

I'll Be Your Mixtape: Lou Reed, Andy Warhol, and the Queer Intimacies of Cassettes

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I am going to tell the story of a cassette tape, a set of never-released (and rarely heard) songs by Lou Reed, and the tape's intended audience: Andy Warhol. It is also the story of the affective affordances of personal recording technologies, and the emergence of the mixtape as an intimate gift of curated sound, archived gesture, and spliced being. Warhol and Reed are giant figures in the history of twentieth-century art and music; their artistic collaboration from 1966 to 1967 resulted in the multimedia Exploding Plastic Inevitable events and culminated with the album *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (1967). Prominent rock movements in the 1970s—notably glam, punk, and industrial—found inspiration in the raw sounds, streetwise subjects, and queer mystique of that album, just as Reed and Warhol continued to look to each other throughout that decade as sources for ideas and as potential collaborators on projects that were never realized.

The story of this one cassette tape intersects with growing popular and scholarly interest in audiotapes more generally. Since 2004, with the publication of *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture*, edited by Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, cassettes have made a steady return in the

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I would like to thank the following scholars, archivists, and interviewees for their generous help with this project: Victor Bockris, Jeremy Braddock, Erin Byrne, Peter Doggett, Andrew Flory, Don Fleming, Vincent Fremont, Terry Garahan, Matthew Gray, Pat Hackett, Gabriel Harmsen, Jonathan Hiam, Jonathan D. Katz, Sean Peters, Greg Pierce, Nick Salvato, Bruce Yaw (d. 2019), and the anonymous readers for this journal. This article is dedicated to the memory of Bruce Yaw.

marketplace of recordings, first to the indie music scene as a hipster trend, then inevitably by 2009 to the major labels, generating nearly a decade of internet buzz.¹ The return of this legacy media format follows on the heels of the slightly earlier vinyl revival, itself a pushback against the intangibility of digital music files and online streaming services. Both vinyl and cassette revivals are driven by nostalgia for a material presence of recorded music, as well as a perceived sonic warmth due in fact to a loss of fidelity and increase of noise inherent in both analog formats.² To this nostalgia for warm presence, the cassette adds compactness, affordability, and the opportunity to compose, curate, and duplicate sound through home tape decks and portable machines.

The 2017 special issue of *Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Andrea F. Bohlman and Peter McMurray, published eight articles that place tape front and center in sound and media studies, and “reflect on the epistemological and ontological challenges issued by magnetic recording” at material, historical, and conceptual levels.³ Studies in this collection and elsewhere trace the role of cassette tapes in particular—a participatory format that is easy to circulate but difficult to regulate—in the formation of new social and political consciousness in the second half of the twentieth century, including emergent feminism in North India, the Iranian revolution, and Polish resistance.⁴ Other scholarship has focused on the role of cassettes in the formation of subcultural hip hop, punk, noise, and connoisseur scenes that bridge local and global networks of producers and consumers.⁵ All of these studies concern social collectives created through distribution networks. My focus is on a smaller scale: the singular, unidirectional communiqué from A to B, the revelation of self

¹ For example see Dorian Lynskey, “Return of the Audio Cassette,” *The Guardian*, 29 March 2010, accessed 29 June 2018, www.theguardian.com/music/2010/mar/29/audio-cassette-comeback; and Matthew Lear, “The Humble Cassette Tape and Why There’s Reason to Champion Its Return,” *Getintothis*, 13 March 2018, accessed 29 June 2018, www.getintothis.co.uk/2018/03/return-cassette-different-sort-revival/.

² See Lucas Mearian, “Vinyl Revival? Records Move on CDs in 2008,” *TechHive.com*, 3 January 2009, accessed 3 April 2019, www.techhive.com/article/156302/vinyl_moves_on_cds.html; and Marc Hogan, “Is Vinyl’s Comeback Here to Stay?” *Pitchfork.com*, 22 January 2018, accessed 3 April 2019, <https://pitchfork.com/features/article/is-vinyls-comeback-here-to-stay>.

³ Andrea F. Bohlman and Peter McMurray, “Tape: Or, Rewinding the Phonographic Regime,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 14 (2017): 3–24, at 7.

⁴ See Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 236–56; Bohlman and McMurray, “Tape: Or, Rewinding the Phonographic Regime,” 4–5; see also Andrea F. Bohlman, “Making Tapes in Poland: The Compact Cassette at Home,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 14 (2017): 119–34.

⁵ See Jared Ball, *I Mix What I Like! A Mixtape Manifesto* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011); Shane Greene, “Peruvian Punk as a Global Means of Underground Production,” *Popular Music and Society* 39 (2016): 286–300; David Novak, “The Sublime Frequencies of New Old Media,” *Public Culture* 23 (2011): 603–34; and idem, *Japanoise: Music at the Edge of Circulation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 198–226.

to an intimate other, and the epistemological and ontological challenges of doing so on tape.

We Didn't Say Anything, Did We?

The cassette in question came to the Andy Warhol Museum Archives (henceforth, the Warhol Archives) from his estate as one of nearly 3,500 audiotapes, composed of roughly 30% reel to reel and 70% cassettes.⁶ Long before Warhol began collecting objects of his life into boxes he called “Time Capsules”—a project that began in 1974 as a result of moving his studio—he collected the sounds of his life, from roughly 1964 to 1985. The majority of these tapes capture conversations: some were intended for transcription into books (such as *a: a novel*), plays (such as *Pork*), and interviews for his *Interview* magazine; but many more simply archive Warhol’s daily interactions, never intended for transcription and perhaps not even playback. In addition to capturing conversations and the occasional cabarets and rock shows he attended, these tapes provide a sonic trace of Warhol’s own body moving through different spaces. In one from 1973 we hear Led Zeppelin in concert at Madison Square Garden, Warhol walking through a crowd out to the street, his footsteps on pavement, and his entry into the bustling restaurant noise of Café Rouge, complete with background big band jazz and the clinking of cutlery and plates.⁷ The tapes archive Warhol’s being in the world by way of sound.

Melissa Ragona writes that Warhol’s recordings “confound the relationship between information and artwork.”⁸ They also blur the line between private and public utterances. Before I continue deeper into the Warhol Archives and the tape I found there, a word about the special conditions of what follows: this will be a closet essay about a closet drama. By closet essay I mean the ways in which I must talk around the contents of this tape, illustrate by way of analogy, sound by way of proxy, quote by way of code, hint, and pastiche. The Andy Warhol Foundation, the entity that owns the contents of the Warhol Archives, forbids any direct quotation or sound samples of the tapes. Such closeting of literal content reenacts the conditions of the closet operating in Warhol’s lifetime, and reanimates those peculiar strategies of indirect communication. By

⁶ These numbers stem from the Warhol Archives inventory of audio tapes made available to me.

⁷ Tape 671, Andy Warhol Museum Archives, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁸ Melissa Ragona, “Impulse, Types and Index: Warhol’s Audio Archive,” in *Warhol Live: Music and Dance in Andy Warhol’s Work*, ed. Stéphane Aquin (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2008), 130–35, at 131.

closet drama I refer to what theater scholar Nick Salvato describes as “plays written for private reading or coterie performance, but not for public staging.”⁹ Coined in the nineteenth century, when a *closet* could designate a study or private room, Salvato considers closet drama as “the mode at the threshold between writing and performance.”¹⁰ Salvato’s extension of this mode to other media, specifically what he calls “closet television,” will also be useful: closet media are ephemeral productions kept from public view in the forms of unproduced spec scripts, unsold pilots, canceled series, lost episodes, or those only available as bootleg copies.¹¹ Marked by disappearance and inaccessibility, closet media engender queer critical modalities that resemble the epistemologies of that other, metaphorical closet.

One can reasonably debate whether Warhol was ever “in the closet,” especially given his notoriously “swish” manner that put him at odds with other contemporaneous gay artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg.¹² Jonathan D. Katz argues that Warhol broadcasted his queer sensibilities in his early Pop Art paintings such as the *Torn Campbell Soup Can* series (1962), in which the ripped label always isolates “camp” from “bell”; and in his camp-coded treatments of everyday items and celebrity subjects.¹³ Nevertheless, Warhol and others around him participated in closet techniques and discourses, and were subject to closeting by editors and curators. A case in point is the newly disclosed circumstance that led to Warhol’s most famous utterances published in the November 1963 *ARTforum* article “What Is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I”:

[Warhol:] I think everybody should be a machine.

I think everybody should like everybody.

[Gene Swenson:] *Is that what Pop Art is all about?*

[Warhol:] Yes. It’s liking things.¹⁴

⁹ Nick Salvato, *Uncloseting Drama: American Modernism and Queer Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 1–2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹ Nick Salvato, “Closet Television, Queer Hooperman,” in *Closet Drama: History, Theory, Form*, ed. Catherine Burroughs (London: Routledge, 2019), 203–16, esp. 203–6.

¹² See Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 12.

¹³ Jonathan D. Katz, “The Silent Camp: Queer Resistance and the Rise of Pop Art,” in *Visions of a Future: Art and Art History in Changing Contexts*, ed. Hans-Jörg Heusser and Kornelia Imesch (Zurich: Swiss Institute of Art Research, 2004), 147–58, at 156. See also *idem*, *Andy Warhol* (New York: Rizzoli Art Series, 1993); and Gavin Butt, *Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, 1948–1963* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 119–22.

¹⁴ G. R. Swenson, “What Is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I,” in *I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 1962–87*, ed. Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2004), 15–20, at 16.

These career-defining statements, as Jennifer Sichel has recently revealed, were produced through the heavy-handed editing of a taped conversation—editing that suppressed an all-important context: Swenson’s opening question was not “What is Pop Art?” but “What do you say about homosexuals?” to which Warhol initially answers, “I think that the whole interview on me should be just on homosexuality.”¹⁵ With the statements “everybody should be a machine” and “everybody should like everybody,” Warhol was striving to articulate a queer utopian fantasy of automated responses to affective attachments and sexual desire set free from social categories, sanctions, and psychic interference.¹⁶ The tape recorder, the machine in front of Warhol, performed this automatic intimate engagement as he struggled to articulate its queer potential. In the end, however, *ARTnews* editor Tom Hess “cut out all those words” (according to Swenson) and added quite a few of his own, such as this famous “Warhol” remark: “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine.”¹⁷

The unedited tape transcript illustrates the tape’s ability to blur ontology and epistemology—an indiscriminate mode of being versus the heavily edited mode of knowing and writing. This tension emerges within the interview itself, as a closet drama unfolds about the drama of the closet:

Warhol: Well, we didn’t say anything, Gene, did we?

