

Institution: Bath Spa University
Unit of Assessment: 35
Title of case study: Creativity and originality in songwriting
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

This case study demonstrates the application of Joe Bennett's research into strategies for quantifying, observing and analysing creative processes used by songwriters. Impact has been achieved through three researcher-practitioners at the University – Bennett himself, plus Davey Ray Moor and Richard Parfitt. The research has been disseminated outside of academia through the publicly accessible workshops at the UK Songwriting Festival and Burnsong, which have received national media coverage (BBC, Sunday Times) and attracted participants from all over the world. The research has also had an impact in the commercial music industry through Bennett's forensic musicology songwriting consultancy reports, which have been used by music publishers and law courts in the settlement of songwriter copyright disputes. Summaries of the research have been presented to a non-academic music audience via international print publication (*Total Guitar Magazine*). Practitioners connected with the research (Moor and Parfitt) have achieved top 10 hits and international music publication for non-academic audiences.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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The research is based within musicology because it aims to define creative processes and originality thresholds in popular song. It also analyses creative behaviours of individuals and teams and has been published in both musicology and psychology contexts. The underpinning research listed below took the form of: academic journal articles, conference papers, a book chapter, co-written songs with corresponding performances/broadcasts, and confidential forensic musicology reports for music industry clients. The primary research itself includes interviews with successful songwriters, musicological analysis of copyright disputes in US and UK case law, active work on copyright disputes (some resulting in case law – see references), and analysis of live songwriting sessions (with international publication of outcomes – see Ashgate book chapter and *Total Guitar* articles).

Academic publications

Observation fieldwork for the creativity research (studying the behaviours of songwriters in collaborative or creatively constrained contexts) began in 2004 when Bennett launched the UK Songwriting Festival, and is ongoing as at November 2013. Initial findings were shared in 2010 (Art of Record Production conference and subsequent 2011 journal of proceedings) and more detailed psychology work was published in 2012 as a book chapter (Ashgate Psychology of Music series). Bennett's concurrent work on originality and similarity thresholds in popular song and observational methodologies for songwriters' processes was disseminated at conferences during 2013 (IASPM Spain, Art of Record Production Quebec, PopMAC Liverpool).

Compositions and underpinning fieldwork for research

Bennett's 10 compositions for Rockschooll draw on his academic research into collaboration and constraint in collaborative songwriting. Compositions are created within specified artistic constraints, and are 'linearly collaborative' whereby the constraints of form and duration are pre-specified and the composer (Bennett) uses these constraints as a creative stimulus to make the work. The compositions, which are published worldwide in the Rockschooll syllabus 2012-2018, are used as set pieces for guitarists, bassists and drummers studying for formal music Grades 1-8. Bennett, Moor and Parfitt have all undertaken commercial collaborative songwriting activities throughout the audit period. All three researcher-practitioners have been undertaking observational fieldwork (of songwriters' processes) together via the UK Songwriting Festival, which is an annual meeting of academics, professional and amateur songwriters, music industry guests and researcher-practitioners. Bennett collects these outcomes together for analysis; the fieldwork

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explores negotiated creativity in collaborative contexts and manifests itself in his book chapters and conference papers. In commercial terms, the fieldwork informs Bennett, Moor and Parfitt's commercial work, whereby compositions are created within known creative constraints using collaborative songwriting techniques developed at the Songwriting Festival (and summarised in Bennett's published research). Moor's work with Carl Barat (of The Libertines) on the latter's self-titled debut album featured several songs that were co-written with Moor with the intention of them being performed in Barat's artistic (and literal) 'voice'.

Public events

The UK Songwriting Festival (established in 2004 by Bath Spa University) is an annual public workshop event, open to all songwriters, where creative processes are explored, analysed and shared. It is organised by Bath Spa University and has been hosted at the University itself (2004-2010) and more recently in partnership with Scottish songwriting organisation Burnsong (2012 and 2013), with funding support from the University and from Creative Scotland. Media coverage of the event in 2009 had a reach of 422,028 and a value equivalent to advertising of £8,849.47. Bennett's theoretical work on creative constraint in songwriting underpins the curriculum for taught sessions and workshop tasks; Moor, Parfitt and many other professional songwriters contribute to the analysis and workshop sessions, and host discussions relating to collaborative and/or constrained creativity in songwriting. Notable participant songwriters and industry speakers include Richard Thompson, Eddi Reader, Chris Difford, Boo Hewerdine, Iain Archer (Snow Patrol), Nigel Beaham-Powell (deputy chair, PRS), and Midge Ure.

