MTO A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

Gendered Power Relationships in Mashups *

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KEYWORDS: mashups, gender, performance

ABSTRACT: When evaluating mashups, most authors praise the coupling of unrelated songs. Subversion of meaning depends on bringing disparate songs together so that they can reveal unexpected points of contact. The disparate elements in mashups can, and often do, result because of differently-gendered performers coming together in unexpected and unintended ways. This juxtaposition of masculine and feminine tokens can create a wide variety of meanings. In this article, I investigate some male/female power relationships that mashups exemplify and examine different types of meanings that can result from the combination of musicians who perform gender differently in a mashup.

Received November 2017

Volume 24, Number 1, March 2018

Introduction and History

[1.1] Mashups are a creative art form rooted in combining diverse elements; they fuse together extremely disparate songs in a functional way. The first scholarly research on mashups was published in 2004, the same year Danger Mouse made his *Grey Album* available for free download (Howard-Spink 2004; Gunderson 2004). These early articles, and many that came after, dealt with mashups exclusively from a legal perspective (for example, McLeod 2005). In 2007, John Shiga focused on democratization of production when he argued that mashups have created "a new kind of amateur musicianship based on pluralistic listening" (Shiga 2007, 93). A year later, David J. Gunkel was able to sort mashup scholarship into two basic categories: (1) articles that praised mashups as a clever way of reworking the tedious pop music fed to us by the recording industry; and (2) articles that damned mashups for their derivative nature and typically illegal production (Gunkel 2008, 189). Two dissertations on mashups were completed during the beginning of this decade: Liam McGranahan's, which was the first ethnographic study of mashups, along with their creators and community (McGranahan 2010); and my own, which was a broad overview of the history and technology that led to the development of mashups, as well as an examination of their legal status and aesthetic features (Boone 2011).

[1.2] Around this same time, entire books and edited collections dedicated to mashups and remixes began to draw interest (Navas, Gallagher, and burrough 2015; Sinnreich 2010). Sinnreich's book focuses on technology and configurable culture, and examines binaries between art and craft, artist

and audience, original and copy, and composition and performance. The Routledge edited collection includes essays about mashup ethics and mashups as political activism, and delves into the realm of visual remixes, as well as audio. Recent articles explore specific issues within the mashup world: a mashup typology (Boone 2013), a historical account of the *Grey Album* as a type of performance (Adams 2015), and analyses of particular mashups (Brøvig-Hanssen 2015).

[1.3] Although mashups have been described in the popular press as "a marriage made in hell" (McLeod 2005, 83), "a recombinant DNA experiment" (Greenwald 2002, 30), and "bastard pop" (Lamacq 2002), and the creators of these pieces of music have been called "musical mad scientist[s]" (Vivinetto 2004, 1E) and "pop music Frankenstein[s]" (McLeod 2005, 79), most authors praise the coupling of unrelated songs (Mudhar 2006). Indeed, juxtaposing songs from surprisingly different genres, classes, and time periods seems to be the *sine qua non* of this art form (Boone 2013; Brøvig-Hanssen and Harkins 2012). Using structures similar to mainstream pop songs, mashup artists relish giving songs ironic twists of meaning.

[1.4] "The more disparate the genre-blending is," says journalist Roberta Cruger, "the better; the best mash-ups blend punk with funk or Top 40 with heavy metal, boosting the tension between slick and raw" (Cruger 2003). "Slick," as it is used here, is commonly represented by dance music or boy-band pop. Performers of such music make overt, albeit sometimes ironic, appeals to their own commerciality, often being musically dressed up, or "overly-produced." This contrasts with "raw," an aesthetic associated with punk or grunge and produced to connote honesty, transparency, or primitiveness. Consequently, mashing up Britney Spears with Ke$ha would almost certainly not be as valued as mixing Britney Spears with Nirvana, since the former case combines two artists that fall on the "slick" side of the dichotomy, whereas the latter case juxtaposes slick with raw.

[1.5] Categorizing mashups, however, is not merely a matter of placing an artist into one of these two overly reductive categories; slick and raw are two poles of a continuum with a great deal of nuance in between them. Generating significant musical meaning in a mashup, however, commonly depends on bringing disparate songs together for a very specific reason: to reveal unexpected points of contact between seemingly unrelated artists. Of course, elements on the extremes of the slick/raw continuum are often exploited by DJs in order to create subversive musical meaning; but further, these differences can reveal other commonalities. "It's about picking up on the similarities between two tracks," says journalist Ivor Tossell, "and tweaking the songs to have them create more than the sum of their parts" (Tossell 2005, R32). Two songs from similar genres usually have obvious points where they intersect, and the similarities that emerge in a mashup are therefore rarely surprising: we fully expect that Britney Spears and Ke$ha are singing about similar worlds. Britney and Nirvana, on the contrary, seem to occupy distinct musical universes. Therefore, mashing these two universes together has the potential to reveal hidden points of cohesion between the artists.