Malanga: Be quiet, listen.

Swenson: Well, I’m not going to copy it all down.

Warhol: Oh. Oh, but uh . . .

Swenson: But I’ll keep the tape, and use it against all of ya! [*laughing*]

Warhol: But, I think it’s uh . . . I think you could really. . . I, I would want that on my interview, you know that. You know what we were talking about . . .

Swenson: What?

Warhol: You know, the homosexuality, and . . . and . . .

Swenson: You want it in your interview?

¹⁵ See Jennifer Sichel, “‘What Is Pop Art?’ A Revised Transcript of Gene Swenson’s 1963 Interview with Andy Warhol,” *Oxford Art Journal* 41 (2018): 1–16, at 4.

¹⁶ Jennifer Sichel, “‘Do You Think Pop Art’s Queer?’: Gene Swenson and Andy Warhol,” *Oxford Art Journal* 41 (2018): 59–83.

¹⁷ Swenson, “‘What Is Pop Art?’,” 18; see also Matt Wrbcian, “The True Story of ‘My True Story,’” in *Andy Warhol: A Guide to 706 Items in 2 Hours 56 Minutes*, ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann, (Rotterdam: NAI, 2007), 56–57.

Warhol: Yeah. But it should be on somebody else's too, just to, uh . . .

[. . .]

Swenson: [*pause*] Do you think Pop Art's queer? [*laughing*] I'll ask Rosenquist that.

Warhol: Yessss! That would be fantastic!

Malanga: And so this time next Sunday for the Rosenquist interview on the same tape . . .¹⁸

The interview tape suddenly becomes a private object for safekeeping or for blackmail—a threat that Warhol diffuses by insisting on homosexuality as the topic, not only for his interview on Pop Art, but also for the interviews of other artists “on the same tape,” as Gerard Malanga suggests. In other words, it becomes a Warhol/Rosenquist mixtape on the queerness of Pop Art.

Be Quiet, Listen

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The analog mixtape—that is, a homemade compilation of music—always records and enacts a closet drama. In contrast to the instantaneous drag-and-drop process of digital compilations, the analog mixtape drama unfolds in the real time of planning and playing a song sequence, and splicing together songs from different sources. In general terms, “to splice” means to join together end to end to make a continuous length—the mix. “Splice” has further technical and slang meanings: for reel-to-reel tapes, it refers to the manual cutting and pasting process that joins different source tapes or removes sections of tape; in the nineteenth century “to be spliced” could mean “to be married.”¹⁹ It is impossible to create physical splices in a cassette tape; the only way to approximate a tape-to-tape splice is through a transfer to another tape (dubbing). The splice that marries songs on a dubbed mixtape represents the moment of greatest physical labor. This involves changing or flipping records and tapes, adjusting volume levels, synchronizing start times, fading out (to avoid sudden cuts in sound or machine noise), adding silence, pressing pause or rewind to erase mistakes or cue-up the next song. With this embodied and durational experience of each song in sequence, mixtape creators embed themselves within the tape and prefigure the tape's future listeners.

¹⁸ Sichel, “What Is Pop Art?,” 6.

¹⁹ “Splice, v.,” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2019), accessed 13 April 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/187177?rskey=W0XIr4&result=2.

Intended for an audience of one (as a personal object, or a gifted object), a small party, or a limited grassroots distribution network, the mixtape's miniature materiality and curated contents amplify the meaning of the songs held within its magnetized particles. Like the closet dramas of which Salvato writes, analog mixtapes also define a threshold modality of expression between a certain kind of writing and embodied performance. In the 1950s and 1960s, playwrights, poets, novelists, and of course musicians turned on tape recorders to explore exactly this threshold modality: literary works in this vein include Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), Jack Kerouac's *Visions of Cody* (1960), William S. Burroughs's *Nova* trilogy (1962–68), Miguel Barnet's *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966), Andy Warhol's *a: a novel* (1968), and the audio anthology *Tape Poems* compiled by John Perreault (1969).²⁰ To this list we can add John Cage's fully scored spliced-tape composition *Williams Mix* (1952), Steve Reich's word-based tape loop compositions *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966), as well as Robert Morris's 1961 sculpture *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*—a wooden cube that encloses the speaker for a tape recording of the sawing and hammering of the box's construction. W. J. T. Mitchell calls this “phono-graphic” tracing a “kind of writing emanating from the artist”—in other words, a tape that documents the sonic mix of the artist's physical labor.²¹

The cassette mixtape emerged as a personally expressive and privately distributed object in the mid-1970s when early hip hop DJs taped their live sets, and eventually home mixes, to sell within the community and through street vendors.²² In 1978 rock critic Robert Christgau reviewed a unique album of the Clash: his own homemade collection of B-sides recorded for friends—an early public exposure of the mixtape gift.²³ Musicologist Joanna Demers and the testimonials in Thurston Moore's *Mix Tape* locate the dubbed musical epistle (often with the aim

²⁰ See Jesper Olsson, “The Audiographic Impulse: Doing Literature with the Tape Recorder,” in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, ed. Matthew Rubery (New York: Routledge, 2011), 61–75; Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 196–213; Tom McEnaney's essay in this issue, and his article “Real-to-Reel: Social Indexicality, Sonic Materiality, and Literary Media Theory in Eduardo Costa's Tape Works,” *Representations* 137 (Winter 2017): 143–66. For an extended discussion of sound technologies in Warhol's *a: a novel*, see Craig Dworkin, “Whereof One Cannot Speak,” *Grey Room* 21 (2005): 46–69.

²¹ W. J. T. Mitchell, “Robert Morris and the Spaces of Writing,” in *Investigations: The Expanded Field of Writing in the Works of Robert Morris* [online], ed. Katia Schneller and Noura Wedell (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2015), accessed 20 May 2019, <http://books.openedition.org/enseditions/3830>.

²² Peter Shapiro, *The Rough Guide to Hip-Hop*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 332. The “mixtape” terminology remains in present-day digital music culture to connote self-released collections of songs or remixes.

²³ Thurston Moore, “Introduction,” in *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture*, ed. Thurston Moore (New York: Universe, 2004), 9–13, at 9.

of courtship and sometimes breakup) as a common cultural practice of the 1980s and 1990s.²⁴ However, this genre of closet melodrama has roots in audiophile communities of the 1950s and 1960s and the subculture of tape enthusiasts. The enthusiast magazine *Tape Recording* featured articles about creative uses of home and portable equipment, such as “Party Fun with Your Tape Recorder” from January 1963 or “33 Things You Can Do with a Tape Recorder” from January 1966. The latter list includes “tapespondence” through international clubs, and markets the affective and erotic seduction of recorded sound and its technologies by boasting that “staunch friendships and even weddings have come about through exchanging tapes.”²⁵

Enter Warhol (fig. 1), who makes an appearance in the January 1966 issue too. In conjunction with the list of things to do with a tape recorder, the magazine sponsored a contest for the best tape of “Pop Sounds,” with Warhol as a judge. Posing as both a rock star vocalist and comic book superhero (a reference to the new *Batman* television series), Warhol becomes emblematic of the amateur recording artists the magazine hopes to generate: “What we’re after is a new medium of self-expression that will mirror present day society. All you need for this new art is a tape recorder and a little editing ability.”²⁶

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To say that Warhol was a tape enthusiast would be an understatement. In *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, published in September 1975, Warhol famously claimed, “I didn’t get married until 1964 when I got my first tape recorder. My wife”—thus echoing *Tape Recording*’s association of marital vows and recording devices.²⁷ Warhol’s mechanical bride was the Norelco Carry-Corder 150, the first portable cassette tape recorder and player marketed within the United States, and released in November 1964. Also in late 1964 Warhol acquired his first sync-sound film camera, and from that time to 1967 he embarked on several major sound projects: an extended foray into sync-sound films beginning with *Harlot* in December 1964; *a: a novel*, created from the literal transcriptions of tapes of Ondine’s amphetamine-fueled conversations; and, of course, his work with the Velvet Underground.²⁸

²⁴ Joanna Demers, “Cassette Tape Revival as Creative Anachronism,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 14 (2017): 109–17, at 111; and Moore, *Mix Tape*, passim.

²⁵ Jeanne Lowe, “Party Fun with Your Tape Recorder,” *Tape Recording* 10 (January 1963): 18–23; “33 Things You Can Do with a Tape Recorder,” *Tape Recording* 13 (January 1966): 9–19, at 10.

²⁶ Richard Ekstract, “Pop Sounds,” *Tape Recording* 13 (January 1966): 94–96, at 96.

²⁷ Andy Warhol, *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* [1975] (San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1977), 26. The capitalization of *THE* in the book’s title is an oblique reference to Warhol’s earlier book title, *a*.

²⁸ Johannes Schmidt, “On Films 1963–1968,” in *Andy Warhol: A Guide to 706 Items in 2 Hours 56 Minutes*, ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann (Rotterdam: NAi, 2007) 140–201, esp. 140–50;

FIGURE 1. Photograph of Andy Warhol featured in *Tape Recording*, January 1966



Warhol's *Philosophy* describes another machine romance: "In the late 50s I started an affair with my television, which has continued to the present."²⁹ So his relationship to the tape recorder is something else—a conjugal intimacy between human and machine based on the seemingly shared activity of listening.³⁰ Warhol's minimalistic exclamations (Gee! Wow! Great!) and reactive questions (Um, did you? Uh, was it? Oh, really?) united with the passively attentive tape recorder to encourage

and Callie Angell, *Andy Warhol Screen Tests: The Films of Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006), 17.

²⁹ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 26.

