

**THE NEW AURAL ACTUALITY: AN EXPLORATION OF MUSIC, SOUND AND
MEANING IN THE COMPOSED FEATURE DOCUMENTARY PODCAST**

by

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Abstract

This practice-led thesis explores the creative techniques and philosophies used in composing feature documentary podcasts and how listeners engage with the material and make meaning from it. Podcasting as a medium presents a new and so far unexplored way of interfacing with audio documentary and this study works to demonstrate crucial differences from radio practice in terms of intention and expression, how material is made, consideration for its audience, and how its programmes are distributed. Using post-structural theory, specifically Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on interconnected networks of affective transmission, podcasting's relationship to radio is explored, as is how listeners make meaning through their interaction with both the heard material and the devices upon which it is accessed. These theories are then applied to the characteristically open remit of the audio documentary to study how speech, music, sound and silence may be understood to generate meaning, emotion and a sense of immersion in the listener. It is suggested that modes of programme access, listening customs, and interpretational symbolism work together to impart information vital to the ability to connote and denote what is being heard, and that in this way the composed feature can be situated very closely to musical practice and engagement. Taking cues from musical and cinematic analytical practice three podcast programmes are closely scrutinised for an understanding of their constituent material, structural shape, and potential affective transmissions, before interviews with their producers are presented to discuss conceptual intentions and execution. Six programmes are presented as the practice component of the thesis, each made to experiment with and reflect upon different aspects of creative or listening practice, with conclusions drawn concerning their implications and effectiveness.

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I wish to dedicate this text to my endlessly patient partner Sophie, and to those seeking to engage with audio documentary in the most creative, unique and expressive ways possible.

USB flash drive contents and portfolio podcast feed

‘Podcasts’ folder

1. Goodwin Sands Radiogram: *Is It In My Head?* (2016)
2. *Seaside Towns, Seaside Frowns: Margate Twenty-Seventeen* (2017)
3. *Nota Bene: Canterbury Christ Church University and the CPBRA* (2018)
4. *Hibernus Opus Continuum* (2019)
5. Goodwin Sands Radiogram: *Transmission* (2017)
6. Goodwin Sands Radiogram: *Magical Mystery Tour* (2019)

These podcasts can all be found on iTunes-powered podcast distribution apps such as Podcast Addict, as well as TuneIn and Podbean. Search for ‘The Audiosphere’, the name taken from my corresponding portfolio website (<http://theaudiosphere.com>), and subscribe and download as per normal podcast acquisition. Please note that for copyright reasons this feed is not available through Spotify. All files are mp3 format as appropriate for podcast distribution.

‘Practitioner interviews’ folder

1. Brendan Baker, *Love+Radio* producer (interview undertaken on 23rd Nov 2018)
2. Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell, *Wireless Nights* producers (16th Jan 2019)
3. Vanessa Lowe, *Nocturne* producer (8th Aug 2019)

‘Analysed podcasts’ folder

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2. *Wireless Nights: Night Manoeuvres* (2015)
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Introduction

This is a practice-led research thesis investigating the audio feature documentary, the mechanisms by which it imparts information to its listeners, and its form within the new medium of podcasting. Traditionally an entity of radio, the podcast iteration of the feature format exhibits subtle but telling differences which speak of the socio-technological characteristics of podcasting, an entertainment genre in its late stages of formation but still malleable due to the egalitarian principles of the Internet upon which it is built (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 200).

The study is composed of four sections, three of which constitute theoretical background investigation informing the fourth, which is the realisation of six podcast feature documentaries constructed in response to the contextual research. The three theoretical components consist of a literature review, close analysis of some exemplary programmes (accompanied by interviews with their producers), and a commentary section describing the intentions of the audio pieces produced for this research thesis. Together these components work to answer the following questions:

- How does the creative deployment of audio material in a documentary feature context work to impart meaning for the listener?
- To what extent has the democratisation of the creation and distribution of the audio feature influenced its form?
- What are the distinctions between podcast feature documentaries and their radio counterparts, and how might these affect listeners' reception and understanding of their content?
- How can answering the above questions improve my practice as a creator/composer?

This research is timely not only because of podcasting's status as a newly recognised and codified form but also because of its perceived closeness to radio. The study of radio is still

considered somewhat fresh and scholarship of the audio documentary form even more so (Lindgren and McHugh, 2013: 102), with podcasting only receiving its permanent name in 2004 (Berry, 2016: 662) and academic recognition in 2006, two years later (Berry, 2006: 143-162). Like television and film, radio is now subject to scrutiny and problematisation through its relationship to the Internet, with scholars mostly considering these forms ‘remediated’ – a process which describes the changes a medium undergoes as it is reshaped by external socioeconomic forces brought about in response to online and/or digital opportunities and challenges (Bolter and Grusin, 1999: 44-50). The podcast, by contrast, can only exist *because of* and *upon* the Internet – radio is a precursor by nature of its audio-only substance but the relationship between the two is complicated by dint of their separation in both time and technology. Research exists suggesting that some podcast producers begin making programmes with radio practice their intention (Markman, 2012: 555) and that for these people established radio forms are too editorially inaccessible, however both restricted service licences and online digital broadcasting exist which might solve this issue were this to prove the sole creative driving force. People select the medium for definitive reasons.

Such broadcast and online streaming technologies make the definition of the podcast an extremely tricky question and chapter one seeks to answer this as a foundation upon which the rest of the thesis stands. It is suggested that applying the post-structuralist philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari (amongst more contemporary scholars in the field) concerning the transmission and embodiment of affect might be a useful approach in helping to navigate away from the dualist tensions of classification, and this idea is also applied to the means by which podcasts are distributed. An opportunity to test the conceptualisation of this theory is offered to the reader in chapter three, taking as it does a BBC podcast originally written for Radio 4 for close analysis in its podcast form (though chapter two offers the most extensive theoretical work in this vein, which constitutes the literature review proper).

It is worth noting that when this thesis was begun in 2016 the study of podcasts was new and no centrally cohesive literature had been published which worked to collect together the dispersed and isolated clutches of research into the subject. This changed in 2018 with the publication of *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media* edited by Dario Llinares, Neil Fox and Richard Berry, and *Podcasting: The Audio Media Revolution* in 2019 by Martin Spinelli and Lance Dann. It was something of a relief to read that my research was largely in line with the content of these books, though to my knowledge the podcast has not been extensively interrogated using affect theory, particularly in consideration of its socio-technological aspects of delivery and listening habits (though Stacey Copeland applies it to a feminist investigation of the audio content of *The Heart* podcast in Llinares *et al.* (2018: 209-225)). Research into podcast documentary is well catered for in this scholarship as podcasting's standard-bearing show *Serial* is of that genre (see Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 175-198 and Hancock and McMurtry (2018: 81-105))¹, but what I could not have known when beginning this research was how little in the way of *composed feature* documentary podcasting there would turn out to be as the medium matured through the years of study. This has in fact become something of a subtext for the thesis, particularly notable in the producer interview sections of chapter three.

Podcast documentary has become overwhelmingly *Serial*-inflected, establishing a narrative style 'which was informed by, and exploratory of, podcast media identity' (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 83). What Lindgren and McHugh refer to as the 'European-driven style' (2013: 106) is what radio producer Alfred Braun was moved to describe as 'acoustical film' – radio which possesses a 'dreamlike quality ... deliberately transferring the techniques of moving pictures to the radio' (in Gilfillan, 2009: 3), demonstrating a very open format brief and that which could encapsulate many styles of approach and execution. Such 'edited actuality' (Gilliam, 1950: 9) is seldom allowed to speak for itself in the modern

¹ Not to forget the stanchion of research that is Biewen and Dilworth's 2010 overview of the subject *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* which features a chapter by Jad Abumrad, producer of pre-*Serial* podcast *Radiolab* which demonstrates sublime mastery of the illustrative music/sound-as-exposition trope so common in documentary audio (see 2010: 44-53).

podcast documentary as the majority of contemporary series are tightly scripted with minimal use of immersive sound in a manner which allows the listener to let their imagination flourish. With the podcast largely being a US-driven mode of entertainment (Sullivan, 2018: 54) it should come as no surprise that its documentaries should be so influenced by the *This American Life* school of audio journalism (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 180). Podcasts such as *Love+Radio*, without an omniscient and omnipresent voiceover guide, can be challenging, mystifying and even alienating, but also owe a great deal of their freedom of creative expression to the space offered by the introduction of such abstraction. Podcast commercial practice has become that of courting listener engagement to boost visibility via popularity rankings in terms of numbers of downloads and series reviews and to risk confusing one's audience is to court potential failure. Consequently even the gentlest challenging of the listener has become anathema to the great majority of producers, leading to the somewhat predictable shape of programmes now commonly heard. Brendan Baker, whose interview can be read in chapter three, expresses surprise that the more experimental sorts of programmes (on which his production career is based) have not received more attention given podcasting's open access qualities, and in a 2018 webinar given by Julie Shapiro, founder of podcasting network Radiotopia, creative documentary was notably absent from the extensive list of genres she suggested contemporary podcasting to be made from. *Nocturne*, a creative documentary podcast produced by Vanessa Lowe, exhibits the common editorial shape instituted by Serial and is included alongside more open-space examples of programmes analysed in chapter three in order to demonstrate and comment upon this phenomenon.

Chapter two's literature review deals most fully with the way the component material of the composed feature documentary is understood as a listener. Acknowledging Michael Bull's 2000 research on the way users use their personal music players in urban spaces, the listening mechanisms of podcast users are extrapolated. This is a common theme among podcast scholarship due to research which suggests podcast listeners most often engage using

headphones (Edison Research, 2018: online).² The question of attention to heard material is discussed (something addressed by Spinelli and Dann with a shrewd thought experiment (2019: 116)), with the possibly surprising conclusion that one might pay best attention to audio material when physically occupied with another less demanding task – the ‘secondariness’ from which Crisell’s conception of radio suffers (1994: 162) appears to perhaps be its strength. Attention then turns to the mechanisms by which listeners make meaning from heard audio content.

Drawing on research in the areas of audio drama, cinema and music, the ways by which sound is semiotically understood are compared and discussed in the most substantial section of the literature review. Crisell’s notion that all radio is comprised of speech, music, sound and silence (1994: 5-6) is interrogated, deconstructed and used a tool by which to investigate the different characteristics of heard sound and how they make meaning in the ears of the listener. Specifically, Michel Chion’s theoretical work on cinematic sound, R. Murray Schafer’s research into the inherent music present in the soundscape, Lance Sieveking and Tim Crook’s work on sound design for radio and Philip Tagg’s exhaustive work on how music is understood (specifically by the untrained non-musician) are compared side by side to bring together a theory which conceptualises the composed feature documentary as musical practice in its own right. The terminology gained from this comparative work, combined with the earlier philosophical discussion of affective transmission, is then applied as a methodology for chapter three’s close analysis of three podcast episodes. Conclusions of this research are noted and explored before chapter four’s commentaries on the practical component of the thesis are offered, concluding the written component. The audio pieces can be found on the accompanying flash drive as well as being accessed via podcast aggregation apps by searching for ‘The Audiosphere’ podcast.

² While this is widely accepted by the literature available, there is a risk that this acknowledgement becomes something of an unwieldy presumption. While 44% of users polled listen this way, the next 40% (comprised of those who listen through their radio sets or computer speakers) nevertheless listen ‘out loud’ – a nearly equally significant proportion. I foresee this yet unaddressed area of research requiring development in the future.

Notes on this thesis: the English language, and podcast citation practice

Throughout this thesis reference is made to the ‘paraverbal’, a neologism coined as an extension of Philip Tagg’s ‘paramusical’ (that which is ‘*alongside, or in connection with the music, as an intrinsic part of musical semiosis in a real cultural context*’ (italics in original) (2013: 229). Paraverbal is that information which can be extrapolated from hearing speech aside of the spoken word but is nevertheless inextricable – an effect whereby one might be able to ascertain a speaker’s place of origin through accent or dialect, or snatch a clue to their mood or state of mind, for example. In a study concerned so deeply with sound semiotics and that which seeks to critique Crisell’s placing of speech as the ‘primary code’ of audio communication (1994: 5-6) it may come as a surprise that the focus of this study concentrates solely on English language programmes.

This decision was made following some deep consideration of the philosophical impact of such a choice from the outset, but Tagg’s definition of the paramusical (and therefore, by extension, the paraverbal) settled my thinking. His reference to the ‘real cultural context’ underlines the need for one to be *of*, or at least deeply knowledgeable and invested *in*, a culture to be able to grasp its speakers’ nuances and delicate shades of meaning. Crook suggests that listening to a foreign language audio drama might facilitate a ‘65 to 70 per cent’ understanding of the material (1999: 84), which is, frankly, not enough, even with the accompanying sound working at its hardest to compensate. As a monoglot my own personal cultural subjectivity when hearing material in languages other than English causes an affective response along the lines of frustration that I cannot understand the language, coupled with what is probably the curiously British embarrassment of never having mastered another tongue. Having tested my ability to overcome this via a listening experience at the ECREA radio conference in Lublin in 2017 – where a documentary piece entitled *The Golden Boy*³ was played out for the audience in its native Polish with an accompanying text

³ Produced by Kasia Michalak for Polskie Radio Lublin, sound by Jarosław Gołofit, winner of the *Prix Marulić* documentary prize 2014.

translation provided – I discovered that a great deal of paraverbal information was lost when compared to hearing material in my native language. The issue is not solely, however, with the language spoken but also one’s cultural distance from the speaker and the issues around the ability to pick up upon interpretational cues over dialect, class, and emotion this potentially disallows. Affective reception is a deeply personal phenomenon and since one can only ever describe one’s own personal experience and cultural knowledge it was decided to keep the study to English language programmes only.

Throughout this thesis numerous podcasts are mentioned by name, and, as new medium, a decision had to be taken on a method of citing them in an academic context. The Harvard method is employed for this text but when referring to a podcast series (rather than individual episodes) it proves difficult to apply as it is not always possible to cite a web address as a source due to the nature of podcast hosting and the usage of the RSS (‘really simple syndication’) distribution method.

Podcasts can be hosted anywhere online which is made available for public access, and while hosting services such as Libsyn and Anchor specialise in allowing one to upload and make available their work without technical knowledge it is possible, nevertheless, for shows to reside on private servers or in other locations which are inaccessible directly. For a programme to be downloaded in a podcast app it requires an RSS feed to be submitted to aggregators who then index its content, graphics, and descriptions, and make it available for use. An RSS feed link could be supplied in citation here in lieu of the usual web address but this introduces more difficulties: a feed-reading piece of software would then be required to unlock the content to which it links, which is a solution neither particularly user friendly or accessible. Podcasts, like most Internet content, can be fluid in nature and subject to alteration or deletion (this is the reason that the analysed podcasts of chapter 3 are included on the accompanying flash drive), and likewise their hosting arrangements.

Therefore it has been decided to follow the lead of Llinares *et al.* (2018) and Spinelli and Dann (2019) in their adoption of the practice of simply referring to podcast series by their names without further citation in the bibliography. In each case care has been taken for the podcast to be referred to by exactly the name to which searches in podcast apps respond – hence *Love and Radio* being referred to throughout by its indexed title *Love+Radio*. Individual podcast shows are cited as per Harvard convention as, helpfully, all the individual programmes discussed in this thesis have accompanying web pages. It is hoped that this solution to a very modern problem will be deemed acceptable to the reader.

Chapter 1: Definitions and boundaries of research

When considering media one must engage with a set of traditions and practices that constitute the form represented. The naming and classification of a form has traditionally been dictated by the physical mechanics and manifestations of it as well as the distribution methods and networks that surround it – radio could be defined as an audio-only medium distributed by wireless transmission, for example, or feature films by the analogue-print reel to reel configuration of moving pictures traditionally projected in theatres. As media has developed both technologically and creatively, however, these markers have begun to shift, blur and become less designatory, and this concerns the distinct but closely interrelated concepts of how the medium is known and understood by its audience, and its associated working and creative practices.

Much contemporary media scholarship talks of convergence – the social, cultural and economic factors causing previously delineated media forms to cross-pollinate and intertwine (Dwyer, 2010: 8). This phenomenon might be misunderstood as coming about as a result of the multimedia capabilities of the Internet and home computing allowing previously discrete media to coexist and merge, but the truth is that convergence of form in both the senses of media classification and content is dateable to the pre-digital age, despite technologically deterministic rhetoric to the contrary (Bolter and Grusin, 1999: 221-222). Music, for example, can exist as live performance and recorded media on its own terms but it quickly became a keystone of cinema, radio, and television in pre-digital times, and the same can be said for feature films making up a notable portion of television's output long before Netflix and other online digital streaming services were either conceived of or had an infrastructure available.

Bearing this in mind it is important for this thesis to outline what is contextually meant by both the concept of the *podcast* and the concept of the *composed feature* within it, and that is what the following two sections of this chapter will demarcate.

The definition of the podcast is a subject that causes much deliberation amongst radio scholars (Llinares, *et al.*, 2018: 4-5) and, just as much as new media forms are often defined in relation to, and are a destabilising force of, relational pre-existing forms (Bolter and Grusin, 1999: 53), radio is the key reference point as an audio-only medium sharing many of its characteristics and working practices. In a survey of podcast producers conducted by Markman (2012) it was found that a primary drive to create programmes was the desire to engage with (explicitly) radio and that practitioners were commonly people with an enthusiastic interest in the form or those which had prior employment in the industry (555). The relationship is complicated by aspects of contemporary convergence as radio shifts from analogue-only broadcasts (LW, MW, FM) to digital audio broadcast (DAB), Internet streaming, and radio stations offering programmes for download either as catch-up ‘VCR for radio’ (Heeremans, 2018: 58) or producing their own ‘podcast first’ material such as the BBC’s *Death in Ice Valley* (2018)⁴, suggesting intentionality might be considered an important definitive aspect. Convergence makes defining the podcast, or any media format, by its delivery method alone flawed, and one must look harder for a set of contextual and philosophical cues in order to accurately prescribe a name or set of concomitant practices for a given media entity.

Related to this investigation is an enquiry into the concept of the *composed feature* documentary form, a programme type which exists in a recognisable shape in radio and has done for the better part of the medium’s lifetime. Research into the contemporary podcasting landscape suggests that this form of programming takes a slightly different shape from its radio counterpart, and therefore the area being studied will require clear clarification based upon its relationship to its broadcast outlets and their inherent peculiarities.

⁴ There can be hybrids also. *Kermode and Mayo’s Film Review*, BBC 5 Live’s weekly cinema programme, is broadcast live and also made available for podcast download with the addition of typically twenty minutes’ worth of extra material.

1.1: Stockpiled air: towards a definition of the podcast

Audioblogging, as it might have been called before Guardian journalist Ben Hammersley's impulsive titling of 'podcast' was widely adopted (2004: online), was at first thought of as a way for journalists to reach their audience unfettered by the constraints imposed by gatekeeping editors and producers, or worries over potential commercial sensitivities. From a listener's perspective this new form was a way to receive on-demand, transportable and relatively professional-sounding information and entertainment which incorporated a sense of directness and authenticity (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 65; Sullivan, 2018: 42). Christopher Lydon, former New York Times and National Public Radio journalist, notes in Hammersley's article, 'Everything is inexpensive. The tools are available. Everyone has been saying anyone can be a publisher, anyone can be a broadcaster.' (2004: online).

Then considered as mainly a possible commercial opportunity for the creator-broadcaster (*ibid.*), the coming years would see a settling of the podcast form as free at the point of use with, analogous to much internet-borne media, funding infrastructures in a state of ongoing evolution. In recent years commercial advertising has seemed to settle as the dominant financial resource from which to draw (Sullivan, 2018: 50-52), though crowdfunding has also been undertaken with success for well-known podcast networks (Heeremans, 2018: 67). In the years since Hammersley's article the preferred method of delivery has evolved into the current system of subscription management software providing listeners with a user-friendly interface dealing with the nuts and bolts of pulling together mp3 files from an RSS-indexed file-hosting server cloud. The software has gone from being desktop-based to smartphone-based as the delivery technology has matured – Apple's iPod range has been shrunk to a single product (Haslam, 2019: online) and iTunes, Apple's store for music and podcasts to be dragged-and-dropped to one's plugged-in iPod, is being discontinued and replaced by a suite of apps, one podcast-specific (Gurman, 2019: online).

In a parallel to the evolution of the online music marketplace, streaming and downloading

via smartphone seems to be the current favoured mechanism of listening. Big technology companies such as Google and Apple operate dedicated podcast aggregation and listening software and there is a raft of independently built apps also available which operate in more or less the same way, for example Podcast Addict and Soundwaves. A recent development in listening methods concerns the advent of paid subscriptions to walled content in the manner which Netflix or Amazon Prime Video operate for television – Spotify, Stitcher and Luminary all require a monthly fee to listen to and each host content unique to their network as well as the non-exclusive shows offered across other networks for free.⁵ In 2018 the BBC launched its Sounds app, uniting its iPlayer Radio catch-up service with its new podcasting ambitions in a quiet effort to similarly wall its content from Android smartphone users (Cridland, 2019: online).⁶ Financial interests in the field are clearly as hard fought over as any of the other digital media frontiers.⁷ Serving the creators’ side of the enterprise Acast, Podbean, Libsyn, Blubrry and music hosting services Soundcloud and Mixcloud⁸ (again, not an exhaustive list) are online repositories offering straightforward technical syndication services for content aggregators, and are mostly funded by a paid subscription by the podcast producer, though some are free of charge (usually with compulsory advertisement insertion and/or limited functionality).

2014’s *Serial* podcast – the journalistic true crime documentary detailing the murder of Baltimore student Hae Min Lee in 1999 – is possibly the most famous of the medium’s output thus far. Though podcast download figures are jealously guarded and subject to heated debate over formalisation and commercial application at present (Sullivan, 2018: 50), *Serial* is ascertained to be the fastest-ever podcast to reach 5 million downloads (within its first

⁵ Academics and those with financial interests alike will no doubt watch for the success or failure of this business model very carefully in the coming months and years.

⁶ Notably, Google only launched a dedicated Android-native podcast app in June 2018 (Barrett, 2018: online) after much vocal consumer consternation about the developer’s perceived lack of podcast support (Nickinson, 2016: online).

⁷ Sullivan suggests podcasting is a \$100m annual industry (2018: 52).

⁸ Mixcloud appears to be unique in that it has worked to negotiate music licensing contracts with publishers and can therefore host copyrighted music content without users risking infringement prosecution. As such it lends itself to music radio-style podcast practice. Music copyright will be discussed more fully later in this thesis.

month) and held the number one rating on iTunes's download chart for three months (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 82). As predicted by Lydon, above, *Serial* was indeed a pet-project production made by a team of investigative reporters able to set their own production agenda, though the series was funded through affiliation with *This American Life* and WBEZ. Such financial arrangements are reasonably common in very popular podcasts: the Peabody Award⁹-winning *Radiolab* is financially connected with US radio station WNYC, to name another. Those which are independent largely seek funding through advertising revenue which is hard to come by: Sullivan, attending the Podcast Movement symposium in Chicago in 2016, reports the potentially sobering statistic that one needs to attract 50,000 listeners per episode before advertisers might take an interest in sponsoring them, yet less than 1% of all podcasts released on Libsyn, a respected podcast host service and suitable industry indicator, reach this figure (2018: 51).

To help address this issue a growing trend seems to be the formation of podcast networks. These are independent organisations curating, overseeing and funding the creation and output of podcast series in an arrangement roughly analogous to a record label. *Radiotopia*, an early adopter of the system, was founded by radio producer Roman Mars in conjunction with *PRX* in 2014 and initially used a crowdfunding fiscal model, raising over \$620,000 in 2013 (Kickstarter, 2017: online). In the UK, comedian Robin Ince's *Cosmic Shambles* network (overseeing seven series of programmes) was attracting around \$775 per podcast episode in Patreon¹⁰ donations as of June 2019 (Patreon, 2019: online). Sullivan reports that advertising revenue is regarded as the gold standard amongst podcasters, however (2018: 51), indicating that the accumulation of listeners is therefore of major concern to those seeking to make their podcast self-sustaining or even at all profitable. Heeremans notes the advantages of podcast networks – they offer the opportunity to share resources, accumulate an audience through cross-promotion, and enhance one's credibility and therefore make oneself more appealing to

⁹ American award for excellence in broadcasting founded on 1940. For details see <http://www.peabodyawards.com/about> (Accessed 4th March 2017).

¹⁰ Although the network is UK-based, Patreon is a US company that works in USD only.

advertisers (2018: 74-75). Sullivan remarks that they are moving into becoming podcasting's first gatekeepers since without the visibility of being part of a network individuals often undertake much 'aspirational labour' in vain (2018: 51).

Podcasting represents a democratisation of a media form in line with the fates of music, video and print publishing in the Internet age. Given the removal of previous gatekeepers to widespread public access that the web facilitates, it stands to reason that radio, too, would be included in what might be seen as a liberation of content and levelling of interaction between consumer and creator. The effects of Bolter and Grusin's remediation theory (1999: 47) – where disruptive technologies reshape but do not remove their established counterparts – suggest that, given a public, instant and international platform for broadcasting what has been traditionally considered 'radio content', it was probably only a matter of time before established radio's inherent financial and licensing barriers were circumvented by those keen to produce their own material. Indeed, given that the tools for creation of spoken-word audio material are now so accessible and affordable it is a reasonable assumption that those empowered by these tools would seek some outlet for their work, particularly as mainstream broadcast media appears unapproachable for new producers: the BBC's programme commissioning guidelines, even in their drive to produce and disseminate their own podcasts, makes amateur access very difficult. One requirement is that the podcaster needs to be 'registered as a corporate entity (*e.g.* a Public Limited Company)', criteria not easily met for an amateur with an exciting new idea (BBC Information for suppliers to radio, 2019: online).¹¹

Furthermore, commissioning opportunities for speech-based radio are becoming harder to come by as radio stations more commonly employ demographically targeted business models using music effective at subdividing listener age ranges (Hendy, 2000: 32), a profitable practice as well as being relatively inexpensive to do (*ibid.*: 37). Hendy cites Sakolsky and

¹¹ Notably, the BBC's commissioning requirements for podcasts are the same as for radio.

Dunifer's 1998 research that discovered a proliferation of micro-broadcasters in the USA, these displaying 'features of a defined political movement [with] much talk of the principle of free speech' (2000: 15), indicating dissatisfaction with content or feelings of being underserved as listeners. Inability to access radio networks' airtime with content deemed too niche for broadcast is amongst the motivating factors for podcast creation (Markman, 2012: 555).

In 1932 Bertolt Brecht advocated the radio as the 'finest possible communications apparatus in public life ... That is, it could be so, if it understood how to receive as well as to transmit' (in Gilfillan, 2009: 2). For Brecht radio offered a missed opportunity to facilitate the sharing of power by placing the producers of radio on an equal platform to their receivers and opening a dialogue, a situation that could be seen to have now come to pass through podcasting, at least in theory and notwithstanding the challenges of monetisation and visibility noted above. Taken with Gilfillan's assertion that the realisation of new and experimental radio forms occur through access to transmission technologies (2009: xvi) the new medium seems more a creative and sociocultural inevitability given the invention of the Internet than a blossoming of a far-sighted artistic utopian vision.

Podcasting can indeed be seen to be an expression of cultural otherness – an outsider-ness – providing an expressive outlet for those unable to be heard, and a meaningful cultural nexus for those outside of mainstream radio listener communities. Many podcasts and associated networks actively foster a sense of identity through their listeners – see for example Scroobius Pip's *Distraction Pieces* (2014–) which has a secret range of merchandise for only those listeners brave enough to stick by through excessive tracts of awkward self-promotion, or *99 Percent Invisible* (2010–) which marketed its own military-style challenge coins¹² with their emblem struck into them.¹³ Hendy suggests that radio fosters a sense of

¹² A military coin or medallion given to service people bearing their unit insignia which may be produced to identify other members of that unit in order to help foster a sense of group identity and belonging.

community through the imagined perception of simultaneous listening with one's geographically dispersed peers (2000: 121) and podcasts appear to similarly harness and cultivate this phenomenon, taking extra care to attempt to negate the time-based disparities inherent in on-demand content.

The otherness of podcasting allows for a certain degree of technical liberation also. Freed from the constraints of the broadcast schedule podcast episodes can run to lengths that mainstream radio would deem unacceptable and production deadlines can theoretically be discarded, together with guidelines on challenging content and gritty language (Berry 2016: 662). This break from the regulatory concerns of radio opens the door to an individualisation not offered elsewhere, and leads podcasters to meet their audiences at peer-level rather than the top-down traditional radio power structure (*ibid.*: 664).

In 2016 Berry, quoting Lind, seemed particularly keen on ascribing the 'podcast' label strictly to those programmes which are explicitly downloaded (rather than streamed) while simultaneously acknowledging that this argument might fall away as Internet network infrastructure improved (*ibid.*: 668). Indeed this has come to pass as users have adopted more streamlined acquisition models enabled through smartphone apps and other network architecture developments (Berry, 2018: 20-21). Quoting Morris and Patterson (2015: 221) he notes that 'Podcasting is neither limited to nor defined by its technologies. Rather it is a specific set of practices and cultural meaning' (2018: 21).

One of the most commonly discussed unique characteristics of podcast listening is the widely acknowledged use of headphones. Edison Research's annual 'Infinite Dial' research programme on audio listening habits places the smartphone (implying the use of headphones) as the chief delivery method (at 44%) with radio receivers and computers the next most popular (20% each) (Edison Research, 2018: online). The significance of the use of

¹³ See episode 156 'Coin Check' for a full explanation: <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/coin-check/> Retrieved 2nd Mar 2018.

headphones has not gone unnoticed in scholarship and conclusions drawn from the theorisation of their use usually take the form of their ability to physically impress the sound of one body onto another. Charles Stankievech conceptualises headphones as stethoscopes – the embodiment of another entity and the media therein mapped onto one’s own listening headspace:

The interior space of the patient’s body coincides with the interior of the doctor’s body: the heart chamber is remapped to the cranial cavity. In this newly created space organs float in the abyss dissected by auditory exploration. It is here also that the two senses of “interior” overlap. The imaginative powers of the mind’s ability to imagine space coincide with a literal location of an interior space ‘in the head.’ (2007: 56)

This very literal expression of the idea of the physical embodiment of unconnected entities is well explored in scholarly work in the fields of music and new media. Seminal thinkers Deleuze and Guattari theorise the ‘body without organs’ – an empty vessel awaiting the arrival of circulating and passing intensities of events and emotions (2004: 169) as well as the notion of ‘becoming’, where two discrete entities merge as one through flows of these intensities conducting empathy (*ibid.*: 257-258). Ann Game offers a particularly insightful illustration of this as she describes the relationship between horse and rider, particularly in the activity of dressage where successful outcome is measured on the apparent psychological and physiological interconnectedness of the two individuals. It is, she notes, not merely an unspoken communication between the two bodies (and two species), but a merging of consciousness so that the pair become ‘horse-human’ or, in her conceptualisation, ‘the centaur’ (2001: 1). These ‘intensities’ are known and studied elsewhere as *affects* (the former being a term particular to the aforementioned theorists), and the model is much vaunted for potentially offering a way out of circular or insular contemporary cultural theory (Hemmings, 2005: 550). Outlining a broad definition of affect theory as ‘all of our affective experiences to date that are remembered (or better, perhaps, registered) in the moment of responding to a

new situation, such that we keep “a trace, within [our] constitution” of those experiences’ (Al-Saji quoted in *ibid.*: 552), it can be proposed that as conscious creatures we are in receipt of affective (that is to say mood altering, emotive) transmissions from non-conscious objects as well as sentient individuals. These transmissions are not simply one-way, but exist in a mutually affective circuit such that receiver and transmitter are peers (*ibid.*: 552).

The phenomenon of merging consciousness with one’s listening device has not gone unstudied as Bull’s broad survey of the use of personal stereo technology in city spaces attests. He presents users’ habits reflecting the medium’s ability to be a tool for mood maintenance and adjustment (2000: 18-20) and as a stabiliser offering control over conscious experience (*ibid.*: 24). As a pragmatic study it stops short of the adoption of affect theory *in toto* – preferring Adorno’s suggested state of ‘we-ness’ instead (*ibid.*: 28) – but the evidence is enough to posit a clear case for personal stereo users to be thought of as the living embodiment of Walkman-human. Fast-forward a year to 2001 and the introduction of the iPod, arguably the most ubiquitous brand of mp3 playing device, and listeners would henceforth be soundtracking their daily experience to a solid state electronic machine rather than a cassette tape, though the headphone method of listening would remain.

The main differences in this development could be seen to be the physical steps now required to access media on the device and the associated impact on consumer habits but that would be to neglect the felt experience of usage. The consumerist hype around the iPod and other Apple products that relies on the drives for social status and technological novelty (Campbell, 1992: 48-49) suggests the sensation users attain from owning and using their devices counts towards the experience of listening in a way that cannot be explained by the sensations of hearing content alone, but might be explained more fully and robustly with affect theory: the user’s human-iPod set of relations bringing a sense of delight in itself as a separate but related collection of associated intensities.¹⁴ This effect can be seen to be

¹⁴ Berry notes the influence of smartphone apps can positively influence the listening experience (2018: 21).

influential in books such as *iPod, Therefore I Am* (Jones, 2005) and *The Cult of iPod* (Kahney, 2005) published contemporaneously as whole volumes were dedicated to the celebration of the feelings of satisfaction gained through interacting with one's iPod and becoming a conscious one with it (though the books are not presented from this theoretical standpoint). Specific scholarship in the area of computer-human interaction and embodiment has been undertaken by new media scholars, Lupton declaring the relationship 'characterised ... by pleasure and a sense of harmonic blurring' (1995: 106).

Noting all of the above I might tentatively begin to suggest a movement of affects that offers a clue towards a definition of the podcast. There certainly exist indubitable content tropes that have developed in the medium over the years (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 81-105) which might suggest an element of intentionality and these will be investigated below; however these alone are not enough to offer a solid definition in a media space which contains the nuanced artifacts of radio catch-up, digital live streamed and downloaded content. Perhaps the mechanism at work that offers a way out of this difficult theoretical muddle can be found in an awareness of the affects the medium carries with it. Much as McLuhan has been discredited for his technologically deterministic theories (Mullen, 2006: online), perhaps on this occasion his medium-as-message truism can be seen to carry some weight. The podcast, regardless of device and precise delivery method (iPod, smartphone, tablet, laptop, smart speaker, app) is named as such and carries a set of editorial and creative intentions which have a relational connection to the listener through a set of assumptions and, therefore, affects. Just as with iPod users' device-related pleasure responses, Deleuze and Guattari's intensities can be seen to be in flow not only when the listener is actually listening to the media, but also in the engagement and use of the technology of attainment and delivery whether software or hardware. As anomalous as it may be to suggest such a seeming tautology, a podcast (as with all media output) is defined because it is named as such in the mind of the listener and therefore sets up a circuit of affects enabling the listener to 'become' with it in a form recognisably understood as that form. Further, a podcast is itself a Deleuzian

body-without-organs, a set of potential affects ready to be received and transmitted, as is likewise the listener. The circuit of affects completes in two ways – not just in the listener’s becoming and the bidirectional flow of intensities that is set up during interaction (listening, seeking, downloading, streaming), but also in the wider sense of the peer-to-peer nature of the format and its democratised creative form (Berry, 2018: 25). Aligning this medium with others in its involvement with and dependence upon the networks of affect admits it roundly into membership of the club to which radio and television belong as well as on demand internet-streamed TV and created-at-home YouTube content. Gone is the theoretical need for a discrete set of media devices and in their place is what Kember and Zylynska refer to as malleable ‘processes of mediation’ (2012: xiiv).

Furthermore, the admission of affect to our tools of classification and interrogation allow a built-in and always-ready contextualising framework as reception and understanding of affects are fundamentally entangled with listener subjectivity.¹⁵ It is Roland Barthes’s death of the author concept – where the input of the reader’s experiences and prejudices serve to colour their reception of a text (1977: 142-148) – manifested technologically and suggests, at last, a possible conclusive solution to the problem of podcast definition and categorisation in the contemporary media landscape.

With the podcast and its delivery frameworks outlined for the purposes of study (noting that this is of course one working definition amongst others) now attention will be turned to the actual material which is delivered. This thesis focuses upon a narrow band of feature documentary programming native to radio and now appearing on podcasting, most commonly in a slightly different form from its radio counterpart. The next section interrogates the characteristics and recent evolution demonstrated by the proliferation of journalistic documentary practice as popularised by the likes of series such as *Serial*, and compares podcast to radio feature practice.

¹⁵ This is expanded upon in a later chapter.

1.2 Current practices in audio documentary and a definition of the composed feature

Radio producer Peter Everett bluffly describes the audio feature documentary thus: ‘On the spectrum ... that extends from drama to news, the feature occupies the bit in the middle’ (in Crook, 1999: 209). In the assortment of programme types in radio and podcasting the feature documentary might be the most difficult to exactly define since the form is by its nature open to creative interpretation: film scholar Bill Nichols remarks that ‘Documentary as a concept or practice occupies no fixed territory’ (in Rogers, 2015: 1) and it therefore requires some clarification and boundary demarcation for the purposes of study. This section aims to describe the feature form and the role and function of producers when working within it, outlines recent developments in the field of audio documentary in relation to the Internet and podcasting, and suggests a working definition.

Often described as dealing with the quality of ‘actuality’, the radio feature is comprised of interview material with people speaking spontaneously in their own words (mostly unrehearsed and freely delivered), field recordings, and music, all put together with a creative editing credo.¹⁶ The collective action of these elements is to allow non-fiction narratives to be told in a way more involving, emotive, and relatable for the listener than might be offered by a narrator reading from a text or a current affairs programme, and it is the careful composition of these elements of sound by which the feature finds its power.

Features are a different form of radio from either the stalwarts of studio-based music and talk shows or news and current affairs programmes, and are peculiar to the medium – ‘like nothing to be found on television,’ notes Chignell (2009: 22). Considered an important founding force of the genre Olive Shapley, working in the late 1930s, spoke of the avoidance of simply recording ‘the surface of issues’ by ‘offering a deeper reality through the sustained use of unmediated actuality’, the results of which Hendy compares to that of cinematic

¹⁶ Crisell’s assertion that all radio is simply made up of ‘speech, music, sound and silence’ is interrogated in chapter 2.2.

tradition (2000: 74). Radio producer Alfred Braun offers a similar associative analysis, terming radio feature and drama programmes with creative, imagistic and dreamlike composition ‘acoustical film’ (in Gilfillan, 2009: 3). Certainly the radio feature satisfies cinema scholar Michael Renov’s four representational functions of documentary film,¹⁷ Werner Herzog’s examples of which being clearly staged and directed just as a fictional feature film would be: ‘I invent, but I invent in order to gain a deeper insight,’ he notes (Herzog in Rogers, 2015: 5). Inventiveness in documentary hasn’t always been well received, with British television documentaries historically eschewing the use of music for fear it might colour and ‘aestheticise the programmes’ representations and detract from the illusion of direct access to the real world’ (Donnelly, 2005: 114).¹⁸ Cinema also had qualms over the use of sound in documentary preferring silent film practice in the form until the 1960s, notes Birdsall (2015: 22), with pioneering documentary filmmaker John Grierson offering a keen sense of the poetic in his work and exploring the inventiveness the form could allow, insisting that ‘the microphone, like the camera, can do better things rather than merely reproduce’ (in Birdsall, 2015: 28-29). Such is the aligned manifesto of the radio feature.

The role of the features producer is close to the idealistic notion of the filmmaking auteur (or perhaps even closer) – as much as that notion has been discredited through poststructuralist theory (Hayward, 2001: 19-27) – with creators mostly taking charge of the whole process from collecting interviews and field recordings to final editing (Hendy, 2000: 71). Radio producers in this way are possessed of a multitude of skills required to put together an affecting piece of work: journalistic inquisitiveness, interpersonal aptitude when dealing with interviewees, technical prowess with audio hardware and software, and the emotional ability to connect all the gathered components together according to their artistic intent. Radio is of course practically simpler than video and film production by a significant

¹⁷ To record, reveal, or preserve; to persuade or promote; to analyse or interrogate; to express (Rogers, 2015: 4).

¹⁸ Though interestingly Donnelly notes that music accompanying television drama and documentary has been largely derived from film and radio tropes rather than being its own entity developed for the medium (2005: 115).

distance (no make-up, cameras, lighting, location scouting to name but a few associated roles) and producers can take this freedom to create material extremely personal to them, something Piers Plowright openly acknowledges in his work (*ibid.*: 72).

Like film, commissioning editors and the expectations of the radio station (or production studio) do, however, work to colour and shape a director or producer's output (*ibid.*: 71) as their vision for their programme must match the characteristics of the network and not risk the alienation of a hard-won audience. It might be seen that podcasting holds a creative advantage over radio in this way since the absolute autonomy a gatekeeper-free environment such as the Internet provides might mean freedom from such concerns, but this view does not take into account the influence of the podcast infrastructure in garnering listenership. Such apparent freedoms have instead morphed into the constrictions characterised by contemporary podcast practice outlined by Spinelli and Dann (2019: 10-12). In parallel with the effects digital delivery has had upon the democratisation of music distribution, the populousness of the online realm means that an audience is perhaps *even more* difficult to accumulate for amateur creators than with the previous offline model. Frequent requests at the end of podcasts to 'like and subscribe'¹⁹ in order to raise the shows' search ranking and public profile can turn a hobbyist audio producer into a sponsored one, and competition for listeners is subsequently fierce. Content consistency is therefore encouraged, just as in radio practice, to help build an audience, since unsettled formats or regularly changed styles of programmes run the risk of a fractured or capricious audience base.

This is not the only notable difference between radio and podcast programme making which influences the shape of podcast output – the ever-present forces of time and money dictate formulas for success, though manifested in different ways. Generating engagement online in the 21st Century is not a concern peculiar to podcasting but with peer-to-peer publication and promotional networks amateurs and professionals alike must spend time

¹⁹ See The Adam Buxton Podcast for an example, where Buxton has even taken the time to create his own lengthy and witty jingle encouraging listeners do just that at the end of his programmes.

ensuring their work is visible to an audience, and social media is seen as the most effective route even though it can be a laborious task (Sullivan, 2018: 47). Amateurs in the field are up against constraints not in terms of the allotment of broadcast time as in a radio schedule but in the amount of time they might pragmatically have available in their lives to make programmes, and regular output of new material is an important weapon in the arsenal to drive engagement and build a successful brand.²⁰ Podcast series are also almost entirely speech-based in some form or another as complex licensing difficulties and fees (Herstand, 2015: online) tend to limit podcasters to hosting music-based shows on streaming-only services such as Mixcloud who have industry remuneration agreements built into their platform (Mixcloud, 2015: online).²¹

These few important points of difference highlight the sorts of socioeconomic factors which influence the shape podcast shows take, but a full inventory of causes and effects are subject to ongoing evolution in response to both industry and listenership. For the purposes of this thesis it need only be noted that such pressures influence podcast content and practice and these forces have created the current landscape where, according to Radiotopia executive producer Julie Shapiro (2018, online), ten distinct genres of podcast could be observed [capitalisation in original]:

- CRIMEcast/COURTcast (real-life crime journalism)
- CHUMcast (friends discussing something close to them – films, politics, *etc.*)
- BACKcast (historical re/investigation)
- DATAcast (facts, reportage, business)
- HOWTOcast (practical advice, *e.g.* DIY, project management)
- FICTIONcast (drama and *Serial*-inflected faux reportage)

²⁰ See, for example, Baldacci, 2017: online or Werner, 2017: online.

²¹ Podcast host services are sensitive to the unlicensed use of music, though some more so than others it seems. Drawing from personal experience Libsyn is particularly keen that users know that to submit work to Spotify's catalogue, 'all music on your podcast must be "podsafesafe" music' (meaning copyright cleared) and that, 'if any of your music (even 1 second) is not podsafesafe, then it is in violation of both companies' terms of service.' (Libsyn, 2019: online)

- DAILYcast/POLITicast (political news and analysis)
- CELEBcast (e.g. Oprah Winfrey, Alec Baldwin’s own shows)
- FEMcast (shows by, for and about women)
- KIDcast (shows for children)

A broad but pointedly specific list where feature documentary practice is notably absent as a genre in itself but may appear as a possible subgenre of crimecast/courtcast, backcast, fictioncast, femcast or kidcast depending on editorial approach. Changing focus from the nature of a show’s content to its structural framework suggests a more concise and useful categorisation:

Type	Description	Examples
Solo interview	One-to-one interview format, often longform but not exclusively. Includes news and current affairs	<i>The Adam Buxton Podcast</i> , <i>WTF with Marc Maron</i> , <i>Richard Herring’s Leicester Square Theatre Podcast</i> (‘RHLSTP’)
Panel discussion	Two or more participants in subject discussion or debate. Can be multiple or solo presenter/s and with or without guests. Includes news and current affairs	<i>The Infinite Monkey Cage</i> (BBC science panel show), <i>Sodajerker on Songwriting</i> (songwriting-based interview programme with guests), <i>The Outer Colonies Podcast</i> (pop culture fan criticism show)
Fiction	Radio drama format, spoken narrative, faux news/documentary	<i>Welcome to Night Vale</i> (darkly witty community radio homage), <i>We’re Alive</i> (improvised zombie fiction), <i>Limetown</i> (faux non-fiction narrative-style documentary)
Monologue	Improvised monologue (diary/blog type format), poetry, read stories	<i>Imaginary Advice</i> (poetry and short fiction stories), <i>Monday Morning Podcast</i> (improvised diary form), <i>Unexplained</i> (read

		stories of reported supernatural events)
Non-fiction narrative	Non-fiction stories told using interview material, creative editing and use of music and location or creatively-applied sound. With or without host and/or voiceover	<i>Serial, Love+Radio</i> (interview programme with creative credo), <i>Radiolab</i> (science magazine programme), <i>Wireless Nights</i> (BBC radio feature documentary), <i>Have You Heard George's Podcast?</i> (poetry, monologue and socioeconomic commentary with creative sound editing)

Pragmatically it can be noted that programmes are more likely to form hybrids of these categories but core intentions are clear enough to those both listening to and creating the content: five minutes of stand-up comedy before introducing a guest for the subsequent hour would not qualify *RHLSTP* as a monologue-based show, for example. It is noted that these categories apply equally to talk radio as they do podcasting.

Feature documentary can be seen to sit (almost exclusively) within the last category in the table, non-fiction narrative. The genre is listed as part of that broad class rather than as a genre in its own right (just as in Shapiro's list) but the articulation of the form in this way allows an acknowledgement of the typical differences found between the most common radio and podcast versions of this type of programme while excluding less relevant information. These variations must be explored to accurately determine the feature documentary podcast as it pertains to this study.

In radio practice, Crook asserts that factual programmes can be understood as such by looking at identifiable subgenres of show, those using 'montage, continuous stream of consciousness programmes and those depending on an omniscient or voice of god narrative frame' as markers (2012: 51), but these are more technical and structural assembly techniques than classifications *per se*. Laurence Gilliam suggests the feature to be a far broader assemblage, signifying 'a wide range of programme items, usually factual and

documentary, presented by a variety of techniques, but mostly making use of dramatisation and edited actuality' (1950: 9). It is not an easy form to fully describe and boundaries can be flexible. Writer and radio editor Alfred Andersch suggests that

The term 'feature' never means the content of a subject, rather it means the way in which it appears...Since it is form, and thus also art, its resources are unlimited; they extend from journalism to poetic writing, from rational description to the surreal reach into the dream, from the deliberate elucidation of topicality for immediate use to the type of poetic penetration of human community. (In Gilfillan, 2009: 108)

In the table above the term 'non-fiction narrative' has been used in an effort to encapsulate all possible versions of audio documentary, but the examples chosen are illustrative of the type of programme this thesis is focused upon – those which display a more poetic, musical, contemplative and reverie-inflected intention. Looking at the individual examples should highlight illustrative commonalities:

- *Love+Radio* (2005–): This is a programme that has settled on a solo interview form (sometimes monologue due to the editing process removing the interviewer), making involving use of music, atmospheric and designed sound to illustrate and often immerse the listener within the stories being told. There is no exposition other than the interviewees themselves in their own words, though the editing process occasionally reveals the producer at work arranging the narrative to carefully unfold for the audience.
- *Radiolab* (2002–): Ostensibly a panel-based magazine programme about science and technology with (in its earlier podcasts) multiple discrete stories presented in a single episode. Stories are covered using interview material from scientists, researchers and others involved spoken in their own words. Setting *Radiolab* apart from its contemporaries is producer Jad Abumrad's intense relationship with

semiotic sound (Abumrad, 2010: 48) and his skill in using it as a narrative and/or expositional device.

