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Master Thesis

Title:

Can Electronic Music Be Subversive?

Analyzing the development of the mainstream journalistic discourse about artistic authenticity and subversive potential of electronic popular music in Germany during the outgoing 20th century.

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Kann elektronische Musik subversiv sein?

Eine Analyse zur Entwicklung des journalistischen Diskurses bezüglich Authentizität und subversivem Potential von elektronisch-populären Musikstilen in Deutschland in der zweiten Hälfte späten des 20. Jahrhunderts.

Die Verwendung von elektronisch programmierbaren Instrumenten in populärer Musik ab dem Beginn der 1970er und die damit verbundene Entwicklung neuer tanzbarer elektronischer Musikgenres (Disco, House, Techno) hat kulturgeschichtlich zu deutlichen Veränderungen der ästhetischen und kulturellen Bewertungsmaßstäbe von Musikproduktionen und Bühnenperformances populärer Musik geführt, sowohl für die Künstler als auch für das Publikum bzw. für die Hörer. Gerade in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren wurde elektronisch-produzierte populäre Musik oft noch wegen ihrer "maschinellen Ästhetik" und vermeintlich mangelnder subversiver politischer Botschaft beschuldigt, einem oberflächlichen massentauglichem kapitalistischen Utopismus sowie dem Verlust der Authentizität bzw. Aura in den Klängen und den damit verbundenen sozialen Praxen zu Vorschub leisten (vgl. Garcia, 2014).

Mittels einer kritischen Analyse des impliziten und expliziten Mediendiskurses (CDA) auf diesem Feld in den Jahren von 1975 bis 1985 möchte die vorliegende Arbeit eine Antwort auf die Frage finden, wie es zu solchen weitverbreiteten gesellschaftlichen Zuschreibungen kommen konnte und ab wann und auf welche Weise ein klarer Zusammenhang zwischen handgespielter Musik und Authentizität bzw. Subversion diskursiv konstruiert wurde. Das Datenmaterial für diese Analyse besteht aus 50 Artikeln der Zeitschrift Musikexpress (Interviews und Bandvorstellungen), die sich mit dem Debüt von Popularmusik-Künstlern aus diesem Zeitraum befassen und, in denen Fragen zu elektronisch programmierten Musikelementen direkt angesprochen wurden.

Neben der Diskursanalyse zur historischen Entstehung dieser Zuschreibungen wird in der Arbeit zusätzlich die zeitgenössische Situation (ab etwa dem Jahr 2000) der durch Computer-Software steuerbaren elektronischen Musik in den Blick genommen, welche in gewissem Sinne eine Wiederkehr der handgemachten Live-Performance auch in diesen Genres erlaubt, wodurch sich erneute Veränderungen bei der diskursiven Zuschreibung von Subversion- und Protestpotential ergeben könnten. Zur Analyse dieser Vermutung werden drei Interviews mit gegenwärtig aktiven Künstlern aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen der elektronischen Musik ex-novo geführt, um entsprechende Unterschiede zur vorherigen „programmierbaren Ära" elektronischer Popularmusik herauszuarbeiten.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, wie die Kulturindustrie ihren hegemonialen Einfluss auf den kunst- und musikbezogenen Diskurs mit Hilfe massenmedialer Publikationsorgane und Pop/Rock-Intellektuellen (Journalisten) ausübt, um die marktbedingten Bedürfnisse zu erfüllen. Für den betrachteten historischen Kontext zeigen die Analyseergebnisse, wie zunächst die meisten betrachteten Künstler wegen ihres scheinbaren Mangels an Authentizität kritisiert wurden. Parallel zeigt das gleiche Medium die Tendenz, eine andere Annährung zu Künstlern zu haben, deren Karriere im Rahmen der elektronischen Szene schon etabliert ist. Ihnen wird also erlaubt, andere Musiker zu beurteilen, und auch Leitfäden für die Erschaffung „reale" Kunstwerke zu geben. Die aus den Interviews gewonnenen Erkenntnisse bestätigen diese Tendenz teilweise, obwohl jede/r Musiker/in zeigt ihre/seine Neutralität bezüglich der Vorliebe der Instrumente betont, denn diese sei keine Notwendige Voraussetzung für Authentizität.

Abstract

The introduction of electronically programmable instruments in popular music during the '70s led to the development of electronic Dance music (EDM) genre. These brought about major cultural changes in the audiences' appreciation criteria for pop-music artists and performances. Early accusations put forward by music journalists towards the new cultural movements like Disco and House were aimed at its machine-made aesthetics and the supposed lack of a clear and subversive political message. The new genres were suspected of being a superficial vehicle for capitalist utopian-massification, which subsequently lead to a diminished attribution of authenticity of the electronic music artists, their sounds and the socio-cultural practices connected to it.

By means of a critical analysis of the journalistic discourse about electronic Pop music artists in the German mainstream popular music magazine *Musikexpress* from 1975 to 1985, this paper traces back the historic development of journalists' assessment standards for virtuosity, authenticity and subversion in the electronic music age, in order to understand when and how the evaluation standards alongside the technological development in music changed. The sample used for this analysis are interviews and reports issued in the decade mentioned, in which new EDM producers and performers were directly interviewed about their use of electronic instrumentation. The second empirical section will explore how the discourse has affected in the contemporary music scene, mostly characterized by digital and computer instruments. Three professional producers of different electronic music styles, active after the early 2000s, were interviewed and questioned about their relationship with such types of instrumentation.

Results show how some of the mostly debuting bands interviewed, were mistreated regarding their production techniques and also were, with more or less subtle discursive procedures accused, not to be authentic in their sound or not being artists at all. On the other side the same medium later takes a totally different approach towards musicians which already had established commercial success. The interviews tend to reproduce some of those elements, while all of the interviewed musician underline their neutrality regarding the instruments' choice, as it is not a necessary precondition for a definition of authenticity.

1. Framing Authenticity and Electronic Developments in Music

1.1. <u>Introduction</u>

The introduction of electronically programmable instruments in popular music during the '70s led to the development of electronic Dance music (EDM) genres which brought about a major cultural change regarding the audiences' appreciation criteria for pop-music artists and performances. Despite the growing popularity of those genres and instruments in the '70s, they were heavily stigmatized from the Pop and Rock avant-garde, who, as argued by Richard Dyer in his article "In Defense of Disco" (1979), related it to a vacuous cultural-transmitter of "wrong values", such as capitalistic music production, superficial and escapist utopia, lack of oppositional and political message, excessive emotionality and unauthentic musical aesthetics (Garcia, 2014, p.1). In his essay Dyer conversely praises the new electronic music genres, especially Dance music such as Disco. He changes the point of view and considers them as a new musical approach, which would encourage personal contacts and offering a way out from daily capitalistic life. Hence, he interprets them as expressing a subversive potential in a new shape, bringing about a utopian and escapist space in form of entertainment, along with body-related eroticism and a consequent Disco-Romanticism (Garcia, 2014, pp.2-4).

Other accusations moved by exponents of the Pop/Rock intellectual front towards artists who embraced new techniques were not just related to the socio-political background, but also to their supposed manifest lack of virtuosity. In particular, musicians have been (and still are) widely criticized and stigmatized both by the musical industry and by the Pop/Rock avant-garde about the perceived showiness' scarcity and sterility. In fact, both the two fronts seem to share the opinion that electronic musicians would just act motionless in front of their synthesizers or machines without providing a "real" Rock'n'Roll show during their performance (Reynolds, 2007, para.11), extending their arguments to an alleged absence of musical and set-up knowledge for the correct use of such automatic-functioning machines (Black, 2010, p.556).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the point in time when the debate about an alleged problem of authenticity and virtuosity of electronically produced and performed music began to proliferate within the discourse about popular music in Germany. It is interesting to understand which evidence has been brought forward to sustain mainstream and Rock avant-gardistic arguments, which discursive strategies toward artists embracing new technologies in their composition's concept were used, with the aim to deduce how mass-media penetrated the public opinion and induce the masses to maintain a pre-given approach to a cultural phenomena.

To fulfill this purpose, I will first frame the theoretical problem giving a definition for the concept of *cultural hegemony*, as formulated by Antonio Gramsci in order to describe how institutional structures impose their ideological power with subtle procedures upon the society without recurring to violence. Then I will focus on the explanation of the concepts of *authenticity* and

subversion in relation to artworks and cultural goods in the age of mechanical reproduction, as well as on the way these can be applied on the discourse about (electronic) music.

For the sake of understanding the evolutionary path of electronic instruments, as well as their impact on the society and its consciousness, a distinct paragraph will briefly elucidate the history of electronic music. This will begin with its pioneers and early instruments, and, going through early analogue mass-products, will end with a perspective on digital and contemporary software-based instruments, paying attention to the contrast each of those transitions created with the previous generation. Successively, I will take a closer look at Germany within the context of electronic music production, framing the relevance of the research's topic.

Shortly before introducing the two empirical sections that will follow and support my argumentation, I will explain the research dimensions around which latter will be structured and on the basis they will be analyzed. These categories are constituted by the performance as artistic act, artistic identity, virtuosity and subversion.

Both empirical sections aim to investigate how the changing paradigm in musical technology affected the public and specialist opinion, and how the latter reflected on musicians under the named layers. The first empirical section will deal with the transition between acoustic to electronically programmable instruments, under a mass-perception during the decade between the '70s and the '80s. A Critical Discourse Analysis is applied on a sample of articles on artists using electronically programmable instruments during the decade 1975-1984. These are taken from *Musikexpress*, a mainstream music magazine first published in Germany in the late '60s, to detect how journalists and editors approached to these new expressive forms.

The second empirical section will focus on the later transition from electronically programmable instruments to digital and software-based machines. To understand how the notions of authenticity, subversion and virtuosity have changed for the musicians and their surrounding environment together with the compositional and performative paradigm, direct reports of contemporary active electronic music artists are evaluated by means of the Grounded Theory Method.

On the basis of the analysis' results, the conclusive chapter will discuss how mass-media hegemony affects the opinion on the spread of new communication forms, which furthermore consist of changing paradigms in artistic identification, instruments and socialization forms.

1.2. Cultural Hegemony

Within this work, *culture* is understood as the arts as well as other manifestations of human intellectual achievement which are widely recognized, as well as ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society (Stevenson, 2010, p. 425). Antonio Gramsci (1948) recognizes the use of hegemony by the dominant class above the dominated one for the purpose of obfuscating

world's self awareness and consciousness, in order to progressively reduce the cultural value (Cossutta, 1993, p.118).

According to Gramsci, hegemony is an institutional mean for the imposition of power on masses, which excludes the use of violence and includes a combination of forces – in which consensus is the strongest one -, and therefore represents an antithesis to dominion (Gramsci, 1948, Q[1]13, p.1638). From this perspective, the dominated class will accept the rules established by the commanding one, regarding these as unique opportunities instead of considering them as threats, as e.g. would happen in a dictatorial regime. Given that culture plays an huge role in shaping masses ideology, the dominant class uses it as means to reach its purposes. Therefore cultural hegemony is the best way to impose the institutional point of view on other groups through daily practices and shared experiences, until their internalization is achieved, a process needed for the pursuit of laying foundations for a complex controlled system (Gramsci, 1948, Q11, p.1385).

According to Gramsci (as cited in Cossutta, 2013, p.118), cultural unconsciousness would favor the emergence and consumption of "spectacularized" cultural forms, which appear just as empty images of the real concept they pretend to represent. The hegemonic model reflects its rejection for cultural and conceptual elaboration, as it would lead to a greater consciousness, not in favor of the superficial knowledge's propagation. This happens essentially through the replacement of the *education* process, in which individuals are guided to develop their own critical thoughts, with the *training* one, where pre-determined notions and perceptions are favored (Cossutta, 2013, p.19).

1.3. About Authenticity and Subversion

With the description "a unique phenomenon of a distance, however near it may be", Walter Benjamin (2006 [1936], p.22) defined the concept of *aura*. In his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), he observed a historic loss of the exclusive nature –the *authenticity* - of the artwork as such, which at that point started to be technically reproducible through the rise of new media technologies such as photography, phonography and film.

Despite the fact that until the development of technical reproduction systems, artworks have always been reproducible (mechanically), one could previously tell the difference between original and copy. The presence of the former supposedly represented "the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity" (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], pp.19, 20). According to Benjamin, the rise of technical reproduction processes led to a loss of *aura* of the related artworks, since the latter would not express any sort of authenticity in contraposition to a multitude of copies. Hence these overlap the original, they solve the problem of the artworks accessibility, reproducing an ephemeral object e.g. in form of

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[1] Q= Italian "quaderno", notebook [Translated by the author].

photography or phonographic records (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], p.20, 21). Therefore, the cult value[2] related to mechanically reproducible artworks, would allegedly be replaced by the exhibition value. The exhibition value counts as a characteristic of art's reproduction techniques, as e.g. photography, hence they are available in a greater amount. This is an essential characteristic for the paradigm change of artistic production and reception (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], pp.23, 24).

Walter Benjamin used the difference between theatre and cinema actors as an example to support this argumentation. The former usually present unique and singular acting in front of the public with each performance, while the latter act once in front of the camera equipment. Another consequence is that in this way actors don't play the whole act at once, hence the final cut will be created during the montage-phase and directors have the chance to compare different variants of the same performance before choosing the definitive one (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], pp.25, 26). Exhibiting in front of one machine, instead of in front of an audience, would then, according to Benjamin empty the performance and its values, as the artists don't need to think and can have their best performance chosen without giving their best every time they act, turning artworks ultimately into entertainment products (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], pp.26, 27).

With the introduction of technically reproducible artworks the contraposition of copy and original appears to not be the only one that vanishes. In fact, according to Benjamin, during the same epoch, the distinction between author and audience developed into a merely formal difference, hence, with the affirmation and spread of print media, each specialized reader is theoretically "enabled" to express his/her own opinion in a public way. The range which publishing is capable to cover would then expand the dominion of the authorship related to the polytechnic training, which until that moment has been anchored by theoretical knowledge (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], p.28). This process of the incorporation of the masses into the cultural production could be also expanded to the technically reproducible artworks, e.g. movies, allegedly leading to a decrease of virtuosity necessary by the performers, which act and test in front of an equipment. This goes along with speculations made by the film industry, which takes advantage from the participation of the unqualified masses to production processes (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], pp.27, 28).

Similar socio-cultural consequences of technology-related transformations of artistic production and distribution techniques were also described by Theodor W. Adorno in his essay "Kulturindustrie" (1944) under the notions of *Amusement* and *Amusierbetrieb*[3].

According to Adorno's theory, new cultural goods, meaning music and movies, satisfy the same needs as the serially-created goods (e.g. cars), and will frame standards with the purpose of

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[2] "One may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being on view". (Benjamin, 2006 [1936], p.23).
[3] Entertainment industry [Translated by the author].

unifying the quality of the product-line offered by the system, from which the goods are intrinsically dependent[4] (Adorno, 1944, p.129, 130). As a consequence, the range of cultural products only appears differentiated, whereas a pre-selection should have allegedly already occurres during the production phase, where pre-determined and easily-predictable clichés are preferred. Examples of this are the end of a movie, or the point of a song where the chorus starts. (Adorno, 1944, p.129, 130). This kind of selection would therefore aim to favor a superficial perception rather than the audience's intellectual activity. Adorno thus remarks that thinking is unnecessary for the reception of the cultural industry's products, claiming that those offer a distraction from the everyday reality (Adorno, 1944, p.134, 135).

With this concept, Adorno pictures a society in which the cultural industry spreads its insubstantial products and subverts art's revolutionary function by means of new media techniques, allowing the serial reproduction of formerly singular artworks and cultural contents (Adorno, 1944, p.143). In this society the style's authenticity becomes turns into an aesthetic equivalent of the dominion's guidelines. The only ones that dare tacit guidelines to fulfill art's real purpose allegedly are the great and established artists, that, on the contrary of the less-known ones, deny to attend to well-settled and "sure" approaches (Adorno, 1944, p.138). The mentioned unification of styles displays superficial internal differences that are constituted by stereotyped patterns, also known as genres. According to Adorno, those apparently serve as a choice given to the audience, but they would represent nothing more than a part of a specific process, which aims to exclude from the market the genres that don't comply to such "guides" (Adorno, 1944, p.146).

To be an outsider therefore becomes the greatest fault for a creative person to carry. As a "punishment" it entails the rejection from the economic system (society) and consequently the poverty, that automatically leads to the categorization of a human being as suspicious (Adorno, 1944, p.158, 159). The position of the individual becomes thus aleatory, and in the same way innovations are not to be appreciated by the cultural industry, whose only remaininig purpose is to maintain a style's unity. That supposedly leads to a popularization of cultural engagement (meant pejoratively), as well as to a growing degree of dilettantism on the artists' side. This leads to a loss of subversive potential via a styles' unification brought by the new techniques' essence, as art is then strictly connected to consume goods rather than to its ancient autonomous nature.

1.3.1. About Authenticity and Subversion in Music

Adorno's abstract theory finds a concrete application in other studies, where he counterpoises serious and popular music, that allegedly correspond to the dichotomy of high and low culture (Adorno, 1941). Here the concept of *Amusement* has been applied to the supposedly passive and

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[4] TV: depends on the banks; Radio: depends on electricity (Adorno, 1944, p. 131).

automatic reception of popular music, in which he points out the presence of pre-given and easily recognizable frameworks, that, in contrast to the structure of serious music, are allegedly not constituted by a solid system of meticulously concatenated details (Adorno, 1941, para.5, 6). According to these principles, the listener should be able to automatically predict the structural evolution of a Pop song, as it cannot be compromised by the use of those mentioned details (Adorno, 1941, para.7).

Music therefore turns into an inconsistent medium for entertainment, being its principal aim the one to relax the listeners worried by the society' pressure, leading them to become purchasers of consumable goods in order to satisfy their needs (Adorno, 1938, pp.273-296).

This kind of musical standardization is related to dominant economical patterns, which are inducted through aesthetical guidelines for the maintenance of an up-to-date status for the artists. This leads them to the necessity of producing hits' imitations for being widely accepted (Adorno, 1941, para.17, 18). For the sake of hiding this standardization process and to sell more elements on the market, the cultural industry would supposedly act by creating pseudo-individualized songs, as well as stereotyping the improvisatory (e.g. Jazz), deceiving musicians about their apparently unique character and thus avoiding their possible rebellion against the system within which they act (Adorno, 1941, para.21-24).

On the reception side, Adorno states that musical standardization creates fictive judgment opportunities for the listeners, that apparently would simply move their opinion between pre-selected binary options (like/dislike), these being determined only by the familiarity with certain musical styles or patterns (Adorno, 1938, p.271). The listeners therefore appear alienated from society and from the ability to reflect, falling back on a *commodity listening* modality and purchasing products that fulfill such evaluation parameters the most. The result is a conception of success that doesn't reflect the real musician's ability, but instead measures it with the price one pays for enjoying his artwork (e.g. concert ticket) (Adorno, 1938, p.278, 279). Virtuosity's criterions are thus allegedly completely upset, mostly in the context of live performances, which are perfectly arranged in order to sound exactly like the records, denying any form of interpretation. This process implicitly allows a musicians' lack of brilliance and accomplishment, hence the real work will fade behind the protective function of the equipment, which would represent the new *aura* and consequently reflect the fetish character of popular music (Adorno, 1938, pp.282-285).

Adorno's general discourse about popular music, as well as Walter Benjamin's arguments, can be extended to the specific case of electronic music since electronic musicians and electronic music producers have also been affected by similar critiques in the past, mostly brought from the side of the Pop/Rock specialists. This predominantly concerns the alleged lack of authenticity and virtuosity due to their use of electronically programmable instruments, which principally allows them

to program, register and test their musical actions on a medium before their later "live" acts, and therefore open the possibility to always playback the same performance. Since their emergence, new electronic music styles relying on computer technologies have been confronted with and compared to the traditional way of performing music through acoustic (and electrically amplified) instruments, where musicians have an unintentional approach to the performance, which therefore preserves its unique nature because of its intrinsic material impossibility of repeating exactly the same set more than once. For these reasons electronic instrumentation has been inculpated of emptying the performance from its central "authentic" values like exclusivity and unrepeatability, transforming it into a form of mere entertainment.

Furthermore, new music technologies tend to allow people from the common people to express themselves through music, since the equipment costs are lower and they give the possibility to produce good quality tracks without a proper studio. These developments have often been interpreted as a spreading wave of dilettantism in the musical environment by the mainstream press and the Pop/Rock avant-garde.

1.4. Brief History of Electronic Music Evolution

In this section I will briefly introduce the history of electronic music instruments, starting from the early times and the firsts experiments made by pioneers, and ending with contemporary digital and software-based instrument. Successively I will describe the German musical landscape related to electronically programmable instrumentation, as well as the impact of some artists belonging to this culture in the worldwide musical understanding. This paragraph has been included in order to give a proper perspective of the development of such instrumentation, as well as to understand how this evolutionary process shaped cultures and society, especially in Germany, where the present research is based.

1.4.1. Early times

Research about audio recording during the late 19th century started in order to realize a democratic and passive mode of reception, since the broadcasting and listening tradition was mostly related to a bourgeois tradition. Studies about electronic instrumentation started with Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877, that for the first time allowed to store and reproduce acoustic events for years after their genesis - an innovation analogous to the one of photography - (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, pp. 12, 13). This modernization completely revolutionized music production and reception, as well as artistic and cultural landscapes - until the present (Miller, 2003, para.1).

Nowadays, electronically programmable instruments and computer software for music composition has been completely integrated into our culture, allowing musicians to create with regard to the new parameters and production layers, through automating basic musical craftsmanship. These new opportunities offered by the automation of electronically programmable instrumentation, as well

as the. huge variety of timbres, tones and semitones (Russolo, 2004 [1913], pp. 13,14), brought a deep change to the long-established musical paradigms within the Western society. This change was already predicted and desired by avant-garde composers in the early decades of the 20th century, as *Edgar Varèse* (2004 [1936], pp.17, 18) claims:

> "[…] The new instruments will allow me to write music as I conceive it, […] There will no longer be the old conception of melody or interplay of melodies. The entire work will be a melodic totality. The entire work will flow as a river flows".

"Music flow" in the above sense is one of the most characterizing elements in contemporary electronic and Dance culture, which has its roots in the early 1900s, when experiments were made in this field by personalities like the Russian *Lev Termen*, who invented the only instrument playable without body contact, which he named Theremin (Dunn, 1996, p.25). The instrument consists of two antennas - the first one for controlling the pitch, the second one the volume – able to sense the hands' movements in their proximity, and transform the distance into sound (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, p. 36). Prior to the Theremin, the act of producing music flows exclusively through body

Figure 1: Theremin

movements was, in fact, only possible for orchestra conductors. Similar but simplified movements are used for controlling this unique pioneer among the electronic instruments (Black, 2010, p.46).

Over the next decades, huge advancements were made concerning new musical modalities by employing electronics. These comprise *John Cage*'s experimentations with electronic sound sources during the late '30s or *Pierre Schaeffer*'s investigations on tapes' sound modifications in his *Musique Concrète*[5] during the '40s, as well as the development of new instrumentation for recording and reproduction, that became more and more complex as time passed (Dunn, 1996, pp.28, 29).

From 1951 on, electronic music started to be broadcasted by a radio program of Studio Cologne in Germany called "The World of Sound of Electronic Music". Studio Cologne was founded on the premises of the Westdeutsche Rundfunk (WDR)[6] by *Herbert Eimert* and *Werner Meyer-Eppler*. These approached electronic sound from another perspective than for example the French *Musique Concrète* did, as they limited the manipulation of pure electronic sound sources to the

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[5] The basic idea of *Musique Concrète* was to use real sounds as sources and find the potential within them (Collins, Schadel & Wilson, 2013, p.46).
[6] West-German Radio Broadcasting [Translated by the author].

precise compositional techniques derived from Serialism (Dunn, 1996, pp.31, 32). *Karlheinz Stockhausen*, one of the most influential avant-garde composers of the late 20th century and first musician to introduce *Sine-Waves* in music, after ending his brief studies at *Pierre Schaeffer*'s Paris studio, joined *Eimert* in Cologne and became his assistant director in 1953 (Cox & Warner, 2004, p.370).

1.4.2. End of the Pioneers' Age: The Rise of Analogue Electronically Programmable Instruments

The technology's evolution of the early '60s brought substantial changes into the Western musical landscape. The emergence of sequencers and voltage-controlled analog synthesizers completely altered composition's and live performance's paradigms. In fact, both of these instruments for the first time allowed to replace the use of "normal" instruments by working with technologies such as sound sampling and synthesis, which permitted to produce, edit and reproduce any kind of existing sound, as well as the ones of acoustic instruments (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, p.2).

Early analogue sequencers were a key advancement for electronic music of the 20th century, as those allowed the recording and playback of user's created samples. With the emergence this technology arose in the '60s and '70s, musicians were enabled to store recordings on an analogue tape and program their playback in a later moment (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, p.40).

Sequencing brought profound innovations in music practices, as it extended the possibilities of musicians beyond the extent of human capacities, and enhanced the process of creativity. From this moment on, artists could generate compositions always considered impossible, as recorded sequences could be modified and reproduced without the limits of time or speed. Sequencers changed also the way performances had to be perceived, since the programmability of a live-act enabled musicians to concentrate on other elements, rather than on instrumental virtuosities on stage. This aspect, raised several controversies about the authenticity of live events, since – as observed in Chapter 2. – musicians exhibiting electronically programmable instruments were not considered as real performers (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, pp.21-23).