³⁰ See Gustavus Stadler, "'My Wife': The Tape Recorder and Warhol's Queer Ways of Listening," *Criticism* 56 (2014): 425–56, esp. 427, 438–40.

those around him to talk about themselves and gossip about others with a fluency of speech he seemed unable to achieve himself. Warhol might have been interested in the conversation, or not; it is hard to tell from his generic responses. But the tape recorder served as a stand-in for his attention either way, elevating even the most frivolous remark to a moment worthy of preservation. As the constant presence of the tape recorder captured all social interactions, it ironically erased their meaning and motivation. Quoting Warhol's *Philosophy* again: "The acquisition of my tape recorder really finished whatever emotional life I might have had, but I was glad to see it go. Nothing was ever a problem again, because a problem just meant a good tape. . . . Everybody knew that and performed for the tape."³¹

Listening to Warhol's audiotapes can be maddening if you want to follow the thread of a conversation, and fascinating if you pay attention to the density of voices, ambient sounds, and rustling disturbances of the microphone as a total aleatory composition. In 1967 Warhol released a single-sided flexi-disc recording of sounds from the Factory tucked within the pages of his *Index (Book)*.³² The disc, featuring an image of Lou Reed, both archived his social world and served as an example of Pop Sound Art. The recording captures the voice of Nico most prominently, in conversation with several others as they look through materials being compiled for the *Index (Book)* itself. Warhol can be heard softly commenting with his characteristic "oh, really?"; louder voices overlap and drown each other out as strains of Velvet Underground songs come and go in the background. Once Nico is told that they are in the midst of making the recording that will become the flexi-disc insert, she begins to sing the chorus of the Beatles' "Good Morning, Good Morning"—a recent release of June 1967. The self-referential staging of Factory work and sound world becomes the self-conscious performance for the tape that indexes the moment in time.

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Side 1: Homage to A.W.

Warhol recorded and labeled the majority of the cassettes housed in the Warhol Archives; Brigid Berlin labeled nearly thirty tapes. The collection also includes many unmarked tapes as well as tapes with unidentified handwriting. Warhol bought, or was supplied with, certain brands in bulk: TDK and Norelco by and large, with Scotch and Sony also abundant.

³¹ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 26.

³² Andy Warhol et al., *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)* (New York: Random House, 1967).

FIGURE 2. The “Philosophy Songs” tape, Side 1. Andy Warhol, *Tape 1348*. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. 1998.3.12564



Our tape, the German brand BASF, is exceptional; this was not a brand that Warhol procured in bulk.³³ The Side 1 label presents handwriting in black ink, printed in all caps (see fig. 2). Scrawled above the C90 of the label appear the initials “A.W.”—presumably standing for “Andy Warhol.” However, the initials “A.W.” have particular significance as the subject of word and identity games within *a: a novel*, initially standing for “All Woman” and “All Witch,” as well as an ambiguous moniker: “Roger Trudo Trudow, who even named himself A.W. and is not.”³⁴ As Ragona notes, “AW points not to the person Andy Warhol but to the extremely complex category that this brand name has come to represent.”³⁵ Even the book’s title, *a: a novel*, partakes in the identity game, as does *THE Philosophy’s* subtitle, “*From A to B and Back Again.*” Thus the “A.W.” on the tape label participates in this network of in-jokes and references.

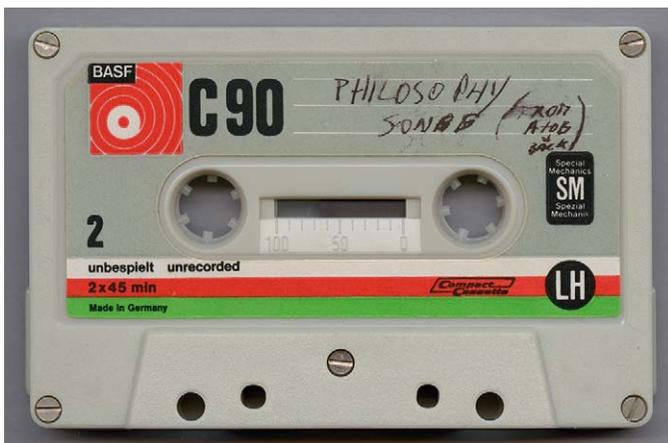
In the space provided for a content list we see a string of abbreviated song titles: “Dirt; Black; CID; Kicks; Feels; Charley’s Girls; V – R n Roll [considerably smeared] – Story.” Side 2 displays the words “Philosophy

³³ Tape 1348, Warhol Archives.

³⁴ Andy Warhol, *a: a novel* (New York: Grove Press, 1968; reprint 1998), 15; see also 3, 20; Warhol identifies “A.W.” as standing for “Andy Warhol” on 38.

³⁵ Ragona, “Impulse, Types and Index,” 132. She makes the claim that “AW, as a category, lies at the centre of Warhol’s audio archive.”

FIGURE 3. The “Philosophy Songs” tape, Side 2. Andy Warhol, *Tape 1348*. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. 1998.3.12564



Songs (from A to B & Back)” in similar black ink, all caps handwriting (see fig. 3). Fortunately, Reed had distinctive ways of writing the letters M, K, and S. I have verified the handwriting on the Warhol Archives tape with known examples of his handwriting: a postcard written by Reed to Danny Fields postmarked December 1970 from Puerto Rico;³⁶ and a demo tape label dated 10/12/75 that Reed made in the Gramercy Park Hotel where he was then living (see fig. 4). It is certain that Lou Reed made the tape in the Warhol Archives sometime in 1975 or later given the reference to *THE Philosophy*. The contents will help us pinpoint when and why.

First, some important background information: in 1974 Reed began a romantic relationship with Rachel, a Latinx transwoman who would be involved with Reed for over three years and accompany him on his 1975 and 1976 tours. Reed had encountered Rachel at one of the numerous afterhours gay, drag, and bondage clubs that Reed frequented, often taking Polaroids of the drag queens and transwomen he met. One such photo of Rachel became the source for the back cover illustration of *Sally Can't Dance* (released August 1974), credited on the inner sleeve as “Back cover illustration of René de la Bush from

³⁶ Box 1, folder 12, Velvet Underground Collection, 1964–2015, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

FIGURE 4. Lou Reed demo tape, “Kicks” 10/12/75, courtesy of Bruce Yaw



a photograph by Lou Reed.”³⁷ In January 1975 Reed began to work on tracks for a new album that would become *Coney Island Baby*, which is filled with tender songs dedicated to his relationship with Rachel. Working with Doug Yule (guitar), Michael Fonfara (keyboards), and Bob Meday (drums), Reed recorded early versions of “Crazy Feeling,” “Coney Island Baby,” “She’s My Best Friend” (a remake of a Velvet Underground song), and a fourth song, “Downtown Dirt,” which would not be released on any album. By the end of this early recording session, however, Reed had a falling out with his producer, Steve Katz, and moved on to prepare for his upcoming world tour by hiring a jazz-fusion outfit from upstate New York called the Everyman Band, featuring Bruce Yaw (bass), Marty Fogel (saxophone), Michael Suchorsky (drums), and Bob Kulick (guitar). Doug Yule played on the tour as well.

Warhol regularly attended Reed’s New York performances throughout the 1970s: the Warhol Archives contain clearly labeled tapes of Reed’s 1973, 1974, 1975, 1978, and 1979 shows, and possibly more in unmarked cassettes. According to Bruce Yaw, on the 1975 tour Reed insisted that the sound technician make a cassette tape recording of every performance directly from the soundboard.³⁸ These soundboard

³⁷ See Tim Ferris, “Lou Reed’s Degenerate Regeneration,” *Rolling Stone*, 8 April 1976, 40–41, 43, at 41. On Reed’s interest in afterhours bars and his relationship with Rachel, see Anthony DeCurtis, *Lou Reed: A Life* (New York: Little, Brown, 2017), 210–40.

³⁸ Bruce Yaw, interviews with the author, 22 July 2017 (phone); 20 August 2017, Moravia, NY; and 15 September 2017, Ithaca, NY. Yaw describes this practice as a “ritual”

recordings are sonically distinct from Warhol's open-air concert recordings: the soundboard recordings lack the reverb of the space and snatches of conversation between songs, and the crowd noise is muffled since those sounds are recorded only as leakage into the stage microphones. Reed clearly dubbed the songs on Side 1 from the soundboard recordings of various concerts from his 1975 tour.

The tour had three legs: Europe from February to early April; the United States and Canada from late April to May; and Japan, Australia, and New Zealand from July to early August. Set lists reconstructed from bootleg recordings and soundboard tapes show a mix of Velvet Underground favorites, early solo hits, and three or four new songs later released on *Coney Island Baby* and *Street Hassle* (see table 1).³⁹ The order of the songs in the set lists were generally stable with a few changes over time and in some cases according to location. For example, on every leg of the tour Reed opened the concert with "Sweet Jane" from *Loaded*. In Europe, Japan, and Australia he usually followed this with "Coney Island Baby"; for the US leg, he inserted "I Wanna Be Black" between these two songs. As the title suggests, this song would have been particularly incendiary for US audiences with its mockery of white middle-class hipsters for being enamored with black politics, street life, and sexual stereotypes.

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The order of songs on the Warhol mixtape does not match any extant set list; nor does any extant set list contain both "I Wanna Be Black" and "Charley's Girl"—the latter song entered the set list during the Australian leg, with an early version of the lyrics that Reed revised for *Coney Island Baby*. To construct the sequence on this mixtape, Reed had to dub songs from one tape to another using two single-bay tape decks wired together.⁴⁰ Reed created a few splices of songs with a fade-out to silence, or to near silence with a trace of machine hum, perhaps indicating that he turned down the volume of the playback deck but not the recording deck. Curiously, he never fades into a song, so every selection begins with an abrupt cut to sound. Reed also routinely presses the "stop" button rather than the "pause" button between songs, which creates a hard break in the tape hiss. The dubbing process becomes sloppier as the tape progresses, although with particular and possibly meaningful outcomes. Six of the first seven songs are new, the exception being "How Do You Think It Feels" from *Berlin* (1973)—a significant album for the story of this tape, as we shall see.

and that the sound engineer (Eric) would deliver the tape to Reed without fail—even in the face of riots in Denmark and Italy as the band and crew fled the stage.

³⁹ "Live in Antwerp, Belgium," Lou Reed Papers 1958–2015, Music Division, New York Public Library (NYPL), New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed 30 May, 2019, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/7732c17c-0ef7-4621-a061-5525eb2f5bb0>.

