

Notes

Introduction: From MTV to OMG!—Music Video as Form, Practice, and Literacy

1. The sense of awe my family had at watching a video on a computer was not unique: on the YouTube comment thread for “Buddy Holly,” one user writes, “Windows 95! I still remember being so amazed ‘The computer can play ... videos?!!!!!!’” A commenter on the thread for Edie Brickell’s “Good Times, Bad Times,” the other video included on the CD-ROM, writes, “I love this song and video, mostly for the Windows 95 nostalgia it brings. When I first saw this video, it was still an amazing thing to see full-color, hi-res video playing on a computer.” Another user writing on the same page boils his entire commentary on Brickell’s video down to two words: “Windows 95.”
2. Stephen Manes, “Personal Computers: What Is Windows 95 Really Like?” *New York Times*, August 1, 1995.
3. Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* (London: Ashgate, 2002), 5.
4. *Ibid.*, 2.
5. Ellen Seiter, “Practicing at Home: Computers, Pianos, and Cultural Capital,” in *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected*, ed. Tara McPherson, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Reports on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 28–35.

6. Larry Gross, "Art and Artists on the Margins," in *On the Margins of Art Worlds*, ed. Larry Gross (Boulder: Westview, 1995), 6 (italics in original).
7. Seiter, "Practicing at Home," 27–52.
8. "It makes no sense to add 'converged media literacy' as yet another requirement young people need to meet if they are to qualify as full-blown citizens, without addressing the vast disparities in their access to the tools, networks, and experiences that prepare them to exercise that citizenship. When young people are only selectively initiated and integrated into the processes and practices of converged literacy, their lives and stories are missing or misrepresented in the public sphere." Elisabeth Soep and Vivian Chávez, *Drop That Knowledge: Youth Radio Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 47.

1 Form: A Short History of the Music Video

1. "Timeshifted TV" was a phrase I had not encountered before Nielsen used it in their quarterly Cross-Platform Reports, available at <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/reports/2012/state-of-the-media--cross-platform-report-q1-2012.html>.
2. "ComScore Releases June 2013 U.S. Online Video Rankings," comScore Inc., http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press_Releases/2013/7/comScore_Releases_June_2013_U.S._Online_Video_Rankings.
3. YouTube user raygunsally has curated a great playlist of these video booth karaoke videos, spanning from 1990 to more recent recordings, and from Brockton, Massachusetts, to Georgetown, West Malaysia. I have a personal soft spot for YouTuber richfoty's upload of his family's version of the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction," recorded in 1990, at an amusement park noted as "Wonderland": <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL44AB115AEE7D5947>.
4. "Billboard 200: Week of August 21, 2010," *Billboard*, <http://www.billboard.com/charts/billboard-200#/charts/billboard-200?chartDate=2010-08-21>.

5. "Nominees and Winners: Album of the Year," the Recording Academy, <http://www.grammy.com/nominees?year=2010&genre=All>.

6. Josh Sanburn, "The 30 All-Time Best Music Videos," *Time*, <http://entertainment.time.com/2011/07/28/the-30-all-time-best-music-videos/slide/arcade-fire-we-used-to-waitthe-wilderness-downtown-2010/#arcade-fire-we-used-to-waitthe-wilderness-downtown-2010>.

7. "Arcade Fire, 'The Wilderness Downtown,' an interactive film by Chris Milk, featuring 'We Used to Wait,'" <http://www.thewildernessdowntown.com>).

8. Jake Coyle, "Left for Dead by MTV, Music Videos Rebound on the Web," *Associated Press*, September 12, 2010, <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2010/sep/12/left-dead-mtv-music-videos-rebound-web/>. Coyle is not the only journalist to beat the dead video horse; this theme crops up again and again in music video journalism, including Sanborn's *Time* piece from 2012. Sanborn introduces his write-up for OK Go's 2006 viral hit "Here It Goes Again" thus: "In 2006, the state of the music video was bleak. MTV had all but abandoned the art form."

9. "ComScore Releases January 2010 U.S. Online Video Rankings," http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press_Releases/2010/10/comScore_Releases_September_2010_US_Online_Video_Rankings.

10. There are actually five eras, if we include the proto- or pre-MTV musical visual forms of Vaudeville's illustrated song, the post-World War II Scopitone, and the midcentury pretaped promotional clip—none of which will be discussed here but make for a fantastic rabbit hole for the reader to explore. Amy Herzog's essay "Illustrating Music: The Impossible Embodiments of the Jukebox Film," in *Medium Cool: Music Videos from Soundies to Cell Phones*, ed. Roger Beebe (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), is a great place to start, as are <http://www.scopitonearchive.com> and <http://www.youtube.com/user/ScopitonesDotCom>.

11. Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 30–37.

12. *Ibid.*, 35–36; as well as Roberta Cruger, former senior clip evaluator, MTV (1981–1984), conversation with author, March 15, 2011.