The first notable model of this innovative instrument was the English Mellotron, which worked with a magnetic tape, that, according to its position in relation to the head, enabled the playback of different sounds (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, p.40). At that time, however, these instruments were very complex and too heavy to carry, for example for the occasion of a live performance. Furthermore they hadn't reached a sufficient degree of reliable efficiency's degree yet, which was necessary to the avant-gardist front in order to create a personal electronic system for individual composers. In fact, their purpose was the one to get approximately the same technical

capability of the classic studio taking advantage of the new technologies, but with lower costs (Dunn, 1996, pp.37, 38).
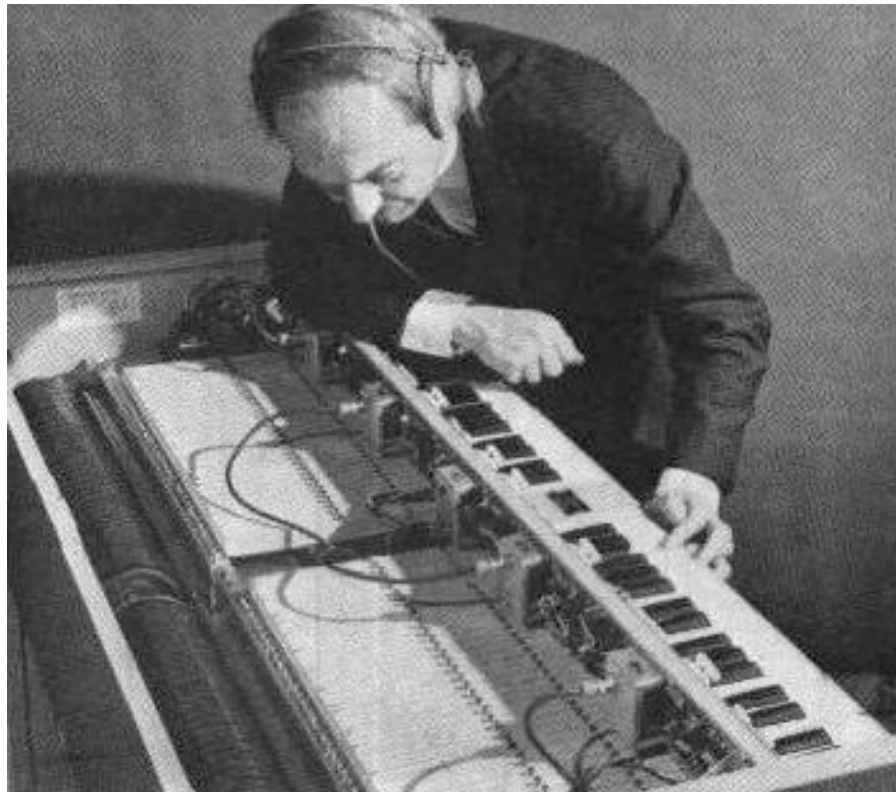
Figure 2: Mellotron Tape Recording Demonstration in the '60s

Besides sequencing, one of the most successful musical invention of the 20th century was the synthesizer, as it created and disposed a great range of sounds and more ways for controlling and recording them just into a single machine (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.547). The instrument is named after one of its first exemplars created in the late '50s: the RCA Mark II Synthesizer. This was the first programmable electronic synthesizer, which provided the possibility of generating sound and electronically sequencing it, without tapes. However, as other machines developed, RCA Mark II proved not to be suitable for commercial purposes because of its room-size dimensions and its complicated paper tape-based programming engine. The introduction of factory-produced synthesizers on the musical market started around 1964, with the parallel development of two different machines. The first one was created by Donald Buchla on the United States' West Coast, while the other one, which consisted of sound generators and processors connected by patch wires in endless combinations, was produced by Robert Moog on the East Coast (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.548).
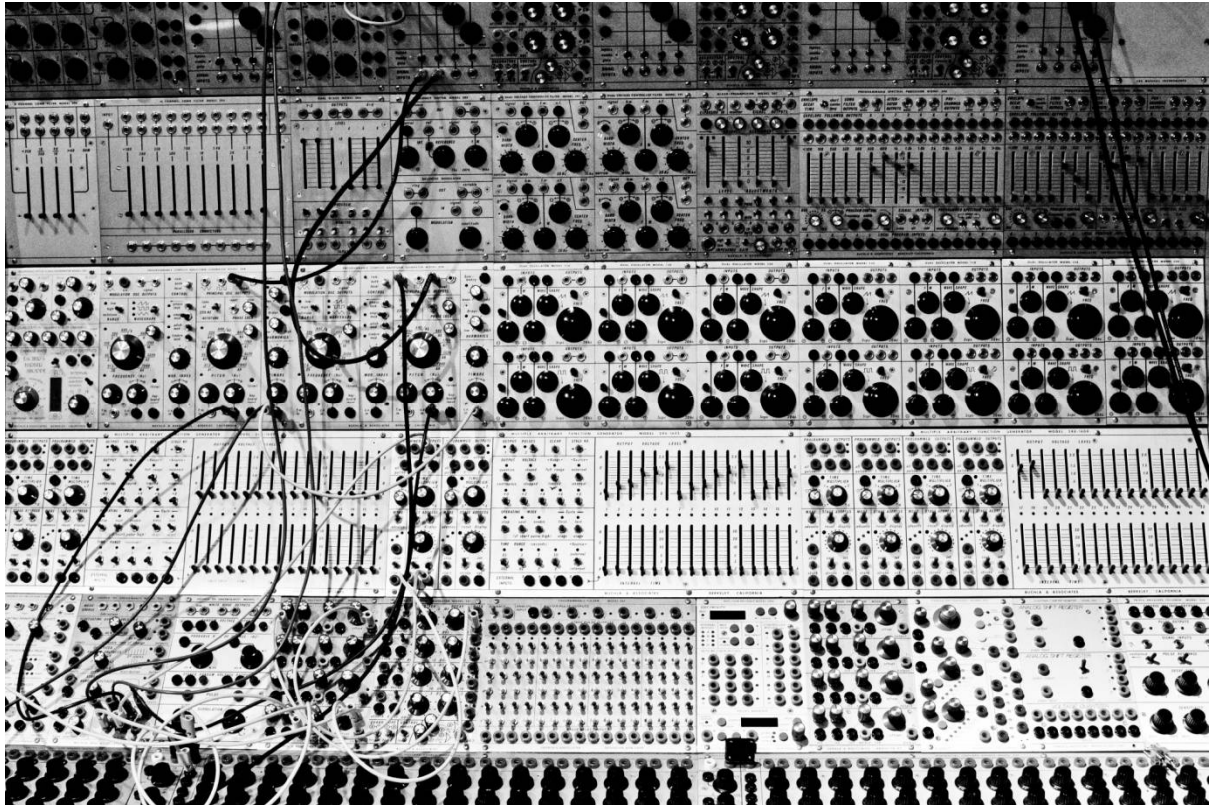
Figure 3: Buchla Modular Synthesizer

The main difference between the two engines was that the Buchla synthesizer did not provide any external controller in comparison with the Moog, and for that reason, its application - and popularity - appeared less immediate, therefore being instead mostly suitable for intellectual academic compositions. On the other hand, the Moog displayed more benchmarks for musicians which did not have a background related to electronic composition, e.g. the use of the octave-system, or the presence of a keyboard, which gave it the appeal and versatility of a "normal" piano (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.551, 552). For these reasons the Moog turned into a standard for many musicians that during the '60s widely approached to synthesizers, turning them into a part of the leisure and entertainment industry (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.547).

In 1968, Robert Moog designed and patented a new low-pass filter, whose sound was considered unique, and therefore was found wide acclaim among contemporary musicians, becoming a benchmark for his industry. In the same year, *Walter[7]Carlos* produced one the most striking compositions of that era using a Moog synthesizer, called "Switched on Bach", definitively marking the entry of electronic instruments into the popular music realm (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, pp.552, 553). At the same time, the experimenter *Morton Subotnick,* composed "Silver Apples of the Moon" using a Buchla machine, the first work commissioned specifically for the record medium (Dunn, 1996, pp.39, 40).

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[7] Now Wendy [Note of the author].

Even, after Carlos' composition was widely known and electronic instruments were beginning to be accepted in the domain of "real" instruments, they were still considered to be "an expensive plaything for Rock superstars" (Reynolds, 2007, para.6). Moreover, those playthings were quite impossible to use in a live situation because of their oversized dimensions, as well as the amount of time their patches' set up required (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, pp.552, 553).

In the early '70s, in order to face his bankruptcy due to the above-mentioned reasons, Robert Moog developed a new instrument called Minimoog. It had the same sound features of the original one, and introduced new facilities, e.g. the pitch wheel. But of course, the very innovation of the Minimoog were its dimensions. It was light and easily-transportable - as it was essentially a portable keyboard -, and the low price, which made the instrument affordable for the most mass-consumers. Minimoog has been therefore the first synthesizer with qualities in the retail market which actually sold. It thus became a benchmark in popular music, especially for Psychedelic Rock bands. In fact, those started to include it in their line-up as accompaniment for the guitars or solely[8], creating a new kind of
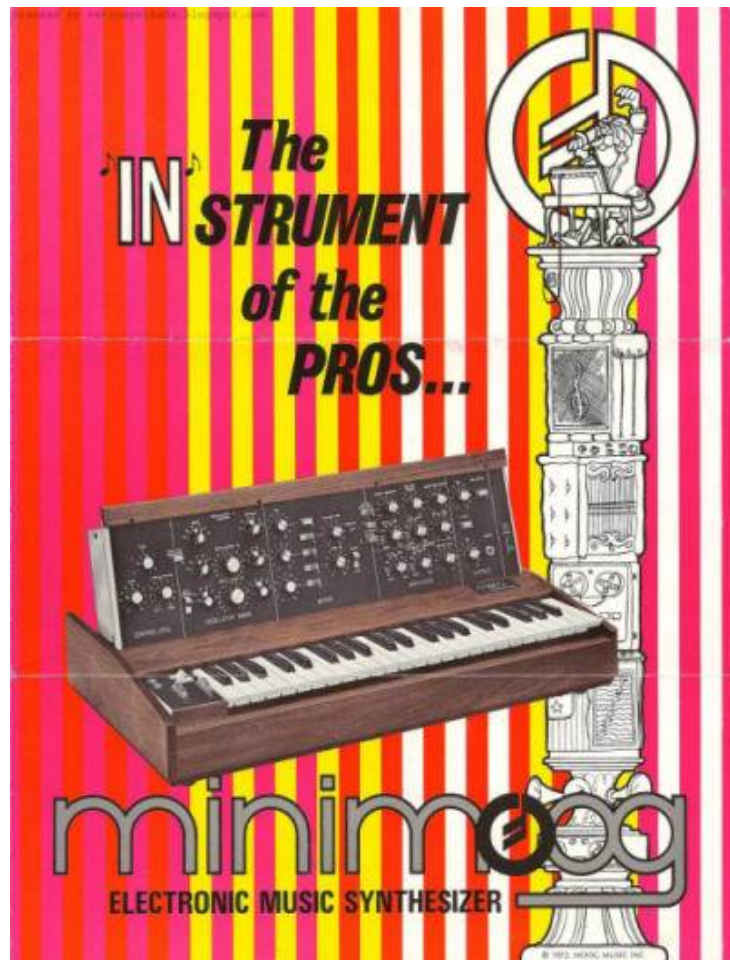
Figure 4: Minimoog Brochure

virtuosity in the Rock domain and bringing the pioneers' era of electronic music to an end (Dunn, 1996, p.39; Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, pp.553, 554).

1.4.3. Digital Instruments and Computer Music

Minimoog and analogue sequencing count as important precursors of digital instruments and MIDI[9] sequencers being as those easy to use, reliable, and equipped with a built-in keyboard connected to menus of recorded sounds (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.554). The difference between

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[8] Pink Floyd recorded their famous album "The Dark Side of The Moon" (1972) using an ensemble fully composed by synthesizers [Note of the author].
[9] Musical Instrument Digital Interface.

analogue and digital systems is essentially constitutional by their nature: while the former present a physical quantity symbolized by an analogue physical quantity, digital systems represent this physical quantity through a counting process, which in computer systems consists of a two-digit binary coding of the switching states (Dunn, 1996, p.44).

By the end of the '60s, some composers started moving towards computer technologies for real-time performances, which for the first time allowed them to link the functions of analogue synthesizers to the possibilities of digital controlling (Dunn, 1996, p.48). Those new production tools differed from the established ones, as they enabled the recording of any sound and its digital reproduction, using techniques such as loops. In particular, digital instruments provided the sensation of composing something perfect, something aspired for decades by composers (Goodwin, 1998, p.109).

The use of digital synthesizers in their early times was principally divided into two kind of categories: some composers preferred to approach the new methods in order to create innovative structural relationships, while others mostly worked on in the development of synthetic waveforms and timbres (Dunn, 1996, p.48). By the mid '70s, digital synthesizers in popular music (including Disco) served more as sort of electronic organ with a polyphonic keyboard and preset sounds, which means, that the interest towards the exploration of new frontiers of sound dramatically decreased. In the '80s, the early complicated and elite systems started to disappear, leaving space for more accessible and commercially successful digital instruments, like the Yamaha DX7. Those did not require to their users to program their desired sounds themselves, but instead presented a huge range of easily-editable presets already developed by the company. This meant an enormous benefit and encouragement for those, who did not trust themselves to handle complex modular synthesizers (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.556). Consequently with the success of the Yamaha machines, around the mid '80s, the market of digital synthesizers saw the wide expansion of other acknowledged Asian – and in particular Japanese – manufactures like Korg, Roland and, later Casio. The union between affordability and good quality of those instruments marked the decline of analogue synthesizers, and made their digital version extremely popular also among amateur and lower-class people, which finally could easily introduce them into their musical projects.

Two further developments completely changed the understanding of electronic music during those years: MIDI and digital-sample technologies. MIDI technology, introduced in 1983, is one of the most influential advancement in the music equipment, as it allowed the connection of synthesizers from different manufactures with each other or/and to a computer (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.556). The introduction of MIDI changed the way synthesizers were built up - as until this point, they usually had a built-in keyboard -. It also changed the studio composition, that enabled musicians to program keys and knobs, to give them the desired output on command (Kogan, 2008, p.9). Japanese

industries as Roland and Korg rode the wave of these epochal transformations, producing a great amount of inexpensive machines used for MIDI compositions (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.556).

Figure 5: Early Fairlight CMI

Digital sampling is a purely electronic digital recording system, which takes samples (or "vertical slices") of sounds and converts them into binary information (data), that provides the key for their reconstruction (instead of reproduction) to a sound-production system (Cutler, 2004, p.149). The first digital sampling machine, the Fairlight CMI, was built in Australia between 1980 and 1982. It basically consisted of a computer and a keyboard, and was capable of recording and manipulating patterns, as well as, in a later stage, of reproducing them in a certain order, overlaid or mixed. The computer was able to record any kind of sound stored in its internal card memory, and this property opened absolutely new horizons in the domain of digital synthesis, as it replaced the obsolete and complex tape-technology and allowed to embed of a wider range of instrumentation into a single machine (Kogan, 2008, p.7). However, the first affordable samples were introduced in the mid 1980s by Ensoniq, but they reached the masses no earlier than the '90s (Cutler, 2004, p.149). In fact, during the '90s, the Japanese keyboard manufacturer Casio brought digital instruments to a home entertainment level, ending the first phase of democratization of hardware based electronic instruments (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.556).

Goodwin (1998) differentiates between three schools of digital sampling: he calls the first one *hidden sampling*[10], where musicians only reproduce the sounds of "real" instruments, gaining

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[10] From German: "Verstecktes Sampling" [Translated by the author] (Goodwin, 1998, p.113).

technical efficiency and saving economic resources. Secondly he names the *explicit sampling*, mostly manifested in remix of already existing songs, with the possibility of modifying them as preferred solely using a keyboard controller. The third trend is represented by artists which discovered the aesthetics of sampling, as happened in the Hip Hop and New Wave styles, and is more closely associated with the production of musical hits (Goodwin, 1998, pp.113-115).
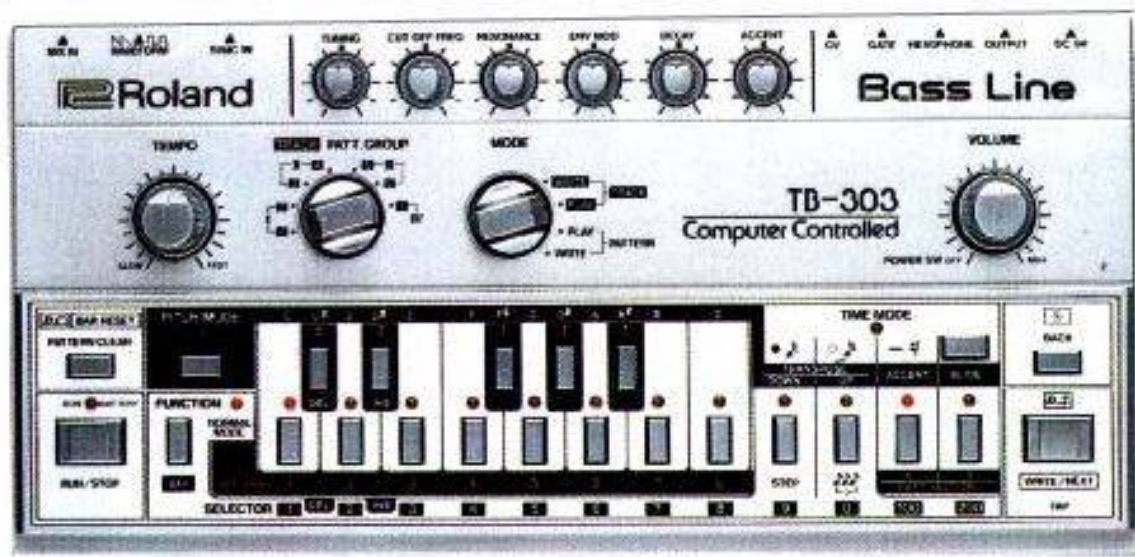
Figure 6: Roland TB-303

The use of the first mass digital sequencers, e.g. the Roland TB-303 or TR-808 and 909 drum machines, were characteristic for the rise of specific Dance genres like Acid House, Electro, Hip Hop and Techno, as these sounds were intentionally inhuman and impossible to reproduce with a manual drum (Miller, 2003, para.31). Disco music became ultimately electronic, as the digital instruments conferred it a "Funkier" sound, which was appropriate to be played in discotheques - later clubs -, in other words by speakers and sound systems (Miller, 2003, para.40).

1.4.4. Sound Cards and Live-Software

Until the discovery of sound cards, computers made nothing but functional audio signals (e.g. error beeps, or some early form of sound in games). During the '90s, the development of such engines completely changed the understanding of electronic music production, hence for the first time computers were able to produce and reproduce sounds. This opened the doors to a new frontier of electronic music, which was no longer dependent on a specific hardware. Even the most primitive sound boards allowed musicians – and non-musicians - to build up their own recording studio into their private space (e.g. home), as well as to "install" them directly into their personal computers (Kogan, 2008, p.14). Furthermore, the MIDI communication protocol played an important role into this epochal change, as it was optimal for the sound from the sound cards, however it was not able to store audio signals created by synthesizers (Kogan, 2008, pp.14, 15).

Consequently, so-called Tracking-Software was developed, that followed sequencing schemes similar to the Fairlight CMI. Nevertheless, the first editions did not suit to professional electronic musicians, which tended to remain faithful to their own hardware linked to MIDI engines. On the other hand, the new technology allowed people without a formal musical education and little money to buy professional equipment to compose "real" music thanks to an object of everyday usage, simply through a flexible graphic interface. The first tracking software was the so called DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), later VST (Virtual Studio Technology), that enabled musicians to record their studio-sound directly onto digital tape, managing it by simply using a MIDI controller (Kogan, 2008, p.16).

Until that point, these tools was mostly exclusively related to a musical studio-production. When laptops became the principal choice of electronic composers, the paradigm changed once again, increasing the interest towards real-time sound manipulation. This brought about the implementation of knobs and sliders on MIDI controllers - now easily linkable to a computer via USB interface-, and brought about an empowering of live-software technology, that altered the conception of electronic music performance once again (Kogan, 2008, pp.17-18). A result of figure of the new technological approaches is the so-called *Live-PA*[11]. This has been described as a hybrid of the past and present live musical paradigm, where the former is represented by the presence of a live-playing musician on stage in front of an audience, and the latter presents the performance as a mixing/playback product with pre-recorded

Figure 7: Modern MIDI Controller

aesthetics. Technically, the new-era of music production finally enabled electronic musicians to bring on stage what is considered as their fundamental instrument, the studio (Miller, 2003, para.49).

Nowadays – meaning since the early 2000s, the realm of Dance music, and of electronic music in general, is extremely related to software such as the Berlin-based Ableton Live[12], founded in 1999. It allows real-time sequencing without any human agency or intervention, but it still allows

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[11] Public appearance, public address or sound system (Miller,2003, para.49).
[12] *Ableton Website,* Ableton AG, 1999-2008, Url: Http:/ /www.ableton.com/.

complex manipulations on sound, as well as the production of various harmonies. Technically, performers handling this kind of equipment to assemble their tracks use a great amount of individual clips, which are simultaneously mixed and effected. Thanks to these characteristics, one can consider such kind of events as performances, and not just as playback of digital files (Black, 2010, p.36). Moreover, the sample market nowadays represents an important legal[13] community for professional producers, and clips have become even more sophisticated and disposable[14], allowing much more than a remixed playback of a song or sound.

The old unidirectional paradigm of live music reception turned thus into the one of an immersive environment, where speakers and basses are part of the musical performance, and so the audience, whose interests now expands from the act of listening to music the one of "feeling the music" (Miller, 2003, para.46). Socially, this led to the development of special meeting places, known as clubs, and of the rise of a Raving culture, whose cultural impact has been compared with the one of the Hippy movement during the '60s (Laarman, 1998, p.141).

1.5. The Role of Germany in the Electronic Music Realm

Since the very beginning, musicians and artists from Germany have played a big role in the development of electronic music, as has been observed in section 1.4.1. about the pioneers of the Studio Cologne *Eimert* and *Stockhausen*. Nowadays, in the digital era, this place turned into the "Mecca" of Electro and Dance sounds. In fact, until 1968, in the West German musical post world war scene, there was no place for Rock'n'Roll, it being considered as mere entertainment brought by the British and American occupiers. Therefore the intellectual sound research was quite exclusively concerned with the electronic domain (Van Dusen, para.3).

As the protests of the late '60s spread in the Western world, the musical and subcultural landscape changed homogeneously, bringing new influences related to Psychedelic Rock into the German scene and giving life to an original music style as a response to post-war rebirth, (ironically) named "Krautrock" (Van Dusen, para.7). Krautrock bands gave a German touch to '60s Rock music, being the first in Europe to take inspiration from bands like *Velvet Underground* and *Pink Floyd*. The also laid the foundation for the today's sampled music, using a Proto-Punk minimalism (Reynolds, 1996, para.2-6). Its innovation consisted in the reinvention of the rough-guitar era "fused […] with the cold precision of Techno" (Reynolds, 1996, para.22).

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[13] Sold for licensed use (Black, 2010, p.33).
[14] A large amount of sample libraries are provided in the network.

Figure 9: Stockhausen in the WDR Studios in the '70s

Acknowledged as first pioneers of the movement are the bands *Amon Düül* and *Amon Düül II*, whose music was still closely connected to its Psychedelic roots, similar to *Ash Ra Tempel*. They signed on the independent and Krautrock-focused label *Ohr*[15], that encouraged them and other similar bands to experiment in new sonic territories, like the one of Space Rock (Van Dusen, para.8-10). The sound of this music style was a compound of epic compositions and cosmic atmospheres, often inspired by science fiction and astrophysics (Reynolds, 2007, para.2). This was embraced by some of the major exponents of German popular electronic music, e.g. *Edgar Froese* and *Klaus Schulze*, which at the end of the '60s founded the extremely influential band *Tangerine Dream*. In 1974, the band turned its equipment and sound completely electronic, and released their album "Phaedra", exclusively composed on synthesizers and sequencers (Van Dusen, para.12).

Figure 8: Ohr Label's Logo

Another front of electronic based Krautrock was the minimalistic one, based on the repetition of elements, whose protagonists were bands such as *Can*, in the beginning, later *Neu!* and *Kraftwerk*. The latter started performing in 1968 using exclusively electronically programmable instruments, as well as sample technologies, and in year 1974 produced the very first album that was considered to be

[15] One of the first influential European label, until this moment the majors dominated the international musical landscape (Van Dusen, para.25).

a part of the Synth-Pop genre, "Autobahn". It introduced Krautrock in the top international charts (Van Dusen, para.18). The interest of *Florian Schneider* and *Ralf Hutter* in synthesizers, and their far-sightedness about the potential of such instrument, made *Kraftwerk* the "godfathers of Eurodisco, New Romanticism, Electro and Techno-Rave,[…]" and therefore the most important band of the '70s to spread electronic minimalism worldwide (Reynolds, 1996, para.13).

Figure 10: Kraftwerk

1977 was the year of the Punk explosion, but was also paramounting the Space Rock of *Tangerine Dream* and *Kraftwerk*. They reached their peaks of high-commercial-profile in their productions, *Tangerine Dream* with the soundtrack for the movie "Sorcerer" by William Friedkin and *Kraftwerk* with the album "Trans Europe Express". Noteably at that time, those two bands in particular were widely appreciated by the international audience, but hardly recognized within Germany (Reynolds, 2007, para.12). *Kraftwerk* was one of the first very pioneering-bands that used a completely programmable set-up for popular music, and their principle of repetition has been influential on a sizable amount of musicians, from the Synth-Pop to the Techno generation (Collins, Schedel & Wilson, 2013, pp.90-91). Synthesizers were no longer just used for piano compositions, but instead for producing their own futuristic noises, and they were integrated into bands related to the Punk and Post Punk movements, definitively turning their avant-garde appeal into a characteristic sound of Rock and Pop music (Reynolds, 2007, para.13).

The '80s were characterized by the synthy-sound of New Wave, which arose principally in the United Kingdom, but had its furthest roots in North American sounds of bands like *Television* and *Talking Heads* in the late '70s (Reynolds, 2005, p.XIX). The German response to that was a direct descendant of Krautrock, a genre so named Neue Deutsche Welle[16], characterized by lyrics in colloquial German language and by a catchy-minimalistic-Dance groove. Among the principal exponents of this movement one recognizes bands like *Ideal*, *Fehlfarben* and the better-known *D.A.F.*[17]

Figure 11: D.A.F. LP Cover

The emphasis on sound repetition (loop) and minimalism present in "Autobahn" and other Krautrock works was essential for the creation of important works in popular music, such as *David Bowie*'s "Low", or for the development of *Brian Eno*'s Ambient compositions (Van Dusen, para.23). But it was also essential for the evolution of the heart of electronic music: Acid House and Techno during the '90s and 2000s (Reynolds, 2007, para.21). These genres are characterized by a mechanized beat which provokes a spatial and temporal dislocation through a musical continuum which can last an entire night, hereby fulfilling the desires of the early Futurists during the first decades of the 20th century (Sherburne, 2004, p.322).

1.6. Research Dimensions concerning the Mediatic Change

In this section I will describe the dimensions that this research aims to observe and analyze: Performance and "I" Artist (artist as individual), Virtuosity and Subversion. These correspond to aspects related to music, such as the musician's personality and performances which have been affected by the mediatic change which went along with the transition from analogue to electronically programmable and digital instrumentation in music.

1.6.1. Performance and "I" Artist

The term performance, as described for the musical context by Simon Frith (1998, p.205) defines a social – or communicative – process, which requires the presence of an audience and is dependent on interpretation. An electronic music performance is be understood as one in which electronic sound generation, processing and control occurs in real-time in front of an audience (Dunn, 1996, p.48, 49).

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[16] New German Wave [Translated by the author].
[17] Deutsche-Amerikanische-Freundschaft (German-American-Friendship) [Translated by the author].

In order to consider a musical event as a performance, some kind of ongoing feedback controlled by the body of the performer is necessary. This feedback should not simply be driven by unconscious mechanical reflections of the performer's intervention, but rather show a conscious awareness of the music, which should be produced as an organic whole with pre-conscious interactions with the instrument related to the sound production itself (Black, 2010, p.47). The use of the body during an art performance must, according to Frith, dominate other forms of communicative signs, like language and iconography, as it represents the central rhetorical object of the show and creates dialogue and intimacy with the audience (Frith, 1998, pp.205, 206). Here the performer's body movements represent a posing as a public appearance, and have to differ from everyday motions, in order to legitimate what in is unaccepted in the society's customs and provide an artistic appeal to the musician (1998, p.207).

Performing therefore consists of willed and unnecessary movements, chosen for aesthetic rather than functional reasons, as happens with dancing. Dancing is often considered as pure movement to music, a response to it, and under this perspective can be recognized as a form of enhanced listening (Frith, 1998, pp.220-223). Dance is one of the central elements which characterize a certain kind of events organized in the contemporary electronic music scene, and it can be mostly understood as a signal of appreciation from the side of the audience. Consequently, dancing movements are indirectly involved in the production of beats, becoming an integral part of the performance and essential for its continuation, as in African music, where rhythm and body are strictly related (Frith, 1998, p.141).

For the first time in the European music domain, the body of the listener is essential during the performance, and, as observed by Dyer (1979), electronic music becomes a means for personal and sexual approach, setting the preconditions for social freedom. In electronic and Dance music styles, the rhythm of the beats made by repetition enables the perception of the "here and now", highlighting the conception of time passing and encouraging the listeners to the movement (Frith, 1998, p.149). In comparison, dancing to Rock guitar music is particularly difficult because of the restricted beats that leave no space for individual movements. The situation is therefore instead inverted in relation to the interpreters: whereby the body of a Rock musician is strictly involved in the creation of the musical performance because of the nature of its instruments (e.g. guitar, drums), the electronic performer is still and concentrated, not providing any mutual feedback to its audience when handling his instruments. With the rise of the Rave movement during the '90s, the performer became an integral part of the audience, and for the first time in the history of Western music, these performance and audience were not separated anymore by the presence of a stage but started to form new sort of unity (Neill, 2004, p.389).