[1.6] The disparate elements that DJs tend to combine in mashups can, and often do, result from performers who express gender differently. This juxtaposition of masculine and feminine tokens raises some important questions: Does viewing the feminine against a masculine backdrop emphasize that femininity and accentuate it, or does it "butch up" the feminine by making the subject seem more androgynous? Are the masculine and feminine elements of a mashup working together toward a common goal, or are they pitted against each other in direct competition? In this article, I will investigate some of the gendered power relationships that mashups exemplify and examine multiple meanings that can result from the combination of musicians who perform gender differently in a mashup.

Performing Gender, Performing Mashups

[2.1] "Performing gender" is of course a reference to gender theorist Judith Butler. As she proposes, "whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (1990, 8). "The core problem with gender," Nagoshi, Nagoshi, and Brzuzy explain, "is that it is based on a binary, mandatory

system that attributes social characteristics to sexed anatomy" (2014, 4). Not only is gender easily separable from sexed anatomy; the sex binary itself is false, because there are more than two types of sexed human bodies. Gender expression is truly an independent performance, unrelated to genitalia, but determined based on physical, behavioral, textual, and power cues (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, and Brzuzy 2014; Taylor 2012).

[2.2] The concept of performance, newly applied to gender in Butler's groundbreaking work, has always been inseparable from music. It follows, then, that when one performs music, one is also performing gender simultaneously. Both the gender expressed by the performer and the musical features of a song can impact this dual performance. "[A] performance," says Nikki Sullivan, "consist[s] of reciting gestures, signs, images, and so on, that are drawn from a shared cultural reservoir" (2003, 90). Indeed, musical characteristics can function as examples of the aforementioned gestures and signs that can affect the perceived masculinity or femininity of a particular artist singing a song (Taylor 2012). As Susan McClary has noted, masculinity and femininity in music do exist. She suggests that, "[b]eginning with the rise of opera in the seventeenth century, composers worked painstakingly to develop a musical semiotics of gender: a set of conventions for constructing 'masculinity' or 'femininity' in music" (2002, 7). These conventions still persist today (think of the flowing piano and strings accompaniment to many of Sarah McLachlan's songs, or the aggressive electric guitars of Black Sabbath) and we interact with these codes in a reciprocal manner. The codes themselves "participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music" (McClary 2002, 7–8).

[2.3] While the examples of gendered music above confirm the gender binary in their performance, the field of queer theory problematizes the very nature of a binary gender system. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains queer theory as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, or anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (1993, 8). Jack Halberstam describes queer theory as a "scavenger methodology" that combines methods from different disciplines and "refuses the academic compulsion toward disciplinary coherence" (1998, 13). Queer theory, instead of limiting gender and sex to binaries, acknowledges ambiguity and plurality (Leibetseder 2012, 10). "Queer is not a singular oppositional position, but rather evokes a broad range of radical critical responses, which are constantly questioning the dominant discourses that produce ever-shifting logics of social and cultural normativity and non-normativity" (Taylor 2012). Performances of gender, therefore (including musical ones), "will be ambiguous and open to multiple meanings" (Sullivan 2003, 92). Of course, music is no stranger to ambiguity. Jodie Taylor writes that "[t]he act of creating and performing music . . . results not only in the creation and performance of sounds, but also in the creation and performance of subjectivities" (2012, 44–45). In this article, I will analyze mashups that perform both gender and music in ways that result in a wide range of meanings.

[2.4] Mashups are not actual live performances.(1) Simon Frith, however, argues that recordings of popular music are experienced in the same way as live performances: "I listen to records in the full knowledge that what I hear is something that never existed, that never could exist, as a 'performance,' something happening in a single time and space; nevertheless, it *is now* happening, in a single time and space: it is thus a performance and I hear it as one"(1996, 211). Frith was talking about recordings of most popular music in general, but the fact that the performance "never existed" becomes more obvious in the case of a mashup. Aside from not being in the recording studio together, the parties involved are not in the same band, probably have never met each other, and may not have even been alive at the same time! These constructed interactions, however, do give listeners the phenomenological experience of a performance unfolding (Auslander 2004). Ragnhild Brøvig-Hanssen concurs, noting that, despite the virtual nature of the musical environment of mashups, the performers and performance are indeed real (2015, 267).

