound, the most common reason given was the lack of drum groove. One respondent mentioned the music reminded them more of a film soundtrack, while another stated ‘there were a few small things that kind of reminded me of the Bristol sound but it’s missing the drum beat.’

The results of question two are displayed in table 5.12. Amongst those respondents that heard a connection to classical music, the strongest association was in the areas of development and interaction.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.12: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



Amongst those participants that felt the piece did not remind them of classical music, the most common reason given was the lack of instruments that one typically associates with classical music. One respondent noted ‘the piano reminded me a bit of classical music but I was expecting to hear more string instruments.’

#### 5.4.4 Reflections

While some participants did not hear a connection to the Bristol sound or classical music, ‘She Moves’ was successful in that those that did hear such connections heard them in areas that aligned with the intent when composing the piece. The cliché of the Rhodes piano was the primary connection to the Bristol sound and many participants selected instrumentation in their response, despite the fact the Rhodes is the only instrument in the track typically found in the Bristol sound and is tacit for the majority of the song. In addition to the lack of drums, the bass guitar is also absent and the track made prominent use of a 12-string acoustic guitar, an instrument that is not found in any songs within the style. The use of a pitched male vocal is also a departure from the Bristol sound norm, where male personas typically rap in lieu of singing.

Additionally, those respondents that heard a connection to classical music selected the way the piece develops over time and the way the instruments interact as the reasons. The interaction between the instruments can be confidently inferred as pertaining to the pointillist texture of the work, one of the stated intentions when composing the song. Also, the development of the piece may pertain to the fluid nature of the track where no pulse layer is evident and the song is not restricted to a fixed meter or rhythmic structure. Accordingly, there was a high degree of alignment between the intent when composing the work and the areas in which participants heard connections to both styles. However, it is important to note that this is the first track in which some participants did not hear a connection to either style and specifically noted the lack of certain instruments as the reasons why.

## 5.5 Composition Five: ‘Wistful Deeds’

‘Wistful Deeds’ predominantly draws from classical music in the areas of harmony, instrumentation, and changes of meter. The primary goal was to create a harmonic structure that, though triadic like the Bristol sound, was not derived from the major scale. The intention was not for the harmonies to sound overtly ‘classical’ but rather to expand the harmonic language of the Bristol sound by introducing atypical harmonic progressions.<sup>335</sup>

The harmonic structure had its genesis in explorations with Pitch Class Sets, an alternate means of categorising pitches that is often used when describing harmonies in post-tonal 20<sup>th</sup> Century music.<sup>336</sup> Pitch Classes are used to discuss pitches independent of octave displacement and enharmonic spelling. Any two pitches that sound the same on an equal tempered scale (for example C<sup>#</sup> and D<sup>b</sup>) or are only different due to octave displacement are said to belong to the same Pitch Class. There are 12 possible Pitch Classes on an equal tempered scale and a common method is to number each Pitch Class from 0 to 11, starting with C (Fig. 5.47).

C	C <sup>#</sup> (D <sup>b</sup> )	D	D <sup>#</sup> (E <sup>b</sup> )	E	F	F <sup>#</sup> (G <sup>b</sup> )	G	G <sup>#</sup> (A <sup>b</sup> )	A	A <sup>#</sup> (B <sup>b</sup> )	B
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Figure 5.47: Pitch class.

A Pitch Class Set is a list of Pitch Class numbers. For example, a C major triad would be described as [0, 4, 7], or a G minor triad would be described as [7, 10, 2]. The initial seed for ‘Wistful Deeds’ was the Pitch Class Set [0, 1, 3, 4] (Fig. 5.48).



Figure 5.48: ‘Wistful Deeds’ pitch class set.

<sup>335</sup> See section 4.2

<sup>336</sup> For example, see analysis of Schoenberg’s Second String Quartet, Berg’s *Four Songs*, and Webern’s *Five Pieces for String Quartet* in Williams, *Theories and Analyses of Twentieth-Century Music*.

This set was transposed to create a similar set with different pitch classes but an identical intervallic structure, [8, 9, 11, 0] (Fig. 5.49). Two similar Pitch Class Sets such as this, where one is merely a transposition of the other, belong to the same 'Pitch Class Set Class'.



Figure 5.49: 'Wistful Deeds' secondary pitch class set.

Each Pitch Class Set Class is represented by a Prime Form Pitch Class Set. For example, [0, 1, 3, 4] and [8, 9, 11, 0] both belong to the Prime Form [0, 1, 3, 4]. Combining these two sets forms a scale based on two tetra chords (Fig. 5.50).



Figure 5.50: 'Wistful Deeds' synthetic scale based on pitch class sets.

Noting the interval of a major third between pitch class 4 and 8, an F# (6) was added to create a scale that is symmetrical around its central axis (Fig. 5.51).

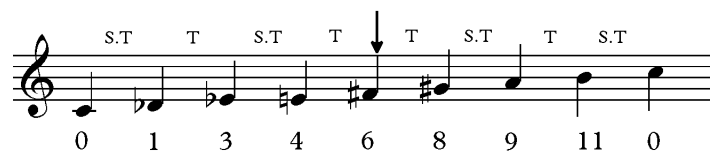


Figure 5.51: 'Wistful Deeds' symmetrical scale.

The above scale is effectively a combination of the two forms of an octatonic scale, with the lower tetra chord coming from the semi-tone, tone form and the upper tetra chord coming from the tone, semi-tone form. This scale not only provided the source material for certain melodic passages within 'Wistful Deeds', it was also used as the basis for the harmonic structure. Harmonizing the scale in

thirds, following standard harmonic practice, produces the following possible triads (Fig. 5.52).<sup>337</sup>

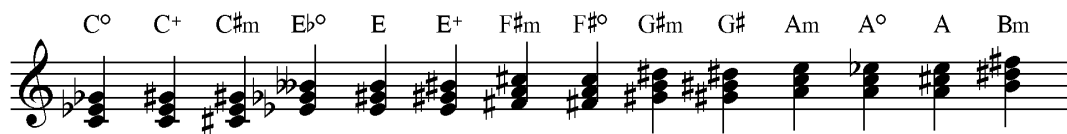


Figure 5.52: Triads derived from symmetrical scale.

This collection of chords provided the source material for some of the harmonic progressions in ‘Wistful Deeds’, which maintains a strong tonal center in C with an overall minor tonality but could not accurately be described as being in the key of C minor. In order to create a stable tonal center around C, a G natural was introduced to the scale to create a tonic minor triad as well as an augmented dominant triad (Fig. 5.53).

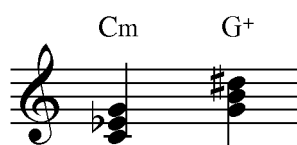


Figure 5.53: ‘Wistful Deeds’ tonic to dominant harmony.

The inclusion of a string quartet is a further reference to classical music, as is the use of mixed meters. Whereas songs in the Bristol sound maintain a fixed 4/4 meter throughout,<sup>338</sup> ‘Wistful Deeds’ extends this practice by incorporating brief aleatoric passages as well as instances of 3/4 and 6/4.<sup>339</sup> The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition, as shown in Table 5.13.

<sup>337</sup> Enharmonic spellings are used for clarity.

<sup>338</sup> See section 4.3.1.

<sup>339</sup> Instances of multiple meters can be found in Bartok’s *Subject and Reflection*, Stravinsky’s *Les Noces*, and Hindemith’s *String Quartet No. 3*.

**Table 5.13: Source of musical elements in 'Wistful Deeds'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Extended Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	Synthetic scale derived from pitch class set
Phrase structure	Open-ended gestures	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Primarily fixed tempo 65bpm	Some aleatoric elements
Meter		Multiple meter changes
Duration		6:55
Rhythmic consonance	Consonant between all layers	
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases Predominantly 4+4+4	
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 4-bar pattern (Vs) Repeating 4-beat pattern (Ch)	
Functional bass layer	Harmonically driven	
Harmonic filler layer	Sparsely populated Episodic	
Melodic layer	Period structure	
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, guitar, bass, drums	String quartet
<b>Soundbox</b>	Static mix	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area	
Gestural surrogacy	3 <sup>rd</sup> order surrogacy	
Spectra	Inharmonic saturation (guitar, strings) Opaque mediation (vinyl)	

### 5.5.1 Classical incorporation

The scale in Fig. 5.51 informed the composition of 'Wistful Deeds' in a number of ways. The track opens with a viola playing a motif derived from the Prime Form Pitch Class Set (mm. 1-6) (Fig. 5.54). The accompanying harmony is similarly taken from the scale, with the addition of the G natural (bar 5) discussed earlier (Fig. 5.53).

Musical score for the opening intro of 'Wistful Deeds'. The score is in 4/4 time and features four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first violin and second violin parts begin with a melodic motif marked *mf*. The viola part starts with a 'freely' marking and a *mf* dynamic, followed by a 'tempo' marking. The electric bass part also begins with a *mf* dynamic. The score spans six measures.

**Figure 5.54: 'Wistful Deeds' opening intro.**

This motif is then developed (mm. 7-11), beginning on the next scale degree (Fig. 5.55).

Musical score for the development of the 'Wistful Deeds' intro. The score continues with the same four staves. The first violin and second violin parts continue the melodic motif. The viola part features a 'freely' marking and a *mf* dynamic, with a triplet of eighth notes. The electric bass part also features a triplet of eighth notes. The score spans six measures.

**Figure 5.55: 'Wistful Deeds' intro.**

The first violin then picks up the motif and further develops the phrase (mm. 12-15) (Fig. 5.56).

Musical score for the ending of the 'Wistful Deeds' intro. The score features a single staff for Vln. 1. The first violin part continues the melodic motif, marked 'freely' and *mf*. The score spans six measures.

**Figure 5.56: 'Wistful Deeds' intro ending.**

The first violin retains the melody for the remainder of the intro (mm. 20-23), with a countermelody similarly derived from the scale played by the electric bass (Fig. 5.57).

Figure 5.57: 'Wistful Deeds' bass intro.

The verse (mm. 24-35) introduces the first chord progression (Fig. 5.58).

Figure 5.58: 'Wistful Deeds' harmonic progression - verse.

This progression repeats three more times, though on the final iteration the 4/4 time signature is retained throughout. The chords are sourced from the set in figure 5.52, with the addition of the Cm and G<sup>+</sup> triads to create a strong tonic to dominant movement. Although the progression creates a tonal center around the Cm chord, the remaining chords in the progression are not diatonic to the key of C minor. This is in stark contrast to the type of progressions typically found in the Bristol sound where the majority of chords can be reconciled into a single key signature.<sup>340</sup> Furthermore, two contrary chord types built on the same root note, such as the Cm and C<sup>°</sup> above, are rarely found in the Bristol sound.

The pre-chorus (mm. 36-43) draws from the synthetic scale in a slightly different way (Fig. 5.59). During the first half of the section the guitar outlines the same intervallic structure of the Prime Form Pitch Class Set in Fig. 5.48. In the

<sup>340</sup> See section 4.2.

second half of the section, the root motion outlines the same intervallic structure. The pre-chorus also follows the same 4 + 4 + 4 + 3 meter grouping as the verse.

The musical score for Figure 5.59 shows the guitar and bass parts for the pre-chorus. It is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 36-39, and the second system covers measures 40-43. The guitar part is in the treble clef, and the bass part is in the bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature is 4/4. Chords are indicated above the guitar staff: Ebm, Em, Ebm, Bm in the first system; Ebm, Em, F#o, G+ in the second system. The bass line consists of eighth and quarter notes, often moving in parallel motion with the guitar's bass line.

Figure 5.59: 'Wistful Deeds' variation of pitch class set - pre-chorus.

The chorus (mm. 48-59) follows more normative harmonic practices, outlining a simple | i <sup>b</sup>VI | ib Vc | progression. This is to provide a sense of harmonic stability to the chorus in contrast to the relative instability of the preceding sections. However, there is a sense of instability in the meter that alternates between 6/4 and 4/4 for the first four bars before remaining in 4/4 for the final four bars (Fig. 5.60).

The musical score for Figure 5.60 shows the guitar part for the chorus. It is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 48-51, and the second system covers measures 52-55. The guitar part is in the treble clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature alternates between 6/4 and 4/4. Chords are indicated above the guitar staff: Cm, Abmaj7, Cm/Eb, G7/D in the first system; Cm, Abmaj7, Cm/Eb, G7/D in the second system. The guitar part features a steady harmonic progression with some melodic movement in the higher register.

Figure 5.60: 'Wistful Deeds' harmonic progression - chorus.

The remainder of the song repeats the previous sections following the conventions of popular song form. The string quartet helps to shape the texture as the track proceeds, playing minimal melodic lines and gestures during the verses (Fig. 5.61) with a denser texture and greater melodic movement in the chorus (Fig. 5.62). In both instances the strings largely follow the harmonic progression, using chord tones plus passing and neighbor tones to construct the melodies.

64 Cm Dbm C° Cm G+

Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.

68 Cm Dbm C° Cm G+

Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.

72 Cm Dbm C° Cm G+

Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.

Figure 5.61: 'Wistful Deeds' strings - verse two.