⁴⁰ Single decks with two cassette bays (or "dual transports") were not manufactured until the early 1980s. See Arthur J. Zuckerman, "Copy-Cat Tape Decks," *Popular Mechanics* (October 1983): 94–95, 170, 172.

TABLE 1.
Comparison of 1975 set lists and Side 1 of the "Philosophy Songs" tape

	May 1975	23 July 1975	
11 March 1975	Kansas City	Perth, Australia	
Antwerp, Belgium (NYPL soundboard tape)	(Yaw soundboard tape)	(Yaw soundboard tape)	Warhol Tape Side 1
Sweet Jane	Sweet Jane	Sweet Jane	Downtown Dirt
Coney Island Baby	I Wanna Be Black	Coney Island Baby	I Wanna Be Black
Pale Blue Eyes	Coney Island Baby	Waiting for the Man	Kicks
I'm Waiting for the Man	I'm Waiting for the Man	Satellite of Love	Coney Island Baby
Heroin	You Can Dance	Vicious	How Do You Think It Feels
Berlin	How Do You Think It Feels	Heroin	Charley's Girl
Lady Day	Downtown Dirt	Leave Me Alone	Leave Me Alone
			<i>(interrupted by tape disturbance lasting about 1 minute 30 seconds)</i>
Kill Your Sons	Walk on the Wild Side	Walk on the Wild Side	Vicious <i>(begins mid song; abrupt splice to next song)</i>
Satellite of Love	Kicks	Ride Sally Ride	[Rock and Roll] <i>(begins mid ad lib of Lucille + 1 stanza of Foggy Notion; abrupt splice to next song)</i>
Walk On the Wild Side	Complete This Story Now	Charley's Girl	Complete This Story Now
Kicks	White Light/White Heat	Kicks	
White Light/White Heat	Rock and Roll + <i>ad libs</i> : Lucille, Little Queenie, Annie Had a Baby	White Light / White Heat	
Rock and Roll		It's Too Late Mama	
		Rock and Roll + <i>ad libs</i> <i>(no interpolated song)</i>	

Missing is any clean recording of a Velvet Underground song; only a portion of the ad lib within “Rock and Roll” comes through on tape. The ink smear on the label that nearly obliterates that song’s title directly corresponds to a sequence of audio disturbances on the tape that indeed obliterate the song. Reed starts to fiddle with the volume controls of the playback tape deck during “Leave Me Alone”: the music fades in and out, then cuts to a loud whirring of machine noise with intermittent blips of music. It sounds as if Reed is stopping and starting the source tape with slow depressions of the button, at times leaving one tape deck to record the mechanical noises of the other. The sound corrects in the middle of “Vicious,” cuts off again, then comes back during the ad lib of Little Richard’s “Lucille,” which includes a full chorus, instrumental verse, and a further ad lib of lyrics drawn from the Velvet Underground’s “Foggy Notion.”

The audio disturbance indexes the machine and the tape as it moves haltingly through the playback heads, recording the tape speed itself—a sonic document of the tape’s own making. But such disturbances also leave a ghostly trace of human presence as a seemingly careless operator. Warhol’s films are riddled with such moments of ineptness, or more accurately what Gustavus Stadler calls Warhol’s “strategic naiveté,” denoting his creative stance toward technology that reactivates the historical and affective moment of early users.⁴¹ Warhol’s signature filmic touch starting in 1966 was the “strobe cut,” effected by switching the sync-sound Auricon camera off and on for a type of “in-camera editing.”⁴² The lag time for the camera motor to respond to the stopping and starting created overexposed and white frames, and concurrently slower sound recording.⁴³ This falls in line with what Graig Uhlin describes as the “aural modernism” in Warhol’s films: bad technique that allows the materiality of the sound-recording mechanisms to interfere with the spoken word and transmission of meaning.⁴⁴ In the absence of dialogue, this naïve aural modernism becomes psychedelic expressionism: Warhol’s 1967 film *The Velvet Underground in Boston* translates the sensory overload of strobe lights and high-volume music to the medium of film through strobe cuts, panning, zoom, and audio disturbances that include pronounced variations in volume, muffling, distortion, and harsh zipping noises.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Gustavus Stadler, “Strategic Naiveté,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 23 (2011): 235–40; see also Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 166.

⁴² See Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994), 28.

⁴³ I thank Greg Pierce, associate curator of Film and Video at the Andy Warhol Museum, for his explanations about this technique.

⁴⁴ Graig Uhlin, “Sound and Speech in Andy Warhol’s Films,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 26 (2009): 322–38, esp. 324–25.

⁴⁵ See Homay King, “Stroboscopic: Warhol and the Exploding Plastic Inevitable,” *Criticism* 563 (2014): 457–79.

As the producer of *The Velvet Underground and Nico* album, Warhol's strategic naiveté took the form of advocating against professional sound engineering, discouraging human interference with the work of the recording machine.⁴⁶ Reed's approach to recording technology sometimes followed this strategy, as with the simple plan of placing a guitar against an amplifier and recording the feedback for *Metal Machine Music* (1975). Other times Reed invested in arcane scientific techniques such as his binaural recording for *Street Hassle* (1978). Interviews and demo tapes from 1975 and 1976 reveal that Reed was working extensively with cassettes to try out new sound effects for songs, but also to record interviews with transwomen hustlers to get ideas for his lyrics and characters.⁴⁷ The song "Kicks" on *Coney Island Baby* stems from this research and experimentation. Nearly every stanza begins with the seduction "Hey man, what's your style, how do you get your kicks for living"—phrases Reed likely gathered from the hustlers, along with stories of dangerous sadistic johns that inform the song's depiction of sexually charged homicides. He also published a version of the lyrics in a suite of eight poems about transwomen hustlers and violent street life for the January 1976 issue of *Coldspring Journal*, the same month the song was released on *Coney Island Baby*.⁴⁸ Although not part of the January recording session, "Kicks" appears in every extant set list from the 1975 tour, and so, along with the sentimental "Coney Island Baby," Reed conceived of this song early in the process of planning his new album inspired by Rachel. In its live incarnation, "Kicks" sounds like a mid-1970s sequel to Reed's mid-1960s masterpiece, "Heroin": the slow-building waves of rush and calm in "Heroin" are replaced in "Kicks" by quick violent surges of volume that punctuate lines and eventually lead to an extended instrumental jam (see audio example 1).⁴⁹

Before recording the studio version of "Kicks," Reed tried out a striking guitar effect captured in the demo tape of 12 October 1975. On side A of the tape Reed plays around with a Roland Jet Phaser AP-7 while singing through portions of two songs, "Kicks" and "Senselessly Cruel" (which appears on *Street Hassle*) in one continuous medley of just under ten minutes (see fig. 4; note his documentation of the phaser's settings). The sound he achieves combines a mid-tempo pulsing tremolo with a slow sweeping phase that alternates the high and low harmonics of the fuzz distortion. In the midst of this thickly restless sound Reed sings the

⁴⁶ See Reed's comments in Bill Flanagan, "White Light, White Heat: Lou Reed and John Cale Remember Andy Warhol," *Musician* 126 (April 1989): 74–78, 80, at 78. See also Stadler, "Strategic Naiveté."

⁴⁷ See Ferris, "Lou Reed's Degenerate Regeneration," 41.

⁴⁸ See Lou Reed, "Attitudes," *Coldspring Journal* 9 (January 1976): 11–20, at 11.

⁴⁹ Audio Example 1 available at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/JM.2019.36.4.401>. Lou Reed, two excerpts from "Kicks," live performance, 23 July 1975, Perth, Australia, courtesy of Bruce Yaw.

menacing lyrics of “Kicks” in a quiet dispassionate voice that heightens the sense of psychosis and perversion (see audio example 2).⁵⁰

While musicians taping themselves is by no means remarkable, the remarkable point is Reed’s final decision to create the dramatic effect he was looking for by using a tape of a studio party to insinuate the sound world of schizophrenic voices that swirl around his calm voice. The dense patter of conversations forms a sonic drone that fades in and out of the song’s foreground, sometimes ripping into the superficial calm more forcefully as the lyrics become more violent.⁵¹ With the different versions of “Kicks” we hear Reed’s point of reference for sound and space shift from the stadium to the intimate isolated enclosure of his own room, and eventually to the more claustrophobic crowded space of parties. Once again, Warhol’s taping practices make a ready model for Reed’s sonic choices and method, both in the audible tracing of his body in space and over time (recall Warhol’s tape-recorded walk from Madison Square Garden to Café Rouge), and in the cacophony of voices that echoes Warhol’s erstwhile social practice at the Factory, where celebrity culture mixed with street culture.

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My hunch that the recorded version of “Kicks” obliquely refers to Warhol’s sound art and social world finds support in the final song on Side 1 of the mixtape, which closes not with the concert’s high-energy finale of “Rock and Roll” but with the slower “Complete This Story Now.” This is a song written by Nelson Slater, whose album *Wild Angel* Reed produced and performed on with the Everyman Band during that year. It is a suitable ending for a mixtape directed at Reed’s one-time producer. Altogether, the collection of songs and sounds on Side 1 represents a reconstructed live set that both distinguishes Reed from his Velvet Underground past, and pays homage to Warhol’s technological aesthetics and his role in shaping Reed’s own practices.

Side 2: The “Philosophy Songs” of Lou Reed

THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (from A to B and Back) purports to be a book of knowledge: chapter titles announce big categorical topics such as Love, Beauty, Fame, Work, Time, Death, and Art; annotations for each chapter in the table of contents list whimsical subtopics. For example, the list below the chapter “Work” reads: “Art Business vs. Business Art. My Early Films.

⁵⁰ Audio Example 2 available at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/JM.2019.36.4.401>. Lou Reed, excerpt from “Kicks” demo with Jet Phaser, 12 October 1975, courtesy of Bruce Yaw.

⁵¹ Howard Sounes, *Notes from the Velvet Underground: The Life of Lou Reed* (London: Doubleday, 2015), 204.