- *Serial* (2014–): Investigative journalism examining possible miscarriages of justice. Presented in voiceover form using recorded interviews with the individuals involved, with some ambient sound but minimal music.
- *Wireless Nights* (2014–): Possibly the programme in the list most true to the prototype feature documentary concept, using as it does interview material, field recordings, sound design and music to tell participants' stories, often three or four per episode intertwined.
- *Have You Heard George's Podcast?* (2018–): A collection of poems and spoken word material both autobiographical and socially analytical interwoven with creative sound design and use of music.

What these programmes have in common is their creative employment of narrative sound and spoken word material. Where *Love+Radio* and *Radiolab* could be persuaded into other categories (solo interview or panel respectively) *Wireless Nights* and *Have You Heard George's Podcast?* use sound design together with spontaneous speech and the creative employment of music to impart meaning, to advance narrative and add to the programme an element of alchemic transformation that facilitates a sensation of immersion. It is telling that *Wireless Nights* was intentioned as a radio broadcast first (with podcasting a secondary idea), displaying as it does a notably whimsical approach to narrative and sound which is typical of what Siobhan McHugh refers to as the 'European-driven' style of audio documentary, 'closer to radio arts than reportage or journalism' (2013: 106). A contemporary-sounding podcast equivalent of *Wireless Nights* might be *Nocturne* (2015–), similarly a study of the human condition at night featuring an autobiographical narration technique but with differences such as a less whimsical and more direct structure, and absence of poetry and familiar pop music.

This latter, more direct, style is much more the sort of approach expected from podcast programmes such as *Serial* and *S-Town* (2017). Taking McHugh's lead these types of programmes could be considered more 'US-driven', adopting style cues from the *This American Life* stable of audio journalism. This style of presentation seems removed from the creative nature of the feature documentary described thus far – presenter Sarah Koenig's voiceover for *Serial*, while autobiographical and discursive, is somewhat direct and leaves little room for ambiguous interpretation, and likewise the systematic editing, pacing and structure of the episodes. Spinelli and Dann do point out, however, the characteristics shared by *Serial* and more whimsical feature documentaries in techniques such as 'withholding a piece of information, inviting consideration of its opposite, and then finally revealing it' (2019: 180), noting the demonstration of a 'loosened grip' on 'robotic journalistic professionalism' and a move towards the 'universal appeal of human stories' (*ibid.*: 187). Rebecca Ora concurs, suggesting *Serial* to be 'a series of conversations, after-the-fact or from a bird's-eye-view, of the lived world through a specific and highly persona vantage' and suggests that the series conforms to Bill Nichols's 'performative mode' of documentary making which 'admits to truth's fungibility as well as its subjectivity' (2018: 118).²²

The overwhelming success and wide reach of *Serial* suggests the format is an effective one having had a strong influence over subsequent podcast form (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 84-85), with Spinelli and Dann noting that even with all of the creative possibilities offered by the blank canvas of podcast storytelling most creators 'prefer to sit on the journalism side of the fence' (2019: 182). The more whimsical feature documentary was already showing signs of a decline in popularity while still on radio, however. Chignell suggests that even as the critically acclaimed features of Charles Parker were broadcast in the late 1950s and early 1960s they were seen as somewhat dated, and in 2009 called the format

²² The other modes being 'poetic', 'expository', 'observational', 'participatory' and 'reflexive'. While feature documentary practice could be seen to fall most completely into the performative mode (emphasising the 'subjective or expressive aspect of the filmmaker's own engagement with the subject', highlighting feature making's auteurism) Nichols does assert that the modes 'overlap and intermingle' (2001: 33-34).

‘almost extinct now’ (23-24); BBC feature documentary producers Laurence Grisell and Neil McCarthy would have echoed this sentiment at the time (interview, 2019: see chapter 3.2.2). Podcasting seems to have brought about a resurgence in interest in the form – Chignell suggests that longform documentary is not as compatible with current radio output since radio programming has shifted to, generally, lighter and easier content with which listeners can ‘soundtrack’ their lives (2009: 24-25). New independent podcast producers such as Brendan Baker (see chapter 3.1.2) have seized podcasting as an opportunity to explore the style anew, offering feature listeners a suitable platform for an experience to which closer attention lends itself (Berry, 2016: 666).

Yet the feature as Parker or Shapley would recognise it (best embodied above by *Wireless Nights* with its meandering but carefully considered structure, inventive use of narration, interplay between voices and inclusion of poetry, music and sound design) is, as noted above, curiously largely absent from podcasting. Notable examples of the format include Francesca Panetta’s Sony Award-winning *The Hackney Podcast*, an early success which appears to have finished sometime in 2012,²³ the barely-established *Paper Radio* project (2010-2017) with only a handful of episodes in its seven-year existence, *Nocturne* (2015–), part of podcast network The Heard and distributed by KCRW, and multiple British Podcast Awards winner *Have You Heard George’s Podcast?* (2018–). The format is very much in the minority, or at least, cannot be found easily amongst the vast library of content available. Much more common are podcasts in the *Serial* style or those which use first hand spontaneous interview material left largely unedited but with the addition of an ambient-type music bed in a nod to feature tradition – projects such as *This is Actually Happening* (2014–). This particular example displays a lesser degree of creativity but has maintained a regular biweekly release schedule since 2014. It is no coincidence that this particular series has over 130 episodes, bearing out a suspicion that the programmes are relatively quick to make and put together

²³ Podcasts rarely announce when they are closing, leaving content feeds and websites generally in a state of intriguing abandonment when the producer stops creating them. The Hackney Podcast website is a good example of this: <http://hackneypodcast.co.uk/> (accessed 22nd Aug 2018).

with a careful eye on the need for regular and speedy output. One can speculate that the commercial and time-based pressures outlined above are contributing to the lack of the more artistic feature style podcasts, as carefully composed non-fiction narrative is a time consuming process compared to other types of programme.

All of which leads to the need for firm clarification of the definition of the term ‘feature’ for the purposes of this thesis, which is focused upon the more artistic end of documentary practice. This area of podcasting demonstrates a creative ambition to employ speech (in both the verbal and paraverbal senses²⁴), music, sound, silence and editing in the most inventive, original and imaginative ways possible. While popular journalistic formats inspired by *This American Life* are acknowledged as functionally effective and often feature superb reportage and immersive storytelling, the directness of their narrative and overreliance on the spoken word do not exhibit the potential of feature practice to its fullest and is therefore of less interest to a practice-based research project concerned with creative composition.

With this in mind, in line with radio producer Nina Perry’s recently submitted doctoral thesis on radio features it is proposed that the favoured term is ‘*composed feature*’ (my italics), referring as it does to programmes ‘giving equal weighting to music, spoken word and sound within a montage structure’ (2017: 10). Conceptually similar to Perry’s research (though her work is focused on the nature of the authorial voice and exploring compositional methodology (*ibid.*: 14)), the act of placing all possible sounds as unvaryingly equal in audio documentary creation, and confiscating the privilege often yielded to speech, is central to this thesis and therefore must be central to any delineated boundary of investigation.

To be explicit, it is proposed that this thesis be concerned with the *composed feature*, where the composed feature is:

²⁴ See chapter 3.1.

An audio documentary programme which uses spontaneous first-hand speech together with music, ambient sound, non-linear editing structures and/or sound design in a manner which privileges none of these components over any other for the purposes of making meaning.

This definition works to delineate and highlight the central creative component which audio documentary producers adopt at their most creative, displaying arrangement and composition skills equivalent to those in music. It can be demonstrated that such skills are not only transferrable between these two media forms but that composed features are an explicit expression of musical practice, and it will be this relationship to music that will be explored in subsequent chapters and through practice-based creative work.

Chapter 2: Literature review

With the areas of research outlined the following chapter will consist of a literature review broken down into five areas of research covering a review of contemporary radio infrastructure and Internet radio streaming, the composed feature's relationship to music, the subjective experience of listening, the embodiment of audio media, and the composed feature in the wider media landscape. These facets of investigation will work to inform a thorough background in which to situate my case studies and practice research.

2.1 Situating the podcast: Contemporary analogue, digital and Internet radio

At first glance there is a lot to be disheartened by for the contemporary radio enthusiast. Knocked from its place at the pinnacle and cutting edge of media consumption in the West, and far from Frith's assertion of being the most important media form of the 20th Century – that which first brought the public world into private space (in Clayton *et al.*, 2012: 152) – the 21st has, so far, seemingly been unkind to traditional audio-only broadcasting. Accusations of its irrelevance through its displacement as a home entertainment medium by an increasingly diverse offering of television content – first by TV's expansion into digital services in 2007²⁵ (Dutta, 2012: online) and further by the development of digital on-demand streaming services around the same time (Netflix, n.d.: online) – radio's parallel digital advancement a decade earlier now brings harsh criticism over audio quality and regrets over allocated bandwidth short-sightedness (Laird, 2015: online). The UK's Digital Audio Broadcasting, known commercially as DAB, is seemingly not the driving force that was envisioned at its inception. Television and cinema have traditionally usurped radio as the prestigious mass medium of choice since their moving pictures added sight to Crisell's 'blind' medium (1994: 3).

²⁵ In the UK, but around the same time in other parts of the developed West.

New technology did deliver its intended purpose of freeing up space on the airwaves, however. In 2018 the UK DAB service offered 341 stations, regional geographical variations included (Digital Radio, 2018: online), a significant gain in broadcast space over the analogue FM and AM consumption of bandwidth which offered far fewer slots. Persistent issues with signal coverage means the UK still tends to lag behind the Norwegian pioneers of DAB who are actively working to shut down analogue radio altogether (Griffin, 2017: online); in the UK this undertaking is now forecast to be occur in 2020 at the very earliest (Stockton, 2018: online). DAB's promise of a greater wealth of listener choice has been instead largely co-opted into dividing users into targetable demographic groups, an important revenue generating tool for selling airtime to advertisers keen to maximise their investment (Hendy, 2000: 31-32, and Clough, in Kassabian 2013: 68). As an example, Bauer Media Group subdivided their *Absolute Radio* brand into seven separate stations along boundaries of age group²⁶ (Absolute Radio, 2018: online) allowing advertisers to sell products to consumers at an appropriate life stage. In the UK only BBC radio, with its public service remit, has shown commitment to serving smaller interest groups nationally without directly seeking financial gain, though some of the more niche stations have already been threatened with closure (Robinson, 2010: online). A similar situation exists in the United States currently, where kowtowing to capitalist forces allowed the deregulation of radio station ownership throughout the 1980s and 90s, leading to a situation where progressively bigger media conglomerates systematically bought up local stations and began broadcasting centralised content, destroying the nature of neighbourhood news and geographic social listening cohesion (Hendy, 2000: 41-45). From this reading of the current situation it seems that radio is falling conspicuously prey to the forces of big business causing the mediocrity of output that can occur as stations strive to appeal to as broad a taste as possible.

However, let us not be too gloomy. In terms of analogue radio, Hendy notes that a swathe of microbroadcasters are appearing across the USA facilitated by inexpensive modern

²⁶ These are: Absolute Radio (contemporary music), Classic Rock, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s, and '00s.

transmitting equipment and people with the desire to serve their neighbourhoods with content not made available by national commercial stations (2000: 15). In the UK the 1990 Broadcasting Act brought into law the ability for government authorities to grant Restricted Service Licenses (RSLs – low power temporary radio station approval often tied to events) which are geographically limited but often seen as valuable in an artistic or community-building sense. London’s art/community radio station Resonance FM began life in this way in 1998 as part of BBC Radio 1 DJ John Peel’s *Meltdown* festival (Hodgkinson, 2003: online) and has since gone on to be granted a fuller community license. It now broadcasts to international interest through online channels, though its FM broadcast reach is constrained to the central London area. In some sense it might be seen that this devolving of broadcasting power to those who value their local stations the most and express a ‘conscious projection of collective identity’ (Hendy, 2000: 15) is energising and inspiring; on the other hand it could be viewed that this system privileges the commercial interests of large corporations as any small station which catches more widespread attention will likely have its output subsumed into a commercial organisation for the primary concern of revenue generation (Hendy, 2000: 16). For the listener to the independent station this act might mean a ‘mainstreamisation’ of content²⁷ and a loss of individuality. Unfair as this may be to smaller stations this arrangement is an advantage to established commercial broadcasters as they have, in effect, a multitude of content broadcast trials running simultaneously and at no cost or inconvenience to themselves. This situation has not gone unnoticed with European radio art creators such as Radio Subcom who have made protest-based work in direct response to this phenomenon (Gilfillan, 2009: 140). Hendy also notes the negative impact on public service broadcasting such a system causes (2000: 53); this can be seen to be in action currently in the UK as the BBC comes under ever-increasing pressure for access to public funds (and under attack particularly in the right wing press) (Ponsford, 2017: online).

²⁷ Particularly in terms of music and in parallel the way that major record labels keen to cash in on conspicuously-growing niche content act to seize control of that content to make it more widely marketable. See Richard King (2012) for a detailed breakdown of this phenomenon in his chronicling of the UK independent music scene from 1975 to 2005.

Alongside the mechanical frameworks of radio broadcasting the content of radio output must also be considered. As Paddy Scannell notes, broadcast forms are by default banal and that the historical ‘institutionalization of broadcasting ... meant the stabilization of what it did and that, in effect, meant the routinization of production’ (1996: 9). He goes on to insist that the ‘user-friendliness’ of broadcast output is in its normalisation and sameness (*ibid.*) and the seriality of output is a key component of this (1996: 10). It could be illustrative of radio’s listenership, then, that he concludes that the construction of a station’s listener is embedded in its output (1996: 14) – radio stations would appear to get the listeners they want, but also deserve.

In 1993 Friedrich Kittler commented on this relationship:

Nobody listens to radio. What loudspeakers or headsets provide for their users is always just radio programming, never radio itself. Only in emergencies, when broadcasts are interrupted, announcer voices get stuck in the throat or stations drift away from their proper frequencies are there at all any moments to actually hear what radio listening could be all about (in Gilfillan, 2009: 139).

Both television and radio are beholden to what Scannell refers to as the ‘broadcast hallmark’ of difference-in-sameness (1996: 10), where the scaffold of a broadcast schedule remains the same while only the content within is changed. Alterations in radio frameworks are particularly notable in their infrequency – an observation reinforced by their rare occurrence leading to the generation of press column inches.²⁸ It seems that the routines within the lives of radio listeners reinforce the need for a concrete broadcast structure. Radio as a ‘secondary medium’ (Crisell, 1994: 162) tends to play in the background of peoples’ day-to-day lives, with the routinisation of output providing comfort and familiarity throughout their waking hours (Scannell, 1996: 9). It seems to matter less what is actually

²⁸ See for example the 2018 announcement of changes to BBC Radio 2’s presenter line up (Ruddick, 2018: online).

being broadcast (as long as it is inoffensive to the listener), more that there is *something* to hear – an observation insightfully made by Crisell in his assault on broadcast silence (1994: 6). The relationship between radio and its listeners is complex and indissoluble – Gilfillan notes that radio is neither self-generating nor prone to self-examination, but is a medium at the behest of outside forces as a ‘transgressive, regressive, progressive and reactive’ assemblage (2009: 169).

What, perhaps, the 21st Century offers is the technology to allow radio to move more towards satisfying Kittler’s wishes. Where microbroadcasters and RSL licensees with leftfield content are geographically limited, and with community DAB licenses being criticised as unobtainably expensive (Bawden, 2018: online), in the West wireless Internet access is becoming more ubiquitous – around 70% of the UK is covered with mobile data access in 2017, for example (OpenSignal, 2017: online)²⁹ with WiFi covering those spots wireless doesn't yet reach.³⁰ Perhaps this offers a broadcast network where traditional radio falters, but it does beg questions of operational procedures, ownership and control, and even calls into question the definition of the medium itself.

For those wishing to start an online radio station there are a range of ‘out of the box’ Internet streaming services offered which provide live broadcast systems nationally or internationally (depending on the user’s preference) complete with software to manage music playlists and the technical aspects of transmission. Sold as simple setup systems where the user requires only themselves and perhaps some music to broadcast,³¹ services usually charge monthly subscription fees for the broadcaster, and are free to receive for listeners. Pricing plans are generally built around the expected listener numbers as bandwidth availability is a service consideration (AirTime, 2014: online). Since no radio transmitter system needs to be

²⁹ Admittedly this is a lacklustre statistic when compared with the claimed 97.3% of UK DAB radio broadcast coverage (local topography notwithstanding) (Martin, 2017: online) but the report expects a steady increase as infrastructure improves.

³⁰ Internet usage worldwide stood at 47% of the population in 2016 so clearly this cannot be considered a worldwide access solution, at least currently. (Taylor, A., 2016: online) Also, Hendy notes that analogue radio still has a wider global reach than even television (2000: 62).

³¹ See Airtime as an example: <https://www.airtime.pro/> (Accessed 9th Feb 2018).

in place Internet broadcasters are liberated from those particular technical concerns and only a music license may have to be purchased additionally, should one wish to play music that requires one. Just as in podcasting such a peer-to-peer delivery system encourages competition in audience building, and while listeners may discover individual stations of their own volition an additional subscription to an online radio aggregation system such as TuneIn might be worthwhile for the broadcaster. TuneIn is an Internet radio provider which combines multiple station streams into its digital outlet apps across various devices and platforms (including in-car entertainment for those vehicles fitted with a SIM card) and boasts a user base of 75 million listening to around 116,000 stations (TuneIn, 2018: online).³² The company operates both a chargeable subscription service and content promotion service should a broadcaster wish to promote their station through the network (*ibid.*).

Taking such service providers as representative of the state of the audio streaming industry currently³³ it can be seen that one set of commercial interests have been swapped for another. Online broadcast does not offer the freedom that might be expected of it, despite the utopian futurology advocated by Murrone *et al.* where digital multiplexes offer a way for overcoming dull programming (in Hendy, 2000: 52). Though FM broadcast licenses may be bypassed by Internet broadcast technology, broadcasters are still limited financially to a quantifiable listener base, just without the constrictions of geography as a factor (though costs may be considerably less over all). While the worldwide accessibility of Internet radio streaming does not preclude the creation of locally-focused stations, the displaced centrality of the overarching infrastructure displays the same disruptive shift that the Internet has brought to the music industry: Where once there were independent record labels, now there are aggregators for self-released music; where once there were independent radio stations,

³² The advertisement of such large numbers seem to extol the apparent desirability of choice that digital technology can bestow upon users, yet research has shown that an excessive range of options leads users not to explore the vast array of content but instead drives them into a state of overloaded frozen anxiety (Schwartz, 2004: 19).

³³ Acknowledging as much limitation as one can with such a fast-moving and changeable entity as the Internet.

now there are aggregators for self-produced radio shows. In both cases the digital domain has caused a financial (and associated power-) shift from the former to the latter.

The question over whether Internet radio is still considered to be ‘radio’ is an enquiry with parallels to the associated debate in podcasting studies.³⁴ Richard Berry, an early voice in podcasting scholarship, has published work contemplating podcasting’s forthcoming role in overthrowing radio (2006) through to situating it as part of mainstream media consumption alongside it (2016) just ten years later, such is the speed of the evolution of both the form itself and listeners’ adoption and usage. It can be seen from this appraisal of contemporary radio practice that the infrastructure of broadcasting is entangled with the type and editorial choices of the content transmitted in a relationship that works in both directions between station and listener. Stations are opened to serve local communities where their needs are not being met by extant stations whom adopt the common commercial practices of segregating audiences by demographics most suited to accumulating advertising revenue; listenership to broadcast networks occurs because people want to hear the content therein.

Content, and listeners reception and understanding of it, should therefore be interrogated to reveal its mechanisms and abilities to make meaning. The understanding of how an audience listens and understands what they hear is fundamental to untangling not only the relationship between listener and radio station but listener and all audio material from radio through to music and the wider world.

³⁴ A notable difference is the new ability for carrier networks to charge for radio reception, a telling example of a capitalist sociocultural marker, perhaps.

2.2 Virtual worlds: Media, music and meaning

In 1948 Pierre Schaeffer attempted to conceptually separate field recordings from the source that created them. *Étude aux Chemins de Fer* (1948), perhaps his most famous *musique concrète* piece, was an exemplar of the sort of listening experience Schaeffer wished be attended to as ‘acousmatic’ listening, the system whereby one is required to ‘describe not the external references of the sound [perceived] but the perception itself’ (1966: 77). As a piece of conceptual theory this idea has had much influence in experimental and leftfield musical spheres in the intervening years; as a practical exercise for an untrained listenership the task takes a good deal of patience and wilful-mindedness, such is the power of semiotics in sound.

Broadcast media, and particularly radio as an all-sound medium, relies heavily on audio semiotics in order to convey ideas, develop narrative, invoke emotion, and suggest that which is unseen. This particular creators’ toolbox is not solely limited to sound effects, field recordings and other non-musical audio objects: John Williams’s two-note shark alarm that works to set pulses racing before the appearance of the beast in *Jaws* (1975) is resolutely dissimilar from any sound of water splashing or figurative aquatic musical motifs. Nothing within that music itself links it to the setting for which it was conceived, and the motif has passed into popular culture as a symbol for impending disaster in the same way as Bernard Herrmann’s screeching violin strikes from the murderous shower scene in *Psycho* (1960). The difference between the two examples is the former is *connoted*, the latter *denoted* (Tagg, 2013: 161-163), that is to say that, unlike in *Jaws*, Herrmann’s string shrieks do indeed serve to sound figuratively like the act being performed on screen. This serves to illustrate that all sound, be it music, field recordings, spoken word material, and every combination of these, carries a set of semiotic interpretations that operate in a predictable manner which enables them to be put to work in the communication of unspoken meaning.

As per Crisell's summation of the types of audio output of which radio is comprised (speech, music, sound and silence (1994: 5-6)), this section will aim to give an overview of the use and theoretical attachments of these four aspects in order to highlight how this demarcation can be seen to be a somewhat blunt model, and how a more cohesive and expansive appraisal of radio's content might be suggested.

2.2.1 Sound

Crisell places speech as the primary element of communication (1994: 5-6), a position seemingly definitively demonstrated and reinforced by Andrew Sachs's radio drama featuring no speech whatsoever, *The Revenge* (1978). First broadcast on BBC Radio 3 (BBC Media Centre, 2018: online), this experimental work has been dismissed as 'a wordless sequence of noises ... a well-puffed curiosity' (Raban in Shingler and Wieringa, 1998: 53), a summary roundly expressing the consensus of opinion in mainstream radio scholarship when considering the employment of large tracts sound without speech to develop narrative (*ibid.*: 51). Contrary to the disadvantage this might seem it can be noted that the vagueness of meaning in sound is that which grants radio drama and documentary much of its power. The creative harnessing and (re-) purposing of audio material allows the crinkling of audio tape and snapping of sticks to stand in for a campfire on radio, for example, a particular undertaking that apparently offers the listener more clarity in identification than a field recording of the actual event (*ibid.*: 59). If radio is indeed a blind medium as Crisell insists (1994: 3) (notably much to the disagreement of a swathe of subsequent scholarship (Crook, 1999: 53-70)) that blindness must surely count as an advantage for creative sonic signposting rather than as a hindrance for the listener. As Esslin notes, 'In radio each listener will automatically see his ideal before his mind's eye and thus be satisfied' (In Shingler and Wieringa, 1998: 78).³⁵

³⁵ Screenwriter, author and television presenter Stephen Fry suggests that the most expensive stage direction expressed in the fewest words in a script might be 'the fleets meet' (1997: 285). It presents few difficulties for a radio production.

Shingler and Wieringa's work on the semiotics of radio is tentative to grant neither too much power to non-verbal sound nor too much acumen to its listeners. On the one hand they argue for a requirement in the simplicity of radio, keen to ensure the medium's 'easily distracted' (by which they mean all of them) listeners are not bombarded with so much sound or characterisation that they cannot keep up (1998: 81-83)³⁶, whilst on the other they grant radio sound a unique power and credibility that 'simply doesn't exist in other media' (*ibid.*: 92), finding themselves in agreement with Esslin that 'imagined pictures may be more beautiful and powerful than actual ones' (in Shingler and Wieringa, 1998: 78). What these scholars do offer on a more concordant research level is a broad agreement on the use of ambient sound, field recordings and sound effects, as well as silence, in radio study (*ibid.*: 53-61). They reflect on the generally accepted instances of sound semiotics in radio use (generally radio *drama* use, notably) as what Tim Crook describes as 'cultural codification' (1999: 72) – that which is widely and commonly known and understood in the culture for which it is intended, and this, it is suggested, is how the mechanics of radio storytelling operate.

Crook's *Radio Drama* handbook gives a rounded and well-researched account of the mechanisms by which sound is employed in the conveying of meaning non-verbally and non-visually (1999: 70-89). Lance Sieveking, Hilda Matheson, Andrew Crisell and Martin Esslin (mentioned above) have their work detailed as part of the radio practice community and Michel Chion's cinematic sound design vocabulary is also explored and applied as it relates to radio. These classification indices are a useful set of tools with which to study sound objects in audio drama and documentary and are detailed here in order that they may be both referred to and compared to those in music analysis, further below.

³⁶ They also suggest a radio audience needs continuously reminding of what is currently happening, what has already happened, and the dropping of ongoing hints at future plot developments in order that listeners do not get hopelessly lost (*ibid.*).

Lance Sieveking's audio sound design classification³⁷

Name of classification	Description of effect
Realistic, confirmatory effect	Sound which amplifies a dramatic signpost in the dialogue, for example if a storm is mentioned then creaking ship beams amidst wind sounds will confirm such
Realistic, evocative effect	Sound which does not require signposting through dialogue, for example quiet ('distant') reverbed church bells implying a rural setting
Symbolic, evocative effect	Non-referent sound which may represent an idea through textural or compositional means, for example a busy discordant sound which may be used to infer a character's uneasy state of mind. It should be made clear that this is <i>not</i> considered 'music' by Sieveking
Conventionalised effect	Easily identifiable sounds such as trains and horses. May be culturally encoded according to Crook (such as the chimes of Big Ben) but Sieveking did not envision this aspect explicitly
Music as an effect	Music used for narrative or emotional development or exposition, for example an excerpt of classical music to stand for a particular societal class or use of an insistent half-finished musical phrase to communicate an idea of loss of memory

Sieveking here offers a classification of all non-verbal sound used in radio. Crook's exposition in the detailing of Matheson and Esslin suggests that their understandings of the practice are allegorical and exploratory more than a codification that could be contextually relevant for the purposes of study (1999: 74-75 and 80-81), however Chion's ideas enable as

³⁷ As detailed in Crook (1999: 70-74).

firm a classification matrix as Sieveking's. These are indicated below, again, for analysis and reference purposes. Note that Chion takes into account the non-verbal information available in the content of speech sound.³⁸ With this in mind, and in order to condense the concepts presented here, I have further subcategorised the sounds classified into the following:

- Speech: Sound relating to human speech
- Incidental sound: That which is non-musical but may be added to a radio production for creative purposes
- Psychoacoustic: Sound which may be included in any other category but is specially sonically treated or in some way acoustically structured to offer meaning different from that which had not been presented in this way – a difference in the qualities of the *sound itself* which carries meaning
- Incidental sound/music: Added or present in a way to add to the narrative of the piece which may take the form of either composed sound or music

Michel Chion's vocabulary for sound design³⁹

Name of classification	Description of effect
Speech: theatrical speech	The exchange/presentation of language in dialogue
Speech: textual speech	Narration, non-diegetic speech. Preserves credibility/actuality of characters while providing a visual/conceptual landscape
Speech: emanation speech	Non-linguistic utterances – not fully formed or understood words: grunts, groans, mumbling. Used little in radio drama but radio features may employ this aspect of speech substantially
Incidental sound: rendering	Rendered sound is that processed sound which serve to underline or serve as an illustration of reality, such as a gunshot processed for the dramatic illustration of an

³⁸ Correctly, in linguistic terms, *prosody*, though perhaps a better term for this is 'paraverbal' (literally 'alongside' the verbal), a development of Tagg's 'paramusical' ('alongside' the musical) neologism (Tagg, 2013: 596). This is explored further below.

³⁹ As detailed in Crook (1999: 81-89).

	equivalent plot point
Incidental sound: acousmatic	As Schaeffer, above – that which is heard without being referentially aware of its source; also includes ‘off-stage’ sound, to use a theatrical analogy
Incidental sound: territorial sound	Ambient background sound whether recorded as-is or composed for the purpose
Psychoacoustic: back voice and frontal voice	Acoustic properties understood to convey speech when those speaking are faced away/towards the listener
Psychoacoustic: on-the-air sound	Sound clearly emanating from television, telephone or radio sources. Typically communicated by the filtering of certain frequencies whether deliberately processed or captured live
Psychoacoustic: extension, in-the-wings and superfield	Sound placement. Extension: outside of normal stereo listening, a type of limited surround sound. In-the-wings: the lingering of sound in the periphery of the sound field to indicate a character’s continuing presence. Superfield: Chion refers to this as the full surround sound experience; Crook intriguingly draws a radio comparison to the listeners’ imaginations
Incidental sound/music: empathetic and unempathetic sound	Music or sound introduced to either add to or detract from the emotion of the piece at the appropriate moment to enhance or diminish the mood
Incidental sound/music: internal and external logic	Internal logic sound or music is that which is intended to parallel the narrative flow of the radio piece. External is that which is selected or composed with the intention to suggest a counter-flow or aggravation of the narrative
Incidental sound/music: phantom/negative sound	Phantom or negative sound is that which Crook suggests exists entirely within the imagination of the listener brought about by

	the successful inference of narrative or location by the radio programme
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It can be seen that these theorists' concepts are broadly but inexactly aligned, with Chion's film-originated ideas perhaps expectedly more detailed than Sieveking's given his cinematic background. What both of these matrices offer is the unspoken acknowledgment of the capability of listeners to receive, decipher and apply semiotic meaning from sound when listening to a radio programme. Indeed, Crisell quotes Laurence Gilliam, former BBC radio head of features when he says, 'Radio is the art of communicating meaning on first hearing'⁴⁰ (1994: 42) and the elements listed here are clearly all included as exemplars of the types of sound that are clear purveyors of information.

That the filmic and audio-only may be so closely semiotically intertwined should come as no surprise given that sound and vision are part of our everyday consciousness and used as ways of navigating the world both physically and socially – the experiential day-to-day can be seen to be affected and influenced by what is seen and heard in media. It is not uncommon that listeners to personal music players report otherworldly sensations of playing the lead role in a real time cinematic adaptation of their own lives simply with the addition of music in their ears whilst walking down the street (Bull, 2000: 95). This is an enlightening example of the spontaneous conjuring and playfulness of the semiotics of the media form of film itself (rather than the depiction of narrative within film) and tropes inherent across multiple media platforms encourage this unconscious behaviour through familiarity. Marion Leonard and Robert Strachan note that the audible click of a recording device on film works to draw the viewer's attention to the hitherto background-only soundscape and conjure the character's 'aural point of view' in the mind of the audience (2015: 175), and this effect is surely translatable to the everyday experience of one armed with a personal listening device by a similar referential mechanism. The technology operates a set of semiotic relations in and of itself, as noted in chapter 1.1, whether this be by the physical act of haptic interaction with

⁴⁰ A concern not encountered in podcast practice where the listener can hear programmes again at will.

one's device or by psychoacoustic associations.

This powerful psychological force can be seen to be evident by the acknowledgment of radio's ability to invoke a sense of nostalgia in its listeners. Jo Tacchi writes that while radio has been central in domestic household life and has a role in the embedding and situational placement of the family within the world (2000: 281) the particular power it wields in this regard may be caused at least in part by to the way that sound is psychologically understood. Stressing that nostalgia is not about the slavish verification of memories but more the embodied feeling which can be connected to real or imagined pasts (*ibid.*: 294), she notes the non-linear way memory works and how this does not easily lend itself to straightforward linguistic representation (*ibid.*: 289). It is suggested that memory can be seen to operate in a similar manner to the edited and created actuality of sound offered by composed features with their often non-linear narrative characteristics (Hendy, 2013: 38-39); add to this the creativity offered by sound's inherent imprecision and radio's compelling nostalgic inflections become a central aspect of the form. 'The blurring of clarity in acousmatic voices has a particular psychological effect in which sound "breaks from its source to become something greater, more powerful and suggestive ... a sound that comes back to haunt"' (LaBelle in Leonard and Strachan, 2015: 177). Nostalgia is not simply a longing sentimentality, Tacchi continues, but plays a significant role in the psychological resistance to the conditions of modernity often experienced as isolation or loneliness (2000: 291), echoing Bull's findings on the employment of personal music player technology as a daily social coping strategy (2000: 24). Interestingly, these observations are also shared with R. Murray Schafer's studies into soundscapes, modernity and listeners' links with nostalgia (1977: 180).

Schafer sketches a collection of audio semiotics in his 1977 landmark work *The Soundscape* similar to the radio and cinematic matrices above. These take the form of what he terms 'sound contexts' (similar to Crook's 'cultural codifications') where he outlines the

idea that sound found in the context of the everyday sonic environment has certain connotated meanings. By no means a comprehensive system of classification⁴¹ as per Sieveking or Chion, Schafer's work closely echoes the theories put forward by these practitioners (albeit forty years after Sieveking's original work),⁴² though the emphasis which makes Schafer's thinking stand out is the application of the semiotics inherent in sound to the real world experience and not as part of a composed media product. Building on Pierre Schaefer's work on acousmatic listening (1977: 134) R. Murray Schafer's expression of the surrounding soundscape as musicality has a striking resonance when discussing the creative application of field recordings and speech, as his few examples attest:

R. Murray Schafer's 'sound contexts' examples⁴³

Sound	Acoustics	Psychoacoustics	Semantics	Aesthetics
Alarm bell	Sharp attack; steady-state with rapid amplitude modulation; narrow band noise on center frequency of 6,000 hertz; 85 decibels	Sudden arousal; continuous warble; high pitch; loud; decreasing interest; subject to auditory fatigue; sensitive pitch area	Alarm signal	Frightening, unpleasant, ugly
Flute music	Interrupted modulations of shifting frequency; near pure tones with	Active patterned sound of shifting pitch; melodic contour; pure tones; highish	Sonata by J. S. Bach; inducement to sit down and listen	Musical, pleasant, beautiful

⁴¹ Schafer suggests a number of sonic classification methods: by physical characteristics (attack, sustain, decay, duration, *etc.*), by referential aspects (natural, human, mechanical, *etc.*), by aesthetic qualities (how one might come to appreciate the sound), and by context. Only context is usefully relevant for the purposes of this study (1977: 133-150).

⁴² Sieveking's original work, *The Stuff of Radio*, from which Crook takes his 'laws', was published in 1934 (London: Cassell) and is both out of print and very difficult to obtain second hand, it seems.

⁴³ As outlined in *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1977: 148-150).

	some presence of even harmonics; varying between 500 and 2,000 hertz; 60 decibels	register; moderately loud		
Car horn	Steady-state, reiterative; predominant frequency of 512 hertz; 90 decibels		Get out of my way!	Annoying, unpleasant
			I've just been married!	Festive, exciting
I say, "Pierre, how are you?"	My crimped baritone		Pierre is called	Friendship
Margaret says, "Bonjour, Pierre"	Margaret's glorious contralto		Pierre is called	Friendship
Kettle boiling	Colored noise; narrow band (8,000+ hertz) steady-state; 60 decibels	High-pitched hissing sound	Tea is on	Pleasing
Snake hissing	Colored noise; narrow band (7,500+ hertz); steady-state (occasionally intermittent); 55 decibels	High-pitched hissing sound	Snake preparing to attack	Frightening

The list serves to highlight the possible multiplex of meanings transmitted by a single sound and also the requirement of contextual aspects in hearing to potentially give sounds meaning, as well as the important aspect of the subjectivity of the listener. Even the first two examples listed – sounds with seemingly the most certain and unmistakable denotation – can

be misconstrued: the alarm bell could well be triggered by a fault in the wiring prompting exasperated frustration rather than startled arousal; the floating flute of J. S. Bach may appear drab and disinteresting for one who prefers rock music. Interestingly, the speech item on the list includes a description of Margaret's voice as 'contralto', an explicitly musical term. Casual comparisons between the sung and spoken word are abound in the English language but take on a heightened meaning here when used in the context of Schafer's research and when discussing the roles of speech, sound and music in radio.

2.2.2 Speech

In the early days of radio, when clarity of reception was far from guaranteed, mediocre audio quality encouraged a 'declamatory' announcing style (Crisell, 1994: 12). Today, received pronunciation (in the UK at least) might be seen as a marker of media past, colonialism, formality, authority, and ripe for (perhaps fond) parody.⁴⁴ It has been established since the 1960s that listeners can accurately discern a disembodied and electronically mediated speakers' age, education and even weight to a close degree (Dunaway, 2000: 35), but Dyson notes that the 'radio voice' has become a cultural tradition and comprises a set of expectations, perhaps 'factual and informative' but certainly 'dedicated to the betterment of life' (in Shingler and Wieringa, 1994: 41). Crisell notes how the radio presenter's voice can be understood as the human embodiment of the station as a whole (1994: 43). The qualities of the voice itself are as important in semiotic meaning as the words that are spoken – consider the disallowance of female newsreaders in the early life of BBC radio due to concerns that the higher-timbred sound of the female voice might connote an element of hysteria (*ibid.*: 45-46)⁴⁵, and that the use of audio recording of ethnographical research

⁴⁴ For an example, listen to the *British Pathé* announcer on the 1946 film *Americian Ship Wrecked On Goodwin Sands [sic]* (1946)

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVA2THMLEE95L3VNFG6XE5FZZ6M0-AMERICAN-SHIP-WRECKED-ON-GOODWIN-SANDS> (Accessed 18th May 2018).

⁴⁵ Vocal fry, or the dropping of the voice below one's natural speaking register, is a current debate in broadcast media encompassing as it does feminist issues regarding the way that women present themselves and are sonically semiotically understood, especially in radio and podcasting. It might be

interview material is considered an essential part of research practice for the rich qualitative data such material can contain (Makagon and Neumann, 2009: 12). Dyson warns against excessive fine editing of recorded voices as it can lead to the effective disembodiment of the voice as the inherent coughs, wheezes and other sounds evoke an experiential physical presence for the listener and removal of these promote an uncanny ‘God-like authority’ (in Shingler and Wieringa, 1994: 43). Poet and radio researcher Seán Street has written much on the sound of the spoken word:

It is only the *sound* of the voice that can convey the full poetic idea, the rhythm, volume, pause and emphasis of the spoken word itself. There is a poignancy in the everyday spoken word, particularly in the spontaneous speech of impassioned recollection or expression. (2012: 81)

The spoken word intrinsically carries markers of emotion, social background (including class, education, geographic history), and a rough indication of the immediate vicinity of the speaker and how they are located relative to the listener or the recording microphone (as noted by Chion in the table above). Social cues may or may not be wholly accurately inferred as, for example, one may guess a speaker’s place of birth by their accent only to find a considerable amount of time spent in another part of the world later in life has had a formative effect on their speech, and accuracy of social interpretation relies somewhat on the listener being from (or at least connected to or knowledgeable of) an associated culture. One marker of the power of the non-verbal information available to a listener is how much might be revealed to those who do not speak the language they are hearing at all – Tim Crook’s own empirical experimentation leads him to estimate he could understand ‘65 to 70 per cent’ of the themes and storylines of a selection of foreign-language radio dramas when he attempted to do so (1999: 84), though as a caveat this should take into account the clues given by the sort of structural tropes that these types of programmes have accumulated over

connoted that this type of voice suggests the speaker less competent or trustworthy, but conversely perhaps educated and upwardly mobile (Heid, 2017: online).

the years as all media forms are wont to do. The radio feature tends to be a freer art form and less open to schematics assembled for the sake of dramatic narrative arcs and so may well be more difficult to interpret. When one is listening to speech either in an unknown language, or even a spoken language from a culture with which one is unfamiliar, semiotic connotations available in the heard words will be lost: a non-English speaker will not be able to infer the cultural stereotypes of, say, a native Cockney in the same manner as one who is well versed in British culture,⁴⁶ and it is for this reason that this study focuses on English language material only – the data may be there for those able to process and understand it, however as a speaker of English only one cannot evaluate the effectiveness of the transmission of extra-verbal information incorporated in non-English spoken word material. Poet Basil Bunting may be able to ‘delight an audience by reading poetry of a sufficient quality in a language it does not know’ (in Street, 2012: 22) but this study is concerned with the development of a nuanced account of the information transmitted by non-verbal means rather than as a celebration of what this manifestation of sound can do. The performative act of poetry is a subtle art, some poets feeling that hired actors ‘often bring too much of a sense of performance to [a] text’ (*ibid.*: 50), placing importance, as noted above, on the pauses within the works as key structural elements of the spoken prose as well as inflection upon the words themselves; such is the power of silence to underline and disrupt.

2.2.3 Silence

As a medium based on sound alone silence carries an enormous semiotic power in radio. Shingler and Wieringa note the (broadly-classified) two different connotations of it: the radio stations’ aversion to dead air threatening to cause listeners to feel disturbed and tune away⁴⁷ and its ability to infer meaning through the invocation of ‘expectancy, atmosphere, suspense,

⁴⁶ The traditionally codified definition of the Cockney (born within earshot of the church of St. Mary-le-Bow in London) can cause individuals to be at odds with the ‘pie’n’ mash’ cultural stereotype of the working class Londoner, for example, if they are upper middle class and speak with received pronunciation, as excellently played on for comic effect by *The Fast Show*, BBC TV, 1994-2014.

⁴⁷ The eeriness being caused by a sudden disconnection from the ubiquitous media soundscape to which we are all accustomed, suggests Kassabian (2013: 72).

emotional overtones and visual subtlety' (1994: 55). 'During silence things happen invisibly in the minds of the players and in our imagination' notes Donald McWhinnie (1959: 88), observing its power as a dramatic device. Crisell casts silence into 'positive' and 'negative' functions, indicative as *something* happening (narrative advancement away from the awareness of the listener) or *nothing* happening (accidental dead air) respectively (1994: 52-53). Silence may also be used as a structural device marking one scene from another, noted as being harder and harsher than music used for the same purpose (Shingler and Wieringa, 1994: 64), and also as a device loaded with meaning as the 'pregnant pause' (*ibid.*: 55). This instance of silence is one that radio producers will be extremely aware of as a creative tool for inspiring thoughtfulness in the listener, and just as in music it is powerful. As Dyson warns above that excessive fine editing can be overdone and remove the humanity of speech, editing to *add* silence rather than remove it can also be achieved for dramatic or emotional effect, and this is easily done in the editing suite (whether tape or software), particularly when the producer has a separate track of 'atmospheric' silence underlying recorded speech material to ease the join (*ibid.*: 55). Silence artificially inserted after a particularly noteworthy or emotionally charged point, even when the original recorded text has been spliced and no such instance existed, is a technique open to producers and may be the sort of practice that problematises the relationship between notions of truth in documentary and the creative treatment of actuality which documentary film and radio features employ (Biewen, 2010: 5-7). Holly Rogers writes on the nature of this with a similar semiotic portability that Chion offers to Crook, noting the close relationship between documentary and fiction film particularly in the use of music and creative attitude (2015: 9). 'In fiction film we have to suspend our disbelief; in documentary, we have to keep it activated and hold together in our minds two worlds at once' (*ibid.*: 14).

2.2.4 Music

Music radio is of course one of the more dominant forms of the medium, and there is the

distinction to be made at this juncture between the standalone records played by a radio DJ and music which is used as an accompaniment to a programme for dramatic or jingle purposes. Or should such a distinction be made? When asking how music works we must beware the trap that suggests self-contained pieces of music speak only to themselves without reference to the outside world and bear no relation to either the sociopolitical backgrounds in which they were forged (Kerman, 1985: 31-59) and that music used for dramatic purposes carries special signification that means it only works for that function. There have been many music releases for non-existent accompanying films – Symmetry’s *Themes for an Imaginary Film* (2011), Brian Eno’s *Music for Films* (1978), Passengers’ *Original Soundtracks 1* (1995), and Dave Seaman’s *Back to Mine* (1999) are just a few: the idea is not new. One might ask whether musicologists should treat differently music written intentionally for soundtrack use from that which just happens to feature thereon, and what the extra media association does for the piece. This leads to questions over the use of music in composed features since that music can be scored specifically for the documentary or brought in ready-made with its own set of semiotic associations.

Philip Tagg offers a set of musicological tools, as well as something of a manifesto, for music analysis which can be applied to all musics whether classical, pop, avant-garde or otherwise. Utilising semiological theory developed by the likes of Ferdinand de Saussure and C. S. Peirce (2013: 155-194), Tagg develops a vocabulary which aims to allow the examination of music regardless of the background of either the music or listener, pointing out that humans are always already invested with the ability to read signification across interlinked senses, or what he refers to as ‘domains of representation’ (*ibid.*: 62-68). Building a sophisticated vocabulary, Tagg’s work suggests one need not be a music scholar in the traditional sense in order to undertake musical analysis, something which has been hinted at with the scholarship in the tables above, but he moves to unequivocally convey this idea.

Tagg’s critical methods are too deep to fully expound here so a further table is offered,

with reference to those above, outlining the essential critical facets of his musicological techniques. Some of these terms are taken from wider semiotic discourse, some are neologisms particular to his work.

Tagg's analytical toolkit for 'non-muso' musicology⁴⁸

Analytical term(s)	Description
Aesthetic/poietic	Relating to the aesthesis (reception) of music or its poiesis (construction). Music as viewed by listening or from a technical viewpoint, <i>e.g.</i> 'a sad-sounding chord' or 'E minor'
Anaphone	Musical sign type that can be heard to bear iconic resemblance to that which it represents. <i>Social anaphone</i> : relating musical structure to a para- or extramusical group formation with specific traits in terms of number, gender, group dynamics, <i>etc.</i> <i>Sonic anaphone</i> : relating musical structure with para- or extramusical sound
Arbitrary sign (or conventional sign)	Sign connected by convention to what it signifies
Atmos (pl. atmoses)	General atmospheric sound, the ongoing soundscape
Aural staging	The 'mise-en-scène' of sound sources
Continuant	The ongoing phonetics of a sound, <i>e.g.</i> , the 'r' sound in 'rrrrreally!'
Diataxis	Arrangement/disposition/order of musical episodes in terms of chronological placement and relative importance. <i>Diataxeme</i> : identifiable element of diatactical meaning
Episode	Passage containing distinct material as part of a larger sequence of events
Episodic determinant	Sign type which determines the identification of a passage as a discrete episode

⁴⁸ As outlined in *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos* (2013: 155-528).