84 Cm A♭maj7 Cm/E♭ G7/D Cm A♭maj7 Cm/E♭ G7/D

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

88 Cm A♭maj7 Cm/E♭ G7/D Cm A♭maj7 Cm/E♭ G7/D

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Figure 5.62: 'Wistful Deeds' strings - chorus two.

The track concludes with the string quartet with the viola restating the initial motif from the intro (Fig. 5.63).

106

Vln. 1 *mp* *p* < *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mp* *p* < *mf* *p*

Vla. *p* < *mf* *p*

Vc. *mp*

Figure 5.63: 'Wistful Deeds' conclusion.

## 5.5.2 The Bristol sound tradition

The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition. The form is based on extended popular song form with an elongated intro followed by a succession of verses, pre-choruses, and choruses as well as a number of link sections and an instrumental (Fig. 5.64).

Section	I	V1	PC1	L1	C1	L2	V2	PC2	C2	Ins	L3	Con
No. of bars	23	12	8	4	12	4	12	8	12	6	4	7

Figure 5.64: 'Wistful Deeds' form.

With the exception of the intro and conclusion, each section is based on a multiple of four bars and uses four-bar phrases. This creates an even phrase structure despite the multiple meter changes that occur. The intro/conclusion, verse, pre-chorus, and chorus are all based on different musical material and the phrase structure uses a series of open-ended gestures throughout. The song is rhythmically consonant with a high degree of alignment between the pulse layer and successive interpretive layers.

The most prominent aspects drawn from the Bristol sound are the tempo, drum groove, bass line, and timbre, particularly regarding the inharmonic saturation in the guitar and strings. After the aleatoric intro, the tempo maintains a steady pulse of 65bpm for the remainder of the song. The drum groove is based on a repeating four-bar pattern during the verse, pre-chorus, and link sections, with the only variation being the stop time figure in the 3/4 bars during the verse (Fig. 5.65).

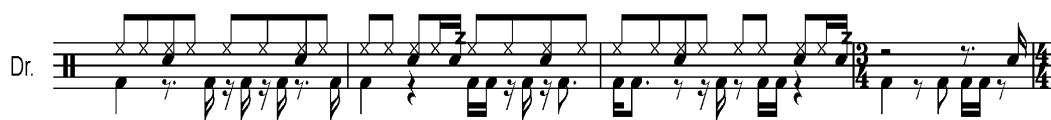


Figure 5.65: 'Wistful Deeds' explicit beat layer - verse/link.

The groove contains a number of syncopated hits on the kick and buzz rolls on the snare to suggest a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level, similar to the groove in 'Sour Times'.<sup>341</sup> The chorus groove is based on a four-beat pattern that repeats despite the numerous time signature changes (Fig. 5.66). Accordingly, the groove does not always begin on beat one of the bar, similar to 'Glory Box' where the pattern is four bars long but each section of the song is built on six-bar phrases.<sup>342</sup>

<sup>341</sup> See Fig. 4.33.

<sup>342</sup> See section 4.4.1

Figure 5.66: 'Wistful Deeds' explicit beat layer - chorus.

The bass line follows the harmonic changes and also includes a number of melodic embellishments (Fig. 5.67). This approach is not often used in the Bristol sound but it is seen in the instrumental section of 'Roads'.<sup>343</sup> Like the Bristol sound, each section of the song is based primarily on a repeating pattern with melodic fills used to create momentum into the next phrase or section (Fig. 5.68).

Figure 5.67: 'Wistful Deeds' functional bass layer - verse.

Figure 5.68: 'Wistful Deeds' functional bass layer - pre-chorus.

There is a high degree of inharmonic saturation on the guitar and strings to retain the lo-fi quality of the Bristol sound.<sup>344</sup> There are several places where the

<sup>343</sup> See Fig. 4.39.

<sup>344</sup> See section 2.5.2.2.

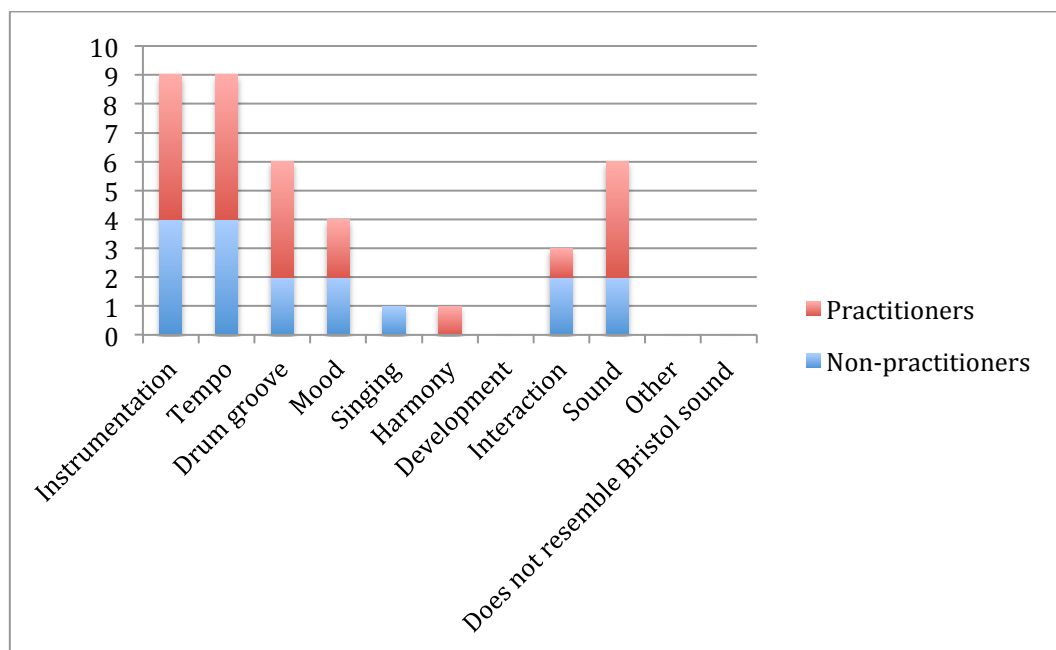
strings noticeably distort (0:15, 0:47, 1:25), creating the sound of an overdriven pre-amp that adds non-pitched noise to the spectral quality of the strings. The guitar also has a high degree of saturation, creating a dirty tone that differs from a typical overdriven guitar in that it lacks heavy compression and tight equalisation. In mm. 31, a solo guitar lick is given further saturation with a tight equalisation around the middle band and pronounced vinyl crackle, the intention being to create the illusion of a sample. Furthermore, a subtle vinyl crackle can be heard running throughout the track, further adding to the gritty timbre.

### 5.5.3 Audience feedback

The audience responses were generally evenly split between practitioners and non-practitioners. No participants felt the composition was outside the Bristol sound style or failed to hear any references to classical music. The results of question one are displayed in Table 5.14. The majority of categories were selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound style, however there was a strong connection with the instrumentation, tempo, groove, and overall sound.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

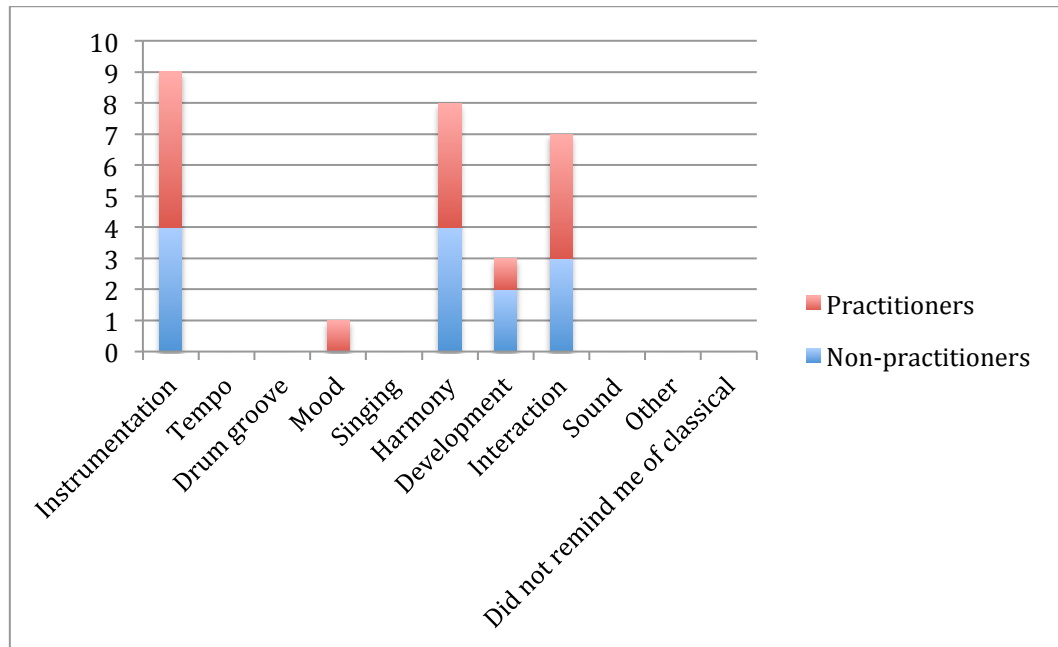
**Table 5.14: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in Table 5.15. The areas in which most participants perceived a connection to classical music were the instrumentation and harmony.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.15: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



A number of participants added additional comments to the questionnaire. One stated that ‘some of the dissonant chords reminded me of classical music’ while others particularly responded to the string quartet in the intro, stating ‘the strings at the beginning reminded me very much of classical music.’ Another recurring theme concerned the dirty quality of the track, or inharmonic saturation. One participant noted that ‘the distortion and overall grit gave it a Bristol sound vibe.’

### 5.5.4 Reflections

The primary impetus when composing ‘Wistful Deeds’ was to create atypical harmonic progressions by drawing from a synthetic scale derived from Pitch Class Sets. The majority of respondents selected harmony as one of the key areas that reminded them of classical music, suggesting the approach was successful.

Similar to 'Autumn', many respondents recognized that the chords sounded different to those typically heard in the Bristol sound, therefore drawing on different systems of pitch organization can be an effective tool in extending the Bristol sound language. The other key area in which respondents heard a connection to classical music was the instrumentation, which can confidently be inferred as pertaining to the string quartet. This is consistent with 'Autumn' and 'When Evening Falls', which both feature a string section and suggests that the mere presence of orchestral instruments can be very effective in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener. Unlike 'When Evening Falls' and 'Autumn', a number of participants also responded to the way the instruments interact. This may suggest that the manner in which the strings function in 'Wistful Deeds', often as a solo section or by interacting with the rhythm section in a gestural manner, helps to convey a classical influence. Conversely, the strings in 'Autumn' continue throughout the majority of the track in a highly repetitive manner, more akin to popular music than the classical tradition. Furthermore, polyphonic texture, as used in 'When Evening Falls', may not have a strong association with the classical music tradition in the minds of many participants.

Concerning the Bristol sound style, a common theme was once again the gritty quality. More respondents reacted to this quality more than in 'When Evening Falls' even though both use inharmonic saturation. However, the inharmonic saturation in 'When Evening Falls' was subtler than that of 'Wistful Deeds', which noticeably distorts in several places. This suggests that sonic qualities of the Bristol sound such as inharmonic saturation need to be made explicit in order to possess the lo-fi characteristic.

## 5.6 Composition Six: ‘Storm’

The motivation behind ‘Storm’ was to compose a work that features a high degree of rhythmic dissonance. Songs in the Bristol sound style are highly rhythmically consonant, whereby the cardinality of each interpretive layer is a multiple of the cardinality of the previous layer and each attack in the interpretive layers coincides with an attack in the pulse layer.<sup>345</sup> To move away from the rhythmic consonance of the Bristol sound, ‘Storm’ employed a polymeter device whereby different time signatures were used simultaneously.

Polymeters are found in many 20<sup>th</sup> century classical pieces as composers sought to expand the relatively simple rhythmic structure of earlier periods, and can essentially be grouped into one of three categories.<sup>346</sup> The first is when the division of the pulse level is different in successive layers, for example the simultaneous use of duple and triple division of the beat. This effect can be seen in the prelude to Debussy’s *The Afternoon of a Faun* (Fig. 5.69). In the piano reduction below, the treble clef uses a duple division of the eighth-note beat level while the bass clef uses a triple division. This is one of the more simple polymeter effects whereby the beat division is different but the alignment of every beat is congruent.

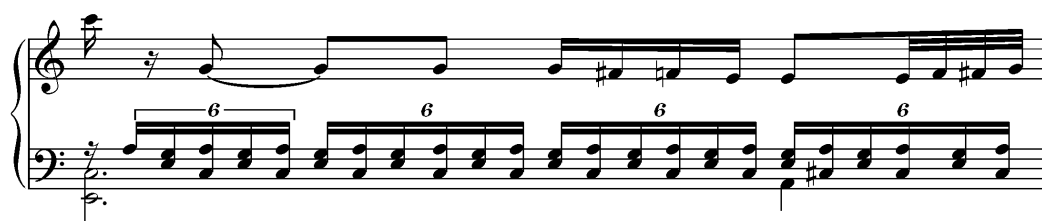


Figure 5.69: Polymeter in Debussy's *The Afternoon of a Faun*.