1.6.2. <u>Virtuosity</u>

As described in paragraph 1.3., according to Walter Benjamin (2006 [1936], the unique *aura* of an artwork is related to the presence of a physical matter and to the impossibility of reproducing identical copies of the original (Miller, 2003, para.11). Digital techniques changed this perspective completely, demystifying the original artwork by a loss of *aura* and allowing the mass-reproduction of "original-copies", that each consumer could potentially own, use, change and reproduce. In fact, sampling technologies enable musicians to use recorded sounds or songs for the creation of other artworks and melodies, and actually represent and essential element in the contemporary Western musical landscape - where digital-samples banks serve as primary sources for electronic music creations (Goodwin, 1998, pp.106, 107).

Nowadays, pre-recorded samples and sequences can be reproduced, mixed, altered and assembled in order to achieve original tracks in real-time using nothing but a laptop, and without the physical presence of a "real" musical instrument or additional hardware. According to Simon Reynolds (as cited in Miller, 2003, para.30), the processes of assembling and programming contemporary music gives musicians new possibilities. These can indeed concentrate on more abstract layers of production and performance, as the technical skills of computer-based instruments are usually beyond the capabilities of even the best trained musicians.

However, this theory does not correspond with the opinion of Eduard Hanslick, one of the greatest music-aesthetics critics in the 19th century. His principal aim was to describe music in an objective form, considering its intrinsic elements related to each other as things in nature are (Hanslick, 1991 [1854], p.35). The concept of *musical beauty* described by Hanslick (1991 [1854]) is totally independent from external influence as it originates exclusively in the tones and their mutual connections[18]. In addition, he refuses any use of fantasy or free associations, for both producers and listeners, as well as any expression of feelings, as he elucidates:

> "The more it [music] abandons the beautiful rhythmicity of its forms, in order to becomes gestures and mimicry to express specific thought and feelings, the more it approaches the crude significance of pantomime" (as cited in Frith, 1998, p.262).

These elements cited by the music theorist changed their validity drastically within the new musical tendencies, as those opened new channels for musical perception, allowing to recognize structures and certain sound elements as "music", which until the mid '90s were considered as noise. As a result one can observe, that the objective description of the new sounds results practically

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[18] „[...] ein Schönes, das unabhängig und unbedürftig eines von außen kommenden Inhaltes, einzig und allein in den Tönen und ihrer künstlerischen Verbindung liegt." (Hanslick 1991 [1854], p.32).

impossible through consolidates unities, e.g. tones and harmonies, which were common for the description of the music of the previous era.

1.6.3. Subversion

Adorno refers to the unification of styles in artworks in the era of serial reproduction, which creates a standardization of the musical tastes. Those would in fact not be individual anymore, as they are imposed by the market. It allegedly determines what can be accepted in order to be sold, creating a threshold that divides the outsider (the one who experiments and moves against the main-flow) from the producers of hit-imitations for *commodity listening*, as well as the high from the low culture.

In the contemporary musical scene, the use of the laptop and sequencers is replacing the acoustic guitar as a primary instrument of expression for new musicians. This makes an upset of the dogma visible which dominated the cultural realm of the Western world since the Renaissance, where "high" arts could only be practiced by an elite (Neill, 2004, p.388). Nowadays, new media allow the production and consumption of artworks by a wider range of people than in the past, finally allowing the integration of art into the global cultural sphere (Neill, 2004, pp.390, 391).

Currently, popularity is not necessarily determined by market laws, but instead by the masses (Frith, 1998, p.15). There are in fact many examples of albums in the history of Pop music that were considered inconsistent for the market, but obtained a great deal of attention. This trend explains one of the principal claims made about the mass culture, which is the incapability of mathematically predicting the popular taste, and therefore to control it (Frith, 1998, p.15).

The concept that "popular cultural goods must signify something", referred by Joke Hermes as "Fallacy of Meaningfulness" (as cited in Frith, 1998, p.12), is reflected in contemporary popular culture with concepts like sociability and interpretation. This derives from the value of cultural goods related to the different consuming groups (old/young, male/female, working class/noble), as the consumption process actually represent the place where contemporary culture has to be located (Frith, 1998, p.13).

2. Empirical Research 1: Critical Discourse Analysis of the Journalistic Discourse around the Rise of Electronically Programmable Instruments in Germany during the Years 1975-1984

2.1. <u>Introduction</u>

The process of *training,* as intended by Gramsci, (introduced in section 1.2.) is nowadays mostly implemented by the mass-media, that, as means of the institutional power, propagates standard knowledge aimed at the creation of status symbols and of success' myths. In Chapter 2., my aim is to recognize which procedures are used by the authorities via their voice, the cultural industry, in order to reach control over the masses.

The present analysis intends to recognize the moment in time when the discourse around the virtuosity and subversion of electronically programmable instruments started to become a fundamental topic for the mainstream music press. Moreover, it also aims to understand the nature of those accusations that have been leveled against artists using such instruments.

The selected sample is analyzed according to the guidelines of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This method was adapted from the theory of Michel Foucault (1972), and aims to examine how linguistic elements can be structured in order to produce specific social meanings. In particular, is employed here to understand how mass-media, uses its arguments to criticize the rising phenomenon of electronic programmable instruments.

2.2. <u>Introduction to the Analyzed Medium and Sample</u>

In order to describe the discursive elements that represent the cultural industry's interests, imposed on the German society by means of mass-media as mainstream divulgation instruments, this project used a sample of 50 articles on musical artists active in Germany, published during the decade 1975-1984 by the magazine *Musikexpress*.

Musikexpress is a monthly generalist music magazine edited by the German publishing house Axel-Springer-Verlag, which was founded in Hamburg in 1946, and is well-known for its corporate principles oriented on a Western-capitalist market economy. The choice to a magazine like *Musikexpress* was taken in order to analyse how mainstream culture publication approached the music-cultural change in focus, at times when it may have been already successfully accepted by more specialist avant-garde Pop/Rock German publications as *Sounds* or *Spex*.

Musikexpress was at that time the only publication of Axel-Springer-Verlag focusing on a topic related to cultural and musical industry, alongside the rather famous *Rolling Stone*, a magazine for Rock and Pop culture, which was founded in 1967 in San Francisco. In fact, the production-line of this enterprise, publisher of one of the most renowned newspapers in Germany (the daily *Die Welt),* is principally concerned with the news divulgation published in a tabloid format, - a journalistic style which tends to present the topics from an entertaining perspective -, as in their best-sold newspaper, the *Bild-Zeitung*.

Already in 1967, Axel Springer, the founder of the publishing house, finds himself in the situation of having to defend

Figure 12: Axel Springer Logo

himself from the accusations made concerning his political and business choices in the cultural field, as in one speech, of which fragments are later published (Springer, 2015). To the lobby-allegations regarding his company's dimensions, he responds by putting the surrounding natural industrial development in the foreground, and comparing his enterprise to big automotive or steelwork industries (Springer, 2015 [1967], p.1). In this way, he legitimates the serial reproduction of culture, whose value he believes comparable with the one of other material goods. Furthermore, Springer claims that his house is committed to absolute neutrality, as well as its will to pursuit of the freedom of press (Springer, 2015 [1967], pp. 3-5). However, as affirmed by Kurt Becker (1968), the critics moved towards the publishing house are explicitly concerning those matters: "[...][The Axel-Springer-Verlag] positions itself in the market under a pseudo-entrepreneurial perspective and submits completely to the laws of the market-taste and the elusive entertainment-necessities [...]"[19]. His articles analyze the danger for the society being exposed to this kind of information manipulation realized by cultural concerns, which essentially aim to control masses' mentality and ideology.

Figure 13: *Musikexpress* '80s Issue

The decade for the analysis (1975-1984) was selected because of the synthesizers' and drum machines' dramatic spread in the music market between the end of the '70s and the middle of the '80s (see paragraph 1.4.3.). In fact, during this period, as cheap and advanced technologies started becoming available, a considerable amount of bands and musicians were no longer operating in the field of electronic music under a pioneering perspective, but instead as a systematic choice. In the interest of establishing a starting point for the discourse around electronically programmable instruments in popular and Dance music styles in Germany, it has been chosen to observe the way the rise of popularity of those genres has been handled by the *Musikexpress*.

The sample for my analysis consists in the very first 50 reports published in the *Musikexpress* during the decade mentioned above, about musicians who debuted with electronically programmable

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[19] [...]der sich quasi-unternehmerisch ganz auf den Markt einstellt und sich völlig den Gesetzen des Massengeschmacks und des flüchtigen Unterhaltungsbedürfnisses unterwirft. (Becker, 1968, p.1) [Translated by the author].

instruments or who introduced these their into musical concept for the first time. Furthermore, only articles were considered, which a direct insight into the discourse of the concerned musicians, in order to observe how these reacted to provocations or appreciations of the journalists in relation to topics as musician's authenticity and electronic music's critical content.[20]

Table 1 is a list of the artists considered within the corpus, together with the year in which they debuted with electronically programmable instruments.

Artist/Band	First Year of Activity with Electronic Programmable Instruments	Artist/Band	First Year of Activity with Electronic Programmable Instruments
ABC	1983	John Watts (Fischer Z)	1982
Alan Parsons	1977	Kim Wilde	1982
Alan Vega (Suicide)	1980	Klaus Nomi	1982
Ash Ra Tempel	1976	Klaus Schulze (Tangerine Dream, Ash Ra Tempel)	1972
Au Pairs	1982	Kraftwerk	1970
B.E.F.	1980	Level 42	1981
Bananarama	1983	Malaria	1982
Brian Eno	1975	Michael Hoenig	1978
Classic Nouveaux	1981	Nena	1982
Culture Club	1982	O.M.D.	1980
Cyndi Lauper	1983	Palais Schaumburg	1981
D.A.F.	1979	Pere Ubu	1978
Depeche Mode	1981	Pete Schelley (Buzzcocks)	1981
Devo	1979	Peter Gabriel (Genesis)	1977
Die Krupps	1981	Phil Collins (Genesis)	1980
Eberhard Schoener	1971	Siouxsie & the Banshees	1979
Fashion	1979	Soft Cell	1981
Gary Numan (Tubeway Army)	1979	Taco	1980
Giorgio Moroder	1979	Talking Heads	1982
Heaven 17	1981	Tangerine Dream	1974
Holger Czukay (Can)	1979	Ultravox	1978
Human League	1979	Vince Clarke (D.M., Yazoo, Erasure)	1980
Japan	1978	XTC	1979
Jean Michel Jarre	1973	Yazoo	1982
John Foxx (Ultravox)	1980	Yello	1980

Table 1: Considered Artists

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a Methodology

The first distinction between language as an abstract structure and language in use has been made by Ferdinand De Saussure (1916), as he for the first time distinguishes a system of universal rules – *langue* -, and the possibility for the speakers to apply them freely for their personal production

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[20] Complete list of analyzed issues can be found in Attachment 1.

of statements –*parole* -. This enables subjects to use language in order to fulfill their communicative needs, according to their knowledge, status and intentions (De Saussure, 1966 [1916]).

This distinction abstractly refers to strictly linguistic elements, and is not embedded in a wider system that considers language a social practice. This aspect is examined in the practice of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a method used as a system for social language analysis.

2.3.1. About CDA

In his essay *The Order of Discourse*, first published in 1972, Michel Foucault introduces the idea that discourses cannot proliferate freely within society, but that they are limited and controlled by societal institutions, which create specific mechanisms and procedures to direct them into patterns in order to govern their power and subversive force (Foucault, 1993 [1972], pp.4, 5).

 Foucault understands the discourse as a connective element between thinking and speaking, which is strongly related to power procedures. He claims furthermore, that it is a strong struggle instrument, since it can represent a mean to reach the power (Foucault, 1993 [1972], p.11). Foucault therefore considers discourses as dangerous, if put in a context where these are not controlled. He also observes the presence of frameworks, tacitly imposed by power institutions on the masses, with the purpose of limiting and controlling the proliferation of an unwanted discourse within the society (Foucault, 1993 [1972], p.10).

Discourse control can be external or internal. The external forms are identified by Foucault as *exclusion procedures*, and refer to processes that restrict the discourse from the outside, thus limiting its arbitrary development. Prohibitions fall into this category in the form of taboos, preferences of speaking subjects or objects concerned -, as well as contrasts like rationality/insanity or true/false (Foucault, 1993 [1972], pp.11-17). Given that only one truth can be true, these two contrapositions exclude the possibility of a co-existence of more than one argument referring to a single circumstance. *Internal procedures* act instead as "classification, regulation and distribution principles"[21] (Foucault, 1993 [1972], p.17) and emerge in the discourses in form of comments, authors, disciplines and reduction of speaking subjects (Foucault, 1993 [1972], pp.17-24).

Foucault's theory has been applied by numerous other scholars interested in the relationship of discourse and power, which led to the development of several different methods to analyze the disparate aspects of this abstract concept. Norman Fairclough's (1989) and James Paul Gee's (1999) guidelines are chosen for the current study because of their concern for social structures, and the way these are affected by conventions of social institutions. Their interpretation technique for linguistic elements within a given framework of social settings and intertextual contexts aims to deduce hidden

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[21] Translated by the author.

rules and (de)legitimizing strategies of implicit mass-media discourse, in order to relieve its societal power.

In pursuance of disparaging the meaning of the contents proposed by mainstream media and to reveal the ideas behind them, the analysis is conducted in following three stages, applying a unification of the elements proposed by the two theorists. In order to describe a proper framework of the relationships between texts, interactions and contexts, the structure and general concept of the analysis mostly follows Fairclough's instructions, while Gee's principles are used asrepresent here a sort of guidelines for a metadiscursive[22] investigation,. The stages' are built up as follows:

(1)   *Descriptive stage*: The stage concerned with the formal properties of a text, these being such as word meaning, wording, relations created by choosing a specific vocabulary (e.g. politeness), as well as idiomatic or rhetoric expressions. Grammatical and textual structure are also observed, in order to understand how institutional power is reflected in the discourse through interactional patterns This may be a certain use of verbal transitivity or modality, or specific textual macrostructures or interactional control forms.

(2)   *Interpretative stage:* In the second stage, the observation is focused on the relationship between text and interaction between the agents for both production and interpretation of the work. The analysis here concerns social settings (e.g. discourse's object, subjects involved and their position), kind of speech acts, schemata and frames, discourse types (surface of the utterance), as well as the confrontation of participant's roles regarding those elements.

(3)   *Explicative stage:* The third phase mostly focuses on the relationship between linguistic interaction and social contexts, such as the power relations at situational, institutional and social level around the discourse, transpiring ideologies and their effects. These reveal how discourse can represent the effect of a struggle, and how it contributes to sustaining existing power relations or transforming them.

The articles are analyzed in these three steps, on the basis of the Critical Discourse Analysis to discover the latent rules in the discourse and the relationships that connect discourse an power, applied on the society through mass-media.

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[22] Related to discourse's reflexivity [Note of the author].

2.4. <u>Descriptive Stage: Results of CDA</u>

Sample Index					
Year	**N. Report/Interviews**	**Relevance** [1]			
		***	******	*****	**-**
1975	0	------			
1976	2	2	0	0	0
1977	3	0	1	0	2
1978	5	2	2	0	1
1979	3	0	1	0	2
1980	5	1	2	0	2
1981	6	2	1	1	2
1982	20	2	7	3	8
1983	3	0	1	0	2
1984	3	1	1	0	1
	50	**10**	**16**	**4**	**20**

Table 2: Sample Index

[1] Significance of the reports/interviews in relation to my research, e.g. in which degree they include/exclude topics about relationship between artists and electronic-instrumentation.

***: Research topic in foreground

**: Research topic present, but not in foreground

* = Reserach topic in background

--: Research topic not present

Table 2 shows the amount of selected articles (interviews and reports) for each year of the considered decade from 1975 to 1984, selected according the criteria indicated in section 2.2., as well as the degree in which they appear related to the research question.[23] Some of the items appeared irrelevant to the research's purposes, since they focused on other aspects (e.g. gender, theatrical temperament, particular voice timbre).

The most striking result regarding this index is the complete absence of reports or interviews related to the investigated topic during 1975. This shows the editorial choice not to consider musicians active with electronically programmable instruments under any point of view at that time, although use of synthesizers and drum machines was already spread.

Except for the last two months of 1976, the editors of *Musikexpress* still didn't release any reports or interviews under the project's selection criteria, although it seems that the magazine somehow "prepared" its audience to the new tendencies by writing a four-episodes dossier starting from June until September called "Musik aus der Steckdose"[24]. In this special, the journalists outlined a profile of the emerging mass-phenomenon of EDM, dedicating each episode to another root of these

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[23] An example of the considered artists can be found in Table 3.

[24] "Music from the Plug-Socket" [Translated by the author]. In *Musikexpress*, n. 6-7-8-9 (June–September 1976).

	Approach Categories			
Year	**Provocations (Journalist)[1]**	**Defenses (Artist)[2]**	**Provocations (Artist)[3]**	**Appreciations (Journalist) [4]**
1976	physical relationship with instruments, technical approach to music, creative process automated, conceptless music, too many instruments on stage	consciousness and knowledge of the instrumentation and musical structures, extreme concentration on stage, transparency on stage, intellectual music	knowledge of the e-instruments functions, cultural knowledge, presence of messages in the music	-----
1977	lack of bands originality, unusual sound	intellectual and structured music	-----	-----
1978	entertainment, live show automated, lack of classical music education, lack of movement on stage, lack of bands originality	many possibilities of e-instrumentation, knowledge of music structures, e-instrumentation not cold	knowledge of the e-instruments function, more than simple sound reproduction on stage	new modern kind of cultural expression forms
1979	entertainment, economical return due to mainstream art	-----	more than simple sound reproduction on stage	classical music education which makes a good musician create original artworks
1980	lack of bands originality, instrumentation coldness	unconventional instrumentation, possibility of originality, public opinion doesn't accept technical changes, innovation	-----	-----
1981	lack of bands originality, entertainment, too many instruments on stage, conceptless music	originality possible, art not exclusive anymore, entertainment is important, big instrumentation on stage is important, different physical approach than with acoustic instruments, e-instrumentation not cold	music is also entertainment not just politics	creativity
1982	amateurism, physical relationship with instruments, coldness, entertainment, lack of political message, lack of virtuosity on stage, lack of bands originality, technical approach to music, mainstream, minimalism	e-music not cold hence made by human beings, not just entertainment, minimalism important, not just amateurs, not just e-musicians, e-music represents the new society, political message is possible	cultural knowledge, not just fun and entertainment, for new cultural expression forms new language elements are needed	-----
1983	-----	e-music can have a concept behind it	-----	-----
1984	technical approach to music, creative process automated	long creative process, many possibilities of e-instrumentation	e-instruments are played just like acoustic ones	"King of Disco music"

Table 3: Approach Categories

[1]: Topics that journalists use in relation to the artists in order to provoke and/or denigrate their artwork and/or work techniques declassifying them to a lower artistic level.

[2]: Topics that artists use to reply to the journalists provocations with the intent of protecting their artwork and/or work techniques.

[3]: Topics that artists use in relation to the journalists in order to protect and defend their artistic intentions without falling into their provocation-game.

[4]: Topics the journalists use in relation to some artists in order to esteem the artwork.

new musical styles, as well as to the terminology necessary to talk about and understand their operating principles in a glossary. During the same year the magazine publishes a similar dossier concerning Dance music called "Disco Sound: Fließband's Baby, Tanzmusik"[25], where the switch of paradigm in the Western world from "black" to electronic music is analyzed and strongly criticized, as the latter allegedly took away the "Soul" from the former styles, and provided an empty commercial approach to Dance music genres.[26]

Starting from the end of that year, the monthly periodical began to partly direct its editorial interests towards the emerging genres, even though until 1982 the number of reports and interviews in the researched context is limited to a modest amount. So the dramatic increase of interest for electronic music during 1982 is especially interesting to note, where not only two columns primarily dedicated to new electronic music artists were introduced (*Deutsche Tänze* and *Neue Gesichter[27]*), but also the most significant number of issues in the thematic context were published. The two columns ceased to exist already in 1983, where as in the early years just a few articles and interviews under the selection criteria were published until the end of the considered decade.

Table 3 shows the categories derived from the editorial approach towards musicians that extended their composition methods to electronically programmable instruments, as well as the evolution of the topics' nature during the investigated decade. Another considered aspects are the artists' reactions when consulted or provoked in interviews because of their use of non-acoustic instruments. The most recurring topic that the journalists used in relation to the artists in order to provoke and/or denigrate their work techniques and thereby declassify them to a lower artistic level is the lack of originality. Alongside, it is often stated that that their sound seems similar to that of other artists, meaning their work are therefore unauthentic. Furthermore, the accusation of producing merely entertaining music which doesn't carry any political or ideological message is expressed.

As shown in this index, there is a significant amount of provocation by the journalists towards the concerned artists, as well as defenses of the latter, who try to respond to the attacks giving their own arguments to the accusations. These two kinds of discursive practices create a circle pattern around the topic in question. Another interesting (re)action modality musicians use to face the issue without taking part to this provocation-game, is that of challenging the institutional idea that EDM as popular genre would not be authentic or subversive because of its intrinsic nature.

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[25] " Disco Sound: Converyor belt's baby, Dance Music"[Translated by the author].
[26] "[…] Tatsächlich fehlte ihr das wichtigste Merkmal der Soulmusik: Die Seele." (Musikexpress, 1976, N.8, p.44).
[27] "German Dances" and „New Faces" [Translated by the author].

In some exceptional cases, journalists express real appreciations toward the artists, esteeming their artwork aside from the essence of the played instruments. These seldom cases will be discussed in section 2.5., together with a synopsis on the timely development of the topic's nature in terms of provocations and defenses by both artists and journalists.

Table 4 shows which artists were provoked or appreciated most, and which of them reacted by defending themselves or provoking the journalist's position. One can observe that the majority of interactions were following a classical pattern of provocation and defense, whereas only a minority of artists were able to provoke the journalists which in turn also very seldom expressed appreciations towards the concerned musicians.

Artists in Focus	
Most Provoked Artists	**Most Appreciated Artists**
Tangerine Dream Kraftwerk Die Krupps Ultravox Vince Clarke Depeche Mode B.E.F. Pere Ubu Eberhard Schoener Yello	Pere Ubu Jean Michel Jarre John Foxx Brian Eno Giorgio Moroder
Most Self-Defending Artists	**Most Provoking Artists**
Tangerine Dream Kraftwerk Michael Hoenig Klaus Schulze OMD Yello Ultravox Die Krupps B.E.F. John Foxx	Tangerine Dream Eberhard Schoener Classix Nouveaux Depeche Mode Brian Eno

Table 4: Artists in Focus

Table 5 lists some titles of the articles that explicitly refers to the topic's nature and already introduce the arguments around the discourse analyzed in the reports. Some headings highlight the use of machines (instead of "real" instruments) by the bands ("The Man-Machine", "Machines make me a Man", "In Studio with Vince Clarke – Computer Child"), whereby in others, reporters connect the composition with electronic instrumentation to the magic, considering it to be something cryptic, arcane and occult ("The Magician at the big Moog", "Magic from the Computer"). Some irony is reflected in titles like "[…]Electronic Michael takes off!", and mostly in "The Sound comes from the Button" or "Dance of Happy Cows", where the artists in focus seem to not be taken seriously by the editorial staff. Lastly, the accusation of "coldness" pointed towards electronic music permeates

through lines like "Emotion & Electronics" and "Intelligent and Danceable", where the authors draw the attention to the possibility of making "human" electronic music, legitimating the widespread consideration of its emotional rigidity. In many cases, especially regarding reports published during 1982, individual article titles aren't present, but the reports are instead put into the framework of a columns dedicated to the new musical tendencies, like *Neue Gesichter*, *Deutsche Tänze* and *Elektro-Pop*.

Artist/Band	Title of Article*
Kraftwerk	"We are a Radio Station"
Eberhard Schoener	"Laser in Concert"
Pere Ubu	"Sound from the Steel Works"
Michael Hoenig	"Blubber, blubber, zisch…Electronic Michael Takes Off!"
Klaus Schulze	"The Magician at the big Moog"
Jean Michel Jarre	"The Sound Comes from the Button"
Gary Numan	"The Man-Machine"
John Foxx	"Machines Make Me a Man"
Human League	"White Hypno-Tones"
Holger Czukay	"Magic from the Computer"
Yello	"Dance of Happy Cows"
Soft Cell	"Emotion & Electronics"
Palais Schaumburg	"Intelligent and Danceable"
Vince Clarke	"In Studio with Vince Clarke - Computer Child"

* All titles are translated by the author. Original titles are reported in Attachment 1.

Table 5: Titles of the Articles

Pictures and graphic styles are also often matched with the titles theme, as well as the teasers. Mostly, the design of these pages alludes to the aesthetics of what collective unconscious knows as science-fiction because of futuristic fonts and their black-and-white appearance.

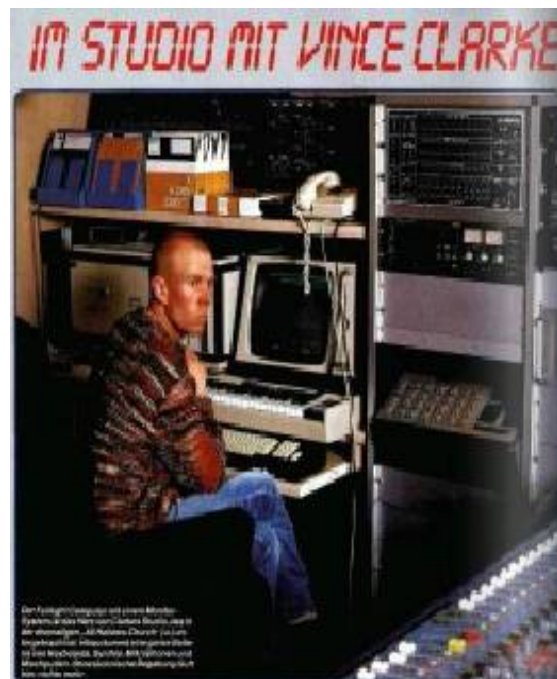**Figure 14: John Foxx in a Black and White Graphic Design**

Figure 15: Vince Clarke Portrayed in his Studio

In some pictures, as exampled in Figure 14 and 15, the focus is put on the nature of the instruments, illustrating the multitude of cables, keys and knobs necessary to produce electronic music. Furthermore, article's teasers whose title already hint to at the method of music production, tend to introduce artists and bands following the same critical demeanor proposed in the headings:

> "Since Kraftwerk bubbles in the American Hit-Parades, synthesizers, space and other synthetic musical fun is requested everywhere in the "land of milk and honey [...]".
>> Freund, W. 1978, "Blubber, blubber, zisch…Der Elektronik Michael hebt ab!"(Michael Hoenig), *Musikexpress*, N. 8 (August), pp. 9, 10.

> "Another Synthesizer Band? And this time from Switzerland? Should it really happen? There are already a sufficient amount of dilettantes piling up their brand-new electronic toys, thinking they were artists [...]".
>> Gockel, B., 1981, "Der Tanz der glücklichen Kühe" (Yello), *Musikexpress*, N. 11 (November), p. 28.

These teasers open two of the reports, giving as first information to the readers the impression that electronic music is strictly related to entertainment, dilettantism and lack of originality, as it will be discussed and observed closely in paragraph 2.5.

Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show which of the artists or bands were treated positively, negatively or neutrally, when putting these in relation to their musical career or background (e.g. kind of musical education). Results display how strictly adverse approaches are exclusively reserved to Synth-Pop bands, most of them debutant, and, on the other hands, how well-established musicians, mostly with a classical musical education or an experimental or one-of-a-kind background (e.g. *Pere Ubu*, *Brian Eno*), are appreciated by journalists, who show a respectfully approach to them. Instead, pioneers of popular electronic styles, as *Tangerine Dream* for Space- and Krautrock or *Kraftwerk* and *Vince Clarke* for Synth-Pop, are partially appreciated for their artistic contribution and partially mistreated because they are part of a scene, which is displayed as related to the loss of musical authenticity, and therefore they were portrayed to be technicians rather than as musicians.

