

Saxophone Solos in EDM—The Roles of an Acoustic, Improvising Instrument in  
Dance Music

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Alessandra Mariela Mulder

November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## ABSTRACT

In this applied musicology thesis, I investigate how saxophone solos in electronic dance music facilitate structural shifts while injecting elements of liveness into EDM tracks. This work seeks to expand discussions of improvisatory strategies in EDM by illustrating how the saxophone's association with jazz and other Black American musical traditions, opening a wide range of improvisatory reference points that resonate uniquely in electronic contexts. Key findings include a mapping of how improvising saxophonists in the subgenres of electro-jazz, funky, tropical, melodic, and deep house music drive structural changes and shape musical events like rises, drops, and breakdowns. Theorisations of conversational irony in jazz practice are in turn used to parse the novelty of saxophone use in a case study of Anders Nilsen's *Salsa Tequila* (2014). New knowledge is demonstrated in this thesis through both the musicological analysis of improvised saxophone lines presented in Chapters 1 and 2 and in the major creative work submitted for examination, discussed in Chapter Three, that applies the findings of the musicological analysis to a set of newly composed musical works.

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## Note On Transcriptions

I have attempted to notate all musical examples as accurately and clearly as possible. Timestamps are included to ensure absolute clarity of what the reader/listener is hearing or reading is the same location in the track as the notated transcription. This is of special importance in EDM, where some sections of the same track can sound identical. Like in jazz studies I have included chord changes where I found them to be most relevant. They are not included in other examples where harmonic analysis is not the primary focus—or where including them would be redundant due to repetition or where it would obscure the clarity of reading the transcription. All examples are notated with all parts in concert pitch, for the purpose of showing the breadth of pitch range across all parts of a track. There are some instances where it is not possible to notate all layers of an EDM track using conventional notation. These include certain synth sounds, electronically generated effects, and audio effects. Where this is the case, rhythmic or descriptive indicators are included in scores, or within the text. There are some instances where not all layers are included, either for clarity or because it was too difficult to separate them out from the main layer—a notable example being background vocals. In these scenarios the absence of these parts is irrelevant to analytical goals, their primary purpose is adding sonic depth.

### *Saxophone Specifics*

I have attempted to notate the inflections, phrasing, dynamics, and articulations of each saxophonist studied as accurately and with the highest level of detail possible. Within these aspects of depicting the saxophonists' sound exists a great deal of nuance. Bends and scoops are indicated with the conventional symbol, however even within one solo can be a

spectrum of how each pitch manipulation is shaped. Descriptors and time stamps are included as a supplemental aid. Articulations typically follow the jazz practices of notation:

1. a staccato (.) marking indicates short, but not accented or tongued harder
2. a (>) accent indicates a harder attack, or that the note is louder at its front
3. a tenuto marking (-) indicates that the note is given its full value, tongued lightly or with an air attack
4. a tenuto marking (-) with an accent (>) denotes that the note's attack is heavier, and/or the notes volume is also louder
5. an agogic accent (^) indicates a short, but "fat" articulation

Growls and altissimo notes are denoted with parentheses and descriptors, as well as ghosted notes. Certain extended techniques, such as tone trills, alternate fingerings, and split notes are also indicated with parentheses and descriptors.

## Introduction

A key finding of Ingrid Monson's landmark jazz studies text *Saying Something* is that the lines between music genres are becoming increasingly blurred—especially in the realm of Black American Music. “While writers have generally treated jazz, rhythm and blues, and gospel as separate genres, it is common—if not typical—for jazz musicians to have performance experience in several different African American genres” (Monson 1996, p. 195). Electronic dance music fits into this story in a unique way. Mark Butler's foundational work on the genre draws attention to the “process/product” discourse in jazz studies and explores how this discourse mirrors the way EDM artists think about the improvisatory nature of their groove-based tracks (Butler 2014, p. 8). Butler stresses that producing EDM is not “making it up as you go along” but a complex interplay of “fixed” and “flexible” elements (p. 115) that aligns with the way jazz artists conceptualise improvised soloing. Citing a Max Roach quote from Paul Berliner's ethnographic study *Thinking in Jazz* (1994), Butler draws his readers into the following paradigm: “After you initiate the solo, one phrase determines what the next is going to be. From the first note that you hear, you are responding to what you've just played: you just said this on your instrument, and now that's a constant (Berliner, 1994, p. 192).”

In this applied musicology thesis, I seek to weave together existing EDM literature into a map of the complex field of “fixed” and “flexible” elements at play in the genre before examining how saxophone solos are utilised in EDM to both facilitate structural manoeuvres and introduce elements of liveness into EDM tracks. Fundamentally, this study aims to shine new light on discourses of improvisatory assembly in EDM by demonstrating how the sound of the saxophone is freighted with improvisatory possibility in the genre, even when it is used to articulate structural “fixed” elements in the music. This is a research led project utilising the visual representation of transcription to analyse music not commonly represented in this

way. New knowledge is demonstrated in this thesis through both musicological analysis of saxophone lines and improvisations in EDM tracks and in the major creative work submitted for examination, discussed in Chapter Three, that applies the findings of the musicological analysis to a set of newly composed musical works.

## **Parsing the “Fixed” and “Flexible” in Live and Recorded EDM Practice**

The EDM musical landscape is composed of both recorded/rendered works and musical works that are delivered live in front of audiences. While the “fixed” and “flexible” components of both modes of production overlap considerably, there are also notable differences. One of the primary modes of improvisation in EDM is the use of continuous processing in a live DJ performance— i.e., the use of audio effects and frequency manipulations to modify pre-composed tracks in real time. Butler’s (2014) discussion of live performance delves into this component of DJ practice, concluding that: “For these musicians, laptop and DJ sets serve as ways of reimagining, recontextualizing, and transforming the pre-existent elements found on recordings” (p. 171). Smith (2021) provides an extensive mapping of these effects and how they are placed within tracks, focusing on how these devices manipulate and heighten listener experience. Solberg’s (2014) work in turn has focused on how these manipulations “create tension and a heightened emotional intensity among clubbers” (p. 61). Tension and release in the form of “build ups,” “drops,” and “breakdowns” are a large part of how structural timelines are understood by EDM audiences (Solberg 2014). And yet the real time deployment of these effects is not their sole manifestation in EDM practice. For instance, Smith’s (2006) terms “swells,” “dips,” “riser,” “soar,” and “breakdown” refer simultaneously to structural metaphors the guide the design of recorded EDM tracks. Build ups, drops,

breakdowns, etc. are therefore sometimes flexible elements and sometimes fixed elements in EDM, yet regardless of their fixed or flexible status, they are always freighted with the open-ended possibilities of listener response.