Extended present	Durational marker – that which lasts no longer than a musical phrase, a few footsteps, or gestural pattern
Extensional/intentional	Musical expression over the longer duration/musical expression ‘vertically’ (simultaneous layerings of expression)
Generic annexing	Process whereby a response to music is formed through broad generic associations, <i>e.g.</i> , the Allman Brothers Band’s <i>Jessica</i> signifying ‘cars’ but not the UK TV show <i>Top Gear</i> itself, which employs the song as its theme tune
Genre synecdoche	Part-for-whole sign type referring to a musical style other than that of its immediate surroundings invoking the meanings of that other associated style, <i>e.g.</i> Graham Coxon’s soundtrack to <i>The End of the F***ing World</i> (2018) invoking cowboy Western film tropes even though the TV show is set in the contemporary UK
Gestural interconversion	Type of signification that relates between internal and particular sensations and external objects, <i>e.g.</i> , soft undulating hills
Lexical	Relating to the words of a language rather than its grammar, syntax or prosody
Logocentric	Assuming, often implicitly, that the semiotic properties of verbal language apply to other symbolic systems
Logogenic	Having properties that can adequately be put into words
Morpheme	A minimal unit of speech that is recurrent and meaningful, a linguistic form that is not further divisible without destruction of meaning
Museme	A minimal unit of musical meaning, as morpheme. Can be arranged into museme

	<i>stacks</i> (a compound of simultaneously occurring musical sounds to produce a meaningful unit of ‘now sound’ meaning) and <i>museme strings</i> (a compound of consecutively occurring musemes in a single piece of music)
Paramusical	‘Alongside’ the music – semiotically related to a particular musical discourse without being intrinsically related to that discourse
Phoneme	Smallest unit of sound used to construct meaning in speech
PMFC	Paramusical field of connotation – connotatively identifiable semantic fields relating to identifiable sets of musical structures
Prosody	The rhythm, speed, accentuation, intensity, intonation, <i>etc.</i> , of speech
Syncrisis	Musical form in terms of the aggregation of several simultaneously ongoing sounds perceptible as a combined whole inside the limits of the extended present (museme stack)

It can be seen that Tagg’s analytical apparatus for music is both broader and deeper than the previously indicated tables for Sieveking, Chion and Schafer. This is not because music is somehow more difficult to interrogate – though pre-Kerman music scholarship might lead one to believe this (Cook, 1998: 90-93) – but because in working to bypass the assumed need for music criticism to be the sole preserve of classically-trained music scholars Tagg seeks to engage with the full scope of the underlying semiotics inherent in the music. Such Peircean and Saussurean semiotics sit a conceptual level of understanding lower than the individual academics working in various media forms – Chion in film, Sontag in photography, *etc.*; they all work to draw broadly on semiotic theory and draw upon it to apply it to their own fields, but even bearing this in mind it is striking, and a keystone of the analytical theory of this

thesis, just how applicable Tagg’s work is to the radio and podcast feature. For clarity of illustration, a comparison exploration of Tagg’s table above is offered made with explicit reference to composed feature content and practice examples:

Analytical term(s)	Description	Composed feature example
Aesthetic/poietic	Relating to the aesthesis (reception) of sound or its poïesis (construction)	Respectively, slow ambient music under which speech sits (aesthesis) naming the technique a ‘music bed’ (poïesis)
Anaphone	Sonic sign type that can be heard to bear iconic resemblance to that which it represents. <i>Social anaphone</i> : relating sound structure to a para- or extramusical group formation with specific traits in terms of number, gender, group dynamics, etc. <i>Sonic anaphone</i> : relating musical structure with para- or extramusical sound	<i>Anaphone</i> : The metallic swish of a blade – a cutting, sharp sound. <i>Social anaphone</i> : Use of skateboard sounds to stand for a youthful, energetic pursuit. <i>Sonic anaphone</i> : Use of flute as allegorical to birdsong
Arbitrary sign (or conventional sign)	Sign connected by convention to what it signifies	<i>Jaws</i> theme to suggest menace, tension, danger
Atmos (pl. atmoses)	General atmospheric sound, the ongoing soundscape	Ambient background recordings
Aural staging	The ‘mise-en-scène’ of sound sources	Use of fox calls and owl hoots to suggest night
Continuant	The ongoing phonetics of a sound, e.g., the ‘r’ sound in ‘rrrrreally!’	Same
Diataxis	Arrangement/disposition/order of musical episodes in terms of chronological placement and relative importance. <i>Diataxeme</i> : identifiable element of diatactical meaning	The structure of narrative in a feature. <i>Diataxeme</i> : Pointed use of a deliberately intriguing plot revelation out of place to act to draw in the listener
Episode	Passage containing distinct material	Individual ‘scene’ of a

	as part of a larger sequence of events	composed feature
Episodic determinant	Sign type which determines the identification of a passage as a discrete episode	Usage of fades, silence or particular sound objects to transition from one episode to another, or move from one instance of aural staging to another
Extended present	Durational marker – that which lasts no longer than a musical phrase, a few footsteps, or gestural pattern	Same
Extensional/intentional	Musical expression over the longer duration/musical expression ‘vertically’ (simultaneous layerings of expression)	Longer shape of a feature/use of elements of recorded sound simultaneously to impart meaning, e.g., separately recorded interview material, background sound and music layered on top of one another
Generic annexing	Process whereby a response to sound is formed through broad generic associations	Use of accordion to signify a French scene
Genre synecdoche	Part-for-whole sign type referring to a narrative or sonic style other than that of its immediate surroundings invoking the meanings of that other associated style	<i>Limetown</i> podcast’s adoption of solo reportage style referencing <i>Serial</i> and therefore borrowing its inherent signification
Gestural interconversion	Type of signification that relates between internal and particular sensations and external objects	Use of ever-rising Shepard tones to communicate tension; tension embodied
Lexical	Relating to the words of a language rather than its grammar, syntax or prosody	Same
Logocentric	Assuming, often implicitly, that the semiotic properties of verbal language apply to other symbolic systems	Words tentatively spoken represented by hesitant or broken sound or structure

Logogenic	Having properties that can adequately be put into words	Clearly identifiable sound source, e.g., the sea
Morpheme	A minimal unit of speech that is recurrent and meaningful, a linguistic form that is not further divisible without destruction of meaning	'Um', 'err', 'a', 'the'
Museme	A minimal unit of sonic meaning, as morpheme. Can be arranged into <i>museme stacks</i> (a compound of simultaneously occurring sounds to produce a meaningful unit of 'now sound' meaning) and <i>museme strings</i> (a compound of consecutively occurring musemes in a single piece of sound)	Bleeps on a telephone keypad. <i>Museme stack</i> : Combined with a dial tone. <i>Museme string</i> : dialling a complete phone number
Paramusical	'Alongside' the music – semiotically related to a particular musical discourse without being intrinsically related to that discourse	Concept of electric guitar communicated by rock music. <i>Paraverbal</i> : Accent, background inferred from speech material. <i>Parasonic</i> : Seaside town inferred from seagull recording
Phoneme	Smallest unit of sound used to construct meaning in speech	't', 's', 'ou', 'thr'
PMFC	Paramusical field of connotation – connotatively identifiable semantic fields relating to identifiable sets of sonic structures	Podcast commercial read by presenter or podcast theme tune, both connoting imminent start of programme
Prosody	The rhythm, speed, accentuation, intensity, intonation, etc., of speech	Speech accent, delivery, pacing
Syncrisis	Sonic form in terms of the aggregation of several simultaneously ongoing sounds perceptible as a combined whole inside the limits of the extended	Steam train journey understood from rhythmic clack of rails, steam hissing, whistle

	present (museme stack)	
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Tagg’s terminology and classification structure offers an excellent reinforcement of the concept of the composed feature as musical practice. In many instances the identified phenomena translate directly across without amendment (‘continuant’, ‘extended present’) while others require a small adjustment to move from the original considerations of music in its traditional sense to sound studies and the composed feature (‘museme’, ‘generic annexing’). Some are remarkably applicable in their own right (‘genre synecdoche’, ‘episode’ and ‘episodic determinant’).

For some time now academics working in the field of new media have discussed the notion of convergence, whereby first technologies and then content would combine and mingle as the Internet offered the opportunity for uniting media electronics (Lister *et al.*, 2009: 202). However, it is suggested that by embracing semiotics and their clear application it can be seen that media forms have always been interlinked in terms of their creation, practice, and reception. Speech, music, sound and silence may be discrete and distinct items to be layered upon one another for the purposes of narrative, but that is not how they are understood by either the creator or the listener of feature documentaries (what Tagg refers to as the poïetic and aesthetic); these elements each carry with them intense amounts of signification deeply related to cultural, personal, mnemonic, and nostalgic aspects of the human condition, each layered upon another creating morpheme and museme stacks which can be understood exactly in the way music can be understood – as existing as a bundle of codified emotion waiting for a listener to decipher the sound using a set of tools personal to only them (Kassabian, 2013: xxiv-xxv). Rather than Crisell’s placing of speech at the top of his radio content hierarchy it is suggested that music have that honour, but that it stands to *encompass* the others rather than preside over them.

Outside of the semiotics inherent in sound features another important facet of meaning making when listening, namely the manner in which one opens their consciousness to receive

such material. In podcast studies much is made of the medium's significant engagement with the act of headphone listening, but this will not guarantee that a listener is fully immersed, or even paying much in the way of attention at all. The next section examines what effect the concentration of the listener has upon the material they might hear and looks at how podcast listening practice might compare with other audiovisual media.

2.3 Curious acoustics: Listening habits, sound perception and the subjective experience

‘Awareness and the difficulties of the self in the social world begin ... with an immersion in sound, coming from within, without and inside, all at once, and this sound is not so much heard but felt ...’ (Toop, 2010: 29). The ways in which we as listeners choose to engage with the world offer insights into how we understand ourselves and the soundscape around us. Kassabian recognises that histories of ambient music are often at pains to make clear distinctions between the natural soundscape and composed music and sound, suggesting that the separation lies with the listener’s manner of interaction (2013: 5); in other words, one chooses to understand the sound of their world the way one wishes with the implementation of a mode of listening. What does it mean, then, to engage sonically with one’s surroundings, and how can such engagements be understood creatively and communicatively when one seeks to actively select what they are hearing? These questions must be addressed to understand what listeners take from podcast feature documentaries and how interaction with sound impacts interpretation.

I have already discussed above Crisell’s summation of radio as a ‘secondary medium’ (1994: 162). TV, like film, is believed to hold the attention more fully as the visual aspect is assumed to draw one’s full concentration and is therefore supposedly more fulfilling. Improvising musician Derek Bailey conforms to this view when he considers recorded music versus live performance, asking ‘Where do you look? Do you stare at a wall when you listen to records?’ (Bailey in Cox and Warner 2007: 111). However, the television despite its visual qualities holds no such especially attentive powers, Donnelly explains, citing John Ellis: ‘We listen to television sometimes more than we watch it. It is a talkative medium, and tends to have sound cues that we can follow when our attention is drawn elsewhere’ (2005, 111). Tagg comments on this, suggesting TV theme tunes have a ‘reveille function’ (in Donnelly, 2005: 113), calling viewers to take their seats for their show on a television already switched on and presumably playing only half-noticed. The designation of radio as a secondary

medium implies an imperfection, of it having a lack of some fulfilling aspect of its being; radio is seen as a poorer cousin simply *because* it can be an accompaniment to other simultaneous activities. This thinking is along the same now-questioned lines as the requirement to be a classically-trained music scholar in order to understand how music makes one feel (Kerman, 1985: 114-120), very much of the associated and contested school of thought that requires full immersion in a piece of music in order to fully interpret it (Tagg, 2013: 94). Passive engagement does not mean that something is being *actively ignored* (is such a thing even possible?) but that one's attention is drifting and returning. Since most music, TV, film and radio is so seldom pointedly fully engaged with save for analytical study, is fully focused listening really the best way to evaluate the mechanisms present in broadcast media?

Indicating a typical wandering and focusing of attention, Kevin Donnelly cites Annabel Cohen's experiments on attentive listening in film, discovering that viewers while closely watching a slide show did not notice the presence or absence of music (2005: 7), indicating the levels of attention typically dedicated. Claudia Gorbman states that film music is the 'hypnotist that lulls us into a hyperreceptive state ... all the more powerful in not actively being noticed' (2000: 234). Such analysis chimes with Michael Bull's study into personal stereo use, his primary research subjects reporting that use of the technology causes a 'moving around in a "trance-like" state with their perceived reactions to the environment slowed down and their response times to situations subsequently longer' (2000: 23). Could it be suggested that the presence of music, whether actively or passively engaged with and through whatever medium one comes to it, induces broad states of 'occupied' consciousness? Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, psychologist and author of the theory of *Flow* – a conception of the mental state of having one's foremost consciousness fully diverted and absorbed – seems to suggest so:

Without training, and without an object in the external world that demands attention, people are unable to focus their thoughts for more than a few minutes at a time. It is relatively easy to concentrate when attention is structured by outside stimuli, such as when a movie is playing on the screen or when while driving heavy traffic is encountered on the road. (2002: 119)

Bull likens this form of attention to an electronically-facilitated concept of daydreaming (2000: 38), invoked by Adorno's idea of 'we-ness', the 'substitution of direct experience by technology-mediated forms of experience' (*ibid.*: 28)⁴⁹ as a suggestion of what the personal stereo is activating in its users. Csikszentmihalyi would seem to agree (2002: 120).

Personal audio player (Walkman, iPod, and most recently app-mediated audio content on smartphone) use might suggest a slightly different psychological engagement with media, whether playing music, radio or podcasts, since the user is actively selecting the content they want to hear, therefore suggesting that focus might already be increased: there is a greater degree of agency from the listeners' perspective and more substantive control over what is heard. Bull's Walkman-using subjects certainly employ their devices to engage with the world in this way, with multiple respondents reporting reassuring control over their environment as being an important part of the process of usage (2000: 24). It might be considered that the mediation via headphones of a chosen listening source has an impact on the attentiveness a user gives the sound from them, but what precise impact is difficult to quantify since one's attention naturally has to wander to some degree even with headphones; iPod-related traffic accidents are a reasonably commonplace occurrence (Jamieson, 2008) but would presumably be a good deal higher otherwise.⁵⁰ Control over one's soundscape can only ever be in degrees since one cannot choose exactly what one hears from a selected

⁴⁹ This could also be applied to the media form of the composed feature as a whole of course, imparting as it does the views of experiences of others upon listeners as a form of social interaction, but more on this below.

⁵⁰ Evaluation of sources reporting them has to be considered carefully as new technologies are often the subject of technologically dystopian reporting where new technology is looked upon with disproportionately great levels of suspicion (Briziarelli, 2015: 51).

podcast or radio station save in repeat listening situations, and even then background sound and the physical location one is in will have an impact on exactly what one is hearing and how one feels about it (Soltani, 2018: 202). This absence of control *in toto* encourages a wider perspective of how users are modifying their consciousness – Cohen and Taylor make an interesting observation:

We experience the external world as bound together by time and space, it spreads before us in an ordered and predictable manner. But often the purely inner life is far more random and inchoate. Sometimes we literally cannot get our fantasies going. We lie back and wait but they will not unroll, our inner eye refuses to travel ... we respond by feeding it with further stimuli, we gaze at pictures, read books, assemble relevant properties. (1976: 102)

This suggests that listeners are seeking distraction and deliberately compelling their minds to wander with their chosen media rather than wishing to pay close immersive attention to what they are hearing, and reinforces the argument that this listening mode is a wide default. Radio's 'secondariness', rather than having the negative trait that Crisell seems to suggest, might be seen to have a significant advantage in its *absence* of possibly distracting moving pictures – Csikszentmihalyi's own research also suggests television is an ultimately unrewarding psychological experience (2002: 83). Furthermore, the suggestion that media users are acting to intervene in their own fragmented inner world adds weight to the notion that music and radio (and documentary features of course) are psychologically linked to the mechanisms of nostalgia, or, to quote Bull, 'The prominence given to the personal narrative taking place in the users' "own space" represents a reappropriation of the past in the present whilst the present is experienced as "removed"' (2000: 24).

Inattentive listening is little studied and understood, with the examination of the perception and cognition of music being,

most advanced in the context of deliberate and attentive listening, perhaps because it is assumed that other kinds of listening involve the same processes but simply capture less of the available information. (Clarke *et al.*, 2010: 77)

Toop addresses this unknowability directly, noting that ways of hearing are ‘notoriously subjective’ (2010: 33). Anahid Kassabian has studied ongoing everyday exposure to music and the effects this has on cognition and listener comprehension. Borrowing the term *ubiquitous listening* from Mark Weiser’s notion of ubiquitous computing (where microchip processors would be present in all everyday items (2013: xii)), she works to build a model of the processes involved and offers considered philosophical grounding in the mechanisms at play:

Ubiquitous musics act, even when not engaged in a focused manner; the degree of attention one pays to them seems to rely on an enormous range of musicological, psychological, and sociological factors; and the relationship between listening and attention is anything but clear. (Kassabian, 2013: xix)

Kassabian acknowledges the contribution to musical disciplinary discourse that Foucault provides, and notes Adorno’s high regard towards fully immersive listening as an analytical gold standard before posing the noteworthy question, ‘Logically, if expert, concentrated, structural listening produces the canon, don’t other modes of listening produce other repertoires?’ (2013: 6). While the question deserves an insightful answer the ability to address it directly becomes tricky and somewhat circular if, as suggested above, the default listening mode is one of casual inattentiveness. Ola Stockfelt suggests that different musics develop a bidirectional relationship with their associated listeners, each influencing the other, producing what he terms *genre-normative listening situations*, calling individual listening encounters ‘adequate listening’⁵¹ (1997: 91), a phenomenon about which musician David

⁵¹ ‘To listen adequately ... means that one masters and develops the ability to listen for what is relevant to the genre in the music, for what is adequate to understanding according to the specific genre’s comprehensible context’ (Stockfelt, 1997: 91).

Byrne concurs (Byrne, 2013: 18-22). Kassabian approaches this by proposing that we exist in a massive conceptual network of distributed subjectivity where understanding of music, the self, and society are in a constant state of semiotic renegotiation (*ibid.*: xxvii), noting that other scholars have conceptualised similarly (*ibid.*: xxiv).⁵²

Distributed subjectivity is ... a nonindividual subjectivity, a field, but a field over which power is distributed unevenly and unpredictably, over which differences are not only possible but required, and across which information flows, leading to affective responses. The channels of distribution are held open by ubiquitous musics. Humans, institutions, machines and molecules are all nodes on the network, nodes of different densities. (Kassabian, 2013: xxv)

Ubiquitous music can be conceptualised as a sort of multifocalism, or sourcelessness perhaps. Music was obviously present in society before the ability to capture and distribute it electronically but this invention has surely magnified its ubiquity; the advent of the Internet and solid-state memory music players even more so – in fact the contemporary version of the Internet might even be conceived as a physical expression of this idea.

Taking a further conceptual step, Kassabian then asks the question that if the way music is understood can be qualified by the amount of attention listeners pay towards it, then exactly how much attention is available to be captured? With the 21st Century's proliferation in media delivery mechanisms and corresponding content to fill those channels Nobel-prize winning economist Herbert Simon addresses the question from an informational perspective: 'What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention' (in Davenport and Beck, 1997: 11). This viewpoint is echoed in research into the nature of choice and its excesses:

⁵² Specifically Haraway's work on the cyborg, Castells' work on networks, and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes concept, to which I should like to add Tagg's cultural semiotics in relation to music as discussed above (2013).

A large array of choice may discourage consumers because it forces an increase in the effort that goes into making a decision. So consumers decide not to decide, and don't buy the product. Or if they do, the effort that the decision requires detracts from the enjoyment of the derived results. Also, a large array of options may diminish the attractiveness of what people *actually* choose, the reason being that thinking about the attractions of some of the unchosen options detracts from the pleasure derived from the chosen one [italics in original]. (Schwartz, 2004: 20)

Kassabian deals with this by suggesting that one's attention is always divided into a collection of different types negotiating for position and importance in an array not dissimilar to her description of networked multifocalism above. Types of attention she suggests include 'multiple versus single focus, conceptual/analytic versus generative/creative, durational (reading) versus pointillist (watching viral videos, clicking around web pages)' (2013: 53). Toop concurs with the difficulties in investigative interpretation, noting that hearing and listening are notoriously subjective (2010: 33), and if indeed hearing infers daydream-like states then listening will ultimately defy absolute prediction of experience – we are rather left with Roland Barthes's 'death of the author' once again, where the receiver of the message has ultimate responsibility for their experience, voluntarily or otherwise (1977: 142-148).

Individual subjectivity nevertheless seems to coalesce into wider-held beliefs and cultural agreements over the qualities of listening experience, however, and Kassabian accounts for the individual's role in this by invoking Massumi and his work on affect theory and the relationships we build with self-identification in social (including sonic) interactions. Outlining affect in this instance as a 'process leav[ing] behind a residue of position', Kassabian notes the phenomenon's influence on identity as a reference to individual subjectivities across the network, asserting that, 'Identity doesn't reside within a single subject; rather, it is a flow across a field, which constantly morphs into different shapes and contours, depending on the circumstances' (2013: xxvii). This adds weight, if it were needed,

to the anti-positivist stance in musical analysis famously espoused by Kerman (above) that music speaks only of itself without reference to external sociopolitical concerns. Clarke *et al.* note the affordances of specific music offered to both individuals and groups (2010: 78), as does Tagg in relation to advertising practices (2013: 93), reinforcing the idea that individual subjectivities are arranged to collectively produce cultural understandings.

The means by which listeners engage with media output in terms of attentiveness seems to be varied, unpredictable and deeply personal, with recourse to deeper philosophical ideas in explanation of practices required to try to identify broad characteristics of behaviour. Since one cannot predict exactly how a piece of feature documentary work might be listened to, from a pragmatic perspective only the recognition of the invocation of (day-) dream-like states offers any creative certainty from which to develop an aspect of practice, though this is not to say the recognition of non-attentive listening as a key component of media creation isn't significantly important. Affect theory has already been discussed in relation to technological mediation of content, and this section similarly alludes to the machinations of that particular discourse by the use of flows across distributed networks. The recognition of this system of engagement has potentially important consequences for the way non-verbal meaning is understood in podcast features, and this idea will be more fully explored next.

2.4 The transmission, reception and embodiment of audio media

Writing on radio listeners and the employment of imagination to conjure mental images in response to listening, David Hendy suggests that ‘the innate pleasurability of such cognitive activity helps forge a strong *emotional* attachment to the radio medium itself’ [italics in original] (2000: 119), citing involvement of the limbic system in the brain.⁵³ Certainly radio emphasises certain imaginative processes in its listeners (but then so do other media – filmgoers are required to summon the unseen monster in horror films, for example), but whether this facilitates an emotional bond *per se* might be difficult to ascertain. From a philosophical standpoint affective and embodied processes play a key role in the cognition of media. Crisell observes the peculiar sensation of ‘liveness’ in broadcast radio, even in pre-recorded programmes (1994: 9), and the sense of awareness when hearing a live unfolding event whilst knowing there are unseen others similarly listening is common even though the sensation is largely illusory (Hendy, 2000: 121). Radio is considered a medium of warm companionship despite this mirage of sociality, a fact Crisell believes is true because of the skills listeners have in imagining the events it depicts (1994: 11). Such practices tend to invoke similar mental images across wide sections of listeners due to the semiotic reasons outlined by Tagg, above, but these massive broadcast-scale agreements in meaning do lend themselves to deeper philosophical interrogation. How does radio and podcast listening make us feel, and what is happening to us when we listen? This section aims to develop affect theory further as applied to (mediated) listening, and demonstrate how embodiment can be observed to understand emotional cognition and reception.

David Hesmondhalgh notes the recent ‘affective turn’ in cultural theory, pointing out the limitations of semiotic work in taking into account emotion and embodied experience:

⁵³ This biological assumption might be considered fragile as it excludes all conscious subjective experience and lays qualitative research directly over quantitative, a practice fraught with difficulties (Bavelas, 1995: 49-62). Emotional attachment, however, is nevertheless easily observed in enthusiasts.

The affective turn in cultural theory has the benefit in recognising that sensations, moods, and feelings are a key part of cultural experience alongside emotion, and that there are important somatic dimensions to affect. This is good, because responses to culture should not be treated primarily as a matter of intellectual interpretation and evaluation. (2013: 13)

Tagg's semiotic readings of music and sound are indeed pragmatic and leave emotional responses entirely to the receiving subject's personal history and pre-existing psychological state, relegating emotional transmission to extant cultural codification tropes he terms 'paramusical fields of connotation' (2013: 229-262). This is not to say that Tagg's work (or any semiotician's) can be disregarded or put entirely in place of affect, but rather they might be conceived to exist in parallel with semiotics offering a concrete definable event complimentary to the 'trace within our constitution' which is left by vanishing affective transmission (Hemmings, 2005: 552). Strachan suggests the interactions of affect and cognitive processes are cyclical, the individual making a "quick and dirty" appraisal of perceived sonic materials which are almost simultaneously refracted through frameworks of signification, meaning, and, ultimately, emotion' before looping around a multitude of times and settling on a final cognitive position (2010: online).

Affect could be defined as 'an autonomous reaction of an observer's body when confronted with a particular perception' (Meelberg in Strachan, 2010: online) and therefore essentially outside of analytical experience and ability as Hesmondhalgh suggests. Massumi concurs and offers the idea that affect is never wholly caught and posits that its power comes from elements being untranslated and unknowable, terming this the 'autonomy of affect' (*ibid.*), with Shouse keen to make clear that the phenomenon is distinct from feelings and emotions, calling the sensation a 'non-conscious experience of intensity ... a moment of unformed and unstructured potential ... It is what determines the intensity (quantity) of a feeling (quality)' (in McHugh, 2012: 193). The transmission of affect is that characteristic

which might be felt from a ‘warm’ or ‘hostile’ audience, or sulky teenager; an ‘atmosphere’ or a ‘vibe’, not just an emotional experience but a felt, embodied encounter: something which Brennan summarises as ‘the physiological shift accompanying a judgement’ (*ibid.*: 194).

Affect is available to be received at all times from all sources, animate or otherwise.⁵⁴ Just as Kassabian conceptualises a vast interconnected matrix of individually subjective nodes, similarly Erik Davis builds upon Marshall McLuhan’s work to propose his idea of ‘acoustic space’:

Acoustic space is the space we hear rather than the space we see ... Acoustic space is multi-dimensional, resonant, invisibly tactile, ‘a total and simultaneous field of relations’. Where visual space emphasises linearity, acoustic space emphasises simultaneity. (in Kara and Thain, 2015: 187)

Brian Massumi, who has worked extensively on affect theory, posits along similar lines, terming his relational field of forces a ‘biogram’ which is an ‘intense, torsional coalescence of potential individuations’ (2002: 190), building on Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas on interrelational planes:

The plan(e) always concerns the development of forms and the formation of subjects. A hidden structure necessary for forms, a secret signifier necessary for subjects. It ensues that the plan(e) itself will not be given. It exists only in a supplementary dimension, to that to which it gives rise ... This makes it a teleological plan(e), a mental principle ... It may be in the mind of a god, or in the unconscious of life, of the soul, or of language: it is always concluded by its own effects. (2004: 293)

It would seem that this interrelational field is easily conceived but difficult to capture or command, and harnessing or manipulating this force creatively might not be possible in a

⁵⁴ Affect has been discussed in relation to technological listening devices and formats, see 1.1.

direct and practical sense. Massumi comments about how his biogram, like Deleuze and Guattari's plane, is itself beyond direct cognition and control:

To do this would require somehow integrating logics of perception and experience into the modelling. Processes like habit and memory would have to be taken into account ... Ways of architecturally soliciting an ongoing eliciting of emergent forms-functions at the collective hinge of perception, hallucination, and cognition would have to be experimented with. Techniques would have to be found for overfilling experience. The methods would have to operate in a rigorously inexact way, respecting the positivity of the virtual's vagueness and the openness of its individual endings. Never prefiguring. (2002: 191)

Clearly music, radio, film and all media output does work to manipulate this interrelationship, however, else the created product would fail in its objective to entertain, move or otherwise engage an audience – art which leaves no impression at all is rare and emotional blandness seldom an objective goal. Creators are always working with affective fields, for we all exist on that quantifiable plane, albeit with variable personal experiences that cannot all singly be catered for (and would anyone wish to make art so prescriptive?). Acknowledgement of oneself and one's place on the biogram is essential in order to acknowledge the changes one is facilitating or becoming aware of, asserts Kassabian (2013: 105), and this must be true for both producers and receivers. The biogram puts one in a state of 't/here' whereby one's existence on the distributed network of nodes places one on a figurative parallel of quantum entanglement: 'I can *in fact* be both here and there at once. Not non-space-based, but entangled. While entanglement is fragile, it is nonetheless real and observable' [italics in original] (*ibid.*: 103).

In terms of audio documentary, McHugh notes that 'when an informant narrates an experience in an affecting way (*i.e.*, with palpable emotion) listeners will register the emotion through the prism of their own lived experiences [and] we can infer that this personalization

will confer added impact' (2012: 195). Indeed, she places this affecting power at the very centre of the medium, citing the interrelationship between sound, voice and the intimacy of the listening experience as prime qualities in shaping our listening and cognitive interpretations (*ibid.*). David Dunaway refers to the affective content of features as 'holistic aperçu' (2000: 42) – the corporeal sensations felt as a result of the combinatory powers of creatively edited audio – and this snapshot of sensations is of course malleable from a creative perspective even if a producer has no direct control over the listening situation or personal history of the listener. Meaning, as Tagg explains, is made by the receiver and may be different from the intention of the creator, and to arm the creator with this understanding is to offer a significant unlocking of the mechanics of the form perhaps. This process is akin to musical composition, according to Jeremy Gilbert, where attempts to understand music's workings in culture must be able to interpret its effects rather than its myriad subjective meanings (in McHugh, 2012: 206).

Explicitly linking with Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' concept (1998: 138), Kimberly McCarthy notes that, 'the creative experience requires a delicate balance between experiential and behavioural attention, a balance influenced by affect' (*ibid.*: 141). Exploring the same thread, Gregory Feist works to interrogate not the mechanism by which sensation and understanding is transmitted but rather the influence it has on the listening experience itself. Keen to connect the creativity shown by the producer in the process of making to the creative cognitive work done by the listener on reception of media, he cites a range of studies that suggest positive affective states aid the connection of ideas in an unusually insightful way and that further emotional positivity is a common felt experience after connections have been made (1998: 98-99). Since podcasts lend themselves to the active participation of the listener in the selection process (as opposed to the somewhat more passive mechanism inherent in radio consumption), it seems likely that podcast listeners might be more attuned to this sensation, and that the previously discussed loyalty and fostered sense of belonging also bear this assumption out. Further, it is likely that this phenomenon is especially heightened in the

feature documentary as these are often edited to present their actualities as a narrative puzzle to be slowly revealed to the listener.⁵⁵

If one's own personal experiences act to colour interpretation of received media then the act of listening itself might, as Csikszentmihalyi suggests, work to quell the sense of self involved in a manner that allows affect through. 'Flow' acts to drop one's self-conscious conception and remove it as an interrogative barrier: 'Being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable. When not preoccupied with our selves, we actually have a chance to expand the concept of who we are' (2002: 64). Going further, the theory parallels with Feist's research into affect's process of facilitated self-reward, suggesting that to lose oneself in a listening experience is to set oneself to work on an activity requiring a particular set of skills (*ibid.*: 49) which facilitate the learning of new cognitive methods and are helpful for self-development (*ibid.*: 41).⁵⁶

This temporary disappearance of the concept of self in the listener and the acknowledgement of impalpable affective networks leads to the assertion that media is consumed via methods other than conscious reasoning – that it is somehow present in the body rather than just the mind. Stankiech's treatise on headphone listening and the embodiment of audio it causes strikes a parallel with Deleuze, Guattari and Massumi – '*space is created within the mass of the body where sound masses float in an impossible space*' [italics in original] (2007: 56) – but the point is made that the mechanism of headphones is such that 'the difference between *contained* and *container* dissolves, as does the difference between you and me. We easily identify with our fantasies once we have become the Hollow Men making room for an Other' [italics in original] (*ibid.*: 59). Though

⁵⁵ The *Love+Radio* podcast is especially known for this: see the episode 'A Girl of Ivory' (2016) in which a polyamorous relationship is carefully narrated before fully revealing the nature of its protagonists, for example.

⁵⁶ Interestingly, in regard to the argument for radio's status as a lesser medium due to listeners' abilities to undertake other tasks simultaneously (the implication being that listeners are never fully involved or immersed), Csikszentmihalyi suggests that this ability is indicative of a fully-realised state of 'flow' – that actions become 'spontaneous, almost automatic; [those in a state of flow] stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing' (2002: 53).

we understand and actively engage with the method of delivery (and all the cultural signification accompanying it), the audio material – the object of our desire to listen and the reason why we do – seems to work upon us in a similarly affective manner.

This has of course not gone unnoticed in radio scholarship. Crisell inadvertently draws an affect analogy when he notes that ‘words, delivered by actors a vast distance away yet through the paradox of technology “closer” to us than they would be to a theatre audience invade each of us alone and in our own surroundings’ (1994: 153), and he quotes Gray (1981): ‘As soon as we hear a word in a radio play, we are close to the experience it signifies; in fact the sound is literally inside us’ (*ibid.*: 162). Michael Bull in his work on the Walkman notes that users ‘reconceptualize their experience of the body as the “site of action” (2000: 40), something that LeBelle notes in those experiencing acoustic urban space: ‘A sort of feverish vapor, sidewalk acoustics is a connective reverberation, breaking the seal of private life while in turn countering the ongoing rush of public presence’ (2010: 94). The embodiment of media experience, and particularly audio-only media, seems to have been considered and is broadly agreed upon as a deeply affective attribute of listening, but there is in evidence a deeper and tantalising suggestion that the connection is more than simply a *felt* cognition.

It has been noted above that memory might operate in a similar manner to the creatively edited sound offered by radio (Hendy, 2013: 38-39), an observation Tacchi also draws upon when commenting upon nostalgia, a sensation which ‘constitutes a way of knowing that is not privileged [to a particular sense] but is nevertheless experienced bodily’ (2000: 289). This distributed non-linearity does indeed chime with findings from clinical studies looking at the physiological manner in which attention, memory and cognition systems work in a discrete but coordinated fashion in the brain. Citing the research of Posner and Raichle (1994), McCarthy describes how both conscious and unconscious attention is drawn through a series of neural networks including those of orientation, event detection, executive attention

(which moves to alert the consciousness), and the vigilance network and various memory handling systems (1998: 136-137) which work distinctly to provide a cohesive experience: cognition, processing, understanding and memory are not one whole unit but rather a distinct non-linear schema of thought activity.

A final and logical drawing together of investigative threads is the physical manifestation of *spontaneous* heard voices in a clinical, rather than media-based and elective, sense, since the essence of embodiment can be taken to its purest distilment through this line of enquiry. Stankieveh's stethoscope is a tool which, he suggests, maps one's person into another's corpus, but for between 5 and 28 per cent of the population this transfer of embodiment requires no such mechanical mediation, experiencing as they do the regular auditory hallucination of voices (Mental Health Foundation, 2018: online). Such voices are typically casually characterised as audibly originating from inside of the hearer's head but can also be experienced as coming from an external source, perhaps from a person or disembodied presence in the room, or even as if other people's thoughts are being overheard (Mind, 2016: online). As much as the phenomenon is linked with mental health conditions it is suggested that only a quarter of those who encounter this have a psychotic disorder, and the occurrence is extremely common in children, who largely develop out of it before age 13 (Mental Health Foundation, 2018: online). Lisa Blackman has studied the phenomenon extensively in relation to embodiment theory and notes that nowhere in medical literature is a 'normal' mental imagery or experience defined (2001: 50), opening an enticing door into the correlation of the transfer of affect in audio-based arts and humanities scholarship with work done in a clinical setting.⁵⁷ Altered states of consciousness 'akin to hypnosis'⁵⁸ are qualified as counting as perfectly normal and healthy mental states according to medical classification

⁵⁷ In fact Blackman notes that most clinicians working in the area focus on mind-state rather than brain-state (2001: 51).

⁵⁸ It is worth noting that a firm definition of hypnosis is extremely contested. Doing away with notions of 'trance', Zeig and Rennick note the difficulties posed by subjective and objective experience in the practice of hypnotism and suggest 'indirect suggestion', 'multilevel communication' and, most alluringly for the purposes of this thesis, 'one-step-removed communication' as a selection of classifiers (1991: 279).

and do not rule out auditory hallucination as a widely-experienced event (*ibid.*: 50-51). Furthermore, just as in media theory, Blackman places the hearer of voices as both a receiver and interpreter, noting that the vagaries of individual personality and personal situation will tint the experience and affect meaning for the individual (*ibid.*: 52).

This explicit correlation between medical quantitative research and arts-based qualitative research when considering the comprehension and understanding of audio-based media is suggestive that philosophical findings are insightfully aligned with experience almost to the point of pragmatism. Individual subjectivity, employment of imagined realities, the proffered reality the ability to lose oneself in listening offers, and a vast interconnected plane of affective entanglement all work to inform the listener of a set of meanings which are *felt* – embodied – rather than understood purely intellectually. The listener, it seems, is a holistic system, or, as Blackman suggests, a ‘container for the ethereal soul, the metaphysical entity which is considered the divine source of humanity ... Much like a lightning rod, the body conducts and is conducted by all that lies beyond the corporeal senses.’ (2001: 100). This understanding offers creative possibilities for audio-based media producers in the way that truly affecting content can be skillfully brought to realisation; the manipulation of Massumi’s biogram can indeed be achieved by producing content that is engaging and of interest to both the producer and listener. The exact means of cognition and understanding may not be knowable to the author, but since both author and listener are entangled on the same network of affect some manner of meaning will be transferred and the biogram will be shifted enough for both parties to bodily experience the movement.

Having described mechanisms of transmission, content cognition, podcasting, and the semiotics of both music and radio, the next section will work to bring these discrete areas of investigation into focus and describe how these threads of enquiry serve to illuminate where the composed feature podcast resides as a media entity.

2.5 The sound of/as music: The composed feature as media entity

This thesis focuses on the concept of feature documentary as musical composition and this idea, while heretofore never closely examined, is not new. Lance Sieveking made reference to himself as conducting ‘for the first time an opera of his own composition’ (Sieveking, 1934: 17) when entering the BBC radio studios for the broadcast of his work *The Kaleidoscope, a Rhythm, Representing the Life of Man from Cradle to Grave* in 1928, and Seán Street notes that the BBC’s Dramatic Control Panels⁵⁹ were thought of as being ‘played’ rather than ‘operated’, requiring a good deal of creative skill on the part of the user (Street, 2012: 6). The ability to edit together representations of sound either live or recorded has begged radio’s comparison with musical method since very early in the existence of broadcast media, but this is not the only other medium to which it can be linked. This section will look at how the audio feature compares with other related media from a pragmatic perspective.

Andrew Crisell’s observation of radio content being subdivided into the four broad ‘codes’ of speech, music, sound, and silence (1994: 5-6) is a useful observation but tells little about the successful application of each for the purposes of creating meaning. Indeed this might be considered something of a blind spot for his research since he also suggests that music taken as an independent entity demonstrates an absence of signification since language is not privileged as the leading communicator of the form (1994: 48-49).

Sieveking’s understanding and knowledge of music also comes across as a little lacking, suggesting that there is no such thing as ‘radio music’ or music influenced by radio practice since ‘composers go on composing music just as if wireless had never been invented’ (1934: 24) – a false assertion since the vagaries of early recording practices and technologies had already had, for example, a profound influence over Western violin players’ intonation

⁵⁹ Early incarnations of sound mixing desks installed at the BBC for the purposes of lending radio dramas an air of authenticity. Actors would be situated in a variety of rooms equipped with the sonic qualities required for given script scenarios and the outputs would be mixed for broadcast in real time (Taylor and Beckwith, 2013: online).

techniques (Katz, 2010: 94-108). These viewpoints suggest that radio scholars do not perhaps make the best musicologists. The reverse is surely similarly true.

Crisell perhaps experienced what Michel Chion terms *vococentrism* in his listening, the phenomenon whereby the human voice seizes one's attention and causes immediate prioritisation of such above all other sound (Sexton, 2015: 158). It is true that an enormous amount of radio output is led by voices (hence the consternation over Andrew Sachs' wordless radio play *The Revenge* (Shingler and Wieringa, 1998: 53)) but it need not be so – radio forms such as *Hörspiel* are characteristically challenging by their nature and demonstrate a willingness to embrace other forms of practice outside of the remit of common radio broadcasting (Cory and Hagg, 1981: 257). Similarly some musical forms directly aim to challenge the boundaries of the definition of their medium. The inclusion of spoken word material in music problematises the exact definition of the radio *feature* form particularly – Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988) uses collected interview material as a structural component to unfold personal horror stories of the Holocaust and fits the mould very closely, but Brian Eno and David Byrne's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1981) and Baz Luhrmann's *Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)* (1999) are not beyond the limits of composed feature practice given the format's flexible and creative shape in the age of the podcast non-fiction narrative programme.⁶⁰ In all of these examples the spoken word has pre-existed the musical elements such that the music was composed around the speech in order to inject another level of meaning or immersion, a technique common to feature producers who work from whatever actuality they can collect in order to shape a narrative (Hendy, 2000: 76).

There is of course the obvious technical parallel in that audio software and/or tape editing are employed as construction techniques for both music and features. Early electronic composers such as Daphne Oram and Delia Derbyshire for the BBC Radiophonic Workshop were keen pioneers of electronic composition utilising the creative possibilities offered by the

⁶⁰ These are a handful of examples that could also include Talking Heads' *Once in a Lifetime* (1980), Scroobius Pip and Dan le Sac's collaborative work including *Thou Shalt Always Kill* (2007), and the entire output of UK indie rock band Public Service Broadcasting. There are of course many more.

tangible manifestation of sound. While this has doubtless encouraged experimentation and opened innovative avenues it is not enough to cite this observation alone as evidence that feature documentaries and music are so closely analogous to be as one, but the role of the producer in the creative process is certainly worth acknowledging. Brian Eno famously spoke of the use of the recording studio as a compositional tool in 1979 where he accepted his inability to read music or adequately play an instrument meant that it was only contemporary technology that allowed him to work as a composer (in Cox and Warner, 2007: 130). His is only one area of practice in many musical pursuits requiring skills with technology rather than manuscript paper: hip hop and DJ culture is based on the ability to recompose recorded music using physical media in real time, music software Ableton Live has its ability to loop and sample both synthesised and sampled music with no musical training required, and the role of the editor in television requires cutting bought-in library music in accompaniment to cheaply made drama programmes in order to generate emotional engagement (Donnelly, 2005: 128). These are but a few examples – musical practice covers a raft of activities.

More specifically for comparisons of the radio feature, then, are the ways in which audio materials are put together to convey emotion or storyline and how these compositional techniques work in equivalence across media. Already examined is how the semiotics of sound closely interrelate across genres, but some working practices themselves also carry directly between music and radio.⁶¹ To list a few: Crisell draws attention to the importance of sound levels and fades (1994: 53) and discusses at length the ‘lyrical qualities’ and delivery of radio commentators despite his musical misgivings (*ibid.*: 131-138); Shingler and Wieringa point out the frequent use of leitmotifs in radio (1998: 66); Crook cites Gilliam when he explicitly refers to the use of repetition with variation in radio drama as a ‘musical device’ (1999: 216); Donnelly uses the terms ‘cross-rhythm and counterpoint’ when discussing the use of music in film (2005: 12). Examples of this revealing thread of thought

⁶¹ Crook notes that the practicalities of actually creating sound for radio drama have often been ignored by theoretical writers and how a musical sense of timing for the practice is essential (1999: 73).

are never discussed in openly referential terms but the connection is a conceptual ever-present for those who wish to look.

Cinema scholarship seems to acknowledge music and sound as narratively intrinsic and equal in status to the spoken word, and as such does not suffer from the pretence of radio's suggested vococentric hierarchy. Bill Nichols realises the power of music in film to influence the audience into seeing the world from a particular perspective (2014: xi), and Michel Chion places paramount importance on the 'added value' of sound in its ability to structure or frame other aspects of film (1994: 7).

Royal S. Brown proposes that film music performs three roles: working as a 'wallpaper soporific' to provide comfort within and/or furnish a scene, as an 'aesthetic counterbalance to [the] iconic/representational nature of cinematic signs', and as a 'cogenerator of narrative affect' (1994: 32). Concert-hall composer Aaron Copeland shares similar opinions in the function of such: 'creating atmosphere, highlighting the psychological states of characters, providing neutral background filler, building a sense of continuity, sustaining tension and then rounding it off with a sense of closure' (in Donnelly, 2005: 10). As hinted by Chion's vocabulary of sound design (see section 2.2) film music functions in more or less the same manner as it does in the composed feature suggesting the medium is unimportant⁶² and indeed that music in an accompaniment role in various media is, as Donnelly puts it, 'parasitic yet also symbiotic' (2015: 20).

More specifically in the field of documentary film, Holly Rogers notes that viewers in the digital age due to an abundance of content are highly efficient at unpacking the complex musical messages used therein (2015: 3). Music employed in fiction or documentary plays more or less the same role with the caveat of the need to (in some way) convey a truthfulness in the latter, and Corner suggests the quality of veracity is an aspect of documentary which stands above aesthetics in viewers' cognition, which is to say it exists as an ongoing *nota*

⁶² A viewpoint also expressed by Barthes (1977: 79).

bene during viewing (2015: 135). The misconstrued colouring of reality is an active concern of filmmakers, he continues, with the more self-consciously ‘artefactual’ documentaries having fewer qualms over the more extravagant and florid application of music (*ibid.*: 123) although the lines have been blurred between an artistic strain in cinema and documentary tradition since as long ago as the 1930s (Leonard and Strachan, 2015: 169). Corner summarises this relationship as fundamental to the documentary form expressing as it does the format’s essential ingredients of a combination of knowledge and aesthetics (2015: 123).

From a structural and technical perspective documentary cinema and radio also provoke many comparisons in the employment of music and sound. Rogers points out that on-location sound recording for film is avoided due to its unpredictability with editors preferring to add the desired soundtrack in post-production (2015: 8), a working method favoured by audio producers also; music is employed as theme tunes and other structural/temporal markers (‘bumpers’) such as advertisement break jingles⁶³ (Donnelly, 2005: 113); and podcast producers certainly cut pre-existing music to their edits just as a great deal of television editors do (*ibid.*: 128). Online libraries of suitable royalty-free music for podcasts have grown up to cater to this requirement⁶⁴ – music, like that which is bought in for televisual use, written without the benefit of an exact brief or any narrative to work to (*ibid.*: 125). Just as in television, the types and styles of music available for this purpose reveal the current tropes extant across podcasting which could be read as illustrative of a lack of originality in content if one were to choose to (*ibid.*: 126). Musicologist Nicholas Cook suggests that much music made for commercials composes with genre rather than notes, meter, or rhythm, and in doing so is able to communicate ‘complex social or attitudinal messages instantaneously’ through the invoking of various social attitudes and prejudices using a sort of sonic shorthand (1994: 35) – this rings true for the sorts of off-the-shelf pieces often used for the purposes of

⁶³ Podcast host *Acast*’s automated commercial insertion algorithm being a particularly notable example for its five note jingle denoting an imminent advertisement break.

⁶⁴ See Audio Jungle, for example: <https://audiojungle.net/category/music?term=podcast> (Accessed 11th Sept 2018)

podcasting also.⁶⁵ Just as in film, the skill of the editor comes into play in the cutting of music to fit or aid the narrative, perhaps aiming for what Donnelly calls ‘synch points’ where the convergence between storyline and music (be it emotionally, dramatically, *etc.*) work off one another in a manner which compliments, enhances, or perhaps disrupts expectation (2005: 11).

To summarise, if there exists a central thread to the employment and understanding of music as part of a discrete but containing artefact it lies not with the nature of the medium itself but rather, as hinted at by Philip Tagg’s work on sonic semiotics, our codified responses as listeners. Donnelly suggests that cine-musical linguistic codes are based around schematas which we as engaged societal members are all able to read through their philological entrenchment over years of use in stock situations (*ibid.*). This does not mean that it is any less powerful or influential in its position, however – music can refigure and fundamentally change the nature of a given scene, and we know this to be true as viewers/hearers; what may not be so obvious is the recombinant nature of the ‘third thing’ produced, for the music itself is disrupted by its inclusion just as much as the object it is chosen to accompany (*ibid.*: 31); it is only the shape of this third object which changes and gives the medium in question its distinctive form. What the identification and nuance this form (television, film, music, radio and podcasting) depends upon can be summarised as a triumvirate of recorded media, socioculture and, as put forward previously, the affective signals contained therein.

⁶⁵ The overused ambient beds employed in podcasts such as *This is Actually Happening* are a typical example.

Chapter 3: Case studies

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the theoretical work discussed thus far in the context of extant podcast composed features. This will be done by performing a close analysis of three podcast programmes that will be presented together with insights into the compositional process and theoretically informed interview material collected from the producers of those works. These particular pieces are chosen as together they work to demonstrate the principles discussed above: feature documentary composition as musical practice, sound and its associated affective information, and the nature by which feature podcasting is influenced by online dissemination. It is not proposed that each programme be held as an archetype of any one aspect of the research as facets of all areas of investigation are present in most, if not all, podcast output; however some are obviously more suited as particular exemplars than others.

Each programme will be considered in turn, first being broken into catalogues of events contained therein and then more broadly discussed in terms of themes and techniques identified. By close analysis of sound heard and the listing of newly occurring incidents two objectives are achieved: firstly, an overview of the content, structure and pacing of a programme can be obtained through deconstruction and annotation, and secondly, individual instances of potential affect can be explicitly logged. These studies might be considered the equivalent of a musical ‘score’ in the same manner as Tagg defines music notation as a set of instructions to recreate a work (2013: 121) and they therefore allow unhurried examination of the pieces which aids the process of analysis. For the purposes of this thesis analysis will be done with reference to the previous chapter’s survey of theoretical work.