Negative Approach*	
Artist/Band	**Background/Career**
OMD	Debut Synth-Pop band
Ultravox	Synth-Pop band
B.E.F.	Synth-Pop label and music project
Die Krupps	Debut Synth-Pop band
Depeche Mode	Debut Synth-Pop band
Bananarama	Debut Synth-Pop female band
Fashion	Debut Synth-Pop band
Yazoo	Debut Synth-Pop band

Table 6.1: Negative Approach

Positive Approach*	
Artist/Band	**Background/Career**
Pere Ubu	Well-estabilished Avant-Garde band
Jean Michel Jarre	Electronic music composer with a classical musical education
John Foxx	Founder of Ultravox and of an indipendent music Label
Holger Czukay	Member of Can
John Watts	Ex-Member of Fisher Z
Pete Schelley	Ex-member of a guitar band
Brian Eno	Experimenter, pioneer of Ambient music, intellectual
Alan Vega	Political approach
Giorgio Moroder	"King of Disco Music"

Table 6.2: Positive Approach

Neutral Approach*	
Artist/Band	**Background/Career**
Tangerine Dream	Pioneers
Kraftwerk	Pioneers
Eberhard Schoener	Composer
Klaus Schulze	Pioneer
Classic Nouveaux	Debut Synth-Pop band
Yello	Debut Synth-Pop band
Soft Cell	Debut Synth-Pop Band
Palais Schaumburg	Neue-Deutsche-Welle band
Heaven 17	Debut Synth-Pop band
Vince Clarke	Founder Depeche Mode, Yazoo, Heaven 17

Table 6.3: Neutral Approach

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* Treatment of journalists towards the artists in the reports.

2.5. <u>Interpretative Stage: Observing the Editorial Choices of *Musikexpress*</u>

As the analysis' results indicate, the editors of the *Musikexpress* initially avoided to recognize the importance of the growing phenomenon of electronic and Dance music genres, choosing the omission of this topic as an editorial line until 1976. After that, the periodical started to release first interviews and articles with bands or musicians who employed electronic music techniques, and in most cases they then were subjected to provocations on different levels.

Year	Nature of the Critiques
1976	Physical relationship with e-instruments
	Synthesizers on stage
1978	Entertaining character of electronic music
	Motionless performance
	Lack of originality
1979	Cultural industry
1980	Emotionless and cold nature of electronic music
1981	Incompetence of electronic musicians
	Amateur musicians
	Great amount of instruments on stage
1982	Pre-recorded live performance
	Lack of political message
	Lack of virtuosity
	Lack of originality
	Programming vs. Composing
1984	Turning knobs vs. Playing instruments

Table 7: Nature of the Critiques

Nevertheless, as one can observe in Table 7, there was a certain kind of evolution of the subjects that the musicians were confronted with. In fact, during the first years (until around 1978) journalists mostly focused on the technical issues around electronic music production (such as the physical relationship with the instruments - in studio and on stage, or the motionless of electronic music performers), and around the beginning of the '80s the accusations shifted towards the creative domain of composition. This also includes also intellectual questions about artists' virtuosity and the allegedly "cold" character of electronic music.

This process escalated until 1982, where the largest number of debut bands was consulted and questioned about their use of drum machines and synthesizers, and moreover was strongly criticized about their apparent lack of originality or subversion. This tendency decreased in the last two years (1983-1984), and gave space to another kind of debate about the new generation's computer-based instruments, such as software and sequencers. During this phase, journalists started to complain about the new character of composition and performance, where artworks were no longer produced with a "real" instrument (not even an electronically programmable one), but with

computers, turning the practice of music development to a pseudo-office's job, rather than to a creative one, as the example below shows.

> *MUSIKEXPRESS:* "[...] Here [in Vince Clarke's studio] music is produced by pressing a button, songs are not written anymore, but programmed [...] Here one can find mixers, recorders, microphones, speakers, a Fairlight computer [...] and if one goes through the glass-door, he reaches the second room, where musicians usually play instruments [...], which here is more like an office instead, where songs are composed, obviously using a computer [...]".
>
> Evert, M., 1984, "In Studio mit Vince Clarke - Computer Kid" (Vince Clarke), *Musikexpress*, N. 5 (May), pp. 48-50 [Translated by the author].

The domain in which the artists' defenses range, in order to argue for their artwork's authenticity against the journalists' accusations, is parallel to the latter, as a reaction to those.

Provocations of the Journalists		Defenses of the Artists
No physical relationship with electronic instruments	→	Knowledge of the instruments and musical structures
Presence of too many instruments on stage	→	Transparency of the actions on-stage
Creative processes are automated through electronic music instruments	→	Electronic instruments allow more complex structures and many possibilities
Lack of bands originality	→	Electronic music is now part of the society
Lack of political message	→	A political message is possible
Electronic musicians are just amateurs	→	It doesn't have to be like this - electronic musicians can also accomplished musicians
Most electronic musicians don't have a classical music education	→	Electronic musicians can often also play other kinds of instruments too

Table 8: Provocations and Defenses

Table 8 shows the most recurring provocation and defense patterns that arose in the discourse about electronic and Dance music's authenticity and ideological message. Within the articles, the weight of the journalists' accusations and the artists' responses do not seem to be equivalent: in fact, the musician's arguments in the articles are ordered in a way in which they appear weak and not convincing, as if the musicians are admitting their guilt feelings in relation to these issues.

MUSIKEXPRESS: "Hoenig introduces himself as a non-musician:"

MICHAEL HOENIG: "Since the beginning of my career I have always pressed [synthesizer] keys. Chords, triads and harmonies don't have a significant meaning for me."

MUSIKEXPRESS: "How can this be possible?"

MICHAEL HOENIG: "Well, I have been doing this kind of introduction to myself for several years now. [..] I don't have a classical music education... Nevertheless I am able to build up harmonies and sound structures...".

> Freund, W., 1978, "Blubber, blubber, zisch…Der Elektronik Michael hebt ab!"(Michael Hoenig), *Musikexpress*, N. 8 (August), pp. 9, 10 [Translated by the author].

As the example above shows, the style of depicting the interview legitimizes there being a natural correspondence between being a "real musician" and having a classic musical education. In this way, it excludes the possibility of becoming a musician when having another kind of socialization. On his side, the artist doesn't seem to defend his own artistic style by claiming it to be something unique, but rather takes up the topic of the question by answering that he nevertheless possesses basic skills that allow him to function like a "real musician", meaning he has knowledge of musical harmonies and structures. Thereby his answer also legitimizes the institutionalized idea that a musical artist needs to have a classical education.

Another response that musicians use to protect themselves from the attacks is to accuse other artists by using the same institutional arguments:

MUSIKEXPRESS: "[…] And again, like *D.A.F.,* you use textual imperatives".

DIE KRUPPS: "They [*D.A.F.*] also want to create something new, a kind of differentiated rhythm [...] when I was performing together with *D.A.F.*, I simply controlled the tape-recorder on stage".

> Meierding, G., 1982, (no title) (Die Krupps), *Musikexpress*, N. 3 (March), pp. 26, 27 [Translated by the author].

In this case a member of a new band implicitly criticizes an old one for using a tape-recorder on stage, implying a loss of quality of the artistic creation because of its automation, in order to protect themselves from the accusation of not being authentic. This example demonstrates a certain kind of insecurity on the electronic music artists' side, which appears difficult to be dealt with in its essence.

MUSIKEXPRESS: [Journalist compares *Classix Nouveaux* to *Visage* and *Spandau Ballet*]

SAL SOLO: "I don't see so many similarities between us, because each live act looks so different from another. We are performers, and therefore we also care about our good looks".

MUSIKEXPRESS: "Sal Solo easily admits to produce purely entertaining music, [...] [as this project represents] his first confrontation with the Pop-Sound [...]".

SAL SOLO: "The entertaining aspect is very important to me, because otherwise it is too easy to   get into a particular situation, [...] politics and all this is stuff are also relevant, but it doesn't have to dominate over the music. If you want to be a politician, then you should become a politician, not a musician".

Meierding, G., 1981, "Dschingis Kahn der Avantgarde" (Classix Nouveaux), N. 7 (July), pp.20, 21 [Translated by the author].

In the example above, the singer of *Classix Nouveaux* is formerly accused due to the the lack of originality of his project, being compared with two other bands of the Synth-Pop domain. His reaction towards the journalists appears to be quite weak, as he tries to claim his own right to care about the appearance. However, a very different approach is discernable in his answer to the second comment about the production of entertaining cultural goods Here he shows his self-confidence regarding the topic, being aware and sure about what he wants to communicate. With the last sentence ("[...] If you want to be a politician, then you should be a politician, not a musician."), he displays another type of reaction to the editorial provocations: the one of remaining outside the debate and provoking himself, not accepting the standardized accusations directed towards electronic musicians and preserving them from being considered unauthentic or pure entertainers. Other musicians respond likewise:

MUSIKEXPRESS: "What kind of physical relationship do you have with your [electronic] instruments? Is it the same as with guitars?"

TANGERINE DREAM: "It is just an optical difference, [while playing electronic instruments you are] extremely concentrated, you are fully committed and this is also a physical experience, even if no one down there is able to perceive it. [...] And while you turn the knobs and press the keys you are able to hear the sound you produce instantly! You don't have to wait 5 minutes in order to be able to hear something!"

Schober, I., 1976, "Ein Traum bekommt Flügel" (Tangerine Dream), *Musikexpress*, N. 11 (November), pp. 8-10 [Translated by the author].
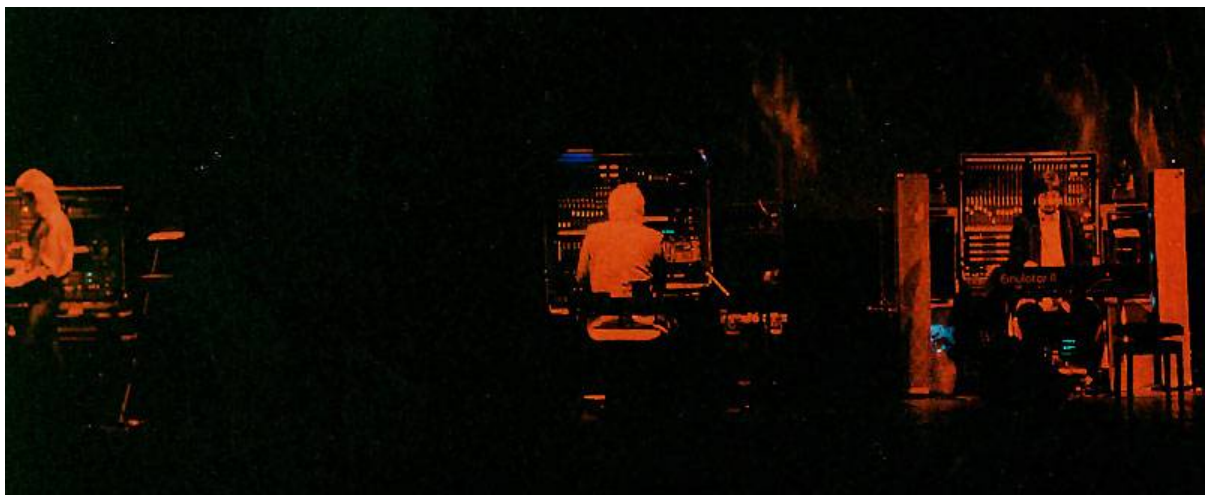
Figure 16: Tangerine Dream on Stage

In the example above the band first explains the feelings they have in relation to their electronic instruments, comparing them, as they were asked for, to the relationship towards acoustic instruments. After referencing on the discourse on alleged virtuosity problems themselves ("[...]even if no one down there is able to perceive it."), they make jokes on the journalist's "ignorance" concerning electronic instrumentation. In this case they appear as the ones who "know" what they do and authentically exhibit the high degree of concentration needed for electronic compositions.

A member of *Kraftwerk* reacted in a similar but more disturbed way to a comparable question:

MUSIKEXPRESS: "What happens, when you sit at your synthesizers?"

KRAFTWERK: "You know when you play shit. We are also aware, when we switch from A-Minor to D-Major. This kind of stuff is obviously in the very foreground".

> Schober, I., 1976, "Wir sind eine Radiostation" (Kraftwerk), *Musikexpress*, N. 12 (December), pp. 12-14 [Translated by the author].

Effectively, the journalists' provocation-game doesn't reach its goal of demotivating the readers' interest regarding electronic music. Nonetheless, the amount of musicians who were able to face this topic with such a degree of confidence is very low, compared to the ones who simply try to avoid the accusations.

Impulse	Reaction	
Provocations (Journalist)	Defenses (Artists)	Provocations (Artists)
Tangerine Dream	Tangerine Dream	Tangerine Dream
Kraftwerk	Kraftwerk	-----
Die Krupps	Die Krupps	-----
Vince Clarke	-----	-----
Depeche Mode	-----	Depeche Mode
B.E.F.	B.E.F.	-----
Pere Ubu	-----	-----
Eberhard Schoener	-----	Eberhard Schoener
Yello	Yello	-----
Ultravox	Ultravox	-----
-----	Michael Hoenig	-----
-----	Klaus Schulze	-----
-----	O.M.D.	-----
-----	John Foxx	-----
-----	-----	Classix Nouveaux
-----	-----	Brian Eno

Table 9: Impulse and Reaction

Table 9 shows the artists' (re)action to the provocative editorial impulses. As already mentioned, only a small number of musicians which were provoked because of their electronically programmable instrumentation react to the affronts by accusing the journalists themselves of not being prepared to an epochal change of musical composition. Most of those who did, were actually bands of well-known musicians, usually with a classic musical education. Here, one must note the presence of the band *Depeche Mode*[28] within this group, who were heavily accused from many different sides for various reasons within the researched issue, as already in the teaser of the report:

"[…] Easygoing Synth-Pop for dancing people. But along the way, the dancing-legs get   tired too…".
Güldner, U., 1982, (no title) (Depeche Mode), *Musikexpress*, N. 5 (May), p. 16 [Translated by the author].

In this text, the diffidence from the journalist' side is clearly visible, as he uses a metaphor to express his disappointment regarding the formation of another band in the Synth-Pop scene, which he apparently considers extremely nugatory.

During the second part of the interview with *Depeche Mode*, one of the members appears so disappointed about the low journalist's consideration of the band, that he just starts to joke ironically about his arguments, thereby overturning the role of the ridiculous and putting the journalist himself in the position of the accused:

MUSIKEXPRESS: "On the British Islands, they are all-stars. Stars for countless pairs of feet on the Post-Travolta-Dance-Floor. Stars for the make-up-joyous New-Romantic-Crowd, stars for the joy of Pop music, emerging from the oscillators and filters of the electronic instruments' theme park, which become larger, better and cheaper every day. [...] [The debut Album "Speak and Spell"] is already on top of the charts. A wonderful set of pralines from the tool box. Another album in the New Wave section of your local record store."
"[...] Do you maybe also have something like a message? Do you want to make people happy?"
DEPECHE MODE: "There is no message. And furthermore, are we not happy guys? We're just a fun band!"
Güldner, U., 1982, (no title) (Depeche Mode), *Musikexpress*, N. 5 (May), p. 16 [Translated by the author]

Furthermore one can note, that after 1976, where bands like *Tangerine Dream* and *Kraftwerk* were also scrutinized by journalists, the most criticized and provoked bands or musicians that simply reacted by defending themselves, have been Electro and Synth-Pop bands debuting exactly during those same years (e.g. *Die Krupps, B.E.F., Yello, Ultravox*). This could hint to a lack of professional

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[28] Nowadays very famous, but at that time they were an Electro-Pop debut band. [Note of the author].

experience in handling these kinds of situations, which would have been handled by enforcing their own artistic standards.

Figure 17: Die Krupps - Clip from a Promotional Video (1982)

2.6. Explicative Stage: About Discoursive Procedures of Mass-Media

The results of the first part of the empirical research, concerning the way *Musikexpress* reacted to the spread of electronically programmable instruments and consequently the growing number of bands who adopted them in Germany during the decade of 1975-1984 show the editorial choice of completely ignoring this development until 1976. But apparently, the growth of this musical phenomenon worldwide had become too extended for ignoring it any further for a well-established generalist publication about contemporary popular music styles.

Electronic music has been indeed introduced to the mass audience of *Musikexpress* with a set of simplified dossiers about electronic music history during the last months of 1976, which explained the basic concepts of electronic music, both from the historical and technical perspectives. Parallel to this, the general public was also informed about the changing paradigm into the Dance music domain by another special report. It explained how electronic music started started to replace former genres belonging to the black tradition (Soul, R'n'B), and bringing a new conception of production and reception of Disco Music in the Western realm.

Successive to these two introductory dossiers, the interest of the analyzed medium for new musical tendencies arose, as the growing amount of articles published in the following years about electronic musicians confirms. The interest's peak is reached during the time span which coincided

with the spread of electronic instruments on the market (1981-1982), after which the amount of reports concerning the topic in focus dramatically decreases. This kind of editorial choice might be related to the fact that, due to the stabilization of such instruments in the international musical landscape, the market related to electronic music found its own well-established place, and consequently the phenomenon no longer needed to be observed in such detail anymore.

The research also shows that the editorial office of the *Musikexpress* points out an alleged lack of virtuosity, originality and subversion regarding the involved musicians because their use of electronically programmable instruments. Journalists indeed often ironically refer to these as "toys" or "machines", as if they don't have anything to do with the creative process around them and would instead be more closely related to a diversion activity. It is interesting to see, that with the emergence and spread of computer-based instruments and MIDI technology, the same accusations first pointed by the journalists against musicians using electronically programmable instruments, later shifted towards the new techniques.

This could hint to an ignorance from the journalists, which do not seem to be conscious about the enormous changes happening in the musical and cultural scene during the considered years, and therefore did not know how to approach it. They appear incredibly conformist to old patterns, as the obligatory presence of a conservatory education into a musician's life. Their conception of authentic performance refers mostly to the incontestable stereotype of guitars and drums on stage, where the performers need to move, to bring their own instruments to play. The fact that, in order to play a synthesizer or a drum machine, the body is not noticeably involved, roused superficial reactions from the journalists, which preferred to label these new kinds of acts as "cold and motionless", to the point that they even doubted the performance being one.

The lack of interest regarding electronic and programmable instruments by the side of the authors is also shown through the way they diagnose an alleged lack of originality among the new bands who use them. They refer to those artists as being similar to each other, as they make machine-made music and oft reproduce recorded tapes on stage, where it would be difficult to distinguish from one project to another. This perspective also brought them to claim a lacking of subversion, as they would supposedly just make music for fun and entertainment, without any political sense, allegedly also due to the circumstance that most of them were not trained musicians.

These accusations have brought forth more or less manifestly, during the conversations with the artists or through the report text, as well as with employing a certain graphic design and selected pictures, that underlines the intention of the articles.

Nevertheless, the new movements related to electronically programmable instruments during the considered decade was not rejected in general, hence, as results show, the majority of the critics and the most negative approaches were usually addressed at debut bands or artists, in particular

mostly to those which haven't a traditional musical educational (e.g. conservatory). On the other hand, well-established musicians, as well as those who did have a musical background concerning other musical styles or pioneers, were not negatively considered in the discourse about lack of authenticity and subversion.

Unlike the debuting musicians, who mostly tried to protect themselves from the accusations of the journalists, the most-famous ones react highlighting their know-how concerning their own musical profession. In this way, they accentuate the lack of knowledge of the interviewers, which "dare" to question the basic elements of an experienced musician, e.g. artistic background, virtuosity.

As mentioned above, the parameters of those journalists are accustomed to the mainstream Pop/Rock music styles, which also included more "subversive" sub-genres as Psychedelic Rock[29], which in those years became a standard of the popular styles. Above that, guitar-based music is the first genre able to maintain its subversive and politically-engaged appeal, at the same time being extremely successful under an economic point of view. Consequently, the emergence of electronic music styles might have represented a threat for the established Rock, already widely and permanently appreciated by the audience, which reflected the musical market and cultural industry. The results of the present analysis shows an interest of the mass-media as the voice of the institutions of taking advantage from the ideological position of the intellectual Pop/Rock front represented by the journalists.

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[29] In the sense, that they were mostly acclaimed by politically-oriented alternative cultures. [Note of the author]

3. Empirical Research 2: An Investigation within the Contemporary Electronic Music Scene

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 2. aimed to analyse the evolution of the discourse around the changing cultural paradigm, from analogue instruments to electronically programmable ones for a great amount of popular musicians and Dance music producers, during the decade between '70s and '80s in Germany. A result of this analysis is, that the introduction of such instrumentation completely transformed the approach to composition, musical production and reception, gave opportunities also to those who did not receive a classic musical education, and created new conceptions of virtuosity.

The transition from electronically programmable instruments to digital and software-based ones, as well as their societal spread during the '80s and '90s, blurred the distinction between what was considered "high art" and "mass culture" even further. The new technologies are able to turn each computer owner into a potential musician or remixer, as well as they allow everyone to participate in audio network communities because of the open access to the cyberspace (Cox & Warner, 2004, p.XIV).
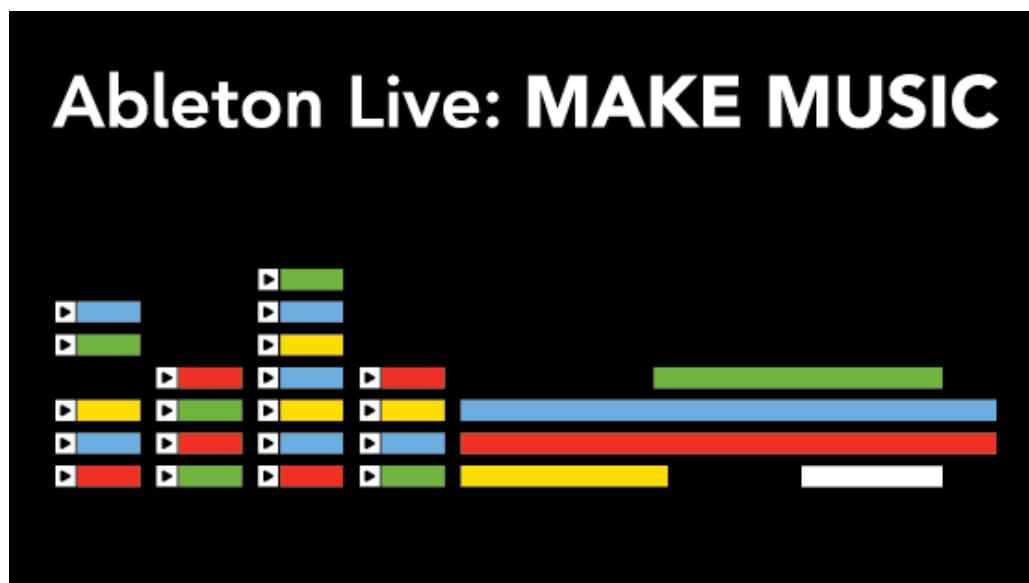
Figure 18: Ableton Live

Nevertheless, also in this second age of electronic instrumentation, similar debates to the ones of the previous age arose, in which live-sequencing was again criticized by the public opinion – and especially by the mainstream publications - and contrasted with the performance in which a "real" instrument is played. This section will investigate, whether the same arguments that were found in the last section for the '70s and '80s as results of the CDA, managed to persist in the era of software-based instruments, and how and from whom are expressed.

To answer this question, I interviewed three musicians that are part of the contemporary electronic music scene and mostly perform with software-based instruments, about their experiences with journalism and audience about the nature of their production. The material this time is evaluated

following the guidelines of the Grounded Theory, a method for comparative qualitative analysis introduced by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in 1967, to deduce which value the conceptions of subversion and authenticity in music assumed in the present days.

3.2. Introduction to the Analyzed Sample

In order to explore how the discourse about authenticity and subversion in electronic music affected the contemporary scene, I selected as a sample for this second analysis of three professional producers of different electronic music styles, who began their musical work after the 2000s, and operating with a minimum of one laptop in both composition and performance. For the sake of covering a wider range, one of the criteria is to interview musicians with different backgrounds, respectively corresponding to Techno (1.), IDM[30]/Ambient (2.) and Experimental (3.). The aim of this selection is to provide an heterogeneity of styles that will give a realistic portrait of the contemporary electronic music landscape, as the affinity with certain scenes could also reflect the kind of engagement, both of musicians and audience. Therefore I decided to trace an imaginary line starting from the most widely-appreciated domain – the one of the dance-floors -, going through the more intellectual one of IDM and Ambient, to finally reach the extreme territories of experimental avant-gardistic music with political tendencies.

As pointed out before, the interviewed musicians were required to be professional, meaning, that their principal income has to be derived from their musical activity. Furthermore, they were requested to be active in the software-based electronic music landscape only after the 2000s, with a minimum of 10 years of performance practice, therefore preferably not younger than 25 years old. This realm is principally male-dominated, so I decided to interview at least one female musician, which turned out to be the one belonging to the experimental scene. Furthermore, since the contemporary music scene works within an international context, being globally active was another prerequisite for the selection of the interviewed musicians. This criterion is fulfilled when a musician practice his or her musical activity (e.g. tours, showcases) not only locally, but also outside the area where they he/she is based.

Their search for and selection of my interview partners was made directly by a written personal invitation which included a brief introduction to the present project, after a pre-selection and verification of the presence the requirements mentioned above. Since the interviews (approx. 1 hour each) has to be digitally recorded, they were conducted in places that were quite enough, and which were convenient to the musicians, which turned out to be recording studios or private spaces.

To provide a certain reliability for the present study, the questions were designed considering the interviewed principally not as musicians themselves, but instead as a qualified audience for

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[30] Intelligent Dance Music.

computer-based music performances. The aim is to avoid receiving self-referential answers, as it might have happened if they would have been questioned about their own authenticity and subversion as musicians.

The first and introductory section of the interview focuses on general questions about the last performance or concerts visited in general, and the evaluation of these. On this basis, the interview investigates the musician conception of s performance's authenticity and virtuosity. During the second phase, I highlight the concern about software-based instruments on stage, and examined which feelings and impressions these situations may provoke from the of the present study, as well as their notion of authenticity and virtuosity in this context. Only during the third and last part of the interviews, the participants were asked to talk about their personal experience concerning the topic in focus, as well as their eventual ways to handle and react to these kinds of accusation and critic.[31]

The interviews are fully transcribed and evaluated according to the guidelines of the Grounded Theory.

3.3. Grounded Theory as Methodology

The method chosen for the evaluation of the artists' direct reports is the Grounded Theory, devised by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967). Grounded Theory is a methodology in the social studies for the construction of theories by comparative analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999 [1967], p.1).

Its primary aim consists in extrapolating technical data from qualitative material obtained during the social research, in order to render it usable in the field of sociology and provide theoretical conceptual models, to fill the gap between theoretical and empirical research models (Glaser & Strauss, 1999 [1967], pp.2, 3). Practically, Grounded Theory observes "the interrelationship between meaning in the perception of the subjects and their action", in order to discover new meanings expressed through symbols – fundamental elements of human interaction (Glaser, 1992, p.16).

The method proposed by Glaser & Strauss differs from typical structuralist theories (as e.g. CDA), since the collection of data does not serve as support of a given theory, but instead the theory is practically derived from the collected data. In fact, the application of this process is used for the sake of conceptualizing through empirical research a possible solution of a given problem.

In order to reach this purpose, the collected data needs to be observed according to given stages theorized by the founders of Grounded Theory. The ones selected for the examination of the current research question are:

(1)   *Open coding and memoing:* The phase of *open coding* consists of the identification of useful concepts derived from all collected data. Those are marked and connected in form of semantic blocks, in order to develop a greater concept, which could represent the theory

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[31] Full interview's transcriptions in attachments 2.1., 2.2., 2.3.

answering the research question. During a second phase of the first stage, called *memoing*, the identified concepts are coded as field notes. Each of these notes serve as foundation for the purpose of building up the theory's core. *Memoing* represents the intermediate stage of Grounded Theory, as it is needed for the crystallization and connection of theoretical concepts.

(2)   *Selective coding:* This second stage is needed in order to delimit the research's field, and it can only be done after the identification of the core category. Successively, all other recognized categories have to be related to this, in order to build and develop theory's guidelines for answering concrete questions.

(3)   *Integrating, refining and writing up theory:* During this phase, the coding categories that emerged from the collected data are linked and confronted to each other, in order to develop theoretical models around a central theory, which could represent the answer to the research question.