[2.5] Additionally, the presence of a singer adds to this experience of performance. I'm choosing to focus on vocal music in this article for two reasons. First, most mashups have vocals. Mashups are generally constructed from popular songs, the vast majority of which have a singer (Boone 2011).

Second, singers serve as human transmitters through which a musical message can be conveyed. Singers, according to Frith, "enact both a star personality (their image), and song personality, the role that each lyric requires" (1996, 212). I examine both of these components in the analyses that follow. Burns, Lafrance, and Hawley focus on lyrics in their analysis of the songs of Björk and PJ Harvey: "Popular music lyrics communicate immediately to the listener by telling a story or exploring a social theme or issue, by conveying a subject's perspective or emotions in relation to that story" (2008, 9). Of course, these authors do not undervalue the musical element of a song, which may serve either to reinforce or undermine a lyrical meaning. Music can, in fact, make the difference between a song that is meant to be taken literally and one that should be interpreted as a parody. Indeed, Dai Griffiths stresses that song lyrics are not meant to stand alone outside of their musical context. Lyrics, although they can be "*like* poetry," are not actually poetry (2003, 42). Separation of lyrics from their intended musical accompaniment is part of what makes mashups different from traditional pop songs; the lyrics and melody lines of a given pop song were composed to interact with specific musical elements, including a bass line, chord progression, instrumentation, and backup vocals. A mashup artist pulls apart these elements that were born together. She takes the concept of schizophonia—a term conceived by R. Murray Schafer to describe the anxiety-ridden act of separating a sound from its organic source (1977, 90)—to its extremes. Steven Feld saw this as early as 1992, during the heyday of digital sampling: "No doubt that if Schafer were writing his book now, he would see digital sampling, CD-ROM, and the new ability to fully record, edit, re-organize, and own any sound from any source, as the final stage of schizophonia, namely, total portability, transportability, and transmutability of any and all sonic environments" (1995, 98).

[2.6] This work investigates the nature of gender performance in mashups and the resulting power relationships that manifest themselves through this performance. Moya Lloyd contends that "all performances are imbricated in hegemonic power relations even as they contest them" (1999, 208). I will examine these power relations through two lenses: those of music theory and those of queer theory. There are several factors at play when considering mashups as performance. Since mashups are created from previously-existing songs, the performative aspects of each source song must be considered. Some aspects of meaning tend to persist, despite recontextualization. When a listener recognizes the songs being used to create a mashup, she remembers the way the songs sounded when she first heard them, un-mashed. That memory of musical meaning, then, interacts with *new* aspects of musical meaning that are created when the two songs are combined. To thrust two performers into uninvited conversation with one another adds an additional layer to the concept of performance, and a mashup's interpretation as such. Mashups force musicians to collaborate, and this new collaboration leads to a series of unexpected meanings. Finally, the performative aspect of the DJ or mashup artist cannot be overlooked. The musical partnership results from a mashup that was not initiated by either of the contributing artists; it was created by an invisible third party: the DJ.[(2)] This unseen force adds a controlling aspect to the performance as well, with her decisions determining the interaction between artists.

Analysis

[3.1] Edward Cone refers to the vocal persona in a song as its protagonist. "Every song is to a certain extent a little opera," he says (1974, 21). Simon Frith agrees: "All songs are implied narratives. They have a central character, the singer" (1996, 169). I find it useful to imagine mashups as sonic plays with two significant variables: setting and character. The most common type of mashup is the basic A + B mashup, where the instrumentals from one song are used in tandem with the vocals from another song (Boone 2013).[(3)] In this play analogy, the instrumentals serve as the setting and the singer as the character. Significantly, the singer has been pulled out of his original musical environment and thrown into a new one, usually without his consent. Burns, Lafrance, and Hawley base their analytical model on the "*dynamic* interaction of lyrical and musical expressive gestures" (2008, 11). This dynamic aspect of lyrical and musical interaction becomes even greater in a mashup than in a traditional pop song. The dynamism comes in as the singer becomes part of an entirely new band, and the band members find themselves backing up a different singer. Of course, it is important to remember when analyzing the characters' interaction that it is still the DJ who is truly in control. He has the power to put these musicians into

conversation with each other—conversations that were never originally intended. In his recent article on Danger Mouse, Kyle Adams argues that the mashup is an act of performance, not by the musical artists, but by the DJ himself (2015). This is a unique position: the DJ is able to interpret two musical works simultaneously (2015, 18). In so doing, the mashup places several other binaries into question, especially those that Aram Sinnreich discusses in his 2010 book on mashups: artist vs. audience, original vs. copy, and performance vs. composition.