A similar ambivalence arises around whether the timbral and textural components of an EDM track that result from stratifying layers of recorded sound represent a fixed or flexible element. Smith (2006) argues in his survey of continuous processes that timbre and texture are not always evolving in EDM, and that sometimes “techniques can be described as discrete processes, since they involve the sudden entrance or exit of a sound layer, or the repetition of discrete sounds in a stratified texture” (1.2). That is, shifts in timbre and texture might be conceptualised in Smith’s view as sometimes functioning as fixed structural events. On the other hand, texture and timbre in EDM have frequently been studied in the psychological literature for the ways they *do* evolve in EDM and consequently mediate listener perception of other phenomena in a track. Solberg (2014) for instance writes of the impact textural density can have on listener perception of a track’s groove and momentum. Honingh et al (2015) in turn document the ways timbral changes influence the ways listener’s conceptually position rhythm in a track (p. 387). In these studies, timbre and texture are flexibility agents, or, to use Van Elferen’s (2017) framing, a kind of “interactive event” or “ongoing process” (p. 486) that actively shapes perceptions of an EDM event. Like the build ups, drops, and breakdowns that are played with in real time during live performance and used to structure recorded work, the timbral and textural shifts that rhythmically energise EDM are both fixed *and* flexible elements of EDM practice that simultaneously signpost structure while transforming listener experiences in different ways.

The sounds of instruments in EDM possess both fixed and flexible meanings for listeners as well. McDermott’s (2021) study for instance presents case studies in which the

inherent qualities of acoustic instruments are transformed into sound that simultaneously references acoustic and electronic sound worlds. In describing the transformation of a bass flute through electronic processing, McDermott writes: “[T]he breathy qualities inherent in flute playing, and the metallic nature of the bass flute’s tone, were both maximized by the granular synthesis time-stretching and EQ treatment” (p. 58). For McDermott (2021), the deployment of these qualities provided layers of sound that resulted in “an apocalyptic, stretched-out wind tunnel effect” (p. 58). In this example, the sound of the flute retains its fixed acoustical referent while simultaneously becoming integrated into the electronic fabric of the surrounding track. Transformations of electronically synthesized instruments in contrast are not necessarily bound to fixed referents. Butler (2014) outlines how such transformations layer in tension to EDM tracks, given the predisposition of listeners to try to locate sound sources. He writes: “The experiential gaps that recordings open for listeners intensify when that music is also electronic. For example, the task of imagining or understanding *how* the sounds one hears were produced becomes even more difficult with synthesized sounds that cannot be traced to any single familiar instrument” (Butler, 2014, p. 67). Manipulating instrumental referents and moving beyond instrumental referents are thus both key parts of the fixed and flexible interplay that Butler locates at the centre of EDM’s improvisatory spirit.

## **Locating the Saxophone**

In this thesis, I focus on the use of the acoustic saxophone in EDM in order to understand how its associations with jazz improvisation are both utilized and circumvented in EDM musical practices. In a 1995 article titled “The Moan within the Tone: African Retentions in Rhythm and Blues Saxophone Style in Afro-American Popular Music”, Doug Miller argues that the saxophone’s timbral distinctiveness is one of the key reasons it has featured so

consistently in Black American expressive practices that seek to articulate historical roots in Africa. A key component of Miller's argument is that the saxophone functions like the human voice: "the reed and the vocal chords serve the same purpose... both voice and saxophone have 'free resistance chambers'" (p. 157). This vocal quality, according to Miller, has allowed saxophonists in Black American musical traditions like rhythm and blues to "speak" with difference in ways that resonate with the struggle for equality in America (p. 161). Miller (1995) writes:

"Certainly, under the oppressive conditions of slavery in the Deep South, such vocalisation had been a key means by which... [enslaved people] could retain some identity and dignity... Translating such vocalisation to instruments seemed to be a logical extension of this oral tradition, and since the saxophone came to substitute for and/or complement the voice in Afro-American musical performance, the variation in tone was understandably transferred from voice to horn (p. 161)."

Miller (1995) provides an extensive bank of evidence to support his claims of the instrument's vocal qualities and timbral possibilities, including descriptions of the instrument's unique "pitch", "colour", "texture", and "attack and decay" (pp. 162-163). These claims are central to Miller's argument that the flexible tone and timbre of the saxophone are uniquely suited to asserting the kinds of individual difference that drive a wide range of Black American musical traditions.

Improvisatory activity in turn is the arena of music making in which individual difference tends to manifest most readily in the traditions Miller studies. Monson's work (1996) on jazz practice has for instance been foundational in conceptualising improvisation as a musical arena capable of conjuring personality: "jazz as a musical language, improvisation

as musical conversation, and good improvisation as talking or “saying something” (p. 73). Monson (1996) goes on to explain: “The metaphor of conversation directs our attention not only to the structural aspects of interactive music making but also to the feeling and tone of particular styles of conversation” (p. 90).

Berliner’s ethnography of jazz practice reaches similar conclusions regarding the conversational nature of jazz improvisation. According to Berliner (1994), the processes of learning a language and learning to improvise both involve acquiring “a complex vocabulary of conventional phrases and phrase components, which improvisers draw upon in formulating the melody of a jazz solo” (p. 95). Much like speech, improvisers do not generate original “words” spontaneously—instead using building blocks collected from other speakers, notably jazz masters considered to be fluent, native speakers of the language.

Butler’s (2014) work on EDM identifies an aligned process of compositional design in the live performance practices of DJ/producers Sender Berlin and Jeff Mills:

“The creative work of Sender Berlin and Jeff Mills—the networks of performances and compositions described herein—reveal diverse and complex relationships between sonic outcomes that are specified in time (“improvised”) and those specified ahead of time (“composed”). Sender Berlin’s performances centre around their own precomposed tracks. Each recorded track serves as a framing structure or “script” for a portion of the performance, providing a basis for improvisation and precise coordination. Many details of the performed sonic outcome are determined through improvisation, including the form of the tracks played, their texture, the durations of sections within tracks and of tracks as a whole, their hypermetrical organization, the selection and application of effects, and the transitions or connections between tracks” (p. 170).

Butler's (2014) description of how Berlin and Mills draw together the "script" of their tracks in dynamic and new ways in live performance – and the importance of the dialogic relationship between the live performance and the pre-recorded material – demonstrates an important way EDM artists are able to "release their agency" (p. 125), or perhaps more acutely, using Monson's words, "say something."