The following sections (3.4., 3.5., 3.6.), will describe how these stages were empirically applied on the interviews used as the sample for the present research, which is concerned with the reception of electronic music.

3.4. Stage 1: Open Coding and Memoing Resumé

The processes of open coding and memoing have been summarized on the basis of the interview guidelines in Table 10. This briefly introduces which questions were asked to the participants and resumés their answers. As suggested in the previous section (3.3.), the concerned musicians were first asked to give their opinion about authenticity and virtuosity, both in general and with electronic programmable instruments, considering themselves as part of the audience. Indeed, these have been asked to evaluate performances they have personally visited, and to express their judgement about the impressions those communicated to them. In order to categorize their viewpoints, they have also been requested to define their general conception of virtuosity and authenticity during a live performance. During the second part of the interview, the same musicians were confronted with their emotional feedback concerning the use of newest electronic instrumentation (laptops, controllers) by other artists, investigating their inner values regarding new conceptions of virtuosity that arose after the establishment of the new tools. They have been asked to give their own considerations about these latter, as well as their notions of virtuosity and authenticity on stage, before the questions' focus switches. In the final part they were asked to report about their personal experience as musicians, no longer as qualified audience, and their own approach to this topic and to possible critique they received because of their personal artistic choices.

According to the first observations of the interviews (Table 10), the musicians stress the importance of developing an original expressive approach, which differs from the ones imposed by the market on musical languages and structures. This kind of authenticity seems not to be connected to a medium in particular, but instead to a set of values, which differs from a musician to another. Moreover, all of the interviewed recognize the democratic accessibility of the new instruments, as they are affordable for everyone.

Experimentation, which – as reported by the participants - is the core characteristic to define an artist or an artwork as authentic, can apparently be approached in different ways, according to the musicians' background and perspective. For example, the first and second musician (Techno and IDM/Ambient) connect it to a process of discovering that has to be a continuum between studio composition and live performance. On the contrary, the experimental musician focuses her work on the architecture of the narrative, which cannot be improvised on stage.

The importance of an original performance, which differs from an empty show, is indeed underlined by each of the questioned musicians. In fact, they explain the dimensions, that, according to their personal judgment, constitute the foundations for a "real" live act. The disappointment in the context of live performance is allegedly related to the reiteration of certain patterns which have already been explored and approved by the society and the majority of musicians, as well as to the lack of flexibility in the work of a musician itself.

Questions' Categories	1. Techno (Male, 33, active since 12 years)	2. IDM/Ambient (Male, 35, active since 11 years)	3. Experimental (Female, 38, active since 14 years)
Last concert seen	Morton Subotnick	Back to Chill Showcase (Ena, Goth Rad, Dj Scotch Bonnet), Japan	Two bands in Marseille
Liked?	Yes	Yes	One yes, one no
Why?	Non-conformist, original	High musical quality, different from the European taste	Interesting: Artist/Audience interaction / Not interesting: traditional way to perform
Last authentic concert seen	Morton Subotnik, Don Buchla	Gruen (Daniele De Santis), 2014	D.A.F.
Why authentic?	Real = Meaningful, something that can influence the art scene	Experimentation + Improvisation + DIY = Authenticity	Old = Symbolic + Political
What is authenticity/virtuosity?	Authentic = non mainstream/commercial = against market rules on music structures, exploration	See above	-----
Last unauthentic concert seen	In a certain way Squarepusher (Berghain) - but he can do this because he comes from a certain scene	Doesn't mention any name - Underground scene that use established patterns. This is a paradox, as jazz in conservatory. Underground need to break the estabilish language	Lust Mord, Berlin Atonale 2015. Old, but established and didn't care about showing something new
Last laptop-concert seen	Every weekend	Ryo Murakami, Japan, Autumn 2015	Anemone Tube, Chra
Feelings about laptop on stage	Medium not important, but the output and the ability of creating something new with every tool	Medium not important, but the aesthetics and the ability to express it	Medium not important, but the message and the ability to express it .Composition is about narrative, how to tell a story
Disappointment about laptop on stage	Mixing with a laptop, as well as with a wall of synths,. Anyway laptops are easier to transport	Market-standardized dance-floor events. It should not happen in the underground scene	Chra, Berlin Atonal 2015. Talented but not creative (both important)
Is someone with a laptop really playing on stage? / Feelings?	Big concerts = everything is prepared = show (-) ≠ performance (+)	It happens. Lack of artist's honesty	Not important, but the message
When is a laptop-concert unauthentic/unvirtuous?	Easy approach, Reproduction of a studio product	Often Techno events, because laptops are cheaper	Three layers of performance: 1) Theatrical aspect (PERSONA) 2) Character (PERSONALITY) 3) Presentation of the work (ARTIST)
What is authentic/virtuous on stage?	Process of discovering during a live performance with help of audience's feedback	Three layers of authenticity: 1) technical 2) expressive 3) aesthetic Each one can dominate above the others	A combination of the three layers
Difficulties on expressing own authenticity on stage	1) Feedback missing 2) Difficulties of communication through always different performances (≠ show)	Frustrating. It is easier to play in a club, because one just has to follow the flow	More on the technical level than in the content one
Provocations received about the used medium	Not about the medium, but about the content. Experimentation possible with anything	Not about the medium but about the aesthetics	By another artist. Important is to communicate for a composer not just to improvise
What would you say if someone would tell you, that your music is not authentic/virtuous?	Critique is an input to discover further, but one doesn't have to stick to the public opinion but can also experiment with something new. Provocations in this context are made from haters	One can be authentic or not with each kind of medium	Explain own point of view, and the reasons for making a certain kind of music
Last personal considerations	Feedback very important used in a constructive way	Everyone is free to express itself with the media he wants, also for other kind of uses than the predefined	Pro-Piraterie + Always curious about machines since childhood, therefore not scared of them

Table 10: Open Coding and Memoing Resumé

3.5. Stage 2: Selective Coding's Results

Selective Coding Categories	1. Techno	2. IDM/Ambient	3. Experimental
Authenticity	Independent from the Medium Established Musical Career Experimenting+Innovating Uncompromised Approach Meaningfulness No Mainstream	Independent from the Medium Experimenting+Innovating High-Quality Aestethics Originality	Independent from the Medium Established Musical Career Talent+Creativity+Persona
Virtuosity	Multimediality Deconstruction Audience's Feedback and Interaction*	Research on Aesthetics Set-up Organization Technical Know-How Improvisation	Creativity Composition+Narrative Musical Training
Subversion	Avant-gardism Experimenting+Innovating	Avant-gardism Instrument's use Reinvention Language Reinvention	Political Engagement Female Gender
Authentic Performance	Discovery+Innovation on Stage Output's Quality Recycled Tools DJ Sets	Experimenting+Innovating Hybrid Performance's Nature Inspiring Performance	Interaction with the Audience Meaningful Content Presence on Stage
Not Authentic	Repetition of Successful Paths Standardized Approach to Composition Pre-Recorded Performance Exaggerated Setup Laptop	Repetition of Successful Paths Standardized Aesthetics Pre-Recorded Performance dance-floor oriented events Conservative Approach	Standardized Aesthetics Exaggerated Setup Lack of Presence on Stage
Arguments Pro-Software	Affordability+Portability Contemporary Music Tools	Affordability+Portability Contemporary Music Tools	Affordability

* Audience's feedback is considered as a reflection of a musician virtuosity during a performance.
Table 11.: Selective Coding's Categories

Table 11 shows the categories that follow from the selective coding stage. As was already argued in the section resuming the first stage of open coding (3.4.), some of the answers allegedly match for each participant. This for example is the case concerning their arguments about the apparent irrelevance of the medium's nature for the sake of developing an authentic expressive modality, in contrast to the huge importance given to an experimental and critical approach, as well as technical know-how.

"[...] [the medium] doesn't really make a difference, [...] important is the output, like, whatever tool ...it's about how they use it, there are so many tools, there have ALWAYS been so many tools, like even in the Seventies there were already a lot of tools...[...]" .

    Artist 1. – Techno

"[...] I mean for me there is no difference between a hardware-based live and a computer. For me, what is impressing is the way you can affect my perception, and that's it. Because for me is not important

what kind of information or setup you have, but the way you can connect all this....[...] but I mean, this can happen via laptop, via hardware...at the end there is no difference, I think [...]" .

Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

"[...] I don't really care about that, because, for me, what is important is the message that they are sending....if they play live a software or not, that's up to them, I don't get annoyed by it.. ".

Artist 3. - Experimental

However, the artists also propose different visions about some of the concerned points, as for example the dimensions that they declare fundamental for the constitution of an authentic performance (Table 10), as well as their priorities on stage, which often reflect their own background and the kind of events they usually act in. In fact, each of the interviewed artists refers to one location/place in particular during the whole interview, which somehow indicates the nature of the scenes they take as sample.[32] Furthermore, 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient) recognize the importance of experimenting and innovating in order to pursuit a certain degree of musical authenticity. Interesting to note is that, both 1. (Techno) and 3. (Experimental), latently reveal their attribution of authenticity to an established and influential musical career, as shown in the examples below:

"[...] Subotnick or Don Buchla, they live in their own bell, completely, I am not at that   level[...] [they have been] blueprint for generations".

Artist 1. Techno

"[*D.A.F.* are authentic] Because they are old.....old in the sense that they come from the 80s ...".

Artist 3. Experimental

Regarding the categorization of musical virtuosity, one can note that 1. (Techno) always tends to emphasize is the significance of an audience's feedback, as being an essential part of the kinds of events he acts in. The reaction of the crowd appears central for Techno dance-oriented events, where the audiences body's response is the evaluation of the performance, feeding it through interaction or "drying" it through emptying the venue.

"[...] so let's say a performance, is half up to you, the other half up to the crowd you have in front of you, so when the crowd is MISSING the energy it's strange, then is really difficult to work on a message...then it can happen, that you end up just in a routine.. [...]".

Artist.1. - Techno

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[32] 1. = Berghain (EDM club); 2. = Intellectual; 3.= Intellectual-Alternative

"[...] one thing that actually GIVES you energy is when the crowd, let's say, when the magic happens, then you find yourself FULL of energy, so even when you're thinking 'I' m about to die, I can't anymore', then as soon as you step up and something happens and then....bum! The fire comes..and, in those cases, it becomes like a vampire system, when you just give a lot of energy and then you feel like really...[empty]".

> Artist 1. - Techno

For 2. (IDM/Ambient) and 3. (Experimental), the matter of the audience appears irrelevant, as they consider other factors to be more significant. 2. (IDM/Ambient) emphasizes the importance of refined non-established aesthetics, especially in the one scene that he defines as "underground", where one should be able to break the traditional musical patterns in order to contrast market rules:

"[...] many projects also in the experimental domain are only experimental on the surface, it's kind of repetition of an aesthetics which is already done by somebody else [...], this "new wave" of standardized experimental music, which is kind of countersense [...] I mean, it' s a bit weird when it happens in an experimental domain [...]".

> Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

Furthermore, in pursuance of expressing an original aesthetics and communicating a message, according to 2. (IDM/Ambient), one should also be able to manage the technical equipment and possess a certain amount of virtuosity. This virtuosity appears to be strictly related to the relationship with the instruments and with musical techniques, if compared to the skills that - according to 3. (Experimental) - are fundamental for the creation of a virtuous artwork or performance. These are mostly related to the physical presence of the artist on stage, who should be able to communicate his or her subversive message with a certain combination of persona, personality and presentation of the artwork. Thus, her priority for a meaningful performance would be the creation of the narrative, instead of focusing on technical equipment or output, as instead stressed by 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient).

This narrative described by the Experimental musician, is needed in order to deliver a subversive political message. On the contrary, the conception of musical subversion for 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient) chiefly stresses other elements. In fact, they recognize this property basically related to the ability of experimenting and creating new expression modalities, which would give an avant-garde character to the artist who challenge the established rules:

"[...] it's actually a good thing when artists are kind of conscious of this responsibility [the power that they have on stage], and they know, that, depending on what they do, one, two, a hundred times a year they are actually shaping what's coming next in the scene".

> Artist 1. – Techno

"[...] because Jazz, especially referring to Bebop, was created exactly to BREAK the language...".
     Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

Furthermore, the Techno musician explains how, in order to be subversive, an artist should be able to renew itself and propose new themes, as well as to face the disappointment of his or her own fans for the new choices:

"[...] in these moments [when you change an approach] you know already, that there will even be a lot of YOUR fans, they're gonna hate HATE you, because they just want something they are used to".
     Artist 1. – Techno

What he points out, is the difficulty to remain accepted as a musician when one chooses to experiment outside of the settled patterns of composition and performance. With this statement, he claims the necessity of contesting the public opinion in order to provoke the acceptance of new modalities, which otherwise would stick to the old given paradigms, which otherwise categorize their musical taste.

The innovative factor appears, according to the artists 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient), basically when achieving an authentic performance, as well as when researching a certain relationship between the tools used and their impressing output:

"[...] So I consider something MEANINGFUL when I see that the artists on stage manage to deliver to the public, something that they really get, but they didn't know they wanted...you know, where there is still a DISCOVERY process...".
     Artist 1. – Techno

"[...] what impresses me is the way you can affect my perception [during a live performance], and that's it.".
     Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

As asserted before, the perspective of the musician 3. (Experimental) in regard to this concern differs. In fact, in order to recognize a performance as authentic, she mostly stresses the meaningful presence of the artist on stage, and his or her ability in delivering the subversive message. For the same reason, she didn't express her disappointment in respect to a live performance where the musician is suspected to not play live. She also did not have any contra-points regarding electronic and digital instrumentation in general, when this can be the path to follow in order to create something original experimenting. On the other hand, both the artists 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient) seem to

display some of the widespread critiques of laptop musicians and DJs in the EDM domain, where, according to musician 2. (IDM/Ambient) it results easier to meet unauthentic artists:

"[...] actually there are many many many performances, especially into the dance-floor oriented domain [that I consider as] boring! I mean, in terms of sound, research, because anyway they reproduce the same drum machine and so on...[...]".
Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

The economic factor is also remarked by artist 1. (Techno), although he highlights the fact that a laptop-mixing performance could be perceived as unauthentic because of its lack of virtuosity:

"[...] I have been disappointed in guys just pushing play on the laptop [...] I it find more interesting as a performance-charisma to see something else that just a laptop, you know, a laptop is a very important tool, but let's say, there is something that always catches my curiosity when I see, this is going with no laptop, for example, because that is already an[other] attitude [...] but it also depends a lot on the possibilities, because, bringing equipment costs a lot of money and that impacts on your actual earnings".
Artist 1. - Techno

Nevertheless, both of them care about not generalizing their assumptions, giving examples, where machines don't represent any impediment for the purpose of composing in an original and authentic way. Indeed, as the Techno musician explains, everything may potentially end up being unauthentic or unoriginal, even an excessive use of hardware on stage:

"[...] I have also been disappointed in crazy set-ups, or hardware live-acts with a massive wall of synthesizers, [...] it's already a counter-movement [in the scene][...]".
Artist 1. - Techno

Moreover, musicians 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient) feel the same necessity for improvisation on stage as part of the process of musical discovering. They express a deep disappointment in artists, which prepare their own performance in studio in every detail, or simply reproduce their studio product in front of the audience. These arguments seem to be strictly related to the musical scene they act in. Nevertheless, if for musician 1. (Techno) this circumstance appears as an indicator for lack of expertise, the IDM/Ambient one recognizes, that a musician might possibly need to prepare his set in a meticulous way - without leaving room to an improvised performance, in order to expose his or her full authenticity:

"[...] sometimes I mean is exactly what you want, there are some performers were you actually KNOW that they are just pushing play, but maybe what is interesting in that is maybe the sound design

they use, so, how it works in a club situation, so then it's another level...there is an ability to discern, which is important too, otherwise it's to tricky.. maybe his aim is another one! Maybe he just spent a LOT of time just making that frequency resonating and then someone just says "You are not playing!"....yes but it's another thing!".

> Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

The central aim for everyone appears to be the discovery of new territories though of experimenting, which can happen on- or off-stage, in order to create products that can be controversial or not accepted by the public or by the critics, but that follows the art's purpose, the one to break the society's rules and being subversive. Furthermore, musician 2. (IDM/Ambient) tends to use Adorno's arguments against musical standardization when referring to the lack of experimentation by other artists, accusing them of not investigating, but simply walking on other musicians footsteps:

> "[...] the disappointment is when I perceive a standardized aesthetics, especially in the experimental underground world, because I see exactly the same methods supposed to be criticized by the underground system itself, so it's a huge contradiction, and of course this trend has a strong aesthetical and sonic result, that's why, in my opinion, experimental sound for definition, must be original, and then if it sounds   like many many others, something is not working....in a more philosophical way...".
>
> Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

> "[...] it reminds me when you for example go to a Jazz conservatory, which for me is a kind of paradox, because Jazz, especially referring to Bebop it was created exactly to BREAK the language...so it doesn't work...so that's how I see many of these performances..[...]".
>
> Artist 2. – IDM/Ambient

In fact, what he denotes, is an overlaying fixed structure that only differs in the details, which does not contribute to the creation of the entire artwork. These, instead, allegedly represent a superficial differentiation of the proposed serial product, though pretending to be subversive.

3.6. Stage 3:Theory Development

The present empirical research, concerned a second age of electronic instrumentation, which deals with digital engines, e.g. laptops and (MIDI) controllers. Three professional artists active in the 2000s with a minimum of one computer in their composition and performance processes, coming from three different scenes, have been interviewed. The purpose was the one of getting direct reports of their (competent) impressions about the conception of virtuosity and authenticity in performances with these instruments.

The results show the univocal reaction from all three musicians regarding the medium's choice. It appears indeed to not be important for the sake of giving an original character to a musical

product or a live performance. Authenticity is rather connected to values related to experimentation and disregarding of market rules, as well as to the importance of being able to distinguish a performance from a fully-prepared and therefore "empty" show. In order to pursuit uniqueness, musicians should allegedly be able to step back from the established patterns - without bothering about public opinion -, and express their message through their technical and expressive ability.

Nevertheless, each of the interviewed defines virtuosity and authenticity, as they are extremely related to their background and to the scenes within which they act. Each of the interviewed turns out to be bound to certain venues and audiences, as well as to specific values, that make them highlight the importance of particular factors. For example, according to the Techno artist the performance is guided by the feedback of the audience, and, the underground-Experimental artist reflects the meaningfulness of a performance when achieving the communication of the message.

Still, the results of the analysis reveal some intrinsic contradictions between the expressive statements about authenticity's and virtuosity's conceptions of some of the participants, and what they really consider these to be. In fact, as observed in section 3.5., both the first and second musician (Techno and IDM/Ambient), point their critiques towards the use of laptops and pre-recorded performances, not considering these authentic. Moreover, they regarded those kind of live-acts as being uninteresting, both from an aesthetical and a musical point of view, and, particularly artist 1. (Techno), seems to be cherish hardware based instruments. Specifically, musician 2. (IDM/Ambient) refers to dance-oriented events when he was requested to designate an unauthentic typology of electronic music acts. According to him, these end up being similar to each other and are therefore not original. Furthermore, what both participants remark to be as not virtuous, is the "steady" appeal of laptop-performances, which can apparently only be justified because these musical tools are affordable.

On the other hand, artist 3. (Experimental), who gives more importance to the contents rather than to the musical aesthetics, is consequent about her affirmations regarding authenticity and virtuosity in the software-based domain. In fact, she never accuses the new instruments due to their lack of presence or virtuosity, but instead leaves the decision of instrumentation to the artists from the artists, who should be the ones able to choose the technology for expressing their message.

This fundamental difference between the interviewed musicians corresponds to the kind of scene they represent. Both Techno and IDM events, are the ones mostly related the contemporary mainstream digital music scene, that usually take place in well-established locations, and are easily sellable as extremely experimental music. Furthermore, the intrinsic meaning of the latter, is based on an anti-popular appearance, for the purpose of remain subversive in its contents and criticize the surrounding society.

As a consequence, artists 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient), seem to be more subjected to market rules and values than musician 3. (Experimental). This is reflected by their assumptions, as they, instead of confirming their anti-conformist perspectives, rather stick to well-established theories. For them, the presence of hardware, the audience's recognition and a catchy appeal on stage is indeed essential in order to gather acclaim and, therefore, to sell work – in shape of live events or records-. The case of artist 3. (Experimental), is an example for how extreme music styles mostly focus on other layers of the performance, which don't include well-marketable elements and so are not of any interest and are therefore partially immune to the cultural industry's guidelines.

3.7. Considerations about the two Empirical Analyses

As observed in the results of the Grounded Theory analysis, the interviewed musicians apparently refer to the choice of the instrumentation as an irrelevant factor for composition. They instead give more weight to other elements, such as creativity or audacity of proposing something new. Some of their arguments though discard these postulation, hence their comments are similar to the ones made by the journalists of *Musikexpress* about artists that use electronically programmable instruments (Chapter 2.).

The results of the first empirical research exemplified the reluctance of the Axel-Springer-based journalists to accept the new modalities. This tendency was revealed by the use of some discoursive procedures, as e.g. the omission of the topic until it could no longer be ignored, and later the accusation pointed towards the concerned musicians of only being amateurs and not real artists. The reasons why these were looked down upon was in fact the lack of showiness and virtuosity on stage, as well the lack of well-established musical education patterns and their supposed lack of originality. Those allegations, made directly by the Pop/Rock intellectual front, were apparently supported by the publishing organ, which feared a fragmentation of the musical market due to the new musical trends, still unpredictable at that time. The consequence of this process might have been the loss of control over the musical market, possibly leading to economic damages for the cultural industry.

In order to protect itself from this eventuality, *Musikexpress* – as voice of the institutions – allegedly decided to shape the public opinion, pointing out the "defects" of such musical tendencies and recalling the patterns that are supposed to be the "right" ones to follow for being a "real" musician. Once ensured about that the new genres had a reasonable market of their own, there is a change in the in the editorial line of the *Musikexpress*. The former accusations against the use of electronically programmable instruments, shift and reappear against the widespread use of computer and digital samples that emerge in the mid '80s.

This kind of ideological pressure from the cultural industry on musicians working with electronic instrumentation, persists until now. From the results of the second empirical analysis (Chapter 3.), one can conclude that two of the musicians somehow regret seeing laptop-performances. The accusations they raise against these kinds of events include, among others, critique concerning to the fact that the body is principally not involved – and therefore virtuosity would be missing -, the supposed standardized character of dance-floor events, which would principally serve to be acclaimed by the dancing audience.

The examples below shows the reproduction of recorded or too-prepared acts on stage is pointed out by musicians 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient) in the same way the journalists did some decades before concerning electronically programmable instruments:

"[...] but it also depends on the target, you know, in that target the people don't care about the performance, they care about THE SHOW, so it's also understandable, it's not critique, it's just a system that I don't share. If you are on stage you need to perform, as simple as it is".
      Artist 1. - Techno

"[I feel] pretty disappointed, if I understand that something is TOO prepared with very little room for improvisation in the performance it becomes not interesting, then I can just go in a music shop and buy a release of them..[...]. [I also feel disappointed] When the approach is too easy. I mean, when I see that it is mostly about like...just pushing play, or...calling it a live performance just because they're playing their own things, that they're producing in studio...It's like if you see a concert of *Daft Punk*, probably everything there is prepared,[...]".
      Artist 1. - Techno

"[When I have to ask to myself if the musician on stage is really playing,] Intellectually is actually like an offence, because you are not honest as artist. [...] This often happens when you are booked for Techno events, with artists coming from different background playing on the same stage, [...] I mean, they just push play and ...so yes, disappointed [...]".
      Artist 2. –IDM/Ambient

In the first two examples, the Techno producer doesn't concord the choice of certain artists about recording in studio and then reproducing that work during a live act, referring to those if they weren't performances. Moreover he draws the parallel between these events and those of more established and mainstream bands - here the band *Daft Punk*. He refers to their shows as unauthentic, since these were supposed to be completely prepared for the sake of achieving a marketable perfectionism, quite impossible to get by "genuine" improvisation.

Furthermore, one can note, that the expression "just pushing play", has the same denigrating meaning as in the reports analysed for the CDA (Chapter 2.) for both musicians 1. (Techno) and 2. (IDM/Ambient), as it states the performers' lack of virtuosity. The lack is usually supposed when,

instead of playing an instrument, artists only activate their sequencers by a single movement of their hands and fingers.

As observed above, artist 2. (IDM/Ambient) reiterates to his latently discriminating viewpoint during the interview about Techno events. What he justifies in this context though is an established musical career, as well as certain educational patterns, which might again legitimate the use of "standardized" music tools. A similar observation has been made by the Techno producer (1.), with the act of favouring an established musician – *Squarepusher* - for using approved patterns because of his background:

> "[Sometimes I felt disappointed by] big performances I saw recently like *Squarepusher* at Berghain, [because it is something] I still considerate a more "commercialized" sound, but comes from such a story where that is allowed [...]".
>
> Artist 1. - Techno

It is interesting to note, that these kinds of judgments towards a specific approach to electronic music have been given by the ones, who actually belong to the scenes that are more connected to the "musical industry". These are in fact genres which appeal more to the masses, and consequently to the market, being more involved in mainstream dynamics. On the contrary, the third musician, belonging to an Experimental non-commercialized scene and having a more interpretative approach to the performance, appreciates the use of electronic and digital instruments exactly because they represent a democratic possibility to participate to the creative compositional process:

> "[...] I questioned myself because I started playing with computer, with a laptop, because that was accessible for me, I didn't have the money for synthesizers.... [...]".
>
> Artist 3. - Experimental

The musician doesn't regret the use of electronic instruments, identifying them as simple objects capable of expressing artists' intentions, and on the contrary points out the empty willingness of showing off by some musicians in the Post-Digital era:

> "I have a critique about it, because nowadays, 2015, you have a new corner, which is the corner of improvisation, and DIY instruments... where the people focus a lot on the visual performance, in the sense of having a lot of cables, a lot of weird instruments which look cool, and ok, I agree...you need a lot of work in order to do that, but they just focus on the visual aspect, to look weird, but it doesn't also SOUND weird! There is no narrative in that, it is more the spectacle of using machines which they build up themselves [...]".
>
> Artist 3. - Experimental

This new tendency of going back to analogue self-built instrumentation - as already pointed out in section 3.5. by the Techno musician (1.), has been criticized and accused because of an alleged lack of honesty by some musicians. What the research's participants point out, is in fact their will to perform in public without laptops, focussing more on the quantity of instruments on stage, rather than on the quality of their compositions.

In any case, the critique about the lack of authenticity pointed out by the interviewed persons is never moved towards a specific instrumentation, but instead is concerned with the use the musicians make of them. The lack of subversive message observed by the producers was always related to a lack of authentic expression by the ones who used those instruments, who apparently tend to reproduce something already widely approved in order to be extensively acclaimed, instead of daring the masses' musical taste and proposing something that could potentially not be accepted immediately. What each of them strongly highlights, is the necessity of use of music's subversive power in order to upset affirmed aesthetic patterns and revolutionize art's language, as shown in the explicit example below:

> "It is about innovating, and I normally appreciate a lot of artists that have this CONSCIOUSNESS that e-v-e-r-y single time they are performing in front of a crowd, they have a big power in their hand, it is a huge medium, you reach people in a such a direct way, that is really hard in another way... and energetic magic that can happen is really unique, [...]".
> Artist 1. - Techno

After the 2000s, the understanding of electronic music changed dramatically, turning what before was considered as a standard, e.g. sample technology, into old-fashioned media. The affirmation of productions based on the remixing of your own samples' let the dichotomy of hand-played and electronic fade, leaving space for the conception that recognizes the use of computers as a central parameter for electronic composition. (Black, 2010, p.31). The relevance of a classical musical education is now less important, while what matters is the knowledge of the operating principles of electronic music and electronic instrumentation, as well as the use one makes of it.