[3.2] A clear example of this kind of performance occurs when DJ Eamon takes a bravado-filled, hyper-masculine singer and places him in a foreign setting in "Eminenya" (2001), a combination of Eminem's "The Real Slim Shady" (2000) and "Orinoco Flow" by Enya (1988); see **Audio Example 1**.[(4)] Eminem spends the majority of the track rapping about how he is different from other celebrities: he is real, he curses, he doesn't care about awards, he hates pop groups and wants to destroy them, and he believes that other people who act like him are just imitators. The original backing to Eminem's rap is a retro-sounding drum beat and synthesizer melody. The old-school style synthesizer sounds a bit facetious, and it draws attention to the fact that Eminem "[doesn't] give a fuck" (as he says in the lyrics), and that he does not spend much money or effort on production values. The plausibility of this stance is fairly ludicrous.[(5)] But regardless of the cost and effort that went into making the album, Eminem's music comes across as being closer to the "raw" side of the slick-raw continuum, and the focus is on his rapping. Raw and masculine are intertwined in this example. When placed over Enya's instrumentals, however, the aesthetic profile of the song completely changes. The music to "Orinoco Flow" has a lush, heavily-produced (synthesized) orchestral texture. Moreover, Enya herself is associated with the "New Age" style of music. The effect is one of sublime absurdity: "Eminenya" reduces Eminem to blathering on about his imitators over what now sounds like inspirational music. His rap, originally full of braggadocio, has been completely disempowered by Enya's slickly-produced, and thoroughly feminized music. The setting overturns Eminem's appeals to rawness and masculinity, and his professed resistance to commerciality. He is exposed for the commercial artist that he in fact is, and he is made to look ridiculous complaining about the commerciality of other pop stars.

[3.3] **Example 1** is a chart of performed masculinity and femininity in mashups, and the predicted power relationships that could result from these interactions. "Eminenya" fits into the cell outlined in bold, and the power relationship that results matches the analysis above: "Masculine is heard out of context; feminine takes control." The chart will be discussed in more detail as additional examples are analyzed. Although Eminem and Enya themselves map fairly straightforwardly (pun intended) onto the heteronormative gender binary system, a mashup artist like DJ Eamon has the potential to subvert this binary through the juxtaposition of these two songs. In this case, he brings Eminem's rawness and masculinity into question through its recontextualization.

[3.4] Feminine-performing subjects can be taken out of their original contexts, too. Beyoncé's "Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It)" (2008) seemingly has little in common with the whistled theme song from "The Andy Griffith Show."[(6)] One is a sexy dance anthem; the other was used to introduce a wholesome 1960s sitcom about life in small-town America. They do, however, share a harmonic similarity (namely, a significant amount of time on a single major triad with the occasional move to a IV chord), which DJ Party Ben exploits in his mashup "Single Ladies in Mayberry" (2008); **Audio Example 2**. This mashup plucks Beyoncé out of her usual urban dance environment and places her instead in the apparent innocence of rural Mayberry, perhaps singing to Andy Taylor or Barney Fife. In the mashup, Beyoncé's original message remains: she is a proud, unattached woman. If her boyfriend wanted to keep her, he should have proposed to her. But the meaning is also changed through the recontextualization of these vocals. Transported to a very foreign locale, this tough, urban woman now seems overly brash against the old-timey, rural atmosphere evoked by the "Andy Griffith" theme. In this case, "Single Ladies" is definitely the more "slick" element of the mashup. It has obviously been produced in a studio; in the original song, Beyoncé's voice has been tracked a number of times to enable her to sing her own backup vocals. There are also noticeable echo effects, and the instrumentation is almost all synthesized sound. The "raw" element is the unprocessed whistling with its simple guitar and drum background. But Griffith doesn't escape the transformative power of the mashup. His once-innocent whistling can be viewed through a much more threatening lens when seen beside a sexy

woman: could Andy Griffith be catcalling to Beyoncé?(7) In this interpretation, some of our character's power gets taken away as she is held under the male gaze. In addition to the oppositions rural/urban and female/male, that of black/white also becomes very apparent in this mashup, especially given the usual absence of any people of color on "The Andy Griffith Show." Beyoncé is out of place in every way in Mayberry. This, of course, can become quite disturbing, because "The Andy Griffith Show" was about wholesomeness, which was defined by white people in the 1960s. The opposite of wholesomeness, then, becomes projected onto Beyoncé, her blackness, her urbanism, and her femininity.