And yet "saying something" in jazz performance is often deeper than exchanging or elaborating on melodic phrases when calling back to established scripts. Monson (1996) for instance writes of a frequent "doubleness" in jazz conversations in which musical lines function as social commentary, inviting listeners to think about earlier musical statements in new ways (p. 75). Such conversations are inter-textual and often pointed – i.e. they are capable of delivering irony, humour, and parody in a powerful mix that often delivers a powerful message through jazz performance. The saxophone's jazz resonance carries this conversational history with it as well.

## **Thesis Design and Chapter Summaries**

At the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, theses frequently include integrated creative work and written investigations of practice. Chapter One and Chapter Two of this thesis undertake analyses of saxophone use in EDM works that inform the creative work presented in the linked video files and discussed at length in Chapter Three. Transcription of these tracks using traditional notation seek to create visual representations of music that has been underrepresented in this type of analysis. There are instances where traditional notation's limitations are on display, at which times I acknowledge when this is the case. Transcription is

a well-established mode of inquiry in the jazz literature, and is central to how new works and contexts are investigated in this thesis.

In Chapter One, I examine the different structural markers in EDM that saxophonists have embraced and analyse the different ways they navigate and mediate these musical situations through improvisation. These structural markers are organized into four categories: cueing new sections and rises, resets and breakdowns, final drops, and playing with a horn section. These solos and musical examples analysed reflect the processes of how vocabulary from different musical traditions is incorporated into and expressed in improvisation. These various musical situations, structural markers, and vocabulary are represented with transcription.

In Chapter Two, I present a case study of ironic saxophone use in Anders Nilsen's 2014 hit "Salsa Tequila" informed by the discourses of "doubleness" in jazz studies. In this chapter, I aim to illuminate the sociocultural forces expressed in this doubleness and how the instrument became part of Nilsen's practice in making a hit dance song—which is also representative of how the instrument has become a part of this practice as well as part of the listener's expectations. Importantly, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that the functional and aesthetic aspects of the instrument's presence can even be achieved without the use of an acoustic instrument.

In Chapter Three I connect the findings of this thesis to how they are expressed in an example of my live performance practice as a DJ, producer and improvising saxophonist in the form of a live recorded set in a studio with a live audience. This chapter outlines how all of the structural and aesthetic functions of the instrument transcribed and analysed in Chapters One and Two are present in this performance video. It is also important to note that I am a career professional jazz saxophone player who also DJs and produces EDM, and this performance is

representative of my expertise as a saxophonist first and foremost. This is also demonstrative of the priorities of this thesis, centering the saxophone and improvisation.

## **Chapter One – Improvised Saxophone Lines and Structural Markers in EDM**

The field of jazz studies has, in the last decade, made a decisive shift away from analysing improvisations for isolated content towards a practice placing improvisations within broader contexts of practice (see Givan 2014 and Monson 1996). In EDM, studying saxophone solos can yield vocabulary choices particular to individual soloists, while revealing how the instrument plays a key role in accenting the genre’s structural conventions. Three primary streams of contributions by saxophonists in this arena are: introducing new sections; resetting in the breakdown; and releasing the climactic final drop of a track. In these ways, my analysis of these transcriptions bridges jazz and EDM studies by using transcription to exam structural features of the music.

### **Cueing New Sections and Rise Effect**

Butler (2005), Smith (2020), and McCallum (2021) write extensively about the structural importance of rise and release in dance music. In EDM tracks that utilise live saxophone performance, forward momentum into a new section is frequently heightened through the deployment of improvised saxophone lines that play off key rhythmic components of a track. Clean Bandit’s remix of Whitney Houston’s “How Will I Know” (2021) provides one example of this approach.

Figure 1111 - "How Will I Know" Clean Bandit

(2:40)

Vocals I  
If he loves me / If he loves me not / Oh how will I know

Synth Bass

Drum Set  
(snap w/reverb)

Vox. 1  
oh oh oh

A. Sax. 1

S.B.

D. S.  
cresc.

In this track the rhythmic acceleration is initiated by the drums four bars before the drop (2:49) with the saxophone joining in the final bar of the acceleration. Though the drums have already started playing sixteenth notes, the convergence with the saxophone's sixteenth notes in the final beat before the drop is where the rise peaks before the release. Figure 2 presents the bass drum and saxophone rhythms in isolation:

Figure 2222 - "How Will I Know" Saxophone & Kick

While the snare drum provides the smallest beat subdivision, forward motion is provided by the bass drum, which condenses throughout the acceleration. The improvised saxophone line mirrors the bass drum's rhythmic acceleration.

A variation of this phenomenon occurs when drums drop out and saxophonists fill space to complete a rising motion. Joe Killington's "Painkiller" (2020) features saxophonist Lovely Laura first as a textural layer and then as a key structural contributor to the build-up:

Figure 3333 - "Painkiller" Joe Killington

The image displays a musical score for the song "Pain Killer" (0:57). It features five staves: Vox, A. Sax., Pno., E.B., and D.S. (Drum Set). The vocal line includes lyrics: "pain kill er And we won't have to hur no more". The saxophone part is marked with *mp* (high pass filter) and *f*. The piano part shows chords Am, G, F, F, G, Am. The electric bass part is marked with *synth*. The drum set part is marked with *(snare+clap)*. The score includes dynamic markings like *mp*, *f*, *mmm*, *sim.*, and *(ghosted)*, and performance instructions like *(growl)*.

Figure 4444 - "Pain Killer" (0:57)

Texture

Rhythmic

Melodic

This block shows a close-up of the saxophone and electric bass parts. The saxophone part starts with a *mp* (high pass filter) marking and transitions to *f*. The electric bass part includes a *(growl)* instruction. The saxophone part is marked with *11* and the electric bass part with *11*.

In the textural contribution role, Lovely Laura plays long notes enhanced by applied filter and volume controls. When the drums drop out, Lovely Laura's contribution shifts to an

ascending line where the off-beats of “1,” “2,” and “3” are punctuated by articulations. Both the melodic ascent and rhythmic energy of the improvised line in this moment builds momentum that is released as the track transitions into the subsequent section.