A more disruptive type of polymeter is where the beat groupings are not congruent and the various layers align only at the level of the bar. For example, in the section of Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* below (Fig. 5.70) the meter begins in 3/4 but the piccolo and oboe play in 7/8. The meter then changes to 2/4 with the piccolo and oboe in 5/8, before moving to 3/4 while the piccolo and oboe play in

<sup>345</sup> See section 4.3.2.

<sup>346</sup> Williams, *Theories and Analyses of Twentieth-Century Music*.

8/8. Accordingly, the placement of the beat is different between the successive parts although each layer aligns on beat one of every bar.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Piccolo (Pic.), Oboe, and Cello. The Piccolo and Oboe parts are written in treble clef and feature a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of each part. The Cello part is written in bass clef and features a simpler rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The score is divided into five measures, with the time signature changing from 7/8 to 5/8 and then to 3/4.

Figure 5.70: Polymeter in Stravinsky's *Petrushka* mm 28-32

The final and most disruptive category is where the placement of the beats do not coincide either at the beat level or at the bar level. Rather, several layers exist simultaneously, each with their own metrical structure. Ligeti's Piano Étude No. 12 is an example of this type of polymeter.

'Storm' draws from the first two categories of polymeter and is discussed in more detail below. As a further reference to classical music, several instruments more commonly associated with the classical tradition were included, specifically the piano, flute, harp, and violin. These instruments are used for decorative effect and primarily play short, melodic gestures throughout the piece. As a final reference to classical music, a brief quotation of Messiaen's *Preludes Pour Piano* was used during the chorus sections. Table 5.16 specifies how the remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition.

**Table 5.16: Source of musical elements in 'Storm'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Popular song form	
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	
Phrase structure	Constant structure	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Primarily fixed tempo 70bpm	
Meter		Polymer
Duration	4:50	
Rhythmic consonance		Rhythmic dissonance
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases Predominantly 4+4	
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 4 bar pattern	
Functional bass layer	Harmonically driven	
Harmonic filler layer	Sparsely populated	
Melodic layer	Period structure	
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, synth, guitar, bass, drums	Piano, flute, harp, violin
<b>Soundbox</b>	Static mix	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area	
Spectra	Inharmonic saturation (drums, piano, vocals)	
Intertextuality	Autosonic analogue allusion	Quotes Messiaen's <i>Preludes Pour Piano</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> movement.

### 5.6.1 Classical incorporation

'Storm' uses an underlying 4/4 meter that is primarily articulated by the drum set. The majority of the remaining instrumental layers act against this meter by using a different division of the beat level (category one) or by using non-aligned beat groupings that are only congruent at the bar level (category two). The intro is an example of category one (Fig. 5.71).

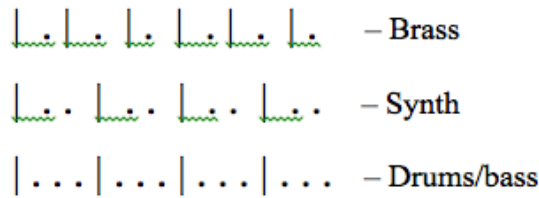
Figure 5.71: 'Storm' polymeter - intro

The 4/4 meter is expressed by the drums and bass guitar, with each part implying a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level where the quarter note beat is divided into four (simple division). In contrast, the synth plays in 12/8 and each quarter note beat is divided into three eighth notes (compound division),<sup>347</sup> creating a dissonant 3:2 rhythmic grouping. Additional disruption occurs in the synth part as the accented notes fall in metrically weak places, further disguising the meter. The melodic and rhythmic grouping of the synth part is structured in such a way that is only aligns with the drums on beat one of every second bar.

The brass stabs are notated in 6/4, creating a 6:4 quarter note ratio against the drums and bass.<sup>348</sup> Each note in the brass part corresponds to two notes in the synth part, though the accented notes only align on beat one of every second bar. The rhythmic grouping of the brass part is structured so that it aligns with the drum part every two beats. Fig. 5.72 shows the rhythmic structure for one bar and details how the various layers align.

<sup>347</sup> The repeating eighth notes are achieved with an echo effect, hence the use of normal-sized noteheads to denote the attack and smaller noteheads to denote the repeating echoes.

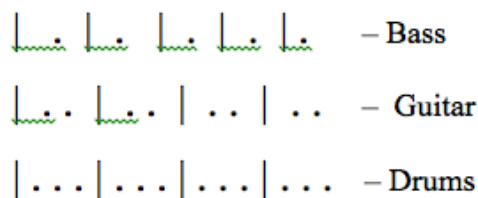
<sup>348</sup> The repeating quarter notes are similarly achieved with a delay effect.



**Figure 5.72: 'Storm' rhythmic structure - intro**

The drum part shows four beats ( | ) to the bar, with each beat divided in four ( . ) representing the 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level. The synth part similarly shows four beats to the bar with each beat divided in three. Each beat aligns with the beat in the drum part, though this is obfuscated to a certain degree by the melodic phrasing. The brass part shows six beats in the bar with each beat divided in two. Each attack in the brass part corresponds to an attack in the synth part and every fourth beat in the brass aligns with a beat in the drums.

The verse is an example of the second category of polymeter. The drums maintain the 4/4 meter with the electric guitar taking over the 12/8 meter of the synth part. Similar to the synth, each beat aligns with the drum part although the division of each beat is different and creates a 3:2 ratio at the eighth note level. Again similar to the synth, the guitar part consists of an accented attack on beat one with a vibe effect set at eighth note triplets to create the repeating notes. The bass guitar introduces the second type of polymeter, whereby the beat groupings are not congruent with any of the other layers. The bass plays in 5/4 with each beat being divided in two. Unlike the intro, it is only on beat one of every bar that all of the rhythmic layers align (Fig. 5.73).



**Figure 5.73: 'Storm' rhythmic structure - verse/chorus.**

Further references to classical music were made with the inclusion of flute, harp, piano, and violin. While they are used for decorative effect to create variety in the texture, they also introduce further rhythmic dissonance. In Fig. 5.74, the

violins play in the same 4/4 meter as the drums and piano but divide each beat into six rather than four, creating a 6:4 ratio at the 16<sup>th</sup> note level.

Figure 5.74: 'Storm' rhythmic dissonance.

Similarly in Fig. 5.75, the piano part plays in 4/4 but implies a 12/8 meter on beats 1, 2, and 4.

Figure 5.75: 'Storm' further rhythmic dissonance.

The bridge features an electric bass with a nylon string guitar accompaniment. Though they both play in 4/4 there are frequent moments of rhythmic dissonance, such as 3:2 ratio at the eighth note level in Fig. 5.76.

Figure 5.76: 'Storm' rhythmic dissonance - bridge.

### 5.6.2 The Bristol sound tradition

The remaining musical elements were drawn from the Bristol sound tradition. The form is based on popular song form with an intro followed by a succession of verses and choruses with a contrasting bridge section (Fig. 5.77).

Section	I	V1	C1	V2	C2	Br	V3	C3	Con
No. of bars	8	8	8	8	8	16	8	8	8

Figure 5.77: 'Storm' form.

Each section is a multiple of four bars and is based on symmetrical phrases, giving the song a very even phrase structure. The verse and chorus use a constant harmonic structure, which can be defined as a series of three or more chords that share the same quality and collectively are not diatonic to any key signature. The verse/chorus progression consists of a series of minor triads that descend chromatically. The bridge also uses a constant structure based on minor triads, though the chords are often separated by a minor third in addition to the chromatic movement found in the verse and chorus. Constant structure is not commonly used in the Bristol sound but is suggested in Tricky's 'Overcome',<sup>349</sup> as well as

<sup>349</sup> See section 4.2.1.

other songs in the style that were not discussed in the analysis.<sup>350</sup> Where constant structure is found however, it is not used as extensively as it is in ‘Storm’.

The most prominent aspects drawn from the Bristol sound are the tempo, drum groove, inharmonic saturation, intertextual references, and style of singing. The tempo is a steady 70bpm and remains consistent throughout the song. The drum groove is based on a repeating two-bar pattern (Fig. 5.78) and similarly remains unchanging throughout. There are no decorative fills or secondary grooves, rather the groove is edited in places to provide rhythmic variety. The groove implies a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level and plays the 16<sup>th</sup> notes with a swing feel in a similar fashion to reggae music.<sup>351</sup>



Figure 5.78: 'Storm' explicit beat layer

The drums also feature a high degree of inharmonic saturation. The snare is heavily compressed so that it sustains over the entire beat without a pronounced drop in volume following the initial attack. The drums are also saturated with the crackling sound of a vinyl record to reference the lo-fi quality of the Bristol sound.

‘Storm’ also briefly quotes Messiaen’s *Prelude Pour Piano* during the chorus sections. The sonic quality of the sample is deliberately poor, further contributing to the overall gritty quality of the track. The intertextual reference is categorised as autsonic analogue allusion in that it is a direct sample from another sound recording and appears only briefly in the track.<sup>352</sup>

The vocal persona occupies the intimate zone, singing with minimal projection exposing many vocal nuances and pronounced grain of voice. The

<sup>350</sup> For example the opening of Portishead’s ‘Mysterons’ consists of a B<sup>b</sup>m chord followed by a Bm chord.

<sup>351</sup> As discussed in section 1.4, reggae played an important role in the evolution of the Bristol sound style.

<sup>352</sup> See section 2.6.2 on phonomatic references.

melody is contour rich, in that the same melodic shape is often repeated, but also uses period structure in that the specific notes vary as guided by the changes in harmony (Fig. 5.79).

9 C#m  
Torn and low - ly why can't you feel the way I

11 Cm  
do I know just for a lit - tle while you could

13 C#m Cm  
feel so smooth tak - ing my time you know

16 Bm  
for a lit - tle while as I breathe feed - ing the air

19 Bbm Am G#m  
lay down your arms

22 Gm  
lin - ger with me in the storm

Figure 5.79: 'Storm' vocal melody - verse one/chorus.

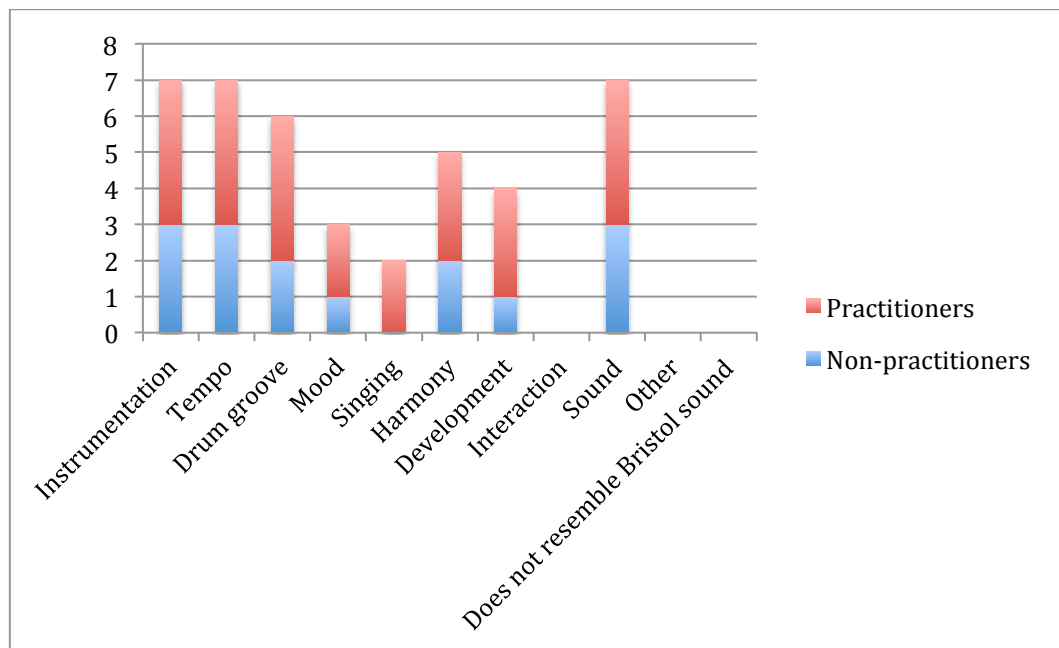
In Fig. 5.79, the descending perfect fourth in the opening bar is repeated on the next line but a half step lower. Similarly, the melodic shape in the first two bars of the chorus (mm 17-18) is mimicked in the following two bars but again a half step lower. There are also instances of melodic/harmonic divorce where non-chord tones do not resolve by step, such as the D natural in bar 22 (a flattened fifth against the G#m chord) which moves to another non-chord tone. There is also pronounced use of inharmonic saturation in the vocal performance.