[3.5] **Example 2** shows the masculine/feminine interaction chart again, this time with "Single Ladies in Mayberry" located in the bold-outlined cell. Like "Eminenya," this example maps "masculine" onto "raw" and "feminine" onto "slick" fairly directly. DJ Party Ben, however, doesn't work to subvert this binary the way that DJ Eamon did above. This particular juxtaposition serves to reinforce the stereotypical gender binary by emphasizing difference and alienating Beyoncé from her new instrumental context.

[3.6] As noted, both of the previous examples feature a female artist as the "slick" side of the mashup (Beyoncé, Enya) and a male artist as the "raw" side (Andy Griffith, Eminem), whether used as character or setting. The vast majority of mashups function this way, because mashups are a reflection, not only of our musical landscape but also of the way gender roles are represented and reinforced in our culture. Women in our society are supposed to be beautiful and polished; this holds true in the music industry as well. While there are notable exceptions to this rule, Melissa Click and Michael Kramer found that a majority of mainstream pop music videos featuring women performers placed the bodies of those performers on display, compared to those featuring male performers. People who watch the videos, therefore, are "invited to gaze on [the female performer's] physical beauty" (Click and Kramer 2007, 256). Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie (1990) remark on the differences between music made by men and music made by women. Men's music, especially that of the "cock rock" genre, is aggressive, explicit, and dominating— raw, in other words. Women, on the other hand, are glamourous. "Female musicians," they say, "have rarely been able to make their own musical versions of the oppositional rebellious hard edges that male rock can embody"(Frith and McRobbie 1990, 377). It is for this reason that finding an example of a mashup where the raw element aligns with the female element is difficult. Finding an example of a single, un-mashed up song with this alignment can be difficult as well. A potentially related aspect to consider is that the majority of mashup artists and DJs are also male.(8) Finally, it should be reiterated that "slick" and "raw," like "masculine" and "feminine," are not two distinct categories in binary opposition to each other. There is a continuum from slick to raw, as there is from male to female. It is possible for a performer to embody certain elements on the raw side of the spectrum and other elements on the slick side.

[3.7] Mashup artist Lenlow created the track "Mercedes Beck" (2008) by using the vocals from Janis Joplin's "Mercedes Benz" (1971) and both music and vocals from Beck's "Go It Alone" (2005); see **Audio Example 3**. Janis Joplin is one of the rare women in popular music who tends to lean toward the raw side of the continuum: both her appearance and her performances were unpolished and gritty, a far cry from most other female singers of the 1960s. "[Her] gender presentation and sexuality were somewhat ambiguous," notes Doris Leibetseder (2012, 5). Beck also subverts gender norms as he finds his place on the slick-raw spectrum. He seems to have deliberately tried to make his image lean more toward the raw side; Beck makes it clear in early interviews that he hasn't been influenced by the music industry and has remained true to his underground roots as a struggling artist (Wild 1994). This narrative has been hard to maintain, however, in light of more than two decades of commercial success. His music tells a different story, as well. When listening to his albums, it becomes obvious that Beck has technical expertise. He uses samples to create musical collages, and he spends a lot of time perfecting each track. "You're working on a song for 16 hours straight," he says in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, "and you're not even talking anymore. It's a subhuman state – sort of like an alien" (Dunn 1996). Despite its cult status and aims at authenticity, Beck's music is slickly produced, especially when juxtaposed with the music of Janis Joplin.

[3.8] Joplin states, "I'd like to do a song of great social and political import," as she does ironically at the beginning of her source track. Immediately after this remark, drums, handclaps, and the bass line from "Go It Alone" enter. Joplin sings her verses over this backing from Beck, but Beck performs his own verse and chorus sections alone. Here these parts are lifted directly from "Go It Alone" with no additions from "Mercedes Benz." This mashup was probably relatively easy to construct. First, no pitch shifting was done; the songs have the same tonic pitch (E♭) in their original versions. Second, "Go It Alone" was slowed down only slightly to fit with Joplin's tempo. Finally, "Mercedes Benz" is an a cappella track. Joplin's singing is accompanied only by a very faint drum beat (or perhaps Joplin herself tapping her foot). Ease of construction doesn't necessarily correlate with the quality or effect that a mashup may produce. This simplicity may indeed be one of the reasons motivating a mashup artist's initial choice of two particular songs.