Saxophonist GRiZ adopts a similar approach in “Renegade” (2022) with Big Gigantic:

Figure 5555 - “Renegade” Big Gigantic, GRiZ

(0:16)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) includes staves for Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Synth Pad, Electric Bass, and Drum Set. The Alto Sax part has a melodic line with accents on the off-beats of measures 1, 2, and 3. The Drum Set part features a clap on the first beat and a consistent rhythmic pattern. The second system (measures 5-8) includes staves for Alto Sax (A. Sx.), Tenor Sax (T. Sx.), Synth Pad (S.P.), Electric Bass (E.B.), and Drum Set (D. S.). The Alto Sax part continues with a melodic line, and the Drum Set part features a consistent rhythmic pattern with triplets in measures 7 and 8.

Drop (0:31)

In contrast to Lovely Laura on “Painkiller,” the saxophone here drives the groove while the synth maintains the melody and the drums initiate rhythmic acceleration before the break. Yet in parallel to Lovely Laura’s approach, during the break GRiZ builds rhythmic momentum through a melodic line that accents off-beats:

*Lovely Laura, “Painkiller”*

Figure 6666 - “Pain Killer” (1:00)

*GRiZ, “Renegade”*

Figure 7777 - “Renegade” break

(0:27)

The implied sixteenth note subdivision comes through the space both Lovely Laura and GRiZ leave in the examples above, allowing the listener to hear the pulse continue without every subdivision being filled. It is important to note that in each of these examples (“How Will I Know,” “Painkiller,” and “Renegade”) the solo breaks or lead ins to the drop have little or no production treatment – that is, the saxophone is left either completely in its original sound, or with reverb (an audio affect that can be applied with minimal impact on the saxophonist’s tone or timbre). This decision by the producers to leave the saxophone with very little audio treatment is interesting because the option to let the instrument sound as acoustic as possible is as significant of a decision as choosing to apply another production technique.

Finally, Lovely Laura’s tenor saxophone line in “Gotta Get Away” (2022) with Ben Santiago facilitates the track’s build up to a drop in a different manner, through the use of a long sustain. At (1:40) the saxophone plays a two-bar riff and at (1:54) the ascending improvised line gives rise to the track before holding a sustained E.

Figure 8888 - “Gotta Get Away” Lovely Laura, Ben Santiago

The musical score for Figure 8888 is set in 4/4 time and begins at the 1:40 mark. It features five staves: Tenor Sax 1, Tenor Sax 2, Brass Pad, Electric Bass, and Drum Set. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The Tenor Sax 1 and Tenor Sax 2 parts play a two-bar riff starting at 1:40, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Brass Pad part starts at 1:54 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a high pass filter, then crescendos (*cresc.*) to a sustained E note. The Electric Bass part also starts at 1:54 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and crescendos (*cresc.*) to a sustained E note. The Drum Set part features a consistent pattern of eighth notes with an open hi hat, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

5

(echo)

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B.P.

*mp*

E.B.

*cresc.*

D. S.

9

(wide vibrato)

Vox.

*p* ooh do do oh ba by

B.P.

E.B.

D. S.

13

(pitch filter)

T. Sx. 1

Vox.

Gottagetaway gottagetaway gotta getawayfrom you ba by Gottagetaway gottagetaway gotta getawayfrom you oh ba by

B.P.

E.B.

D. S.

17

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

Go tta get a way go tta get a way go tta get a way from you ba by Go tta get a way go tta get a way go tta get a get a way from you oh ba by

B.P.

E.B.

D. S.

21

T. Sx. 1

Vox.

Go tta get a way go tta get a way go tta get a way from you ba by Go tta get a way go tta get a way go tta get a get a way from you oh ba by

B.P.

E.B.

D. S.

The image shows a musical score for five tracks: T. Sx. 1, Vox., B.P., E.B., and D. S. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The T. Sx. 1 track has a sustained E note at the top of the staff, with a long, curved arrow indicating a pitch bend. The Vox. track has a vocal line with lyrics: "Ba by ba by ba by ba by Ba by ba by ba by ba by Ba by ba by ba by ba by oh ba by". The B.P. track has a bass line with accents and a final note with an accent. The E.B. track is mostly silent. The D. S. track has a drum part with a low pass filter and a bubble/blip effect sound.

While the ascending lick at 1:54 is brief, the sustained E at the top of the instrument’s standard range (F#) is given a range of pitch filter treatments. The pitch adjustment applied to the saxophone’s sustain bends the sustained sound in and out of focus while other layers are filtered in with added volume. The pitch alteration expands the groove in frequency, adding to its breadth while other layers are brought into the foreground. Although the material produced by the saxophonists in these tracks has been recorded and selectively used like other sounds and instruments, it still gives the impression and the feeling of being improvised.

## Resets and Breakdowns

In addition to contributing to rise effects and cueing new sections, improvising saxophonists also have the ability to drive breakdowns. Breakdowns in these tracks are a disassembling of the grooves and textures heard in the main chorus sections, notably the most intense sections, to a comparatively thin texture. By analysing saxophone solos in four tracks by Lovely Laura & Ben Santiago, Klingande, GRiZ, and Big Gigantic I unpack the ways in which

saxophone improvisation shapes a compositionally significant moment in the design of these tracks. For context I have transcribed moments before and after the solos and have included time stamps. Vocabulary used in these solos ranges from sparse, short phrases to double-time sixteenth note runs that echo the language of the bebop tradition. The different ways in which the solos contrast or compliment material the saxophonists have contributed previously to the track and the ways they interact with the other instruments or layers in the track reveals how improvisation shapes and drives structural events in these examples.

*“Just Want Your Body-Radio Edit,” (2018) Lovely Laura, Ben Santiago*

The breakdown of this track exemplifies a classic manoeuvre of a chorus section followed by an abrupt exit of bass and drums, leaving a harmonic or textural instrument to take over time keeping responsibilities. In this case, the chords from the piano orient the listener’s sense of time, giving the saxophone choices for filling the space. Lovely Laura opts to leave the space quite sparse, performing several long notes. This contrasts the riff she plays in the choruses that is very dictatorial of the beat and drives it quite strongly. Part of what contributes to the strength that the saxophone drives the beat with is the use of a side chain compressor, to make the saxophone react to the kick drum. This production technique allows producers to limit instrument overlap in a way that gives the music a certain bounce. The texture at the breakdown (0:54) is also thin, with only piano, violin, and saxophone.

Figure 9999 - "Just Want Your Body - Radio Edit" Lovely Laura, Ben Santiago

(0:46)

This musical score covers measures 6 to 9. It features five staves: A. Sx., FX, Pno., Synth bass, and D. S. The A. Sx. staff has notes with accents and two '(growl)' annotations. The FX staff has a '(metallic, computerised fall)' annotation. The Pno. staff shows chords Cmaj7, D, Em, and Am7. The Synth bass staff has a steady eighth-note pattern. The D. S. staff has a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks, and a '(high pass filter on kick)' annotation at the end.