Why I Love Leftovers. Living is Work. Sex is Work. How to Look a Maid in the Eye. A Roomful of Candy.” Readers hoping to learn something of Warhol’s inner thoughts and emotional life encounter instead deadpan observations and aphorisms that only further Warhol’s famous inscrutability. As with *a: a novel*, the composition of *THE Philosophy* relied on tape recordings—of phone conversations with Brigid Berlin (the principal “B” of the title), and of topical interviews with Warhol conducted by Bob Colacello and Pat Hackett. But unlike the literal transcriptions of every noise, sentence fragment, stutter, and interruption in *a: a novel*, meant to expose the process of its own making, *THE Philosophy* redacts the many noises and voices of its own making into one smoothly edited text. Warhol’s literary voice here is a kind of phono-graphic ghostwriting.⁵² The book thus enacts the closeting of content through an evacuation of procedural details, giving rise to a new aesthetic philosophy that the book itself announces: “The 60s were Clutter. The 70s are very empty.”⁵³

For my discussion of the “Philosophy Songs” on Side 2 of Lou Reed’s mixtape, I will keep well inside the closet too, referencing the songs’ lyric content by way of pastiche from *THE Philosophy* and other relevant sources. The tape contains twelve full songs and the fragment of a thirteenth song, which suggests this side was dubbed from a master tape. All the songs sound improvised from a minimal plan of a key, a riff, and an opening line (see table 2). Reed accompanies himself on an acoustic guitar in simple rhythmic strums. Sometimes he stops the recording between songs, other times he lets the recording continue. He is apparently alone; no other person speaks or makes any noise; only the sounds of traffic and Reed shuffling paper disturb the quiet between songs. He sings softly and close to the microphone with a slight nasal voice and lisp. The chord changes are basic and repetitive, drawn from the vocabularies of folk music or rudimentary rock. I have compiled a track list based on citations in the first line or key phrases of the song, sourced from chapter titles, annotations, and characteristic passages. Most of these lyrics use the first person, singing from Warhol’s point of view, in line with the voice of *THE Philosophy*. One notable exception is the first song, which describes a wind-up Andy Warhol doll that does nothing. This does not come from *THE Philosophy* and I would not be able to cite that lyric were it not for Victor Bockris’s reference to an Andy Warhol doll concept that

⁵² For a study of the construction and publication history of this book see Lucy Mulroney, *Andy Warhol, Publisher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 113–32. Mulroney indicates that in the course of her research she heard the tape of “a live rock band” that “plays songs in which the lyrics are things like ‘Warhol puts it on’ and ‘Warhol is nothing, does nothing’” (125). She does not identify the artist or accurately describe the music, but it is clear to me that she is referring to the Lou Reed tape.

⁵³ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 26.

TABLE 2.
Lyric references in the “Philosophy Songs”

Track List	References
1. Andy Warhol Doll [Key of E; 3:00 minutes] Recording stops.	Bockris, <i>Warhol: The Biography</i> , 345: “The Velvet Underground had once considered producing an Andy Warhol doll . . . when you wound it up it did nothing at all.” <i>Phil</i> 7: “Some critic called me the Nothingness Himself.”
2. So What [G; 3:30] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> 112: “‘So What.’ That’s one of my favorite things to say.”
3. A Put On [A; 5:21] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> Introduction subtitle: “How Andy Puts His Warhol On.” <i>Phil</i> 79: “People used to say I tried to ‘put on’ the media.”
4. Success [E; 3:20] Recording continues.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 11 title: “Success.”
5. Wasted Space [E; 2:58] Recording continues.	<i>Phil</i> 143: “Wasted space is any space that has art in it.”
6. Coke [E; 6:20] Recording continues.	<i>Phil</i> 101: “A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking.”
7. Saturday [E; 3:25] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 15 annotation: “What I Do on a Saturday When My Philosophy Runs Out.”
8. Fame [G; 4:16] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 5 title: “Fame.”
9. Drag Queens [A; 4:28] Recording continues.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 3 annotation: “Drag Queens.”
10. Drag Queens (slower) [A; 2:06] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 3 annotation: “Drag Queens.”
11. Sex is Hard [G; 7:30] Recording stops.	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 3 annotation: “Romance is Hard but Sex is Harder.” <i>Phil</i> Chapter 6 annotation: “Sex is Work.”
12. Interview [E; 2:04] Recording continues.	<i>Phil</i> 78: “If you go into an interview blind, there is absolutely no way of guessing what kind of article the person you’re talking to is going to write.”

Table 2. (*continued*)

Track List	References
13. Song fragment [F; 0:37] Tape ends mid phrase.	No identifiable references.

TABLE 3.
Lyric references in “Success”

4. Success	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 11 title: “Success”	
—business art	<i>Phil</i> 92: “Business art is the step that comes after Art.” [Chapter 6]	
—machines making art	<i>ARTnews</i> interview 1963: “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine.”	
—so what	<i>Phil</i> 112: “‘So What.’ That’s one of my favorite things to say.” [Chapter 7]	
—tape-recorder wife	<i>Phil</i> 26: “My tape recorder and I have been married for ten years now.” [Chapter 1]	421
—calling B	<i>Phil</i> 5: “I wake up and call B. B is anybody who helps me kill time.” [Introduction]	
—taking Archie to Gristedes	<i>Phil</i> 79: “I lived next to a Gristedes grocery for twelve years.” [Chapter 5]	

purportedly goes back to the Velvet Underground days.⁵⁴ (According to Yaw, Reed used to say that people would come out to see the Lou Reed doll, “wind it up, it walks into walls”).⁵⁵

Although my constructed track list looks like a tidy progression of discrete topics, in actuality my closet methodology masks the ways in which lyrics frequently drift into unrelated or freely associated stories from *THE Philosophy*, other media interviews, and personal gripes. None of the “Philosophy Songs” develops into a clear verse-chorus form; oftentimes Reed lapses into tedious repetitions of *Philosophy*-derived catchphrases such as “put on,” “so what,” and “wasted space,” perhaps stalling until something else comes to mind. A few “Philosophy Songs” bear traces of songs he was working on at the time, as is the case with the track I am calling “Success” (see table 3). This song pieces together references from at least six different

⁵⁴ Victor Bockris, *Warhol: The Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 345.

⁵⁵ Bruce Yaw, phone interview, 22 July 2017.

FIGURE 5. Lou Reed demo tape, “New Songs (Overdub)” 10/11/75, courtesy of Bruce Yaw



chapters of *THE Philosophy*, the famous 1963 Swenson interview, and a story about Warhol's dachshund Archie relieving himself in the aisle of Grinsteades supermarket. The music utilizes a boogie guitar groove and lyric phrasing reminiscent of “I Wanna Be Black” (with due rhythmic alterations to replace “black” with “a success”). Similarly, the eighth song “Fame” and the ninth song “Drag Queens” shift to a hard-rocking strum and two-chord structure that resemble his song “Leave Me Alone,” where rhythmic chants of “fame, fame, fame, fame,” or “drag, drag, drag, drag” replace “leave me, leave me, leave me alone.” Reed recorded acoustic guitar demos of “I Wanna Be Black” and “Leave Me Alone” along with songs for *Coney Island Baby* on a tape dated 10/11/75 and labeled “New Songs (overdub) definite” (see fig. 5). Here a microphone captures Reed playing lead guitar fills along with a prerecorded cassette tape of his own vocals and rhythm guitar to create a low-tech overdub (see audio examples 3 and 4).⁵⁶

Within the track “Drag Queens,” Reed once again references Warhol's famous published statement about wanting to be a machine, *THE Philosophy's* excerpt about his tape-recorder wife, and alludes to another remarkable statement in that book: “Drags are ambulatory archives of ideal moviestar womanhood.”⁵⁷ This song and the next one form

⁵⁶ Audio Example 3 available at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/JM.2019.36.4.401>. Lou Reed, excerpt from “I Wanna Be Black” demo with overdubs, 11 October 1975, courtesy of Bruce Yaw. Audio Example 4 available at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/JM.2019.36.4.401>. Lou Reed, excerpt from “Leave Me Alone” demo with overdubs, 11 October 1975, courtesy of Bruce Yaw.

⁵⁷ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 54.

TABLE 4.
Lyric references in “Drag Queens”

9. Drag Queens	<i>Phil</i> Chapter 3 annotation: “Drag Queens”
—men being women	<i>Phil</i> 54: “I’m fascinated by boys who spend their lives trying to be complete girls, because they have to work so hard.”
—being a machine	<i>ARTnews</i> interview 1963: “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine.”
—machine romance	<i>Phil</i> 26: “So in the late 50s I started an affair with my television.”
—marrying a machine	<i>Phil</i> 26: “My tape recorder and I have been married for ten years now.”
—drag queens wanting to be movie stars	<i>Phil</i> 54: “Drags are ambulatory archives of ideal moviestar womanhood.”
—Marilyn Monroe’s lips	<i>Phil</i> 54: “Marilyn’s lips weren’t kissable, but they were very photographable.”
10. Drag Queens (slower)	
—trying to be something they’re not	<i>Phil</i> 54: “It’s hard work to look like the complete opposite of what nature made you and then to be an imitation woman of what was only a fantasy woman in the first place.”
—women who are funny are not sexy	<i>Phil</i> 68: “I’m always trying to figure out whether if a woman is funny, she can still be beautiful.”
—getting hurt; trying not to care	<i>Phil</i> 26: “When I got my first TV set, I stopped caring so much about having close relationships with other people. I’d been hurt a lot to the degree you can only be hurt if you care a lot.”

the most coherent pair in the whole collection, linking together the fabrication of gender, the industrial machinery of celebrity image production, Warhol’s mechanical fabrication of art, and his stated romantic and conjugal intimacy with machines (see table 4). The second song about drag queens—slower and more plaintive—focuses on Warhol’s emotional remoteness derived from a passage in which he cryptically narrates how he transferred intimacies from people to machines and

became himself machine-like: “When I got my first TV set, I stopped caring so much about having close relationships with other people. I’d been hurt a lot to the degree you can only be hurt if you care a lot.”⁵⁸

Reed’s two songs about drag queens touch on several related scenarios of drag: men who would be women, women who would be movie stars; machines that would be artists and intimate companions; and, above all, problematic emotions that would be good tapes. This last type of cassette drag—that is, the mechanical costume that transforms affective expression into aesthetic sound object—may be at the root of Reed’s mixtape design for Side 2. These “Philosophy Songs” do not celebrate Warhol’s book; on the contrary, each song mocks and condemns the book’s and Warhol’s vacuity—sometimes viciously so. The eleventh song in the collection (“Sex is Hard” in table 2) offers a particularly scathing portrayal of Warhol’s indifference toward the recent deaths of Eric Emerson (d. 27 May 1975) and Candy Darling (d. 21 March 1974), and his bewilderment at being blamed for not caring.⁵⁹ Near the end of the song Reed addresses Warhol directly, decrying how he uses people and suggesting that it would have been better if he had died from being shot in 1968.⁶⁰ This shocking tirade of bitterness and accusation ends, stunningly, with a spoken apology. If Side 1 resembles a courtship mix, then Side 2 is all about the breakup. Reed and Warhol were never romantically involved, but this tape, and other conversation tapes discussed below, record the entangled passions and psychologies of their decade-long relationship.⁶¹

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A “Philosophy Songs” Remix

Reed recorded the “Philosophy Songs” for Warhol’s listening, but did he also listen to them? The Lou Reed archive at the New York Public

⁵⁸ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 26.