[3.9] Despite the fact that Joplin begins the track with her tongue-in-cheek statement about what's to come, Beck seems to be the one in charge during most of this mashup. The drums, handclaps, and bassline add polish to Joplin's raw, potentially unfinished-sounding song. And, as mentioned before, Joplin is completely pushed out of the mix during the chorus. The other verse and chorus sections, though part of a mashup, involve no mashing, and are the exact choruses from "Go It Alone" by Beck. A chart of the structure of "Mercedes Beck" can be seen in **Example 3**. This table makes it clear that Beck is the dominating force in this mashup. He performs all of the music and sings as much as Janis Joplin (not counting her brief, spoken intro and outro).

[3.10] Because of this added complexity, the location of "Mercedes Beck" on the masculine/feminine interaction chart is more difficult to pinpoint. During the brief sections where Joplin sings ("Feminine vocals, Unaltered masculine instrumentals"), the resulting power relationship would be identical to that of "Single Ladies in Mayberry": "Feminine is heard out of context; masculine takes control." As noted above, however, these moments make up a relatively small portion of the mashup as a whole. Overall, "Mercedes Beck" can best be located outside of the chart, because masculine vocals are interacting with masculine instrumentals, or instrumentals from the same song. This is not a category that I expected to encounter when analyzing mashups that feature musicians who perform gender as differently as Beck and Janis Joplin. Beck ends up in control, not because of recontextualized vocals, but because of Joplin's musical absence and lyrical sparsity. This mashup both subverts gender performance norms by using Joplin's unrefined vocals, and reinforces them by giving her so little time in the spotlight. Jodie Taylor (2012) applauds performances that queer normativity, as Joplin's tended to do. "However," Taylor continues, "the multiple potential of meanings suggests that the measurement of [their] success will always remain ambiguous, thus the political and subversive potential of the performance is always contextual" (2012, 34). Just using a strong female musician isn't enough to completely flip the power balance; she needs to be given space to command, as well.

[3.11] The power balance situation can be even more complicated when a mashup features more than one singer in a conversational texture. When two singers interact vocally in a mashup, they are essentially forced into a duet by the controlling DJ. The resulting power relationship can vary, depending on the ways in which the musical elements combine, as well as conversational juxtapositions that arise. "Closer to Spice" (c. 2002), an anonymous mashup, features both music and vocals from Nine Inch Nails and the Spice Girls.[(9)] Mel B. and Geri, two of the Spice Girls, begin their song "Wannabe" (1996), over a sped-up beat from the Nine Inch Nails song "Closer" (1994), and are then rudely interrupted by Trent Reznor (**Audio Example 4**). The juxtaposition—not just musically, but conversationally—yields an arresting confrontation. The lyrics of the Spice Girls are coy. It is somewhat ambiguous what they "really, really want," because they never quite say it. Although it can be easily interpreted as a *double entendre*, the media image of the Spice Girls was basically that of "nice" girls, and their music was marketed to a pre-teen audience. But Trent Reznor's lyrics are not so nice or coy. He declares what *he* really, really wants, crudely unmasking the *double entendre*. In this way, Reznor seems to invade the Spice Girls' musical space and appropriate their unspoken desire for himself. This comes off as an unwelcome interruption, which is both funny and potentially disturbing. In fact, the listener perceives that Reznor essentially takes control of the entire song, beginning at this pivotal moment of invasion. His vocals serve as the central character for the majority of the rest of the mashup. "Closer to Spice" is another example

that doesn't fit easily into a single cell on the masculine/feminine interaction chart, because in this particular case of lyrical interaction, the act of interruption acts as a key element in the power relationship. Musical aspects from both songs remain in the mix for the entire track, but Reznor's aggressive vocal entrance and subsequent lyrical takeover set the tone for the power imbalance between the Spice Girls and himself. The Spice Girls do insert the occasional line, but when they do, it seems superfluous (see **Example 4** and **Audio Example 5**). This feeling of gratuitousness perhaps stems from the fact that this mashup isn't particularly refined, tonally. "Closer" is using pitches primarily from the C pentatonic minor collection, and this particular part of "Wannabe" starts with a G major triad, which is less harmonically compatible. But the lack of coherence in this section does serve to emphasize the Spice Girls' alienation and powerlessness in the mashup. Their tonality, and their control, has been wrenched away from them in yet another reinforcement of the gender binary.