This musical score covers measures 10 to 13. It features four staves: A. Sx., Violin, Pno., and D. S. The A. Sx. staff has notes with accents, a '(reverb+some echo)' annotation, and a triplet of eighth notes. The Violin staff has a sustained note with a tremolo effect. The Pno. staff shows chords Cmaj7, D, Em, Am7, Cmaj7, D, Em, and Am7. The D. S. staff is mostly empty.

This musical score covers measures 14 to 17. It features three staves: A. Sx., Pno., and D. S. The A. Sx. staff is empty. The Pno. staff shows chords Cmaj7, D, Em, and Am7. The D. S. staff has a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks and a '(clap)' annotation.

The sparseness of Lovely Laura's solo articulates a different kind of sonic space to the sections that precede and proceed from it. This sparseness is accentuated by the reverb and slight echo effects applied to the solo that blurs the sharpness of the instrument. The solo also emphasises the key of E minor (the relative minor to the G tonic of the track)—adding harmonic difference to the breakdown's sonic parameters.

*"Jubel-Radio Edit," Klingande (2014)*

Improvisation contributes to sonic difference between breakdowns and chorus sections of tracks. In *Klingande's "Jubel-Radio Edit"*, Lovely Laura's sparse commentary works to pre-empt or foreshadow that there is a bigger moment happening later. These brief interjections effectively reignite the feeling of liveness, and the listener is reminded of possibility.

Figure 10101010 - "Jubel-Radio Edit" Klingande

(1:11)

Alto Sax

Vocals

Guitar

Piano (wawa synth)

Bass (wawa synth)

Drum Set (clap)

Bongo Drums

FX (reverse cymbal)

5

A. Sx.

Vox. (panning) L R *sim.*  
oh eh Oh eh Oh eh Oh eh

Gtr.

Pno. C/E Em Am F  
*p* (electric piano sound)

E.B.

D. S.

Bgo. Dr.

FX (sweep)

9

A. Sx.

Vox.

Gtr. (delay/echo)

Pno. C/E Em Am F

E.B.

D. S.

Bgo. Dr.

FX (reverse cymbal)

13

A. Sx.

Vox. 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Gtr.

Pno. C/E Em Am F

E.B.

D. S. (panning effect) (shaker)

Bgo. Dr.

FX (cymbal)


In the section following the transcribed passage above, Klingande brings the bass and drums back in, but only briefly. The bass and drums drop out again at (1:58) for a false breakdown that reintroduces the saxophone theme heard at the introduction of the track:

17 (2:05)

A. Sx. 

Vox. 

Pno. 


E.B. 


D. S. 

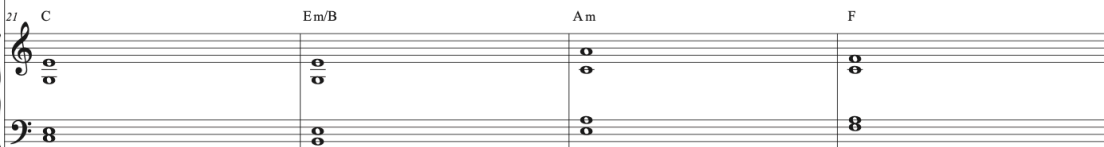
Clave 


(FX) 


21 (very laid back/behind the beat) (big bend)


A. Sx. 


Vox. 

Pno. 

E.B. 

D. S. 

Clave 

(FX) 

25  
A. Sax.

Vox.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

Clave

(FX)

29  
A. Sax.

Vox.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

Clave

(FX)

The true breakdown of the track occurs at 2:36. This is the most pronounced melodic gesture  
 Lovely Laura plays on the track, over a moment in which the texture has been stripped to its

thinnest. Lovely Laura’s inflection—the intensity of the growl combined with very wide pitch bends intensifies the statement.

Figure 11111111 - "Jubel-Radio Edit" (2:05)

The musical score for "Jubel-Radio Edit" (2:05) features the following elements:

- A. Sax:** Melodic line starting at measure 33 with a "(growl)" instruction. It includes a "(big bend)" instruction and continues with a melodic phrase.
- Vox:** Lyrics "save me" are written below the vocal staff in the final measure.
- Pno.:** Chord progression starting at measure 33: C, Em/B, Am, F.
- E.B.:** Bass line starting at measure 33.
- D. S.:** Drums starting at measure 33.
- Clave:** Clave pattern starting at measure 33.
- (FX):** FX line starting at measure 33 with a "(sweep)" instruction.

Through these choices, the saxophone line draws attention away from the sustain underneath it, effectively driving the aggregate decrescendo that plays the entire track down to only the vocals in the last bar. The direction of Lovely Laura’s line in the last five bars of the breakdown descends to the second scale degree, opening space for the vocals to resolve to the tonic

*“Vibe Check,” GRiZ (2021)*

In the breakdown of “Vibe Check”, GRiZ’s melodic choices work to thread together (rather than delineate sections), driving the track back into a denser texture.

Figure 12121212 - "Vibe Check" GRiZ

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 33, marked with a time signature of 1:39. It includes staves for A. Sx., Lead, Pno., and D. S. The A. Sx. staff contains a melodic line. The Lead staff has a treble clef with notes and a bass clef with rests. The Pno. staff has a treble clef with chords and a bass clef with rests. The D. S. staff is a drum part with various rhythmic patterns. Annotations include "(vibraslap)", "(low pitched 'whoosh')", and "(reverse whoosh)". The second system starts at measure 43 and includes staves for A. Sx., Lead, Pno., and D. S. The A. Sx. staff has a melodic line. The Lead staff has a treble clef with notes and a bass clef with rests. The Pno. staff has a treble clef with rests and a bass clef with rests. The D. S. staff has a drum part with a *pp* dynamic marking. An annotation "(alarm rise)" is present above the Lead staff.