Of the two objectives noted perhaps the second is most contentious since affect by its very nature requires a transmitter and a receiver and is therefore heavily influenced by the subjectivity of the receiving party – in this case the author of this thesis. Subjectivity is such that it has the ability to influence an individual’s interpretations and judgements but exerts

only a limited influence when framed against wider societal meanings: Lawrence Kramer asserts that ‘Subjectivity...is both a constantly mutating negotiation between internal perceptions and worldly conditions and the style and rhythm of that practice. It is private only insofar as it is also public and historically conditioned...’ (2011: 5). The premise is therefore suggested that the reader and writer of this thesis will broadly agree upon any affects noted, but there may be exceptions. In the personal perception and analysis of these selected programmes there are most certainly musical inclusions, sonic events and even narrative remarks made that have either personally passed by the author completely or have only been fully understood later once highlighted by their creators upon interview. They may, however, appear glaringly obvious to the more culturally aware or educated listener, and these events will be highlighted in the text as they arise. This is of course not to say that some still exist and have been overlooked completely through my personal subjective lens.

3.1 *Jack and Ellen* (2013), *Love+Radio* podcast episode

Produced by Brendan Baker, Mooj Zadie, and Nick Van Der Kolk, *Jack and Ellen* was awarded a Best Documentary Honourable Mention at the 2013 Third Coast Audio Festival awards (Third Coast Festival, 2013: online) and employs sound design techniques which are notably interesting for their narratively descriptive qualities. Founder of the *Love+Radio* podcast, Nick Van Der Kolk works to make the programme deliberately ambiguous, aiming to fill the gap between documentaries where the presenter performs the expositional role of walking the listener through stories and those which stand fully upon subjects' interviews with little overt editorial intervention (Harris Green, 2016: online). Heavily invested in audio storytelling from a young age, Van Der Kolk is particularly aware of the role paraverbal⁶⁶ content plays in the audio documentary form (Sawyer, 2016: online), a concern demonstrated by his employment of Brendan Baker as sound designer and editor for the early series of the programme.

The *Jack and Ellen* episode tells the story of a young Hispanic American female who uses the anonymity the Internet provides in order to entrap and blackmail paedophiles. She poses as an underage male on social networking platforms and lures adult men into inappropriate contact with someone they believe to be a minor and from thereon collects personal information about the predator until they can be blackmailed. The aim is not to shock or be scandalous – like the majority of *Love+Radio*'s output the intention is to make the listener engage, question and think (Taylor, M., 2016: online) rather than revel in salaciousness.

The interview is structured in such a way that Ellen's underage Internet alter ego 'Jack' opens the programme and is introduced using a disguised voice pitchshifted and modulated in

⁶⁶ 'Paraverbal' is used here as an extension of the 'paramusical' term Tagg uses in musical analysis, being defined as "things other than just music" that demonstrate the existence of semantic fields linked to musical structure in a [piece of music being analysed]. He asserts that these connections 'are not *extra-* but *paramusical* because they exist *alongside* or *in connection with* the music' [italics from original] (2013: 229). Such inclusions in a composed feature will comprise music, ambient sound, silence, the tones of voice interviewees employ, and any other sonic information the listener may receive in the transmission of affect.

a manner that is a familiar and common technique employed by news broadcasters when witnesses wish to remain anonymous. This serves the dual purpose of hinting that the as yet unknown interviewee wishes to be unidentifiable (providing accompanying notions of secrecy and the attendant possible interest-piquing and affective transmission for the listener) while hiding the true nature of ‘Jack’ until the later reveal.⁶⁷ The true nature of Ellen’s activities are then slowly played out, taking in the opinions of her friends (included as short dramatic segments voiced by actors), her mother (with a snatch of Ellen quoting her in her native Spanish), and an encounter with the police (including a deliberately misleading false ending to the programme facilitated by the knowing use of Penguin Café Orchestra’s *Perpetuum Mobile* (1987)). This programme particularly is of interest to this thesis due to its unusually adept sound design, its inclusion of heavily culturally-laden popular music, the use of voice treatment as an explicit sonic artefact in expounding narrative, and its shrewd editing techniques.

The following chart is a close analysis of the episode in question, detailing each new sonic event as it appears.

The table employs the terminology outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis, particularly Tagg’s analytical concepts but also that of Chion and Schafer where appropriate, and is inspired by the former’s practical guidelines on close musical/cinematic analysis (2013: 565-577). The heading ‘Episode’ is a contraction of what Tagg calls ‘episodic determinants’ where the constituent material therein together creates that which sounds characteristic for the duration of a discrete period in question (*ibid.*: 516). It can be seen that most documentary features are broken into segments exploring a particular aspect of their subject matter and this practice aligns agreeably with Tagg’s musical analytical techniques. ‘Cue’ is a cinema-derived term referring to an instance of music in a film, and this analysis numbers music’s appearances individually to try to map the macro structure of the programme. The shading of the column

⁶⁷ Such reveals are a common trope of *Love+Radio* (Sawyer, 2016: online).

indicates the presence of a particular cue so as the moment of change or removal of music can be clearly seen, and the highlighting shades used are to aid in the distinguishing of changes rather than pertaining to the nature of the cues. There are a handful of instances where cues are repeated or reprised and this is reflected in their numbering. The ‘time’ and ‘marker’ headings are self-explanatory in identifying the moment of the appearance of the sonic event described, with ‘remarks’ outlining any additional relevant information. The final column is where suggested affective content and semiotic material is detailed for each event, and this is disposed to personal subjectivity as previously mentioned. It is not suggested that every tiny new event can be logged as a programme develops since many occurrences are very small, happen in an evolutionary manner, or are repeated in such a way so as to cause unnecessary duplication – this method of investigation aims to strike a balance between capturing a sense of the programmes’ macro structures and component events and generating so much information so as to be unhelpful for analytical purposes.

Due to the Internet’s capacity for endless versioning and *Love+Radio*’s habit of re-releasing episodes, the exact copy of the podcast being analysed can be found on the accompanying flash drive should the reader wish to follow this table in real time (which is recommended). A full text transcription can be found in appendix A.

3.1.1 Close analysis of *Jack and Ellen*: sonic events contained in the programme and their associated affects

Epi- sode	Cue	Time	Marker	Remarks	Semiotics/suggested affect
1	1	00:00	<i>Radiotopia</i> ident	Music, sound design, treated speech	Un/familiarity (newness/comfort or overfamiliarity respectively), anticipation. The music is electronic synthesis-type signifying perhaps modernity, depersonalisation perhaps (since the music might be programmed rather than played and recorded). Multiple voices and sound processing signifies togetherness, group effort, collage. Fade to silence signifies clearing the way for a listening event to occur
2		00:09	Nick Van Der Kolk	Speech only	American accent, dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. Delivered in a casual yet cautionary manner, some evidence of vocal fry which can be read as a typical contemporary podcast/American radio phenomenon
3		00:46	Ellen's disguised voice (as Jack) 'At the time, I was working at Subway...'	Unaccompanied speech, treated speech	Voice of unknown gender disguised by manipulation (pitchshifting) in a manner typical of media tropes to create and denote anonymity, provoking curiosity and interest as well as excitement at discovering a secret or being able to snoop. Verbally the listener is presented with an intentionally decontextualised reality, inviting them into the programme as a decryptor to interpret to disjointed narrative threads. Sarcasm can be detected at the term 'sandwich artist'
	2	01:14		Slow electronic music, bass, slow rhythm (approx. 70 BPM)	The bassline and rhythm is evocative of secrets and seediness; film noir/spy (or even pornography) -inflected tropes work as Tagg's 'conventional signs'. Verbal as well as the

					paraverbal in conjunction with this music builds Tagg's 'intentional' element of seediness and secret behaviours to be discovered
		01:55	'It was Jack.'	First appearance of an untreated voice (but used in conjunction with the treated voice). Works to uncover a little of the anonymity as the employment of the same spoken phrase acts as a reveal, though the relationship between the voices and the use of anonymity effects still remains deliberately vague	The listener is made aware that untreated voices will be used at all in the programme since no contextualising clues have been given as to the overall aims and structure so far. This partial reveal enacts affects of surprise and inquisitiveness, leading the listener on. The voice is noted as the main protagonist's voice (Ellen's voice)
		01:57	'Hi, my name's Jack...'	Temporary suspension of rhythm in music for approx. 2 seconds	As 00:46
		02:04	'...and would love to make some gay friends...'	Percussion in music is allowed to dissipate, leaving ambient-inflected, meterless sound	Sense of slowing down, perhaps a slight sense of calm
		02:08	'That was the story'	The first appearance of an untreated voice in the programme itself	Both the verbal and paraverbal work together to uncover the mystery of the anonymous individual speaking. It is revealed it is an American-sounding woman, quite young (possibly 20s to early 30s), and the choice of the phrase 'that was the story' indicates that this is the reveal the listener has been waiting for to alleviate some of the tension built up by not being able to contextualise what was being heard. This might be considered analogous to tension-and-release tropes in music
		02:11	'Yes, I was going to...'	Percussion picks up again in music	Sensation of movement, of going forward
		02:20	'I made a fake email account...'	Second occurrence of the untreated voice	It now becomes clear that the untreated voice is that of the protagonist and that the treated (anonymised) voice is that of the character they have developed. Provides the listener reassurance that they are beginning to be let into the secret and the subsequent flitting back and forth between the treated and untreated speech

					contextualises the speech
	3	02:34	'After about ten minutes of posting the ad...'	Accompaniment much louder, very beat-driven, a development of the previous cue	Beat now double time (still remaining around 70 BPM) with more emphasis on the trebly percussive elements which are mixed very wide, introducing a sense of space or being surrounded or immersed (what Chion would refer to as 'superfield'). Firm rhythm gives a sensation of progression and movement, like narrative is speeding up
		02:34	Ellen laughs	Laugh clip has delay effect applied, hocketed between speakers	This is essentially a musical event since it provides little narrative addition other than working to reintroduce the musical cue which has faded to silence, possibly to emphasise the amusing-if-shocking exposition of the term 'twink'. This term may or may not cause amusement, shock or indifference depending on the listener's previous exposure to it
		03:07	'Here's my Facebook if you want to continue chatting.'	Panning of this whole phrase from right channel to left	Used as a musical device as they rhythm pauses for a few beats and the bass is allowed a solo moment before the passage continues
	2	03:10	'I could find our their occupation...'	Beats subside, rhythmic crisp percussive sounds remain, slowly subside	The verbal narrative develops alongside the musical development, emphasises movement, adds sonic interest
		03:23	'Hey Jack, you told me to come here...'	First use of another voice other than the 'character' of Jack and the real voice of Ellen. Voice is also subject to effect-based anonymised treatment	Introduces the idea to the listener that more voices may be employed to tell the story and these may also be effected treatments of verbal content. It may only be Ellen's plain speaking voice that is the 'real' voice and to prepare for further sonic ambiguity
	4	03:30	'...I'm not really eighteen...'	Music falls into almost ambient, pointillist treble tones and appears much less structured	Silent or near-silent background brings verbal material front-and-centre and encourages listener to focus carefully on the meaning of the speech presented
		03:59	Static hiss	Static hiss, white noise used to cover what is most likely a sexually explicit term	The hiss is abrupt and unexpected. The verbal content leading up to it contextualises the noise as a sonic censor. The use of a hiss rather than the more

					traditional sine tone bleep is perhaps surprising given the already established characteristic of using well-trodden anonymising sounds
3	03:46	'The first paedophile...'	Percussion and bass return, a development of the former music		As above, beats emphasise narrative movement and cohesion - nothing is singled out individually as being particularly noteworthy. Rhythm is half-time of cue 2 but still remains around 70 BPM
5	04:00	'I had never had any...'	Music suddenly very percussion-heavy and faster (around 130 BPM)		Sudden quick rhythm moves the programme along in an unexpected manner
	04:08	'Has only still been with women...'	Complete break, silence, minimal speech		Silence acts as a pause for shock, surprise, a particular noteworthy point
3	04:15	'I took screenshots...'	Return of beat-based music, shifting to a more unsettling mood (around 70 BPM)		A development of the previous cue with the inclusion of a noteworthy amount of discordant tones perhaps to emphasise the unusual and morally questionable territory the programme is entering. Insistent alarm-type repetition of single notes suggests a conceptual connection to R. Murray Schafer's work in connecting industrial sounds with the soundscape and work as a paramusical warning
	04:31	'Yeah can you read it?'	Off-microphone request from male voice		Voice of (presumably) the interviewer gives the first indicates that this programme is formed from a real-world guided interview. The interjection suggests connotations that the interview is unscripted and also gives a hint as to the environs in which it is being recorded. The editor of the programme clearly intended for this to be explained at this point since it need not be included at all; presumably to introduce the section that begins at 17:45 where the interviewer takes more of a central role. It is suggested that the interviewer might be playing a 'choric' role, standing for the inquisitiveness of the listening audience
2	04:35	'Hello, Mr So-and-so...'	Rhythmic crisp percussive sounds, reprise of cue 2		The anonymised voice returns, this time not as the character Jack but as the blackmailer. The music

					disintegrates as the various textures and tones fall away
		04:40	'I have saved documentation ...'	Complete break, silence	Silence prioritising verbal content and encouraging focus in that direction
		04:44		Sound of tape stopping	Anonymised verbal speech abruptly ends unfinished as it appears to stop as if on a malfunctioning tape. Used as a shortening device since the whole letter appears too long to be accommodated fully or is not entirely relevant. It is an interesting choice since the term 'tape' is often adopted by radio producers to refer to interview material – see Carrier (2010: 28), for example
	3	04:43	'That I had this explicit content...'	Loud again, suddenly very beaty, sensation of moving	A reprise of cue 3, beats and the emphasis on movement
	6	04:52	'If you don't give me this 500 dollar...'	Pure sound design, rhythm vanishes, treated speech, sirens	Soundscape treated to communicate a calamitous end. Voice is subject to delay effects which are reminiscent of police megaphone and police sirens can be heard as well as what sounds like a collision, invoking something of a cinematic scene of danger, flashing lights, and arrests. Ends with a pitchshifting and hocketing effect where the end phoneme of Ellen's voice disappears as if to connote the vanishing of an imagined event
	7	05:06	'You have until tomorrow morning...'	Slow heartbeat bass and Ellen speech	Untreated speech except for long bass note accompaniment which may connote a heartbeat and tension
		05:24	My name is Ellen...'	Solo, almost unaccompanied, speech	The first explicit reveal of Ellen as the owner of the main protagonist's voice. Offers the listener a sense of clarity which has hitherto been only gradually allowed
4	8	05:32	'I had just moved...'	Ambient music, beatless but wide and enveloping	See below
		05:32	[bleep]	Sine tone bleep redacting Ellen's location	The more traditional method of redacting information in media, the technique is given an unusual spin but having it split and hocket between channels as the volume fades. In the listener this might read as a modern twist on

					an old method (appropriate for podcasting as a new medium perhaps?) It may also simply be read as a purely musical device leading into the following ambient-style accompaniment that demarcates the next episode in the programme
		05:56	Possible shop ambience sound, low in the mix, left channel		Producer Baker refers to hidden components within the programme to encourage repeated listening (see interview, chapter 3.1.2). This particular event is very low in the mix and suggests shop ambience to accompany the verbal reveal of previous shoplifting excursions, or it may not be – it might be that the compositional characteristics used throughout merely <i>suggest</i> this is the identifiable sound to the listener
		05:59		Alarm sounds, reasonably low in the mix	These sounds occur as Ellen discusses shoplifting, presumably to illustrate her narrative
		06:15	'It was really tedious to work as a sandwich artist'		Reprise of line from cue 3, only this time with delay and panning effects applied making the speech sound wide. This processing serves to highlight the revisiting of the phrase now that more is known of Ellen
		06:26	'Bad ideas'		Speech with delay and panning effects applied the same as the words 'sandwich artist', presumably to highlight the name of the website and for sonic interest
		06:49		Speech edit can be heard - rapid fade down at the end of one sentence and a rapid fade up at the beginning of the next	Explicitly illustrates to the listener that the speech is edited and the narrative is in the hands of the producer
		07:04		Development of the current cue, introduces a sinister-sounding note into the ambient chord and begins to evolve	A sinister sensation is conjured, warning, wariness
		07:14	'Most people, they know about to catch a predator...'	Speech suddenly panned hard to the right channel and briskly slides back to the centre	This could be a deliberate effect applied as the producer is using such techniques throughout, however it could be that the microphone used to capture the interview is a stereo device and

					the interviewee had moved during the interview process which the editing here has served to highlight. Since the feature is so carefully composed throughout it seems unlikely that this is an error and it is included for creative reasons, though the semiotic reason for this is not clear
	9	07:33	'It's easy to have a fake Facebook...'	Ambient-style, reasonably formless melody with electronic dance music-style beats	Beats moving the narrative along, picking up the pace of the programme (approx. 110 BPM)
		07:47		Overlapping speech edits - one phrase is brought in before another is finished	Demonstrates editing in a manner correlated to the practice of vocal 'comping' (compiling) whereby music producers divide a singer's multiple vocal takes into phrases in order to select and edit together the best of each to form a flawless vocal performance. Overlaying the beginnings and ends of phrases in this manner is often used in pop music recordings when lyrics are too long for the required scan and the following line needs to be delivered in time regardless – see <i>Bank Holiday</i> by Blur, for example (<i>Parklife</i> , 1994). Here items of speech are presented as non-sequiturs with the overlapping phrases creating the impression of a fast-moving series of characteristics for the imaginary Jack
	10	07:59	'I showed what books he was into...'	Underlying rhythm featuring plunderphonic-style borrowings of existing records	Very brief clips of records by the artists mentioned feature here, of which Pink Floyd's <i>Money</i> (1973) and The Smiths's <i>There is a Light That Never Goes Out</i> (1986) are perhaps the most famous. These add sonic interest and may pique the curiosity of those listeners who recognise the clips. Suggests a knowledge of John Oswald, or at least sampling culture, by the producer (Baker studied electronic music for his degree – see interview, chapter 3.1.2 – so this is likely)
	9	08:17	'I made up fifteen other...'	Ambient-style, reasonably formless melody with	A reprise of cue 9.

				electronic dance music-style beats	
		08:23	'Oh, you look cute! I miss you!...'	Montage of speech and sound design	The first appearance of unprocessed voices other than Ellen and the interviewer. May have the effect of 'opening out' the programme for the listener to expect more people in future. The electronic 'buzz' sounds likely to be a pitchshifted and shortened sound and, sounding a little like a dial-up modem (an 'anaphone' for Tagg), works to place the voices as imaginary people existing online only
	9	08:30	'I used to write fan fiction...'	Ambient-style, reasonably formless melody with electronic dance music-style beats	A reprise and development of cue 9
	10	08:50	'The first paedophile I baited...'	Underlying rhythm featuring plunderphonic-style borrowings of existing records	A reprise of cue 10
		08:58	'My first catch'	This phrase repeated and panned to the opposite channel at each repetition	Despite the repetition failing to match the musical meter to which it is set, this appears to be a musical device to bring this episode of the programme to a close
	11	09:07	'It was weird, he didn't fall for it...'	Fading hocketed kick drum (110 BPM)	Could be heard as an anaphone for heartbeat as Ellen's first attempt is heard to go wrong, possibly signifying panic or fading excitement as the results of her efforts fail to come to fruition. The fade works to further bring this episode to a close
		09:24	'I feel like the problem was that...'	Ellen speech unaccompanied	Unaccompanied speech may be heard as somewhat more honest and contemplative, the background silence underlining the speech as important or worth paying close attention to
5	12	09:42	'So the first paedophile that I...'	Ambient-style long tones for melody, crisp percussion and deep kick drums (approx. 45 BPM)	Music sounds more tense, almost horror-inflected as the programme changes pace and moves to the next episode of the narrative
		10:07	Repeating of the 'O' in 'CEO', the 'f' in 'for this', and the word	Like a skipping vinyl record; no panning this time, the repeat stays central	May symbolise hesitancy although the outstanding affect is likely the attention the listener is encouraged to pay to the relevant phonemes

			'popular'		
	3	10:27	'He's the kind of guy...'	Slow electronic music, bass, slow rhythm, a reprise of similar in episode 3 (approx. 70 BPM)	A reprise of cue 3, having mystery and tension-type attributes
		10:41	'Damn, this is my first...'	Phrase is allowed to stand alone without music and is subject to quietening/frequency filtering treatment	Both the silent background and sound processing work to make the phrase more noteworthy
	3	10:44	'So we began talking...'	One musical phrase from cue 3 is looped suggesting a skipping vinyl record	May symbolise hesitancy, uncertainty
	13	11:02	'Hi Jack...'	Samba-style rhythm, brisk and upbeat (135 BPM)	The victim speaks and is heard alongside Ellen's narration. Introduction of a fourth untreated (and clearly new and different) voice over the background music, which works somewhat as a leitmotif and to conjure an image of a life of luxury in a warm place. The actor reading the script uses a voice that sounds self-assured and confident. This evocation is achieved with a clip no longer than 11 seconds
	2	11:13	'He was actually very open...'	Slow electronic music, bass, slow rhythm, a further development of this cue (approx. 70 BPM)	A reprise of cue 2
	14	11:30	'He was just a sad fella...'	Rhythmic bass, no percussion	Momentarily slows the narrative, slight increase in tension as tones are more insistent, fade to silence offers a little breathing room
	2	12:07	'But then I thought about how...'	Slow electronic music, bass, slow rhythm	A reprise of cue 2
	2	12:39	'They can be a dad, they can be a doctor...'	Percussive music, bass and crisp higher-pitched shaker-like sounds prominent, no regular meter	A further reprise and development of cue 2, still recognisable but notably different
	3	12:55	'At that point I put aside...'	The end of this phrase can be heard to be prematurely edited to a close	Judicious editing to stop the speech material in order to allow the bass to reintroduce the main cue for this chapter, cue 3
		13:00	'I have saved documentation ...'	Voice of the backmailer returns	The same sound processing as at 04:35 to signify the return of the blackmailer. As time progresses the voice becomes subject to a

					delay effect and is hocketed between channels. Music develops into only percussion by is recognisably the same cue
		13:04	'I threatened him correctly'	Ellen's voice allowed to narrate over the top of the blackmailer's voice	Reinforces the notion of the blackmailer as a discrete individual
	2	13:19	'I made him think...'	Slow electronic music, bass, slow rhythm	A reprise of cue 2
	15	13:34	'I will do all of this...'	Church organ-type cacophonous chords, building. Appearance of interviewer's voice off-mic	Building tension. Rapid movement between the three voices of Ellen, the interviewer and the blackmailer builds it further
	16	13:44	'Ruin you..'	Sound design, effected speech, hocketing, expansive sound, almost science fiction-inflected. Heartbeat-sounding kick drum	High tension, encourages the listener to feel extremely involved
		14:06	Please, don't ruin my reputation'	The victim's voice reappears	Consolidation of the victim as a separate, and very real, person on the receiving end of the blackmail
		14:16	'Well, thank you for...'	Ellen's speech as the blackmailer, unaccompanied except for an unmetred occasional kick drum	Somewhat fading (rather than release) of tension as affected by the quieter and less regular kickdrum/heartbeat anaphone
		14:27	'Bye, stay away from children...'	Ellen speech unaccompanied	Unaccompanied speech to underline the importance of a point again and to work to close the episode
6	17	14:44	'Send me a 500 dollar gift card...'	Electronic beat-driven music, machinic inflections (approx. 100 BPM)	Music with a solid beat again implemented to encourage the programme along
		14:44		Speech treated with a very brief delay in this instance and then again on a number of occasions in the next 25 seconds	Has the effect of splitting Ellen's voice not for anonymisation or character-playing but to weave two interrelated narrative threads together in order to serve the overarching story. Used in the same manner as the compiling of speech technique heard at 07:47
	18	15:23	'That way I would end up...'	Electronic beat-driven music, machinic inflections, around 80 BPM	Picks up the pace of the programme to then fade to silence in order to introduce the following episode
		15:36	Silence		A break, space to reflect for the listener, and a marker for the end of this episode
7		15:41	'When people ask me what I	Ellen solo speech	Speech without musical back or treated sound feels more marked

			do for a living...'		and perhaps more honest at this stage
	19	16:16	'I don't think I'm very malicious at all'	Slow ambient-style tones begin, developing into ambient-style electronica with hocketed trebly percussive sounds at 16:38	Beginning of a new episode in the programme, rhythm moving the narrative along (approx. 80 BPM)
		17:06	'I just swallow all of it...'	Music fades and solo speech returns	Honesty in Ellen's explanation of her work, absence of music underlines what is being said as important
		17:20	'I'm usually fine'	Silence after this statement	The silence left after this statement may be from the original recording or allowed by the producer. Either way it introduces a powerful uncertainty to the listener that Ellen is in fact anything but fine. The absence of music here and in the preceding few seconds underlines this
		17:45	'She didn't have any..?'	Interjection by interviewer	This episode is much simpler, quieter and more direct than anything so far in this programme except for Nick Van Der Kolk's announcement at 00:09. The inclusion of the interviewer playing a greater and more noticeable role here emphasizes the bare confessional nature of the interview on which the programme is based. These interjections continue occasionally for the rest of the podcast
		17:48	' <i>Tienes que parar, porque vas a tener muchas problemas</i> '	Ellen quotes her mother verbatim	Ellen's use of her mother's native Spanish is quickly queried by the interviewer and translated by Ellen. The listener may feel brief confusion if they do not speak the language. It may be read as Ellen moving to hide behind her Spanish as this part of the programme works to make Ellen feel as exposed as she can be; there is no fun or feeling of adventure in this part of the podcast. Alternatively, since Ellen appears at times somewhat brash and shameless in her actions, might she just be showing off? Even without knowledge of Spanish the listener may be able to detect

					notes of hesitation and reluctance in the prosody of Ellen's delivery but this nuance does not expound the narrative with the full accuracy that her immediate translation does
	20	19:12	Party noise fades in	Party noise fades in and an actor playing Ellen's friend expresses her opinion as Ellen describes	For narrative illustration purposes and listener immersion. The four seconds of the actor's reply is strongly affective with its background sound and delivery combined. This cue ends with the already used and familiar sound of a tape stopping (at 04:44)
		19:28	Sound of people getting into a car	On-location sound opens a short scene where Ellen's friend expresses her opinion as Ellen describes	As 19:12. This cue simply fades out swiftly rather than using a sound effect to bring the listener back to the interview
	21	21:09	'I'm trying to give you a closing line...'	Penguin Café Orchestra's <i>Perpetuum Mobile</i> (<i>Signs of Life</i> , 1987) is brought in to suggest a closing to the programme while Ellen continues to attempt her poetic closing speech	This piece of music has been used as accompaniment music for the <i>This American Life</i> radio programme, the <i>Economist</i> magazine's podcast and a number of other programmes. It is a piece which inherently appears to communicate busyness, complete or wholeness, satisfaction and, as used here, a sense of closure. It is so well known that it conforms to Tagg's 'generic annexing', and is thus used here to deliberately play with listeners' expectations. This section is, however, effective in wrong-footing the audience whether they are familiar with its use elsewhere or not. Chion's term 'external logic' is applicable here, evoking a counter-flow or aggravation to the narrative (see chapter 2.2.1)
		21:23	[<i>tape stopping</i>]	<i>Perpetuum Mobile</i> stopped with another instance of the sound of malfunctioning tape	The malfunction and sudden halt nature of the effect is important here as a marker of the removal of built expectations that this is the end of the programme. It works to whisk the listener out of their certainty over the shape of the programme
		21:24	'Do you not see the connection?'	Interview continues as before	Ending is revealed to be false and interview continues. Listener may feel confused, cheated, shocked perhaps but no time is left to adjust

8	22	22:14	'Because I hadn't been approached by the cops...'	Music cue begins - mechanical and electronic sounding; angular and forceful, moving quickly into a rounder-feeling piece using now-familiar textures and timbres (BPM approx. 130)	Beats moving the narrative forward and announcing a new episode
		22:25	Telephone sounds	Penguin Café Orchestra's <i>Telephone and Rubber Band</i> (1981) features here very low in the mix in a recognisable form, then a single tone is kept on to repeat subsequently as part of the music	Possibly dropped in to facilitate producer Baker's enthusiasm for repeat listening and cultural references (see interview, chapter 3.1.2). Will likely carry a similar affective sensation as the inclusion of Pink Floyd and The Smiths, above
		22:40	'He would write something like...'	Music develops so as to remove all content except percussive elements	Signifies a small break, asks listener to be attentive to what is being said; used for emphasis
		22:43	'Maybe'	Recurrence of manipulated voice to signify victim	Familiarity with the effect and the understanding of its signification now the listener is within the 'world' of the programme
	3	22:47	'...but he continued to talk...'	Music picks up again	Development and reprise of cue 3, rhythm encouraging a sense of movement
	23	22:56	'How come you started using...'	Brief pause in music as it drops away to reveal the tuned telephone tones of <i>Telephone and Rubber Band</i>	Interjection by interviewer feels like flow of interview is broken up, this is reflected in the musical treatment
	24	23:02	'Eventually, at around two in the morning...'	Music maintains the same pace (approx. 130 BPM) but is augmented with synth chords	Still brisk and almost danceable to, moving the story along
		23:10	'You see, I'm not used to this...'	First instance of Ellen's voice (as the 'bait') treated not with pitchshifting anonymisation but only to reflect the telephone-mediated sound of the conversation	The trope of Ellen's voice being treated to reflect the playing of roles is now well established so the listener is able to key into the idea very easily; however, noticeable is that for the first time in the programme she is now playing a female victim and the anonymisation/pitchshifting device is not used. This could indicate that the pitchshifting is specifically to make Ellen's voice more masculine or that it is a partial unveiling of her identity since this is also the first mention of telephone interactions with her blackmailees

		23:23	'and then grabbed my...'	Tape stopping effect	Tape malfunction effect employed again, this time for the censorship of explicit conversation. Effect is manipulated in reverse to restart the conversation
		24:01	'And I was gonna let him go.'	Music stops and allows just solo speech	Unaccompanied speech to underline an important narrative point
	3	24:08	'He already fucked up...'	Return of beat-driven music, this time with alarm sounds forming a discordant melody (BPM remains constant)	Alarm sounds indicating danger, discomfort. As cue 3
	3	24:18	'He continued to ignore me...'	Melody falls away and only percussion remains	Reprise of cue 3 at 04:43 but at half-time
	23	24:24	'Hey listen...'	Double-time beat pattern with new synth-driven melody	Brief digression for emphasis
	3	24:32	'Here's a blog that I made...'	Returns to previous cue	Reprise of cue 3 at 04:43 but half-time, as at 24:18
	3	24:44	'I was woken up...'	Beat driven electronic music, approx. 60 BPM, doubling back to 120 BPM as it develops	Reprise of cue 3 at 04:15
		24:54	'Is this Lisa?'	Anonymised pitchshifted voice	Return of the pitchshifted anonymised voice, male again, now a well-understood technique
	24	24:55			Music develops and insistent percussive beat appears to indicate heartbeat and panic (remains at 120 BPM)
		25:03		Synth sweeps	Sweeps sound mildly aggressive with an abrasive texture, helping to communicate the idea of discomfort. Sound somewhat like a police siren, linking with the spoken narrative
		25:12	'I just hung up.'	Sound of telephone being disconnected	Illustrative narrative sound which also ends the musical accompaniment
	25	25:14		Electronic music cue begins, a development of the previous cue but more scattered and less focused. Rapidly paced, around 130 BPM, but with a counterpoint of around 60 BPM	A development of the previous cue. More scattered sound communicates the idea of the panic that Ellen feels at this point. The slower pace is connotative of a heartbeat
		25:28	'I quickly pressed number 7...'	Telephone DTMF sound of number 7 being pressed	For narrative illustration and immersive purpose

		25:40	'Finding out my IP address...'	Ellen edited to present of overlapping non-sequiturs as at 07:47	As at 07:47. Rapid and overlapping statements suggest a hurriedness in the narrative, helping to communicate Ellen's panic
		26:38	'When I changed my phone number...'	Cue slowly fades to unaccompanied speech	Leaves space for Ellen to begin a genuine summing up. Without accompaniment the impression might be had that her words carry a higher level of sincerity and thoughtfulness. Paraverbal information such as her dry mouth and hesitant manner of expression suggest that she is uneasy and tense. Also closes the final episode of the programme proper
		29:26	[<i>tape stopping</i>]		Ellen's interview ends with the now-familiar tape malfunction effect and seven seconds of silence to indicate the end of the episode and interview
9	26	29:33		Electronic beat-driven music fades in, brisk at 140 BPM	The quick pace of the music does not connote the usual sort of assuredness sought in a summing up/closing piece. This may function as a marker of <i>Love+Radio's</i> 'otherness', its willingness to make compositional choices that mainstream radio may not. In this way it may work as a device to help unite its audience somewhat
10		29:42	'That's it for Love and Radio...'	Nick Van Der Kolk reappears and closes the podcast	Just as in cue 2, save for the somewhat assertive 'do it' instruction at 30:06 which might read as either slightly comedic or confrontational
11	1	30:11	<i>Radiotopia</i> ident	Music, sound design, treated speech	As its appearance at 00:00. Fade to silence signifies end of the programme

3.1.2 Interview with Brendan Baker, sound designer and producer of *Jack and Ellen*

What follows is a discussion of identified techniques, working processes and creative intent with *Jack and Ellen* producer Brendan Baker. All quotes are taken from an interview conducted with Baker on 23rd November 2018 by Skype call, the full, unedited version of which can be heard on the included flash drive. While Baker isn't the sole producer of the programme he indicated in the interview that he was responsible for sound design and editing, the area of study with which this thesis is concerned.

There are a number of techniques and sonic characteristics that can be heard as recurring themes on *Jack and Ellen*. The overarching musical accompaniment appears to be made from a palette which might be described as slow electronica with inflections of ambient music, but carefully and intelligently through-composed to accompany, and sometimes lead, the story being told. The interview itself is constructed so that the introduction presents the interviewee as an enigma whom the programme unmasks quite soon into its running time but goes on to invoke again in places as a narrative device. It exhibits careful application of structure and pacing considerations alongside this, at one point presenting a false ending by playfully subverting typical radio documentary techniques.

Given the polished and complex nature of the soundtrack this composed feature demonstrates it may not come as a surprise that Baker's background is musical with a focus on composition. 'In undergrad I studied English and music, and particularly electronic compositions, so it was doing a lot of more esotericky *musique concrète* kind of collage pieces [*sic*].' He reveals his influences include American-Dutch electronica duo The Books, citing their proclivity for combining music with found sound recordings of speech as a source of inspiration for this programme particularly:

They would go to goodwill shops and find old cassette recordings like the answering machine-type tapes...and they would weave the sounds of voices into their pieces and

then...chop up the sound of their acoustic guitar and cello, and it had this sort of 'folktronica' kind of...that's one word people use to describe it. It almost felt like listening to a radio story but an abstract radio story where the voices were from all these disparate sources and you as the listener had to make up a story, or at least that's how I perceived listening to their stuff.

Citing Steve Reich's work as an influence, Baker became interested in the idea of making music but 'made...anchored around a story, made...anchored around a voice.'

In terms of techniques of composition and application of music Baker often performs rough edits to background music in the editing suite, or employs placeholder pieces to conjure a particular atmosphere:

I would try to stick in pieces of music as I was editing to get a sense of how it could feel. As you are taking several hours of tape and cutting it from four hours down to a half-hour or whatever, sometimes [listening to music] makes it feel like radio earlier on in the process so it can inspire you.

Looking at the final versions of this music it becomes clear that in *Jack and Ellen's* case the main palette is likely based around the use of commercially released music by other artists. Aside from the knowing inclusions of snatches of Pink Floyd's *Money* (1973) and The Smiths's *There is a Light That Never Goes Out* (1985) (amongst others) employed to illustrate the fictitious Jack's listening tastes, the main music bed upon which the programme is built owes a debt to Jan Jelinek's *Loop Finding Jazz Records* album (2001) and music by the artist Matmos – see cues two and three in the analysis table above for an example of this.

I think 'mashup' is probably the closest thing...I would also write some musical lines along with it or I would take a song that we had been using as background or test sample music and then pitchshift it or stretch it out in various ways so I'm kind of making it my own.

Quizzed on the potential legal transgressions of this approach Baker is philosophical:

As a musician I have complex feelings about it. As much as I believe in the freedom of sampling and the right to use whatever I want to make an interesting sound collage I also feel like if you're featuring someone's piece of music they should get credit for that. I look at it very similarly to how people talked about sampling in hip hop – it's something that's really exciting and also can be its own art form and at the same time it's not without its problems.

Baker asserts that this practice is no longer adopted for new programmes, suggesting it is untenable given the rise in *Love+Radio*'s popularity. 'I wouldn't get away with it. At that time our listenership was just a few thousand, and now...hundreds of thousands for sure if not many hundreds of thousands.' Later in the interview when asked how podcasting has changed since *Jack and Ellen* was created, he notes that 'It feels different from the early days of podcasting or public radio – it's [now] a commercial space,' further emphasising his point. He adds that *Love+Radio*'s commercial affiliation with podcast network Radiotopia forced the use of wholly original music material. He suggests that podcasting is currently where the most creative approaches in audio storytelling can be found when compared to radio practice but that pragmatically he is less bothered as to the relationship between the two media:

My interest is in working in sound so I don't really care about the distinction between [the two] ... But because we know that there's a high likelihood that people are going to be listening to [podcasts] on headphones things that would be problems with broadcast radio like phase cancellation [are less of an issue].

Alongside the programme's main cues of adapted versions of recorded music there are some instances of clearly recognisable clips of pop and rock music (such as the aforementioned Pink Floyd at 07:59), which Baker uses for more than the apparent illustrative purposes of narrative:

[It's] building things in as references almost. I think about it like, a few generations beyond me, above me, people used to quote prolifically and that was a sign of being a well-read person, how many different quotes you could weave into your conversation, and I think about sampling in a similar type of way. I've listened to a lot of music in my life and have associations with different pieces; some of those might be pieces of music that are reminding me of *This American Life* or they might be emotional sampling like a piece of music that gave me a certain feeling and I want to evoke that feeling in a small way by layering it in.

It is its association with *This American Life* that led Baker to include Penguin Café Orchestra's *Perpetuum Mobile* (1987) as the false ending music at 21:09, a piece that particularly lends itself to a sensation of ending, completeness, and fulfilment even without the listener's specific knowledge of its usage on American public radio. When questioned about listeners' prerequisite knowledge of music for culturally referential purposes Baker is resolute in his intentions to build layered pieces that bear multiple listenings:

A successful piece is something that a person can listen to multiple times and get different levels of nuance and different reactions to. Both from a story construction standpoint and from a musical standpoint I want to ideally create pieces that when people go back and listen to them a second time they're hearing deeper into the piece. As you're putting it together you have to listen to it multiple times so it has to be interesting for you, too. We would often talk about different types of Easter eggs,⁶⁸ you know, things that people could find if they listened really carefully.

Producer Mooj Zadie, who did the majority of the interviewing work on the programme, used to attend monthly radio workshops in New York with Baker who would test versions of

⁶⁸ Intentional hidden messages, inside jokes, or knowing inclusions to a piece of media output such as director Alfred Hitchcock's brief cameo appearances in many of his films.

Jack and Ellen on listeners to make sure that everyone could successfully navigate the deliberately misleading opening to the work:

Nick [Van Der Kolk] particularly had wanted the piece to be structured as if Jack and Ellen were just totally different characters throughout the entire piece and there'd be a reveal at some point that it was the same person, and I felt pretty strongly that that wouldn't carry for an entire piece, like it was a good entry into the story [only]. I played this piece at various intervals throughout the course of its production to test it on people and see how well it was working and it felt pretty clear to me that there needed to be some moment pretty early on in the piece where you have this...getting all listeners on the same page and making it clear what was actually happening.

Quizzed about the process of finding interviewees for the programme, especially given the somewhat intimate, revealing and incriminating nature of the stories told in some episodes, Baker reveals that the producers keep a running list of people they have read about in books or magazines or have been suggested to them by other radio or podcast producers knowing that referred stories would be handled carefully. Van Der Kolk often interviews subjects three times to ensure he has the material to tell their story fully (Sawyer, 2016: online) but Baker admits that there have been episodes where the interview material has been less interesting:

I think that whenever you're putting out a number of episodes you're always going to get a certain percentage that are, sort of, what you might call 'turd polishing', so it doesn't quite work but you're making it work anyway. It forces you to think about what is the best possible version of this story and how can you edit it and design it in a way where it still is at least something interesting to listen to.

Baker cites the *Love+Radio* episode *Discarnate Rebel Angel* from 2015 as being a particularly difficult programme to make, not because of the story it tells but because of the

sonic qualities of interviewee Timothy Wyllie's somewhat monotone low-registered speaking voice. 'From a sound design perspective there's some really interesting stuff happening in that episode but it's maybe not one of our strongest narratively, but I would like to think that it still is an interesting listen because of the sound design,' he suggests. Baker's approach is to place emphasis on neither the speech nor the accompanying soundtrack but to let both carry equal influence in the creative process. 'I dislike being in the position of having people tell me that they think things can get fixed with the sound design,' he remarks. 'I think of it holistically. The story should be interesting and the sound should be interesting; sound shouldn't be compensating for [a dull story]. It can, but it becomes a different type of project at that point.' Asked about his compositional intentions, he replies, 'The way I thought about it was like, if you engage with it as a piece of music you can start to use music's tricks and structure as a way of making sense of what you're hearing.'

Further on this topic and regarding *Jack and Ellen's* structural layout and pacing, Baker consolidates this thesis's analytical findings that the programme is formed of clearly demarcated sections:

There are very clear chapters, and...the music changes with each chapter, and rhythmically turning points in the story match up with turning points in the music and that's all very intentional... But part of the reason we did that was also, like, well how do we add structure to this story...was the interview on its own going to hold people's interest? And it's a mixture of both editing the interview part of the material and trying to structure that so it makes sense but then also doing the same thing with the music and trying to make them work together.

On pacing, Baker is resolute:

I think the pacing of someone's voice is actually a huge part of the musicality of the overall feeling of an interview and it's something that a lot of people don't talk about. But

it can really change the way people perceive a piece. I feel that [it] is an unsung art form unto itself. All the *Love+Radio* episodes are very carefully, like, every phrase bit by bit is sort of mapped out. Making sure that there's the right amount of pause and breath and... It is sort of a little bit artificial in that way, but... *Jack and Ellen* is a really good example of that. We had to really carefully cut up and re-edit, pace everything to the music because the original interview was very, kind of, slow.

Sonic events are clearly carefully deployed on both a micro and macro scale. Of consideration are gaps such as 'having the right amount of pause before a tail of music comes in,' Baker notes, but it can also be seen that *Jack and Ellen*'s overall structure, as mapped out above, is divided into six discrete chapters (not including Van Der Kolk's announcements, the closing music, or the Radiotopia jingles), each dealing with a distinct theme.⁶⁹ The interviewee's voice he considers 'an element in an overall orchestration,' and, in offering his thoughts on the concept of the composed feature as a musical piece, Baker suggests his own conception while working is that of creating a film score:

Sound design and music are the proxy for an image. [While I'm editing it's like] I have a movie playing in my head and it's built off of cues that I'm getting from the music and cues that I'm getting from the sound design and from the description in the [interview] tape itself. [I find myself] thinking about music more as, like, what is it doing to the imagery in my mind? When I hear this piece of music and this piece of tape what is the synthetic image, for lack of a better word, that I'm getting as a combination of the two? That's part of what's interesting to me about radio – it is this alchemic, weird thing. I guess the assumption that I'm always having is [that] if I'm seeing images in my mind that's a moment where listeners are going to be imagining pictures in their minds.

⁶⁹ These are: 00:46-05:32 introduction, establishing themes and the anonymous voice reveal; 05:32-09:42 the blackmail method; 09:42-14:44 catching a victim; 14:44-15:36 collecting payment; 15:41-22:14 views of Ellen's friends and family; 22:14-29:33 Ellen's encounter with the police.

Asked for concluding thoughts on his revisiting *Jack and Ellen*, Baker is introspective. ‘I think when I started in radio I had this feeling that this was going to be this next wave, that there were going to be a lot of other programmes like this. I keep waiting to hear from other people who are doing this kind of crazy work and I don’t hear enough of it.’ His concluding remarks indicate a note of frustration in podcasting’s now-widespread popularity:

I feel like the through-line of this conversation is that at the time *Jack and Ellen* was made I felt a ton of freedom to do whatever I wanted, to use whatever sounds I wanted, and [although] I cared about people enjoying the story...I wasn’t thinking about the wider audience so much as it was about, like, can this piece be an interesting work of art on its own terms? I kind of miss that era, I miss that sense of freedom that I had when I didn’t know what I was necessarily doing but I was following my intuitions and treating it much more like a piece of music and being more playful with it... I don’t have that sense any more, I don’t have that same freedom.

3.2 *Night Manoeuvres* (2015), BBC Radio 4 podcast

‘This show allows me to eavesdrop on what people get up to without getting arrested,’ is Jarvis Cocker’s glib description of BBC Radio 4’s *Wireless Nights*, a series of composed feature documentaries themed around nocturnal biographical interviews (BBC Breakfast, 2015). First broadcast in 2014, the programme is produced in-house for the BBC by experienced radio makers Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell and was derived from a predating BBC anthology feature series entitled *London Nights* for which McCarthy was a contributor (interview, 2019). The programmes each take a titular theme (examples include *They Only Come Out at Night* and *The Darkest Hour*) and weave typically three or four interviews through carefully chosen music and sound design.

Indie pop singer and former BBC 6 Music presenter Jarvis Cocker narrates the episodes through a careful contrivance whereby he addresses the audience directly but also places himself – and then, by extension, the listener – within the scene itself, inviting us to switch on a standard lamp for poet Al Alvarez or navigate a Berlin nightclub alone while he visits the bathroom, for example. Cuts between the interviewees are often made using this device, with Cocker seemingly rooted in a manner which might be described cinematically as alternately diegetic and non-diegetic, with the listener never absolutely sure whether he was ever personally present in a given scene. Though this sounds a somewhat awkward production concept once the mechanics are hidden the result appears seamless and dreamlike, an experience deliberately cultivated for the programme by the producers through the use of more relaxed pacing techniques (interview, 2019).

The episode under consideration here, *Night Manoeuvres*, was first broadcast on Tuesday 4th August 2015 at 11:30pm. It features three sets of interviewees: Jeggsy Dodd, a minicab driver working in Liverpool, Alan McLean and his assistant (only ever referred to as ‘Dale’ and only ever heard over McLean’s radio), and some members of a skating group in London who are never identified by name and the number of members of which is not made clear.

Each interview appears to have been recorded on location rather than in a carefully sound-controlled studio environment, and the ambience present in their interviews is both affective and involving. Only private investigator McLean's story is presented as a narrative serial with a story arc and conclusion – the others are casually dipped into and out of to provide a flavour of their lives and experiences. Cocker's presence as a personal guide through the former's evening's work identifying, chasing and ultimately snaring his quarry makes for compelling listening.

Throughout the programme music is used for humour, atmosphere, wider cultural reference purposes, joyful celebration, scene setting and as a leitmotif, as a mood enhancer, and as a narrative illustrator. The ambient sound captured along with the interview material might also be considered illustrative and musical in its own right (certainly in the way Schafer describes such phenomena (1977: 148-150)) since it features sound objects such as bells and a three-note electronic soundmark of a walkie-talkie in an evocative way, although not always perhaps intentionally so.

These inclusions, as well as the accents and prosody of the interviewees, are the raw materials with which the producers work to compose a feature documentary in a style recognisable to early producers such as Shapley and Parker, and the creativity on display in the use of these materials is one justification for its inclusion in this thesis. Another is that as a BBC in-house production the series is less troubled by the commercial pressures to produce regular episodes for popularity's sake – a force to which podcasts are susceptible (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 161-166) as the BBC make the series primarily for network broadcast.⁷⁰ The time taken to make a half-hour episode of *Wireless Nights* is 15 working days (interview, 2019) (or, to suppose a 40-hour week, 240 working-hours), an amount of time that a hobbyist podcaster might find difficult to practically accommodate around other life commitments as

⁷⁰ The programmes are 'pushed' by radio rather than 'pulled' by the user selecting a podcast, as Spinelli and Dann describe it (2019: 8).

well as one unfavourable to building a listener base through the requirements of online promotion and networking.

In terms of editing and content, the simultaneous absence and presence of McLean's colleague Dale offers an opportunity to experience and probe the affective sensations of electronically mediated sound in a way that other analysed programmes in this thesis do not, and Cocker's fourth wall-breaking narration is a unique example of the merging of the journalistic and 'European-driven' sound and radio art inflected styles of documentary identified by Lindgren and McHugh (2013: 106).