[3.12] In all of the previous examples, characters or singers have been yanked out of their original environments and thrust into a new setting. In these situations, the setting or musical background is the controlling variable of the mashup, forcing change upon a dependent character who is inserted into the mashup. Singers, however, can appear to exert control over a setting, as well. "Enter Telephone" (2010) is a mashup by DJs From Mars that combines "Telephone" by Lady Gaga (2009) and "Enter Sandman" by Metallica (1991). While I do consider this to be a basic mashup with Gaga's vocals over Metallica's instrumentals, it is different from the previous two examples because some of the musical (setting) elements from "Telephone" do indeed make it into the mix. At the beginning of the track, the dance beat seems to be dictating the entrances of the electric guitar. Even when Lady Gaga starts to sing, Kirk Hammett's guitar part appears to back her up, playing a subsidiary role. Her vocals are center stage, and she demands that her accompanist follow her (**Audio Example 6**). However, the power balance seems to shift as the chorus begins. Gaga's voice becomes higher and a bit more vulnerable, while the electric guitars (more than one, now) become louder and more insistently rhythmic (**Audio Example 7**). This particular mashup becomes a two-sided gendered power struggle rather than a hostile takeover by a single party. The balance shifts from one side to the other at various parts of the track, but Lady Gaga does seem to win out in the end. There is a climactic break-down section where DJs From Mars take Metallica's guitar parts and essentially turn them into a dance beat (**Audio Example 8**). The singer fully controls the song, as the instrumentals have been manipulated in order to serve her better. Does this mashup make Lady Gaga seem more raw, authentic, masculine, or tough because of the setting for her voice? Perhaps. But this change in meaning seems to be happening with her permission, or even at her insistence, rather than being out of her control. **Example 5** shows the masculine/feminine interaction chart one final time, with "Enter Telephone" located in the bold-outlined cell. The transformation of the "masculine instrumentals" results in "Masculine is heard as changed; feminine takes control." DJs From Mars, then, have effectively challenged the gender binary with the construction of this mashup.

[3.13] The key element that leads to this more nuanced mashup, then, is transformation of setting, which allows a character to retain his or her original power. When the instrumentals of a song remain unchanged, and thereby function as the background of a mashup, they set the stage for the singer and demand that he or she fit into the prefabricated setting, as we saw with both Beyoncé and Eminem. When the instrumentals are changed, however, the singer appears to be more in charge of the situation. Why? Because the change appears to be happening at the demand of the character. The musical background is being changed to suit the singer's vocal line, giving him or her an authority over the musical form and texture. This is what happens in the previous example, "Enter Telephone." DJs From Mars manipulate Metallica's heavy metal guitars into an electronic dance music beat, completely stripping them of their original meaning and leaving Lady Gaga in control of the song.

[3.14] The illusion that a vocal character or a musical setting can be "in control" is an easily maintained narrative in the genre of mashups. Listeners hear the interaction between these two musical elements and can't help but imagine that the interaction is literally taking place. However, the narrative tends to break down when a DJ or composer works with a single piece of music, as in a remix. In my typology of recycled music, I define a remix as involving only "one previously

existing song, and it must retain enough of the original song that it can still be identified as 'the same song'" (Boone 2013, 6.1).[10] There are many different types of remixes—most notably, those designed for dance clubs. But Canadian composer John Oswald's famously illegal *Plunderphonic* albums demonstrate a different type of remix. These tracks exploit pitch/tempo shifts, as a way to make a commentary on artists' original recordings. An example that stands out is the track "Pretender" (1988), which is constructed from a Dolly Parton cover of "The Great Pretender" (1984) originally recorded by the Platters (1955); see **Audio Example 9**. Oswald essentially manipulates magnetic tape to masculinize Dolly Parton.[11] He begins the track at a very fast speed, making Parton's high, feminine voice *too* high (a là "Alvin and the Chipmunks"). The tempo of the tape is then gradually slowed down for the remainder of the track. The result is that Parton slowly transforms into a soulful tenor and then a very expressive bass/baritone. Her vocal timbre remains beautiful throughout the pitch shifts, although the sinking pitch and slowing tempo make it feel as though a music box needs to be wound again. Dolly Parton herself has a very "conspicuously gendered image" (Edwards 2016, 189), with her large breasts, cascading hair (usually a wig), and Southern charm. In fact, she acknowledges that this exaggerated performance of gender is "highly staged" (Edwards 2016, 189), and in assuming this persona, she plays on a "male notion of femininity" (Frith 1996, 213). But this masculine voice has the effect of turning her into a drag queen.[12] Oswald's 1988 remix was uncannily prescient. Since then, Parton has continued to become more and more "artificial," as she changed her physical features, presumably with some combination of surgeries, injections, and makeup. Oswald and Parton are pushing in opposite directions. He makes her artificially masculine as she makes herself artificially feminine. In the case of a remix, the illusion of the character having control quickly fades; it becomes clear that the composer (DJ) holds the reigns.