GRiZ's solo mediates the transition out of a half-time feel into 4/4 in the breakdown and then back into the half-time feel at the following drop. This time feel change between breakdowns and drops is perhaps more significant than the actual content of the solo—which is otherwise

relatively brief (eight bars) and consisting of diatonic blues vocabulary. Dominic Lalli's solo on "Touch the Sky" (2014) achieves a similar effect:

\*notated in half-time

Figure 13131313 - "Touch the Sky" Big Gigantic

(1:42) *8va* *8va*

T. Sax. *34* *8va* *8va*

S. 1 *34* *8vb* *8vb*

S. 2 *34*

D. S. 1 *34*

D. S. 2 *34*

Vox 3 *34*  
sky Touch the sky ah touch the

*8va* *8va*

T. Sax. *38* *8va* *8va*

S. 1 *38*

S. 2 *38*

D. S. 1 *38*

D. S. 2 *38* (alarm rise)

Vox 3 *38*  
sky ah touch the sky oohwa touch the

\*notated in true time (2:07)

Musical score for measures 42-45. The score includes five staves: T. Sx., S. 1, D. S. 1, D. S. 2, and Vox 3. Measure 42 starts with a dynamic marking of *mp/mf*. Measure 43 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 44 includes the instruction "(low pass filter breakbeat)". Measure 45 has a dynamic marking of *p*. The vocal line (Vox 3) has the lyrics "sky" under the notes.

Musical score for measures 46-49. The score includes five staves: T. Sx., S. 1, D. S. 1, D. S. 2, and Vox 3. Measures 46-49 feature triplets in the T. Sx. and Vox 3 staves. The vocal line (Vox 3) has the lyrics "Touch the" under the notes.

Touch the

50

T. Sx.

S. 1

D. S. 1

D. S. 2

Vox 3

sky

54

T. Sx.

S. 1

D. S. 1

D. S. 2

Vox 3

Touch the

58

T. Sx.

S. 1

D. S. 1

D. S. 2

Vox 3

sky

62  
T. Sx.

62  
S. 1

62  
D. S. 1

D. S. 2  
(high pass filter)

62  
Vox 3  
touch the

The hand claps on all four beats at (2:08) immediately changes the feel to the faster four coming out of the chorus section. The consistency of the claps on each beat gives Lalli space to dance around the time. His opening four bar phrase has a loose time feel conjured through sustained notes and the quarter note triplets at (2:14) introduce destabilising syncopation. His introduction of a double time line at (2:21) is the first hint that the time feel is beginning to lock back into the track's original groove. This is confirmed and reinforced by the sixteenth note—or double time line played at (2:26) that then leads to loud, driving quarter notes in the upper register of the tenor saxophone.

What these examples of solos on breakdowns show is that saxophone solos—even in this defined structural context—can have varied content and effects. Ultimately the most important findings are that time keeping responsibilities can be traded, and that saxophone solos can shape compositions in ways that drive time feel changes. They also play an aesthetic role, taking the listener away from the groove before returning the listener to the key drivers of the track. In turn, they remind us of the liveness of the track, of the interplay between a soloist and engineered instruments and sounds, and of possibility in a genre where repetition and consistency have a heavy presence.

## Final Drops

Another crucial role improvised saxophone solos play in EDM is to drive peaks in musical intensity during a final drop. In examining five tracks, I will unpack how saxophonists navigate these musical moments and place them in a larger context of what they mean to the compositional construction of the analysed tracks. Final drops generally constitute the most intense sections of a track, and the analytical goal here is to examine how this intensity is enhanced by improvisation. Furthermore, this analysis provides insight into the stylistic particularities of specific improvising saxophonists.

### *"How Will I Know," Clean Bandit*

I have previously outlined how saxophonist George Philips' ascending lead into his solo on this track reflects a drum rise, achieving the compositional goal of anticipating a drop. During the drop, the saxophone improvises around vocals that perform familiar chorus material, at times aligning with the vocals and at times breaking away:

Figure 14141414 - "How Will I Know" (2:49)

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is labeled 'Vox. 1' and contains the vocal line with the lyrics 'oh oh oh oh'. The second staff is labeled 'A. Sx. 1' and shows the alto saxophone part. The third staff is labeled 'S.B.' and shows the saxophone part. The bottom staff is labeled 'D. S.' and shows the double bass part. A 'cresc.' marking is located below the D. S. staff. The score is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of three flats.

9

Vox. 1  
How will I know if he really loves me I say a prayer with every heart beat —

Vox. 2  
How will I know — hey — how will I

A. Sx. 1  
*p*

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

13

Vox. 1  
— I fall in love when e — ver we meet — I'm ask ing you cuz you know a bout these things

Vox. 2  
know — who — How will I

A. Sx. 1  
*8va*

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

17

Vox. 1 How will I know How will I know

Vox. 2 know How will I know na na know

A. Sax. 1

S.P.

S.B. sim.

D. S.

21

Vox. 1 How will I know How will I know

Vox. 2 How will I know na na know

A. Sax. 1

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

Undoubtedly the strongest musical gestures of this solo are the altissimo note landing on the drop at (3:05) and the pitch bend/slide into the altissimo “C” for the alto saxophone at (3:21). Further intensifying this note is the wide vibrato applied to it by Philips. It is difficult to discern whether the pitch bend slide is generated independently by Philips, or if it is in conjunction with an applied audio effect. This note is also relatively high in the alto’s altissimo range—the

standard range of the instrument ending on high F# for the instrument (concert A4), placing Philips' note at concert Eb5. With the sounding bass notes spread across Eb1 and Eb2, the range created in this moment is gigantic, spanning three octaves. Furthermore, Philips holds this note for a total of nine beats—two full bars and a pickup beat. With this duration the ear is pulled decisively to this sound as Philips effectively expands the overall tessitura by an octave, lifting the ceiling of the high frequencies and broadening the depth of the texture.

*“Light of Day” Big Gigantic (2009)*

Big Gigantic's “Light of Day” offers a saxophone solo as the sonic centrepiece, released of all constraints—like playing with vocals—with complete freedom not seen in the previous two tracks. Instead, improvisation *is* the release of this track. The structural significance of Lalli's solo on this track is not *where* it is going, rather that it *is* the arrival point. Typical works in this subgenre of electronic dance music, this track has a two bar beat loop and harmonic rhythm. The track's key centre is concert A minor, but the chord progression is Dm|Em7|Fmaj7|Fmaj7 over the first bar, with the second bar comprised of Fmaj7 only. Unlike in jazz where the chords are followed or used as the harmonic rhythm, here what anchors the track is the melody played by the synth lead. This melody repeats like an ostinato throughout Lalli's entire solo, including the false breakdown at (3:34).

Figure 15151515 - "Light of Day" Big Gigantic

(3:19)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled (3:19), contains five staves: Tenor Sax (melodic line with accents), Synth lead 1 (melodic line with accents), Synth pad (chordal accompaniment), Synth bass 2 (bass line with accents), and Drum Set (rhythmic pattern). The second system, starting at measure 5, contains five staves: T. Sax (melodic line with triplets and accents), S.L. 1 (melodic line with accents), Synth pad (chordal accompaniment with Roman numerals IV and V), Synth bass 2 (bass line with accents), and D. S. (drum set pattern). A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed below the drum set staff in the second system.