Nevertheless, the contradictions, observed between the statements of some participants of the second empirical study and the meanings they actually produced, reveal their will of pursuit their own musical ideals, while being influenced by the music market's laws. Their values appear seriously affected by the public opinion's judgement, in turn shaped by the mass-media, as their success basically depends on it. Although the concerned participants principally produce software-based music, they react critically towards other artists who use the same compositions methods, exclusively justifying the well-established and influential ones. Moreover, they acknowledge a certain degree of importance for aesthetical elements of the performance, which somehow correspond to the ones

proposed by the cultural industry, also recognizing the sound's quality and technical competence as synonyms for virtuosity.

In conclusion, considering the results of the two present empirical analyses, one can assume that the aesthetics of the cultural products principally appear modelled by the necessities of the cultural industry. This, in fact expresses its values of authenticity and virtuosity – mostly through the mass-media –, in order to discipline both audience and musicians and obtain conformist aesthetics that make products profitable and return rewards to the companies related to the music industry. The choice that musicians have to differentiate themselves into different scenes is thus only apparent, hence these need to follow the predefined guidelines in order to be appreciated and obtain success within their belonging scenes, strictly related to existing marketing rules. These consolidated values seem to not alter the reception of musicians, who, since the outset, decide not to simply work withing the established realm of the artistic domain (e.g. Artist 3. – Experimental), also renouncing to an higher degree of popularity. This is reflected in their choice of producing provocative music – both in its aesthetics and contents –, for the sake of expressing their disappointment regarding the capitalist society, which tends to also maintain the control also over the artistic expressive modalities.

The present study, based on two different ages of electronic instrumentation separated by a 20-years time span, show how the same strategy for controlling the development of musical tendencies from the cultural industry is used in both eras. Consequently, the alleged critique about new instrument generations appears to be nothing more than mere expedients for directing audiences and musicians towards market-related necessities, basically shaped by the technological developments characterizing the respective time periods. Finally, it can be assumed that the emergence of new musical tools generates the urgency of outlining new standardized sellable patterns, in order to prevent independent and fragmented musical evolutions, which can lead to financial losses for the entire business.

4. Conclusive Discussion: Towards a new Kind of Authenticity

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to answer the research question about the nature of the alleged connection between hand-played music and authenticity, virtuosity and subversion. These dimensions are considered to be focal points for the empirical researches: the first one (Chapter 2.) aims to recognize how they are affected by the epochal transition to the establishment of electronically programmable instruments during the '70s and '80s, while the second one (Chapter 3.) analyses their further development in the age of software-based instruments.

The study shows that the public opinion is strongly influenced by mass-media's ideological divulgation, mostly based on market's necessities. In this conclusive chapter, I will finally discuss this aspect, attempting to umask the way the institutions try to impose their hegemony by means of the cultural industry upon the masses, through an analysis based on the influence of the paradigm's changes on the examined dimensions.

4.2. Mass-Media Hegemony working against new Communication Forms

By means of a critical discourse analysis, this paper aims to describe institutional power relationships between the Pop/Rock establishment - represented by a mainstream music magazine - and new emerging musical artists employing electronic composition and performance techniques during the 1970s and 1980s. It exemplifies how the predominance of a certain ideology within the society as a whole is defended, and how mass-media channels are used in order to reach a widespread coverage for the production of a certain collective opinion about new cultural topics through hegemonic procedures. The analysis', as experienced in Chapter 2., are an example for how specific simplified cultural models may be imposed on the masses with their own consensus, instead of using violence.

From the results of the present study we may learn that the cultural industry readily demonstrates its hegemonic influence on artistic and musical discourse by means of media institutions (in this specific case, through the *Musikexpress*). In the beginning, the magazine was in fact reluctant about accepting the emerging expressive modalities of electronic music, which could not be codified in any recognized and established way by the journalists. In this way, it did not reflect the market parameters as perceived in the cultural industry. As *Brian Eno* argued:

> "About the new musical styles, I would like to suggest that we are experiencing something new and different, and I also think that it would be the right moment to develop an appropriate language to be able to talk about it".
>
> In Hülsen, H., 1982, (no title), (Brian Eno), *Musikexpress*, N. 6 (June), pp. 36-38. [Translated by the author].

Here the composer expresses the necessity to develop a new code in order to be able to talk about an emerging musical phenomena. This code would also give the opportunity to deepen the understanding of the new styles, and consequently could somehow help to sell the product to a mass-public. *Brian Eno*'s response to his interviewer underlines the alleged ignorance of the authors of musical publications, which, as explained in the discussion of the first empirical research in section 2.3., is a possible reason for their lacking acceptance regarding new musical tendencies.

Indeed, the analysis in focus shows, before the rise of electronic music as a mass phenomenon, the mass-media (as voice of the institutions) and the Pop/Rock intellectual front seem to have shared a tacit agreement about the "defense" of existing music styles. This was the age of Psychedelic- and Hard-Rock, which was legitimized by the intellectual avant-garde as subversive and authentic, while at the same time being suitable for consumptions and therefore the music industry was able to sell a huge amount of records and live performances, with these genres a perfect hybrid of art and commerce (Miller, 2003, para.19). Pop and Rock styles were therefore an interesting and well-selling topic to be discussed in the media of the cultural industry, being inextricably connected to the commercial culture, both in theory and in practice (Thornton, 1996, p.9).

Apparently, the emergence of electronic music artists initially strengthened the accordance between Pop/Rock avant-garde and cultural industry, since they were difficult to sell and regarded as inauthentic as they supposedly were lacking of an inner message on the intellectual front, too (Garcia, 2014, p.1). From the standpoint of the current discourse analysis, this led to a tendency of unwillingness - on the journalists' side - to acknowledge and explain cultural changes currently taking place. Instead, they seem to have adopted a strategy of trying to deter the audience from the newly emerging styles. This resulted in steady accusations against the artists during the years of the electronically programmable instruments' growth, especially towards young debut bands and musicians, which did not have a significant background with composition through acoustic instruments, still considered the "right" way of creating music, and were not able to effectively challenge their critics' line of argumentation (Miller, 2003, para.24).

The arguments used against these musicians appear very much in accordance with Adorno's cultural industry's theory, in that the journalists argued – using different discursive procedures – that the new musical techniques would potentially allow people without any knowledge of the musical structures to compose meaningless catchy themes, with the only purpose of distributing standardized entertainment in society. The editorial line of *Musikexpress* made the readers believe that the interviewed musicians were not "real" artists, but rather just amateur-producers of automated artworks. For this reason, those "products", seen as alienating entertainment for the masses, might have been only liked or disliked according to impersonal processes imposed by the cultural hegemony, without the real presence of a critical vision or knowledge.

Due to the lack of substance offered by electronic instrumentation, the authors argued by drawing on Walter Benjamin, a loss of *aura* would take place. This argumentation from the 1950s and 1960s was simply repeated without respect to the cultural paradigm changes that had taken place by that time. New reproduction techniques had been indeed considered as machineries for the creation of musical imitations aimed at mass consumption, without recognizing the affirmation of new technical and aesthetical forms of art's authenticity during the 20th Century, which Benjamin couldn't predict at the moment he wrote his essay (Miller, 2003, para.11). The old conceptions of originality made the immaterial realm of electronically reproducible instruments appear as outrageous, causing what one can refer to as a "crisis of authorship"[33], especially concerning the widespread phenomenon of samples. In fact, samples has been acknowledged for a long time as defragmented and de-contextualized sound without ownership, representing an accepted technique for contemporary music production. Moreover, nowadays it evolved into sophisticated and easy accessible sample libraries for professional musicians, further distancing itself the old conception of originality towards a brand new vision of authorship (Black, 2010, pp.32, 33).

The intellectuals' skepticism concerning the newly emerging electronic music styles is also reflected simply neglecting the topic for as long as possible, which follows the principle that Foucault referred as *exclusion procedure* in relation to the analyzed subject. Naturally, a mainstream music magazine like *Musikexpress* that had no explicit genre restrictions (e.g. Heavy Metal, Rock'n'Roll, Pop) should have reported on these developments earlier.[34] With the growing tendencies of already established musicians to also employ synthesizers and drum machines in the following years the development obviously grew too important to ignore it any further. In order to prepare its target readers for this development, the magazine allegedly applied a so-called Foucaultian *internal procedure,* introducing the overall topic by explaining the basic principles of electronic music composition and performance as well as its origins by publishing a special dossier. Nevertheless, the new styles were not embraced as a obvious artistic evolution due to new technological developments yet, but is still regarded as a threat for the existing culture.

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[33] So called by Alan Durant (1990), p. 177.
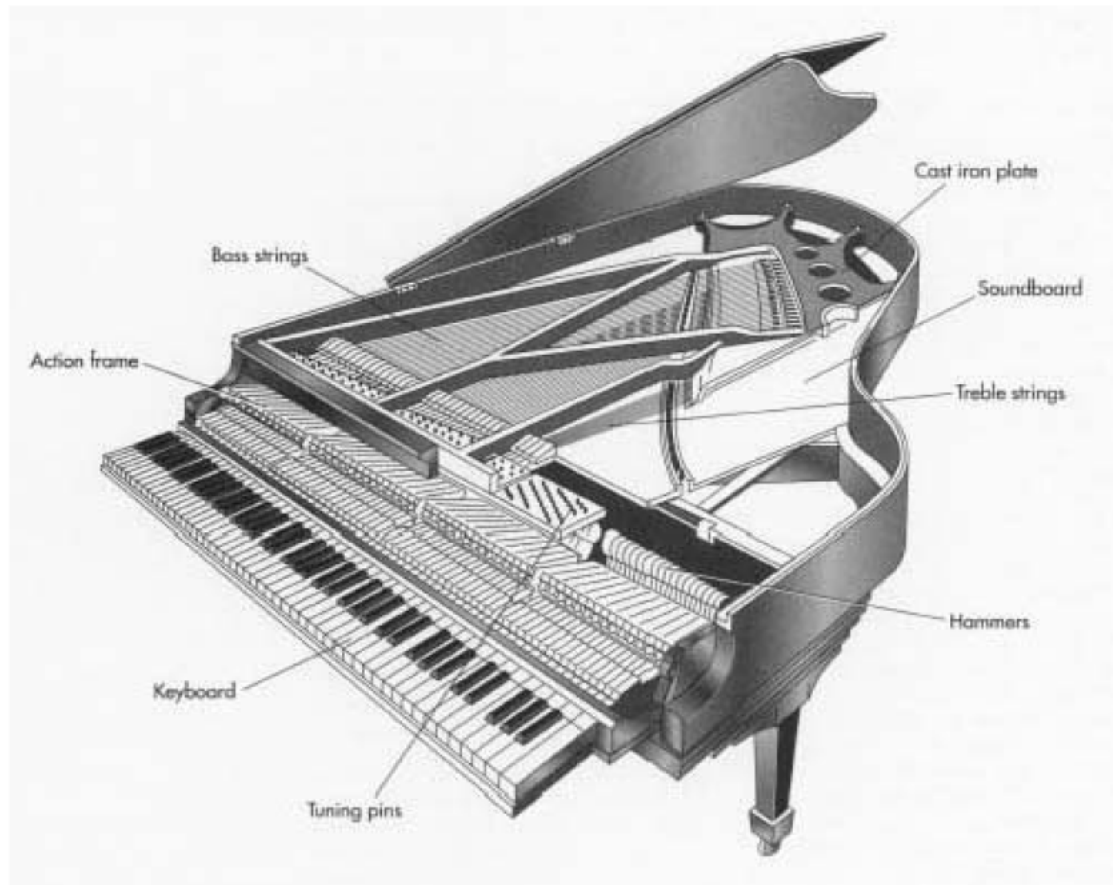[34] The target audience for this magazine is the average-music-consumer.

Figure 19: Internal Structure of a Piano

This early reception of electronically programmable instruments is similar to the one of the firsts keyboards instruments, e.g. piano and organ. These instruments, that play a fundamental and widely accepted role in the musical domain nowadays, in their early times were accused by purists of bringing unwanted mechanical devices into the musical culture (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.537). In fact, those instruments replaced the manual pitch-mechanism of the flute through a system that permitted to stop holes with a simple pressure of the keys, instead of activating a full-body action, providing a more fluid sound character and opening new artistic perspectives. Piano-music was rejected by many musicians at that time, refusing to consider it "real" music, defining it instead as a ridiculous and emotionless product a mathematically cold system, that excludes human imperfections (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, pp.539, 540). The problem that the critics of piano music emerged seems to be related to the lacking connection between musicians' movements and the instruments' output, which is not linked by a direct action, but by a mechanism. Once it is activated, it actually doesn't require an human agent anymore, but allows a limited set of sounds and variations (Black, 2010, pp.38, 39). Indeed, the lack of physical contact seems to relate the keyboard compositions to the simple binary activation of a switch (on/off) instead of the meticulous process believed necessary for the production of art, as observed by Willy Apel (1972, p.4):

"Apparently there is nothing more artificial and less artistic in the whole domain of musical instruments than that complicated mechanism of levers, joints, connecting rods, hammers, slides, springs, straps, etc., which constitute a key. A violinist's instrument rests close to his body, his hand holds the bow that makes the strings sound, and in a most literal sense it is his fingertips' sensitivity that produces the music. With hands and mouth an oboist holds his instrument as though it were a part of himself, his own breath flows through the pipe and his lips vibrate in closest contact with the reed. Compare him with a pianist or an organist: Both are far removed from the sounding strings or pipes, both are busy depressing lifeless ivories, and both depend on a complicated apparatus which produces tones as mechanically as the typewriter prints letters and words".

The parallel made by the historian between key-instruments and typewriting underlines the conception that mechanical methods are considered artificial instead of artistic because of the indirect relationship between body and engine. This has not only been related to the composition process, but rather to the performance, where the audience at first hesitated to applaud after a piano live act, embracing the idea that the performance was completely automated and that the musician did not have any influence on its outcome (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.542). The general belief that the new instruments could simply substitute professional and expensive musicians started to let them fear for their own jobs. On the other hand, in the U.S., some experts started to recognize keyboards as a step towards democratization of sound, foreseeing the possibility of a "universal" music education, which actually took place within a few decades (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.542).

These are the same suspicions that arose with the development of electronically programmable instruments, where, since their early times, they were feared for replacing the interpreters, letting "real" music become suitable for nothing but museums (Stockhausen, 2004 [1959], p.378). However, the fact that such instruments were deliberately created by human beings, in order to assist them during processes of composition and performance was not considered within these debates. Consequently those should allow them to dedicate their time to mostly creative activities ("human"), instead of mechanical ones, these being the skills needed in order to play an instruments (Stockhausen, 2004 [1959], p.378). This argument was also confirmed by an assumption of *Klaus Schulze* (as reported in Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.558), where the musician remarks that it is impossible to give machines the capacity of thinking and creating, which is indeed a unique human characteristic up until today not reproducible:

"Computers will never replace the human touch in music . . . Even if you could program a computer to add that human variable element, it wouldn't be the same. Otherwise, you could just program a symphony and it would always sound the same".

Concerning the development of the analysed discourse within the German mainstream audience, a similar evolution to the one of mechanical key-instruments has been observed. The

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editorial tendency of omitting articles around the electronic music topic changed in the early '80s, where those styles became popular within the masses and reached a certain commercial success with the of "Neue Deutsche Welle" (NDW) and Disco music, that became fully a Pop phenomena, and hence has been generally accepted by the society as a whole (Holert, 1998). Therefore, it may be safely assumed, that even if the journalists skepticism may have persisted, a magazine owned by an enterprise like the Axel-Springer-Verlag, deeply and economically entwined as it was with the German record industry, would not allow endangering this success. Accordingly, the NDW protagonists suddenly received a surprising amount of attention by the magazine, until interest peaked in 1982, where the journal dedicated a specific column to the growing amount of Synth-Pop and electronic music artists, which disappeared the year later (1983) because the discourse became obsolete and also in order to make space to discussions about the next tendencies of the electronic music's new generation. By then, the NDW and Disco musicians were well-established and appreciated by the international audience, and consequently already considered by other specialist music publications in Germany, such as *Sounds* or *Spex*.

The journal editors' ideology seems to be clearly skeptical regarding electronic and Dance music genres. This claim may be justified by the fact that very few musicians received recognition apart from their use of synthesizers, drum machines and tapes. These were usually the ones who had a music conservatory background or an already prominent career in the field of electronic and Dance music (e.g. *Brian Eno*, *Giorgio Moroder*, *John Foxx*, *Jean Michel Jarre*). These were also allowed to express their judgments about new musical movements and to give guidelines to the "novices" on how to be a "real musician" as shown in the example below:

> *GIORGIO MORODER:* "One has to sit down and work. Every day you have to sit down at the piano and compose. Then you compose ten songs, and maybe just one or two are suitable."
>
> Schoeneberger, F., 1984, "Endstation Schlaraffenland" (Giorgio Moroder), N. 12 (December), pp. 26-29 [Translated by the author].

Those same tendencies have been observed in the results of the interviews (Chapter 3.) regarding the second paradigm change connected to the transition from electronically programmable instruments to digital machines. There, some of the musicians justify the approach of certain artists because of their educational patterns, a conception that only shifted from the one of the conservatory formation to the knowledge of the analogue electronic instruments' working principles. In fact, the old critiques, which formerly affected mechanical and later electronically programmable instruments, has been transferred to the digital ones, creating a revival for the analogue engines (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003, p.556).

4.3. Arguments about Changing Paradigms in Music

The changing paradigm around music's authenticity and virtuosity, caused by the technological advancements, affected the analysed dimensions. Storage media, musical instruments, performance and cultural movements absorbed the technical progress and developed their own unique expression modalities related to the electronic age.

4.3.1. Recorded Authenticity

Simultaneously to the development of new instrumentation for composition, the technical evolution also affected the domain of music reception. The record technology developed during the 20th century allowed for the first time to capture electromagnetically the artist's presence, and therefore to amplify its *aura*. Consequently, the old values of authenticity, closely related to the idea of music as a live performance, were quickly transferred to the domain of possession and commodity, brought by the new medium for musical storage (Miller, 2003, para.14). Indeed, one of the most striking effects of records, was the fact that they managed to overcome a temporal and spatial dimension to music, turning it from ephemeral into repeatable. This gave improvisatory techniques another meaning (e.g. in Jazz), paradoxically appearing more interesting and deep if listened to more than once (Eno, 2004, p.127).

Within a very short time span after the spread of the new storage media, the concept of authenticity was transferred to the emulation of the record (with just few exceptions). This phenomenon has been named the *Baudrillard Effect* by Simon Frith (as cited in Miller, 2003, para.20), hence he claims that "[nowadays] a concert feels real only to the extent that it matches its TV [or radio] reproduction". This kind of "recorded authenticity" inevitably brought fundamental changes into musical and cultural values, which were turned into economic profits for the cultural industry (Thornton, 1996, p.35). The restored conception of a live event led to modifications all around the musical domain, stimulating the emergence of new locations, where social groups could enjoy the new events, and professions, first of all the one of the disc jockey. The new styles therefore acquired their own *auratic* value, which was no longer constricted anymore to a stage situation, but also spread to the recording studio. (Thornton, 1996, p.51).

A phenomenon that quickly develops around those reproduction techniques is described by H. Stith Bennett (as cited in Miller, 2003, para.25) as a *recording consciousness*. With this term, he describes a collective memory, where the record is recognized as a blueprint for musical standard parameters, for both audience and musicians. In this way, the latter tend to generate their sound in order to achieve a reproduction of the record related aesthetics. This definition is strictly connected to the modern mixing processes, which are possible only by means of electronic engines, through whom the "operator" is able to create new syntactic units for musical communication. What changes, is the approach to music from both the production and the receptionist sides. Nowadays this mostly results

in linear sounds as effect of synthesis, waveform, equalization, compression, etc., rather than to complex harmonies and pitch systems, invalidating the arguments used by Hanslick during the 19th century (paragraph 1.6.2.) if applied to those new musical patterns (Miller, 2003, para.26).

The way electronically programmable and digital instruments emerge in the Western culture, the exactly follow the principle of the emulation of the studio sound, and thus represent the apotheosis of Rock's interests, as they introduced the possibility of disposing of all sound components in real-time. For this reason, the well-established tendency of "hiding" the studio instruments on the stage has been completely upset, and it turned into the necessity of literally exhibiting the whole recording studio. As observed by *Ralf Hutter* (*Kraftwerk*): "We play the studio, so we had to take the studio with us [by playing live]" (Miller, 2003, para.38).

The economical factor dramatically increased the use of new instrumentation as of the '70s. As already observed in the introductive historical section (1.4.), until that moment this kind of studio equipment was barely considered by popular musicians, for both its complexity and exclusive prices. With the decrease of computer chip costs and the extension of RAM storages, included also in widespread synthesizers like Yamaha, more musicians started building home studios. The new popular machines included in fact the possibility to store a great amount of samples, as well as to improve the recording quality, factors which lead the cultural industry's market to rethink its strategies in order to face the innovative trends (Jones, 1992, pp.73-75).

In the same way the development of print modified the content of publications, recording technologies changed music's production and consumption. Technology is in fact a reflection of human and cultural necessities, that need to be satisfied in renewed ways. The very novelty in this sense is represented by the opportunity that electronically programmable instruments, and later digital instruments, offered in enabling the fusion of two separated spaces related to the recording process, into a single instrument: a studio (musician) and a control room (engineering) (Jones, 1992, pp.155-157). Those changes met (aspiring) musicians expectations, seriously lowering the costs related to the production, allowing the proliferation of more musical projects with an altered conception of authenticity.

4.3.2. Computer-Based Instruments

The interviewed musicians (Chapter 3.) emphasized the importance of experimentation as for an integral conception of authenticity, as well the huge contribution of the audience for the success of the performance. Ben Neill (2004, p.289) highlighted these aspects in a report about a *Squarepusher* concert, where the musician experimented on stage with tapes in 2001 at the Coachella Festival in Indio, California:

"[...] For me, however, the unquestionable [festival] highlight of the event was a performance by *Squarepusher*, a.k.a. Tom Jenkinson. [...] As I stood in the packed tent, there came to mind the early works of *Edgar* Varèese, the stunned audience in the Philips pavilion hearing "Poème Electronique" for the first time. This truly was a new, exploratory event experience, and the audience was an essential part of the innovation. The context was different, however. No longer was this type of music relegated to a rarefied, unique performance situation. Experimentation had fully   made its way to popular culture and a mass audience, a significant cultural transmigration from the *Varèse* performance 50 years ago."

The composer compares the experimental level of a contemporary performance with the presentation of one of the pioneering works in the electronic music realm, made by *Edgar Varèse*. Furthermore he points out the relevance of the crowd's feedback, that was an integral part of the show. Moreover, the audience was no longer a small intellectual elite, hence the new kinds of authenticity reached a higher degree of popularity.

Digital instruments also introduced the possibility of experimenting on stage in the realm of electronic music, opening it a certain degree of flexibility and getting rid of the old conception that gave this freedom only to Rock or Jazz musicians. Samples and sequencers represent a standard in the present age, but during the transition era those caused a crisis of musical authenticity and originality, hence they removed the differences between electronic music and the "hand-played" one, as well as the cliché that relegated the former style exclusively to dance-floor events (Goodwin, 1998, p.107).
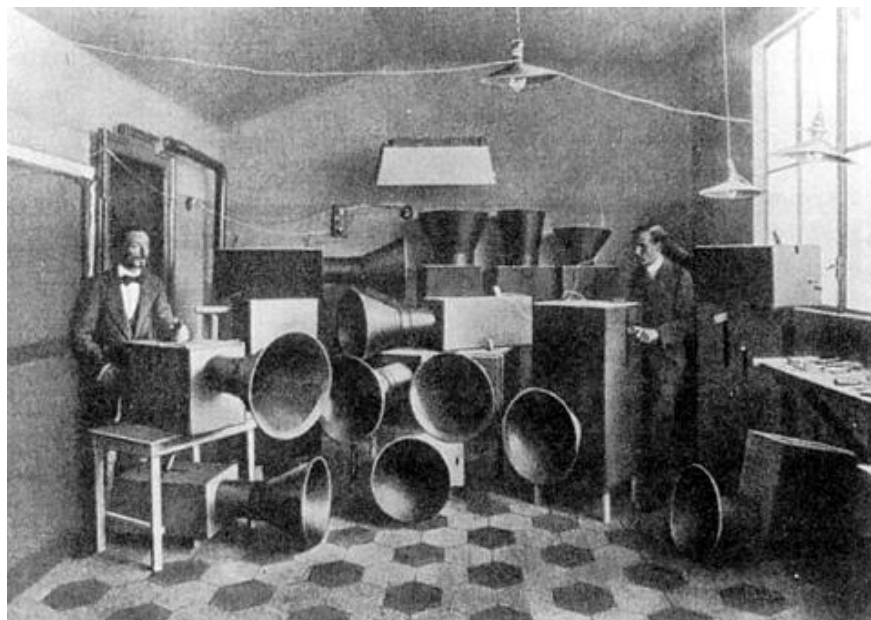
Figure 20: Luigi Russolo's Intonarumori (1914)

As Simon Reynolds observes (Miller, 2003, para.30), digital and computer sequencers "allow for the construction of complicated riffs that are often beyond the real-time capabilities of even the most dexterous keyboardist", and furthermore offer infinite possibilities for editing, choosing or rearranging sounds in real-time. The critique of coldness and "inhuman" perfection mended to

electronic music can be easily ascribable to the fact that the new machines allow for human beings to produce sounds, which otherwise would not be physically conceivable (Diedrichsen, 2014, p.335).

Furthermore, Reynolds claims (Miller, 2003, para.35-37), that the use of samples and, indirectly, of their RAM, are a chance to go beyond the scope of real-time sonic possibilities. This happens thanks to the deconstruction of the metaphysic presence, made by musical fragments belonging to different eras, genres and places. The description of "utopian" instruments capable of producing an infinite variety of tones and notes, made by the Futurist by *Luigi Russolo* in the early 1900s, has now become reality.

Those elements concerning the new paradigm prove that the technological evolution related to musical media did not deprive musicians from their capability of creating original artworks, conferring to music an automated perfection that doesn't leave space to experimentation or real-time sonic elaborations. The increase of digital media switched instead the focus on other aspects, allowing new layers of experimentation, that somehow include also the interaction with the audience. This turned an artistic expression into a meeting point between musician and listener. This fact, together with the new aesthetical parameters developed through the massive use of sequencers and samples, led to the development of new forms of authenticity.

4.3.3. Performance

The concept of performance, as already described in Chapter 1., doesn't only concern the content that it presents. It rather also requires the presence of artists on stage (or in a similar position), as well as the way those introduce themselves and their work to their audience, in order to establish communication acts between the two. Electronic music, both with electronically programmable and digital instruments, has always faced the problems concerning the question how to display the enormous quantity of meticulous actions that artists need to apply in order to get the desired output[35]. These styles have often had to handle the weight of "impossible performances", together with all the complications this reputation brings with itself (Miller, 2003, para.56). In fact, as observed in the results of both empirical researches, electronic musicians have often been quite unanimously accused for their "lack of showiness" on stage, as well as for their alleged tendency of exhibiting nothing but their hefty instrumentation. Those performers carry the pressure of having to act like "real" musicians on stage, even if, as already observed in section 4.3.2., it is practically impossible for them to fulfil this expectation. As also one member of the band *Chemical Brothers* assumes: "The drums we use are not physically reproducible" (Miller, 2003, para.55).

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[35] Looping, layering, waveform editing, pitch shifting and time-stretching; positioning and sound of the original microphones used to capture the drum kit; equalization, audio processing of drum tracks in the mixing console (Miller, 2003, para.56).

With the new computer technologies for automatic sequencing, movements on stage are limited to finger-operations, however this does not change the performance's nature. Those developments basically favour the musician's concentration on the creative side more than on the technical one. Larry Grossberg assumes (as cited in Jones, 1992, p.5), hereby confirming the interviewed musicians, that the old conceptions of virtuosity and creativity were undoubtedly related to technical ability. This interpretation is outdated nowadays, since popular music is being constantly technologized.