13. Roberta Cruger, conversation with author, March 15, 2011.

14. Any number of the iconic “I Want My MTV” promos are viewable at YouTube, all beginning with Cyndi Lauper, David Bowie, the Police, or other durable pop icons exhorting viewers, “Turn it on, leave it on,” or “America, demand your MTV!”

15. I use the terms “hanging out” and “messaging around” here in the sense defined in Mizuko Ito et al., *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).

16. Heather A. Horst, Becky Herr-Stephenson, and Laura Robinson, “Media Ecologies,” in Ito et al., *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 54.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 54, 57, 62.

19. “Spike Jonze, Chris Cunningham, Michel Gondry, and Palm Pictures Present the Directors Label,” *Business Wire*, June 12, 2003, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Spike+Jonze,+Chris+Cunningham,+Michel+Gondry+%26+Palm+Pictures+Present...-a0103111975>.

20. An indulgent personal digression: My own strongest memory of *TRL* dates from 1998—I would have been fourteen and already fancied myself a committed punk and so never cast a vote; still, *TRL* was on in the background as my friends and I whiled away the time after school. Though I didn’t deign to contribute to *TRL*’s polls, I fittingly recall that I was online, talking via IM to a boy in Minnesota, making fun of the pop acts trotting across the stage, and hatching subversive fantasies that nevertheless engaged the *TRL* system—specifically how amazing it would be to be able to summon enough votes to push the bands we *did* love to the top of the countdown. Occasionally bands that we approved of did make it onto the *TRL* charts, which provided polysemic moments

of vindication and revulsion, visions of a world we wished could exist while we took pride in carving our own world out of what we were given.

21. Ben Sisario, "Totally Over: Last Squeals for 'TRL,'" *New York Times*, November 18, 2008.

22. Anne Becker, "MTV Favors 'YouRL' Swap for 'TRL,'" *Broadcasting and Cable*, April 30, 2007, <http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/news-articles/mtv-favors-'youurl'-swap-'trl'/82534>, reports 782,000 as a peak in 1999, while Erin Carlson of the *Huffington Post* reported a peak of 757,000, also in 1999. Erin Carlson, "TRL Canceled: MTV's 'Total Request Live' to Conclude in November," *Huffington Post/Associated Press*, September 15, 2008, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/09/15/trl-canceled-mtvs-total-r_n_126619.html.

23. "The TRL Archive: Recap, June 2006," ATRL.net, <http://atrl.net/trlarchive/?s=recap&y=2006&m=06>.

24. "The TRL Archive: About TRL," ATRL.net, <http://atrl.net/trlarchive/?s=about>.

25. Becker, "MTV Favors 'YouRL' Swap for 'TRL.'"

26. Yvonne Villareal, "Fans rocked the vote on MTV's 'TRL,' which wraps Sunday," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 2008.

27. Ibid.

28. Howard Becker, "Art Worlds and Collective Activity," in *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 28.

29. "MTV Music Meter BETA," Viacom International Inc., <http://www.mtvmusicmeter.com>.

30. "Billboard Charts—Social 50," Billboard, <http://www.billboard.com/charts/social-50#/charts/social-50>.

31. "Pitchfork Reviews, Recent, Most Read" (sidebar), Pitchfork Media, <http://pitchfork.com>.

32. Denise Martin, "MTV Drops 'Music Television' from the Network Logo," *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 2010.

33. Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 5.
34. Seiter, "Practicing at Home," 33, 34.
35. James Paul Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 120–121, 124–125; David Buckingham, Rebekah Willett, and Maria Pini, *Home Truths? Video Production and Domestic Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011).
36. Holly Willis, "Voice, Performance, and Transience: Learning through Seismic," in *Learning through Digital Media: Experiments in Technology and Pedagogy*, ed. R. Trebor Scholz (Institute for Distributed Creativity, 2011), 172.

2 Practice: Curiosity to Fluency in the Career of Hiro Murai

1. "VMAs 2010: Lady Gaga and Eminem Top This Year's Nominees," Viacom International Inc., last modified August 3, 2010, <http://buzzworthy.mtv.com/2010/08/03/2010-mtv-vma-nominee-list-lady-gaga-eminem>.
2. It seems likely that with the Murai family's overall cultural aptitudes, they would have created much the same atmosphere even if Murai's father was not explicitly making a living in a creative field. "In some cases, parents lend support to their children's endeavors by helping to provide material and emotional infrastructures that enable them to develop their skills and visibility." Patricia G. Lange and Mizuko Ito, "Creative Production," in Mizuko et al., *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 288.
3. Horst, Herr-Stephenson, and Robinson, "Media Ecologies," in *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 167–170.
4. Buckingham, *Home Truths*, 65. "In terms of identity, participants who video mainly for more private purposes tend to see themselves as family archivists rather than as video makers; whereas participants who are more publicly oriented seem more comfortable taking on the identity of a 'serious' video maker. And in terms of learning and film gram-

mar, private practices tend to be less concerned with components such as composition, editing, or even lighting, whereas public practices tend to involve a more developed form of media literacy.”