8<sup>va</sup>

9

T. Sx. *(altissimo)* *(altissimo)* *(altissimo)*

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

13

T. Sx.

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

16

T. Sx.

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

19 (bebop back tonguing)

T. Sx.

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

21

T. Sx.

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

24

T. Sx.

S.L. 1

Synth pad

Synth bass 2

D. S.

(echo)

Even though Lalli's solo begins directly on where a drop would be expected, he does not play the solo in with an ascending line. Until the moment of the drop, Lalli plays in sync with the synth lead. At the point of the drop, Lalli's improvisation diverges from the expected melodic role. What keeps the listener anchored throughout Lalli's solo is the synth continuing to play the two-bar phrase of the chorus sections.

The combination of the consistency of the ostinato played by the synth and the repetition of the two-bar loop and the filter applied to the saxophone is what ultimately allows for the high degree of independence in this example of Lalli's playing. The sudden drop out of drums and bass at (3:33) makes Lalli's solo into a break—similar to what might be heard at the end of a jazz melody going into a solo—which then plays into the drop with the filtering in of drums and the climbing range of Lalli's line into the altissimo range of the instrument. At the downbeat of the drop (3:44), Lalli doubles the synth—but in the context of an improvised solo I would argue that instead he quotes it, especially because it is such a fleeting moment in the broader context of an obviously improvised section. While the track is strongly in A minor, the two-bar chord progression loop |Dm Em|Fmaj7| provides Lalli with many harmonic possibilities, which he exploits particularly in his longer, faster bebop lines. With these lines—particularly at bars 15 and 19 of this transcription—allow Lalli to outline that harmony and they have the dual sound of upper extensions in A minor in a way that expands the harmonic breadth of the track. It is in this way that Lalli is able to fuse bebop vocabulary with the hip hop and electro elements of this track in such a musically satisfying way.

*“Lucid Dreams,” Big Gigantic (2010)*

The position of Lalli's solo in “Lucid Dreams” in the middle of the track instead of a final drop towards the end is more evocative of the structure of a jazz tune than an EDM track.

The result of this convergence of structural practices is the vocabulary that emerges in Lalli's solo. Like "Light of Day," the release of Lalli in "Lucid Dreams" to freely improvise facilitates an increased presence of bebop vocabulary—most notably enclosures and chromaticism—melodic tropes, and hemiolas typical of jazz. When we consider that Lalli is both a producer and soloist on this track, "Lucid Dreams" is highly representative of how Big Gigantic's music is the amalgamation of two practices.

The enclosures, chromaticism, bebop tropes, and hemiolas mentioned above are represented in the transcription below. Note that the harmonic rhythm is comprised of a two-bar loop: |Cm |Cm Ab G|, making the harmony rather static but firmly in C minor. The red underlining marks a dotted quarter note hemiola, enclosures are marked in blue, and chromaticism in green. Lalli's two enclosures at (2:56) encircle the 5<sup>th</sup> and the tonic in Cm, while also constructing an idiomatic melodic phrase from jazz vocabulary. The following two enclosures encircle the 5<sup>th</sup> and minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, constructing lines firmly in C minor. The chromatic line at (3:04) is a descending fourths pattern eventually landing on the tonic. The layer of the track not transcribed is the computerized synth sound running up and down that is pitched in C minor, moving triplet 32<sup>nd</sup> notes but up and down in a manner that was extremely difficult to notate. The presence of this layer and Lalli's position in the mix also makes the two sounds more concurrent rather than a solo and accompaniment as is typically heard in jazz.

Figure 16161616 - "Lucid Dreams" Big Gigantic

(2:21)

Tenor Sax

Synth Pad

Synth Bass

Drum Set

T. Sax.

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

T. Sax.

(pizzicato)

(altissimo)

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

13

T. Sx.

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

8<sub>bb</sub>

17

T. Sx.

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

20

T. Sx.

S.P.

S.B.

D. S.

(altissimo)

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: T. Sax (Tenor Saxophone), S.P. (Synth Pad), S.B. (Synth Bass), and D.S. (Drum Set). The score is divided into two systems, measures 23-25 and 26-28. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. In the first system (measures 23-25), the T. Sax part features a melodic line with eighth-note triplets and a triplet of eighth notes at the end. The S.P. part provides harmonic support with sustained chords. The S.B. part plays a steady bass line with occasional eighth-note triplets. The D.S. part consists of a consistent drum pattern with 'x' marks indicating hits on the snare and cymbals. The second system (measures 26-28) shows the T. Sax part playing a melodic phrase that concludes with a whole note. The S.P. part continues with sustained chords. The S.B. part plays a bass line with a long note in measure 27. The D.S. part continues with a similar drum pattern, including some grace notes in the final measure.

Even when Lalli is not playing phrases that would be considered standard jazz vocabulary, there are still allusions or suggestions of Lalli’s status as a speaker of that language. In the very first phrase he plays the start of each fragment on an upbeat, something that could be heard when a jazz soloist is playing around an accompanists or filling spaces while comping. With the synth bass and lead playing heavy downbeats in their two-bar loop it makes sense that Lalli’s jazz sensibilities would guide him to play something oppositional and fill the rhythmic space in a different way. Lalli’s use of sixteenth note triplets, particularly as an anticipatory device, has strong double time implications typical of bebop lines. The twice double-time line at (3:08) is evocative of the way John Coltrane—and subsequently Coltrane inspired saxophonists—used scales to create shapes that are heard as one sound rather than each note representing part of melodic line. This is a sound described by Downbeat Magazine critic Ira Gitler in the liner notes of Coltrane’s 1958 album *Soultrain*. Of course, the notes are not

random, they are fragments of several bebop scales Lalli uses to step in and out of the key, but the real value of this line is its ascension to the minor 7<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (in concert C minor) in the altissimo range of the tenor saxophone. The sonic shape Lalli creates results in the tenor saxophone expanding the thickness of the total texture leading up to a widening of the tessitura range. Knowing that Lalli comes from a jazz background and still maintains part of his career in that practice certainly justifies the presence of that language in his playing with Big Gigantic, however with a broader understanding of saxophone solos function in this genre transcriptions of Lalli's playing reveal much more of the ways these two genres intersect.