Conclusion

[4.1] Mashups celebrate difference by demonstrating similarity; the best mashup artists combine markedly dissimilar tracks into a musically cohesive whole; true mashup fans acknowledge unanticipated similarities and allow their own aesthetics to change. This appreciation of recontextualized music may map aesthetics onto larger potentials for recontextualization as well. As I have demonstrated by analyzing the interaction of vocals and instrumentals within a particular track, mashups that combine musical artists who perform gender differently can serve as key sites for various manifestations of dynamic masculine/feminine power relationships, both reinforcing and reimagining those relationships. To summarize, an unaltered musical setting seems to exert control over its newly-introduced singer, while altered musical settings usually cede power to vocalists, as the transformed setting is heard as accommodating them. The nuances of each interaction are complicated and context-dependent. The proportion of music, whether vocal or instrumental, can lead to a particular artist dominating the texture of a mashup, and the act of interruption can serve as a way to take that power away. The interaction of these vocals and settings and the resultant power relationships, then, can also serve to either highlight the gender binary (as in the cases of "Eminenya," "Single Ladies from Mayberry," and "Closer to Spice") or challenge it (like "Enter Telephone").

[4.2] The true artists of these tracks, the DJs, have been anonymized, and are thereby freed of responsibility, as they individually either reinforce masculine hegemony or strategically subvert societal assumptions. Gender performance and mashup performance are not prescriptive activities, but interpretive acts. Journalist Ivor Tossell, quoted at the beginning of this article said that the best mashups add up to "more than the sum of their parts" (2005). The added value in a mashup is not just the action of a clever artist; it is also the subjective and contingent act of interpretation. Philip Auslander argues that performance analysis "is as much interpretive as it is descriptive" (2004, 4). Each act of interpretive analysis thereby adds another element to each piece of music, elements that the original performers never intended, and that even the DJ may not have had in mind when creating the mashup. Aesthetic relationships are heard and felt as expressing deeper modes of lived experience, both revealing and enhancing music's affective power.

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Footnotes

* This article is based on a presentation given at the 2014 joint meeting of the Society for Music Theory and the American Musicological Society in Milwaukee, WI. Many thanks to Jennifer Beavers, Lori Burns, Toby King, and Matthew Richmond for their invaluable input on drafts of this article.
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1. They can be, however. This is a genre that I term a "cover mashup" (Boone 2013).
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2. N.B. Most commercially-produced tracks have some element of unseen control, as well: the producer or engineer. However, one imagines that the work is done in collaboration with the artists, or at least with their knowledge.
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3. “Instrumentals” is the term that mashup artists and DJs use for tracks where the vocal parts have been removed. See (Roseman 2007).
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4. DJ Eamon actually used a sound-alike cover version of “Orinoco Flow,” which, as I discuss in (Boone 2013), creates the same effect as if he had used the original recording.
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5. It is unclear whether or not this is meant to be plausible, or whether Eminem is poking fun at himself. I could not find any data on how much *The Marshall Mathers LP*, the album that contains “The Real Slim Shady,” cost to make. A minimal production budget is doubtful, however, given that the album was produced by Dr. Dre, featured many guest musicians, and was released by three major record labels.
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6. The actual title of this song is “The Fishin’ Hole” (1960).
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7. Thanks to Rachel Mitchell for pointing out this interpretation.
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8. This is a widely-acknowledged problem; see Harrison 2015.
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9. I have tried in vain to find the original source of this mashup. Although it is mentioned in two books by Todd Souvignier (2003a, 7 and 2003b, 158), it seems to exist only in regurgitated contexts, like the YouTube video that was posted in 2010. Even some YouTube comments discuss the ambiguity of the year of this mashup’s creation.
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10. It should be noted that the concept of “remix” is constantly growing and changing. See Navas, Gallagher, and burrough 2015.
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11. The original *Plunderphonics* EP, although released in 1988, was created exclusively with magnetic tape, not digital technology.
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12. Parton 1994 makes this comparison. In referring to her overstated appearance, she states: “I’ve always said that if I hadn’t been a woman, I would have been a drag queen” (309).
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