3.2.1 Close analysis of *Night Manoeuvres*: sonic events contained in the programme and their associated affects

The following chart is a close analysis of the episode in question detailing each new sonic event as it appears and the associated affective transmissions. For an explanation of the methodology, intentions and caveats of this approach please see chapter 3.1.1.

As per the other programmes analysed, due to the nature of podcasting's allowance for multiple versions of the same programme the exact episode examined is available on the accompanying flash drive. A full text transcription is available in appendix A.

For the purposes of brevity in the table the following initials refer to the speaking voices:

JC: Jarvis Cocker

JD: Jeggsy Dodd, minicab driver

AM: Alan McLean, private investigator

Epis-ode	Cue	Time	Marker	Comments	Semiotics/ suggested affect
1		00:00	'Thank you for downloading Wireless Nights...'	Speech only	Liverpudlian accent, dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. Delivered in a slightly formal manner appropriate to the characteristics of BBC Radio 4
2	1	00:04	Music begins	1980s car-based science fiction crime adventure series <i>Knight Rider</i>	Music is upbeat synth-driven automated arpeggios (BPM 117) which suggests futuristic adventure and pursuit, affects which communicate the theme of the TV series even if one does not recognise it. For those that do it may invoke sensations of nostalgia (or at least a cheery recollection)
		00:05	Car door slam	Doors slams and diegetic sounds of	Cocker's speaking voice comes across as warm and mellifluous.

				seatbelt fastening before JC begins diegetic narration	His accent reveals his Sheffield heritage (though this may not be identifiable to those unfamiliar with it). The voice can be heard to be affected by the acoustics of the car he is driving, setting what Tagg refers to as 'aural staging'. As the first voice you hear in the programme his presence feels welcoming and avuncular, particularly when he addresses the listener(s) directly
		00:28	'At last I have you in my clutches'	JC diegetic voiceover	Personable, humourous remark helps the rapport build between JC's voiceover and the listener. This continues through the next 30 seconds where he performs a mock faux-masculine car review typical of the output of BBC television's <i>Top Gear</i> motoring show
		00:39	Brief rise of music to fill pause in speech	Bridging technique (a convenient editing device to shorten time/remove irrelevant recording). Aligns with appearance of theme tune melody	A brief pause allowing the listener some time to comprehend their environment and visualise/place themselves within the scene. Alignment with music offers a sense of completeness, of feeling 'right'
		00:56	'I'm sure I took the handbrake off'	Music rises as JC's diegetic narration closes, car horns dubbed over the final notes	Music finishing offers a sensation of the opening episode closing and the dubbed-in car horns, edited to align with the final notes of the <i>Knight Rider</i> theme, suggest humour and a merging of diegetic and non-diegetic worlds, as well as an example of R. Murray Schafer's alignment of real-world sounds and music
3		00:57	'This is Wireless Nights...'	JC's voiceover is switched to non-diegetic. Introduction to the programme following the first minute's preamble	Sensation of steadfastness and certainty due to presence of introduction, possibly offering a sense of the shape of the programme. An anchor point
		00:59	'Come on, baby...'	JC's diegetic voiceover continues in the background	Reaffirms that we are not changing scene completely and though the programme has begun in earnest that we are experiencing a linear narrative trajectory. Perhaps somewhat reassuring, especially as we are explicitly invited to 'calm down' at 01:17
	2	01:00	Music bed starts	Music is from Scorsese's 1976 film <i>Taxi Driver</i> . Brass-	Adds a sense of discomfort, danger, unease. Very low in the mix at first, it is slowly brought to the attention

				driven, it is dark and haunting with no discernible rhythm or melody at this stage, but shortly reveals to be quietly rhythmic with a BPM of around 70	of the listener. Those familiar with the music and its context will make the connection between night driving and the music in a way that those unfamiliar will not. However even those unfamiliar will be able to read its sinister cinematic cues and perhaps note it speaks of the uneasy sensations cities at night can offer
		01:04	'And tonight...'	JC's non-diegetic voiceover continues from 00:57. JC introduces himself at 01:06	As 00:57 with the added illuminating reassurance of the host's name
		01:19	'Now there are some boiled sweets in the glove compartment...'	The first instance in this particular programme of the narrator performing his role in a fluidly non/diegetic manner where the voiceover sounds like it was recorded in a voiceover studio but is written and performed as if part of the scene	This is a device characteristic of the <i>Wireless Nights</i> series. This fluidity bridges the worlds of the programme and the listeners', with JC often addressing us directly and explicitly inviting us into the scene. This creates a sensation of inclusiveness and disappearance of the self such as Csikszentmihalyi advocates in the 'expansion of who we are' (2002: 64). This fourth wall breaking is the sort of technique that may not be for everyone – for those wishing for a more straightforward documentary experience it may be found to be somewhat grating. Since this thesis discusses composed feature documentaries and celebrates their creativity it shall be assumed from hereon that this device is embraced pleasantly as the producers intend
		01:33	'Tonight's show concerns...'	JC's non-diegetic voiceover gives a brief summary of the concept of the programme: 'ordinary people making their way through the darkness'	As 00:57. Reassuredness and a firm grounding of the concept of the programme
		01:57	'Each night when I return the cab to the garage...'	Sample of Robert DeNiro as Travis Bickle in <i>Taxi Driver</i> , followed by JC's non-diegetic naming of such	The sudden American accent and noticeable change in audio quality signals the inclusion of material from outside of the <i>Wireless Nights</i> world built up so far. The audio characteristics in the voice are that of cinema and, combined with the filmic soundtrack, evoke a hostile and uneasy sense of foreboding.

					JC's explicit acknowledgement of the source comes across as a teacher perhaps quoting a poem or work of literature
4		02:27	'You just pray that no-one's sick.'	JD introduced	This opening line, edited in directly after JC's observation, 'My, how things have changed since then,' makes for a humorous transition. The bed of ambient noise that comes with JD's interview at this stage makes it clear he is in a moving car, transmitting all the affect which that might conjure for a night ride: perhaps safety, comfort, or loneliness, depending on the listener's subjective experience. He has a Liverpudlian accent: dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. JD sounds perhaps world-weary but open and kind
		02:32	'Jeggsy Dodd: minicab driver'	JC (non-diegetic) introduces JD	Introduced with an air of authority and a little mysteriously perhaps, a technique which might be intended to lead the listener on
		02:34	'And people always say...'	JD continues and is interrupted at 02:52 by a sudden radio which momentarily catches his attention	As 02:27 but the minicab radio affirms the location of the interview and places the listener firmly in the scene. Perhaps this also communicates a sense of authenticity since the interviewee is interrupted mid-anecdote
		02:56	Whoosh as car passes by	Used as a bridging device as per 00:39 by keeping sonic interest without employing a pause which might be potentially semiotically heavy	The sound chosen to create the bridge is part of the same sonic palette as the ambient sound in JD's interview. The height of this in the mix denotes a break but not too great a break. Listener is signalled that the interview may change tack slightly at this point
		02:57	'It's quarter-to eleven at night...'	JD describes his location and what he's doing	Absence of the <i>Taxi Driver</i> bed for a few seconds suggests perhaps a more authentic insight into JD's description of his current actions. May be perceived as more honest. His description of the thick fog builds an image in the listener's mind
	2	03:21	Reintroduction of <i>Taxi Driver</i> music	Louder in the mix, used here as a bridging device together with another whoosh of a passing car	As 02:56

		03:33	'There have been times in my life...'	JC diegetically discussing the escapism of driving	Narration from within the <i>Wireless Nights</i> world with similar ambient sounds to JD placing Cocker in a car also, a callback to his role at 00:05. The continuation of the <i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack suggests a fluidity of scene, and by extension affect
	3	03:50	Speech stops	Silence except for the quiet introduction of military-style percussion at marching pace	Silence offered as an episodic determinant as an indication that the programme is about to move on to another act. Military drums connote order, discipline, determination and set the scene for the forthcoming briefing meeting with AM
5		03:55	'Right, what time is it now..?'	AM addressing his surveillance team before going out into the field	A new contributor is introduced. With a Northern Irish accent, his dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered just as above. AM sounds focused, hardened and professional with his ease of the use of terminology in his work. Addressing a group of people it is clear that AM is experienced and carries authority. For the listener this sets the scene, previews what's to come, and invites them along
		04:00	'Yep. Yep'	JC non-diegetically placing himself within the scene	A sense of guidance and reassurance from the narrator, especially as the listener is addressed directly at 04:07 (a telling off for apparently not going to the toilet). As at 01:19 this has the affect of pulling the listener's consciousness into the scene itself
	2	04:11	'What evidence this lady wants...'	<i>Taxi Driver</i> brass re-emerges	Continuation and connection with previous episode, music still carrying connotations of darkness, seediness, unease
		04:34	Three tone bleep of radio		Whilst being the radio's built-in 'transmission ended' notifier, the bleeps stand out as being overtly electronic and alien-sounding for the scene. They present as jarring, possibly because the pitch of the tones is such that they cut through surrounding ambience. Signals to the listener that radio conversation is being undertaken, and acts as one of R Murray Schafer's soundmarks. Beckons the listener to pay attention to the transmitted

					material, or flags up the realisation that there may be others included in the scene who cannot be heard; has the effect of opening the room out, or perhaps turning it inside out to include the outside world
		04:53	'...then we'll abort the mission'	Music quietly fades out	Focuses attention on the 'dry', or unaccompanied, interview material
	3	05:04	Car door slam		Signals a change in physical setting, and the acoustics inherent alongside AM's voice can be heard to be confirming the scene is now in a small enclosed small, <i>i.e.</i> a car. The change of setting and AM's testing of the radio signals a moving along of the narrative, as well as audio of keys jangling and low frequency rumbling. Military drums reintroduced as 03:50
		05:11	Three tone bleep of radio		Here and every subsequent use infers the idea of distant coordinated communication, of calling out; broadcasting. Also two-way radios such as this carry the signification of secrecy
		05:24	'On your right, right right...'	Use of radio to speak to colleague Dale. Dale is never heard directly and is only ever mediated through radio communication	Dale's role within the programme can now somewhat be considered in lieu of the audience. AM rarely addresses the listener directly from hereon and the action is now described through Dale
	2	05:27	'Roger'	Dale's voice heard through the two-way radio. Reintroduction of <i>Taxi Driver</i> brass	The first time we hear Dale speak, albeit quietly. We become explicitly aware that there is another individual taking part in the investigation (no-one else is heard throughout the briefing) and that he is distant but crucially included
		05:38	'I have to be fairly close...'	Music quietly fades out	As 04:53
	4	05:57	'I'm expecting him...'	Music changes to a simple melody of electric guitar	Melody is a simple two chords played as three-note arpeggios and is free of tempo. The chords employed suggest sadness, distance, time taken, emptiness, sorrow, loss. Has the affective result of slowing the pace of the programme
		06:21	'I think we'll leave Alan...'	JC speaking non-diegetically	AM can be heard settling down and JC encourages movement of the listener to the next episode within

					the programme
6	5	06:28	Introduction to <i>London By Night</i> ⁷¹		Signals moving to next episode of the programme. Introduction could be perceived as dawn-like, the rising harmonic tones suggesting a beginning afresh, a sunrise (or perhaps in this case, a moonrise)
		06:31	'Here we go, approaching Piccadilly Circus'	JC speaking diegetically from inside his car	A returning of the listener to the programme's guide and placing us inside the car with JC ready to experience a new direction
		07:00	Temporary raising of music bed volume	Acts as an edit point bridging device	Temporary breathing space offered before JC's voiceover begins again
		07:07	'One thing you can do...'	JC explains the number plate game	Personal conversation with the listener encourages a sense of warmth and rapport. Stories like these offered by JC are affectively different from those offered by the other contributors since they are interviewees while JC is integral to the programme, addresses the listener directly and knowingly, and is an experienced broadcaster
		08:00	<i>London by Night</i> 'by night' lyric		As 07:00 but this has musical inflections of a closing line, a summary, and ending. The music is faded from hereon.
7		08:19	Not clear but possibly 'Hey, where are you?'	Introduction to the skaters	A new, unfamiliar voice. Sounds young, male, perhaps adolescent or early 20s. Dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered just as noted above, though this snatch of speech is not much up which to build a picture
		08:21	'I can see, like, people with skates on...'	JC speaking (non-) diegetically begins leading the listener to the next scene	A device where JC may or may not actually be able to see the skaters he describes but this is used as a bridge to the next episode
		08:27	'Coming street skating, bro?'	Skater's voice heard at 08:19 continues	Becomes clear that JC and the skater's voice are edited together in post-production so as to intertwine as a kind of bridging device
8		08:40	'Usually we meet up here...'	Skater allowed to continue uninterrupted	Ambient sound of JC's car fades and the absence of the low frequency rumble makes the listener aware they are left in the presence of the skater and his associated soundworld

⁷¹ Though the song can be clearly identified as this, I am unable to identify the exact performer or version for citation purposes.

	6	09:05	'Let's roll, let's roll!'	Soundscape shifts and becomes fuller and less focussed on the single interviewee, music heard	Ambient sound of people skating through streets, music heard (approx 125 BPM) giving the scene a sense of movement and purpose. Though the music can't be heard and necessarily identified (unless one happens to be previously familiar with it, perhaps) it suggests a feeling of the urban
		09:13	'When you're having fun...'	Soundscape from 09:05 continues but interviewee brought to front again	Continuation of interview, soundscape bed suggests interview may have been recorded after some time had passed (this may be a trick of the edit, however)
		09:15	Police siren in background	Part of recorded ambience	Reinforces idea of the urban
		09:29	'One, two, three...'	A second male voice	Used very fleetingly, this voice suggests more people are present than just the interviewee from 08:19. Not enough time is given to perhaps form a subjective sense of the person
		09:32	'I'm a learning support worker...'	First female voice in the skater episode	The same background ambience but with a new female voice, possibly in the same age range as the previous interviewee. The voice calls to mind all prejudices where similar voices may have been encountered just as noted above
		09:43		Brief volume raising of background sound and music	Bridging device between interview sections (as at 07:00) allowing the listener a little breathing space between interview sections. Instances like this are good indicators of the overall pacing of a programme since their extended use tends to suggest a more relaxed feeling to the edit
		09:50	'I'm not working at the moment...'	Appearance of second female voice in this episode	Just as 09:32 with the contrast that the previous interviewee reveals herself to be in employment whereas this person states she is unemployed. This may reveal prejudices in the listener pertaining to the urban environment or the types of people perceived as skating enthusiasts
		10:12		Brief volume raising of background sound and music	As 09:43
		10:14	Laughing	Part of (or perhaps mixed into) background ambience	Reinforcement of skating as a pleasurable activity, encouraging vicarious enjoyment

9	3	10:19	Reappearance of the <i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack		Returning to the previously visited soundtrack which connotes danger, mystery, sleaziness
		10:31	Whoosh of passing car		As 02:56 and also employed as a useful edit point with which to reintroduce the low rumbling ambient noise of JC driving
		10:33	'As I sd to my friend...' [<i>sic.</i>]	JC reads the Robert Creeley poem <i>I Know a Man</i> (1991), speaking diegetically	The meaning of the poem posits an existential darkness and a barbaric expression of consumerism as an escape, and therefore its marriage with the <i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack can be read as considered and appropriate. For those familiar with the poem it might conjure possibly pleasant recognition or bring to mind previous readings, or for those unfamiliar it may simply be seen as thematically suitable, addressing as it does the night, cars and driving. Cocker's delivery is warm and knowing, speaking of curiosity and exploration rather than representing the brutality in the text. The inclusion of poetry may aid in the mystery and 'bedtime story' air of comfort which the programme aims to foster (see interview with McCarthy and Grissell, chapter 3.2.2)
		10:56	Whoosh of passing car		As 10:31 but in this instance used to disguise the fading out of JC's car ambience
10		10:58	'Another boarded up pub...'	JD reappears, commentating on the streets of his surroundings as he drives	Reassurance as a familiar voice reappears and, assuming the listener is still engaged with the programme, curiosity as to what might occur next. Accompanying music crosses from the last episode into this, this may be an aid to continuity of experience
		11:19	Voice on taxi radio	Voice unintelligible but the radio-mediated quality of the voice is clear	Low rumble of car and radio voice reinforce JD's diegetic ambience
		11:21	'I don't know if I'm supposed to drive here...'	<i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack faded out and JD turns his attention to feeling lost in the fog	The listener might experience empathy towards the confusion the driver feels as there is a small but noticeable change in his vocal expression. The absence of music makes this feel more honest perhaps, though it also makes space for the bell heard at 11:38

		11:35	Operation of electric window		Reinforces the idea of being present in JD's car. Opening the window also has the effect of letting the wider soundscape into the vehicle, of placing the listener in a wider scene than that which is just inside the car
		11:38	Bell chiming		Acting as an example of Tagg's 'aural staging', the soundscape here is referred to explicitly and then the sound source demonstrated for the listener. This is also an example of Schafer's 'soundmarks' (1977: 26) as the bell is a sound characteristic of, and identifiable to, a particular location (even if the fog-bound interviewee appears to be having trouble at this point)
		12:12	Voice on taxi radio		As 11:19 but the absence of the low rumble of the car reinforces the sense of being in a now stationary vehicle. This continues throughout this particular episode
		12:28	'Ask not for whom the bell tolls...'	JC non-diegetically interjects the popular misquote	Witty addition might raise a smile and reinforce JC's good-natured appeal. He then goes on to address the listener directly with a reassuring sentiment before JD is allowed to continue
		13:09	'A death knell for British industry?'	JC continues	JC offers explicit examples of Schafer's 'sound contexts' as discussed above, demonstrating how the sound of the bell can connote five different interpretative instances
11	4	13:24	Electric guitar		As 05:57 but longer and a development of the arpeggios to make a piece no less mournful than the previous use of this cue. Since this cue appears only when AM speaks it might be considered a leitmotif
		13:29	'Not everybody's cut out for this job.'	AM reintroduced, this time speaking from within his car as he waits for the subject of his investigation	As before, reassurance as a familiar voice reappears and, assuming the listener is still engaged with the programme, curiosity as to what might occur next.
		13:48	'Back at the stakeout...'	JC, speaking non-diegetically, reintroduces AM	Familiarity, settled sensation of knowing where one is situated aurally without having to deduce it perhaps
		14:13	'Radio check.'	AM tests radio, colleague Dale answers in the	Now-familiar three tone electronic bleeps signal the two-way radio's deployment and the familiar voice

				affirmative	Dale responds. As at 05:27 we can hear there is more than one individual taking part in the investigation
		14:17	'I've been awake...'	AM discusses his past career experiences	Possible sensations of incredulity and respect for someone able to work in highly pressured and dangerous situations, and is a recovering alcoholic
12		15:25	'So this is an all night garage...'	JC diegetically discusses the UK overnight service station experience	Back inside JC's car, as heard by low rumbling ambience and car interior acoustics. Cue 4 continues until he parks and exits the car (used as a gentle bridge into episode 13), again familiarity can be felt
13		15:41	'I'm just getting some Hula Hoops.'	JC inside the service station shop	Ambience from inside the shop, JC can be heard talking to the sales assistant
14	5	15:49	Reintroduction of <i>London By Night</i>		Back in the car with JC. As 06:28, though this time we are moving into a section where JC shares his memories of the 'social hubs' which were late night fuel station shops. Used as a leitmotif, <i>London By Night</i> is accompanying JC's diegetic speech but is faded after only a brief appearance to make way for other sonic events. Feels familiar and oddly entertaining, and many listeners might empathise with the somewhat strange experience that this calls to mind
		16:45	'Oi! Are you nodding off?'	The non-diegetic JC interrupts the diegetic JC	This is a witty interjection that demonstrates the flexible nature of the realities which composed features can invoke. Similar to <i>Jack and Ellen's</i> use of multi-layered speech from a single interviewee (at 07:47), the listener is treated to multiple versions of the narrator, but this time having one critique the other. As well as seemingly rescuing the listener from diegetic JC's 'boring' story, non-diegetic JC, speaking from a position of later hindsight, provides wry, good natured entertainment. The listener is referred to as having 'accepted a lift' from diegetic JC, promoting a sensation of personal inclusion in the narrative
	7	17:27	The Proclaimers' <i>I'm Gonna Be (500</i>		Brought in to illustrate JC's story, the song is widely known and will

			<i>Miles</i>) (1988)		likely provoke a sensation of memory-jogging recognition from the those familiar with it and a sense of understanding the story from those who don't.
		17:57	Car whooshing past		As 02:56
15		18:01	Three tone radio bleeps	Back with AM on his stakeout	As 05:11 - situation instantly familiar and recognisable through the sound of the bleeps
	8	18:01	Music comprising bass guitar and brass	Quite low in the mix, used to colour the atmosphere, 'composing with genre' to create a quick musical shorthand (Cook, 1994: 35)	This music has a definite beat (approx 118 BPM) and the composition is one that builds tension, drawing on the type of music one might associate with spy thriller cinema. Tagg refers to this type of signification as 'arbitrary' or 'conventional' (see chapter 2.2.4). This may be part of the <i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack as well, it would certainly fit from a genre perspective
		18:02	'Okay mate...'	AM talking alternately to the listener and to Dale on the radio	Familiarity and curiosity to what's coming next, a sense of tension as stakeout activity suddenly increases
		18:05	'Alan and his team...'	JC's non-diegetic voiceover confirms that stakeout activity has suddenly increased	Familiarity and curiosity to what's coming next, a sense of tension as stakeout activity suddenly increases, but explicitly stated in voiceover
		18:10	Dale on radio (speech unintelligible)		As 05:24
		18:22	Low rumble of car, accelerating		Rising tone of car engine (recorded here as a low rumble from inside the car) indicates the acceleration of both the vehicle and the narrative, generating a sense of excitement
		18:41	'Okay, hold on tight...'	JC's non-diegetic voiceover	Addressing the listener directly, we are informed we are in 'an actual car chase', generating excitement and possible recollection of times the listener may have also been in a similar situation, wished they were, or experienced such a thing cinematically

		18:53	'This is exciting! Isn't it? Isn't it? <i>Isn't it?</i> '	JC's non-diegetic voiceover	The delivery of the three questions is interesting. The first two read as encouragement to feel excitement, the last reads of a wry observation of the situation and possible reminding that the listener is not <i>actually</i> present, or that the situation may not in truth be as exhilarating as one might be being persuaded it is. The episode continues with shorts intercuts between JC, AM, and Dale as the narrative plays through, and JC plays the pragmatist throughout advising the listener on the use of seatbelts and the presence of speed cameras, once again playing an anchoring, reassuring role
		19:06	Cars whooshing past		As 02:56
		19:09	'This is where holding your nerve...'	AM continues	Tension and curiosity increases as AM discusses investigative techniques. JC (faux diegetically, addressing the listener) and AM alternate in the pursuit of the suspect
		19:48	Cars whooshing past		As 02:56
16		19:49	'Those skaters we passed earlier...'	JC's non-diegetic voiceover	Bridging the gap to a new episode, this sounds like a straightforward continuation of voiceover (which indeed it is). Feels a gentle but swift transition away from a tense situation, the brevity of the link fitting with the fast paced nature of the adjoined episodes
		19:52	Skate wheels rolling on tarmac	Familiar ambient sound from episode 8	Ambient sound of people skating through streets, music heard (approx. 70 BPM) giving the scene a sense of movement and purpose. Though the music can't be heard and necessarily identified (unless one happens to be previously familiar with it, perhaps) it suggests a feeling of the urban
		19:57	'On the pavement, dodging in and out, mate!'		May be the voice of the interviewee at 08:19, causing a questioning in the listener if not able to positively identify. Dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered just as noted above
	9	20:03		Music introduced (but remains behind	Music gives the scene a sense of movement and purpose. Though the

				ambient sound and interviews, approx. 125 BPM)	music can't be necessarily identified (unless one happens to be previously familiar with it, perhaps) it suggests a feeling of the urban
		20:17	'It's, like, ten o'clock?'		May be the voice of the interviewee at 09:32 or 09:50, causing a questioning in the listener if not able to positively identify. Dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered just as before
		20:27	'I said I could see if a bus is coming!'		Witty reply in story told by female interviewee, will likely raise a smile
17	8	20:32	'At the top of the road, Dale...'	Return to AM pursuing his subject	A rapid transition between episodes with no bridging device other than a fade. The episode left at 19:06 is picked up again wholly with music in place (a jazz swing piece, bold and brassy, 125BPM), now assisting in building tension in the car chase. Excitement and expectation generated for the listener
		20:52	'Shhhhhh! Why have we stopped?'	JC non- diegetically describes the scene for the listener	Music comes to a close as AM and Dale discuss the subject of their pursuit stopping. Excitement of chase subsides but is replaced with intense curiosity as to the movements of the subject. Listener likely fully engaged and listening closely. There is a notable absence of ambient sound which heightens this affect
		21:06	'He's come out...'	Dale over radio, followed by the now-familiar three bleeps	Back into the diegetic world of AM's pursuit, a sense of re-engagement
		21:09	'Yeah I've got him.'	AM to Dale over radio	Notable absence of any ambient sound meaning the car is stopped, though the acoustics of the voice confirm AM is still in the vehicle
	4	21:17	'Not a bottle of wine...'	AM to Dale over radio, guitar arpeggios return	Suggesting sadness, loss, and desolation, these notes might signify a disappointment or a sense of shame as the subject is found to be guilty of the indiscretion of which he is suspected
18		21:40	Cars whooshing past		As 02:56

		21:42	'Basically nothing can shock me...'	JD describing experience with previous passengers	Guitar arpeggios remain giving a sense of continuity between episodes. Suggests sadness, loss and, this time, contemplation. Low rumble suggests we are inside a now-moving vehicle
		21:57	Unintelligible radio voice		Confirms we are still in JD's taxi. Sense of familiarity and certainty
	10	22:41	'And I always put something like Jack Johnson on...'	Jack Johnson's <i>Adrift</i> (2008) is played	An inclusion for illustrative purposes, the effect on the listener is similar to that which JD describes for his passengers – calming, reassuring, soothing. For those familiar with the song it might conjure possibly pleasant recognition or bring to mind previous listenings, or for those unfamiliar it may simply be experienced as settling
		23:01	'Wow, I see what he means...'	JC non-diegetically remarks upon the music	JC's somewhat derisory review of the song gives a sense of distaste at the ending of the excitement in the programme. Might be read as either an irreverent critique or as a little impolite given the delicacy of the song and performance
		23:11	'Are you alright? You look a bit green!'	JC non-diegetically addresses the listener	Listener is again placed into the world of the programme, but, again, with reassurance as the central affective motif
19	11	23:18	'Don't open the door...'	Back to AM's watching of his subject and introduction of a tense pair of musical tones	Musical tones are introduced, a low rumble (sounding similar to the movement of a vehicle) and a higher pitched, shorter duration note. These are tense, horror cinema-inflected sounds and work to build anticipation and a sense of danger and dread
		23:30	'Please let that be a bird.'	AM mutters his wishes under his breath	The listener may or may not find AM's desire to find the subject of his enquiries guilty a little surprising as this is the first indication of his feelings towards the situation in the whole programme. On reflection it might make sense to wish one's work to come to fruition but given the personal and moral implications of the subject's infidelity it might be received as something of a jolt
		23:44	'Bastard!'	AM judging the subject	Again, perhaps an odd reaction given the moral ambiguity as noted above. Possibly confusing sentiment – is AM pleased with his

					discovery or not?
		23:46	Three tone bleep of radio	In conversation with Dale	Reminder that this is a coordinated effort, also the leitmotif of the three tone bleep
		24:09	Music (low tone) subsides		Absence of tones lifts tension, makes the event feel more authentic perhaps
		24:17	'What we've just witnessed now...'	AM addresses the listener as his drives away	Affect shifts from the emotive <i>sensed</i> feeling of the event to a more rational understanding as AM explains explicitly what's occurred using professional-sounding language. Low rumble of moving car returns (and car indicators heard) suggesting leaving of the scene and a release of tension
20	12	25:41	'Hmm. Food for thought.'	JC addresses the listener non-diegetically as soul music is introduced	Played for comedic effect, JC suggests the listener is being unfaithful to him. The use of stereotypically sexy music adds to the overplayed and light-hearted affect felt. For those familiar with the song it might conjure possibly pleasant recognition or bring to mind previous listenings, or for those unfamiliar it may simply be experienced as a sensual mood-setter, though in both instances one can presumably recognise the humour in its application
		26:02	'Extra-marital manoeuvres in the dark.'	JC non-diegetically begins a summing up of the programme's events and themes directly addressed to the listener as if they had actually taken part	Reassurance (again), a sense of closure, of completeness and finishing
	2	26:22	<i>Taxi Driver</i> soundtrack once again introduced	Revisiting the music used at 01:00, early in the programme	Sense of closure, of a closed loop and the end of the programme approaching
21		26:32	'Taxi!'	JC non-diegetically calls a taxi for the listener. Car whooshing sound is heard	As 02:56
		26:33	'So you do see...'	Back to JD in his taxi, low rumbling heard of moving vehicle, the tick of indicators	Sense of revisitation, a reminder of the programme's beginning, completeness
		27:10	'But we know what happens...'	JC again, non-diegetically addressing the listener	A sense of inclusivity, closing and reassurance, perhaps feeling encouraged to look review the

					programme's experiences. Music cue continues in order to add continuity between the episodes
		27:18	'And all those other wireless nights we've shared together'	JC again, non-diegetically addressing the listener	For those familiar with the presence of other episodes in the series this might feel a summing up and sense of closure (possible disappointment if there are no more programmes to follow? This will depend on when the programme was heard), or for those unfamiliar it might quietly signal that there are more episodes to be discovered, causing a sense of anticipation
		27:35	Car whooshing past		As 02:56, this time bridging to the outro of the programme
		27:40	Absolute silence	Used as a hard divider between episodes	A moment to pause and take a breath as the programme ends
22		27:43	'Wireless Nights...'	Announcer as at 00:00 reading outro	Sense of completeness, closure and finality. Advertising other programmes opens one to possible new avenues of experience and can be felt as either tiresome (if heard many times perhaps) or as a welcome invitation

3.2.2 Interview with Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell, producers of *Night Manoeuvres*

What follows is a discussion of identified techniques, working processes and creative intent with *Night Manoeuvres* producers Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell. All quotes are taken from an interview conducted at BBC Broadcasting House on 16th January 2019, the full, unedited version of which can be heard on the included flash drive. During the interview presenter Jarvis Cocker was identified in having a small hand in the production workflow of the programme and although efforts were made to contact him for his thoughts all enquiries were sadly unanswered.

There are a number of techniques and sonic characteristics that can be heard as recurring themes on *Night Manoeuvres*. The overall impression of the programme is of a benevolent late night companion, a role embodied by presenter Cocker shifting between (to employ cinematic terminology) diegetic and non-diegetic roles as a contributor to the interview portfolio as well as an omniscient voiceover addressing the listener directly and explicitly inviting them into the scenes. The employment of a whooshing car recording as a sonic bridging device occurs regularly, and the music might be considered leitmotif-like in its usage since songs seldom stray from under their particular corresponding interviewee. Like *Jack and Ellen* the music is drawn from existing pop music, but unlike it the component episodes are shorter and contain much more variety and contrast with the programme being made of a portfolio of at least seven contributing voices. Of this portfolio the selection of accents and dialects chosen for inclusion is broad, from taxi driver Jeggsy Dodd's rich Scouse accent to private investigator Alan McLean's more robust Northern Irish, via an assortment of London's inner city youth. We here witness a BBC more inclusive of diverse voices and far from the homogenised and discriminatory output of the corporation of yore documented by Crisell (1994: 45-46).

Wireless Nights as a series is a development of McCarthy's earlier (also in-house BBC) series *London Nights*. He explains:

It started [as] us searching for a way of using shortform *in* longform. We had half-hour slots and we came across stories (in our regular search for stories) which wouldn't go thirty minutes but were really good and gave you little insights...and we were wondering, could you weave them together? *London Nights* was a series of short stories, obviously with London as the common theme, and that raised the night space as an area to explore.

The producers intentionally compose the programme for its night-time audience, with Grissell noting its more relaxed atmosphere compared to daytime equivalents: 'It's just a very different pace I think...to leave some gaps for the imagination to fill in, whereas I think a lot of what you hear during the day and on other podcasts and stuff, by the nature of what it is, needs to move. You can let silence do some of the talking.' McCarthy suggests that, 'the stories can be quite fine, quite gentle at that time of night.' On story selection Grissell says he is:

...Always looking for stories with a beginning, middle and an end, whereas [McCarthy] is more relaxed on the narrative front, and I think that that is quite a good tension to have. I think that if stories signal themselves very strongly as *stories* you can lose some of the atmosphere; somehow the storytelling becomes very apparent. The word 'immersive' is really overused now but I suppose the idea of these programmes is that you are put in a world, a sound world. It's about the essence of a story I suppose, that's what you're looking for.

In contrast to Brendan Baker's musical background, McCarthy and Grissell began as journalists with the former beginning as a freelancer making pieces for the BBC World Service's *Outlook* programme and the latter making five-minute montage pieces for BBC consumer programme *You and Yours*. Like Baker, however, both report an absence of

professional training and close supervision (McCarthy notes how in the beginning he purchased his own recording equipment for use on BBC commissions) but received a lot of mentoring from colleagues and other producers. Both count themselves as producers first, journalists second.

The recruitment of Jarvis Cocker as presenter proved to be a crucial event in the development of the series in terms of its character and makeup. Originally a decree from BBC Radio 4 seeking to appoint a better-known voice to front the series, both McCarthy and Grissell were struck with the playful dialogue with the listener Cocker practiced on his BBC Radio 6 Music *Sunday Service* programme. McCarthy recalls:

We had the title and he signed up for it, and then we were thinking, we've got it all, we have the commission, what are we going to do with [the programme]? We were slightly frustrated and we didn't know what it was yet, and then he sent us a list of about forty different phrases that were 'evocative of the night,' I think he said; like 'overnight delivery', like 'night manoeuvres', like 'they only come out at night'.⁷² We hadn't been thinking of it in that way, we hadn't thought how a phrase could open up a whole idea. That liberated us from the idea of doing three consecutive stories [per episode].

Grissell describes the development of Cocker's role. 'We realised that if he was just coming in, introducing a story, and then disappearing again (which was sort of the original idea), he wouldn't be embedded in the programme...that was when we realised the stories would need to be interwoven.' McCarthy continues:

The first studio session I did with him I did just play him audio and I said, 'can you imagine yourself in this situation?' and he immediately started to fill in the gaps and put himself there, and I think I realised, 'okay, you can get into this', and I think in our minds we [had always] wanted him to do that but we didn't know if he would go for it.

⁷² These all became episode titles from the first series of the programme.

‘We’ve always, sort of, said [that there is] this idea that he’s kind of there but not there,’ agrees Grissell. ‘I think that is one of the things that is innovative about it, his voice, by which I mean his role. He plays with the idea of narration. Sometimes he’s *there* but he’s also there in narration as well, I think he plays around with that very effectively.’ Asked about Jarvis critiquing multiple versions of himself in *Night Maneuvres*⁷³ Grissell says, ‘That’s very funny, the idea of undercutting yourself. That really makes me laugh.’

The music used in the programme is popular music but, in another alignment with *Jack and Ellen*, deliberately sourced from across the spectrum of cultural media rather than being simply well known pop records. The soundtrack to Martin Scorsese’s horror-thriller *Taxi Driver* (1976) is used throughout by McCarthy (particularly as a leitmotif to interviewee Jeggys Dodd’s material), but such pop-cultural touchstones as 1980s science fiction fantasy series *Knight Rider* (Glen A. Larson, 1982-1986) are employed for comedic as well as cinematic effect. ‘I think Knight Rider was your idea,’ McCarthy says to Grissell. ‘It worked well, it sounds like action and he’s going nowhere, that was a good counterpoint.’ In a revealing retort, Grissell chuckles, ‘that shows our different cultural reference points!’

Asked whether previous knowledge of included music is important for getting the most as a listener from a composed feature, McCarthy replies, ‘No, we wouldn’t expect [people to know it]. I mean there will always be music that’ll be new – some of the music helps the story along, it can be a reflection of the story you are telling or be more oblique.’ Cocker provides a lot of the music for the programmes, most of which is unfamiliar to the producers. ‘For [Jarvis] it was very important from the beginning, in our very first email he said, “Can there be music in these programmes?” We don’t have many programmes where we can use as much music as we do [here],’ notes McCarthy.

On the use of music Grissell says:

⁷³ At 16:45, see table in chapter 3.2.1.

I think it's about creating a mood with the music and I think you just know what's going to work and what isn't. Stuff that's quite heavy on lyrics I tend to find more difficult to work with, I mean it is generally much easier with instrumental work, though clearly not all instrumental work. [Jarvis] usually gives us quite a long list of stuff, quite a lot of choices, and it's usually relatively easy to pare down from those because you can just kind of *feel* it I think.

Grissell agrees that there is a risk that listeners can bring associations to music that as a producer one might not intend, but also notes that in *Wireless Nights* the music can be relatively obscure and there is less risk of this happening:

This concerns me with other programmes but less with this one because we know what fits the mood – we have a very clear brief, effectively, which is to make something which works at eleven o'clock at night. If one wants to get into the traditional linear schedule versus podcast listening [discussion], [this is] the way in which the linear schedule really helps us. You can say, 'this has a slot...does this suit my frame of mind at that time?'

'I think it's maybe moving this way in podcasts,' agrees McCarthy. 'Being grouped in late night listening, meditation, or in certain subgroups where [the programme] might find itself quite happily.' Asked if it occurs to him that the programme might be listened to differently as a podcast, McCarthy says yes, 'I know people listen to it on the train on the way to work and things like that but [I think it's] best appreciated after dark.'

Use in different listening situations brings up the question of delivery medium, specifically the use of headphones when listening. 'Hopefully it's more enjoyable in headphones,' suggests McCarthy. 'There's quite a lot of attention to detail with the sound. We mic [Jarvis] differently to any other presenter we have. We use a *good* mic, basically, so there's a real intimacy – nice on your bedside radio but quite enveloping if you are listening on headphones.' Grissell concurs:

They are very, very heavily crafted programmes, these, that we pore over and give blood, sweat and tears to. Even this programme, *Night Manoeuvres*, went through a lot of iterations. The bit that I enjoy the most is the later stages of the programme when you've got it all on screen and you're fine tuning it, you're getting the timing right, you're getting the fades right. That's when suddenly the finished article starts to emerge.

Asked about their feelings towards the comparison between feature documentary and music making Grissell confirms, 'Absolutely it's a composition. You want it to feel seamless, and you want everything to naturally flow. You know when it works. You know when it doesn't work.' McCarthy suggests, 'It's in the words and the stories, how you can pull three stories apart or three different characters apart, yet have them come together at these different points. It's either a natural fit or it doesn't work at all.'

Finally consideration is given to the composed feature documentary format itself and its status and relationship with contemporary podcast practice. Both agree podcasting has brought about resurgence in the form but with caveats.

Neil McCarthy:

I actually thought I was in a dying medium ten years ago, I didn't think there was much future for longform storytelling. Lots of the cuts were going on and jobs were going [at the BBC]. Ours is the more expensive end of radio production, like drama. The explosion of podcast popularity has brought a resurgence of interest in these longform stories, and now we are [the BBC] pointing our ship in that direction as well, quite late to the party but the ones we have made seem to be quite popular. They have a lot of craft in them as well, thoroughly produced...and [a take a lot of] journalism, and resources. In terms of what we do, [podcasting] has given it an extra boost I think.

Laurence Grissell: 'When I started making these documentaries in 2004 I won't say it was "dying" but as a form it had lost a lot of its prestige. There had been fine feature makers like

Piers Plowright making incredible stuff in the 1980s. Other people might say I'm wrong but that's how it felt, that it had lost some of its lustre.'

On podcasting and the democratisation of audio documentary practice Grissell continues:

I think it's great but I don't hear a lot of crafted documentaries that are being made in that way because they take so much time. Obviously there's lots of great podcasts but actually the really successful podcasts which do documentary work do exist within a framework, they're not just people tinkering in their bedrooms. I think there is a distinction between podcasts which are making what we might call traditionally 'documentaries' (and I mean that in a very broad sense) and podcasts which are more kind of discursive around a studio. The resources required to do the former are far greater than the latter and that's why an institution like the BBC is so important. It takes money, time, expertise and resources to do that.

At the time of the interview McCarthy states had been asked to create only one podcast-only⁷⁴ project for the BBC (*Death in Ice Valley*) which featured in iTunes's top ten popularity lists. Asked what the creative rather than simply practical differences might be between podcast feature documentary making and its radio counterpart, he suggests a number of small but significant distinctions:

It was a lot more spacious within, those transitions and the music, the mood and the atmosphere was allowed to breathe a lot more than it generally would do in a radio programme. It had certain 'podcasty' (I was told) details or traits [such as when] you're doing an investigation, you're in the studio, and two investigators look at what you've learned and then move onto the next bit. We had the space to do [that] and it seemed to work. The informality, I suppose, is unlike Radio 4 where it is a lot more structured.

⁷⁴ McCarthy refers to it as 'podcast-only', but does note that it was broadcast on the radio as well. The BBC press release refers to it as 'podcast-first' suggesting the commissioning intention was a question of emphasis rather than exclusivity (BBC Media Centre, 2018a).

In consideration of the lack of durational constraints offered by podcasting McCarthy is enthusiastic. ‘Often for me at least I spend a day just trying to get [a radio] programme down to size, nipping and nipping and nipping to get the programme from 31 minutes or whatever it is that feels right to 27:40 which is what you have to deliver.’ He also notes how an acquaintance of his regularly listens to two-and-a-half hour unedited interview programmes and how it makes him sometimes (half-jokingly) wonder why he bothers, before conceding, ‘it’s for different audiences, and different people like different things.’

Grissell picks up this thread:

There’s room for both isn’t there? What we’re aiming to do with *Wireless Nights* is to create something that takes time. If you want to create something in which you’re transporting somebody to a place, whether that’s an actual place or an imaginative place, that does require a certain level of craftsmanship. Is that more valid than three people sitting around having a laugh about what’s going on in the news or whatever? Well, no – they’re just different things. But one does require more resources. One hopes that what we’re doing is creating something which is distinctive and enriching for the people who are listening to it.

McCarthy suggests that the ‘flipside’ of podcasting breathing new life into longform storytelling is that untrained newcomers might be unaware of the history of the area in which they are working. ‘You often get the sense that podcast makers think they’ve invented the form! They’ve *discovered* it really because we’ve been doing this stuff for years.’ Grissell adds, ‘They’ve found a way of packaging it differently perhaps.’ He concludes:

There is quite a lot of stuff around that sounds like quite a lot of other stuff. I think particularly the American podcasts, a lot of them have been really good and groundbreaking but they’ve also then led to a lot of stuff which is just quite similar. I think the challenge is always to find distinctive voices. Originality.

3.3 *The Dream You Should Be Having* (2017), *Nocturne* podcast

Nocturne is a monthly-released documentary podcast begun in 2014 and described on its website as ‘essay radio – a hybrid form of audio storytelling that blends elements of documentary, fiction and sound-art’ (Nocturne, 2019: online). Created by radio producer Vanessa Lowe with input from musician Kent Sparling, like *Wireless Nights* it documents nocturnal life and the human activities therein. Episodes most often take the form of a solo interviewee telling a single story, and each programme is carefully crafted with original musical contributions selected from the back catalogues of musicians who donate their work to the project. Some new music is commissioned and composed especially for the series at the behest of Lowe, who is now the typical audio feature-making auteur – producing, editing, scoring, and organising the running of the show. Originally part of podcast network *The Heard*, the programme is now supported by Los Angeles-based US radio station KCRW both financially and in matters pertaining to promotion and distribution.

Unlike *Jack and Ellen* and *Wireless Nights*, which demonstrate a creativity and structure more akin to composed feature documentaries of ‘European-driven’ origin (Lindgren and McHugh, 2013: 106), *The Dream You Should Be Having* was selected for analysis because it boldly demonstrates the characteristics of such contemporary programmes clearly made with podcasting as the foremost broadcast intention while still retaining a creative credo. It is hoped that analysis of such a programme might assist in identifying the differing traits and creative techniques that separate the two media.

Creatively it can be noted that the programme is of a more linear nature than the aforementioned examples, with a narrative style and voiceover designed to offer as clear a path for the listener as possible with the careful removal of much possible uncertainty from the narrative. Though Lowe suggests that her radio practice is not directly influenced by podcast stalwarts *Serial* or *S-Town* (interview, 2019), the influence of NPR and *This*

American Life can be heard in both the voiceover style employed and the more direct and unobstructed explorations of its subject.

As opposed to the shows analysed above, sound design on the programme can be heard to be largely supplementary rather than leading, evocative or illustrative, and as a result the affective transmissions generated by the show might be felt to be somewhat less rich or involving (though personal subjectivity is such that other listeners may experience this differently). Meterless, ambient sound is employed heavily to stimulate a sense of immersion and there is no use whatsoever of pre-existing copyrighted music which might offer recognisable cultural references. There is no use of music or sound as a leitmotif, though cinematic musical tropes are evoked through the employment of library music which echoes the form and is treated to sound of vintage origin. The over all impression is of a series less challenging, and so perhaps, relatedly, not as rewarding than the others investigated, though for those less invested in the form (casual listeners or people disinterested in the construction or mechanics of the medium) it may prove to be exactly what they seek in podcast entertainment.

3.3.1 Close analysis of *The Dream You Should Be Having*: sonic events contained in the programme and their associated affects

The following chart is a close analysis of the episode in question detailing each new sonic event as it appears and the associated affective transmissions. For an explanation of the methodology, intentions and caveats of this approach please see chapter 3.1.1.

As per the other programmes analysed, due to the nature of podcasting's allowance for multiple versions of the same programme the exact episode examined is available on the accompanying flash drive. A full text transcription is available in appendix A.