### 5.6.3 Audience feedback

None of the participants felt the track was outside the Bristol sound style, however a number of non-practitioners did not hear any references to classical music. The results of question one are displayed in Table 5.17. The majority of categories were selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound style, however there was a strong connection with the instrumentation, tempo, groove, and overall sound.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

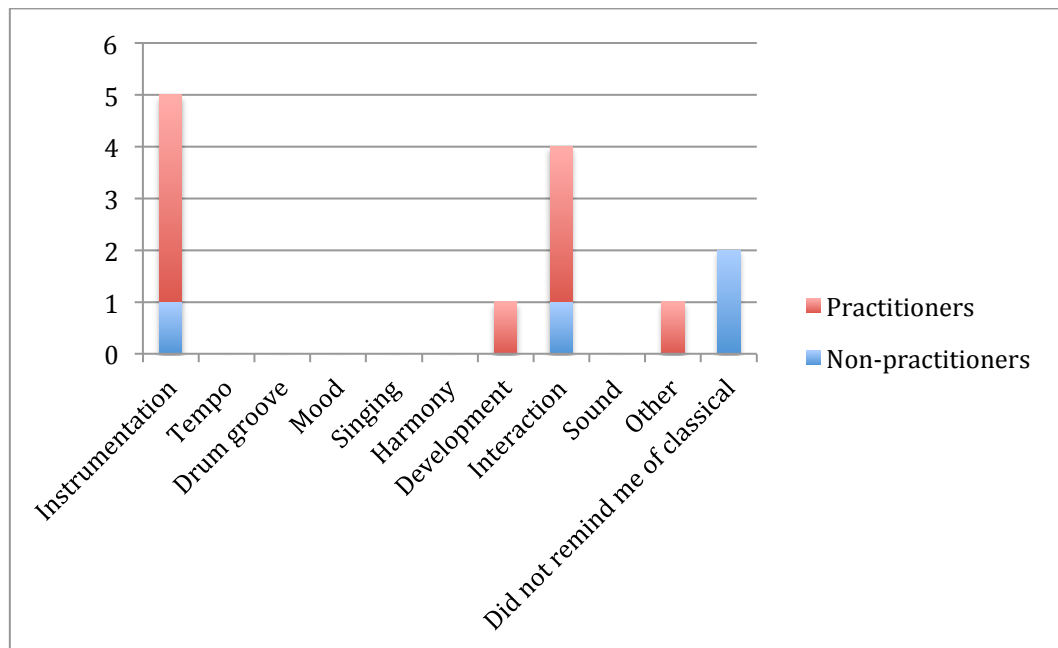
**Table 5.17: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in Table 5.18. While there were a number of areas in which the participants perceived connections to classical music, the strongest association was in the areas of instrumentation and interaction.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.18: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



The practitioner who selected ‘other’ mentioned the ‘five against four in the bass part’ as reminding them of classical music but no other specific references to polymeter were made. A number of participants selected ‘interaction’ as an area that reminded them of classical music, however it is not clear if this refers to polymeter and the rhythmic interaction of the instruments or if it refers to the decorative, gestural playing of the orchestral instruments and the way they interact with the rhythm section. One of the respondents who stated the piece did not remind them of classical music added ‘I heard a flute in places but the overall piece didn’t sound classical at all.’

#### **5.6.4 Reflections**

While all of the participants felt the song reminded them of the Bristol sound, and the majority felt the song reminded them of classical music, it is difficult to determine how successful polymeter was at suggesting a classical influence. Only one respondent specifically mentioned rhythmic dissonance in their comments and it is possible that those who selected ‘interaction’ were referring to another aspect of the composition. Instrumentation once again proved successful in

suggesting a classical influence, however to at least one respondent the orchestral instruments were not prevalent enough to remind them of classical music.

Regarding the Bristol sound style, the overall sound of the track was a popular response and most likely refers to the high degree of inharmonic saturation and generally noisy quality of the track. Interestingly, a number of participants noted that the way the piece develops over time reminded them of the Bristol sound, which may be in reference to the abrupt juxtaposition of contrasting styles in the bridge.

## 5.7 Composition Seven: ‘End of Season’

The motivation behind ‘End of Season’ was to compose a work that broadly references classical music in a number of areas while still retaining the overall Bristol sound style. The initial impetus was to move away from the episodic nature and repetitive symmetrical phrasing of the Bristol sound. Songs in the Bristol sound style typically have a highly symmetrical phrase structure and use short, repetitive phrases.<sup>353</sup> To achieve a balance between the Bristol sound and classical music, the verse sections use symmetrical phrases but asymmetrical phrases are incorporated in other sections of the song. Furthermore, the form follows a more discursive approach than that typically found in the Bristol sound. Songs in the Bristol sound tend to be highly episodic and repetitive, often consisting of a small number of musical ideas that repeat throughout the song. ‘End of Season’ extends this approach by using a number of contrasting ideas, several of which occur only once. To heighten this contrast, several different key signatures are used throughout the song.<sup>354</sup> The length of the track (9:30) is also atypical for the Bristol sound style and is more congruent to a work in the classical tradition.

The drum groove also incorporates a discursive approach. Drum grooves in the Bristol sound are typically very symmetrical and rely on a consistent, predictable alternation of strong and weak beats. In contrast, ‘End of Season’ includes passages of metrical ambiguity where the location of the downbeat is difficult to perceive.

The instrumentation also borrows from classical music, specifically the string orchestra and acoustic piano. The passages performed by the string orchestra are autsonic quotations of an earlier original composition, *Addio Amore*. In addition to acting as a reference to classical music, this approach was adopted as an experiment with autsonic self-quotation, a compositional approach found in a number of songs in the Bristol sound style.<sup>355</sup> Table 5.19 provides additional information regarding the source material for ‘End of Season’.

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<sup>353</sup> See section 4.2.2.

<sup>354</sup> Modulation does not occur in any of the songs in the analysis section in chapter four.

<sup>355</sup> See section 2.6.1.

**Table 5.19: Source of musical elements in 'End of Season'.**

	<b>Bristol Sound</b>	<b>Classical</b>
<b>Form</b>	Episodic form	Extended form
<b>Harmony</b>		
Surface structure	Triadic harmony	Modulation
Phrase structure	Open-ended gesture (Vs) Period Structure (Br)	
<b>Time</b>		
Tempo	Fixed tempo 60bpm	
Meter	4/4	
Duration		9:30
Rhythmic consonance	Consonant between all layers	
Phrase rhythm	Symmetrical phrases 2+2 (Vs)	Asymmetrical phrases 8+14 (intro) 6+7 (link 2)
<b>Functional layers</b>		
Explicit beat layer	Repeating 2-bar pattern (Vs)	Metrical ambiguity (link 2)
Functional bass layer	Riff-based (Vs)	Tonic pedal (intro, link 2)
Harmonic filler layer	Sparsely populated	
Melodic layer	Period structure (Vs1) Contour rich (Vs2)	
<b>Instrumentation</b>	Vocals, guitar, bass, drums	String orchestra, piano
<b>Soundbox</b>	Static mix	
<b>Persona</b>	Personal zone	
<b>Timbre</b>		
Spectral space	Opaque Concentration around root area	
Gestural surrogacy		
Spectra	Inharmonic saturation (Link piano)	
Intertextuality	Autosonic self-quotation	Quotes Wragg's <i>Addio Amore</i>

### 5.7.1 Classical incorporation

The track opens with a melodic theme in the cellos against a tonic pedal in the bass (Fig. 5.80). The initial theme lasts eight bars and is then developed over the next fourteen bars. The theme is in D minor but suggests a modal tonality by consciously avoiding the flattened sixth and using the flattened seventh in lieu of a leading tone. The instrumentation, non-repetitive phrase structure, and lack of an explicit beat layer help to ground the song within the classical tradition from the onset.

The musical score for the 'End of Season' intro is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the Vc. and Db. parts in 4/4 time. The Vc. part has a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Db. part has a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) shows the Vc. and Db. parts. The Vc. part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Db. part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third system (measures 9-16) shows the Vc. and Db. parts. The Vc. part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Db. part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

Figure 5.80: 'End of Season' intro.

Following the opening section, the entire string section presents a secondary theme. This theme is more grounded in the Bristol sound tradition in that it comprises a repeating loop that creates a symmetrical 2+2 phrase structure (Fig. 5.81). The sound quality of the sample is also degraded in reference to the lo-fi quality of the Bristol sound.

The musical score for the 'End of Season' string loop is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-2) shows the Vln. 1, Vla., Vc., and Db. parts. The Vln. 1 part has a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 1 and a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic in measure 2. The Vla. part has a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 1 and a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic in measure 2. The Vc. part has a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 1 and a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic in measure 2. The Db. part has a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 1 and a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic in measure 2.

Figure 5.81: 'End of Season' string loop.

The loop creates an ambiguous tonality, initially suggesting an F<sup>#</sup> diminished triad resolving to an F<sup>#</sup>m triad. This ambiguity continues into the first verse where the underlying bass figure initially suggests a tonic Am chord, with the raised



Following the second verse, a third motif is introduced in the second link section, again in the key of D minor. The violas are harmonized in thirds, playing a modal melody against a tonic pedal in the bass (Fig. 5.84).

The musical score for Figure 5.84, 'End of Season' link two - mm 52-53, is presented in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves: Piano (Pno.), Drums (Dr.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The piano part begins at measure 52 with a sixteenth-note triplet and a triplet of eighth notes. The drums play a complex, accented pattern. The viola part consists of a modal melody in thirds, with a tonic pedal in the bass. The cello and double bass parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

Figure 5.84: 'End of Season' link two - mm 52-53.

The piano plays light gestures in counterpoint to the guitar while the drum set obscures the meter by playing accented notes in metrically weak places (Fig. 5.85).

The image displays a musical score for a six-piece ensemble across two systems of music, measures 54-57. The instruments are Piano (Pno.), Guitar (Gtr.), Drums (Dr.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.).

**System 1 (Measures 54-55):**

- Piano (Pno.):** Measure 54 is a whole rest. Measure 55 features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by another triplet (C5, B4, A4).
- Guitar (Gtr.):** Measure 54 has a whole rest. Measure 55 contains a series of chords: a B4-G4 dyad, a B4-G4-A4 triad, a B4-G4-A4-B4 tetrad, and a B4-G4-A4-B4-C5 pentad.
- Drums (Dr.):** Measure 54 has a whole rest. Measure 55 features a steady eighth-note hi-hat pattern with a snare drum on the second and fourth beats.
- Viola (Vla.):** Measure 54 has a whole rest. Measure 55 has a half note G3, followed by a half note A3, and a whole note B3.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Measure 54 has a whole rest. Measure 55 has a half note G2, followed by a half note A2, and a whole note B2.
- Double Bass (Db.):** Measure 54 has a whole rest. Measure 55 has a half note G1, followed by a half note A1, and a whole note B1.

**System 2 (Measures 56-57):**

- Piano (Pno.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 features a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) followed by a sextuplet of eighth notes (F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2) and a final triplet (G2, F2, E2).
- Guitar (Gtr.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 contains a series of chords: a B3-G3 dyad, a B3-G3-A3 triad, a B3-G3-A3-B3 tetrad, and a B3-G3-A3-B3-C4 pentad.
- Drums (Dr.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 features a steady eighth-note hi-hat pattern with a snare drum on the second and fourth beats.
- Viola (Vla.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 has a half note G3, followed by a half note A3, and a whole note B3.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 has a half note G2, followed by a half note A2, and a whole note B2.
- Double Bass (Db.):** Measure 56 has a whole rest. Measure 57 has a half note G1, followed by a half note A1, and a whole note B1.

Figure 5.85: 'End of Season' link two - mm 54-57.

The bridge uses an extended period structure and moves through several different tonalities. It opens in the key of Bm, briefly moves to E<sup>b</sup>m, then uses a direct modulation to B<sup>b</sup>m. The section concludes with an augmented dominant chord, however this chord is not resolved into the following section (Fig.5.86).

77 Bm Em<sup>6</sup> F<sup>#</sup>/C<sup>#</sup> Bm

81 F<sup>#</sup>m/A Em Cm(maj7) Ebm

85 Bbm Bbm(maj<sup>9</sup>)/A Bbm<sup>7</sup>/Ab Bbm<sup>6</sup>/G

89 F<sup>#</sup>m Dbmaj7/F C<sup>#</sup>o/E F<sup>+</sup>

Figure 5.86: 'End of Season' bridge.

Verse four introduces another contrasting motif in the original key of D minor. The strings play a repeating two-bar loop alternating between a Dm triad and an F<sup>sus4</sup> triad (Fig. 5.87). In contrast to the previous verses, verse four does not use a repeating symmetrical phrase structure and is significantly longer.

Figure 5.87: 'End of Season' string loop - verse four.

At the conclusion of verse four the tonality shifts to D dorian and the harmony alternates between an implied  $D^{m7}$  and G major triad against a D pedal in the bass (Fig. 5.88).

Figure 5.88: 'End of Season' verse four ending.

The song then returns to the initial two-bar string loop (Fig. 5.81), shifting the tonality one again before concluding with a final verse.

## 5.7.2 The Bristol sound tradition

'End of Season' uses an episodic form (Fig. 5.89). There is no chorus or refrain, rather a succession of verses that alternate with contrasting link or bridge sections. The tempo maintains a consistent 60bpm throughout the song, though this is not immediately clear in the intro due to the minimal rhythmic movement and lack of an explicit beat layer.