Both in electronic and in Rock music, many movements made by the performers are so internalised, that they are practically automized. Daniel Black (2010, p.47) points out the importance of conscious movements during a musical interpretation, and with this offers a renewed definition of performance, which should require:

> "[...] 1) some kind of ongoing, real-time feedback loop controlled by the body of the performer or performers, and; 2) that this feedback, whether through the generation of new sounds or alterations in an existing flow of sounds, not be driven simply by conscious reflection and effort directed towards the *mechanical* aspect of the performer's interventions, but rather marries some degree of conscious awareness of the music produced as an organic whole with pre-conscious bodily interactions with the means of sound production itself".

Ultimately, one can assume that the critique regarding the "lack of showiness" can be understood only if one compares electronic with Rock or Jazz performances, which were made up the canon for popular music for over 50 years. Here the authenticity of the interpreter is commonly measured in the ritual function of solos, which are tactically used in order to demonstrate the virtuosity of the bands' single members, as well as by the aesthetic quality of the artistic persona, usually impersonated by the lead vocalist (Diedrichsen, 2014, pp.162-164). But, as already shown, electronic music rejected the tendency of Rock of noticeably separating musicians and spectators, in favour of letting them merge and transfer specific values related to authentic representations to the role of the dancers. Giving a new meaning to the performance, they use their body to compensate the "lack of communication" of the steady electronic musicians (Diedrichsen, 2014, p.171).

4.3.4. "In Defense of Disco"

The fundamental meaning of the presence of an interacting audience draws on the arguments presented by Richard Dyer (1979). Here, he underlines the "full-body eroticism" of Disco music and remarks the sensual and emotional connections between the practice of collective celebration, and a sense of belonging to something bigger than the representation of oneself (Garcia, 2014, p.4). This voluptuous communicative character embracing the electronic and Dance music genres turns the performance into a full immersion in the act, occurring "here and now", which interrupts the daily routine.

What earlier was referred to Disco-culture, nowadays transferred to the contemporary phenomenon of Club-culture, a global reality that includes "youth cultures for whom Dance clubs and their Eighties offshoot, raves, are the symbolic axis and working social hub" (Thornton, 1996, p.3). With this definition Sarah Thornton expands the concept of Club-culture from the mere notion of musical genre to the one of a youth culture, tacitly including a specific set of actions and habits. Those include the recognition of clubs as cult spaces, where sound is continually transformed, and the excesses of the youth merge, in order to escape and "participate [in] an imaginary global village of Dance sounds" (Thornton, 1996, p.21). This undoubtedly gives a powerful feeling of liberation for the visitors of such places, that became part of a congregation of people with similar tastes (musical, sexual, etc.), turning the crowds into a self-conscious cultural phenomenon (Thornton, 1996, pp.22, 29).

The dichotomy of mainstream (commercial) and subcultural (alternative) youth cultures is not applicable to the growing Club-culture, nor to its internal organization or the way its members socialize and build their social world (Thornton, 1996, p.96). According to Thornton, this new movement is beside the definition of mainstream, hence it stands above the limits of all previous popular cultures. Indeed it appears that this culture is on one hand globally marketed, while on the other the crowds of this movement emerge locally, segregated within smaller realities (Thornton, 1996, p.99). Nowadays the idea of "mainstream" regarding these realities is little more than a frail abstraction maintained by the mass-media, which try to keep the claim alive representing youth cultures as media phenomena (Thornton, 1996, pp.116, 117).

4.4. Conclusion

The results of the present study, which aimed to analyze the relationship between electronic music and authenticity, exemplify how mass-media – as voice of the cultural industry – generally resists to accept new artistic expressions, as these differ from the institutional methods already approved and crystallized in dominant culture. This reaction might be interpreted as a reflection of the fear of losing control over the masses ideological choices – choices tantamount to realizing any profit in the cultural industry. In the current scenario, the intellectual front affiliated to a Pop/Rock philosophy also took part in the "game", by rejecting new tendencies that may oppose to the established cultural structures and legitimization strategies.

The same seems to happen in the context of the contemporary digital scene, where well-established musicians, questioned about their own perception of the current tendencies, expressed a viewpoint similar to the one of the mainstream dominant culture. Concerning a given use of software-based instruments in the Club-culture's scenario, they appeared in fact reluctant in recognizing authentic and subversive elements in those realities, condemning the most musicians to the "mainstream circle"– with exception of some well-established and one-of-a-kind artists-.

The growth of electronic music culture – and its apotheosis represented by Club-culture -, slowly led to a blurring of the boundaries that divided the so-called "mainstream culture" and the "subculture" for decades. In a closer examination of those two cultural modalities, one can observe that the principal distinction between them is basically imposed by the mass-media. This includes the channels chosen to promote musicians, in order to reach a given target-audience. Although the definitions given regarding mainstream and subculture are not identical, sociologists like Simon Frith, Dick Hebdige and Stephen Evans (as cited in Thornton, 1996, pp.94-97) all define mainstream to white, bourgeois and for the masses, while the alternative culture has been linked to students and the avant-garde, principally tending to differ from others and displaying an exclusive musical taste.

What actually makes a musical taste "exclusive" in the sense of being"underground", is its relationship with the mass-media. Musicians that care about their "authentic" status usually tend to avoid contact with them, preferring instead niche-media such as flyers, which contribute to the construction of their the *aura* of subculture through a series of "networks essential to the creation, classification and distribution of cultural knowledge" (Thornton, 1996, p.117, 118). As Sarah Thornton remarks, the rarity concerning the disposability of certain musical genres, and consequently their low exposure to media, is considered a prerogative to maintain their "underground" character. In one example concerning the so-called "white labels"[36], she explains how those are considered precious elements of the subcultural capital. This status is maintained until mass-media start to sell them, corrupting that sound regarded as original and subversive. This reflects how judgments concerning musical scenes - and musicians - are influenced by the way music is distributed in the marketplace, making them related to the cultural capital and the groups consuming it (Frith, 1998, pp.5-6, 13).

In a music-production-related context, the conception of authenticity seems easily linkable to the use of material tools. If one takes as an example the EDM scenario, near the role of the PA, the other essential figure is represented by the DJ. The authenticity of this figure consists in mixing records produced by other musicians. DJs are infrequently accused of being unauthentic, and this issue could be related to the fact that the material used by DJs are "analogue, tactile and physical". On the contrary, PAs – who actually perform their own production - are often criticized due to the "live use of digital-samples and loops – locked in synchronicity by a master MIDI clock and invisibly stored in the depths of some computer hard drive" (Miller, 2003, para.51). A fact barely considered, is instead represented by the innovation concerning the contents brought on stage by PAs. They display an indisputably greater amount of creativity due to the real-time de-composition and re-assembling of their own material (Miller, 2003, para.52).

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[36] 12" single produced in a limited edition without the colourful graphics that accompany most retailed music (Thornton, 1996, p.117).

Anyway, it may be difficult to accept a performance which is conceived by samples and sequences and evolves randomly according to some programmed algorithms, as the ones who characterize the contemporary EDM scene. But these would paradoxically not be existing without the presence those technologies (Black, 2010, p.34). In fact, these processes actually represent the real authenticity of those genres, and, by replacing them, one would simply lose their characterizing essence. This concept is also underlined by the Techno musician interviewed (1.), when he says: "[...] the whole survival of the scene DEPENDS on these new tools, so going stupidly against it...it's a very blind vision! It is going against the tradition too!".

As Miller observes (2009, para.57), "true progress in the sphere of EDM ultimately requires the musician to "surrender" his or her *aura* to the realm of digital reproduction". So both the hegemonic cultural industry as the purists of the Pop/Rock intellectual front should finally accept the societal and musical (r)evolution, as well as the evolving needs of its protagonists.

Apparently, the crisis that overwhelmed the concepts of authorship and identity - connected to the spread of electronic instruments-, was extremely frustrating for the exponents of the Pop/Rock front, as they saw their relevance and that of their hegemonic culture vanish, which were powerful market magnets. As Glenn Gould (2004 [1966], p.125) states:

"[…] The technology of electronic forms makes it highly improbable that we will move in any direction but one of even greater intensity and complexity […] Because this complexity, because so many different levels of participation will, in fact, be merged in the final result, that individualized information concepts which define the nature and authorship will become very much less imposing. […] The most hopeful thing about this process – about the inevitable disregard for the identity factor in the creative situation – is that will permit a climate in which biographical data can no longer be the cornerstone for judgments about art as it relates to environment […]".

What the performer underlines is that the old parameters used to categorize "real" music and musicians simply disappeared, a information and tools are nowadays widely available and duplicable. This makes the new scenes appear unattainable for public relations agents, advertising companies or labels, who cannot frame a marketable identity anymore.

Technical reproduction, as well as the widespread emphasis around it, internationally arose with the publication of *Kraftwerk*'s "Autobahn" and evolved into established EDM styles, such as. Techno and House. Since it represents – together with the continuous flow – an essential characteristics of contemporary music, it should be accepted in its renewed authenticity, as the old art allegedly exhausted its expressive modalities (Sherburne, 2004, p.319). Material tools themselves no longer represent a unit of measurement for originality or subversion anymore. The power is instead in the hands of the musicians, who decide how to handle the available technology in order to get the desired output and deliver their own message.

Figure 21: Kraftwerk's "Autobahn" Cover

The new instrumentation's nature incorporates the development of a language needed to express new ideas, but the established culture still fights against this evolution, as *Stockhausen* observes (2004 [1959], p.371): "[…] The historical development of instruments was closely tied to a music that is no longer our music. Since the turn of the century the idea of saying something new has existed, but the old sound symbols continued to be used". Here the pioneer recognizes the repulsion regarding a paradigm switch for the society contaminated by hegemonic cultural ideas, and despite its necessity to revolutionize the contents, still sticks to obsolete modalities.

Nowadays the complete communication system and most of the daily facilities are completely digitalized, so that the approach to the entire life in the Western world cannot be thought without submission to overall disposable media capable of providing any kind of fragmented information. The linearity and the dependence from the materials that dominated during the print-age has been replaced by the immaterial *aura* of digital contents, whose container does not determinate their nature, but rather appear as empty, optional and common devices (Cascone, 2004, p.393). Obviously, those enormous technological evolutions make it impossible to avoid collateral reflection in the realm of art and music, whose function still remains the one of providing a portrait of the society in which there are conceived. Perhaps, once those "green" tendencies in the artistic domain will become settled, they probably won't be perceived as a threat for the Pop/Rock intellectual front anymore, since these will also have recognized their own essence, as well as a marketable standard.

However, this study is limited in several ways. First, despite the enormous relevance of Germany for the evolution of electronic music, the territorial restriction confines the study. In fact it doesn't consider the approach to the discourse within the other two places in the Western realm that

are of special importance for a global comprehension of the matter, since they saw an uncountable amount of musicians approaching electronic programmable instruments: England and U.S.A.

A second limitation concerns the lack of confrontation with the discourse within the so-called avant-garde scene. A medium selection that includes different kinds of publications, might be more more appropriated sample, useful to trace a line between the two opposite point of views, as well as to understand how the same arguments were used during the analyzed decade.

Finally, one can note that the sample for the interviews of the second empirical research is relatively small, thus it cannot be considered truthful for an objective examination of the contemporary musical scenario.

Further researches should consider how these limitations can be overcome, expanding the sample of current musicians might be the most necessary first step, both in quantity and in quality, as well as observing a broader scenario through a wider medium selection.

New studies about the topic of electronic music authenticity may also need to consider also a greater range of genres, both in the Dance as in the IDM and "alternative" domains. Possible examples are the Post-Digital evolutions, which are quickly taking hold in the contemporary computer music, e.g. in form of "aesthetics of failure". This is intended as the aesthetics of technology errors sounds like glitches, bugs and system crashing, that nowadays are unnoticed and omniscient present (Cascone, p.393).

Furthermore, the notions of "underground" and "subculture" should be drastically re-investigated. Also the extreme influence of the great disposability of recorded music in the global network should not go unnoticed, in order to determine what those concepts mean in the contemporary scenario, and if they still carry the original subversive signification of the decades preceding the global spread of Internet.

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*I couldn't investigate about the author identity of the piece. For this reason I will refer to the publication *Musikexpress* as author of the concerned pieces.

Attachment 1: List of Articles

Year	Issue N.	Artist/Band	Title	Column	Relevance Evaluation[1]
1976	11	Tangerine Dream	*Ein Traum bekommt Flügel*	-	***
	12	Kraftwerk	*Wir sind eine Radiostation*	-	***
1977	3	Peter Gabriel	*Ungeschminkt*	-	−
	7	Ash Ra	*Neuer Start in London*	-	**
	11	Alan Parsons	*Der Tüffler aus der Abbey Road*	-	−
1978	1	Eberhard Schoener	*Laser in Concert*	-	**
	7	Pere Ubu	*Der Sound aus dem Stahlwerk*	-	**
	8	Michael Hoenig	*Blubber, blubber, zisch...Der Elektronik Michael hebt ab!*	-	***
	10	Talking Heads	*Die aufrechten Vier*	-	−
	11	Klaus Schulze	*Der Magier am großen Moog*	-	***
1979	3	Jean Michel Jarre	*Der Sound kommt aus dem Knopf*	-	**
	4	Siouxsie & the Banshees	*Herz aus Glas*	-	−
	9	Gary Numan	*Die Mensch-Maschine*	-	−
1980	1	XTC	*...Just Drums & Wires!*	-	−
	2	Devo	*De-vo Da-da (oder auch "Diewo Dada!")*	-	−
	5	John Foxx	*Maschinen machen mich zum Menschen*	-	**
	9	Human League	*Weisse Hypno-Tone*	-	−
	10	OMD	*Abschied von Winston*	-	***
1981	5	Phil Collins	*(no title)*	-	-
	5	DAF	*(no title)*	-	-
	7	Classic Nouveaux	*Dschingis Kahn der Avantgarde*	-	**
	9	Ultravox	*Midlife Crisis einer Band*	-	***
	9	Holger Czukay	*Magie aus dem Computer*	-	*
	11	Yello	*Der Tanz der glücklichen Kühe*	-	***

1: Relevance degree of the articles concerning the research topic

*** High relevance degree

** Medium relevance degree

* Low relevance degree

- Not relevant

Year	Issue N.	Artist/Band	Title	Column	Relevance Evaluation[1]
1982	1	Soft Cell	*Emotion & Elektronic*	-	**
	1	B.E.F.	*(no title)*	Deutsche Tänze	**
	3	Palais Schaumburg	*Intelligent und tanzbar*	Deutsche Tänze	**
	3	Die Krupps	*(no title)*	-	***
	4	John Watts	*John Watts: Going on*	-	**
	5	Klaus Nomi	*(no title)*	-	-
	5	Depeche Mode	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	***
	5	Pete Schelley	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	**
	6	Brian Eno	*(no title)*	-	**
	6	Alan Vega	*Der letzte Rebell*	-	**
	7	Kim Wilde	*Pin up-Pop*	-	-
	8	Bananarama	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	*
	9	ABC	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	-
	9	Level 42	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	-
	10	Fashion	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	*
	11	Au Pairs	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	-
	11	Malaria	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	-
	12	Culture Club	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	-
	12	Yazoo	*(no title)*	Neue Gesichter	*
	12	Japan	*(no title)*	-	-
1983	3	Taco	*Mit Swing und Schmalz*	Neue Gesichter	-
	5	Nena	*(no title)*	-	-
	8	Heaven 17	*(no title)*	Elektro Pop	**
1984	5	Vince Clarke	*In Studio mit Vince Clarke - Computer Kid*	-	***
	7	Cyndi Lauper	*(no title)*	-	-
	12	Giorgio Moroder	*Endstation Schlaraffenland*	-	**

I = Interviewer
M = Musician

[00:00:00-0] **I:** Which was the last concert or live performance that you have visited personally?

[00:00:02-0] **M:** It was during the projection of a documentary.....I dream of Wires, about Morton Subotnick .

[00:00:18-9] **I:** And did you like it?

[00:00:19-9] **M:** A lot

[00:00:22-9] **I:** Why?

[00:00:27-1] **M:** Because....Subotnik as well as Don Buchla ..they represent a really uncompromised vision.. not only of music creation but really even in the music business, like it's a .... it was a very anarchoid way of seeing things in general and for what they did, they are pretty unique, they have been like a ...blueprint for a lot of generations after, like, you know, he was coming from nowhere at that point...yeah, it was really fascinating....

[00:01:01-7] **I:** And when have you seen the last concert or live performance, which you would define as a real artwork?

[00:01:51-0] **M**: Mmmmm...Both the Subotnick one, because it was also an audiovisual experience... and then I would say...probably....some very interesting things I saw at the last Raster Noton Showcase in Berghain, where I saw really a lot of very very interesting performances from a lot of Ruster Noton affiliates, artists...

[00:02:10-7] **I:** Ok...And what brings you to say that these people were real artists?

[00:02:40-7] **M:** ...Well, the word artist is like a very delicate word....it has been used in many different ways, let's say ..to avoid being arrogant I would define....like...what brings me to say that these are MEANINGFUL artists, like, which is not just artist, it's kind of also a self definition often...but by valuable and meaningful bringing something that has an impact and a meaningful impact on, not only the scene but also the society and public that go to listen to it, and for example Morton Subotnik was very interesting because..first there was also a long lecture about it, and then the performance which allows you to be introduced in a certain mind-set, and, what I saw there, was a completely uncompromising approach to things. The same things he was actually saying during the lecture were APPLIED in the way of making music...and...he was like...so....uncompromising in the sense that even the kind of code, because you know, music IS a code like spoken language, only that it has a very different...structure..in a way we could say that is more universal, meaning like that human language is

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quite restricted to very tight rules, music not THAT much, it is, still, but not that much...mmm...and let's say what I saw during the Subotnik show was a pure almost Expressionism attitude. All kind of archetypes in music were like completely disassembled, but not taken completely out, were more deformed, you know, that's what I find sometimes interesting when you can still RELATE to what you are hearing as a specific gender, like, experimental electronic music..Subotnik. But the output is so unique, and once again UNCOMPROMISING that, yes, it is but it's not only that, you know what I mean...and that's..those are the moments, were like a lot of insights come out, you know, that's what I mean with meaningful, and what I saw there is that it attracted, because I saw the public present there, when like half of the music..contemporary electronic music community in Berlin, so, those are things that leave a trace, you know, because then, all of us as artists would back home to the studio and bringing an influence of that, that's what I mean with meaningful.

[00:05:06-4] **I:** ..so you would say that this kind of expressive modality from these artists is also authentic?

[00:05:12-6] **M:** Ehm...yeah...in the sense of...I have a very specific almost political position about it, and what you mean with authentic I mean with like NO MAINSTREAM.

[00:05:28-4] **I**: I mean pure, genuine, real.

[00:05:31-8] **M:** Yeah, which is what I call NO MAINSTREAM...like...so like almost like a anti-Pop attitude to things, because ...let's say in Pop music, in mainstream and commercial music you have very specific structures you need to stick on, like even the length of the track, where is the breakdown, how long is the intro, how long is the closing, all these things there were completely disassembled, and this is a vision I can really relate to, you know...like....to not care about it....you still care about certain structures but not for the same purposes let's say.

[00:06:18-3] **I:** And vice-versa: when have you seen the last concert or last performance when you considered the artists not really authentic or not really virtuous?

[00:06:28-7] **M:** Ehm....ok....well, normally I try to avoid those experiences, I am kind of experienced in the field, so, let's say, I know where to go and where not to go, and those things....I just want to keep them out of my horizon, like I don't want to EVEN have the minimal...the most minimalistic influence on myself like I normally... I am never disappointed because I make a pre-selection of what I am going to see.

[00:07:14-3] **I:** So, have you never been disappointed the last times?

[00:07:14-3] **M:** Not recently, let's say... no, not really, because I mean at the big performances I saw recently like Squarepusher at Berghain, that it's not something...I still considerate a more "commercialized" sound, but comes from such a story where that is allowed, let's say....you know...the rest is really not interesting for me to go and check, you know, so...

[00:07:50-4] **I:** Ok. And which was the last live performance or last concert that have you personally visited, where the performers were using one or more computers on stage?

[00:08:05-0] **M:** ..uh! every weekend?! [laughs] like...very very often.. I mean, I work in clubs, festivals, so..for me that's the history of my life, I mean...e-v-e-r-y single weekend of my life....

[00:08:24-7] **I:** And which feelings does this transmit to you?

[00:08:28-4] **M**: Well, I am a computer performer too, first of all! Not only, but also... and, doesn't really make a difference, like it's a...important is the output, like, whatever tool ...it's about how they use it, like, there are so many tools, there have ALWAYS been so many tools, like even in the Seventies there were already a lot of tools. So...I grew up let's say with a school of thought that is like the one of Krautrock or like Lee Perry and Roots-Dub and stuff like this, back in the Seventies-Eighties, where the approach was like, we do with what we have, it doesn't really matter, a cool phenomenon like Dub music, that has been, I think, the most influential gender of the last 40 years, objectively, for how in a subtle way guided everywhere..from Pop-music to super underground, like Dub has been like huge on the influence level. It was like recycling, because they had no money! So they were like recycling and taking what they U.S. studios were throwing in the garbage, they were buying it for nothing and bringing all to Jamaica, and built the studios with what they considered like rubbish, garbage, you know...So that's my approach too...I am a fan of Low-Fidelity.

[00:10:20-0] **I:** Ok. So, as before, have you ever felt disappointed in this context?

[00:10:28-6] **M:** Yes, I did, I did, many times...but I have been also disappointed from people mixing on a laptop, I have been disappointed in crazy set-up, or hardware live-acts with a massive wall of synthesizers, I have been disappointed in guys just pushing play on the laptop...It's not about the medium if I get disappointed or not, I have to say of course, personally, I find more interesting as a performance-charisma to see something else that just a laptop, you know, a laptop is a very important tool, but let's say, there is something that always catches my curiosity when I see like, this is going with no laptop, for example, because that is already an attitude that on the main...attitude, that there is in the moment in the scene, it's already a counter-movement, you know, to say like "I don't take it easy and I bring a wall of synths... but it also depends a lot on the possibilities, because, bringing equipment costs a lot of money and that impacts on your actual earnings, you know..like so...if you ... I know because I travel every weekend, and if you travel just with a laptop your life is easier, it depends also how punishing is your tour-schedule, or not, you know...like how flexible you are...

[00:12:33-4] **I:** Ok...and have you ever found yourself in the context to ask yourself if the person on the stage is playing or not?

[00:12:55-2] **M:** Ehm... not in the kind of things I go to see, because it is absolutely ethically impossible. In our scene we have a quite strict behaviour, like rules, you know, a code of rules let's say, but yes, I ask myself, when I see a huge concert like this, and yes, in the end probably everything is prepared, you know what I mean, like...but it also depends on the target. In that target people don't care about the performance, they just care about THE SHOW, so it's also understandable, it's not like critic, it's just a system that I don't share. If you are on stage you need to perform, as simple as it is.

[00:13:47-4] **I:** And so, how do you feel in this moment, when you have to ask yourself...

[00:13:54-8] **M:** If it is prepared or not?

[00:13:56-5] **I:** Yes

[00:13:56-5] **M:** Ehm...pretty disappointed. If I understand that something is TOO prepared with very little room for improvisation in the performance it becomes not interesting, then I can just go in a music shop and buy a release of them...

[00:14:16-0] **I:** So, let's stay in the context of one or more computers on the stage...were there performances or concerts that you felt as not authentic?

[00:14:32-5] **M:** Yes. When the approach is too easy. I mean, when I see that is mostly about like...just pushing play, or like...calling it a live performance just because they're playing their own things, that they're producing in studio...It's like if you see a concert of Daft Punk, probably there everything is prepared...

[00:15:13-2] **I:** So, what would you consider as authentic or virtuous?

[00:15:13-2] **M:** On stage?

[00:15:15-3] **I:** On stage.

[00:15:15-3] **M:** On stage...but..there are different forms....because the live performance is not the only one. I can consider REALLY authentic also the DJ-Set, which is a NEW way of performing, and, because that is a whole art, on its own, you know what I mean, so....mmmm..I consider authentic... If I can say authentic....So I consider MEANINGFUL when I see that the artists on stage manage to deliver to the public, come thing that they really get, but they didn't know they wanted...you know, there is still a DISCOVERY process..

[00:16:07-7] **I:** Which means, people, who are performing this, are still researching, they don't consider their work as like definitive...

[00:16:29-9] **M:** It is about innovating, and I normally appreciate a lot of artists that have this CONSCIOUSNESS that e-v-e-r-y single time they are performing in front of a crowd, they have a big power in the hand, is a huge medium, like you reach people in a such a direct way, that is really hard in a else way... and the energetic magic that can happen is really unique, you know what I mean... and it's actually a good thing when artists are kind of conscious of this responsibility, and they know, that, depending on what they do, one, two, a hundred times a year they are actually shaping what's coming next in the scene. It's up to them, and to us, let's say..

[00:17:28-4] **I:** Ok. And have you ever had some difficulties on yourself to express your meaningfulness in

music, during your performance...

[00:17:45-4] **M:** Yes.. I did because it depends on so many factors...so let's say a performance, is half up to you, the other half up to the crowd you have in front of you, so when the crowd is MISSING the energy it's strange, then is really difficult to work on a message...then it can happen, that you end up just in a routine...

[00:18:10-8] **I:** Yes..You need your feedback.

[00:18:10-9] **M:** Yes.

[00:18:16-3] **I:** In every single performance, otherwise you come into this trick that you already said...You prepare your performance, you just make a show...

[00:18:25-3] **M:** Ehm..

[00:18:28-7] **I:** It's not communication anymore.

[00:18:29-1] **M:** No, it's not. It's ego-show-up, and that's the thing. And so, even on many many levels of factors, sometimes you artistically feel like way more interested, so your message is very subtle, sometimes is really direct. It depends a lot on how much crowd you have in front of you, if is ready or not to follow you..yes...that depends from the city where you are, the scene in that place, how the promoter of the event prepared people for the event and all those things you know.

[00:19:11-9] **I:** Yes, it's not just up to you.... And how did you feel with yourself when you saw that you couldn't express yourself as you really wanted to?

[00:19:43-4] **M:** Really bad! Because, like, well, touring a lot is exhausting, already, one thing that actually GIVES you energy is when the crowd, let's say, when the magic happens, the you find yourself like FULL of energy, so even when you're thinking like "I' m about to die, I can't anymore", then as soon as you step up and something happens and then....bum! The fire comes. and, in those cases, it becomes like a vampire system, when you just give a lot of energy and then you feel like really...

[00:20:17-5] **I:** Empty.

[00:20:19-4] **M:** Empty. Yes, completely.

[00:20:24-5] **I:** Yes, if you're not expressing yourself, you're just giving yourself to something which doesn't represent you somehow...

[00:20:30-9] **M:** Exactly.

[00:20:30-9] **I:** And have you ever been provoked in this context, so have you ever been said you are not authentic or meaningful, in the way you mean it, or virtuous, just because you are playing electronic instruments, electronic music....

[00:20:56-0] **M:** No, not in this context. I have been of course criticized, which is normal, but very few times about the medium, let's say, and in those cases I mean this debate, is sooo oversaturated that you just turn the shoulder, like do you really have to start that, you know..

[00:21:17-9] **I:** And who did provoke you? Someone from the public, or someone, like an interviewer?

[00:21:28-1] **M:** No, mainly... often by other artists..

[00:21:32-5] **I:** Ok..

[00:21:35-6] **M:** I mean, someone who has a more traditional approach to things, and as usual, as in many in things, not only music, people that are traditionally in the use of that tools that tend to defend it with open teeth, you know...but also this, at the moment, there is a huge debate in my own scene, like, in the early 2000s and stuff like this, nowadays if someone says such a thing...it seems like a fool..."what are you talking about" really.

[00:22:19-8] **I:** It doesn't make sense anymore..

[00:22:23-9] **M:** I mean, the whole survival of the scene DEPENDS on these new tools, so like going stupidly against it's...it's a very blind vision! It is going against the tradition either! Because I have a lot of respect also for artists that use more traditional instruments...and it's even in the synthesis level, when you are in the studio, you can choose different approaches, even the electronic music in itself...there are some approaches that are more traditional and come from the "academics", let's say, and other approaches that completely experimental, like...the so called East Coast and West Coast approach...Don Buchla, for example...