Episode	Cue	Time	Marker	Comments	Semiotics/suggested affect
1		00:00	'This episode of Nocturne...'	Plain unaccompanied speech	American accent, dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. Delivered in a slightly formal manner appropriate to the now-common podcast conventions of reading scripted commercial copy
2	1	00:51	Ambient synth chord, piano, and wildlife noises	Theme tune for the podcast series	Slow, gentle, reassuring. Inclusion of wildlife noises suggests night time through association – the crickets and toads heard may not be local or native to the listener but symbolise night through the associative exposure to the sounds through exposure to American media
		01:04	'You're listening to Nocturne...'	Host and producer Vanessa Lowe introduces the programme	Reassurance, curiosity. The voiceover explains exactly what is being heard and roots the audio material for the listener, as well as leaving space to be interested as to what's to follow
		01:09		Synth chord falls away leaving just the wildlife field recording	Absence of music creates an episodic marker before the programme begins proper but the wildlife recording continues as a

					bridging device. A moment to pause and take a breath, to reflect and get one's bearings
3	2	01:12		Synth chord returns	Programme mood lifted in readiness to introduce the first element of the show
		01:20	'I can't sleep...'	Female voice via telephone	American accent, dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. Voice recording is heard mediated by telephone and voicemail technologies – it sounds distorted, somewhat broken, the frequency spectrum information is not complete as high and low frequencies are compromised. Voice is instantly recognisable as processed through the telephone system thanks to personal experience and the sound being a well-used technique in all recorded media. This sound represents distance, emphasises relationships, and can connote anonymity
		01:20		Music changes to being entirely a meterless ambient chord with percussive notes, slowly evolving in note content and texture in a small way, always remaining smooth	Focuses attention and encourages listener immersion
		01:22	'Wew! I can't sleep...'	Male voice via telephone	As 01:20
		01:24	'I can't sleep...'	Female voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:27	'I can't sleep...'	Male voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:28	'I can't sleep because...'	Male voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:30	'...because...'	Chorus of 'because...'	Curiosity increases as the voices are introduced from 01:20. This montage of the single word acts as

					a culmination of the individual introductions but, since no further information is offered, induces a sensation of expectancy and encourages one to listen further
		01:33	'They wanna shoot bears out of helicopters.'	Male voice via telephone	A resolution of the sentence from one of the previously heard voices is offered. The final statement may induce surprise, confusion, alarm, or, depending on one's experience with bears, a sense of positivity. The lack of context the clip offers can cause some interesting interpretations perhaps – when I heard this I mistakenly thought that bears were going to be <i>fired</i> from helicopters, causing a sensation of confusion and some Python-esque mental images
		01:36	'You won't talk to me.'	Female voice via telephone	A resolution of the sentence from one of the previously heard voices is offered. Though the sentence is complete, the full picture is still not communicated which causes a curiosity and a wanting to complete the context of the sentence. May bring to mind similar situations the listener has experienced
		01:39	'I can't sleep...'	Female voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:40	"Cos I'm drunk...'	Male voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:43	'It's the third night...'	Male voice via telephone	A resolution of the sentence from one of the previously heard voices is offered. Though the sentence is complete, the full picture is still not communicated which causes a curiosity and a wanting to complete the context of the sentence
		01:46	'I can't sleep...'	Male voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20
		01:47	'...because...'	Female voice via telephone, different from 01:20	As 01:20

		01:49	'I may have made...'	Male voice via telephone	A resolution of the sentence from one of the previously heard voices is offered. Though the sentence is complete, the full picture is still not communicated which causes a curiosity and a wanting to complete the context of the sentence
4	3	01:56		Music changes to an ambient piece built around an emphasis on a higher frequency chimes, based on meterless string-plucked (possibly guitar) notes	The change is used as an episodic determinant, signalling a shift in focus from the callers-in to the project's creator
		01:59	'The project is called <i>Sleepless...</i> '	Project creator Audrey is introduced	American accent, dialect and gender calls all prejudices to mind where similar voices encountered. Her description of her art project is expositional for the forthcoming episode and lays out exactly the area which the programme is setting out to document. Hopefully the project is sufficiently interesting to hold the listener's attention for the forthcoming material. Curiosity over the shape and techniques of the project may be generated
		02:39	'That's the creator of <i>Sleepless...</i> '	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Expositional description of the project's author, noting that she does not attach her real name to the project, linking to the next section of interview material
	4	02:45		Music bed changes	Piece is ambient with absence of string plucks; smooth and warm. Suggests immersion, mystery
		03:00	'I don't want...'	Audrey continues	Audrey explains why she wishes to remain anonymous
		03:20	'So do you want...'	Recording of Vanessa Lowe interviewing Audrey	The audio quality is very slightly different from the voiceover material with a little more room acoustics able to be heard, indicating this is not part of the voiceover but the interview. Might call to mind the interview itself as a precursor to the programme, in some way allowing the listener a peek 'behind the curtain' of production

		03:28	'I feel like...'	Audrey responds	Sounding unsure and perhaps a little caught off guard, Audrey selects her name for the interview. Having a name for the interviewee adds a little more affective sensation of rootedness, completeness
		03:40	' <i>Sleepless</i> is first and foremost...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Lowe explains the details of the project and leads into the next episode
5	5	03:54		Music bed changes	Music changes to clarinet-based music, generically invoking a 1920/30s dance band style. This is treated with very heavy amounts of vinyl crackle layered over the top, illustrating Nicholas Cook's assertion that music production shorthand is to 'compose with genre' rather than melody or themes (1994: 35). Music change suggests an affect of looking back into a (possibly imagined) past, invoking nostalgia, a powerful affect which may be felt bodily (Tacchi, 2000: 289). Music is upbeat and is the first to have a regular rhythm (approx. 70 BPM) but the absence of drums means the 'driving along' sensation often experienced with such music is largely absent. Listener may question the relevance of the music style, generating interest
		03:59	'What I try to do...'	Audrey continues	Audrey outlines her working practices and the association between visuals and speech material. Perhaps listeners' interests piqued over this exposition
		04:35		Speech pauses, music louder	Opportunity to take a breath and reflect before continuing. Music is of a different phrase than previously, adding to audible interest
		04:40	'The videos, being archival, have an old-timey feel to them...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Lowe reveals connection with the music as the archival nature of the source material is mentioned. Listener might begin to wonder what the results of this work are like to experience first-hand
		04:54		Music is allowed to fall away completely over 6 or 7 seconds	Introduces space for the listener to breathe, acts as an episodic determinant before another voicemail is offered

6		04:54	'I can't sleep 'cos...'	Male voice via telephone	Caller's tale of distress might cause a sympathetic response depending on life experience/emotional susceptibility to such tales. Digital encoding of voice can be heard as part of telephone system audio processing
		05:54	'This feeling that it can help to say things...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Linking to next section
	6	06:00		Music returns, beat-driven (96 BPM), electronic with regular pulsing. Spatialisation is creative with the higher frequency pulses made wide in the mix	Beats moving the story along. Seems a little at odds with the story of heartbreak and physical injury being relayed by Audrey, though it sympathetically changes into a more ambient piece when abortion is mentioned at 06:43. Synchronises with the interview again at 06:51 when discussing a head injury where the music sounds like it is attempting an expository or illustrative role – could be considered a 'anaphone' (Tagg, see chapter 2.2.4) or Sieveking's 'symbolic, evocative effect' (see chapter 2.2.1)
	7	07:00	'I was not out...'	Music morphs into meterless ambient style	Less energetic, more relaxed, immersive, perhaps beckoning the listener to 'lean in' and pay close attention
		07:21	'Between grieving over the end of a relationship...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Expositional, linking, phrase. More sensations of rootedness perhaps
		07:30	'Yeah, I was having a lot of trouble sleeping...'	Audrey continues	Possible empathetic/sympathetic sensations recalling how one might also have experienced their own sleepless nights and wanted someone to talk to
		08:26	'I can't sleep because...'	Male voice via telephone	Male caller begins to describe a difficult life situation. As 04:54
		08:45	'And I don't know what to do.'	Music fades into silence	Silence underlines the caller's emotion, allows an authenticity of unadulterated expression through to the listener, generating empathy, possibly allowing oneself to imagine/recall their response in a similar situation
	8	09:24	'Because why ruminate on the negative?'	Guitar-based, meterless music returns	Gentle tones offer the sensation of calmness, rest, reassurance
		09:32	'You can be staying up...'	Audrey continues	Possible sensation on empathy or recognition of one's own late night sleepless experiences or

					self-examination
		10:04	'So, providing a place...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	A possible switch back from empathy with the caller or self-recognition to the consideration of the art project again. May even be felt as something of a jolt in attention
		10:24		Music fades into silence	Music fades almost imperceptibly before changing. No space is given with a pause in speech material to pause and reflect, this progression is achieved smoothly
		10:24	'And I was really looking for a way...'	Audrey continues	Beginning a clip halfway through a sentence offers a sense of 'jumping onto' an already-moving train of thought – it is requiring of one's attention and instantly involving
	9	10:28	'...use them more seriously...'	Music cue of early cinema begins	Orchestral music typical of early cinema – sounds through-composed rather than metered or structured as a song and is equalised so as to bias the middle frequencies. Vinyl crackle can be heard, though not as strongly as in cue 5. Illustrative of the discussion of the videos created and their dreamlike (perhaps timeless) qualities
		10:54		Brief pause and raising of music volume for trumpet fanfare	Small dividing device and giving the listener a moment to pause and reflect or build a mental picture before the discussion moves on
		10:57	'Sometimes in dreams...'	Audrey continues	Expositional description of the project's working practices. Possible generation of interest in how the videos might look, or consideration of the nature of mental images
		11:17		Speech ends and music continues for a few seconds	As 10:54
		11:24	'A pretty good example...'	Audrey continues	Lowe's description of the video suggests images to the listener's imagination
		11:46	'...swimming around in a jar of liquid...'	Music slowly fades into a short loop of processed electronic music	Music is looped and reversed, given a rhythm by the nature of its repetition (65 BPM). Music sounds wobbly and disorientating, inducing the sensations being discussed in the voiceover

		12:05		Pause in speech as music continues	As 10:54
		12:08		Audrey continues	As 10:57, perhaps additionally consideration of how repetitive exposure to something might affect oneself
		12:27		Music fades into silence	Music fades almost imperceptibly over approximately 10 seconds
7		12:29	'For Audrey...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Short linking voiceover into the discussion of ethical issues
		12:41	'There's one person...'	Audrey continues	Audrey speaks about the difficulty of navigating sensitive messages she has received, or could potentially receive. These perhaps might evoke in the listener questions over what they themselves might do to navigate such things, or remind them of a time they were in such a situation of feeling lonely or desperate. Discussion moves on to possible follow-up calls and the limitations of the project, each inviting the listener to consider their responses to the items mentioned
	10	12:50	'...my voicemail won't let people leave messages longer than three minutes...'	Music begins, quiet fade in	Ambient music looped to move reasonably rapidly back and forth between two chords, but meterless. Adds sensation of mystery, sadness, immersion. Music is delicate to match the tone of the speech it accompanies
		13:27		Pause in speech as music continues	As 10:54
		14:06	'If someone called me and said...'	Audrey continues	Audrey discusses how she might react to a potentially suicidal caller leaving a message. The curiously upbeat, laughing conclusion of 'Hopefully I would be there in time [but] I might be asleep!' feels at odds with the tone of the rest of the discussion and the contemplative music, and may jerk the listener to attention or out of the immersive world of the programme
		14:20		Pause in speech as music continues	High-toned single-note swell in the music timed to fill the pause in speech. Keeps interest and the development of what is rather static ambient bed draws the listener onwards

		14:24	'Audrey does worry sometimes...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Linking to next section
		14:31	'Because when you're a filmmaker...'	Audrey continues	As 10:24. Audrey discussing the relationship between callers and her filmmaking invites consideration of the project
		16:18	'I went to sleep at nine o'clock...'	Female voice via telephone	Caller describes anxieties over forthcoming US election. The changing nature of current affairs means that listeners may experience this differently (hope/fear, enthusiasm or disgust) depending on their political engagement and/or leanings and the time when the podcast is heard compared to its release. Absence of music underlines the potential gravitas and perceived authenticity of the caller's message
		16:18		Music fades into silence	Music fades almost imperceptibly over approximately 10 seconds
	11	16:56	'...and I thought maybe that's what my students need.'	Music begins, quiet fade in	Slow, electric guitar composition, no percussion but with an almost-regular meter (approx. 70 BPM). Strikingly similar in sound, mood, and tone to music used in <i>Wireless Nights</i> at 05:57. Contemplative, gentle, reflective, suggesting distance or emptiness; here, a sense of completeness and beginning to close the programme
8		17:00		Pause in speech as music fades in	As 10:54
		17:08	'While Audrey doesn't want...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Lowe introduces the concluding section of the programme and invites listeners to do the same
		17:18	'I feel so much more normal now...'	Audrey continues	Audrey reflects on the project and considers how it has helped her state of mind and others', and how it applies to broader themes of uncertainty experienced by people. Listeners might be encouraged to reflect on their own lives and sleepless experiences in relation to Audrey's findings through her work
		18:10		Speech stops as music is allowed to complete and then fade out over approx. 12 seconds	As 10:54 but offering a sense of completion and closure

9	12	18:24		Music fades in	Music comprises pointy, high frequency string plucks and ratchety-sounding rhythms, almost machine-like in quality. Has a regular meter (around 80 BPM). Suggests unease, discord, a broken clock. Music is allowed to fade in for five seconds before speech is introduced
		18:29	'Oh I feel so bad...'	Audrey continues	Audrey outlines how to call and leave a message for the project. The combination of the 'clockwork' music and the matter-of-fact description of the mechanics of the project might suggest an affect of looking 'under the bonnet' at the project's construction system
		18:56	'I can't sleep...'	Female voice via telephone	Reprises the voices heard at 01:20 but presents a whole message, a story about a smoke detector. At this end of the programme, having learned all about the project, one might bring to mind the sorts of mental images the discussion of archive film might suggest. The regret expressed by the caller over not having a partner tall enough to reach the alarm might bring to mind similar experiences for the listener, or cause them to ruminate on memories, or the nature of being single and living alone
		19:56	'You've been listening to Nocturne...'	Vanessa Lowe's voiceover	Lowe reads the end credits, reprises the advertisement heard at the beginning of the programme, mentions <i>The Heard</i> podcast network of which the programme was a part at the time of creation. Listener is informed of the imminent ending of the programme and might feel the sense of closure and completeness
		20:56		Speech stops as music is allowed to complete and then fade out over approx. 20 seconds	As 10:54 but offering a sense of completion and closure

3.3.2 Interview with Vanessa Lowe, producer

What follows is a discussion of identified techniques, working processes and creative intent with *The Dream You Should Be Having* producer Vanessa Lowe. All quotes are taken from an interview conducted via Skype on 8th August 2019, the full, unedited version of which can be heard on the included flash drive.

Like Brendan Baker, Vanessa Lowe drew on both her musical experience and the new opportunities offered by podcasting in planning the concept for *Nocturne*. Her education and early career set her in the direction of clinical psychology (in which she holds a doctorate), and her radio work, despite it being the result of a career discovered ‘by accident’ (interview, 2019), has been widely broadcast and is well respected (Knitwise Media: online). She describes the process of forming *Nocturne* as setting out to create a series of programmes (as opposed to the one-off pieces she has made previously) with the intention that they should be as absorbing as possible:

Nocturne came up talking to my partner and talking to friends...I started thinking about it and jotting down lots of ideas about stories to see if it would have legs to sustain for at least a year, and what I discovered was it seemed endless. What I loved also about the idea of doing something that intersected with the night was that it felt really conducive to creating a soundworld, to [the use of] music, [and] to [the use of] immersive atmospheric sound. I didn’t just want to do news stories or journalistic stories; I wanted to do something that felt musical and creative.

Nocturne demonstrates Lowe’s practice of careful composition, with speech and music sensitively arranged, and pacing executed judiciously, something which was of particular concern for this episode in executing the collages of voices. From the interview, it can be clearly seen that musical practice and the musical qualities of audio documentary are important to Lowe, and, like Baker, she describes her approach to making radio as similar to

that of musical composition. In both areas she has had no formal training, suggesting that there, ‘seems to be a theme of just jumping in and doing things without knowing how to do them, but I find that to be the most fun,’ noting she has only, ‘very basic music training’. She describes how she feels audio documentary and musical practice intersect:

I was finding that I loved editing music and [how] that kind of feels like creating a song or a music piece. I’m a songwriter and I haven’t done any writing [or] much music in the almost five years I’ve been doing *Nocturne*. I often feel it’s because when I sit down and put a *Nocturne* episode together it feels like composing a song. I’m not saying it feels like composing a piece of music, it feels like composing a song because of the speech element, as though those are the lyrics.

Enquiring as to the origin of the music used, Lowe describes herself as lucky that she has a community of musician friends who have kindly opened their archives for her use, and that when the programme’s budgets afford it she commissions new music and remunerates the composers. Asked how she selects music from the archive, she suggests visualisation and emotion play significant roles:

I’ll have in my mind an idea of the ‘world’. There are interviews, but I picture it as almost like this bubble world, and then there’s an emotional component that I’m feeling. I’m having this intuitive sense of what the worlds feel like – is it washy [and] dark or is it kind of suspenseful, is contemplative, meditative? Should there be a driving, moving forward feeling? Does it feel kind of edgy and ‘now’, or does it feel more universal and overarching? That guides where I’m going to look for the music.

Asked how she feels that sound works to impart meaning, she suggests that there are sounds which one might suggest are perhaps ‘primal and iconic’ such as ‘deep, washy’ tones being associated with caves and underground spaces, or ‘big, shimmery and deep’ noises which might connote starry skies. However, Lowe notes that she uses these sparingly, often

preferring to employ sound which is connotative according to her own subjective interpretation into how she feels emotionally about the subject at hand. In a position markedly different from the other series discussed in this chapter, *Nocturne* very rarely includes identifiable, copyrighted music due to Lowe's fear of legal infraction, though its power to guide listeners and illustrate narrative is noted – a 'tiny' clip referencing the film *Titanic* (1997), was used in another episode in the series, though it was not taken from the film soundtrack itself.

Moreso than the other analysed pieces here, *Nocturne* heavily employs the meterless, evolving ambient soundtrack, appearing more numerous than other styles of music in this programme. Lowe uses this technique thoughtfully, stating:

For me, what I want when someone's listening to an episode of *Nocturne* is for them to drop down into the world of the story. Often it's less about what I want that piece of music to do [as much] as I don't want that person to leave the world. I very intentionally use dry interview tape...but then when you cover everything with music it can be exhausting to listen to – I find that [balance] to be really tricky. So often it's just about almost imperceptibly having that there to keep the atmosphere going. I really do try not to, like, *lead* people, overly.

The idea of leading people with sound begs the question as to what impact a narrative voiceover has on programmes. Whereas the listener might sometimes be left to largely assemble the narrative for him- or herself (such as in the case of *Jack and Ellen*), *The Dream You Should Be Having* employs a very straightforward voiceover technique, reminiscent of enormously successful podcasts *Serial* and *S-Town*. 'I feel like Ira Glass's voice is overused,' Lowe comments. 'People taking his voice on, his style, his cadence.' She continues:

I've thought about the issue a lot, of narration versus no narration. I think from a purely artistic perspective that [the latter] is really wonderful and lovely, and there has been a

couple of episodes which have gone more in that direction, and I do always want to do stuff like that, but it does feel like a balance. Personally I don't feel compelled, myself, to listen to non-narrated audio stories very much. I think it's a balance with keeping the listener engaged with the story.

Lowe notes that this decision is partially based on how she is willing to conduct her interviews with her subjects, recalling that an early mentor in radio placed a great deal of emphasis on having their interviewees say things in complete sentences for ease of editing without narration, whereas another suggested it be more important not to interject and disturb a subject's train of thought, with the caveat that the material may not be so cohesive for editing purposes and may require a voiceover to ensure continuity. In conclusion, she reflects that, 'I think [narration] supports the stories the best, for most of my stories.'

Asked about her background in clinical psychology and its relevance to, and impact upon, interview techniques she might employ when interviewing her subjects, Lowe sees a clear connection.

It's extremely related. The kind of psychology I did was very active and collaborative and I always saw my role...as building the narrative of the person's life for that person, with that person. Active listening, being genuinely curious, is always how I approached therapy and psychology and I just do the same thing in interviews with people, asking questions at the right moment sparked by my curiosity and some of it lead by what needs to be in the show, but it's always just being drawn into that person's story. What's fun is that I've had many experiences at the end where people say, 'That was really great!'

She suggests that she has noticed a trend across her experiences with interviewing people in the United States that people are, 'kind of crappy listeners,' and that, 'a lot of people are just not interested in other people's stories.' Contemplating that people are just so, 'freaked out and stressed out in their own lives that [they] just tend to go inwards,' she has noted that

her interviewees are sometimes, ‘just so excited that someone is listening.’ In the early days of the project her interview material came from close friends with interesting stories or by chasing personal fascinations, but now are sourced through Internet research including the use of Google’s ‘alert’ facility to automatically report on defined phrases such as ‘strange things that happen at night’.

The practicalities of making *Nocturne* are fairly unique among podcasts due to its licensing and distribution arrangements. Originally a member of *The Heard*, an egalitarian podcast network formed for the purposes of sharing resources, advice, and promotional activities, the network disbanded due to its success in raising the profile of its producers to the extent they began to be asked to work on other more remunerative and prestigious projects. Los Angeles-based radio station KCRW struck a deal with Lowe to support her work financially in return for the rights to brand it as their own, distribute it as part of their online output, and occasionally broadcast a show within their analogue and online radio schedules at their discretion. She retains ownership of the project. Asked if this was a fairly common arrangement Lowe admits that she is unsure.

Talking to friends that have podcasts that have been on radio stations they all seem to do it differently. There’s not one set way, and I think that all the radio stations have been continually been trying to figure out what their place is in the world of podcasting. The world of podcasting is generally supported by sponsors and ads, and KCRW is a public radio station. They have to be much more choosy about the kind of ads they have in their shows. Consequently I don’t think there’s been an ad in my show since I’ve been on KCRW, they mostly run promotions for other shows.

Originally supported by the radio station’s Independent Producer Project before the arrangement she has in place now, Lowe has no editorial constraints placed on the content of *Nocturne*. ‘I’m so incredibly grateful. The situation I have now is, sort of, unheard of,’ she remarks.

The regular income supplied by KCRW allows the freedom to dedicate time to the creation of carefully composed audio which self-supported podcast producers may not have. *Nocturne* is released once a month as each episode takes between three and four weeks to put together (of ‘sometimes four-hour days and sometimes twelve-hour days,’ notes Lowe). She explains how unusual this is.

It’s unheard of for a station or a network to want a monthly show, but [KCRW agreed to it] because as podcasters have been working they have realised that they get really burned out producing every week or every two weeks, so they do seasons now. All the other podcasts on KCRW would have a period where they weren’t producing so they were really happy to have something that went all the time, all year long and never stopped.

This is a subject about which Lowe holds strong opinions. ‘This is the cultural thing tied to the use of the word “content”, which I think is crazy. “Content” is what comes between the ads, I feel like that’s the way our culture is thinking of it: “Produce as much as you can so you can sell more product!”’

The close relationship between *Nocturne* as a podcast and KCRW as a radio station begs the question of difference between the two media. Lowe feels that the difference may lie chiefly in subtle distinctions felt in terms of intimacy when listening, but acknowledges this is changing as more radio stations produce podcasts where you have ‘teams of editors and, well, teams of everybody.’

There’s a very particular thing to one or two people making stories really well, to a high level of production value, but maintaining their voice rather than [that of] a committee of people. By the end I think you can feel that. You might have a great story but there’s this alchemy that happens when you know that it’s one person who has made that whole story and it’s their own personal excitement and passion for that [which] is being communicated in some subliminal way.

Asked if this is what might be meant by a sense of authenticity, an aspect possibly important in successful podcasts (Sullivan, 2018: 42-43) Lowe agrees. '[It's] so primally human, when you're sitting across from somebody in dim light and they are telling you a story that is coming out of them organically. That's special, right?' Again, like Baker, Vanessa Lowe wishes that her work be appreciated under full concentration, alone, in darkness. She believes that the combination of music and speech is what makes the composed feature documentary medium so powerful.

You're blending that incredibly special– It's like a different part of your brain that reacts to a song, and there's an intensely particular part of your brain that reacts to some other human's story, and when you put those things together it's like a fantastic alchemy.

3.4 Case study conclusions

The aim of the above analyses of three examples of composed feature documentary programmes is to highlight commonalities and differences, and offer some insight into the methods by which producers construct their work to make meaning for listeners. All are podcasts, but occupy slightly different spaces in the canon due to the time of their creation and their production intentions. Oldest among them is *Jack and Ellen*, created at a time before *Serial* is thought to have brought podcasting into mainstream media consumption (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 82), made ostensibly as a passion project by a producer taking time to hone the project over a duration that would be anathema to contemporary podcasting release schedules. *Night Manoeuvres* is a BBC Radio 4 programme, backed by considerable professional production expertise and resources and made available as a podcast as part of the BBC's response to the new medium, inviting access to a wider audience and broader demographic than usually associated with the station (Dann, 2015: 142-143). *The Dream You Should Be Having* was chosen as a carefully considered example of current podcast programming with a creative remit and strong listener-base which is able to demonstrate the sort of effects the pressures of podcast production have on the sound and shape of contemporary feature documentary-making.

Beginning with a review of the structures employed in the pieces it may be noted that *Wireless Nights* is perhaps the busiest, with twenty-two discrete 'episodes' (defined passages containing distinct themes or collections of connected material, see Tagg, discussed in chapter 2.2.4), which is perhaps understandable given the interwoven nature of the programme's editing and the number of contributors featured. *Jack and Ellen* and *The Dream You Should Be Having* have fewer, but are closely matched at eleven and nine respectively, and both feature a single subject (with occasional short interjections from others).

In terms of overarching construction most notable of the three is *Jack and Ellen*, where a tension is created from the outset over exactly what is being heard and experienced, so

strange is the sound of the opening speech material. The nature of the programme is not revealed for around five minutes, a risky amount of time for the wary producer concerned with listeners becoming frustrated and switching off (though, as noted in Baker's interview, the original conception was for the obfuscation to last the majority of the show), and is therefore a creative decision unlikely to be taken for most contemporary composed feature podcasts. *Jack and Ellen* does exhibit an overall story arc, something only the interview with private investigator Alan McLean displays out of all the other subjects in the other two shows. The remaining interviewees in *Wireless Nights* all offer something of a 'snapshot' of their lives and experiences, but *Nocturne's* filmmaker Audrey is allowed around twenty minutes of time to discuss her answerphone-based project, with her interview carefully edited to convey very little in the way of uncertainty for the listener. It is suggested that this characteristic of playing with narrative to build interest is similar to the tension and release qualities which are at the core of music listening as a gratifying experience – Kramer and Call note that it is a technique used in a variety of formats (2007, in Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 188) – so to suggest it might be reflected in music might not be too big a conceptual leap. Reviewing the 'semiotics/suggested affect' columns of the three programmes, it can be observed that *The Dream You Should Be Having* is the one offering less in the way of affective transmission, possibly making it feel perhaps not quite so involving, and perhaps suggesting that the engaging nature of the tension/release narrative structures exhibited by *Jack and Ellen*, as well as the successful journalistic series such as *Serial* and *S-Town*, offer the more absorbing listening experience.

Another reason Vanessa Lowe's programme might be considered less engaging is its lack of real-world sound and recognisable music, the latter employed for cultural reference purposes in both other programmes. The *Love+Radio* piece uses background sound (what Chion refers to as 'territorial' sound, see chapter 2.2.1) as a framing device in its short clips where Ellen's past experiences are recreated ('cutaways' might be an appropriate term to borrow from cinema), successfully conjuring an affective sense of the scenes in a few short

seconds. *Night Manoeuvres* relies heavily on this technique, and it is rare that voices are heard without some background context such as a moving car or traffic noise. In terms of expository or illustrative sound, this is used occasionally in *Jack and Ellen* (for example, heartbeats heard in the music at 05:06, the succession of pop music clips beginning at 07:59, and telephone tones at 22:25), and in *Wireless Nights* (the sound of skates on tarmac at 19:52 and the playing of the Proclaimers and Jack Johnson at 17:27 and 22:41 respectively), but perhaps only once in *Nocturne*, where an allegorical crescendo of music is heard at 06:00 to illustrate Audrey hitting her head. All three employ what Chion refers to as ‘on-the-air’ sound, or that which is mediated by technology, a device rich in associative affects of distance, (dis-) connectedness, loss, nostalgia, presence and absence – easily understood by the listener but nevertheless powerful. Donnelly’s ‘synch points’ are used throughout all programmes, where natural peaks or lulls in the music and sound are employed to provide pauses in speech, bring in new material, accent the narrative, or in some way jigsaw the elements of the programmes together. It might be suggested that this technique is considered if not essential then perhaps an exemplar of composed feature documentary good practice.

All three programmes employ music heavily; indeed there is rarely an instance of absolute silence in any of the shows, and even the appearance of unaccompanied speech is used carefully. As discussed in chapter 2.2.3 silence is a powerful affective force which can be harnessed to underline the importance of a given passage of speech, or used as an episodic marker or transitional device. It is an artefact which has lost none of its authority in its transition to podcasting.

The music used in the pieces is of a type and genre which is perhaps unsurprising if one knows a little of their respective producers. Brendan Baker’s background as an electronic music scholar is demonstrated by his composition and manipulation techniques in applying such material to *Jack and Ellen*, and his usage of (and philosophical attitudes towards) borrowing and remixing other artists’ work. Taken as a whole, the programme might be

considered a 30-minute piece of music in its own right given its realisation as a complex entanglement of music and speech, the through-composed nature of the soundtrack and its capacity to absorb the illustrative audio material and quoted snatches of pop music. More than any other examples in this study the music can be heard to evolve – with little in the way of sudden emotional or affective changes – though it is rarely still and clearly meticulously arranged. It is for this reason that the programme counts a relatively high number of individual cues at 26, but several of these are recurrences and developments of earlier versions. Of the three pieces, this is the only example to feature original accompaniment by the producer.

In making programmes for the BBC network Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell are privileged to have at their disposal the legal permissions to use any music at their discretion. The pieces selected for *Night Manoeuvres* appear to be pre-existing works by a range of composers working in pop music, soul, folk, big band, and cinema, and these are presented unmodified except for structural editing with the purposes of creative continuity in mind. These pieces seem to be largely employed as leitmotifs for the subjects of the programme,⁷⁵ perhaps in an effort to aid the identification of the speaker (as Shingler and Wieringa suggest (1998: 66)), but perhaps also as the associated music chosen was deemed the most affectively suitable for the character to which it was assigned. Most pieces are recognisable, though some may be thought only generically appropriate rather than also conceptually so unless one is culturally aware enough to acknowledge their usage elsewhere, such as with the use of the *Taxi Driver* soundtrack. In this the producers of *Wireless Nights* and *Love+Radio* share intent in expressing the shared cultural value and associations of particular musics.

Vanessa Lowe's practice in soundtracking her work is situated somewhat between the others' in that she includes original pieces like Baker but nothing under the jurisdiction of copyright as the BBC are able to do. Drawing from friends' and colleagues' portfolios she

⁷⁵ For example, Jeggsy Dodd is mostly heard over the *Taxi Driver* soundtrack, Jarvis Cocker over *London By Night*, Alan McLean the more militaristic bass-and-brass cue, and urban-sounding pop for the skaters.

works to select suitable pieces without the option of being able to provide culturally significant connotations, though this is worked around at 03:54 and 10:28 as genre is employed to suggest the vintage or old-fashioned. More than either of the other programmes *The Dream You Should Be Having* relies on slowly-evolving ambient music to engage the listener in the sound world of the documentary, a particular ability of the genre and a characteristic that may evoke the work of R. Murray Schafer (detailed in chapter 2.2.1) since there is a notable similarity to the physical experience of being underwater and the warm, enveloping sensations generated by that style of music. Both this piece and *Night Manoeuvres* have twelve discrete cues each.

The use of music across all programmes is designed to accompany, illustrate, reference and immerse. The genres employed are appropriate not only to the producers utilising them but also for the perceived target audience – esoteric electronica for *Love+Radio*, a pre-*Serial* podcast listenership at a time when the medium itself appealed to a small and devoted audience of early adopters; well-known, genial, and culturally-loaded pieces for *Wireless Nights*' BBC Radio 4 audience; and compositionally less complex, more accessible and culturally independent pieces for *Nocturne*, a contemporary series designed for worldwide distribution and eager to accumulate downloads. When regular rhythm is heard to be present in the programmes' soundtracks (which is not more than half of the time), it is often used to induce senses of driving forward, certainty, and movement, though this is best achieved with the inclusion of a firm percussive element. This is not dependent on the speed of the music (see, for example, *The Dream You Should Be Having* at 03:54), which varies from around 60 beats per minute to 130 beats per minute at its fastest, a range not known for generating challenging affective sensations in itself. In all pieces pacing is of primary concern, with all producers citing it as a key consideration in the composition of a programme, and one which might be reviewed as the composition undergoes evaluative listening before distribution.

Having completed analyses of three pieces chosen to stand as a selective representation of composed feature documentary podcasting's various iterations, a review of the practical pieces made for the purposes of this thesis is now proposed.

Chapter 4: Practice Commentaries

The creative practice for this doctoral submission has taken the form of six composed feature documentaries, all created for podcast listening and all available to hear via podcast aggregation apps which utilise Apple and Stitcher's indexing directories⁷⁶ so as to be accessible through smartphone. They are also included on the accompanying flash drive. The podcast feed was created for philosophical reasons as well as conceptual – being based on a thesis which interrogates the transference of affect and meaning-making through the relationship between listeners and their digital content delivery devices means it is conceptually appropriate for the pieces to be heard in the manner in which podcasts are normally engaged with. Podcast producer Jad Abumrad is fully aware that the mechanism of delivery of his programmes influences their meanings (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 18) so to present the practical output of this course of study on an external memory device only seems to be somewhat contrary to the explorations of this thesis. The programmes should be heard as podcasts.

My creative work has been informed by scholarly investigation of both past and contemporary feature documentary practice as well as the literature encountered in the read research. Together the pieces perform the creative expression of the questions outlined by this thesis. They work to explore:

- The conception of the composed feature documentary as musical practice;
- Similarities and differences in radio and podcast form in the composed feature;
- Influences to the podcasting form caused by its existence as a democratised medium and the online distribution models upon which it relies, and;
- The nature of listening and the understanding of the material in the programmes, and how this works to create meaning.

⁷⁶ The programmes are not available via Spotify since their sensitivity to the inclusion of copyrighted material makes my content subject to delisting or legal action according to their terms of use (Libsyn, 2019: online).

The pieces made are all designed to in some way explore aspects of research identified in the previous two chapters in order to gain some insight into their creative employment, intentions and effectiveness of use. While no pieces have been made to align exactly with one specific area of research in mind (there are no works dedicated solely to the idea of radio sound as a nostalgic affect, for example), pieces were conceived with a notion of the broad area of research towards which they might lean during the outset of their planning stages. These initial ideas were then kept as central tenets upon which other techniques might be built through the natural creative development process in their writing, editing, performance, or selection of audio material. The actual subjects of the programmes are of little consequence to this study since producers have the opportunity to make meaning from audio material in documentaries about any subject they happen to tackle. As Seán Street suggests, feature documentaries do not detail and preserve their subject, only ‘the feature-maker’s journey in coming to terms with what he or she is trying to do or say’ (2012: 5), and that is what the following pieces are intended to illustrate.

4.1 Goodwin Sands Radiogram: *Is it in my Head?* (2016)

The Goodwin Sands Radiogram was conceived when my PhD was in the planning stages and was founded with the intention of testing several creative theories: that a high concept and somewhat difficult to explain idea could easily work and be understood in sound and that an unwieldy accompanying explanation would not be necessary; that a programme's entertainment value was created in the editing suite and stories didn't need to consist of dramatic life-changing events; and that the composed feature form would be a vehicle capable of expressing joy in the banal minutiae of life. The somewhat convoluted concept of the series is that it is ostensibly broadcast from a wrecked light vessel on the Goodwin Sands sandbank in the English Channel, and it features interviewees who live within the conceptual broadcast range (a flexible area encapsulating a large part of Kent and some of East Sussex). The listener is offered a 'tuning through' of the interviewees' voices as indicated by the employment of radio static transitions as episodic determinants (see chapter 2.2.4) with the aim of conjuring a faux 'old-time radio' impression, a dramatic device assisted by the presence of The Announcer (played by Peter Kelly) adopting an old-fashioned BBC or Pathé News received pronunciation style of delivery.

The series of programmes all open with a common introduction, a 90-second speechless audio narrative of the listener walking across a single beach, opening a radio set from a case, and tuning in. This introduction and subsequent radio static heard as the listener switches on their radio features elements which change for every episode but are not easily spotted as such – the Morse code message is different and appropriate for each programme, as is the listener's whistle while walking on the beach. These elements pertain to the episode titles, another 'Easter egg' whose meanings are deliberately veiled. Such components are designed to foster a sense of listener community just as radio does (Hendy, 2000: 121) and also to reward repeat listening as the elements are discovered, a technique which Brendan Baker employs in his work (see 3.1.3). Similarly, the automated voice reading strings of numbers

and the use of the computer-generated rendition of traditional English folksong *The Lincolnshire Poacher* are included for those listeners deeply enough interested in the esoterica of shortwave radio listening to recognise their significance.⁷⁷ Also in alignment with Baker's practice, my intention was include 'quotable' material to demonstrate my own knowledge of obscure pop culture and to reward others similarly in the know. Over all this aids my intention of fostering a sense of community and to somewhat align the programme with a listenership deliberately away from the mainstream; the programme is intended as challenging and distinctive.

The usage of shortwave and DAB-sampled digital interference (both created by taking radios and experimenting with their tuning controls and/or aerials until the resultant output was suitably noisy/glitchy) work to play up to the overall conceit of vintage radio, the effects of nostalgia and an attempt to creatively engage with radio practice, as borne out in Markman's survey of podcasters wanting to 'do radio' (2012: 555). There are many aspects of the series which would perhaps not be compatible with mainstream broadcast considerations – the long introduction and deliberately abstruse content being one – but the usage of radio static in this form with its sudden spikes in volume, as well as the lack of consideration paid to the technical requirements of phase cancellation,⁷⁸ loudness, and digital sampling rate, would all preclude it from BBC transmission (BBC Design and Engineering, 2017: online). As well as it therefore demonstrating its intentionality as a podcast product it also exhibits itself as the output of a musician and sound artist who has hitherto made work unbound by such matters.

Interviewees were sourced through Facebook and by personal acquaintance, the latter with whose stories I was already familiar. Just as in the case studies in Chapter 3 all voices

⁷⁷ They are the hallmarks of Numbers Stations, shortwave stations which appear and disappear quickly and are thought to transmit codes to spies who can decrypt the messages. A Cold War phenomenon, due to the nature of shortwave radio propagation their sources cannot be traced and they remain a mysterious feature of the shortwave experience (Sorrel-Dejerine, 2014: online).

⁷⁸ A factor to be considered when broadcasting stereo material which might be received on mono equipment, a listening scenario less encountered by podcast listeners (Edison Research, 2018: online).

carry with them paraverbal signification in the form of accents and dialect, with ghosthunters Karl and Donna demonstrating the Kentish estuary voice and Nick disclosing his south east London roots (on hearing the programme he remarked to me that he didn't realise he sounded 'quite so Cockney' and was somewhat dismayed).⁷⁹ Pacing of the interview material was not altered significantly and fine editing of the speech was kept to a minimum to preserve the integrity and humanity of the recordings (Shingler and Wieringa, 1994: 43), though the pacing of the over all programme might, on reflection, be a little too rapid, such was my production inexperience at the time.

Background ambience for the interviewees was integral for the ghosthunting duo as the interview was, at their request, conducted in a local bar. This less than ideal recording situation (the issue of continuity of the sound making edit points overtly noticeable) was overcome with an augmenting bar-chatter recording laid over the top to disguise edits. While not a particularly slick solution it serves the medium of podcasting in an appropriate manner, Spinelli and Dann having noted that the quality of perceived authenticity is a valuable one. They note that while an 'unmeasurable, intangible and subjective' quality, it 'can encompass ideas of honesty, directness, and a "down-to-Earth" character that borders on the amateur' (2019: 65). Too professional-sounding programmes can, it is suggested, alienate listeners seeking leftfield content which is away from professional radio making practice, the medium thriving on the allowance for niche content underserved elsewhere (Berry, 2016: 664). For the other interviews background ambience was added through the inclusion of field recordings sourced online, demonstrating my own advantage-taking of podcasting's still reasonably anarchic implementation of copyright law⁸⁰ (see Brendan Baker interview, chapter 3.1.3, for an exploration of this) with the exception of the ambient sound of a train journey previously made as part of a sound art installation exploring the relationship between

⁷⁹ A poll for ITV News in 2013 suggests that Cockney and Liverpoolian are felt to be the least 'trustworthy' of the major UK geographical accents (ComRes, 2013: online).

⁸⁰ Legal cases of copyright violation in podcasting are rare thus far, with the uncleared use of music seemingly being the main reason for seeking counsel, for example a recent case against podcast network PokerNews (Van der Sar, 2018: online).

sound and space. This latter piece is carefully edited to employ Donnelly's 'synch points' where sounds are matched to the interview for the purposes of narrative enhancement or disruption (2005: 11) and was made using *musique concrète* sound manipulation techniques of frequency filtering and tape reversal. This was also applied to the additional bar room ambience in order to disguise the words spoken therein, a possible distraction in the recording's original form. The music used throughout is similarly processed (for example the guitar piece at 09:02) or composed in a software sequencer, all being extant works which were selected from a library of pieces I had made previously. In the manner of television producers cutting pre-existing music to video (Donnelly, 2005: 128), the pieces were chosen for their ability to convey emotion, provide meditative space or move the narrative along. The high-pitched guitar string plucks at 22:40 (made by picking the strings behind the nut and treating with delay effects) are typical of tension-inducing horror soundtracks and are an example of what Nicholas Cook refers to as composing with genre (1994: 35).

There are a number of sounds employed as illustrative or expository, for example, police sirens, seagulls, train horns and earthquake rumbles. This use of sound is typical of the way producer Jad Abumrad works when communicating ideas on *Radiolab*, a method he suggests functions to 'concretize' abstract concepts (2010: 48), as well as offering themselves as leitmotifs which aid in signposting the interviewees to keep the listener on track (Shingler and Wieringa, 1998: 66). Interestingly the earthquake rumble is only fully effective when heard on earbuds, headphones or good quality speaker systems, composed as it is of very low frequencies which may be out of the reproduction range of on-board computer or smart speakers. This makes podcast listeners' tendency to use personalised audio playback a boon in this instance, though noisy external listening environments such as traffic may easily mask such a sound (Jeffress, 1970: 90-91). Silence is employed at 09:58 for illustrative and dramatic effect, a 'pregnant pause' (Shingler and Wieringa, 1994: 55) which lasts a few seconds longer than might be acceptable for radio broadcast, again adding to the programme's podcast intentionality.

The overarching narrative style is fragmented with only Steve, earthquake victim and emergency nurse practitioner, giving a sequential narrative account of the events of which he was part. This style came about when searching for a way to have the listener experience the concept of tuning through radio voices as mentioned above, and the stories presented throughout the series are mostly linked only through their themed episode titles. My working practice on this programme was to load all of the interviews into a software sequencer and divide them into small sections of perhaps 30-60 seconds and label each with a summary of its content, and then set about arranging these clips into a cohesive whole, ensuring the proper amount of time is dedicated to each and appropriate space is given over for music, sound and the resulting affectual emotive content.

This episode won the Kent Creative Award in the audiovisual category in 2017 and has been broadcast on a number of Internet radio stations, requiring an edit down to 30 minutes exactly at the request of the stations' schedulers. While this might be seen to problematise the notion of the programme being classified as a podcast it can be seen that digital radio stations similarly exist to supply content to niche and underserved demographics and are therefore willing, maybe even keen, to present offbeat or unusual material (see chapter 2.1 for a discussion of this). The programme was always intended to run to around 30 minutes as part of its original concept as something of an homage to BBC radio output and that it was considered good enough to be included for broadcast on others' networks was a flattering and unexpected consequence.

4.2 Seaside Towns, Seaside Frowns: Margate Twenty-Seventeen (2017)

Created for *Oscillate*, Canterbury Christ Church University's one-day festival in June 2017 for its Composition, Improvisation, and Sonic Arts Research Group, this programme is a biography of Sam, a poet from Herne Bay, and his relationship with the town of Margate. I met Sam when he and I were colleagues undertaking administrative work for a local charity and I realised that he had significant unrecognised talent with language and poetry, and that he had been involved in a number of artistic projects in Margate, a place to which he was a frequent visitor. When the university asked me to put together a piece exploring the town and its gentrification following the arrival of the Turner Contemporary gallery I asked Sam if he would be willing to spend the day with me walking the streets, meeting his creative collaborators, and speaking about his relationship with the space and its inhabitants.

The focus on language fits the broad intention of the work which is an attempt to disregard the semiotic content of music, sound and silence and to let speech stand as the 'primary' form of communication as suggested by Crisell's four codes of radio notion (1994: 5-6). To this end focus is allowed to fall on the spoken word and other sonic material is employed in as simple a manner as possible – for example as a structural device where it could be used in transitions or as sonic interest to break up the sameness of the soundscape captured when Sam was interviewed. To undertake such an intention is to acknowledge the way that sound is used in composed features and to try to dispose of such prior knowledge, but I needed to be careful to employ an attitude of regarding the music and sound as simply inert aural *stuff* rather than actively adopting a disruptive or belligerent attitude to its deployment. The impetus for this compositional attitude was to experiment with the practice of putting programmes together quickly as per the pressures brought about by algorithmic podcast search rankings (detailed in chapter 1.2). There is also very little in the way of expository sound illustrating the narrative save for a recording of the Blur show at Margate Winter Gardens in 2012, added as an episodic determinant as well as an example of 'generic

annexing' (Tagg, see chapter 2.2.4) where the band's affiliation with Mod counterculture is aligned with the town's history (Weight, 2015: 220, 324).

This programme is narratively linear in form, broken by interstitial bursts of Sam's shortform poetry (as referred to within the piece) read by volunteers acting as witnesses to the original exhibition for which they were written, and sparingly accompanied by snatches of music composed and performed by those appearing at the CISA event. These are used as episodic determinants as per Tagg (see 2.2.4). My voice as the producer features very occasionally as I decided the piece should be tightly focussed on Sam and his relationships with, and within, Margate, which I did not want to encroach upon directly – the aim was to allow the poet as authentic a vehicle for his voice as possible, acknowledging that such a thing is deemed very difficult in media representation (Funk, Gross and Huber, 2012: 10).

There is no narration to the piece and it is put together with an atmosphere of looseness, the aim of which is to allow the listener room to apply a sense of exploration within the programme as might be roughly equivalent to a corresponding exploration of the town. With reference to Tagg's terminology (as above) one might suggest that it demonstrates a relaxed form of diataxis – there is a freedom of movement between incidents of speech and music with plenty of field recording in between (mostly traffic noise, notably, with some sea recordings mixed in to remind the listener of the geographic setting). The 'aural staging' (Tagg, *ibid.*) or 'territorial sound' (Chion, see 2.2.1) of traffic noise is notably loud, a decision made with respect to the sensation of spending time in Margate as it can feel to be an assault on the ears in this way. Only occasionally does the volume level of the traffic noise dip, such as when out on the harbour arm with Sam or when discussing gentrification in the Old Town. The perpetual clickety-clack of Sam's bicycle wheel was an unwelcome inclusion in the programme and is explained (in a sullen production decision of necessity) at the very outset of the programme. I tried to treat the sound so this was disguised but, alas, could not subdue it.

Music use is sparse, particularly in accompanying speech. This is part of the conceptual reluctance to allow additional affectual information to colour the speech a great deal, though there are instances where it does so, for example at 31:40 where Joe Inkpen's busy and multi-metered guitar piece works to make the interviewee sound even brisker in his delivery. Sam's speaking voice and its accompanying paraverbal information is left as complete as I felt possible for two reasons: to allow the listener to use this information to build a picture of his personality, and to suggest a feeling of authenticity in a manner experienced beneficially in podcasting since radio productions might balk at the inclusion of such untidy material (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 190).

In contrast to his modest speaking voice the delivery of his poems is quick, forceful, perhaps even angrily articulated, with personal experience clearly powering their emotive content. In terms of prosody Sam has what Seán Street refers to as a 'poetry voice' for his performances, a particular style characterised by a problematisation between 'expectation, prior knowledge, and preference in the mind of the listener' (2012: 49-50).

The poetry sections are the only elements of the piece sonically treated in any way, with a small amount of reverb applied to mark the separation between pre-written content to that which is spontaneously spoken. The aim is to in some way monumentalise these parts to make them stand out for consideration as discrete and on their own poetic terms, however I am uncertain of the technique in review.

Over all I would suggest that the lack of consideration applied to the music and sound in the piece contributes a sense of incohesion and perhaps denies the listener a tightly immersive experience which other works in this portfolio demonstrate. As space is offered for the discussion of Margate, and Sam's representations of it, the close central focus of the work is allowed to dissipate over the whole duration of the piece, perhaps being *too* loose a structure to be as involving and effective as I might have intended; however it is

acknowledged that my own subjectivity as the producer offers this summary and other listeners may prefer this style of production.

4.3 Nota Bene: Canterbury Christ Church University and the CPBRA (2018)

Of all the pieces presented for this thesis this is probably the most accessible, least challenging, and therefore the most likely to be the sort of material considered for mainstream radio broadcast. That said, it was composed to reflect the difficult nature of the topic at hand – made for Canterbury Christ Church University’s Centre for Practice Based Research in the Arts it explores the role of the centre, how it works for the university, and how it supports its students undertaking practice-led study.

The programme was a commission to put together an item of academic documentation summarising the Centre’s 2017/18 output which was to itself be a piece of creative work, an approach in keeping with the practice-led methodology of my research and an idea which is beginning to be considered more widely in the academy. Dario Llinares highlights podcasting’s possibilities as an academic research output in its own right, suggesting its ‘value as a primary method of research dissemination could be a fundamental strand of the open access movement, challenging the problems of the academic publishing industry’ (2018: 141). For the project I was given an open brief and used this opportunity to develop the concept of the work in that vein – it was suggested to include pieces made in conjunction with the Centre so I decided I would ask for a collection of the academic year’s recordings, but stripped of any identifiable authorship or conceptual information. In this way I was able to browse the archive unbound by any previous knowledge of the pieces’ backgrounds or intentions (which also eradicated any personal biases since I know some of my fellow practitioners working at that time and didn’t wish to subconsciously select content based on partisan preference).