Section	I	V1	L1	V2	L2	L3	V3	Br	V4	L4	V5
No. of bars	30	8	4	8	13	4	8	16	31	4	12

Figure 5.89: 'End of Season' form.

While the link and bridge sections incorporate a number of approaches from classical music, the verses are firmly grounded in the Bristol sound style. The drum groove is based on a repeating two-bar pattern with a 16<sup>th</sup> note pulse level and consistent alternation between strong and weak beats (Fig. 5.90).

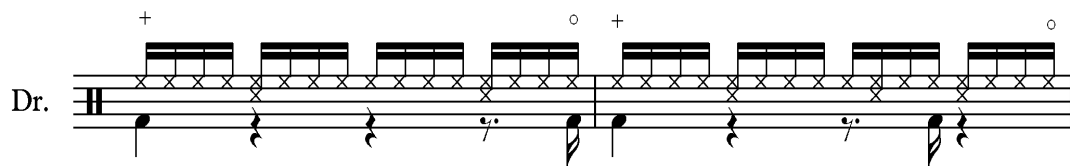


Figure 5.90: 'End of Season' explicit beat layer - verse.

The bass line is similarly based on a repeating two-bar pattern and also influences how one might perceive the shifting tonality (Fig. 5.91).



Figure 5.91: 'End of Season' functional bass layer.

The repeating loop in the drums, bass, and strings form the entirety of the groove in verse one. This sample-based approach is seen in a number of Bristol sound songs such as 'Sour Times', 'Glory Box', and 'Hell is Round the Corner'.

The persona occupies the personal zone, singing with minimal projection and placed some distance from the listener. 'End of Season' is the only composition to feature two personas, similar to 'Hell is Round the Corner' that features Tricky and Martina Topley-Bird. The vocals use a combination of period structure and contour-rich melodies. The melody in verse one follows a period structure largely guided by the chord tones in the harmony (Fig. 5.92).

Am<sup>6</sup> F#m

Been reel - ing from\_ the end of sea - son for so\_\_ long\_

Am<sup>6</sup> F#m Am<sup>6</sup>

but I want you to say\_\_ you lead me on\_ you leave no

F#m Am<sup>6</sup> F#m

rea-son it's so\_\_ wrong\_ so I want you to say\_\_

Figure 5.92: 'End of Season' vocal melody - verse one.

Conversely, the melody in verse two is contour rich (Fig. 5.93).

Am<sup>6</sup> F#m Am<sup>6</sup>

I aint the one who need-ed sav-ing But now it's you that's turned your

F#m Am<sup>6</sup> F#m

eye I aint bro - ken but I'm cav - ing

Am<sup>6</sup> F#m

left to rea - son won - der why

Figure 5.93: 'End of Season' vocal melody - verse two.

There are also instances of melodic/harmonic divorce, such as mm 6 of verse two where both notes are non-chord tones.

The overall timbre of the track is predominantly unmediated, similar to the production style of Massive Attack.<sup>356</sup> However, there are brief moments of inharmonic saturation in the piano part during link one and link three. The piano has also been tightly equalized so that only the middle band is prominent. The intent was to simulate the character of a distorted transistor radio.

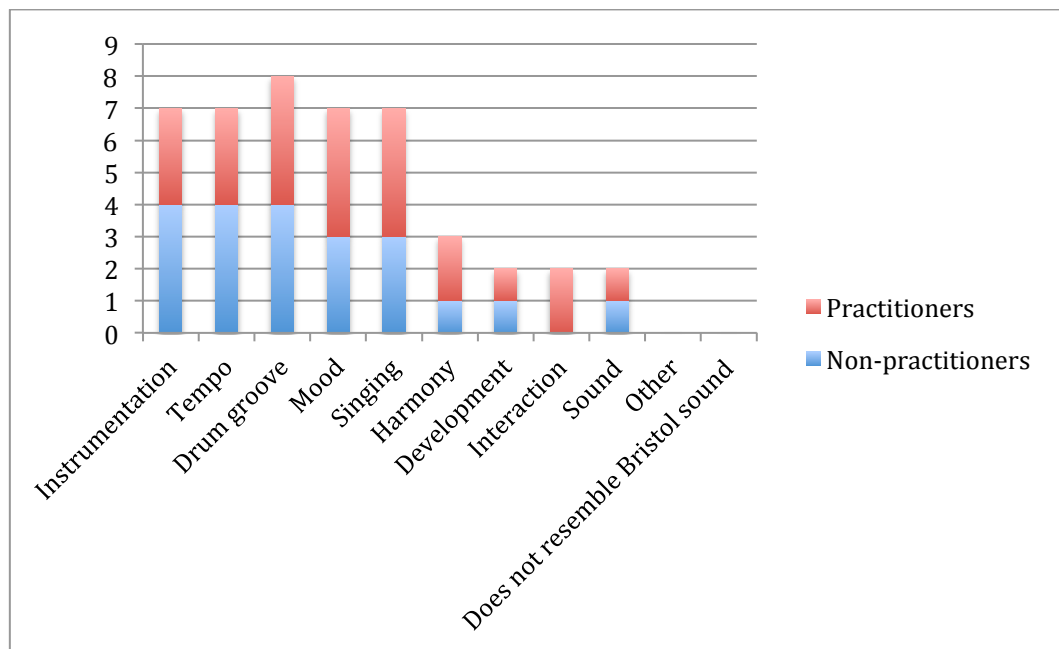
<sup>356</sup> See section 4.7.2.

### 5.7.3 Audience feedback

The audience responses were generally evenly split between practitioners and non-practitioners. No participants felt the composition was outside the Bristol sound style or failed to hear any references to classical music. The results of question one are displayed in Table 5.20. Each category was selected at least once as being emblematic of the Bristol sound style, however there was a strong connection with the instrumentation, tempo, groove, overall mood, and style of singing.

Question 1: If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it?

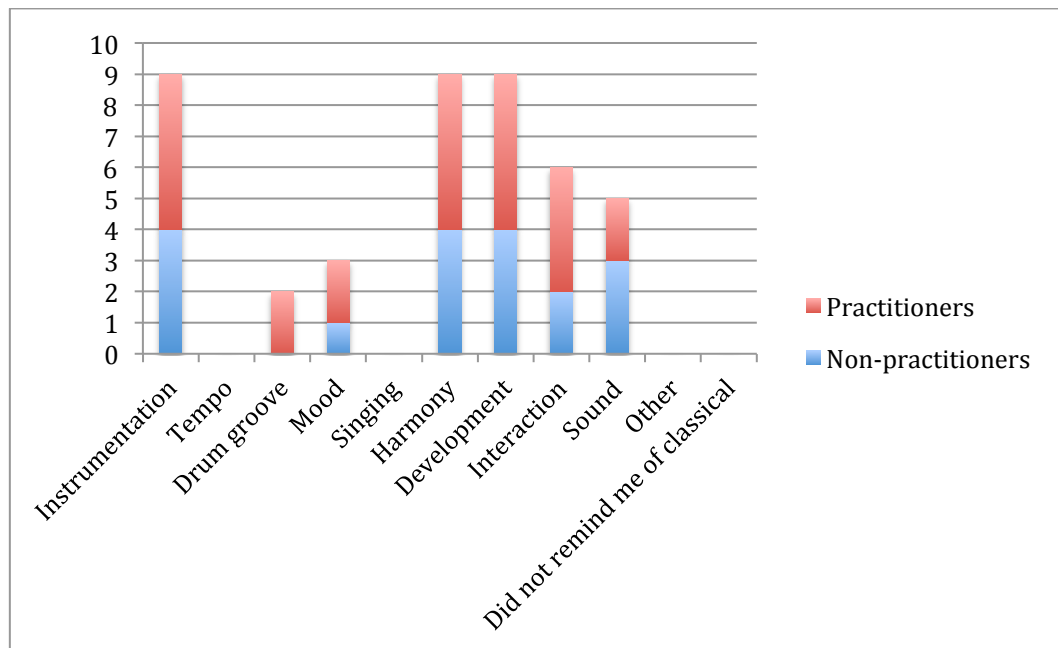
**Table 5.20: Audience response to connection with the Bristol sound.**



The results of question two are displayed in Table 5.21. While there were a number of areas in which the participants perceived connections to classical music, the strongest association was in the areas of instrumentation, harmony, and development.

Question 2: If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they?

**Table 5.21: Audience response to connection with classical music.**



A number of participants added additional comments. One noted the track ‘reminded me of Massive Attack’ while another noted ‘the song seemed to move back and forth between classical and trip hop.’ Another participant stated ‘the sweeping strings in the beginning set a great mood from the start and made me feel like I was at a concert hall.’ One respondent felt the track ‘had the laid back feel of the Bristol sound but lacked the punch’ while another noted ‘the length of the song and the way it changed reminded me of classical music.’

### 5.7.4 Reflections

Audience feedback suggests ‘End of Season’ was successful as a compositional experiment. Not only did each respondent hear connections to both the Bristol sound and to classical music, they also heard references to classical music in a broad number of areas. This aligned with the intent when composing the piece, which drew from a range of approaches rather than focusing on one specific area. This is also the only composition where the overall sound of the track was selected a significant number of times as an area that reminded the listener of classical music, most likely due to the extended string intro and the

second link section where the strings are the dominant instruments. Another notable aspect of the audience feedback is that there is very little discrepancy between practitioners and non-practitioners in the responses. In the majority of the earlier compositions there was a noticeable difference between the responses of the two groups. One possible reason for the agreement between the groups is that many of the classical approaches used in 'End of Season' relate to sonic qualities, such as the string orchestra, or structural elements such as the contrasting sections and overall length of the track. Non-practitioners appear to be more sensitive to these musical elements than compositional strategies such as polymeter or polyphonic texture.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis attempted to extend the Bristol sound style by incorporating compositional devices from classical music. Before embarking on this project however, a number of challenges had to be overcome. The first was to specify exactly what ‘the Bristol sound’ refers to as the term is typically used synonymously with ‘trip hop’, a label that has been applied to such a wide variety of artists it is ineffective as a musical descriptor. The distinction between the Bristol sound and trip hop was made clear in section 2.5. The second challenge was to develop a method of contextualizing the numerous intertextual references found in the Bristol sound. Intertextuality is one of the key elements of the Bristol sound and the way it is used within the style extends beyond sample-based quotation. While a number of theoretical frameworks exist, none were sufficient in detailing the way intertextual references occur in the Bristol sound. This challenge was overcome by expanding an existing model of intertextuality, discussed in section 2.6. The final challenge was to analyse a body of work from the Bristol sound style in order to understand its inner workings. This analysis was presented in chapter four and broke down the style into its constituent parts and offered a concluding summary at the end of each section. These comments are summarised below to address the first research question.

### 6.1 Addressing the research questions

#### 6.1.1 Research question one

*1) Which composition, performance, and production techniques are most commonly used within the Bristol sound, and how are they used in relation to each other?*

Common tropes exist within each of the musical parameters discussed in chapter four, therefore the identifying characteristics of the Bristol sound are the result of a broad collection of recurring themes rather than a small number of specific techniques. There is not one overarching theme that predominates across all of the musical works, nor is there a hierarchy of techniques that can easily be ranked according to their prominence. Rather, it is the symbiotic relationship between the various themes, discussed in more detail below, that is responsible for

the Bristol sound character, as opposed to one or two ubiquitous or fundamental themes.

In terms of compositional approaches, the majority of songs employ popular song form yet also deviate from the archetypal pattern. They overwhelmingly use a minor tonality with triadic harmony, and in most cases can be easily reconciled into a standard key signature. However, non-diatonic chords are frequently incorporated into the harmonic progression, which also tends to be symmetrical in its phrasing. They favour a slow tempo, typically between 60 and 70bpm, and are exclusively in a 4/4 time signature. The rhythmic structure is highly consonant, reinforcing the stability of the 4/4 time signature and symmetrical harmonic phrasing. Vocal melodies employ a variety of approaches with neither an adherence nor rejection of any one type of construction. Melodic/harmonic divorce, however, is a common recurring trait. Lyrics are often confessional and introspective and use a combination of literal and figurative language. They are usually written from a first person perspective and often address a single individual. Intertextuality is extremely prevalent, with autosonic quotation the most common type, however there is no consistency in the musical styles from which these intertextual references draw.

Regarding performance techniques, the drum grooves are highly repetitive and often based on a repeating two or four-bar pattern without the use of decorative fills or contrasting grooves. A similar approach is seen in the bass lines, which are typically riff-based and also use a repeating pattern with little use of fills or embellishments. The harmonic filler layer is typically sparsely populated with little rhythmic activity, and any changes in this layer occur in an episodic manner as the song progresses from section to section. The persona typically occupies the intimate zone, singing with minimal projection and is rarely supported by backing vocals.