⁵⁹ Reed revisited and expanded upon this sentiment in “It Wasn’t Me” from *Songs for Drella: A Fiction*, the 1990 tribute album to Warhol that he composed and recorded with John Cale. This collection of songs bears no musical or lyrical resemblance to the “Philosophy Songs” beyond the use of Warhol as the first person lyrical subject and this one thematic example. While I do not think that the “Philosophy Songs” are a direct precursor to *Songs for Drella*, they do represent Reed’s first large-scale attempt to write songs in Warhol’s voice.

⁶⁰ Warhol references the shooting in *THE Philosophy*: “The worst, most cruel review of me that I ever read was the *Time* magazine review of me getting shot” (78). Reed’s own cruelty may allude to this sentence.

⁶¹ Evidence of their difficult relationship appears throughout *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, ed. Pat Hackett (New York: Warner Books 1989); see esp. 645 (24 April 1985): “What I can’t figure out is when Lou stopped liking me. I mean, he even went out and got himself two dachshunds like I had and then after that he started not liking me, but I don’t know exactly why or when.”

Library (hereafter NYPL) houses a cassette that begins with a short fragment of the “Philosophy Songs”—about thirty seconds at the end of song two (“So What”), the entirety of song three (“A Put On”), and the first minute and a half of song four (“Success”).⁶² These are not different takes of the songs; rather, the NYPL cassette records Reed listening to a playback of the same takes—either the actual tape he eventually gave to Warhol, or a master tape (now lost) that he kept for his own purposes. Even the timing and ambient city noise in the splices are the same. But Reed is not just passively listening to the songs: he is actively listening, manipulating the audio output and constantly shifting the spatial placement of sound on the dub. The playback shifts from direct source input, alternating right and left channels (mono) with stereo, to a reverberant open-air playback picked up by a live microphone, through which we can also faintly hear Reed talking on the telephone. At two points in “A Put On” he momentarily sends the playback signal through a distortion box. (All of these audio effects can be heard in audio example 5).⁶³ The tape abruptly cuts to the Eagles’ album *One of These Nights* (released 10 June 1975), which Reed had recorded earlier from the vinyl. The other side of the NYPL tape contains mostly Nelson Slater song demos recorded circa December 1975 for the *Wild Angel* album, a portion of which is taped over with a conversation between Reed, Rachel, and a fan on speakerphone.

Given the haphazard nature of the NYPL “Philosophy Songs” dub, Reed likely used the source tape as sonic material for audio experiments with his home recording equipment, and not for thinking through new demos of the “Philosophy Songs.” However, Reed did mark the label with “Ø of Andy Warhol (A to B + Back Again),” thus documenting and archiving his little experiments on these songs. Just as Side 1 of the Warhol mixtape archives Reed’s embodied process in the mechanical noises of dubbing and splicing, Side 1 of the NYPL tape adds a spatial dimension to this process, with the listener’s experience in mind. Reed works out on tape the placement of sounds in different head spaces (right, left, front, back), and with different sonic conditions (clean,

⁶² Item 560556, “Lou Reed [Demos/Recorded Conversation and ‘Wild Angel’ by Nelson Slater],” Music Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed 10 May 2019, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/94284aa5-1585-4d92-b592-62f8277cf83d>. The “Philosophy Songs” are listed as “Untitled Song 1” etc. in the Finding Aid.

⁶³ My discovery of these excerpted and fragmented “Philosophy Songs” in the NYPL collection provides a way to work around the restrictions of the Warhol Foundation to bring out of the closet a brief audio sample of one of the songs. I thank the Lou Reed Estate for granting permission to publish this audio clip. Audio Example 5 available at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/JM.2019.36.4.401>. Audio Example 5: Lou Reed, untitled excerpt from *Warhol Philosophy Songs*, from the Lou Reed Archive, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, courtesy of The Lou Reed Estate.

distorted, reverb). These experiments link to Reed's general interest in stereophonic effects, evident earlier in the Velvet Underground's "Murder Mystery" (with different voices distributed on right and left channels) and later in the binaural recording of *Street Hassle*. More specifically, though, Reed performs these audio experiments on recordings of himself singing from Warhol's point of view, perhaps taking a certain pleasure in disrupting, distributing, and distorting his Warholian voice.

Tape Intimacies

What motivated Reed to make the mixtape of his live performances and "Philosophy Songs"? The answer is rooted in Warhol's ambition to produce a Broadway musical, which began shortly after the breakout countercultural hit *Hair* in 1967. In a tape transcript from November 1968, Warhol jokes about turning *Chelsea Girls* into a musical.⁶⁴ In 1972 Warhol conceives of a musical called *Vicious* (after a Lou Reed song, itself based on Warhol's suggestion), and quips in one interview, "we're trying to get Lerner and Loewe to do the music, but if they're not willing, we'll settle for the Velvet Underground."⁶⁵ By 1974, Warhol's musical aspirations became serious enough that he approached Reed to collaborate.

In early January 1974, Warhol and his business manager, Bob Colacello, invited Reed to dinner at Reno Sweeney, a well-known gay cabaret club that regularly featured drag and trans performers. Warhol wanted to have a serious conversation about producing a musical based on Reed's 1973 concept album *Berlin*, which tells a bleak story of an urban romance that devolves into drug addiction, prostitution, physical abuse, child removal, and suicide. Two Warhol cassettes archive a tense and disjointed conversation, with various cabaret singers providing a cinematic soundtrack. Reed dominates initially, interrupting and negating Warhol's suggestions—first, that *Berlin* could be a musical, and second, that it could be an opera.⁶⁶ When Reed flatly shoots down the opera idea, as if

⁶⁴ Manuscripts-Transcripts, B 133, folder LL, Warhol Archives.

⁶⁵ George Gruskin, "Who Is This Man Andy Warhol?," in *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews*, ed. Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2004), 200–220, at 203. See also David Bailey, *Andy Warhol: Transcript of David Bailey's ATV Documentary* (Bailey Litchfield / Mathews Miller Dunbar, 1972), "Pat Ast," n.p. Pat Hackett recalls going to Reed's apartment with Paul Morrissey in 1972 to discuss collaborating on a musical based on the people associated with Warhol's Factory: "When we got there Lou started singing and playing a song he said he had just written—it was 'Walk on the Wild Side'" (e-mail correspondence, 19 April 2019).

⁶⁶ Tapes 47 and 48, Warhol Archives. The tape labels do not include a date beyond the month and the year, but various speakers mention New Year's Eve, which suggests the dinner took place within the first week of January.

on cue the cabaret singer hits a long and loud note that abruptly silences the table. Reed then launches into harsh criticisms of Warhol's *Interview* magazine, suggesting improvements that draw on Warhol's projects from the 1960s such as publishing unedited tape transcripts, columns by classic Factory personalities, and including flexi-discs inserts. It is a slowly unfolding attack on Colacello, whose influence steered Warhol toward rich celebrities and a concern with profit—in other words, the business-art business that would become a motif in *THE Philosophy*. That is where the first tape ends.

The second tape begins in the middle of a revived conversation about the musical: they discuss the story and how it might relate to *Cabaret* (the Broadway show set in 1931 Berlin, turned into a blockbuster film in 1972), and share ideas about staging and casting. This last topic turns into an extended conversation about Holly Woodlawn, a Puerto Rican transwoman and Warhol superstar of the early 1970s. Reed vigorously defends Woodlawn's cabaret act in comparison to Bette Midler's, and Reed and Warhol make a date to see Woodlawn's show the following week. As they exit Reno Sweeney and make their way to the Ninth Circle (a nearby gay disco), the power dynamic has flipped and Reed fights to keep the conversation about the musical alive amidst new voices that distract Warhol's attention.⁶⁷

Reed and Warhol (without Colacello) had an extensive follow-up conversation captured on a tape dated 29 January 1974.⁶⁸ Reed describes his ideas for staging, which hark back to the slide projections and light shows from the Velvet Underground days, and he repeatedly presses Warhol for a commitment. Audio and video tapes from February 1974 provide further evidence that Warhol and his team were still considering the project, and the Factory phone log and appointment books show that Reed and Warhol were in communication in March and April.⁶⁹ The possible reasons why Reed and Warhol dropped the idea of collaborating on *Berlin* are many: the inability to secure financing; Reed's erratic behavior, his new relationship with Rachel, and his touring and recording schedule; or Warhol's two major book projects based on tape transcripts that were contracted with Harcourt Brace. These were *Her*, a biography of the actress Paulette Goddard

⁶⁷ Reno Sweeney was located on 126 West 13th Street; the Ninth Circle was located on 10th Street and Greenwich Avenue.

⁶⁸ Tape 52, Warhol Archives.

⁶⁹ Tape 60 dated 15 February 1974, Warhol Archives. The archivist annotation reads: "Bob Colacello plays Lou Reed's album 'Berlin', which Andy Warhol is thinking he'd like to make into a show." A videotaped interview of Reed by Colacello on 6 February also begins with a reference to the *Berlin* project.