Confidential reports

Bennett's research into songwriters' working methods and his analyses of originality thresholds in songwriting has resulted in frequent commissions (2007-current) as a forensic musicologist by music industry clients (music publishers, advertising agencies or individual songwriters). These documents are all comparative song analyses using a combination of analytical methods (reductive/notational, waveform analysis, spectrography, nulling, historical musicology, prior art searches) to ascertain the extent to which copying between songwriters may or may not have occurred. Clients include Universal Music Publishing, Warner/Chappell Music Publishing, Kassner Music, Adelphoi Music, Michael Simkins LLP, Van Straten solicitors, and many individual songwriters. Bennett has worked on some high profile cases (including, for example, cases involving platinum selling albums, a well-known jazz standard and UK top 10 hits) and is recorded on the UK Music Publisher's Association's register of expert witnesses.

Position held at Bath Spa University

Joe Bennett: Subject Leader, Commercial Music (2001-2005); Head of Department of Music (2005-2008); Dean of Music and Performing Arts (2008-present)
Davey Ray Moor: Senior Lecturer in Commercial Music (2005-present)
Richard Parfitt: Senior Lecturer in Commercial Music (2009-present)

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Bennett, Joe. "Collaborative Songwriting – the Ontology of Negotiated Creativity in Popular Music Studio Practice." In *Journal of the Art of Record Production* 2010. Leeds, UK: Art of Record Production, 2011. <http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/864/>
- Bennett, Joe. *Mohair Mountain (Grade 6 Guitar Examination Set Work)*, Rockscool Instrumental Grades (London: Rockscool Ltd, 2011).
- Bennett, Joe. "Constraint, Collaboration and Creativity in Popular Songwriting Teams." In *The Act of Musical Composition: Studies in the Creative Process*. SEMPRES Studies in The Psychology of Music. London: Ashgate, 2012. <http://goo.gl/ADXeN7>
- Bennett, Joe. "'You Won't See Me' – in Search of an Epistemology of Collaborative Songwriting." *Journal on the Art of Record Production* Vol. 8. Presented at the International Art of Record Production conference, Quebec, Canada: Art of Record Production, 2013.
- Bennett, Joe. "Applying Melodic Analysis to Infer the Extent of Plagiarism in Popular Song Authorship Disputes," International Conference on Analyzing Popular Music: Society for Music Analysis/University of Liverpool, July 2013.

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Bennett, Joe. "Two Worlds Collide – Originality and Plagiarism in Songwriting". Presented at the Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Challenging Orthodoxies conference, Gijon, Spain: IASPM, 2013.

Barât, Carl, with Moor, Davey Ray et al. *Carl Barât* (self-titled debut album). Arcady Records/PIAS International, 2010.

Evidence of Quality

The book chapter, journal articles and conference papers have been through a rigorous peer-review process. Bennett was commissioned by Rockschool to compose pieces for their internationally-delivered syllabus. Moor's collaboration with Barât was [Album Of The Week in The Independent](#) and BBC Radio 6, received four-star reviews in *Uncut* and *Mojo*, and was playlisted on BBC Radio 2 and Single Of The Week on BBC Radio 1's Zane Lowe show.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact takes three forms:

- Impact on listeners – International artistic and commercial success of the compositions.
- Impact on songwriters – Experiential collaborative projects between university staff and non-academic musicians; dissemination of new theoretical frameworks for constrained or collaborative songwriting through international print and web media, and creation of publicly-available songwriting curricula.
- Impact on music industry – Confidential musicology reports for music industry clients.

Since 2004 the researcher-practitioners (Bennett, Parfitt, Moor) have been researching strategies for the analysis (and also teaching) of creative processes in songwriting, with the aim of identifying and describing creatively effective methods for writing songs collaboratively. These findings have been influential outside academia, and have led to collaborative songs and compositions whose creative processes were informed by the emerging research.