Finally, there are numerous production techniques that are not only commonly used within the style, they are also significant in differentiating the Bristol sound from other styles of popular music.<sup>357</sup> Perhaps the production

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<sup>357</sup> As a contrasting example, the Bristol sound overwhelmingly favours 4/4 time signatures but this does not help to differentiate it from most other styles of popular music.

technique that sits closest to the surface, and is therefore the easiest to detect, is the use of inharmonic saturation. This is one of the key areas that give the Bristol sound its ‘gritty’, ‘lo-fi’ reputation. The other is the use of phonematic references, particularly vinyl aesthetic. In a related arena, the use of autonomic quotation is widespread, however it is often subtly employed and does not always make a significant contribution to a track’s overall character. There is also a willingness to move beyond normative mixing practices, such as mixing in mono or creating surreal sonic spaces. When not in mono, the soundbox is typically densely packed around the middle and does not change as a track progresses. The texture is almost always opaque, exposing low-level detail and allowing for nuanced listening. Third order references to gestural surrogacy are common and can be employed either functionally or decoratively.

In terms of how these techniques are used in relation to each other, there are five themes that emerge.

1) The repetitive nature of the drum beat often works in concert with the repetitive bass line. The cyclic nature of these layers, alongside the slow tempo, helps to create a ‘hypnotic’ groove that leads to the ‘head-bopping’ quality of the Bristol sound.

2) The intimate persona, introspective first-person lyrics, and lack of backing vocals create a proximate relationship between the singer and the audience, drawing the listener into the song. In conjunction with the prevailing minor tonality, this helps give the Bristol sound its melancholic reputation.

3) Inharmonic saturation, phonematic references, and a mono soundbox all reference recording and playback mechanisms from an earlier, analogue era. These elements help to give the Bristol sound its antiquated, lo-fi character.

4) References to third order surrogacy and the creation of surreal sonic spaces contribute to the ‘other-worldly’ quality of the Bristol sound. This quality is amplified through the low-level detail that is revealed by the opaque texture.

5) The episodic nature of the form is also often reflected in the sound of a track, where spectrographic analysis reveals stark changes in texture as the song progresses from section to section. This helps give the Bristol sound a degree of predictability that, alongside the rhythmic consonance, consistent tempo, and symmetrical phrasing, creates a highly stable listening environment where anticipated musical events frequently arrive as expected.

The results of the analysis informed the composing process, with each composition retaining certain characteristics of the Bristol sound while disregarding others. This was necessary in order to ground the compositions in the Bristol sound style without falling into the realms of pastiche or cliché. In turn, each composition experimented with various ways of extending the style in order to address the second research question.

### **6.1.2 Research question two**

*2) How can one extend the Bristol sound by applying techniques and devices from classical music?*

This question was addressed using practice-led research, and as such the creative works form an integral part of the response. However, it is prudent to also offer a brief summary here. As discussed in the previous section, the Bristol sound uses a number of recurring techniques in its compositional approach, many of which are found throughout the wider popular music tradition. Therefore, the style can be extended by eschewing some of those techniques in favour of those more commonly found in classical music. This thesis experimented with a number of techniques across a variety of musical areas, using each composition as an opportunity to explore a different approach.

#### *Harmonic structure*

The Bristol sound, like much popular music, uses triadic harmony based on the major scale. Conversely, classical music, particularly during the twentieth century, uses a number of methods that are independent of the major/minor system. By employing an alternate means of harmonic structure, a new type of harmonic language can be introduced to the Bristol sound, thereby extending it in

a different direction. This can be seen with the Tone Clock experimentation in ‘Autumn’.

### *Tonality*

Tonality in the Bristol sound is based on the major/minor system, whereby a song has a strong tonal center and can be reconciled into an established key signature. Tonality in classical music, however, is often achieved by alternate means and often does not fit into a single key despite having a tonal center. Exploring different methods of pitch organisation can add novel harmonic progressions and increased melodic colour to the Bristol sound. This can be seen in the experiments with Pitch Class Sets in ‘Wistful Deeds’.

### *Time*

The Bristol sound relies on a fixed pulse and a consistent alternation of strong and weak beats to provide momentum. Conversely, many works in the classical tradition abandoned a regular pulse in favour of a free-flowing, aleatoric approach, where momentum is maintained by harmonic changes and instrumental gestures. Incorporating free time into the Bristol sound can extend the style beyond its repetitive, groove-based rhythmical framework. Explorations in this area can be seen in ‘She Moves’.

### *Rhythm*

The Bristol sound features a high degree of rhythmic consonance where each interpretive layer aligns with the pulse layer. Particularly during the twentieth century, classical music incorporated complex rhythms and various types of rhythmic dissonance such as polymeters. Introducing rhythmic dissonance to the Bristol sound can destabilize the groove to create a more exotic feel, as can be seen in ‘Storm’.

### *Quotation*

While quotation is a common occurrence in the Bristol sound, and a wide variety of styles provide the source material, references to classical music are not a part of the tradition. As classical works often rely on different musical devices than the Bristol sound, quoting a work from the classical canon can extend the style in a

new direction by introducing a new musical language, whether or not the quotation itself is recognized. This can be seen most prominently in ‘Solitaire’.

#### *Thematic development*

Like much popular music, the Bristol sound relies heavily on repetition as a compositional device. Accordingly, many melodic or harmonic motifs repeat throughout a song, often without interruption. Conversely, classical music makes greater use of development and variation, whereby a motif is manipulated and varied throughout the piece. Introducing thematic development can extend the Bristol sound by moving the style beyond its repetitive, often predictable framework. This can be seen in ‘When Evening Falls’.

#### *Texture*

Like most popular music, texture in the Bristol sound is overwhelmingly homophonic. Incorporating different types of texture can introduce new patterns of behaviour and change the ways various instruments within the ensemble interact. This can extend the Bristol sound beyond its often-repetitive organization. Experimentation with texture can be seen in the polyphony in ‘When Evening Falls’ and the pointillism in ‘She Moves’.

#### *Instrumentation*

While there is no standardized ensemble in the Bristol sound, a number of instruments commonly recur. Similarly, there are a number of instruments that are typically associated with classical music, such as string and wind instruments. Incorporating these instruments can be an effective way of extending the style, however this works best when done in conjunction with other approaches also drawn from classical music. For example, simply adding strings to the Bristol sound is unlikely to extend the style in a new direction as many songs already feature prominent strings. However, string writing in the Bristol sound largely consists of repeating melodic motifs or sustained harmonic pads with occasional melodic movement. Incorporating strings in conjunction with compositional approaches similarly drawn from classical music can compound the impact of the instrumentation by also introducing new patterns of behaviour. Accordingly, instrumentation can have a powerful impact when used alongside compositional strategies, as seen in ‘End of Season’.

While there are many other approaches that one could take to extend the Bristol sound style, the techniques discussed above provide a brief summary of the approaches used in this thesis. Each of the musical areas discussed above are open to extension by drawing from the classical tradition, and a composition can absorb classical idioms providing the majority of musical elements follow the Bristol sound guidelines. However, some areas are more receptive to extension than others. From a composer's perspective, explorations in the area of harmony offered the path of least resistance, especially when done within the context of a typical Bristol sound groove. For example, the explorations with Tone Clock in 'Autumn' appeared to cross the stylistic divide without inherent difficulty, and reconciled easily with the repetitive drum and bass groove indicative of the Bristol sound. The apparent natural synergy between these two areas is reflected in the positive audience feedback for 'Autumn', where each participant recognised connections to both the Bristol sound and classical music in areas that aligned with the composer's intent when producing the work.<sup>358</sup>

Conversely, explorations in the area of time seemed to be the most difficult to reconcile, as the resulting composition can quickly come across as being outside the Bristol sound style. For example, the aleatoric approach used in 'She Moves' blended easily with the typical timbres associated with the Bristol sound, however the lack of a fixed pulse pushed the song precariously close to the boundaries of the style. Although some audience research participants heard a connection to the Bristol sound, this was the only song where a number of participants stated the song did not remind them of the Bristol sound style at all.<sup>359</sup> This suggests that time in the Bristol sound is more rigid in its approach, and any attempts to extend this area should coincide with a large number of common tropes to remain safely ensconced within the style. Despite the varying degrees to which musical elements can be extended within the Bristol sound, there is no evidence to suggest that each area can be ranked according to a strict hierarchy, based on its openness to extension. However, some areas certainly appear more receptive than others.

In a related area, it is worth discussing the specific nature of the relationship between the Bristol sound and classical traditions when simultaneously present in

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<sup>358</sup> See section 5.1.3.

<sup>359</sup> See section 5.4.3.

the works. Smalley's notion of behavioural discourse provides a useful framework for explicating the ways in which the two styles interact, based on notions of dominance/subordination, and cohabitation/conflict.<sup>360</sup> On a macro level, the Bristol sound traditions are dominant over those of the classical idiom. This was done intentionally in order to ground the compositions within the Bristol sound style. The intent was not to hybridize the two styles, or to create a discursive relationship where each style takes turn in a dominant role. Rather, the intent was to base the compositions within the Bristol sound framework and use classical idioms to inform the composition of each work in an attempt to extend the Bristol sound style. Accordingly, when the two traditions are directly interacting, the Bristol sound plays a dominant role while the classical tradition plays a subdominant role. This was the overarching impetus behind the entire body of creative works, despite the variety of approaches employed. On a micro level, there are moments within several of the compositions where the classical idioms play a dominant role, however these moments do not occur when the Bristol sound and classical idioms appear simultaneously. For example, the intro of 'End of Season' consists of an extended solo passage for string orchestra, using modal harmonies and motivic development in the classical tradition. The classical tradition is clearly in dominance at this moment, however this relationship changes as soon as the drum groove enters and the Bristol sound traditions are in play.

Regarding the notion of cohabitation/conflict, both of these approaches were utilised throughout the composing process, and the specific nature of the relationship changes depending on the context. For example, cohabitation can be seen in the string passage in 'Autumn'. The two-bar section is an autsonic quotation of Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, therefore draws directly from the classical tradition in terms of its intertextual reference, harmonic construction, and timbral evocations. However, within the context of the repetitive drum and bass groove, the string passage behaves in a manner highly typical of the Bristol sound, repeating uninterrupted throughout most sections of the song. Furthermore, as the repetition is achieved by duplicating the digital audio file, the minor sonic imperfections in the passage are also continually evident, further referencing the

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<sup>360</sup> Denis Smalley, "Defining Timbre - Refining Timbre." *Contemporary Music Review* 10, no. 2 (1994): 35-48.

sample-based methodology common in the Bristol sound. Accordingly, the two traditions cohabitately seamlessly, resulting in a musical gesture that comfortably draws from two different idioms simultaneously. The same effect is seen during the verse sections of 'End of Season'. The repeating string passage is again sampled from a classical work, with all its implicit associations, yet behaves in a manner indebted to the Bristol sound. The end result is again one of easy cohabitation. As a final example, consider the form of 'Solitaire'. This piece quotes Satie's *Gnossienne No. 1*, however unlike the previous examples it quotes the work in its entirety. The original piece is in a modified ternary form, with an A section, an answering B section, and a contrasting C section. In 'Solitaire', these three sections function seamlessly as a verse, chorus, and contrasting bridge section indicative of popular song form. Thus the form of the original work does not create conflict once transposed into a new musical context, rather it cohabitates with the other musical traditions in play. In the examples discussed above, the cohesive integration of the two traditions does not highlight the blending, but instead renders it opaque.

Conversely, there are other musical contexts where conflict between the two traditions does arise. In the intro of 'When Evening Falls', the rhythmic consonance of the opening string passage quickly gives way to rhythmic dissonance between the cellos and acoustic guitar. The guitar plays a repeating two-bar pattern indicative of the Bristol sound while the cellos play a melodic contrapuntal passage. Both instruments play at fixed tempos, though the guitar plays at a faster tempo than the cellos, resulting in temporal displacement like that often found in classical music. The rhythmic dissonance informed by classical music is in conflict with the rhythmic consonance informed by the Bristol sound, resulting in a musical gesture that is rhythmically unstable and therefore likely to attract further scrutiny by the listener. A similar effect is seen with the rhythmic dissonance in 'Storm'. The 12/8 time signature of the synth and 6/4 signature of the brass act against the metrical 4/4 time signature of the drums, creating an unstable rhythmic structure. The simultaneous use of odd time signatures informed by classical music and the stable 4/4 of the Bristol sound again results in an unstable musical experience, drawing the listener's attention to the conflict. A final example can be seen in the free time of 'She Moves'. The lack of a fixed pulse, while often present in classical works, is highly atypical of popular music

and pushes the song to the boundaries of the Bristol sound style. Therefore, the interaction between the two traditions does not result in cohesive integration, but rather the presence of one tradition threatens to sever the links of the other.

Though in a broad context the Bristol sound dominates over the classical tradition in all of the works, both cohabitation and conflict can arise depending on the specific way the two traditions interact. After experimenting with a number of different approaches, the final stage was to determine which ones were successful in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener. The majority of songs were successful in reminding the audience participants of classical music, with only ‘Storm’ and ‘She Moves’ failing to make a connection with some respondents. However, some approaches were evidently more successful than others, and are discussed below in answer to the final research question.