(never published), and *THE Philosophy*, which he also began to conceive in February.⁷⁰

In January 1975—a year after the first discussion with Reed about *Berlin*—Warhol would indeed “present” a musical called *Man on the Moon*, directed by Paul Morrissey and written by John Phillips, formerly of the Mamas and the Papas. He put no money into the show, but was credited with “production design” in an advertisement, and as the “executive producer” in the program.⁷¹ The show was a spectacular flop, closing after only a five-day run at Broadway’s Little Theater and garnering a scathing review in the *New York Times*. Despite this experience, Warhol continued his pursuit of a musical and once again he entered into discussions with Reed. Bockris in *Transformer: The Lou Reed Story* writes: “Inscribing a photocopy of the proofs [of *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*] to his old disciple with ‘Honey, from Andy,’ Warhol seduced the prolific Reed into writing an album of songs based on the book for a projected Broadway show.”⁷² In a phone interview, Bockris told me that Reed had shown him the inscribed proofs and had mentioned a conversation with Warhol about turning the book into a musical. Bockris further explained: “Lou told me that he wrote all the songs in one day, and he went back to Andy a day or two days later with a tape recording of the songs and played it to him. Andy was so shocked he’d done it all so quickly.”⁷³

The publisher initially intended to release *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol* in April 1975, but delayed it until September. Letters in the Warhol Archives indicate that the proofs for the book were being corrected in December 1974, and so Warhol could have given Reed a copy in late April 1975, during Reed’s US leg of the tour (Warhol taped Reed’s 23 April show at the Felt Forum).⁷⁴ The NYPL’s Lou Reed archive does indeed hold a Xerox copy of the proofs for *THE Philosophy*, which lacks a title page. No inscription or any other markings appear in

⁷⁰ Tapes in the Warhol Archives indicate that planning sessions for *THE Philosophy* began in February. See also Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 184; and Victor Bockris, *Lou Reed: The Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1994), 269.

⁷¹ See Bockris, *Warhol*, 387; and confirmed in a phone conversation with Vincent Fremont (20 June 2018). Several audiotapes at the Warhol Archives record Warhol attending rehearsals and discussing stage designs and costumes. For extensive documentation of this musical see the CD John Phillips, *Man on the Moon* (Varèse Sarabande Records, 2009) 302 066 965 2.

⁷² Victor Bockris, *Transformer: The Lou Reed Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 271.

⁷³ Victor Bockris, phone interview, 3 August 2017. Bockris did not himself hear any of the “Philosophy Songs.”

⁷⁴ See Mulrone, *Andy Warhol, Publisher*, 128. A letter from Steven Aronson to Paul Gitlin, dated 12 December 1974, discusses corrections to the proofs (TC 101, Warhol Archives).

that manuscript.⁷⁵ In the Philosophy song “Sex is Hard,” Reed refers to Eric Emerson’s death as occurring a week earlier, which would place the time of recording in the first week of June 1975. However, the temporal reference may simply serve a lyrical purpose—setting up a rhyme (which it does), filling out a phrase, and contributing to Reed’s caricature of Warhol’s callousness.

A story related to me by Pat Hackett adds yet more mystery to the timing, intent, and sentiments behind the “Philosophy Songs.”

I don’t remember ever hearing anything at all about Lou Reed doing songs related to the *Philosophy* book. But here is an incident related to the *Philosophy* book that I do remember: not long after it was published, Lou Reed came by the 860 Broadway Factory wanting to see Andy. He had a copy of the *Philosophy* book with him and as Andy and I stood there, he was gushing to Andy about how brilliant the book was and what a genius Andy was. At a certain point Lou quoted to Andy a line from the text and then looked at me and said, “But that’s something an idiot like you could never understand.” Lou was often famously, gratuitously, really nasty, and as I remember, I just kind of laughed and Andy said, “But Lou, don’t you know that Pat *wrote* the book?” Lou at first couldn’t seem to tell if Andy was kidding, but I think he finally saw that he wasn’t.⁷⁶

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Reed’s legendary nastiness made its way into the “Philosophy Songs” as well, but was it gratuitous? Or motivated by a sudden shift from fawning admiration to embarrassment and disillusionment? If Reed had once admired the book and hoped to revive a musical collaboration with Warhol through its contents, then his mood dramatically changed by the time he recorded the songs. Perhaps it had soured with the revelation of Hackett’s collaborative ghostwriting, and by a loss of faith in achieving a meaningful collaboration of his own with Warhol.

I have discovered one direct reference that Reed made to the “Philosophy Songs” in an interview published in the UK edition of *Penthouse* in May 1977. Mick Rock, the photographer who created the album covers for *Transformer*, *Sally Can’t Dance*, *Coney Island Baby*, and *Rock and Roll Heart*, conducted the interview:

⁷⁵ Box 68, folder 4, Lou Reed Papers, 1958–2015, JPB 18–01, Music Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York, NY.

⁷⁶ Pat Hackett, e-mail correspondence, 19–22 April 2019. Hackett further explains: “In time, as the years went on, Andy was always out front about giving me credit. For instance, he’d always say to me, ‘They like your book, Pat,’ whenever he would get a compliment on it. But on this afternoon, which was right after publication when Andy certainly owed it to the publisher to take full authorship credit for himself, that notwithstanding, after hearing Lou go on and on, I think Andy just saw a wide opening to blow somebody’s—in this case, Lou’s—mind, which Andy always enjoyed doing. And actually, Andy surprised me, too, when he flat out told Lou that. I think Lou got up and left shortly after that.”

Penthouse: What about Warhol? I know you've done some tapes, kind of setting "The Philosophy of Andy Warhol from A to B and back again" to music.

Lou: Yes. I played them for Andy. He was fascinated, but horrified. I think they kind of scared him. But I'm thinking of doing it as my next album.⁷⁷

Reed's depiction of Warhol's reaction—fascination, horror, fear—hints at the songs' harsh critique and intention to sting. But the May 1977 interview date, published just after Reed's UK tour that year, suggests that the project of the "Philosophy Songs," or the emotions that surrounded that mixtape, lingered in his mind.

To date I have found no other interview or biography of Reed or Warhol that mentions the "Philosophy Songs." The story of the songs and the tape simply disappears, like one of those unproduced spec scripts or unsold television pilots of which Nick Salvato writes—a queer closet episode marked by obscurity, ambiguity, and inaccessibility. I have obviously stumbled upon the tape of these songs, which are not at all suitable for a musical, but do stem from—indeed, give form to—the ongoing closet drama between Reed and Warhol about what a musical collaboration meant for both artists in the mid-1970s given their long history together. I think it is no coincidence that the cover of *Coney Island Baby* features Reed looking rather like a dancer in a Broadway chorus line, with a dash of the queer emcee in *Cabaret* (see fig. 6).⁷⁸ Printed on the inner sleeve we also see Andy Warhol listed among the people Reed thanks—an unusual acknowledgment that hints at their renewed involvement at this time. Reed gave a copy of *Coney Island Baby* to Warhol inscribed "To Dear Andy, I very much hope you like this. Lovexxx, Lou" soon after the album's release on 19 January 1976 (see fig. 7). While Reed may have recorded the "Philosophy Songs" in one day, as early as the first week of June (following the death of Emerson) he could not have finished the "A.W." side until after he returned from touring in August 1975. I suspect that he gave the completed mixtape to Warhol in January 1976, along with the inscribed album, reciprocating Warhol's earlier gifted proofs of *THE Philosophy* with an audio account of his

⁷⁷ Mick Rock, "Still Walking the Wild Side," *Penthouse* [UK] 12 (May 1977): 46–48, at 47. Peter Doggett, in *Lou Reed: Growing Up in Public* (London: Omnibus Press, 1991), 99–100, incorporates this interview segment and adds unverified quotes from Warhol allegedly referring to Reed setting *THE Philosophy* to music: "He just came over and said, 'Can I do it?', and I said yeah, and he came over the next day and had it all done." In an e-mail correspondence (30 August 2017), Doggett told me he never interviewed Reed or Warhol, and had lost the source for the quotations.

⁷⁸ The show *A Chorus Line* opened in July 1975 to unprecedented success.

FIGURE 6. Lou Reed, *Coney Island Baby*, 1976. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. TC109.177



successes in 1975, as well as his musical commentary on Warhol's successes and failures of that same year.⁷⁹

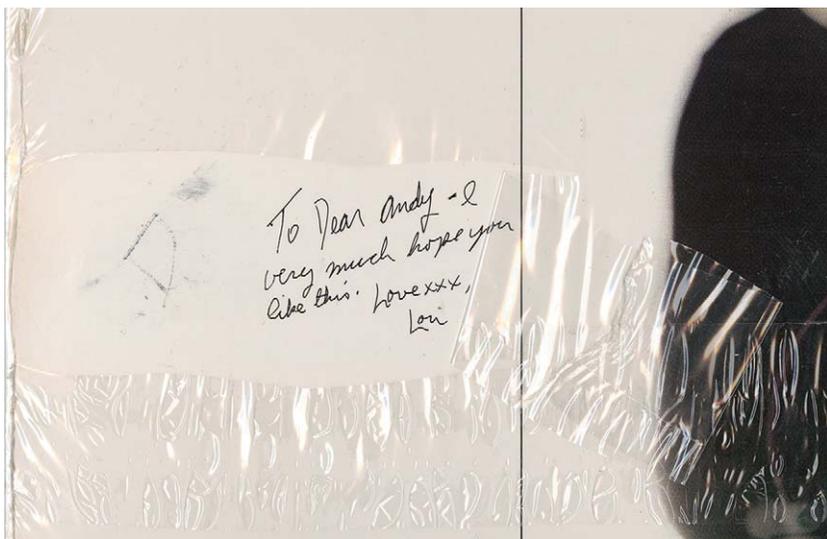
Spliced Beings

Gustavus Stadler writes: "Warhol's account of his marriage [to a tape recorder] contains a suggestive, implicit pun that asks, what is the relationship between audio *fidelity* and love, faith, and faithfulness?"⁸⁰ This question is also embedded in Reed's mixtape; it is a question directed at Warhol, but also pertinent to the emerging cassette culture. Beyond a fascination with celebrity lives or even new biographical details of great

⁷⁹ Item TC109.177 – TC109.178, TC109.189, Warhol Archives. Warhol continued to pursue the idea of producing a Broadway musical, as evident in scattered entries from *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, between 1978 and 1985. Notably, Warhol spent several years taping Maura Moynihan for a show he first calls *Runaway* (see entry for 1 June 1981), and later refers to as *Music Hotel* (see entry for 9 July 1985).