How the research led to the impact

Throughout the nine-year timescale (2004-13) the researchers developed strategies for the analysis and teaching of collaborative songwriting (and collaborative creativity generally). Findings were regularly fed back into teaching (public and undergraduate) for further development. Researchers also used these identified creative strategies in their own commercial work. Finally, the academic research findings were rewritten as a series of 18 *Total Guitar Magazine* articles for worldwide distribution in order to disseminate the theoretical frameworks to a wide mainstream audience of songwriters.

Bennett's work as a forensic musicologist builds on extant recent research in this area from the fields of law and popular musicology, and this music industry work informs academic papers. Bennett compares case law and creative practice in different countries, and this academic work further informs work on future professional authorship disputes.

Beneficiaries of the impact

Emergent songwriters worldwide (articles and events); music purchasers (creative work); other songwriting events providers (events); teachers (the UK Songwriting Festival event attracted over 500 songwriters from 2004-2012, some of whom were teachers of songwriting themselves, enabling them to disseminate the teaching methods to their own students); magazine publishers (articles); record labels and music publishers (creative work).

Confidential forensic musicology work benefits music publishers and law professionals, who have used Bennett's song analyses as evidence to resolve copyright disputes between the parties. This eventually benefits songwriters, whose Intellectual Property is safeguarded as a result of the evidence provided in Bennett's reports. Music industry professionals also benefit from Bennett's research – he has appeared as an expert panellist for PRS for Music (Soundalikes and Plagiarism

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event, PRS House, London, March 2011) and for the international Audio Engineering Society annual conference ('The timeline never lies', AES 135, New York, October 2013).

Evidence of extent and nature of impact

The impact of creative work (Parfitt and Moor) can be measured in part by its commercial success and international distribution through mainstream media channels. The artists with whom Parfitt and Moor were working performed the collaboratively written songs on worldwide tours, achieving radio broadcasts in more than 50 countries each. Barât and Moor's songs have resulted in sales of over 100,000 copies and significant press coverage, including Album of the Week in the Independent. Three of Moor's songs for Barât were BBC playlisted. Performances of works include major international music festivals and two sell-out world tours, and Barât headlined the Leftfield Stage at Glastonbury Festival in 2010 performing songs by Moor.

Bennett's compositions were commissioned and selected by Rockschool for worldwide publication, and now sell around more than 50,000 copies per year worldwide, supporting the technical development of training musicians.

Bennett's magazine articles (published worldwide with an international monthly circulation of c.48,000 print copies per month over an 18 month period – total approx. 850,000) provide evidence that the findings of the research have reached a very significant number of songwriters over an extended period, enhancing their understanding of the songwriting process.

From 2007 Bennett has collaborated with an external public-facing songwriting organisation www.burnsong.org, leading to performances at BBC Glasgow (2007) and the Scottish Parliament (2009). In 2012 these successful collaborations led to the UK Songwriting Festival 2012 being delivered in partnership with Burnsong with additional support from Creative Scotland.

Bennett's forensic musicology work is named in court transcripts (see references for sample) where his expert opinion has been used successfully to resolve music copyright disputes.

Dates of impacts: 2004-2013 (UK Songwriting Festival); 2010-2013 (magazine articles); 2008-2013 (creative work); 2007-2013 (confidential reports).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 1) Festival review: Sinclair, David. "UK Songwriting Festival at Bath Spa University" *Sunday Times*. September 6, 2009. Mirror of article available at <http://www.uksongwritingfestival.com/2009/09/06/swf-in-the-sunday-times/> Impact on creative practice.
- 2) Press coverage: BBC News - *UK Songwriting Festival First for Galloway*. Glasgow, August 16, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-19284817>; and http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/music/article6818780.ece. Impact on creative practice.
- 3) Individual: Solicitor, Simpson & Marwick Solicitors. Impact of forensic musicology on the legal process.
- 4) Legal opinion report: <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/opinions/2012CSOH158.html>. Impact of forensic musicology on the legal process.
- 5) Individual: Editor, Future Publishing. Impact of Bennett's research on guitarists, and distribution of research outcomes worldwide.