### **6.1.3 Research question three**

*3) Which compositional devices appropriated from classical music are effective in suggesting a classical influence to an outside listener?*

The areas that were most effective in suggesting a classical influence were instrumentation and harmony. In each of the songs that prominently featured instruments typically associated with classical music,<sup>361</sup> the overwhelming majority of participants selected instrumentation as an area that reminded them of classical music. As such, there was no significant difference in the responses of practitioners versus non-practitioners. This suggests there are certain instruments that have a strong association with classical music, and that association is readily apparent to both practitioners and non-practitioners. Also, the mere presence of these instruments can suggest a classical influence, whether or not they behave in a manner typical of classical music. For example, ‘When Evening Falls’ features a string orchestra and also incorporates compositional approaches from classical music such as thematic development and polyphonic texture, and participants overwhelmingly selected instrumentation as an area that caused the song to remind them of classical music. Conversely, ‘Autumn’ similarly uses a string orchestra but those instruments behave in a manner much more indebted to the

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<sup>361</sup> ‘Autumn’, ‘When Evening Falls’, ‘Wistful Deeds’, and ‘End of Season’.

Bristol sound than classical music, playing a repeating two-bar motif throughout the track. Despite the distinctly non-classical behaviour of the strings, the participants again selected instrumentation as an area that linked the song to the classical tradition.

In each of the songs that appropriated a harmonic approach from classical music,<sup>362</sup> there was a similarly positive response from the participants. Similar to instrumentation, there was no significant difference between the responses of practitioners versus non-practitioners.<sup>363</sup> This suggests that harmonic quality can be perceived by both practitioners and non-practitioners, even if that quality only relates to the relative consonance or dissonance of a chord. It is also probable that many non-practitioners will often interpret dissonant harmonies as ‘sounding classical’, in contrast to the typically consonant tonality of popular music. For example, the majority of participants selected harmony in the response to ‘Solitaire’, whose harmonic structure is borrowed from Satie’s *Gnossienne No. 1*. While the chords themselves are simply diatonic triads, therefore unlikely to sound dissonant, the non-diatonic notes in the melody add a dissonant colour to the underlying harmonic structure. It is very possible that the dissonance produced by this approach helps to suggest a classical influence to an outside listener.

The remaining approaches varied in their success, and one begins to see a distinction between the responses of the practitioners and those of the non-practitioners. Quotation proved to be a successful device in ‘Solitaire’, particularly amongst practitioners, however no respondents mentioned the quotations in either ‘Autumn’ or ‘Storm’.<sup>364</sup> The way the quotation functions in ‘Autumn’ is more indebted to the Bristol sound tradition than classical music, and the source material is also not a primary theme in Pärt’s original work. Accordingly, quotation was not successful in this instance, most likely because the source material is too short, it does not behave in a manner typical of classical music, and is not an easily recognizable theme. The quotation in ‘Storm’ was also unsuccessful, possibly because no respondents were aware of its presence within the piece. While the source material consists of the opening bars of the first

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<sup>362</sup> ‘Autumn’, ‘Solitaire’, ‘Wistful Deeds’, and ‘End of Season’. See section 5.3.4 on the relationship between harmony and quotation in ‘Solitaire’.

<sup>363</sup> Keeping in mind that the participants were not always evenly split between the two groups.

<sup>364</sup> Which quote Pärt’s *Fratres for String Orchestra and Percussion* and Messiaen’s *Preludes Pour Piano* respectively.

movement from Messiaen's *Preludes Pour Piano*, and is therefore more likely to be recognized, the sample only makes a brief appearance in the track at the beginning of each chorus. For quotation to be a successful device, the reference should demonstrate certain patterns of behaviour common to classical music and should also be presented in an explicit way within the reworked musical environment.

Appropriation in the area of texture had mixed success. In 'When Evening Falls', approximately half the respondents selected this as an area that reminded them of classical music. This was true for both practitioners and non-practitioners. In 'She Moves', the majority of practitioners identified the pointillist texture as reminding them of classical music but only half of the non-practitioners gave similar responses. 'She Moves' was also one of the tracks in which a number of non-practitioners did not hear any connections to classical music. The distinction between the responses of practitioners and non-practitioners may suggest that those without musical training do not immediately perceive the textural quality of a work. However, an alternate explanation is that specific textural approaches such as pointillism and polyphony are not readily associated with classical music, and are thus unlikely to suggest a classical influence. While incorporating textural approaches from classical music can be an effective way of extending the Bristol sound, this will not necessarily translate to a perceived classical influence to an outside listener.

A similar result was seen with thematic development in 'When Evening Falls'. Only two respondents selected this as an area that reminded them of classical music, both of whom identified as practitioners. This could suggest that those without musical training do not easily perceive thematic development, or alternatively that it is not readily associated with classical music.

It is not immediately clear how successful the rhythmic appropriation in 'Storm' was at suggesting a classical influence, as discussed in section 5.6.3. Only one respondent specifically mentioned polymeter in their comments about the piece, and while many practitioners selected interaction as an area that reminded them of classical music, this may have been pertaining to other aspects of the composition. Only one non-practitioner selected interaction in their response,

which may suggest that those without musical training do not easily perceive dissonant rhythmic structures. However, this is unlikely as rhythm is perhaps the most fundamental of all the musical elements and occurs naturally in everyday life.<sup>365</sup> Accordingly, even non-musicians often possess a strong rhythmic sense. An alternative explanation is that, like texture and thematic development, rhythmic dissonance is not readily associated with classical music. This is perhaps unsurprising given that rhythmic dissonance was not a common feature of classical music until the Twentieth century.

Finally, the form of a work can also be successful at suggesting a classical influence, particularly if used in conjunction with classical instrumentation. In the response to 'End of Season', each of the participants selected 'development' as an area that reminded them of classical music. This could pertain to the way the track unfolds over time, with numerous contrasting themes and juxtaposed sections. Also, the extended length of the track conveyed an impression of classical music to at least one respondent. 'End of Season' does not follow any of the standardized forms found in classical music, and is in fact indebted to the episodic formal layout occasionally found in the Bristol sound. However, episodic form is not commonly found in the popular music tradition so it is conceivable that the contrasting sections and abrupt juxtapositions are more readily associated with classical music than the Bristol sound to many of the respondents.

In summary, appropriation in the areas of instrumentation and harmony proved to be the most effective at suggesting a classical influence, with form also showing potential. What is common amongst these elements is that they each live near the surface of musical detail and are therefore easy to perceive. Most people can quickly identify a popular instrument by its timbre and can also easily perceive harmonic qualities, even if only in terms of consonance and dissonance. Most popular music also follows normative patterns in the way it unfolds over time and typically fits inside a relatively short timeframe, allowing a listener to perceive any deviations from this approach. Conversely, explorations with time and texture appeared to be less successful at suggesting a classical influence. Similar to the response to question two, there is no evidence to suggest that each of these techniques can be ranked according to a strict hierarchy in terms of their

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<sup>365</sup> For example, breathing, the heartbeat, walking, change of tides and seasons.

effectiveness at suggesting a classical influence. However, some techniques are clearly more successful than others.

With instrumentation and harmony making the greatest impact, it appears the way a track *sounds* is more important than compositional strategies in terms of suggesting a classical influence. This is consistent with the way many participants reacted to the compositions' connection to the Bristol sound, in that sonic features seem to make a greater impact than compositional strategies. Respondents frequently mentioned the 'lo-fi' 'grit' of the Bristol sound but rarely mentioned things like a riff-based bass line or a consonant rhythmic structure. If the goal is to extend the Bristol sound in a way that suggests a classical influence, using a combination of sonic features and compositional strategies will likely produce the strongest results.

## **6.2 Contributions to the literature**

This thesis made several significant contributions to the literature on the Bristol sound. First, it clarified the distinction between the Bristol sound and trip hop by arguing the Bristol sound is a style that relates to the trip hop genre. This distinction was made explicit by providing detailed spectromorphological analysis that differentiates the sonic qualities of the Bristol sound from trip hop. Furthermore, Fabbri's rules of genre were used to explicate the similarities that unite trip hop artists in spite of their sonic and timbral differences. This addressed the discord between those artists who reject the trip hop label and those in the community that apply it, by arguing the label is appropriate when viewed through the lens of genre but not when viewed through the lens of style.

Second, this thesis offered detailed musicological analysis of the Bristol sound. This supplements the cultural, sociological, and historical writing that currently exists, as well as the work of Brøvig-Hanssen who focused on the sonic qualities of the Bristol sound. While these details are significant in advancing understanding of the Bristol sound, it is not until musicological factors are also considered that a holistic understanding of the style can be achieved. In addition, the musical analysis presented in this thesis offers several guidelines to other practitioners who wish to compose works based in the Bristol sound style.

Third, this thesis made an original contribution to the evolution of the Bristol sound by offering original creative works that are grounded in the style, yet also extend the style in a new direction by incorporating compositional approaches from classical music. These compositions aid in ensuring the Bristol sound style is not confined to the musical history books, but rather can inform the development of future musical styles.

This thesis also made several contributions to the wider body of popular music literature. First is the expanded model of transtextuality offered in section 2.6. While this model was discussed within the context of the Bristol sound, it is equally applicable to all styles of recorded popular music that incorporate quotation. This model is particularly beneficial when discussing music that also acts on the medium as part of its quotation.

Additionally, this thesis offered a practical example of side-by-side comparisons of style and genre in relation to a single musical tradition. Discussing these terms in reference to a body of work that is typically grouped under a single moniker helps in elucidating the specific differences between the two terms and highlighting their unique areas of inquiry.

This thesis also offered several models for the various ways in which one can incorporate compositional devices from classical music into the popular music tradition. As the lines between these two traditions become continually blurred, these models offer a potential way forward to any composer interested in expanding popular music language by drawing from the techniques of classical composition.

Finally, this thesis provides a constructive example of practice-led research within the field of popular music production. As popular music production follows in the heels of popular musicology, becoming more embedded in academic studies, it is likely that more popular music practitioners will engage in research from a performative perspective rather than a musicological one. This thesis offers a potential methodology for engaging in such research.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Research**

A number of limitations were present in each stage of the research. First, the corpus selected for analysing the Bristol sound was small and did not adequately encompass all of the musical traits that are evident in the Bristol sound style. For example, phonematic references play a more significant role in the style than the songs under analysis would suggest. A thorough analysis of the Bristol sound style would need to include a much larger corpus. Second, the original compositions only reflect a small number of the possible ways one could extend the Bristol sound style. For example, the creative works did not incorporate any of the multimedia elements that are present in some 21<sup>st</sup> century classical works, or explore issues like extended performance techniques. Similarly, the original compositions extended the Bristol sound by introducing new compositional approaches. No attempt was made to extend the production or performance aspects of the style.

Finally, the audience feedback component returned a small number of responses. Also, finding a balance between the transparencies required for ethical approval and the avoidance of leading questions was difficult. It is entirely possible that a number of respondents subconsciously responded in a positive manner in order to help reach the research goals. Also, a thorough audience feedback methodology should ideally take place in person in a group setting and involve repeated listening's to each track. One can assume that each participant only listened to a track once and it is unrealistic to expect a listener to hear all the elements of a piece with one listening, especially non-practitioners.

### **6.4 Future Research**

This thesis is the first body of academic literature that systematically explores all musical areas of the Bristol sound. However, there is still opportunity for further research and five potential topics are listed below. First, a much wider body of songs in the Bristol sound could be analysed. This would assist in documenting those approaches that provide nuance to the style yet are not commonly found in the majority of songs. As discussed in section 2.5, sonic qualities such as surreal sonic spaces and references to third order surrogacy help

to delineate the Bristol sound from the wider trip hop genre. However, these qualities were not explicitly incorporated into many of the songs discussed in chapter four. Analysing a larger corpus would help to contextualise these approaches amongst the style as a whole. Similarly, the intertextual references discussed in section 2.6 were under-represented amongst the songs discussed in chapter four. Again, analysing a larger corpus would assist in determining the true extent these approaches contribute to the style as a whole.

Second, there is the possibility that the Bristol sound was not only scene-based but also time-based, and can potentially be bookended between 1991 and 1998. This would encompass the first three studio albums by Massive Attack (*Blue Lines*, *Protection*, *Mezzanine*), the first two studio albums and one live album by Portishead (*Dummy*, *Portishead*, *Roseland NYC Live*), and the first three studio albums by Tricky (*Maxinquaye*, *Pre-Millennium Tension*, *Angels with Dirty Faces*). Massive Attack underwent a number of personal changes after *Mezzanine*, and their fourth studio album, *100th Window*, is a noted stylistic departure from their earlier output. Tricky is similarly the type of artist that constantly explores new sonic territories and draws from different musical styles with each album he releases. Portishead took eleven years to release another studio album after 1997's *Portishead* and, like Massive Attack, it is a noted departure from their earlier material. A wider analysis of the Bristol sound should therefore consider if it occurred only at a specific time and place. Further analysis should also include other artists who are often associated with the style, even if that association is not unanimously agreed upon amongst members of the community.

Third, a broader discussion could contextualise the Bristol sound within the wider establishment of British hip hop. The Bristol sound is often regarded as one of the earliest successful examples of authentic British hip hop,<sup>366</sup> and there is scope to consider the style amongst other attempts at British hip hop to examine how that authenticity was both achieved by the artists and perceived by the audience.