⁸⁰ Stadler, "Strategic Naïveté," 236. Stadler also explores this idea in "My Wife."

FIGURE 7. Inscription on Lou Reed, *Coney Island Baby*, 1976. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. TC109.177



artists, this mixtape gift spotlights recording technology's magnetized relationship to affective life—a relationship articulated by Warhol's conjugal claims in *THE Philosophy*, and enacted by Lou Reed in a new mode of technologized intimacy that establishes a material relationship between audio fidelity and love. Reed's mixtape is a double portrait: Side 1 is Lou Reed himself, faithfully rendered in curated live performances; Side 2 is his portrait of Warhol and his *infidelity*—to his friends and to his past.

If the mixtape—this specific one, and countless others—materializes an affective relationship between audio fidelity and love (or other complex emotions), then we might also ask, what is the relationship of the mixtape to subjectivity and embodiment? To think this through, I turn to a text probably well known to Reed and Warhol: William S. Burroughs's novel *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962, revised 1967), in which he equates bodies with tape recorders, and subjectivity with recorded sound. In one of his many asides to the reader, Burroughs writes: "Get it out of your head and into the machines. Stop talking stop arguing. Let the machines talk and argue. A tape recorder is an externalized section of the human nervous system. . . . Whatever your problem is just throw it into the

machines and let them chew it around awhile.”⁸¹ (Note the resemblance to Warhol’s idea of transferring problems to tape.) For Burroughs, the reel-to-reel tape logic of the physical splice provides a sono-somatic method for subverting society’s internalized prerecorded monologues (“the word”), and ultimately for challenging the supposed unity of the self. Throughout the novel Burroughs describes “spliced-tape experiments” that result in new conditions of being as they upend old modes of communication:

The word is spliced in with the sound of your intestines and breathing with the beating of your heart. The first step is to record the sounds of your body and start splicing them in yourself. Splice in your body sounds with the body sounds of your best friend and see how familiar he gets. Splice your body sounds in with air hammers. . . . Splice your body sounds in with anybody or anything. Start a tapeworm club and exchange body sound tapes. Feel right out into your nabor’s [*sic*] intestines and help him digest his food. *Communication must become total and conscious before we can stop it.*⁸²

Welcome to Burroughs’s version of “33 Things You Can Do with a Tape Recorder”—a guide to visceral sonics and cyborgian intimacies. Commenting on this novel, N. Katherine Hayles calls attention to Burroughs’s “mutated posthuman forms” that “both express and strive to escape from the conditioning that makes them into split beings. . . . Manipulating sound through tape-recorders thus becomes a way of producing a new kind of subjectivity that strikes at the deepest levels of awareness.”⁸³ Although Burroughs imagines a cacophonous playback, his motivation and technique are related to the other auditory strategies of queer resistance and erotics in the 1950s and 1960s—namely, John Cage’s silence and Warhol’s machine noise, by which I mean both his aural modernism as well as his real and fabricated statements about being a machine. Between Burroughs’s total communication and Cage’s silence lies Warhol’s sonic aesthetic of glitch and distortion, and his own stuttering refusal of words.⁸⁴ Yet we can nevertheless hear Warhol’s queer ideal of automatic intimacy across his immense audio archive—the Pop Art of “liking things” reconfigured as the Pop Sound of “recording things.”

⁸¹ William S. Burroughs, *The Ticket That Exploded* (New York: Grove Press, 1962; rev. 1967) 163.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 50 (emphasis in original).

⁸³ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 218 and 220 respectively.

⁸⁴ On Warhol and Cage, see Katz, “Silent Camp” and Branden W. Joseph, “The Play of Repetition: Andy Warhol’s *Sleep*,” *Grey Room* 19 (Spring 2005): 22–53. On Warhol and Burroughs, see Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth-Century Culture* (London: Verso, 1993), 167.

Reed's tape philosophy for Side 1 (the "A.W." side) falls somewhere between Burroughs's physical tape splices and Warhol's continuous "recording things." As I noted above, it is impossible to create physical splices in a cassette tape, but by pressing the "stop" button to make abrupt changes in sound and recording the machine noise of one tape deck onto another, Reed produces something akin to Warhol's strobe cuts in the process of joining one song to the next. These gestures of in-machine editing become an indelible part of the audio. If Burroughs's "first step" toward disrupting the prerecorded word was to splice one's own body sounds together, then Reed's recording process does just that: he sonically splices his bodily gestures into the dubbing of his live tracks, actively curating as well as erasing his prerecorded self.

Other types of splices occur with Side 2 and the "Philosophy Songs"—splices that join Reed and Warhol together in material and discursive ways. We automatically think of the two sides of a tape as back and front, but actually the two sides split the tape lengthwise. Reed's audio portraits of himself and Warhol are parallel tracks occupying the same space, time, and materiality, but running in opposite directions.⁸⁵ In other words, the cassette embodies a split ontology. For Reed and Warhol in the 1970s, a split ontology could describe the drag and trans individuals with whom they were intimately involved.⁸⁶ These individuals, as "ambulatory archives" (to quote *THE Philosophy*), link to Warhol's audio archives—specifically, to his tape-recorder wife as an ambulatory archiving machine. Moreover, trans individuals are figures of self-curation, splicing into the prerecorded monologues of gender and sexuality. Warhol, like Reed at that time, turned to the street and bar culture of transwomen of color for inspiration, producing the *Ladies and Gentlemen* series for an exhibition in Italy in September 1975. The project became monumental in scale, and he produced over a thousand items for it (including Polaroids of fourteen models, paintings, portfolios of prints, collages, and drawings). Warhol shipped only 105 of the paintings to Italy, however, and kept the rest in his studio for the remainder of his life—an archive of surplus closet media that documents the full extent of Warhol's engagement with the complex subjecthood of these transwomen.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ See Steven Connor's observations in *Beckett, Modernism, and the Material Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 87.

⁸⁶ Rachel was apparently fluid in her gender identity. In the *Penthouse* interview, Reed alternates gender pronouns when speaking about Rachel; and in *The Andy Warhol Diaries* Warhol mentions, "I was calling Rachel 'she' because she's always in drag but then Lou calls him 'he'" (entry for Sunday, 19 December 1976, p. 9).

⁸⁷ See Neil Printz, *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné Volume 4: Paintings and Sculptures late 1974–1976* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014), 12–13, 22–23.

Reed's mixtape is embedded within a striking constellation of reference points to trans identities: Reed's relationship with Rachel, his championing of Holly Woodlawn, the fluid reference of "A.W." to Andy Warhol or All Women, Reed's two-in-one "Drag Queens" Philosophy song, and Warhol's *Ladies and Gentlemen* series. We can see and hear in this constellation the discursive convergence of drag and trans identities with posthuman cyborg beings or the human-machine conjugal relations that call the unity of the self into question. A similar jumble of spliced references and subjectivities describe the "Philosophy Songs" in general, where Reed fuses snippets of Warhol's disaffected musings with his own harsh condemnations. The NYPL dubbed fragment offers yet another cyborgian splice, mechanically distributing this composite Reed-Warhol voice in space and time. Even Reed's remarks in *Penthouse* contain a splice; the phrase "fascinated, but horrified," which he used to describe Warhol's reaction to the "Philosophy Songs," quotes *THE Philosophy*, where Warhol describes watching Edie Sedgwick: "She fell asleep and I just couldn't stop looking at her, because I was so *fascinated-but-horrified*. Her hands kept crawling, they couldn't sleep, they couldn't stay still" (emphasis added).⁸⁸ In 1966 Reed wrote the lyric "I'll be your mirror, reflect who you are, in case you don't know." In 1975 the mirror became a mixtape reflecting the fascinated-but-horrified reaction Reed felt for Warhol and, by his own spliced account, engendering the same visceral response in Warhol himself.

Unlike other recent work on cassette culture, where the mixtape circulates as an insurgent media sounding resistance against totalitarianism, my story of the mixtape is perhaps less noble—and certainly more closeted. I have focused on the accumulated weight of fraught personal histories, private conversations, and failed collaborations, all bearing down on a single cassette that Lou Reed bothered to make for Andy Warhol. Given an audio archive silenced by layers of institutional concerns about expressive excess, I have had to make my own evocative mix of proxy songs and soundscapes. Despite its singularity, this cassette may still stand for the significance of other closet mixtapes and their phonographic entanglements. The queer intimacies of cassettes emerge not only from their sonic content, but also in the extension of embodiment and affect offered in a mixtape's material presence, in its archive of gestures, touches, and handling in time and space, and in its inscription of split beings and spliced subjectivities that record our ontological vulnerability.

⁸⁸ Warhol, *THE Philosophy*, 36. Branden W. Joseph discusses this passage in *THE Philosophy* as a reply of Warhol watching and eventually filming John Giorno for *Sleep* (1964); see "Play of Repetition," 27.

ABSTRACT

This article tells the story of a cassette tape housed in the Andy Warhol Museum Archives, a set of never-released (and rarely heard) songs by Lou Reed, and the tape's intended audience: Andy Warhol. Warhol and Reed are giant figures in the history of twentieth-century Pop Art and popular music, and their collaboration from 1966 to 1967 resulted in the acclaimed album *The Velvet Underground and Nico*. Based on extensive archival research and interviews, I discuss how this tape reflects Warhol's and Reed's failed attempt to collaborate on a stage version of Reed's album *Berlin* (1973); Reed's reaction to Warhol's book, *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (1975); and how elements of Warhol's own audio aesthetics and taping practices find their way into Reed's recordings around 1975. I also place this cassette in the context of the emerging common practice of creating and gifting homemade mixtapes of curated music, and demonstrate how such mixtapes function as a type of "closet media" (to quote theater scholar Nick Salvato) marked by private audience, disappearance, and inaccessibility. Drawing on William S. Burroughs's conceptual spliced-tape experiments and their challenge to unified subjectivity, I explore the epistemological and ontological ramifications of sonically entangling the self with another person, and the queer intimacies of doing so on cassette tape.

Keywords: Lou Reed, Andy Warhol, mixtapes, cassettes, closet drama, queer intimacy