Lauren Redhead, as the leader of the CPBRA at the time, was an obvious choice for contributor to give an accessible overview of the work of the Centre (since part of its remit is to engage with non-academic audiences), and she suggested Dan Herbert and Sarah Gail Brand as other practitioners able to articulate their working practices and how they engage

with artistic endeavour more widely. Using the interview material as a starting point, followed by rough editing and arranging short sections of interview to lay out a draft shape of the programme, I then listened to over six hours' worth of audio material and pared down my choices until around thirty minutes'-worth remained. These pieces were then cut to the interviews in a similar manner to the compositionally skilful way Donnelly suggests stock music is used to accent and accompany television programmes (2005: 128): judging the content appropriately for its pace, emotional substance, and ability to support, intensify or conflict with the interview material's affectual qualities in content and delivery. The only piece to which it was difficult to apply this technique was the clip of the performance of *Macbeth* since the content is speech-based and the text so easily recognisable.

Amongst the three main interviewees feature some shorter speech clips from other contributors, placed across the piece when considered appropriate in terms of pacing and narrative. As well as the unfamiliarity of the voices and brevity of the interjections these clips can also be understood by the listener as coming from a different source due to the noticeable change in audio quality. Though not an intention of mine (since I did not record the various 'vox pops') the use of changes in the sonic characteristics between recordings of similar content has creative precedent: the technique is employed as a delineating marker when *Radiolab* hosts Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich read commercials on the programme, their objective being to clearly signpost the advertisement material within the show (Spinelli and Dann, 2019: 213). Often the shorter clips were recorded at musical performances and the ambient sound of audiences can be heard (indeed, the piece opens with such a recording), and it is suggested that this transmits a notably different affect than one might receive from the interview material, even when accompanied by music. Perhaps this is philosophically related to the listener's tendency to envisage disseminated media as being a shared experience and the sound of an audience helps reinforce this imagined perspective (Hendy, 2000: 121).

There are a few instances of the illustrative use of sound where I was able to fortuitously match interview material to specific instances in the musical recordings. Dan Herbert describes his developing of some ‘drone-type textures’ at 14:49 (this was relatively easily matched to some corresponding sound as the CPBRA output seemed to feature a generous selection of such in this year) and an almost comedic portamento was found for 17:49 where Lauren Redhead describes the musical associations between graphic scores and improvisational interpretation (‘line goes up, note goes up’).

Music selections made for the programme might be described largely as reasonably challenging, as befits the general character of the Centre’s output. Faced with a raft of somewhat difficult material to choose from I decided the spirit of the programme should acknowledge this in a small way by processing my voice as the interviewer and using this as a disjointed and occasional linking device. Where interviewers might be used as a framework or guiding figure in a more straightforward documentary (and even the inventive *Jack and Ellen* leaves interviewer Mooj Zadie’s voice as naturalistic and plain, though clearly off-mic (see chapter 3.1.1)) it was decided to challenge the listener and perhaps wrongfoot them a little by playing with this trope. Modifying a component which is often made a stanchion of modern podcast documentary practice (Hancock and McMurtry, 2018: 83) arguably offers a more powerful tool with which to apply an affectual change across a whole programme. The show closes in an atypical way to underline this technique by simply stopping, perhaps suggesting the affect of device failure or a peek behind the production curtain. This is timed, however, to synch with the end of the cheery saxophone-led tune which begins at 20:49 and offers an accompanying sensation of wholeness, completeness, and summing-up.

My impressions in review are of a programme which comes across as self-contained, informative and celebratory, and one which uses sound and music in a compositional manner entirely suitable for its subject matter. Unlike other pieces made for this thesis this work is self-reflexive – it is constructed with the material about which its contributors are speaking

rather than an external referent the listener must imagine themselves. This is not to say that the listener would not be building any pictures of course – Susan Douglas suggests we do so constantly and that the imagination is built entirely of mentally-produced images (2004: 26) – as the interviewees beg a bringing to life, as does the Macbeth performance. Personally I feel the programme taken as a whole offers a good account of the subject matter and seems to have been well received by those both familiar and unfamiliar with the Centre’s work.

4.4 *Hibernus Opus Continuum* (2019)

This is perhaps the piece in the portfolio which stretches the definition of the composed feature the furthest and also to which it is the most challenging to listen. Made for Canterbury Christ Church University's *Wintersound* public engagement music festival in January 2019, the title is a deliberate mistranslation of 'winter work continues' both to fit thematically with the event and to acknowledge the name of the longform piece of music *Continuum*, composed by Sophie Stone, upon which it is based.

The concept for this work is to challenge the nature and characteristics of the composed feature form, a genre already open to wide interpretation by practitioners with broadly divergent training and interests (Lindgren and McHugh, 2013: 103). To this end a number of intentions and practical creative techniques were devised to facilitate an investigation into (amongst other aspects): my own compositional technique of arranging interviews as a framework around which sound and music is thereafter woven; Crisell's assertion that of the four identified 'codes' of radio, speech reigns as the 'primary' code (1994: 5-6); the supposed necessity for a traditionally understandable narrative or exposition; and the conception of the feature as a musical entity.

To challenge my own practice this programme was devised to be made 'backwards' – rather than collecting the interview material and using it as a mapping device around which to plan and execute the piece, the music was chosen first and was to be unedited with the rest of the content added to it. In collaboration with Sophie I selected exactly thirty minutes of her ninety-minute piece, choosing a section with a number of builds and fades in dynamics and intensity upon which to develop the programme, a choice made to offer variety and some opportunity to work with the material in a flexible way within the fixed form. Three interviewees were researched and selected, each with vocational roles affected by the winter season to fit the brief of the piece, and their interviews rough-edited into short phrases, though this time more concisely and deliberately less able to offer much in the way of

context than in other projects. Their durations might be considered to be what Tagg refers to as existing within the ‘extended present’ – no longer than a few seconds or, significantly, ‘lasting roughly as long as it takes a human being to breathe in and out’, being perhaps the original derivation of the typical length of a musical phrase (2013: 272). These clips of spoken material were then added to the *Continuum* piece in a manner that attempted to somewhat disregard the narrative content of it, similar in intention to the *Seaside Towns*, *Seaside Frowns* project, above. The clips are not placed randomly but were selected to play somewhat with or against the affective content of the music, and scattered across the piece for interest’s sake.

Audio processing is applied to all instances of speech. The usage of effects such as delays, panning, reverb, equalisation, and pitch shifting are intended to add a sense of disjointed strangeness and to nudge the listener’s affective reception away from understanding the interview material as speech and more towards hearing it as a sound object stripped of its lexical meaning. Philosophically this has a precedent in Pierre Schaeffer’s pioneering experiments into acousmatic listening where the composer asked listeners to mentally disassociate the real world origin of a recording from its electronic reproduction, so that ‘one asks the subject to describe not the external references of the sound it perceives but the perception itself’ (Schaeffer, 1966: 77). The spoken word clips are presented at a volume which does not guarantee their audibility above the accompanying music – some are left to disappear into the soundscape to further obfuscate their linguistic content (perhaps one might hear the prosody stripped of language) and all are treated with a greater or lesser degree of reverb to help situate or dissolve them into the over all mix of the work, a studio technique frequently used by music producers (White, 2002: 109). They are also often splintered into component pieces – at 1:43 the speech is briefly reduced to a morpheme (the smallest unit of intelligible speech), and at it is 2:50 even more broken, to phoneme level (the sounds used to make speech, see chapter 2.2.4).

These aspects of the composition are to aid in the persuasion of the listener to question the nature of the programme. Chapter 2.2 considers the relationship between the composed feature documentary and music and suggests they are closely entwined in practical and conceptual ways, and the usage of an existing piece of music on which to base the programme is designed to emphasise these qualities. Just as any composed feature would not conform to an understanding of music in terms of traditional Western art music or modern pop, *Continuum* similarly would struggle, perhaps as its meter-less and longform structure might be perhaps described as falling into the ‘ambient’ genre. The piece (and resulting programme) is far from Brian Eno’s original conception of ambient being ‘as ignorable as it is interesting’ but it is nevertheless intended to allow the ‘many levels of listening attention without forcing one in particular’ which is he also suggests (Eno, 1996: 97).⁸¹

The overarching affectual sense of the programme is tense and unsettling. The music, atonal and devoid of melody, contains rough, challenging textures and dynamics, high whistles and shrieking strings which carry what Donnelly describes as ‘Pavlovian’ associations with horror cinema soundtracks (2005: 6). This is a contrapuntal emotional perspective from the somewhat airy affect carried by the interviewees’ voices and the combinatory result builds further tension as the two attributes sit uncomfortably together. There is no sound employed for illustrative purpose in this programme, and no episodic determinants other than those inherent in the music as it peaks and troughs. Whereas all the other pieces in this portfolio demonstrate usage of diegetic and non-diegetic sound there is no audio here from outside of the claustrophobic enclosure of the work. In a manner common with the vast majority of studio-recorded music, only the diegetic exists – there *is* no outside.

The disjointed nature of the narrative makes it extremely difficult for the listener to connect the spoken word edits into a complete whole or even get much of a sense of the personality of the person talking. Again, this is challenging and may be received as

⁸¹ One might wish to contrast this incarnation of ambient music-based documentary against the application of the brooding but rather inert tracks favoured by podcasts such as *This is Actually Happening* discussed in chapter 1.2.

frustrating should one persist in listening in the sort of mode which is usually reserved for audio documentary; should one engage with the work as a piece of music such concerns may be reduced or abandoned altogether as the work is allowed to communicate on its own terms. Listeners to the piece have described a sensation of relief when abandoning trying to follow a narrative thread and instead switching to letting the piece ‘wash over’ them, indicating that an appropriate selection of mode of listening may facilitate a more satisfying experience. Acknowledging such shifts in attention resonates with the ongoing scholarly discussion over how listeners engage with difficult or complex audio material, a discussion that caused Crisell to designate radio a ‘secondary medium’ (1994: 162) and which has been continued to contemporary podcast scholarship, as noted by Spinelli and Dann (2019: 116-117).

As well as challenging the listener, this piece questions how material is listened to and the nature and genre classification of the piece heard. As a thorny and high concept piece one imagines that its listenership as part of a podcast series of similar works would be vanishingly small and would not trouble the iTunes download charts; however if taken as a piece of experimental music it may find an appreciative audience when presented to an established listenership of those enthused by such material in the right setting. Perhaps this demonstrates how podcasting’s strength in its ability to broadcast niche material commercial radio would not commission is also its fundamental flaw – search rankings and their algorithmic biases may ensure that podcasts featuring obscure content will remain forever undiscovered for the enthusiast.

4.5 Goodwin Sands Radiogram: *Transmission* (2018) and *Magical Mystery Tour* (2019)

As these two *Goodwin Sands Radiogram* programmes are similarly conceptually driven it is proposed that they be considered together. Performed in the winters of 2018 and 2019 respectively, *Transmission* and *Magical Mystery Tour* are programmes in the same vein as *The Real Me* (above) but with the distinction that they were performed live in front of an audience as part of Canterbury's series of music, art, poetry and film events, *Free Range*. The organisation is a charity which relies on donations and external funding for its subsistence and is free to enter, taking place on Thursday evenings in a café slightly removed from the city's main high street. It specialises in providing challenging, leftfield and unusual entertainment, and has strong connections to free jazz and musical improvisation practitioners both locally and internationally. For these reasons – as well as a personal connection to the series – *Free Range* was considered a suitable venue for the shows.

The live presentations took the form of myself as compère, producer and conductor operating a laptop computer loaded with pre-edited sequences of interview material, cued so as to chronologically replay sections of the programmes on command. In both cases the interview material, background sound, archive footage and pre-recorded pop music was already assembled to form the scaffold of a podcast, ready to be completed by the accompaniment of two improvising musicians and voiceover artist Peter Kelly (as The Announcer). The musicians were familiar with the programme format having heard previous podcast episodes but were not permitted to hear the interview material from which they would be working before the programme, nor allowed any clue as to the topics discussed. The aim of this experiment was to observe the influence of spoken word material on musicians experienced and capable of interpreting it for an audience in a way that might compliment, or perhaps work against, the affective material present in the recordings.

A second aspect to the experiment was the ceding of production control. Composed feature making is commonly undertaken in an auteurish manner (Hendy, 2000: 71), so the

notion to allow others to influence the nature of a programme's meaning presented an opportunity to experience the captured material processed through the consciousness of others without relinquishing creative involvement entirely. In this way I hoped to be able to situate and contextualise my understanding of composed feature making and 'step back' to see how others might view it, particularly from a musician's perspective given the form's closeness to music. The musicians chosen were Sam Bailey, a pianist with a richly developed improvisational practice which incorporates the use of harmoniums and prepared piano techniques (adopting unusual percussive and drone-making tools such as electric coffee whisks, vibrators and e-bows); Tom Jackson, a clarinet player who demonstrates an impressive versatility with the instrument and whom, like Bailey, holds a PhD in improvised music; and Oliver Perrott-Webb, a less experienced improvisational guitarist with no formal musical training but a keen interest in the area. Perrott-Webb was chosen so a musical perspective might be offered different from that of a professional musician, a consideration that seems appropriate given podcasting's egalitarian nature of content creation and distribution. Bailey and Jackson accompanied *Transmission* and Bailey and Perrott-Webb *Magical Mystery Tour*, a change made for the second programme to blend a more experienced musician with one less so, as well as a desire to add aesthetic variety.

As a concession to the somewhat difficult conceptual nature of the programme I opted to dress in a manner vaguely reminiscent of the 1950s 'golden age' of radio, with a dress suit and bow tie, choices designed to emphasise the warm homage being paid to radio nostalgia as much as explain the programme's framework. The performers were asked to do the same, an unpopular request and one that was questioned by pianist Bailey, who remarked,

The theatre was a bit confusing to me: the audience were engaging with the voices and stories of the interviewees but in front of them were musicians in formal dress... I thought the audience would be unsure who was in the foreground. To my surprise it worked really well for the audience... (2019: email)

To aid in guiding the musicians through the material two different techniques were employed. For *Transmission* a full transcription of the programme was supplied, but in feedback this was felt to be unhelpful as the performers were unsure as to whether to pay closer attention to the document or my conducting, so the following year's event a briefer document was supplied with only an outline to the structure of the show, essentially a script with stage directions only. In trying to find a method by which to guide the musicians through the piece (so as to retain some sense of structure and ensure that moments of wit or pathos were not spoiled), I turned to John Zorn's musical improvisation game *Cobra*. Conceived in 1984, the game is played by a group of improvising musicians being led by a conductor presenting cue cards to guide the players, but with instructions comprising suggestive words and phrases rather than explicit instructions. Says Zorn:

It is not very exciting for an improviser to be told what to play, especially when what you can make up yourself is more interesting than what's been written for you to play ... The answer for me was to deal with *form*, not with *content*, with *relationships*, not with *sound*. [italics in original] (2002: 199)

There are no formal written rules for the game and the exact nature of the cards is both unpublished and open to amendment. For my performance I drew up cards with instructions such as 'Quietly', 'Play at will,' and 'Listen' to be shown during the sections I felt appropriate, and this was received more amiably by the performers, as well as resulting in a resultant programme I personally find more engaging and satisfying.⁸²

The amount of freedom given to the musicians was a moot point voiced by all performers. Bailey suggested for him that, 'The sticking point...I think is the fact that the audio was pre-recorded. I have improvised with live dancers or theatre performers before and [that] seemed more natural' (2019: email); Jackson viewed his contribution as constricted: 'Here I was

⁸² A cue card was also used to enact the audience interaction moment at 31:52, though the text written on it was a much more direct 'Shout "Van Morrison!"' This moment was created as an explicit gesture to the theatricality of the event and to encourage audience engagement.

following a script/score and improvising at moments allocated by the composer – in that regard I didn't consider myself a free improviser during this event, I was a performer using certain methodologies to cater to a composer's demands' (2019: email); with Perrott-Webb remarking that 'The level of freedom was a real test ... Responding to voices which do not intend to be accompanied felt more akin to playing with natural sounds than with other musicians. This opened up a curious space between listening to words/content and listening to voices, one which is hard to contend with.' (2019: email).

Indeed one might question the degree of control yielded by a performance of this design. Though the structures were rigidly set in both programmes the interviews were broken into constituent chunks of a few minutes with each cued on demand so as to respond to the musicians' improvisation and allow them time should they seem to need it. This did not appear, on its own, to allow the performers the space for creativity which they felt they would like, so for the 2019 show space was more explicitly 'built in' to the performance to provide some freedom, and this can be particularly heard at 19:47 where newspaper was provided should the players have wished to respond to the forerunning interview material in a manner requiring it (which they did). The interview section after this interlude (at 23:27) was not cued until my own experience as a musician and improviser led me to feel the musicians had explored as far as they wished.

While the mechanics of the project may not have been entirely to the musicians' tastes (especially those for whom free improvisation is a developed part of their practice), it can be noted that indeterminate compositional techniques can take on a range of different forms, with compositional and performance aspects subject to varying combinations and degrees of undefined parameters. Some examples of varying arrangements might include: a randomly generated composition leading to a fixed performance (such as John Cage's *4'33''*); a predetermined composition with strictly-followed written score and subsequent performance (such as Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*); or, in the case of these podcasts, mostly

predetermined composition with elements of improvised performance. Composer Pierre Boulez rejects the notion of wholly improvised music entirely, preferring his term ‘aleatoric music’ which places emphasis on the incorporation of chance in the performance of a work rather than its composition (Cory and Hagg, 1981: 274). A viewpoint more pragmatically comparable to the manner in which these podcasts were arranged is that of early silent film accompaniment practices which also comprised live improvisation in response to fixed media playback (Miller, 1982: 582). John Cage suggests this form is ‘comparable to that of someone filling in color where outlines are given’, noting that the musician,

may do this in an organised way which may be subjected successfully to analysis ... Or he may perform his function of colorist in a way which is not consciously organized (and therefore not subject to analysis) – either arbitrarily, feeling his way, following the dictates of his ego; or more or less unknowingly, by going inwards with reference to the structure of his mind to a point in dreams, following, as in automatic writing, the dictates of his subconscious mind; or to a point in the collective unconscious of Jungian psychoanalysis, following the inclinations of the species and doing something of more or less universal interest to human beings. (1961: 177)

Cage’s attention to the input made by the subconscious of the musician is in alignment with the investigative intentions of these live programmes. Asked to reflect on their interpretations of the interview material, all are sensitively aware of how they might be affecting the message of the programmes’ subjects:

I recall being very moved by the interviews ... I [was] in a constant struggle to simultaneously ignore the audience and be obsessed with what they are thinking. In this event I thought about the audience more than usual. I was also concerned that my playing might get in the way of some of the interviews/recordings. (Jackson, 2019: email)

Given the content of some of the more sensitive passages, this regularly made contributing an ethical decision as much as a musical one: What can I possibly contribute to this story (when even silence is a contribution)? What am I saying by electing to follow/antagonise/support this? I found the [work] very emotionally affecting, particularly regarding stories of medical trauma. Upon reflection, I feel that I may have overplayed in these sections; allowing those voices and stories to have their own space and providing musical accompaniment which empowers that rather than plays over it remains very challenging. (Perrott-Webb, 2019: email)

The podcast would probably work equally well on an emotional level with a range of different musical contributions. I felt that when I re-recorded my piano part⁸³ I was able to be more sensitive to the stories/voices/emotions because I had heard them a couple of times by that point ... My attention was taken up with the script, the cues, the present moment, managing the night, *etc.*, and I missed things in the podcast that may have been clearer to the audience. (Bailey, 2019: email)

The resultant musical soundtracks might, when reviewing the programmes together, be described as somewhat meandering and unsure, though not unlike the type of free improvisational material I have heard at *Free Range* when musicians are left to work amongst themselves. Both the transcripts and cue cards intended to guide the musicians seemingly served only to preserve the structure of the programmes and ensure that the narrative was *accompanied* and not *disrupted*. Feedback from the audience appears to be positive, particularly regarding the 2019 programme which arguably features fuller

⁸³ Due to a microphone cable failure the piano part was not captured on the night of the *Magical Mystery Tour* recording and this was not discovered until reviewing the material. Consequently Sam Bailey and myself went into a recording studio where we recorded a replacement performance whilst listening back to the live event. This new piano improvisation was not played as an attempt to recreate what was done on the night (impossible since Bailey was now familiar with the material and his improvisational practice is based in reacting in the moment) so he elected to play in response to the recording. What was captured, and features on the final podcast, was a much more melodic, tuneful and purposeful improvisation, suggesting that exposing the musicians to the whole edited programme before a live performance might result in a more tightly structured and accessible accompaniment. Sadly no recordings whatsoever exist of the original piano improvisation for comparison.

personalities and more robust manners of expression than the first, suggesting that the affects found in the qualities of the voices, stories told, organisational editing and humorous interjections are able to be transmitted fully on their own terms and that musical accompaniment, in this experiment at least, is just that. A clue to the successful development of future live events of this type is found in the unintended revisiting of Sam Bailey's piano part for *Magical Mystery Tour* which appears a good deal more involving and confident than his contribution to *Transmission*. Bailey himself also noticed this: 'A little more reflection appeared to improve my ability to provide effective music.' (2019: email).

In consideration of the pieces as composed feature documentary podcasts I would suggest they are affectively rich and involving. The live recording offers a sense of drama, immersion and connectedness that is not present in software- or studio-created programmes, and may easily facilitate the sensation of imagined listener unity suggested by Hendy (2000: 121). The musicians did not consider this aspect of audio programme making in any way (possibly because recording problematises ideas around live improvisation) with Sam Bailey asserting that he 'did not consider later listeners. There was plenty to occupy my attention on the night and my performer instincts kept me in the present moment, [and] I didn't think about creating a "work" or a repeatable audio object.' (2019: email). Tom Jackson admitted 'I have very little knowledge of this kind of programme,' but felt 'there was an invitation into people's lives and private thoughts and I hope that the music was received with a similar feeling of invitation.' (2019: email).

The creative model devised to make these programmes is not one that might be considered sustainable without significant a financial budget and production support. Each programme took around six weeks to put together in total with all performers in the live shows appropriately remunerated, and *Free Range* provided a suitable venue with a ready-made audience keen to see new and experimental entertainment. It was suggested by an audience member at the 2019 event that the show might be the sort of act suitable for touring

and while this is possible given the adaptable nature of the accompanying live music, decisions would need to be made over the musicians employed since repeat performances may serve to consolidate the accompaniment in a way that might prove to either stultify or enhance it over time. In either circumstance it is unlikely that podcast listeners would be delighted with a series of reiterated musical performances over essentially the same narratives, such remains the power of the speaking voice over all other sound.

4.6 Practice conclusions

The last three years of practice research have attempted to address the following questions:

- How does the creative deployment of audio material in a documentary feature context work to impart meaning for the listener?
- To what extent has the democratisation of the creation and distribution of the audio feature influenced its form?
- What are the distinctions between podcast feature documentaries and their radio counterparts, and how might these affect listeners' reception and understanding of their content?
- How can answering the above questions improve my practice as a creator/composer?

I hope to have shown answers to the first three enquiries through my background research and creative engagement with the medium of composed feature documentary podcasting. Specifically, I have worked to communicate the philosophical standpoint that meaning is communicated for the listener through a combination of denoted and connoted sound, and that these two component semiotic factors work in conjunction with cultural and subjective markers to make up a library of audio artifacts capable of transmitting any and all emotive states possible given the listener's personal experience and receptive openness. The sound one hears may be made up of speech, music, ambient sound and silence, but to all affective purpose they may be considered as one, and that audio arrangers and documentary composers have only to tilt the artist's palette to emphasise one quality over another in order to achieve their desired outcome. Furthermore, the resultant combination may be considered a musical product owing to the shared practices of arranging sound with the intention of creating meaning and imparting affect, and the observance of music's inclusion of all of the audio components mentioned.

The composed feature documentary podcast demonstrates significant but subtle differences to its radio counterpart. While clearly based upon the same creative urges to tell true stories artfully, the podcast's origin, its manner of distribution and the concomitant and evolving commercial pressures placed upon it are all causes of a tendency towards narrated, journalistic and less sonically experimental forms. Furthermore the nature of its transmission networks and egalitarian access rarifies sustainable creative documentary making, leading to a dearth of the type. My future podcasting endeavours may by necessity bifurcate, with creative audio documentary trailing behind the more economically sustainable and popular narrated and discursive varieties of programme making which I may need to produce in order to forge a career in the area. I plan, however, to seek out those similarly enthused by the possibilities of exciting, expansive and expressive audio composition in order to attempt to unite and stand against the tide of programmes and producers disinterested in the amazing possibilities offered by the affective use of sound and speech combined.

As a musician, composer and feature maker I have attempted to posit creative responses to my research findings, sometimes taking particular aspects to creative extremes, as in *Hibernus Opus Continuum*, or angling my programme making focus to explore more pragmatic compositional considerations such as with *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Transmission*. The latter, together with *Seaside Towns*, *Seaside Frowns*, also acknowledges the more traditional origins of the form with a focus on poetry and language. Of all of my portfolio pieces, *Nota Bene* might be the most accomplished, blending techniques derived from experimental and electronic musical practice in ways which serve to be affectively rich whilst remaining narratively clear and able to sustain tension and interest. A personal motivation to undertake this doctoral degree was to find an outlet for my training in experimental music that was widely palatable and easily accessible, and if any piece exemplifies my success in this, I believe *Nota Bene* is it. This is not, however, to disregard or devalue the joy, empathy and straightforward immersive entertainment both myself and others – I hope – find in my work.

More than any other facet of my research, three years of practice-led investigation has given me the opportunity to begin to find my artistic voice as a producer, editor, and composer. Emerging is an expressive set of intentions tied to the nature of my character, personal experience and moralistic values. I have discovered that my work is most effective when allowed to express wonderment and delight in others' stories and look askance at the supposed seriousness of the business of contemporary living, a relatively recent attitude brought about by a life-changing diagnosis of degenerative disabling illness three months into my study period. The subsequent adjustment and re-evaluation of matters pertaining to my own personal life-course required a significant period of reflection, an involuntary undertaking which informed a corresponding questioning of storytelling techniques in my composed feature work. As Gareth Williams notes, serious illness pitches into disarray the routine narrative of the practical consciousness dealing with life's mundane details, and 'from such a situation narrative may have to be given some radical surgery and reconstructed so as to account for present disruptions. Narrative reconstruction, therefore, represents the workings of the discursive consciousness.' (1984: 178). The editing and storytelling skills earned through this period of meditation upon the nature of personal histories are gains hard won and creatively effective.

Another reflection of my personal values in my work has been to express my curious but absolute disregard for any anxieties over the supposed desirability of professional-sounding audio quality in the finished pieces. I began my studies with an aged Zoom H2 portable recorder (a capable but relatively low fidelity solid state recording device, awkward to use and impractical outdoors in anything other than perfectly still wind conditions) with the intention of upgrading as soon as funds allowed. The output of this device however can be heard mediating every interview and ambient sound captured in my portfolio. Similarly a more typically radio- or podcast-intentioned tool such as the popular Hindenburg did not supersede Ableton Live, my music-based software sequencer of choice. Podcasting, pleasingly, has ample freedom for such preferences.

A practice-led methodology aims for the generation of new knowledge through the act of creation, and through my work I aim to have articulated what composed podcast features could be if given enough creative application. Though my research acknowledges that currents acting upon those wishing to create well-crafted and thoughtful work often pull in a direction towards the quickly made, sonically tame and narratively predictable, I hope that my work sheds light on not only the philosophically rich seams yet unexplored in the medium, but also the creative potential hitherto untapped. It is my wish that both academics and producers might use my work as an influential starting point for development when working with affective relationships in audio non-fiction – my analytical methodology presented in Chapter 3 has already been used as a successful undergraduate feature-making teaching aid by my PhD supervisor Magz Hall, and the *Magical Mystery Tour* piece is scheduled for broadcast on Resonance FM in October 2019, hopefully inspiring other producers.

Much current podcast scholarship talks of the capacity and importance of the sensation of authenticity in podcasting, and I feel it has not yet reached its full potential and will likely expand into areas not imagined presently – as a less antagonistic alternative to social media, as a component of altered reality gaming, or as an archive of 21st Century life perhaps. I do believe, however, that it is the composed feature documentary podcast, as a medium of empathetic honesty, which might hold the most power in a contemporary media sphere overwhelmed by accusations of the distribution of misleading and injurious information. I certainly hope so.

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Appendix A

Close analyses of composed feature podcasts.

Contents

A1: *Jack and Ellen*

A2: *Night Manoeuvres*

A3: *The Dream You Should be Having*

N.B. Audio files of the analysed podcasts can be found on the flash drive included in the thesis submission. The time codes stated correspond specifically to these files to avoid possible confusion caused by multiple available versions and other phenomena beyond the control of the author.

A1: Jack and Ellen

Love+Radio podcast, produced by Brendan Baker, Nick Van Der Kolk and Mooj Zadie.

N.B. Speakers are denoted at the beginning of their block of speech and not for each paragraph – it is assumed that the speakers’ identity is carried over from the previous paragraph.

Time Speech

00:00 *Radiotopia ident jingle*

00:09 **Nick Van Der Kolk:** Hey, this is Nick, and if you’ve listened to the podcast before, chances are you’ve heard some kind of content advisory. I usually include that because I realise some people might have different standards than I do, but this episode is a little different. And I want to make it especially clear – if you have kids around, you should definitely skip this one. OK, let’s go. From WBEX at Chicago, you’re listening to Love and Radio. I’m Nick Van Der Kolk. Today’s episode: ‘Jack and Ellen.’

00:45 **Ellen (as Jack):** At the time I was working at Subway, but it was this really tedious work as a ‘sandwich artist’. I was working five days a week, really hard all day. I was on my feet for eight hours, just breaking my back. I wasn’t able to make my own times, and the best part about this job is that I can make my own hours, I can work from bed, I can make as much money as I want.

01:17 I was really stupid about the whole thing initially, because people wanted to meet me right away. They would say, “Hey, you’re 15. That’s cool, let’s get coffee.” So I

decided to come up with a story. I decided to go on Craigslist. I posted an ad in the male for male section of Craigslist, titled “Young and Cute.” Craigslist wouldn’t allow me to write my age without getting my entry flagged within a minute. I actually used an alias. It was like naming a baby, I wanted to get it right.

01:55 **Ellen and Ellen as Jack (together):** It was Jack.

01:57 **Ellen (as Jack):** “Hi, my name’s Jack. I’m a young guy who is still in the closet and would love to make some gay friends because I’ve never had any. I’ll be moving to New York soon, so write me an email, don’t be shy.”

02:08 **Ellen:** That was the story.

02:11 **Ellen (as Jack):** Yes, I was going to make some friends ahead of time, which allowed me to talk to these people without the expectation of having to meet them, face to face.

02:20 **Ellen:** I made a fake e-mail account too, along with that ad,

02:22 **Ellen (as Jack):** and then I included a picture

02:24 **Ellen:** a picture of my friend, my roommate.

02:26 **Ellen (as Jack):** I’m really young-looking and skinny – what gay men refer to as a ‘twink’.

02:32 **Ellen and Ellen (as Jack) together:** Paedophiles love twink.

02:40 **Ellen:** After ten minutes of posting the ad, I had about 50 messages.

02:45 **Ellen (as Jack):** I don’t really check my emails anymore, because I have so many of them.

02:48 **Ellen:** But I quickly realised I wouldn't be able to acquire the kind of information that I needed.

02:54 **Ellen (as Jack):** But you seem really interesting and I like you more than anyone else I've spoken to...

03:00 **Ellen:** So I had to convince them to add me on Facebook.

03:03 **Ellen (as Jack):** ...so here's my Facebook if you wanna continue chatting.

03:07 **Ellen:** I could find out their occupation, family, friends, stuff that people put on Facebook without thinking twice about it. Personal information. As soon as they would message me on Facebook,

03:23 **Disguised voice:** Hey Jack, you told me to come here and talk to you

03:26 **Ellen:** I would reply

03:27 **Ellen (as Jack):** "Hey, I didn't mean to deceive you, but I'm not really eighteen, I'm fifteen. If that's okay with you, let's keep talking,"

03:34 **Ellen:** Just to rule out the ones that genuinely believed the kid was eighteen.

03:38 **Disguised voice:** That's okay, I don't mind, age is just a number.

03:42 **Ellen:** And then they would add me on Facebook and we would go from there.

03:49 The first paedophile that I ever spoke to just began talking about how

03:55 **Ellen and disguised voice:** he was horny, how he was looking at Jack's pictures, thinking about how much he wanted to [static]

04:00 **Ellen:** I had never had any experience talking dirty to men, because I was a 21-year-old woman who had only been with women, and has only still been with women, let me rephrase that. So, I took screenshots of the messages that he sent, I took screenshots of all his friends. He had a lot of family members listed, so I took screenshots of their profiles and I included them in a threat letter that I had written. If you want I can...

04:31 **Interviewer:** Yeah can you read it?

04:32 **Ellen:** I can read one of the many threat letters.

04:35 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** “Hello Mr–

04:37 **Ellen:** So-and-So,

04:38 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** – You have recently been speaking to a 15-year-old boy named Jack. I have saved documentation of all your conversations...”

04:44 **Ellen:** I pretty much made it obvious that Jack didn’t exist, that I had this explicit content. The ultimatum was if you don’t give me this 500 dollar Amazon gift card, come tomorrow morning I will send all of this information out to your family and friends, and the police. You have until tomorrow morning to send me the gift card.

05:11 I’ve had four aliases: Jack, Lisa, Kaleb and Ashley. I’ve made about 30 to 40 grand from a hundred people. Maybe more.

05:23 My name is Ellen, and I’m a professional blackmailer. I had just moved to [BEEP] to live here with a few of my friends, but I had only saved up about 500 dollars, so within a month or two that money was gone, because I’m not really responsible with my money at all. So I began stealing things: DVDs, box sets, printer ink, anything in the electronics department that I could get my hands on. But that was too risky.

Every time that I would steal I would have to walk through some metal detectors, and my heart would just sink to the bottom of my stomach. You can only get away with it for so long.

06:13 I began looking for jobs, of course, but it was really tedious to work as a ‘sandwich artist’. I decided to Google ‘how to make quick money’ and ended up on this message board called ‘Bad Ideas’. I probably went through about five pages: How to break into houses, how to break into cars — not anything that I could do, because I wasn’t a master lock picker, I wasn’t comfortable mugging people. So I was thinking, “Oh, I might just have to move back home, I don’t have rent money... What am I doing?” And I was starting to give up. But then, on the fifth page I came across this entry titled ‘paedobaiting’, a term that I had never heard of before. I clicked on it and I began reading all about it.

07:05 Paedobaiting is when you post as a teenager to lure in paedophiles, to either make money or humiliate them. Most people, they know about *To Catch a Predator*, but they don’t know about to con a predator. I thought, “Well, I can do this from my bedroom.” All that I needed was a laptop and internet connection, and my imagination.

07:35 It’s easy to have a fake Facebook account, but it’s not easy to make a fake Facebook account look real. I took about a week. Jack lives in Miami, Florida...from Seattle, Washington, knows English and Spanish, he’s single and interested in women. He’s interested in women on his profile because he’s still in the closet. So I showed what books he was into: *The Sirens of Titan*, *Franny and Zooey*, *Catcher in the Rye* — books that I read while I was still in high school. He likes Pink Floyd, *Explosions in the Sky*, *Beach House*, *The Smiths*, *Jose Gonzales*, *Animal Collective*. I made up fifteen other fake profiles, so that Jack could have friends to make comments...

- 08:22 **Ellen (as Jack's friends):** Oh, you look cute! I miss you! Where have you been? It's been so long..!
- 08:28 **Ellen:** And that's it.
- 08:31 I used to write fan-fiction when I was younger... I've always been a pretty creative person. I never thought I'd be able to act out these characters, but I quickly realised that I was a master manipulator, when I wanted to be.
- 08:51 The first paedophile that I baited, I thought he was gold, I thought "This is it, my first catch!"
- 09:06 But it was weird, he didn't fall for it. He told me to just fuck off and then blocked me. I was pretty disappointed actually that it failed, and I thought this was such a stupid idea. All this hard work that I put in the last week was for nothing. I feel like the problem was that I let the guy know that Jack didn't exist. He didn't have a fear of actually getting in trouble, because he knew that he had never actually spoken to a 15-year-old, which I learned quickly was something that I needed to correct.
- 09:44 So the first paedophile that I attempted to blackmail didn't fall for my story, but then the second guy... So this guy was in the closet. In his late forties, maybe even early fifties, I can't recall. I had actually Googled him already, and I knew that he was rich because he had been...
- 10:05 I'm not gonna say CEO, but...
- 10:12 pretty high up on the ladder for this company that's really popular. Let's just say that. He was the kind of guy that I was hoping to get because he has a lot to lose, he has a reputation. He is not gonna want this to be tarnished. And this guy was loaded, so... Damn, this is my first real big fish.

10:45 So we began talking, and that went on for weeks. The guy even sent me a video. He was casually dressed, there wasn't anything shady, in the dark; it wasn't explicit, it was just the guy in his apartment, saying stuff like:

11:02 **Victim and Ellen together:** "Hi, Jack. It's a beautiful sunny day here in Miami, and I just got back from the pool. I hope you're having a wonderful day. Thanks for your message, you're a lovely kid."

11:15 **Ellen:** He was actually very open with Jack and told him things that he felt about his life. He was so insecure about his homosexuality that he had never had a relationship with a man, and now he began thinking of Jack as a friend, eventually. He was just a sad fella. It was kind of hard to do this guy because being a lesbian myself I was a bit put off by the idea of threatening to out people, because that's really awful. I felt like a traitor, because I myself was in the closet at one point. I was still in middle school and no one knew; I just panicked whenever anyone hinted at knowing. So I didn't really wanna exploit that fear, and that made it hard to not feel guilty.

12:07 But then I thought about how I was posing as a 15-year-old boy luring in older men and that just because I felt empathy for this man, I couldn't just skip him, because every other case was gonna be similar. And if I felt empathy for everyone, I wouldn't make any money. I never in the threat letters included "Hey, you're gay and no one knows, and I'm gonna tell them." It was just given. He's not only a closeted gay man, he's a closeted paedophile. They can be a dad, they can be a doctor, they can be gay, but they all still wanna have sex with children. That's what I had to keep in mind to allow myself not to feel too shitty about what I was doing. At that point I put aside our common bond. I sent out a threat letter to this guy.

13:00 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** I have saved documentation of all your conversations with Jack.

- 13:03 **Ellen:** I threatened him correctly.
- 13:03 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** If you wonder how I have access to all of these files, well, let me just say that Jack's not very good at remembering to log out of his accounts when he uses other people's computers. I have been following all of your correspondence with him and am appalled by what I have read.
- 13:18 **Ellen:** I made him think that I was someone that had accessed Jack's account without Jack's permission, so he was still under the impression that he had done something really wrong with an actual 15-year-old.
- 13:33 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** I will do all of this unless you do the following thing: send me a 500 dollar gift card.
- 13:39 **Ellen:** "Send me a 500 dollar gift card, or I will
- 13:43 **Ellen and Ellen (as blackmailer) together:** Or I will ruin you.
- 13:46 **Ellen:** I will ruin your reputation. I have a video of you. I will send this out to everyone on your Facebook." He had a LinkedIn account, so I had his entire work history at companies that I could send the information out to. He really was pushed up against a wall, he didn't have a choice. He was really panicky, saying
- 14:07 **Ellen and victim (together):** "Please, don't ruin my reputation."
- 14:10 **Ellen:** He fell for it, and he agreed to do whatever I wanted, and that's it. I sent the guy a message saying,
- 14:17 **Ellen (as blackmailer):** "Well, thank you for cooperating with me. I deleted all of your messages, I deleted the video as well, I won't be contacting you ever again.
- 14:25 **Ellen and Ellen (as blackmailer):** And, err, alright.

14:27 **Ellen:** – Bye. Stay away from children.”

14:34 I never blackmailed anyone in my area, because I found that to be too dangerous, and the most obvious thing to do was to ask them for gift cards.

14:44 Send me a 500 dollar Amazon gift card...

14:48 They were eCards, internet cards that you can just send to an email. I would have the gift card within minutes, without them knowing anything about me.

14:57 ...or I will ruin you.

15:00 And then once I received the gift card...

15:03 I made 500 followed by 300

15:05 I would either purchase things online that I knew I could resell...

15:09 Then I made 400 dollars

15:11 ...electronics, iPods...

15:13 Five-sixty

15:14 or I would just sell the actual eCard through Craigslist...

15:17 Followed by one thousand

15:19 ...for maybe 80% of its worth.

15:21 One thousands, one hundred

15:22 That way, I would end up with actual cash in my hands.

15:27 Two thousand dollars

- 15:29 And if purchases were ever traced, it would be traced back to them and not me.
- 15:41 When people ask me what I do for a living, I'd rather say "Oh, I'm a successful artist," or something that is worth being prideful of, not, "Oh, I'm a con artist." This isn't a career that I'm happy with – I'm not making music, or art, or anything. This isn't what I aspire to do with my life. If I didn't have to do it to survive, I wouldn't. If I had parents that could support me, or if I did have a career or a job that paid me enough, I would stop. It's not something that I do out of pleasure, I'm not that malicious. I don't think I'm very malicious at all.
- 16:21 In the beginning, I kind of got a rush. In the beginning, it did make me feel like I had some power over people. In the beginning, I did feel in control of the situation, but the thrill factor wears off.
- 16:40 When I'm working, I'm just a machine, it's all mechanical and I'm a robot, and I'm just repeating the same crap to people, just worded differently, the same stories over and over again. It's just monotonous. I just completely detach myself from my work. My work stays on my laptop. Once I close that laptop, I return to being myself entirely, and I don't think about it. I just swallow all of it and put it out of my mind when I'm not working. I return to being my everyday normal self just, this fine person. I'm usually fine.
- 17:22 My mom knows what I do, I told her during winter break. She didn't know how I was making money and she thought I was either prostituting myself or selling drugs. So I told her the truth, expecting her to yell at me and tell me I was an idiot and ground me, even though I'm 21. But she was actually understanding, and she told me that she thinks paedophiles are pigs. I mean, she's a mother.
- 17:45 **Interviewer:** She didn't have any..?

17:47 **Ellen:** No, she had her doubts. She said, “*Tienes que parar, porque vas a tener muchas problemas.*”

17:54 **Interviewer:** What does that mean?

17:55 **Ellen:** She said, ‘You need to stop because you’re gonna have a lot of problems, eventually.’ She was more concerned about my legal safety than she was in judging me – she thought it was kind of cool that I was teaching these men a lesson and taking their money. I mean, I don’t think any mothers... I think mothers would probably give me a ribbon, or something.

18:17 **Interviewer:** Do you think so?

18:18 **Ellen:** Yeah, but I shouldn’t get a ribbon. I’m not... I’m not a hero.

18:26 **Interviewer:** How come you’re so open about it? Because I don’t think I would be.

18:31 **Ellen:** Yeah, that was a mistake, to be honest, to be that open about it. It was something that I was too proud of to keep to myself. In a sense, I was bragging about all the money that I was making and how quickly I was making it, and all of my friends found it amusing and really interesting, therefore I continued to fill them in on what was going on. No one thought I would go forth with it and actually succeed in any way, everyone thought it was a big joke. But the more I told them what I was doing, the less they pretty much respected me, and all of my friends began to just dismiss my opinions about moral topics.

19:10 One of my roommates stole our neighbour’s computer during a party, and I told her that I thought she was shitty for doing that, and she just said,

19:17 **Roommate:** “Well, you’re not really in a position to be judging me, considering what you do.”

19:22 **Ellen:** At that point I stopped being so open about it. My best friend felt really uncomfortable about me doing it. She would say things like

19:30 **Friend:** “Ellen, I hope you get arrested so that you learn your lesson.”

19:35 **Ellen:** That was really offensive. Those sorts of things would really upset me. Our friendship was pretty rocky for a little bit, because, I mean you’re my best friend, why would you... Do you understand that if I got arrested it would be for twenty years? Are you saying that you hope that? Because if you do, then I don’t wanna be your friend anymore, if you want my life to be over that way. I actually had to lie to her and tell her that I don’t do it anymore. I don’t think she’d be able to still be my friend if she knew that I’ve been continuing doing this.

20:03 **Interviewer:** And if this is your best friend and it’s someone that you like and respect, why don’t you listen to her?

20:11 **Ellen:** Because I’m dumb. I know I should stop, I know what everybody says about it is true, but I like the money, I like the cash money flow.

20:29 **Interviewer:** Do you feel like a repeat-paedophile offender? In a sense of, like, how they commit a crime and then they get out of the jail and they’re still doing this thing that’s destructive.

20:39 **Ellen:** Yeah, actually. I think I’m a little hooked, because it’s just easy. I don’t know how I’m gonna go back to real life after this. I could be a waitress and make chump change compared to what I’ve made, by working a hundred times harder. I guess I could do that. Real life’s out there, waiting for me, and it’s not gonna be fun, and it’s not gonna be easy, but I should step out there. Now I’m just trying to be poetic... I’m trying to give you a closing line, so we can end this.

- 21:10 **Ellen:** The real life's waiting out there for me... Now you can record the door closing to my room, and my footsteps...
- 21:23 **Interviewer:** But do you not see the connection? Or do you not see how..?
- 21:26 **Ellen:** I see the connection. That's why I made the connection to drug dealers. Drug dealers say they make easy money and then they go to jail maybe, and then they come back and they deal more drugs, because that's the easiest way for them to make money again.
- 21:40 **Interviewer:** Do you feel like you're gonna follow that path?
- 21:42 **Ellen:** I feel like I have the ability to stop. I've never had an addictive personality, but I feel like I need to have a certain amount of money before I can stop.
- 21:50 **Interviewer:** So do you see this as a long-term thing or how...?
- 21:52 **Ellen:** I don't know, I wanna quit soon. As soon as I make \$5,000 I think I'm gonna quit. I think.
- 22:01 **Interviewer:** So your plan is to retire when you make five thousand.
- 22:04 **Ellen:** When I make another five thousand I plan to retire. I plan to retire.
- 22:10 **Interviewer:** Why didn't you retire when you got your last \$5,000?
- 22:14 **Ellen:** Because I hadn't been approached by the cops, and now it's a whole lot more real to me.
- 22:22 I decided to create another alias, Lisa. A week ago I was using Lisa's profile and I began talking to this substitute teacher from Philadelphia. He was pretty hesitant, so I said something like "Oh, you're a really handsome guy. I'm sure a lot of your students have crushes on you." He would write something like –

- 22:43 **Ellen (as victim):** “Maybe”
- 22:44 **Ellen:** – and then move on and say
- 22:45 **Ellen (as victim):** “So how’s the weather over there?”
- 22:47 **Ellen:** But he continued to talk to her anyway. He asked for the girl’s phone number, and I gave him my phone number.
- 22:55 **Interviewer:** How come you started using the phone number?
- 22:58 **Ellen:** It makes them open up faster. Eventually, at around two in the morning we started texting. He initiated it, he winked and I played along.
- 23:10 **Ellen (as Lisa):** You see, I’m not used to this. I don’t know how to talk...
- 23:13 **Ellen:** And he said,
- 23:14 **Ellen and Ellen as victim (together):** “It’s okay, you’re doing well.”
- 23:15 **Ellen:** The conversation turned explicit. I said,
- 23:18 **Ellen (as Lisa):** “I would love it if you kissed me on my neck, and then grabbed my...” [*sound of tape stopping abruptly*]
- 23:24 **Ellen:** I said,
- 23:25 **Ellen (as Lisa):** “Oh I’m going to sleep, we’ll talk tomorrow.”
- 23:26 **Ellen:** He said,
- 23:27 **Ellen and Ellen as victim (together):** “Alright, good night Lisa.”
- 23:29 **Ellen:** Winky-face, heart. Whatever.

23:34 I felt like he was ready to be threatened. So I woke up to go and take screenshots of this guy's profile. When I sat in front of my computer, opened it up, logged in and I realised that he had blocked me. So I pulled out my phone and I texted him; I said, "Hey, did you block me?" And he said,

23:55 **Ellen (as victim):** "Yeah, I think it's wrong to be talking to you. I'm sorry, I regret what I did."

24:00 **Ellen:** And I was gonna let him go. He did show remorse and I should have stopped, but thought "Well, he already fucked up." This mistake that he made in the moment, it was gonna cost him 500 dollars, and it's gonna get my rent paid. But then he continued to ignore me, he stopped replying so I got a little fierce with him. And I was like, "Hey, listen, I know you're ignoring me. Here's a blog that I made with your pictures and all of your information on it. God forbid anyone Googles your name." So I sent this guy that link, and then the next morning I was woken up by a phone call at about nine in the morning, and it was a Philadelphia area code, so I thought it was actually that guy calling back, but when I picked up it was actually a deeper voice, a much more commanding voice. And he asked,

24:54 **Ellen and Ellen as police officer (together):** "Is this Lisa?"