Fourth, there is scope to consider how the Bristol sound, or trip hop in general, influenced future styles of popular music. While the style enjoyed

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<sup>366</sup> See section 2.3.3.

widespread popularity during its heyday, it has since retreated from global prominence. However, a number of popular music artists have since incorporated approaches from trip hop in their music making.<sup>367</sup> Identifying those approaches and investigating how they were appropriated will help to situate the Bristol sound, and trip hop, within the larger popular music lineage.

Finally, this thesis focused on extending the Bristol sound by eschewing the compositional approaches used in the style in favour of those more commonly found in classical music. Further practice-led research could experiment with eschewing performance or production techniques. These techniques could be replaced with approaches from 21<sup>st</sup> century classical music or another genre of music entirely. By exploring numerous methods for extending the style across a broader spectrum of areas, its valued traditions can be retained while ensuring its continued evolution and development, further cementing its place in the history of popular music.

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<sup>367</sup> For example, Björk, Madonna, Lana Del Rey, Lorde.

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## 8 Discography

Key albums of the Bristol sound.

Massive Attack. 1991. *Blue Lines*. London: Wild Bunch Records, WBRC D 1,  
0777 7 86228 2 6-CD

Massive Attack. 1994. *Protection*. London: Wild Bunch Records, WBRC D 2,  
7243 8 39883 2 7-CD

Massive Attack. 1998. *Mezzanine*. London: EMI, 7243 8 45599 2 2-CD

Portishead. 1994. *Dummy*. London: Go! Beat, 828 553-2-CD

Portishead. 1997. *Portishead*. London: Go! Beat, 539 435-2-CD

Portishead. 1998. *Roseland NYC Live*. London: Go! Beat, 559 424-2-CD

Tricky. 1995. *Maxinquaye*. London: 4<sup>th</sup> & Broadway, BRCD 610, 524 089-2-CD

## 9 Appendix One - Lyrics

### ‘Autumn’

Weight of time, cold like stone  
When leaves have flown the morning light  
Seeds I’ve sown have passed me by  
Too many years, too many years

A single lie to feed the wandering eye  
The break of night to save me  
To lead me on  
To lead me on

Ooh...  
Sole desire feels so long to realise, it’s true

So far gone to say goodbye  
A waste of time to dream the road long gone  
So am I left to wonder why?  
Too many years, too many years

Ooh...  
Sole desire feels so long to realise  
Ooh...  
Sole desire, what my soul desires

All the wrongs that I can’t hide  
Have so long faded by  
Lost in the wake of long forgotten tides  
And salt dried weighted eyes

Love and lies, a sacred sight  
Somewhere home when I stay

Ooh...  
Sole desire feels so long to realise  
Ooh...  
Sole desire, what my soul desires

Weight of time, cold like stone  
When leaves have flown the morning light  
Seeds I’ve sown have passed me by  
Too many years, too many years

‘Autumn’ is written from a first person perspective, expressing inner sentiments not intended for a specific individual. It addresses feelings of lament when one’s life does not eventuate the expected way.

## **‘When Evening Falls’**

Lost in all the lies of my disguise  
Left alone in a tidal wave  
Holding on to long gone goodbyes  
Breathe in, breathe out I’m tethered

When all we’re told is left to fire, alongside the way

All of the fairy tales the children learn  
Lost and sold and swept away  
And the fears, on which to lay my head  
Trapped in blackness forever

And the sole light, to ease the bitterness  
Is when the stars come out to play

Who am I to reserve  
The memories we leave, forgotten and astray  
And the years, fall into wistfulness  
Breathe in, breathe in

But the sole light, moves to lift my head  
When the stars come out to play

But the sole light, moves to lift my head  
And the long nights, rest in gentleness  
And the stars come out to play

‘When Evening Falls’ is written from a first person perspective, expressing inner sentiments not intended for a specific individual. It addresses the loss of childhood innocence when realizing the reality of the world does not reconcile with the childhood view.

## **‘Solitaire’**

Waiting on my savior  
And my life, pass me by  
But I want you to stay

Patiently awaiting  
Fourteen years, so long gone  
But I want you to stay

I’ve played too long and everybody knows  
I’ve stayed too long but every time he goes

Lonely road to walk along  
Just for a fleeting glimpse or two  
Oh I keep dreaming on

A little lie, a salted gin, a taste of you  
And I can’t deny the feeling of the ache I hold onto  
But I

I’ve played too long and everybody knows  
I’ve stayed too long but every time he goes

Patiently awaiting  
Four more years I’ll hold on  
Cause I want you to stay

I’ve played too long and everybody knows  
I’ve stayed too long but every time he goes

‘Solitaire’ is written from a first person perspective and switches between addressing an unspecified audience and an absent significant other. The protagonist is expressing her regret and frustration at the unrequited love between herself and her occasional lover.

## **‘She Moves’**

A hole in time in a sunken dive  
She dances in shadow like a flickering flame  
And in her face under the evening’s dying light  
I see the weight of a thousand moons, and all the years and places like those that I  
have known

She moves, she moves, she moves  
And every time I catch her eye  
She moves, she move, she moves

Drinking mulled wine on a Tuesday afternoon  
She asks me if I believe in Jesus  
Wanted to say that it don’t mean no thing  
You see this aint the life I dreamed of but it’s the one I got

She moves, she moves, she moves  
And every time I catch her eye  
She moves, she move, she moves

You and I we made the same mistakes in life  
But I’ll absolve you your sins if you forgive me mine  
And when it feels so cold

All the times I catch you when you fall  
Don’t let me down, don’t let me down  
And when you breathe I take your breath  
Don’t let me down, don’t let me down

She moves, she moves, she moves  
And every time I catch her eye  
She moves, she move, she moves

‘She Moves’ is written from a first person perspective, describing the relationship between the protagonist and a significant other. It addresses two people who are both spiritually broken but who’s broken edges fit together, allowing them to draw strength from each other.

## **‘Wistful Deeds’**

Wasted dreams, forgotten lies  
Burdened by desire denied  
Hidden thoughts, no need to fear  
Your silence draws me near

Spoken words identify  
Yearnings that are want to hide  
Disguise the lies your eyes reveal  
Though trying to conceal

Waiting for just one look from you to fill my need

And you cannot deny that you belong to me  
And you cannot deny what you really want from me

Waiting, seasons changing, there’s no room without you

Give me your soul, and I’ll be your saviour  
Conceding control. Lay down your reason  
Secrets untold. I’ll be your saviour  
Future takes hold  
Lie with me  
Lie with me

Breathe in a lingering moment, an illusion for two

Innocence behind your eyes  
Veiled behind a fire defied  
Latent seed, a dark veneer  
A light to disappear

Guided by a sole belief  
Of binded lives and wistful deeds  
Freed in thought no ties I feel  
Abandoned to unreal

Waiting for just one look from you to fill my need

And you cannot deny that you belong to me  
And you cannot deny what you really want from me

Give me your soul, and I’ll be your saviour  
Conceding control. Lay down your reason  
Secrets untold. I’ll be your saviour  
Future takes hold  
Lie with me  
Lie with me

Waiting for just one look from you to fill my need

'Wistful Deeds' is written from a first person perspective addressing a specific individual. It addresses notions of obsession and control, as the protagonist is fixated on another person despite being unknown to that person, creating an alternate reality for himself.

## **'Storm'**

Torn and lowly  
Why can't you feel the way I do  
I know, just for a little while  
You could feel so smooth  
Taking my time  
You know, for a little while

As I breathe, feeding the air  
Lay down your arms  
Linger with me in the storm

Seeing through me  
Hiding behind desire  
And a little lie, but I see  
You believe we could take time  
Or two, for a little while

As I breathe, feeding the air  
Lay down your arms  
Linger with me in the storm

Don't empathise or tell me your lies  
And don't ever say that you're sorry  
Want to belong every time that you're gone  
And stay with me

As I breathe, feeding the air  
Lay down your arms  
Linger with me in the storm.

'Storm' is written from a first person perspective and addresses a specific individual. The protagonist is attempting to convince the addressee to abandon societal constraints and indulge in a single moment of forbidden love.

## **'End of Season'**

### **(Male)**

Been reeling from the end of season, for so long  
But I want you to say  
You lead me on, you leave no reason, you're so wrong  
So I want you to say

I aint the one who needed saving  
But now it's you that's turned your eye  
I ain't broken yet I'm caving  
Left to reason wonder why

Now that you believe in miracles  
And that desire has run dry  
I won't pretend that I'm not cynical  
With mystify by my side

### **(Female)**

You and I were so caught up in denial  
Wouldn't let me to stay  
I won't deny that your heart was formed in mine  
I'm sorry if I broke you but I couldn't say goodbye

What do you want me to say?

'End of Season' is written from a first person perspective though it features two equal personas. The male persona is expressing anger and confusion about being inexplicably abandoned by the female persona. The female persona is responding to the male, saying there were legitimate reasons for her sudden disappearance and that she regrets hurting the other, but she could not bring herself to look at his face and say goodbye.

## 10 Appendix Two – Audience Survey Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

### **The High Art of Trip Hop: Extending the Bristol Sound Through Contemporary Classical Composition Techniques**

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato. In my thesis I am attempting to compose music that combines elements from the musical style known as the 'Bristol sound' (artists such as Portishead, Massive Attack, and Tricky, active from the 1990s until the present) with elements of contemporary classical music. I am interested in audience reactions to the compositions to see which, if any, combinations of different elements are noticeable to an outside listener.

#### **What is entailed?**

If you choose to participate you will be asked to listen to an original composition and then complete a short questionnaire in order to share your thoughts of the piece. The questionnaire covers your knowledge of the Bristol sound style, as well as your experience, if any, with composing and/or producing music. You will then be invited to give your impression of the composition by answering two closed-ended questions, and you will also be free to add further comments if you wish. Total participation time, including listening and completing the questionnaire, will be approximately 10 minutes.

#### **Confidentiality**

All participants will remain anonymous at all times, even to me. In order to guarantee anonymity it is impossible to obtain written consent, as this would identify the participant. **Therefore, completing and submitting the questionnaire will constitute consent.** As no individual participant will be identified, it will not be possible to withdraw or change your responses once they have been submitted. However, you may choose not to answer any particular question.

## **The Results**

Analysis of the questionnaire responses will be included in my thesis. Also, I may quote specific phrases as I see appropriate. Three hard copies of my thesis will be produced, as well as one digital copy which will be accessible online. I will also retain the findings for possible use in future publications.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

Feel free to contact myself or my supervisor with any questions.

Jeff Wragg

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Chief Supervisor

Associate Professor Ian Whalley

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[ian.whalley@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:ian.whalley@waikato.ac.nz)

## 11 Appendix Three –Participant Questionnaire

### Participant Questionnaire

You may choose not to answer any particular question

**1) How familiar are you with the Bristol sound style?  
(in particular the music of Portishead, Massive Attack, and Tricky).**

- I haven't heard of the Bristol sound or these artists
- I have heard of these artists
- I have heard the music of these artists
- I am familiar with the music of these artists
- I am very familiar with the music of these artists

**2) What is your experience with composing or producing music?**

- I have never composed or produced music
- I have composed or produced music in the past
- I often compose or produce music as a hobby
- I compose or produce music at a semi-professional level
- I compose or produce music at a professional level

**3) If the song reminded you of the Bristol sound style, which aspects in particular reminded you of it? (you may choose as many or as few categories as you wish. If the song did not remind you of the Bristol sound style, tick the last box).**

- the instruments that were used
- the speed of the song
- the type of drum groove
- the overall mood of the song
- the style of singing
- the types of chords that were used
- the way the song developed over time
- the way the instruments interacted with each other
- the overall sound of the song
- other (please elaborate)

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the song did not remind me of the Bristol sound style

**4) If you heard any elements in the song that reminded you of classical music, which elements in particular were they? (you may choose as many or as few categories as you wish. If the song did not remind you in any way of classical music, tick the last box).**

- the instruments that were used
  - the speed of the song
  - the type of drum groove
  - the overall mood of the song
  - the style of singing
  - the types of chords that were used
  - the way the song developed over time
  - the way the instruments interacted with each other
  - the overall sound of the song
  - other (please elaborate)
- 
- 
- 

The song did not remind me of classical music

**5) Feel free to add further comments if you wish.**

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## 12 Appendix Four – Ethical Approval

**Philosophy Programme**  
School of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Arts and Social  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Jeffrey Wragg  
Associate Professor Ian Whalley  
Associate Professor Martin Lodge  
Associate Professor Adrian Mabbott Athique

Music Programme  
School of Arts

28 April 2014

Dear Jeffrey

**Re: FS2014-13 Putting the High into Trip Hop: Extending the Bristol Sound Through Contemporary Classical Composition Techniques.**

Thank you for sending me your revisions. Your solutions to the questions put in my previous letter are very satisfactory and I am happy to provide you with formal ethical approval.

I wish you well with your research.

Kind regards,

Ruth Walker  
*Chair*  
*Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.*