[00:23:23-4] **I:** So, you would say, that if someone provokes you in this context you would just say that this person doesn't know what he/she's talking about?

[00:23:33-4] **M:** That this person is not really connected with the actual scene....That is an outsider and often just a hater...and a hater is going to hate!

[00:23:48-6] **I:** And, how do YOU feel when someone provokes you?

[00:23:52-7] **M:** I don't give a fuck! [laughs]....It doesn't really matter... I mean....After many years in the scene you can't even survive if you stop and think about every person that says something about yourself, even if it's like a big journalist...ok, you can do it, but you need to be aware of what you're doing, and if you did it, there must be a reason, otherwise you are inconsistent and you ask yourself "why?"..

[00:24:30-3] **I:** And did it happen to you that some big journalist just came to you and tried to provoke you...

[00:24:38-9] **M:** Not that came to me, but that wrote stuff...yes..

[00:24:42-1] **I:** Wrote..so like, reviews?

[00:24:45-3] **M:** Like bad reviews and stuffs like these...that is always happening...

[00:24:49-9] **I:** And you don't care about this?

[00:24:52-1] **M:** No, because, I mean, it is still about point of views, like for you something can really make sense in a certain context, and probably that context is something the journalist is not getting, and is focused on another context, where what you did doesn't really make sense, it' s the same problem that I often have when I try to not sit on my own chair, but I try to ...as soon as I reach a certain position I try to expand it, I try to look it as an experimenting and innovating...in these moments you know already, that there will be even a lot of YOUR fans, they're going to hate you, because they just want something they are used to...

[00:25:44-2] **I:** They know you as the musician which makes a certain kind of production...

[00:25:49-6] **M:** ...And if don't do like this, they keep it badly. But at the same time, if you stick to that, you have a really short life ...because yes, maybe that fan can be happy, but you stop contributing to the whole scene, and the whole scene understands it, and abandons you...

[00:26:14-6] **I:** Are there other thought or personal experiences you would like to share in this context?

[00:26:22-4] **M:** Yes, probably ....let's say this feedback process IS really really important, because that extreme, like Subotnik or Don Buchla, they live in their own bell, completely, I am not at that level, so I do care about my feedback... but you need to have your weapons on HOW you take it...like on how much did it impact you, and to allow it to impact you...because that is creative, like when you have a feedback and things change because of a feedback, otherwise you are just a monad, you know..but, there must be degrees on how deep and in which way they can reach you...like if they can reach you in a constructive way cool...but if they can reach you in a destructive way then something is going with YOUR..your self-consistence actually...you know...

[00:27:45-4] **I:** Ok. Thank you for contributing to my research!

Artist 2. (IDM/Ambient)

I = Interviewer

M = Musician

[00:00:00-0] **I:** Which was the last concert/live performance you have personally visited as audience?

[00:00:04-8] **M**: As audience....it was in Japan, actually in Tokyo, and was a showcase of Back To Chill.....which is actually a label that I like really much...and there were people like Ena performing, or Goth-Rad and Dj Scotch Bonnet...all people that I really really love and seeing them performing was a very beautiful experience....the quality of the music was on a high level and it was kind of different from the usual European taste...it was really good...

[00:01:03-7] **I**: So, did you like it?

[00:01:08-9] **M**: Yeah yeah yeah a lot...this is maybe related to a club stuff...

[00:01:16-0] **I:** And when have you seen the last concert or live performance which you would define as a real artwork?

[00:01:17-2] **M:** Mmmm...well....I think an artist which has extremely impressed me is Daniele De Santis....Gruen.. for many reasons....first of all, his ability to improvise and dealing in a proper life approach with machines. The second thing is because the 80% of his live set is self made, beyond his old machines, and....but...also because he reached such a level experimenting a lot, and also struggling with the question analogue-digital...so.....and I think he is a perfect example of how a long research in different domains create a solid aesthetics, totally like independent and also aesthetically talking....that is the one I wanted to mention...

[00:02:35-2]**I**: When was it?

[00:02:36-8] **M**: Well....the last one...I cannot remember because I've seen him many many....I think it was last year in Denmark....yes! We were playing together, I was playing with Dadub there, it was the Stroem Festival.. he was playing with Gruen...and this was the last time.

[00:03:03-4]**I**: So you would say, that their expressive modality is authentic?

[00:03:06-5] **M**: Yes totally.

[00:03:14-7]**I**: And vice-versa, when have you seen the last live concert or performance that you would say that it was not genuine or not authentic?

[00:03:24-2] **M**: That's a good question....Well, I don't want to be really specific, but...let's say that in my

opinion maybe many.. no, several....many project also in the experimental domain are anyway experimental just on the surface, it's kind of repetition of an aesthetics which is already done by somebody else....so....actually it doesn't matter who but let's say find kind not original at all, this "new wave" of standardized experimental music, which is kind of countersense, which is kind of...it reminds me when you for example go to a Jazz conservatory, which is for me a kind of paradox, because Jazz, especially referring to Bebop it was created exactly to BREAK the language...so it doesn't work...so that's how I see many of these performances....

[00:04:53-6] **I:** So, you would say, that the authenticity is not just related to the aesthetics but also to the deepest elements of the composition process...

[00:05:04-3] **M**: Yes, not the aim....I mean, something that you are not using in a teleological way, I mean otherwise it's just a repetition of something that works and sells...and that's the point. I mean, it's a bit weird when it happens in an experimental domain because also the categories of judgement are affected by it, because anyway if that's the music that is going around, than, it changes the proper content....like, think about Industrial or Noise...

[00:05:44-0] **I**: And which was the last concert or live performance which you have seen personally where on stage were one or more computers?

00:05:46-5] **M:** Mmmm.....I mean, the last one....It was in Japan, two weeks ago. It was Ryo Murakami, a Noise abstract...it was a little bit unexpected, I mean, his set is an hybrid...between the computer and the hardware. But anyway the computer was playing a key role in terms of sound generation, so that's why I can define it as a proper component of the live set. And it was very very particular because it was in a Techno event, so, after an experimental opening there was there was this abstract and Noise act....and....I mean, normally.....it was great...so, it is possible to combine...that was the last time in terms of time, but actually I mean the trend changed a bit in terms of analogue live sets....but the computer are still one of the main source..but I mean so far nothing that I extremely.. how can I say... not impressive but.. honestly I also didn't go to so many events and festivals and stuff....I don't go either because when I go to see performances, the last thing I wonder is the set up of the performer...because for me for example the fact of being a master engineer could be extremely tricky because, if I know exactly what you are using it's a mess because I start to look exactly for the filters, and the problems that could happen when...and so on.
[00:08:10-2] **I**: So you switch off, you don't want to know...

[00:08:14-2] **M:** Yes.

[00:08:14-2] **I**: And what does this transmit to you when you see people using the instruments in some ways that you don't really like?

[00:08:28-7] **M**: I mean for me there is no difference between a hardware-based live and a computer. For me, what it impressing, is the way you can affect my perception, and that's it. Because for me is not important the kind of information or set-up that you have, but the way you can connect all this. So, yes, if you are able to

manage your set up as a wall, as something which is creating something new...then I like it.....but I mean, this can happen via laptop, via hardware...at the end there is no difference, I think.

[00:09:25-8] **I:** But, were there some performances in the past in this context that you didn't like exactly for this reason?

[00:09:33-2] **M**: Yes, actually there are many many many performances, especially into the dance-floor oriented domain...boring! I mean, in terms of sound, research, because anyway they reproduce the same drum machine and so on...synthesizer...which is ok, it sounds good, but we could dig a little bit more, but apart that because also because of the....it's a little bit conservative, so also the quality of the live set is....but anyway there are of course many many exceptions, for example, talking about machines...like people which play proper Techno and the do it in a kind of hard way, but they properly play....with the machines...it's like if you're watching percussionists, there is no difference in kind of attitude, I mean...

[00:10:35-1] **I:** But do you feel like disappointed if you don't see something made in a certain way?

[00:10:42-4] **M:** No, disappointed no, because at the end everybody is free to express himself in the way he thinks it's better. The disappointment is when I perceive a standardized aesthetics, especially in the experimental underground world, because I see exactly the same methods supposed to be criticized by the underground system itself, so it's a huge contradiction, and of course this trend has a strong aesthetical and sonic result, that's why, in my opinion, experimental sound for definition, original, and then sounds like many many others, something is not working....in a more philosophical way...

[00:11:39-9] **I:** And...you already said you are master engineer and you don't really want to pay attention to this aspect, but I will ask to you this question anyway. Have you ever wondered during a live performance, wheter the person or the persons on the stage were actually playing a live performance or not?

[00:12:00-7] **M:** Yes...sometimes I just wondered...yes it happens sometimes.

[00:12:09-2] **I:** And how do you feel in this moment?

[00:12:10-7] **M:** At the end I don't want to think too much about the work of the others....

[00:12:26-1] **I:** Not but I mean, when you GO to a concert because you WANT to see it, as a part of the audience...as an artist yes, but first of all as a person...

[00:12:35-6] **M:** Ok, I understand. Intellectually is actually like an offence, because you are not honest as artist.

[00:13:00-9] **I:** And have you ever found yourself in this context and thought "this is not authentic/genuine"?

[00:13:06-2] **M:** Yes...I mean....often it happens when you are booked for Techno events, with artists coming

from different background playing on the same stage, and you know that like in a certain kind of situations an attitude is normal, another one is not normal, so, when different performers come from a different backgrounds then of course you can see that there is something totally like already done, already, I mean, they just push play and ...so yes, disappointed. But....fortunately, it didn't happen so often, because as artist I always prefer not to play such often in such situations, so that when I play I will be sure that the people know perfectly what I do and so you are super free...well, you cannot afford a modular system, but it's ok! [laughs]

[00:14:29-9] **I**: And which elements lead you to say that someone is playing in an authentic or genuine way?

[00:14:36-0] **M**: There are several reasons. I will separate them in different ways....in a technical and one expressive, aesthetic...I mean, when you don't feel so many variations.....I mean, when I don't feel there is a proper management of the mass of sound then I start to realize...technically talking, maybe you realize it for the excess of perfection....basically you cannot manage an interruption between you and the audience if you pre-record too much, but sometimes I mean is exactly what you want, I mean, there are some performers were you actually KNOW that they are just pushing play, but maybe what is interesting in that is maybe the sound design they use, so, how it works in a club situation, so then it's another level...there is an ability to discern, which is important too, otherwise it's to tricky...maybe his aim is another one! Maybe he just spent a LOT of time just making that frequency resonating and then someone just says "You are not playing!"....yes but it's another thing!

[00:16:15-7] **I**: It's another kind of authenticity.

[00:16:19-0] **M:** Exactly, totally.

[00:16:26-3] **I:** What you want to reach is like on another level, and of course you need others ways to reach this other level.

[00:16:32-9] **M**: Yes.

[00:16:35-0] **I**: And now I have some questions about you. Did you ever felt any difficulties during your live performances to express your artistic authenticity on stage?

[00:16:44-8] **M:** Mmmm....yes....it is not always super fluid....but for many reasons.....

[00:16:55-3] **I:** And how do you become aware of it when it happens?

[00:17:00-3] **M:** I feel it...I mean....with Dadub many sequences are pre-recorded, but the way they are managed for the sound effects make it live...so the tension can be strong or super flat...as you feel it...that's it....with Inner8 I am digging more on the live side...because I have not to have too much control. I am just dealing some sequence managing stuff...but I won't bother you with that! [laughs]

[00:17:56-5] **I**: And how do you feel with this when it happens to you? Not to feel authentic I mean...

[00:17:58-9] **M:** Mmmm...it' s a little bit frustrating, because of course, you always want to give the best of yourself, but for different reasons it doesn't happen, and it also pushes and improves your audio or technical setup, even if you know that sometimes you can have these kinds of situations there could be also another kind of parallel set-up which allows you to manage less things, no, more things with less control, so, because if you are not in the proper flow you start to freak out and you got literally stuck and....so....maybe playing in a more club situation is easier, because it's anyway like "keepin' it on going"...if you are working in a kind of impro situation you cannot have this kind of few controls...and it takes anyway more concentration...it's a field which I would like to explore much more in the future....

[00:19:10-2] **I**: Have you ever been provoked in this context? Have you ever being said that you were not authentic or virtuoso? From someone like journalists, audience, other musicians?

[00:19:21-5] **M:** No, this no. About the technical side no. Aesthetically talking yes, of course, you get many many beautiful, but also many not so beautiful feedbacks, but all is good, I mean...

[00:19:41-1] **I:** You maybe need both!

[00:19:42-9] **M:** Yes, so that's why I never take it personally...

[00:19:47-4] **I:** And what would you answer to someone who says to you that you are not authentic or virtuoso just because you don't use acoustic instruments or hardware instruments?

[00:19:58-6] **M:** Mmmm....I could say that...in my opinion there is not so much difference between....I mean....I know...but I don't know from where should I approach it...there are many facets..

[00:20:38-0] **I:** Maybe it depends on who would it ask it to you, let's say a journalist...

[00:20:46-7] **M:** It depends first of all from what do you mean with authentic, because in a way a guitar is also an artefact, as a synthesizer, maybe, we could create a category based on electricity or not, so, maybe we could talk about it, about the natural, but then is also another domain...I mean, there is no question. It's like that I know that there are many colours but I decided that they don't exist...[laughs] Because anyway the authenticity is in the way of the use of the instrument....I mean, you can have an electronic musician who is a maniac of 909, 303 sheets.. he is a fascist, he is conservative, even if he is using new technologies. The opposite, for example, a conservatory musician which studies ten years the score of Miles Davis...cyou are like WRITING an improvisation...what the hell is that...but yes, that is what I think about it...

[00:22:22-3] **I:** Are there other things or experience you would like to share about this topic?

[00:22:26-6] **M:** Yes, I mean....No...it is totally not consistent...it is really complex to explain it in a linear way, but the point is deeper. In my opinion is important the challenge that an artist does with an instrument, that is the point, because I mean, if someone is telling that a certain kind of music is working in a way, another kind of music is working in another way, just to sell you a lot of shit music, then, I can understand that there are many

categories and differences between acoustic, electro-acoustic, and so on...and also into the academic world....also there...if your school and your tradition is stronger, then maybe you can have much more possibilities to teach in many places and so on...I understand all the complexity and the depth of the issue, but as an artist the challenge is very different. For example, when I buy a...I am a fanatic of pedals, I love pedals...but when I have them in my hands, I use them in all the possible ways except the one he is made for...and that's the point...It's like when you approach to society...and you are maybe telling me the story and so on...but I can use it also in another way, as I said, and it works! More or less. [laughs]

[00:24:57-3] **I:** It's just an object...that you can use in the way you think is the best for you...

[00:25:05-8] **M:** Yes, and that's the challenge. That's why it's really funny when many experimental musicians just reproduce aesthetic patterns in the same way...It should be another kind of approach!

[00:25:25-6] **I**: Ok...Thank you!

Artist 3. (Experimental)

I = Interviewer

M = Musician

[00:00:00-0] **I:** Which was the last concert or live performance you have visited personally?

[00:00:03-0] **M**: It was in Marseille recently and I saw two live acts from two French bands....I don't remember the names, they are quite underground.....One of them I liked it the most...It was shamanic, pagan shamanic.... French people.

[00:00:17-9] **I**: And did you it?

[00:00:19-8] **M**: I liked the.....the first one was kind of boring, the second one was more interesting.

[00:00:30-1] **I:** And why the first one was boring and the second one interesting?

[00:00:30-1] **M:** Because....the one which was boring was so in the sense of kind of playing guitar...electronic guitar...but playing electronic guitar with classical elements and just moving around with pedals and effects....and it was more kind chill out music for being on the beach..in that sense....in that sense was for me boring, because it was kind for bohemian having a drink...for me...you know...in that sense....And the other was more interesting because they were interacting with the audience...or trying to interact.

[00:01:15-5] **I:** And which was the last concert or last live performance which you have seen personally and which you would define as a "real artwork"?

[00:01:22-4] **M:** MMM let me think...let me think....which was the last one where I was impressed by?

[00:01:36-8] **I:** Yes

[00:01:36-8] **M**: Mmmm...that was D.A.F...Deutsche Amerikanische Freundschaft...this year...

[00:01:52-8] **I:** And what brings you to say that D.A.F. are real artists?

[00:01:55-3] **M:** Because they are old.....old in the sense that they come from the 80s ...and I mean, they played the songs from the past, because this was their last concert, so it was also symbolic....and they come from the same scene where I come from....they in Germany and me in Mexico City....which is kind of electronic Punk and they are still very political...

[00:02:24-9] **I:** So you would say, that their expressive modality is authentic?

[00:02:40-9] **M**: It's authentic. Especially for nowadays, where you don't have so many people being so political as them....especially in Germany!

[00:02:49-] **I:** And vice-versa: which was the last concert or live performance which you have seen, where you would say that was not "art" at all?

[00:02:55-3] **M**: Not art at all.....

[00:02:55-8] **I:** Or not authentic, or not virtuous...

[00:02:56-3] **M**: Well, for instance, there is a person, that I also like a lot in the sense of obscure music, Dark ambient...this British guy, very famous....Lust Mord... and he was playing at Berlin Atonal.

[00:03:43-3] **I:** And why would you say that he wasn't authentic?

[00:03:53-4] **M:** In the sense that, he comes from Punk and he became a legend for playing Dark-Ambient, and he was also playing in Atonal, which is one of the most important festivals in Berlin for this scene...and he is a very important name...but what I found worst it was that he was proposing nothing new...nothing... not even as persona, for instance, this was the same in the case of D.A.F....they played old tracks....however the difference in terms of persona on the stage, this guy was very flat...very boring, in a sense...I was expecting more power, more presence....but....

[00:04:39-7] **I**: He was like established...

[00:04:45-6] **M**: Yes established. It was more the name..

[00:04:48-3] **I**: Ok, he knew that he was already famous somehow...and maybe, you mean, that he was not taking care about making new stuff...?

[00:04:58-0] **M:** I haven't seen in him nothing authentic, honestly. Totally flat... nothing that moves around...

[00:05:16-0] **I:** Ok...and which was the last performance which you have seen, were on the stage was at least one computer?

[00:05:25-8] **M:** MMMM...computers....Anemone Tube, a German guy which plays with computer for instance...Chra, a woman which comes from Switzerland and plays only with computers.

[00:05:52-7] **I:** And which feelings did they transmit to you?

[00:05:52-7] **M:** In a way they are very similar, but also very different...I really like Anemone Tube, he is in my age, and I find he very creative...He works a lot... even though he works with computers....

[00:06:26-1] **I:** So, which is the feeling that his music transmits to you?

[00:06:27-9] **M:** The feeling to have in front of me a composer....Because there is a difference, when you produce music then when you compose music....I come from the composition corner....When you compose, you create a narrative in your music, instead of only PRODUCING music with no narrative.

[00:06:56-4] **I:** So you would say in this case that the medium is not important, but what is more important is to have something to say...and a way to express it...It's like when you write a story, and you should have fantasy but you should also know how to tell a story....

[00:07:21-0] **M**: Exactly.

[00:07:23-5] **I:** And which was the last concert or live performance which you have seen in this context (with one or more computer on stage), that you didn't like?

[00:07:32-3] **M**: Mmmm...Chra....I saw her also in Atonal and I was really looking forward to see her, because she is also a woman....again...it was not that brilliant...for playing in Atonal you know...I saw her talent but not her creativity...

[00:08:15-5] **I:** And have you ever wondered by watching a live performance, whether the people on stage were playing or not?

[00:08:18-7] **M**: Mmmm....in my case...I don't really care about that, because for me what is important is the message that they are sending....if they play live a software or not, that's up to them, I don't get annoyed by it..

[00:08:43-2] **I:** Ok so you would say, you do care more about the content and the message?

[00:08:45-9] **M**: Exactly.

[00:08:47-7] **I:** And which was the last concert or live performance with at least one computer on the stage where you would say, this is not authentic, this is not virtuoso?

[00:09:01-4] **M**: Playing with computer?

[00:09:09-5] **I:** Yes.

[00:09:14-6] **M**: Mmmm...someone with the computer which wasn't really virtuoso....I don't remember..

[00:09:35-3] **I:** Ok, you don't remember...but was there some case of this kind?

[00:09:39-0] **M:** Certainly.....There are a couple of people that i respect in what they do...but....there are

different things....things that I call layers....one is the theatrical aspect of the performance, where they present the persona, the character the personality....what they present....another thing is how they play, how do they present their works, whether they use different machines or not....and another thing again is the message that they transmit, so...in my opinion, when I find the three elements in balance, I find a person that has developed a lot, as a person, as a human being, and as an artist...in my opinion you can't find it that often...

[00:10:31-7] **I:** And now I have some questions about your personal artistic experience....Have you ever felt difficulties to express your authenticity on stage?

[00:10:37-3] **M**: Ehm...I had technical problems...for instance once I had a very expensive soundcard in order to let the sound from the computer coming out in a very clear way....but this thing was not working! It was turning off, in the middle of the concert...this means...the sound was off...it was turning on and off, that was a nightmare of course....And in another concert, the mixer of the venue was not working...but I am talking about the technical context, not the content one...

[00:11:28-0] **I:** So you would say, that you have never had this feeling about your content?

[00:11:33-2] **M**: I had it when I was younger, in the moment that I was learning this...and I had a lot of concerts where I was not satisfied with....because I knew, I could do much more better than that...but these experiences let me rehearse more and more, made my more precise in the composition, and now I am even more relaxed because I already know...I am prepared if something is not working, I know what to do, and also I know that we are human beings, we cannot be always perfect, but I know now I can give more quality for the audience.. respect to myself and respect to the audience...but I am talking about more than 12 years experience...so you get more and more...

[00:12:40-8] **I:** And about your expressive modality you don't feel to have any problems, you feel self confident....

[00:13:17-1] **M:** At the moment yes.

[00:13:20-3] **I:** Have you ever been provoked in this context of digital composition and music production? Have you ever been said that you are not authentic or virtuoso?

[00:13:38-0] **M:** Yes, I was confronted with that a couple of years ago, when I was talking to a German musician which builds machines, synthesizer....With building I mean that he builds really the small parts, the processors, the small brains...And he for instance he critiqued my music because he was asking to me... how comes that you play a laptop? how comes that you don't build your own synthesizer? I found it very arrogant. But I told him: look, in my case is a matter of interpretation, because for me is better to have a person that gives me something decent, than a person that is just plugging cables, but that is my personal perspective, and he can think whatever he wants that I don't go that annoyed...But this happens when I am talking to people that say...build your own instrument...many of them are coming from the punk scene, where there is a Do It Yourself

dogma...also for the instruments...and I respect it a lot...but I have a critic about it, because nowadays, 2015, you have a new corner, which is the corner of improvisation, and DIY instruments... where the people focus a lot on the visual performance, in the sense of having a lot of cables, a lot of weird instruments which look cool, and ok, I agree...you need a lot of work in order to do that, but they just focus on the visual aspect, to look weird, but it doesn't also SOUND weird! There is no narrative in that, is more the spectacle of using machines which they build up themselves, it goes on that level, and for me as a composer, I have a critic, and I don't come so much from this improvisation scene....I do impro sometimes, but is not that where I come from....I come from sound design, sound art, sound collage...that means, you need a lot of time to put pieces together, which voiceover I use, in which language, why I am using this voiceover, what I am trying to tell, what is the topic of my track....and that's a completely different approach, I don't say it's worst or better, it's just different....but for me that I come from this another scene, when I listed to a track then I go back home, and if I'm still thinking about this, that means, that I am very interested into the musician, really...otherwise, I just forget it...

[00:16:51-3] **I:** You mean, that having a wall of synthesizer just to show up that you have a wall of synthesizer, it's not the point....

[00:16:55-5] **M:** It's a spectacle. And we live in a society which is based on spectacle, so you need to show up...which for me is ok, you can show all the machine that have built on your own in the last few years, which is great, especially if you have women doing it, because it has a political meaning .....but in terms of music-music......for me it doesn't tell much....

[00:17:25-9] **I:** And how did you feel with these critics that you had?

[00:17:34-2] **M:** First, I questioned myself because I started playing with computer, with a laptop, because that was accessible for me, I didn't have the money for synthesizers....And all the equipment that I have now it's more than ten years of saving money.....it's an investment....I don't come from a rich family, and for me the first that I had to access the music production was the computer, and that's because I come from the working class. So for me it was the only way. And when I have these people telling me...why are you using computer, and so on, I answer, well, it's a matter of money, if I would have more money, I would love to have such an equipment! Now, I have saved a lot and I am jumping into analogue, not DIY, but analogue, and again there was the thing of researching in myself as an autodidact, how do I play an MS20, how do I play a synthesizer, and I am very glad that we have internet, because I can Google stuff, there are tutorials, videos... I teach myself.....

[00:18:55-0] **I:** But have you felt like attacked from these comments?

[00:18:57-5] **M**: Yes. At some point at the beginning, but later on I fought it. Now I don't take this seriously, because it is a personal opinion...then for sure, I give an argument to explain why I do what I do, with what I have, and they normally shut up, because there is no alternative for me.

[00:19:53-3] **I:** And what would you answer, if someone would tell you that you are not authentic or virtuoso just because you are using computer and electronic instruments?

[00:19:57-8] **M**: At the moment, I wouldn't take it seriously, because I know who I am now, after all the experiences I made and everything, and for one person who tells me that I am not authentic, I have 50 other people that say I AM authentic, so I don't care... I can't just be cool for everyone...

[00:20:29-6] **I**: And are there some other important things that you would like to say about this topic?

[00:20:33-9] **M:** Well, yes, I find your research very interesting, because the change...As I said, I began to make music because I got my first laptop, which was not easy to get. And for me, I think, all the....people that are doing cracks, like Pirate Bay, because I got all the cracks from the software....for FREE! And that means for me, I can remember, when I was still living in Mexico, I was always curious about machines, because my father used to repair televisions, radios....so I grew up with my father with....

[00:21:32-5] **I**: Wires!

[00:21:32-5] **M**: So I was never scared of machines, I was just curious, because I grew up with them...and....but I never had the money for this.....And then I remember, in Mexico, when I was studying philosophy, some of the people in the university were musicians, or starting making music, electronic music....and I remember me asking them...."hey, how do you do it?" and it was a very macho context, they were like...."You can't touch my software, you do not touch my vinyl, my turntables..." and I asked "Why not?" "Because you are a woman". And I got so PISSED OFF, because what is this for an argument? And unfortunately, that was one of the main reason why I left Mexico, because I could not access on knowledge on technology, as I could here in Germany. Here, when I came, I was curious. And I remember I met a lot of people which were left wing oriented, and I remember I ask to one guy....This was the time were I was doing radio...the point where I started doing collages, just for fun..and this guy saw I was doing this stuff and he told me "You need a better software, don't you know Ableton Live? Is from Berlin!" and I didn't. And he told me, "Just pass by, next week, and I will install you the software and teach you a little bit", and he thought I would not have come...but I did. I came on time, with my computer, I installed the software, and explained me a little bit...and I learned like that....since then, 10 years later, I met him again and I told him "Thank you" "For what?" "For the software""are you still using it?" and I said "Yes!" and he was very proud...but he was a German guy living in Berlin, who was like a person who helped me because he saw I wanted to do things...but also if I was a woman, this was never a question...

[00:23:48-4] **I:** I can imagine the difference....

[00:23:57-3] **M:** Yes, I come from a very macho culture...but now is changing.....I am talking about more than 10 years ago, and it's changing, and at that time it was very difficult as a woman...and now actually the people who were telling me I couldn't do stuff because I was a woman, now they really RESPECT me....because they say, "Ok, she did it, she managed it" but I did it in Germany and not with their help!

[00:24:22-1] **M**: Thank you.

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die vorliegende Masterarbeit selbstständig sowie ohne unerlaubte fremde Hilfe und ausschließlich unter Verwendung der aufgeführten Quellen und Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe.

Berlin, den 18. August 2016

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