5. Lange and Ito, “Creative Production,” in *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 280–281, 284.

6. Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 209–210.

7. Mizuko Ito, introduction to *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 16.

8. Martin Lucas, “The Virtual Cutting Room,” in *Learning through Digital Media: Experiments in Technology and Pedagogy*, ed. R. Trebor Scholz (Institute for Distributed Creativity, 2011), 206–207.

9. Yasmin B. Kafai and Cynthia Carter Ching, “Children as Instructional Designers: Apprenticeship and Evaluation in the Learning Science by Design Project,” in *Curriculum, Plans, and Processes in Instructional Design: International Perspectives*, ed. Norbert M. Seel and Sanne Dijkstra (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2004), 116–117.

10. *Ibid.*, 116.

11. Soep and Chávez, *Drop That Knowledge*, 24.

12. *Ibid.*, 89. Indeed, Soep expands the notion of “point of voice” away from the specific arena of social justice and toward the general ability for coherent expression, a fundamental component of personal *and* political fulfillment: “To form a point of voice, young people need sustained opportunities to make meaning and media from their experiences—not to stop at a single story, a single burst of expression, a single chance to reach an audience. Media production is nothing if not iterative, and so is any effort to create social change. The one-shot approach not only limits the impact of the product; it also stops the learning process at a point when there is more to say and do.”

13. Andrew Ross, *Nice Work If You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 21.

3 Literacy: OMG! Cameras Everywhere

1. Hiro Murai, interview with author, February 10, 2012.
2. "Team Blue Glue," OMG Everywhere, <http://www.omgeverywhere.org/shorts/team-blue-glue>.
3. Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us*, 20.
4. *Ibid.*, 19.
5. Larry Gross, "Art and Artists on the Margins," in *On the Margins of Art Worlds*, ed. Larry Gross (Boulder: Westview, 1995), 14; quoting David Pariser, "Child Art," in *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, ed. Erik Barnouw (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 258–262.
6. Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us*, 36–37, 175–176.
7. Yasmin B. Kafai, "The Classroom as 'Living Laboratory': Design-Based Research for Understanding, Comparing, and Evaluating Learning Science through Design," *Educational Technology* 45 (2005): 31–32.
8. Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 209–210.
9. Douglas Klinger, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation: OMG! Cameras Everywhere 2012," IMVDb.com, <http://www.filmedinsert.com/blog/2012/08/how-i-spent-my-summer-vacation-omg-cameras-everywhere-2012>.
10. Mizuko Ito, "Work," in *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 334–335.
11. Lange and Ito, "Creative Production," in *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 284–290.
12. Adam Davidson, "Don't Mock the Artisanal-Pickle Makers," *New York Times Magazine*, February 15, 2012.
13. Gross, "Art and Artists on the Margins," 7.
14. *Ibid.*, 8.
15. Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us*, 23.

16. Soep and Chávez, *Drop That Knowledge*, 54.
17. “UK Music Video Awards 2011: Daniels, Canada, Us, Jonas Akerlund and Barry Wasserman take big honours at euphoric fourth UK MVAs,” Promo News, <http://www.promonews.tv/news/2011/11/09/uk-music-video-awards-2011-daniels-canada-us-jonas-akerlund-and-barry-wasser-man-take>.
18. “2011 MTV Video Music Awards: Best Editing Nominees,” Viacom International Inc., <http://www.mtv.com/ontv/vma/2011/best-editing>.
19. “Fifty-fifth Annual Grammy Awards Winners: 80. Best Short Form Music Video,” the Recording Academy, <http://www.grammy.com>.
20. Ito, introduction to *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*.
22. “Peer-based learning relies on a context of reciprocity, in which kids feel they have a stake in self-expression as well as a stake in evaluating and giving feedback to one another. Unlike in more hierarchical and authoritative relations, both parties are constantly contributing and evaluating one another. Youth both affiliate and compete with their peers.” Ito further notes: “When kids have the opportunity to gain access to accomplished elders in areas where they are interested in developing expertise, an accessible and immediate aspirational trajectory that is grounded in an organic social context can be created” (351).
21. Kafai and Ching, “Children as Instructional Designers”; Kafai, “The Classroom as ‘Living Laboratory.’”
22. Soep and Chávez, *Drop That Knowledge*, 57.
23. *Ibid.*, 58–63.
24. *Ibid.*, 63–69.
25. *Ibid.*, 69–78.
26. *Ibid.*, 58.
27. Ito, conclusion to *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, 353.

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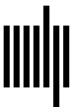
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