24:57 **Ellen (as Lisa):** "No..."

24:59 **Ellen and Ellen as police officer (together):** "This is officer –

25:00 **Ellen:** – yadda-yadda –

25:01 **Ellen and Ellen as police officer (together):** – from the Philadelphia Police Department. Who is this?"

25:06 **Ellen:** I froze up. Should I answer, should I not answer? What am I gonna say?

- 25:12 I just hung up.
- 25:15 Got out of my bed, ran to my roommate's bedroom, and while I was telling her what had happened, I actually received about three more phone calls. I even received one voice message. It began playing, and I quickly pressed number seven and I deleted the voice mail. And I sat there holding onto my head, wondering if they were doing a thorough investigation,
- 25:40 finding out my IP address, contacting the FBI...
- 25:44 I was just afraid that they knew too much. I felt like how the paedophiles probably feel when I send them a threat letter. I was able to feel the kind of anxiety that they feel.
- 25:59 So, my roommate told me to get back in my room and start deleting everything as soon as possible.
- 26:03 Ran to my room, logged into Facebook, deactivated that profile, went to the multiple Gmail accounts that I had made, deleted all of them, changed my phone number, deleted any trace of Lisa off the internet.
- 26:18 And I just waited.
- 26:22 Two days went by and the cops didn't call me, nothing. I don't really know if anything came about from it, but ignorance is bliss. I just forgot about it, and hopefully the case was dropped.
- 26:39 When I changed my phone number I had to contact my mom, and I initially told her that I was just being harassed by a man who I didn't know, but then I told her the truth and she was really scared for me. She made me promise her that I wouldn't do it again, and I broke that promise to my mother.

26:57 I mean, I haven't done it again, but I'm planning to. I don't know man, it's hard to be the kind of person that I would like to be morally. I don't know if there's any turning back now.

27:17 I'm doing this to make money, I'm not a good person in that sense, but I do hope that it's making them think twice about ever talking to children again, and I hope it's getting them some psychological help, out of fear of being sent to jail. I hope I'm doing some good, but in some cases I think I might even be doing some bad as well, because these people maybe never had a source to fulfil their fantasies with, and now they meet this kid and they talk about it for the first time, and they might actually go forth and try it again, even after the blackmail. So who knows, I don't know if I'm doing any good or— I know I'm doing bad, but I don't know if I'm doing any good. I hope I'm doing some good.

28:08 I do have a very strong sense of right and wrong, it's just sometimes I decide to stray from that. Just because what I do is immoral doesn't mean that is entirely who I am. Yeah.

26:28 **Interviewer:** Have you ever considered to call the police about former paedophiles?

28:31 **Ellen:** What keeps me from doing that is just I don't want to get myself in trouble, I don't want them to arrest the paedophiles and then trace something back to me, and I don't really care to live with the guilt of actually ruining someone's life, even if it is a paedophile. I think you have to have some sympathy for these people, because I can't think of anything worse. I mean, I'm thankful that I wasn't born with that and that I don't have to deal with that demon every day. I feel bad for these people, because they spend their whole lives fighting the urge to do something and then they just give into the desire and make a giant mistake that costs them their entire life. And I don't have to worry about that, I don't have any kind of lust for anything that

would ruin my life like that, other than maybe money. [*Sound of tape abruptly stopping*]

29:42 That's it for Love and Radio. The show is produced by Mooj Zadie, Brendan Baker and myself, Nick Van Der Kolk. With additional help on this episode from Mark Ristich, Sharon Mashihi, Rachel James, and Lingling Yang. Follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook, subscribe to the podcast – it makes a huge difference for us, so... do it.

30:11 *Radiotopia ident jingle*

A2: *Night Manoeuvres*

BBC Radio 4 production first broadcast 2012 and made available as a podcast via third party podcast aggregator services.

Produced by Neil McCarthy and Laurence Grissell.

N.B. As before, speakers are denoted at the beginning of their block of speech and not for each paragraph – it is assumed that the speakers' identity is carried over from the previous paragraph. Through the course of this programme narrator Jarvis Cocker switches from being a diegetic narrative presence to playing a non-diegetic voiceover role. These occurrences are distinguished here with the suffixes '(D)' for diegetic narration and '(VO)' for non-diegetic voiceover. For brevity of transcription once individuals have been introduced they will be referred to by their initials.

Time Speech

- 00:00 **Announcer:** Thank you for downloading Wireless Nights from BBC Radio 4.
- 00:06 **Jarvis Cocker (JC):** Outside temperature 17 degrees C, full aircon, airbag, and electric windows. Okay, listener, listeners, fasten your seatbelts (it is the law), but also, at last I have you in my clutches, and we will now merge with the London traffic. Thank you. See what we can find. That's it, a nice bit of revs on there, just getting used to this baby, yeah she's got a lot of power. Oh I'm not even in gear, oh, I'm sure I took the handbrake off.
- 00:58 **JC (VO):** This is *Wireless Nights*.
- 00:58 **JC (D):** Come on, baby. Oh, oh! Where's she going? [Continues on under VO]
- 01:03: **JC (VO):** And tonight I, Jarvis Cocker, will be your chauffeur as we explore the capital after sundown. Now there are some boiled sweets in the glove compartment if

you, if you wish. Tonight's show concerns other people besides my self on night manoeuvres. Ordinary people making their way through the darkness, attempting to keep on the straight and narrow in a world filled with countless diversions. A kerb-crawl through the seamy side of town where the lights are always on red. Have I used enough driving metaphors yet?

01:57 **Film dialogue:** Each night when I return the cab to the garage I have to clean the back seat. Some nights I clean off the blood. Twelve hours' work and I still can't sleep. Damn. Days go on and on. They don't end.

02:15 **JC (VO):** Robert DeNiro as Travis Bickle, aghast at the sleaze of New York City in the 1976 film *Taxi Driver*. My, how things have changed since then.

02:26: **Jeggsy Dodd (JD):** You just pray that no-one's sick. You know when they're gonna be sick straight away.

02:31 **JC (VO):** Jeggsy Dodd: minicab driver.

02:34 **JD:** And people always say, as they're walking, staggering towards the car, you know, shirt off and everything, covered in vomit, and their mates always say, 'it's okay mate, he'll be alright.' And you say, no he won't. You just know straight away he's not gonna be alright. There's more to come, you know.

02:57 It's a quarter to eleven at night on a Sunday. Thick fog. We're on the promenade at New Brighton, heading towards the Derby Pool pub to pick up a job. God knows where they're going in this weather, but it's gonna take a long time. See bout twenty yards in front, if that. In fact I don't know even know [*sic.*] if this is the turning, I can't really see anything.

03:31 **JC (D):** There have been times in my life where I've just kind of thought, I like driving, and just keep driving, and never have to, kind of, get involved with anything, 'cos you can always just drive onto another place.

03:55 **Alan McLean (AM):** Right, what time is it now? It's, um, right – good to go at half past, yeah?

04:00 **JC (VO):** Yup.

04:03 **AM:** Everybody been to the toilet?

04:05 **JC (VO):** Oh, that's a good point, actually. Are you okay? [Scoffs] I told you to go before we set off!

04:12 **AM:** What evidence this lady wants, really, is basically, is her husband having an affair? That's it. Okay? Is everybody clear about that?

04:19 **JC (VO):** Meet Alan McLean, private investigator at AIC in Nottingham.

04:22 **AM:** Got the bag camera, Dale? The keyfob camera, we've got the standard camera which I would imagine, hopefully, that's all we'll be needing tonight. Radios charged, Dale?

04:34 **JC (VO):** Alan is briefing his surveillance team.

04:37 **AM:** He is known in the criminal world and he's a very large frame so exercise caution at all times.

04:45 **JC (VO):** Alan and his team have been hired to follow a man suspected by his wife of having an affair.

04:50 **AM:** If we feel we're going to be compromised in any way then we'll abort the mission.

04:54 **JC (VO):** You listening to this? You taking notes?

04:56 **AM:** If we need to follow him on foot I'll take the foot follow, yeah? And I'll just wear the bag camera, yeah?

05:00 **JC (VO):** Can't I wear the bag camera? I think I'd look really good in the bag camera, don't you?

05:06 **AM:** testing two three, two three testing.

05:10 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Okay, good.

05:13 **AM:** Okay mate.

05:22 On your right, right, right, first car, Dale, yeah?

05:27 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Roger.

05:30 **AM:** Dale, I'm in that first little, it's like a little nook with little garages, yeah? I'm there. As soon as he's moving off, mate, let me know because I have to be fairly close up behind him, yeah?

05:40 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Okay, roger that.

05:43 **AM:** Okay mate, and then you take the follow behind me, Dale, and we'll take it from there, yeah?

05:47 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Okay, got that.

05:48 **AM:** Okay mate.

- 05:50 This here behind us is like a small sort of housing/industrial estate, these are like lock up garages and stuff. I'm expecting him to come out of the gym, um, half eight? And that's it, mate. Sit and wait.
- 06:10 **JC (VO):** Have you got a crossword or anything?
- 06:14 **AM:** This is the waiting game.
- 06:19 **JC (VO):** I think we'll leave Alan for the moment, waiting for his suspect to finish working out. Looks like it could be a long night.
- 06:31 **JC (D):** Here we go. Approaching Piccadilly Circus.
- 06:35 **Song lyrics:** London by night, is a wonderful sight, there is magic abroad in the air...
[song continues under JC's voiceover]
- 06:44 **JC (D):** Okay, I'm in the wrong lane here but I'm going to attempt to go just straight on, you know. Here we go. Eat my dust. And, we seem to be okay, yah. You know when you're driving at night one thing you can do to stave off boredom and fatigue is to look at the registration plates of the cars in front of you and make things up. For instance this one in front of me end 'YFF'. So that could be, like, 'You Feel Fine'. Sometimes you can make rude ones up.
- 07:29 'Not so close, I hardly know you.' It's a pity that car stickers have fallen out of favour. It was always a favourite thing of mine when driving, reading things like 'My father said I'd inherited an estate and this is it', and 'Make love not war, see driver for details.'
- 08:07 Well there's not many people around in this bit of town but, interesting, we're going past a Sainsbury's car park and there seem to be like...
- 08:19 **Skater (male):** Awaail!

- 08:20 **JC (D):** I can see like people with skates on in there, seems like they're using that as a place to meet up.
- 08:27 **Skater (male):** Are you coming? You coming street skating bro?
- 08:29 **JC (D):** They're kind of coming from all over the place.
- 08:31 **Skater (male):** Look at that, cool, cool, cool, cool.
- 08:32 **JC (D):** So this is...
- 08:34 **Skater (male):** Here's some others.
- 08:35 **JC (D):** Their starting point.
- 08:37 **Skater (male):** Wassup you lot, you cool? Yeah man.
- 08:42 Usually we meet up here, in the Vauxhall, and then we usually end up going up to Westminster and onto Trafalgar Square, and then up towards Leicester Square then we might go all the way down to where Marble Arch is, and all the way back, but within that we'll stop off, just have fun throughout the night. Go to McDonald's, you know, like you do, get that energy boost. That's it really. 'Til about two, three o'clock sometimes.
- 09:05 Right you lot, let's roll, let's roll, let's roll. Let's roll.
- 09:13 When you're having fun you don't know what's going on. One minute it's ten o'clock. Next time you look back it's like twelve thirty, one o'clock, and you're not even wanting to go home, you still want a couple more hours. Sometimes we sit in Leicester Square out the way in Trafalgar Square 'til like three or four.

- 09:32 **Skater (female) no. 1:** I'm a learning support worker for fourteen to sixteen-year-olds, year tens and elevens that have been excluded from school and they come to college full time, and I'm a trainee teacher as well.
- 09:50 **Skater (female) no. 2:** I'm not working at the moment, I haven't been working for two years, so, you know, every time I try and look for work and stuff it's, like, not happening, but, when I skate I don't really think about it, when you skate you're kind of free so it's nice, like, it makes not think about reality, kind of thing, when you're skating, you feel like you're flying in a sense. It's good, though, I love it. I love skating.
- 10:33 **JC (VO):** As I said to my friend, because I am always talking, John, I said, which is not his name, the darkness surrounds us, what can we do against it? Or else shall we, and why not, buy a god damn big car? Drive, he said, and for Christ's sake look out where you're going. Robert Creeley – 'I know a man'.
- 10:57 **JD:** Another boarded up pub. The Cygnet, that was. With a dodgy-looking row of shops next to it. See, all these areas which look a bit run down always look far more run down in the fog. You know they always look a bit rougher. I'm just going to the Mersey up here. I don't know if I'm supposed to drive here. I don't know what's at the end here, but it looks well dodgy. I can hear something chiming. That's weird as it's only twenty-past eleven; it's not on the hour. I don't know where that's come from. I don't know if it's on the Liverpool side of the river or on the Wirral side of the river. Woodside Ferry which takes the ferry from the Liverpool the, err, we're just getting this weird ringing. You'd have to picture the surroundings, 23:21 and yet we're on a desolated dock area in the fog and there's a bell keeps ringing. I have no idea what that is.

- 12:28 **JC (VO):** Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee. This is getting a bit like horror movie, isn't it? I'm not scared, I'm just worried about you.
- 12:42 **JD:** With it being so still, though, you can hear all the scrap metal in the middle of the night being shovelled onto, like, ships and things and it's just carried across the river. All the scrap metal from our industrial revolution being broken down to fund China's industrial revolution. One goes to the next. Don't know if I can get out here, this looks a bit, a bit weird.
- 13:10 **JC (VO):** A death knell for British industry? Last orders? The clanging chimes of doom? Bring out your dead? You've got a vivid imagination haven't you? Seconds out, round two.
- 13:29 **AM:** Not everybody's cut out for this job. You know, it's like, this waiting around and that, that's what does a lot of people's heads in. They get bored and they get fidgety and then they get complacent, they read a book, and before they know it the car's gone past them and they've been sitting reading the book.
- 13:48 **JC (VO):** Back at the stakeout Alan is still waiting.
- 13:52 **AM:** Good surveillance operatives just can switch off but stay alert at the same time. I've had years of that, you know, from working in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Having worked out in Iraq and that there it's like because of the type of work I've done most in my life it's always involved danger. One second of complacency could have got me killed.
- 14:12 Radio check.
- 14:15 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Okay, over.

14:17 **AM:** I've been awake in jobs, on surveillance jobs, with the RUC for three-and-a-half days at a time. You know, working very deep. You can even find yourself in the boot of a car with a keyhole drilled out, you know, videoing through that. I reckon he'll move soon. I've had some very lucky escapes. 1995 I got shot in an incident with the IRA, thereafter I came to Nottingham, just to come over, get away from it all, I'd got to a stage my drinking got out of control, I'd got myself in to Alcoholics Anonymous and I'll be twenty years sober on July this year, which I'm fully proud of. And from the day I got sober I decided I was going to do all the things I ever wanted to do, and that's what I did do, I joined the Fire Service, I was in the Fire Service I worked in Nottingham here. I left that, started a private investigation company and I got the opportunity to go out and look after the chief of the Iraqi police force, I was his personal bodyguard in a team of sixteen – I was the team leader.

15:25 **JC (D):** So this is an all night garage I'm coming into now. I have an affection for all night garages. Let's park next to this taxi and freak him out.

15:44 I'm just getting some Hula Hoops. Can I get those please?

15:52 **Song lyrics:** London by night, is a wonderful sight, there is magic abroad in the air...
[song continues under JC's voiceover]

16:01 **JC (D):** It was a big step forward I think when garages kind of turned into shops and started selling food, so then that opened up the garage experience to non-drivers, and they became kind of social hubs for the late night person, the person who's been out all night or the person who gets peckish in the middle of the night. But in rough areas or roughish areas, after a certain hour you can't go into the garage to make your choices, you have to do this kind of recital at the window. You know, 'Twix, Pot

Noodle, Bounty, Double Decker, smokey bacon crisps, loaf of bread...' [continues under voiceover].

16:46 **JC (VO):** Oi! Are you nodding off? I can't say I blame you. That's the trouble with accepting lifts off strangers, isn't it? You have to sit there and listen to their boring stories all night. Because they're doing you a favour.

17:03 **JC (D):** [Continued from under voiceover] He started kind of doing things to amuse himself, so he started this system where he would give you free stuff if you would amuse him in some way. So me and my friend, who I was living with at the time, we both had glasses so he goes, 'Hey, Proclaimers! Sing me a Proclaimers song.' And we would say why should we do that? 'Because, free carton of orange juice.' So we did.

17:34 I thought that was quite enterprising.

17:40 Right. We don't need any air and water and I don't think we need to vac the car and we don't want to overgo the twenty minutes' free parking [laughs] so I think maybe we'll get back on our way shall we?

18:02 **AM:** Okay mate, ready to go. Okay, Dale?

18:05 **JC (VO):** Alan and his team are also finally on the move.

18:09 **AM:** The buzz is good.

18:10 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Reversing from parked position.

18:12 **AM:** We're safe.

18:15 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Moving forward.

18:17 **AM:** Locate it, locate it. Right, right, right at the end, Dale.

- 18:25 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Wearing a blue t-shirt.
- 18:27 **AM:** Okay mate, yeah I'm well on him. Driving thirty-five, forty miles an hour, Dale.
- 18:37 Okay, Dale, I'm behind him, got him, yeah?
- 18:41 **JC (VO):** Okay, hold on tight, you know what this means, don't you? Yes, listener: we are in an actual car chase! Okay, come on, got to stay with him. Follow the tail lights. This is exciting, isn't it? Isn't it? Isn't it?
- 18:56 **AM:** He's going right, right, right at the traffic lights, Dale.
- 19:00 **JC (VO):** Look out! Oh! There he goes! Yes! Yes!
- 19:09 **AM:** This is where holding your nerve is important, you know, a lot of people if they get eye contact in the mirror they'll be... [indecipherable with certainty]. What you've got to remember is, why would he think I'm following him? Okay Dale, I've got a car between me and him, yeah?
- 19:23 **JC (VO):** The pace is quickening. You sure you're alright? Hold tight, make sure that seat belt's fastened.
- 19:29 **AM:** Okay he's travelling at thirty-five, increasing.
- 19:31 **JC (VO):** Whoa. I hope there are no speed cameras around here.
- 19:35 **AM:** Right, he ain't going to Nottingham, Dale, and he ain't going home, because he's going a completely different way.
- 19:40 **Voice on radio (Dale):** [indecipherable]

- 19:47 **JC (VO):** Those skaters we passed earlier, SSE, are making tracks, too. It's their first night skate of 2012.
- 19:57 **Skater (female) no. 3:** On the pavement, dodging in and out, mate.
- 20:12 **Skater (male):** Jumping in off the roads I'm gonna hang on the back of the bus. Whatever. You just have fun. Dangerous but fun.
- 20:18 **Skater (female) no. 2:** It was like ten o'clock. That's why she got me a high-visibility jacket because she said I was wearing all black, skating backwards down the middle of a bus lane. Well I said I could see if a bus was coming. You only live once, isn't it?
- 20:33 **AM:** At the top of the road, Dale, facing the sandwich bar, we're going left, left, left. No we're not, vehicle stopped, Dale, you pick up the vehicle I'm going left. You got the vehicle, Dale?
- 20:45 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Yes, pulled into car park, looks like he's going into the chip shop.
- 20:49 **AM:** Okay, try and get a video clip of him, Dale, if you can.
- 20:53 **JC (VO):** Shh! Why have we stopped? Because Alan's suspect has also stopped here, at a convenience store. Now keep down. Keep out of sight.
- 21:06 **Voice on radio (Dale):** He's come out, looks like he's got food.
- 21:09 **AM:** Yeah I got him. He's a big lump, this—
- 21:12 **Voice on radio (Dale):** He's got what appears to be a bottle of Dr Pepper or Coke.
- 21:17 **AM:** Not a bottle of wine for his good lady by any chance, is it?

- 21:20 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Yeah now I can see it in the light, yep.
- 21:23 **AM:** Is it, seriously?
- 21:24 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Yeah, deffo. Probably rosé by the looks of it.
- 21:27 **AM:** He's shagging, mate. Got him. Right, we're going to– Dale, I'm still going to take this follow, yeah?
- 21:41 **JD:** Basically, nothing can shock me in the car, I've had everything. I've had gay blokes coming onto me, I've had, like, girls coming on to you, tits out, g-strings being shown, I've had a lad with a gun in the car, I've had someone who's told me he's murdered someone, I've just, I've had everything. And they all think they're the first one, you know. Any taxi driver will tell you four women in the car are worse than the four worst blokes because they shriek, the high-pitched voices going 'Oh my god' all the time, they just say, 'Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god...' Everything is 'oh my god', you know. Just screaming, and if you've got four women on coke it's like magnified because the windows are down, they're screaming at lads as you drive past, it's just like madness, you know, you just... And you find yourself driving faster to get them out the car as quick as possible. But I even have tactics if you have, they always want, like, Radio City or Juice FM on which are like kind of cheesy dancey tunes and stuff. And I always put something like Jack Johnson on, and subliminally they don't even realise they're calming down with the music. So if you put chill out music on they chill. They don't know they're doing it, but they do.
- 22:52 **Song lyrics:** Your voice is adrift I can't expect it to sing to me... [continues under voiceover]
- 23:00 **JC (VO):** Wow. I see what he means. This really is a bit of buzz killer isn't it? It's just as well because the chase is over. You alright? You look a bit green. It's alright

we're parked up now, and the trap is about to be sprung. Don't open the door, it'll make the interior light come on!

23:23 **AM:** Out the vehicle, Dale, out the vehicle. Big lad, isn't he? Please let that be a bird. Please let that...

23:37 Dale, in the bedroom with a bird, with his shirt off, can you get a clip, mate? Bastard. That's it, he's definitely at it. You see him? Shirt off, with a bird, look. One hundred percent. You get that, Dale?

23:57 **Voice on radio (Dale):** [indecipherable]

23:58 **AM:** Do you see him, in the bedroom, yeah?

24:01 **Voice on radio (Dale):** Yeah, top right-hand.

24:04 **AM:** Try explaining that to your missus. [Laughs] He's, um, banged to rights, isn't he? Just follow me round a wee bit, Dale.

24:17 What we've just witnessed now is the subject in the front main bedroom switched the light on, he's took his blue top off, he's then wrapped a towel around his waist; a lady, unknown to us at this moment in time, has entered the same bedroom, they've moved over close towards each other, he's then gone to the front bedroom window and drawn the curtains. So based on that evidence and based on the balance of probability I would suggest that the guy's having a sexual affair with some other woman. I would say ninety-five per cent of the people who call us, we catch them out. We catch that partner out. Because they already know, they're only looking for confirmation. All the signs are there, you know the hiding of the mobile phone, taking it with them even to the bathroom, the toilet, you know, it's like... Dressing up more, making a better effort for when they go to work and stuff, it's just, all the signs are there, they just need it confirming and that's what we do, we confirm it.

Sometimes this stops the person doing it and they get back together but in my experience it's like, once a cheat always a cheat. It wouldn't be unusual for this woman to ask us to follow this guy again in three months' time, six months' time, a year's time; I've followed one guy for seven times. Caught him seven times with seven different women.

25:40 **JC (VO):** Hmm. Food for thought. Actually, you've been looking a bit smarter recently. Don't tell me... No! It can't be! Really? Extramarital manoeuvres in the dark. Risky rendezvous. Hair-raising stunts, dodgy driving. I think you've had enough excitement for one night don't you? Yeah, I think I've kept you out long enough. Okay if I drop you here? We'll go out again another night, I promise. Look, here you are, look, there's a taxi coming right now... Taxi! Taxi!

26:33 **JD:** So you do see the kind of dark underbelly of life at night. Where a lot of people who make the decisions on life and stuff have got their curtains closed and they're in bed. All the councillors and stuff they're probably fast asleep when all the madness is going on. You feel like saying to them, you know, just come in the back of my taxi, I'll drive you round for an hour round the streets, and their jaw would hit the floor. 'Cos they've probably never ever seen, they've never been around about at that time of night and seen what really goes on in, you know, in their town.

27:10 **JC (VO):** But we know what happens on the mean streets at night don't we, listener? Thanks for riding shotgun with me tonight, and all those other wireless nights we've shared together. We really must do it again sometime. Meanwhile, you will remember to tip the driver, won't you?

27:43 **Announcer:** Wireless Nights was presented by Jarvis Cocker. It was produced by Lawrence Grissell and Neil McCarthy. If you enjoyed it there are many other podcasts available. Just visit www.bbc.co.uk/radio4.

A3: *The Dream You Should Be Having*

Nocturne podcast, produced by Vanessa Lowe.

N.B. As above, speakers are denoted at the beginning of their block of speech and not for each paragraph – it is assumed that the speakers' identity is carried over from the previous paragraph.

Producer Vanessa Lowe's name is shortened to VL for brevity's sake.

Time Speech

00:00 **VL:** This episode of *Nocturne* is brought to you with the support of *Kind*, makers of delicious healthy snacks using whole ingredients you can recognise and pronounce. Did you know that eating dark chocolate might help you sleep better? That's what researchers in the UK recently found. And that makes me so happy because my favourite flavour in the ten-snack sample box is the dark chocolate sea salt, and now I don't have to worry that eating one at 10 p.m. is going to keep me up. *Kind* bars are also great for a mid-morning snack, after work commute or any time you want a quick healthy treat. Try a free ten-snack sample box by going to kindsnacks.com/nocturne. All you have to pay is shipping. You'll also get to try *Kind*'s 'snack club', where you'll receive monthly snacks at a discount and get members only bonuses. Again, that's kindsnacks.com/nocturne.

01:04 You're listening to *Nocturne*; I'm Vanessa Lowe.

01:20 **Voicemail (female):** I can't sleep...

01:22 **Voicemail (male):** Wew! I can't sleep...

01:24 **Voicemail (female):** I can't sleep...

- 01:26 **Voicemail (male):** I can't sleep...
- 01:28 **Voicemail (male):** I can't sleep because...
- 01:30 **Voicemails together:** Because...
- 01:32 **Voicemail (male):** They wanna shoot bears out of helicopters. 'Cos...
- 01:36 **Voicemail (female):** You won't talk to me.
- 01:39 **Voicemail (female):** I can't sleep...
- 01:41 **Voicemail (male):** 'Cos I'm drunk.
- 01:43 **Voicemail (male):** It's the third night I've been housesitting these two dogs from hell.
- 01:46 **Voicemail (male):** I can't sleep...
- 01:47 **Voicemail (female):** Because...
- 01:49 **Voicemail (male):** I may have made the worst decision of my life.
- 01:58 **Audrey:** The project is called *Sleepless* and it is kind of two things – it's a voicemail that I set up that people can call when they can't sleep and that encourages them to talk about what's on their mind, and kind of with that idea that it would be therapeutic; and then the second part of the project, and, like, the public-facing part, is I take those messages and then I find footage to create kind of these small movies that animate the messages, and that all goes up on Instagram. The Instagram handle is *Sleeplesstheseries*.
- 02:40 **VL:** That's the creator of *Sleepless*. She's 23, lives in Brooklyn, and works as an associate producer at a small media agency. She describes herself as an aspiring

documentary filmmaker. She doesn't attach her real name to *Sleepless* because she doesn't want people's perception of the project to be mixed up with aspects of her own life and identity.

03:00 **Audrey:** I don't want people to watch it and be, like, thinking about me, and I don't want them to be thinking about, 'wow, actually she must have been so sad when she made this.' I kind of, like, hate saying this 'cos I think it sounds very, like, all so pretentious and artsy, but the work speaks for itself and, like, stands on its own or it doesn't.

03:20 **VL:** So do you want to use a fake name, or something else for me to be able to call you?

03:28 **Audrey:** Um, I feel like only really silly names are coming to mind. Um, I've always really thought Audrey was a great name, like, that? Yeah, you could go with that.

03:41 **VL:** *Sleepless* is first and foremost an art project. Each voicemail is accompanied by a short video made up of stock film clips that are sometimes spot on to what the caller is talking about, and sometimes, pretty abstract.

03:59 **Audrey:** What I try to do is at first I just listen to the message and just try to see, like, what images it evokes. Because, you know, sometimes the way people talk, it's very visual, or they'll, you know, if they're talking about love you kind of have some obvious images that come to mind, or, like even cliché. Or if they're talking about home, or, I'm working on a message right now where this girl's, like, talking about a flight and so, you know, immediately you go to like the obvious things first – a plane! But then in the rest of the video are some really, like, rich images that are more associative.

04:40 **VL:** The videos, being archival, have an old-timey feel to them, ironically making them seem sort of timeless, and there's often a quality of free association that feels whimsical or surprising.

04:54 **Voicemail (male):** I can't sleep because I'm so nervous to start a job that I never wanted in the first place, to raise money to go to a school that I never wanted to go to, but I don't really have much of a choice, do I? To go to school and get a job that I hate and live life moderately successful, I hope. Didn't do too well in school. I might not even make it. If I don't make it, all of the money that my parents are helping me put into the school will be wasted. I'm supposed to wake up in three hours to work a twelve-hour shift picking objects and getting paid minimum wage to help other people get things they don't even need. That's about it I suppose. Sometimes I think it just helps to say these things out loud.

05:55 **VL:** This feeling that it can help to say things out loud is a big part of what inspired Audrey to start *Sleepless*. She had just broken up with someone she'd been with for over a year, and then she wound up with a concussion.

06:07 **Audrey:** I actually, I fainted. It was a really weird thing where I was, kind of, um, having a really emotional post-break up. I had, like, two margaritas on an empty stomach and then ended up at a really great comedy show, but it's kind of a funny show that they always have two comedians and then one person who talks about something more serious. And at this particular show the people who are talking about something more serious were talking about abortion. Um, and they began to describe, like, a botched abortion and I just, like, I was like, 'Oh this feels kinda weird,' and then I was just, like, on the ground. I was on a stool and I just fell right back and just, like, right on my head.

- 07:00 I was not out I think for more than, like, a minute or two, and someone called an ambulance and it was really embarrassing. Honestly, I, like, as soon as I got up I immediately threw up, and I got into the ambulance and just started, like, sobbing.
- 07:22 **VL:** Between grieving over the end of a relationship and recovering from a concussion, Audrey found herself up at night.
- 07:29 **Audrey:** Yeah, I was having a lot of trouble sleeping. And I didn't really... I felt like I really wanted someone to talk to but I didn't have that, and I think I was really used to having that. It's kind of what you want in the middle of the night is just someone to talk to. You're like, if I could just get this thought out then I could go to sleep, and so I think I was kind of thinking like, God, I wish I could just talk at something. I think I was feeling very bad for myself and part of me was like, this is really childish in a way, because I can't sleep because of these feelings I'm having but also, like, I'm sure there's at least one other person in my building, or, like, at least a dozen other people up my street who can't sleep for, like, a whole host of reasons that are... I'm sure some of them are much more serious than mine.
- 08:27 **Voicemail (male):** I can't sleep because I'm jobless, it's stressful, my father's about to pass away, and I don't know what to do. I mean I do know what to do, I'm seeking jobs, I'm going back to visit my father, and it's everything you're supposed to do. Somehow it still doesn't feel right. It's like a jigsaw puzzle that you're constantly searching for about three pieces, and you know what the pieces look like but they just don't exist. You have to keep an upbeat attitude because otherwise it will consume you alive. So I just sometimes think about the positive things because why ruminate on the negative?
- 09:31 **Audrey:** You can be staying up really late because you have gone through something specific but also, sometimes, it just gets late at night and at a certain point your life

just feels bad. It doesn't really matter what's going on, but you're just, like, it's really late and everything just feels really bad. And it's kind of this weird ambiguous, like, am I doing the right things with my... Like these bigger kind of questions, like am I on the right path? And, it's kind of like, well, there's no way to know but if you say it out loud you might feel better.

10:04 **LV:** So, providing a place for people to offload their thoughts when they can't sleep was part of it, but as an artist Audrey saw the potential to do something different with these late night ruminations. She turned to the Prelinger archives, which are often used as a filler material in documentaries. She'd used them in her job when a film needed a shot to illustrate something in the past.

10:25 **Audrey:** And I was really looking for a way to use them more seriously and make them primary. A lot of the archival footage I think has a dreamy kind of quality because a lot of the home movies are silent, and they're very grainy, or they can be. When you're up at 3 a.m. thinking, you're supposed to be sleeping and you're actually supposed to be dreaming... Honestly I was kind of like, I wanna make these videos that feel like a dream. Sometimes in dreams you have these very, like, heavy, very literal images and then other times these images that don't seem to make any sense but actually, like, really hit you. And I was like... I kind of want to do *that*. I want to make the dream that someone should be having, but they're not because they're too busy being awake and worried.

11:25 **VL:** A pretty good example of the dream-like quality of the *Sleepless* videos is one for a voicemail in which a grad student talked about being overwhelmed by coming up with research ideas. It starts with pretty spot-on black and white footage of a wall of books, then slowly pans down a line of young people with blank expressions on their faces. Then it gets weird, with a blob-like thing swimming around in a jar of liquid, and then an abstract image that looks like a tiny person being sucked down

into black, swirling water. By the end of the 45-second video it really does feel like you've been in an altered state. It's a result that comes from Audrey spending many hours listening to each voicemail over and over again.

12:08 **Audrey:** It does feel like this weird process of like absorbing, honestly, like, if I sit with a certain message long enough it makes you think about your own life in a weird way. It brings up certain memories or certain ideas for yourself and so it's pretty, like, intense. It can be, it can be really intense.

12:28 **VL:** For Audrey making videos to accompany these late-night voicemails creates some potentially delicate issues. People are calling in at a vulnerable moment. It feels private, but ultimately it's not.

12:41 **Audrey:** There's one person who I'm thinking about reaching out to, she left two messages, one after the other, because sadly my voicemail won't let people leave messages longer than three minutes, and towards the end of the second message she says, 'You know, I don't even know if I want anyone to hear this.' So I've really been going back and forth in my head about whether or not to contact her to say, like, 'Hey, you left me this message, I would love to work with it, but you seemed unsure.' One person in particular, she called and she talked about, like, wanting to hurt herself, and I, like, wondered when she hung up the phone, did she hurt herself? Has she hurt herself since then? Is she okay? Why did she want to? What is going on? I would feel very happy if I met the person and they were like, 'I called your number!' But a couple of people have asked me, like, wouldn't it be so cool if you did, like, a follow up and, like, called a bunch of people and, like, saw how they felt about it? And I... I'm sure it would be cool, but it would also be exhausting. I think I enjoy the limitations of it. This is a relationship in a way where they give me two minutes of their feelings and their voice and then I give them a small movie; but I'm kind of glad that the relationship has, like, limits and boundaries. I mean, if someone

called me and said, like, I'm on a ledge or I'm going to hang up and swallow a bottle of pills, like, I would call them back immediately. Hopefully I would be there in time, I might be asleep!

14:24 **VL:** Audrey does worry sometimes that she gets more out of the voicemails than the people who leave them.

14:30 **Audrey:** Because when you're a filmmaker and you're filming someone you're taking this person's life and you're making a story, and that story's going to belong largely to you, and that dynamic, it doesn't feel balanced. In a way this feels a little more equal – you're anonymous and I'm anonymous, it almost feels like one-to-one, like you leave me one message and I give you one small video, and we have created a somewhat equal transaction.

15:01 I hope there's this sense of, like, oh my God, this cool thing came out of, like, my late night anxiety attack – now it's a tiny movie. I truly hope that it feels good for the person who calls and they get a sense of relief. And then I hope that for other people they're like, 'Oh wait, like, someone else is up late at night, like, thinking about a boy, like "me too."' And the larger thing that I'm trying to do, and that I'm, like, really interested in is kind of creating this weird archive of, like, why couldn't people sleep back in July of 2016? Like, people who can't sleep for a bigger reason? Not that, like, the personal reasons aren't big but, for example there is one message I have up now that someone's talking about they can't sleep 'cos they're really disturbed about the number of police shootings of young black men and how this just keeps happening, and, like, she doesn't understand what to do.

16:01 Someone left me a really beautiful message that I'm really, really excited about, about the Cubs winning. I just think it's a really cool way to maybe view bigger

events that are going on. What happens nationally and, like, on the world stage impacts individuals, like, everyday.

16:18 **Voicemail (female):** I went to sleep at 9 o'clock – at that point the polls were pointing towards Hillary – and I woke up at midnight, and it said that Donald Trump had a 95 per cent chance of winning and I was in my bed and disconnected and alone. I just kept on picturing what my tomorrow is gonna be like. Tomorrow in Trump's America, I don't know how to face my students, 'cos, if I'm feeling upset I bet they're feeling that, like, a thousand-fold. Um, my friend Evan just said, well I called my mom, just to talk to somebody who loved me. And I thought maybe that's what my students need.

17:08 **VL:** While Audrey doesn't want *Sleepless* to be about her, that's not to say that the project hasn't significantly affected her. In much the same way that she hopes it affects you.

17:18 **Audrey:** I feel so much more normal now because, I don't know, I think before I used to just, like, stay up and just think about my life. Did I make the right decision, like, moving to this city, taking this job? Am I doing the right things? Do I have enough money? Why am I so messy? There's just, like, all these kind of, pointless questions that you can bother yourself with late at night, and now I'm just, like, 'Oh my God, so many people are asking themselves these same questions, and torturing themselves.' I feel so much relief, almost like part of me is laughing because there must be at least a hundred other people in the neighbourhood and we're all up just, like, wondering if we're doing the right things. It feels so immense when you're going through it. You feel crazy. And then it's, like, I'm *not* crazy.

18:29 Oh I feel so bad 'cos I'm, like, such a Millennial and I don't know the number by heart, isn't that awful? Hold up, I'm, like, looking up the number now. Okay, yeah, so

if you are interested I would love to have your phone calls, you can find all the videos on Instagram, it's 'at' *Sleeplesstheseries* and the phone number, if you wanna call, which would be lovely, is 917-426-2642.

18:56 **Voicemail (female):** I can't sleep because the smoke detector is on low battery and it's beeping every minute and I can't reach it to take out the batteries because I'm too short and my step stool isn't tall enough, and I'm single now and I don't have a tall boy who can take the batteries out of my smoke detector. So I'm laying in bed with two pillows on either side of my head trying to sleep and trying not to think about the horrible beeping noise or why this is the only time I am unhappy to be single.

19:56 **VL:** You've been listening to *Nocturne*; I'm Vanessa Lowe. *Nocturne* is produced by me, and was created by myself and Kent Sparling, who also composed the theme music. Find out about all the music in this episode at nocturepodcast.org in the notes for this episode. You can also find links there for the *Sleepless* project and the Prelinger archives. Support for *Nocturne* comes from *Kind*, makers of healthy and delicious snacks. Try ten *Kind* bars for free, just pay shipping. Go to kindsnacks.com/nocturne for full details. Again, that's kindsnacks.com/nocturne. Thank you to the rest of the *Nocturne* team, Robin Galante who creates all the exquisite, eccentric art for this show, and Eric Peterson who designed and maintains our beautiful website. *Nocturne* is proud to be a member of *The Heard*, a collective of smart and beautiful storytelling podcasts. Find out more at theheardradio.com. That's H-E-A-R-D. Thanks for listening.

Appendix B

Email correspondence with musicians taking part in the *Goodwin Sands Radiogram* live programmes *Transmission* (2018) and *Magical Mystery Tour* (2019) performed before an audience at the *Free Range* series of experimental music, film, art and poetry events in Canterbury, Kent. The musicians were contacted by email and asked to reflect on their thoughts and experiences of taking part in the shows, and their replies are reprinted in full here to contextualise that which is quoted in chapter 4.5.

Contents

- B1: Email enquiry from myself as producer
- B2: Response from Sam Bailey (piano and harmonium)
- B3: Response from Tom Jackson (clarinet)
- B4: Response from Oliver Perrott-Webb (electric guitar)

B1: Email enquiry from myself as producer (26th July 2019)

Hello Sam, Tom and Oliver!

As you may be aware, I am currently in the write-up stage of my PhD thesis and I am writing commentaries for my practice-based pieces.

As such, I wonder if I might have a few minutes of your time to give your honest feedback on the live Radiogram shows in which you performed please? I will use your comments and feelings about the performances in my evaluations in my thesis.

If you would like to refresh your memories, the programmes can be heard here:

GSR 'Transmission' (2018): <http://www.goodwinsandsradio.org/ep7-transmission-special.html>

GSR 'Magical Mystery Tour' (2019): <http://www.goodwinsandsradio.org/ep8-magical-mystery-tour-special.html>

I wonder if you might comment on some aspects such as the following:

- The nature of taking part, perhaps in comparison to any other live performances you have given
- Whether you would like to share any thoughts on the way the programmes were constructed in terms of the amount of freedom you were given as improvisers, or more generally
- Whether you thought the over all performance was emotionally affecting and what your contribution brought to that (this is particularly interesting for my research)
- Any particular thoughts on what aspects worked well or what you might change as performers and improvisers
- Whether you have any thoughts as to how the programmes might be received by podcast listeners not present on the night and whether that influenced your playing
- Thoughts on narrative structure of the programmes and any sort of sense of the authenticity of the programmes (you are welcome to interpret this as you wish!)
- Podcasts are often thought of as providing a high level of intimacy – might you feel that this is the case here, too?

Sorry if this seems like a lot, you really don't need to comment on all of it (I haven't the room to write up such a large amount of feedback, either!), just maybe see if there are one or two points that you feel might be particularly relevant to your thoughts and jot down a few ideas in response if you don't mind.

I want to say thanks once again for your taking part in what has been such an extraordinary part of my research activities and life in general! I hope we can do another one soon!

Very best and kindest thanks

Ben

B2: Response from Sam Bailey (piano and harmonium) (27th July 2019)

Hi Ben,

It's good to hear from you. I wish you the best for this last lap of the PhD writing.

- *The nature of taking part, perhaps in comparison to any other live performances you have given*

For an experimental/improvised music performance it was unusually formal, theatrical and pre-planned.

- *Whether you would like to share any thoughts on the way the programmes were constructed in terms of the amount of freedom you were given as improvisers, or more generally*

As you know, I have some questions for you regarding your choice to use live improvisation to provide music for your podcast. While the rest of the show (in particular the pre-recorded audio but also the stage design and script) is well crafted and 'composed' precisely, I was unsure of the purpose of having the music improvised with little preparation. The podcast foregrounds the people being interviewed. I'm not sure that the audience understood or cared about the fact that the musicians were improvising. The theatre was a bit confusing to me: the audience were engaging with the voices and stories of the interviewees but in front of them were musicians in formal dress who seemed unsure of what they were doing. I thought the audience would be unsure who was in the foreground. To my surprise it worked really well for the audience and this is what counts in the end. I think this is down to the strength of your audio.

The sticking point here I think is the fact that the audio was pre-recorded. I have improvised with live dancers or theatre performers before and this seemed more natural: all

the performers are there in the moment. Improvising with your audio was a little bit like the disjunct between the audio and the visual in that John Smith film ‘The Girl Chewing Gum’.

- *Whether you thought the over all performance was emotionally affecting and what your contribution brought to that (this is particularly interesting for my research)*

Your skill as a listener and editor is exceptional and the podcast would probably work equally well on an emotional level with a range of different musical contributions. I felt that when I re-recorded my piano part I was able to be more sensitive to the stories/voices/emotions because I had heard them a couple of times by that point. In the live performance I wasn’t even sure that the female interviewee was talking about being an MS sufferer. My attention was taken up with the script, the cues, the present moment, managing the night, *etc.*, and I missed things in the podcast that may have been clearer to the audience. In fact this is both a pro and con of your work: sometimes, due to your familiarity with the material, I think you credit the listeners with slightly more understanding than they have. At least this has been the case with me. However, I realise I also think this is a strength of the work but I suspect that not all the delightful moments of disorientation are deliberate.

- *Any particular thoughts on what aspects worked well or what you might change as performers and improvisers*

Involving the performers in a studio recording of the music, editing this carefully with the interviews and then letting the performers hear this before doing the live gig might work better. Or would it? A little more reflection appeared to improve my ability to provide effective music so perhaps a dress rehearsal/run-through on the night would be all that was needed.

- *Whether you have any thoughts as to how the programmes might be received by podcast listeners not present on the night and whether that influenced your playing*

I did not consider later listeners. There was plenty to occupy my attention on the night and my performer instincts kept me in the present moment, I didn't think about creating a 'work' or a repeatable audio object.

- *Thoughts on narrative structure of the programmes and any sort of sense of the authenticity of the programmes (you are welcome to interpret this as you wish!)*

Picking up Oliver's point about moral decisions: I had a sense of disorientation/caution because I wasn't sure what the tone of each section was supposed to be or where it was heading. This was the first time I had heard the material: should I be underscoring it in a gently comedic way or a menacing way? Should I allow myself to treat the speech as music and obliterate the semantic content by playing over/with the speech? If I started by playing it arch or sentimental and then it turns out to be genuinely moving have I just been disrespectful to the interviewee? This was especially on my mind because I knew that some of the interview subjects were in the audience!

- *Podcasts are often thought of as providing a high level of intimacy – might you feel that this is the case here, too?*

Alongside the pre-recorded/live dichotomy there was also an interesting tension between the intimacy of the form and the public nature of a performance.

I feel I have over-shared here. Forgive me! I hope that some of it is useful.

Sam

B3: Response from Tom Jackson (clarinet) (14th August 2019)

Hi Ben!

Sorry for how long this has taken me...

- *The nature of taking part, perhaps in comparison to any other live performances you have given*

I tried to approach this like I would any other gig, that is that there are always constraints and considerations to make. Here I was following a script/score and improvising at moments allocated by the composer – in that regard I didn't consider myself a free improviser during this event, I was a performer using certain methodologies to cater to a composer's demands.

- *Whether you would like to share any thoughts on the way the programmes were constructed in terms of the amount of freedom you were given as improvisers, or more generally*

I didn't question my degree of freedom (see above)

- *Whether you thought the over all performance was emotionally affecting and what your contribution brought to that (this is particularly interesting for my research)*

I recall being very moved by the interviews. I didn't question my own contribution.

- *Any particular thoughts on what aspects worked well or what you might change as performers and improvisers*

As a performer I might encourage some prior development on the nature of how the music might make a directed contribution to the podcast

- *Whether you have any thoughts as to how the programmes might be received by podcast listeners not present on the night and whether that influenced your playing*

I am in a constant struggle to simultaneously ignore the audience and be obsessed with what they are thinking. In this event I thought about the audience more than usual. I was also concerned that my playing might get in the way of some of the interviews/recordings

- *Thoughts on narrative structure of the programmes and any sort of sense of the authenticity of the programmes (you are welcome to interpret this as you wish!)*

I have very little knowledge of this kind of programme

- *Podcasts are often thought of as providing a high level of intimacy – might you feel that this is the case here, too?*

I do, I felt there was an invitation into people's lives and private thoughts and I hope that the music was received with a similar feeling of invitation.

B4: Response from Oliver Perrott-Webb (electric guitar) (26th July 2019)

Hi Ben,

Here's some thoughts on a few of those points below for ya (numbered to make life that little bit easier).

- 1. Responding to voices which do not intend to be accompanied felt more akin to playing with natural sounds than with other musicians. This opened up a curious space between listening to words/content and listening to voices, one which is hard to contend with, even on a level as simple as whether to play or not.
- 2. The level of freedom was a real test for the reasons given above. Given the content of some of the more sensitive passages, this regularly made contributing an ethical decision as much as a musical one: What can I possibly contribute to this story (when even silence is a contribution)? What am I saying by electing to follow/antagonise/support this?
- 3. I found the piece very emotionally affecting, particularly regarding stories of medical trauma. Upon reflection, I feel that I may have overplayed in these sections; allowing those voices and stories to have their own space and providing musical accompaniment which empowers that rather than plays over it remains very challenging.
- 4. Covered in point 3.
- 5. I did not think about this at the time as it felt important to be with the stories as they were told.
- 6. You are a fantastic listener and have a natural ability to allow people to tell their own stories, a feat which comes across beautifully in your work and is sorely lacking from our society as a whole.
- 7. Covered in point 6 really, but absolutely in the case of your work. You come to trust the voice of someone after prolonged listening to a podcast. That you use this

space to tell other people's stories, and to trust in your ability to do so with such compassion, is just wonderful.

All my best and coolest regards,

Oliver