*"Late Night People," GoldFish (2017)*

David Poole's alto saxophone solo on "Late Night People" serves to add an additional layer over the final chorus section, but more importantly the solo drives the complete unravelling of the track's structure—form, time, and harmony. The instrument is heard throughout the track, as part of the horn section that punctuates the phrases that add to the liveness and funkiness of the track discussed in Chapter Three. Poole's divergence from the horn section and into improvisation begins subtly. It is not until Soweto Kinch's rapping leaves the mix that the listener hears Poole as a soloist. Until this moment many of his notes are ghosted or low in the instrument's range, keeping the instrument in the background. As Poole fills in between and plays over top of the horn section's interjections, the listener is left to imagine what might happen next.

In this case, Poole also drives the track from a chorus, to a saxophone solo, and into the track's conclusion. What is most interesting in this solo is how Poole's improvisation changes as layers leave the mix. The more other layers of the track are pulled away, the more the solo is brought into the foreground. As soon as Soweto Kinch drops out, Poole's phrases

immediately jump into the octave above where he was previously playing. I am not suggesting that this was an intentional choice, rather that this moment represents a shift in the track from an emerging solo tucked into the texture, to a broader stratification of the acoustic instruments being heard. Poole's adjustment of where his voice sits in the tessitura happens again when the horn section drops out at (4:22). The solo drops to the upper-mid range of the instrument, filling the space the horn section was previously occupying. The result is a tiered decrease in track's vertical pitch range.

Figure 17171717 - "Late Night People" GoldFish, Soweto Kinch

(3:41)

Alto Sax 1

Vocals

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Alto Sax 2

Tenor Sax

Piano

Electric Bass

Drum Set

...funk they come to see — turn it Ooh ————— Up to a hun dred de grees I'm gon' booze e'rbody Yeah yeah yeah

Fm Ab Eb B $\flat$  Fm Ab

sim. (slap bass)

(snare+clap)

5

A. Sx. 1

Vox.

yeah yeah yea yeah — Hey Ho Hey Ho

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt.

*p* *mf*

A. Sx. 2

*mf*

T. Sx.

*p* *mf*

Pno.

E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Fm/B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Fm/B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Fm/B<sup>b</sup>

E.B.

D. S.

10

A. Sx. 1

Vox.

(sweep)

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt.

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

Pno.

Fm A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Fm A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Fm

E.B.

D. S.

14

A. Sx. 1

Vox.

B $\flat$  Tpt.

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

Fm A $\flat$  E $\flat$  B $\flat$  Fm A $\flat$

17

A. Sx. 1

Vox.

B $\flat$  Tpt.

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

E $\flat$  B $\flat$  Fm A $\flat$  E $\flat$  B $\flat$  Fm A $\flat$

(moderate reverb)

21

A. Sax. 1

Vox.

B $\flat$  Tpt.

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

E $\flat$  B $\flat$  Fm

(heavy reverb)

25

A. Sax. 1

Vox.

B $\flat$  Tpt.

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax.

Pno.

E.B.

D. S.

(altissimo)

(subtone)

Finally, the way Poole's solo evolves also contributes to the track's dissolution of time. Even though Poole is playing a hemiola at (4:15) right before the horns drop out, it has a very strong implication of where the beat is. This is significant because the following phrase at (4:23) has

many doubled notes and a much more noticeable amount of reverb applied to it, obscuring the clarity of the line. By (4:26) the bass and drums are still in, but the syncopation of the solo begins to obscure where the beat is. From there each micro-phrase starts in a different part of the bar, moving further and further away from the established groove. By the time Poole completes his last phrase, it is extremely difficult to tell where he actually ends the solo. As I transcribed this solo I questioned if it could be notated with a different time signature, or perhaps dropping a beat when the drums and bass leave the mix. The echo and additional space the notes take up as a result of the reverb is highly effective in disorienting the listener, making it difficult for even the trained ear to notate it with conventional notation. It begs the question of how this solo would sound different and what effect it would have without audio effect treatment.

*“No One Has To Know” GoldFish (2017)*

While I have shown that saxophone solos can drive conventional drops in dance music, it is also important that these solos also bend the conventions into different types of drops. In contrast to the aforementioned Big Gigantic tracks that feature heavy, hard-hitting drops, “No One Has To Know” is quite subdued. A slower tempo, warmer sounds, and softer, more subdued vocals supplied by Ashlyn Miller contribute to the track’s more subdued energy. In direct contrast is David Poole’s saxophone entrance at (2:21)—starting in the top octave of the tenor saxophone’s standard range, with a slight growl and hinting at a double time feel with swung sixteenth notes. This track does not feature a traditional drop in the sense of a build and rise to one specific moment, rather Poole drives the intensity of the track to its conclusion:

Figure 18181818 - "No One Has To Know" GoldFish

(2:07)

Tenor Sax

Vocals

Strings 1

Chimes/bells 2

Bass 3

Drum Set

6

T. Sx.

Vox.

Strings 1

Chimes /bells 2

Bass 3

D. S.

(swing 16ths)

8vb

sim.

(snap)

(rise+reverse cymbal)

(-1)

(big bend)

(+8vb)

Been a wake for a long time gone a way all this time no one has to know where we go we go now we go we go now —

We go we go — now — we go now no one has to know where we go we go now —

10

T. Sx.

Vox.

We go we go — we go now no one has to know where

Strings 1

Chimes /bells 2

Bass 3

sim.

D. S.

(big bend)

13

T. Sx.

(growl)

Vox.

we go we go now Been a way we go gone a way we go now no one has to know where

(swing 16ths)

Strings 1

sim.

Chimes /bells 2

Bass 3

8vb

D. S.

17

T. Sax.

Vox.

we go we go now Been a way for a long(time) gone a way (we go) all this time

Strings 1

Chimes /bells 2

Bass 3

D. S.

20

T. Sax.

Vox.

No one has to know where we go we go now

Strings 1

Chimes /bells 2

Bass 3

D. S.

Poole's pitch bends become more extreme as the solo progresses, with the most intense instance occurring at (2:41). This note stirs anticipation by taking a long time to arrive at the principal pitch, which is also the tonic in the high range of the instrument, with the added intensity of a growl. A similar effect to George Philips' large pitch bend in "How Will I Know,"

occurring in very similar musical circumstances with different producers—suggesting that landing on a high or altissimo note like so is soloistic vocabulary in this genre.

## **The Horn Section Effect**

Joanna Demers writes that “sampled materials are ‘read’ as texts whose original meanings and associations contribute to the meaning of a new composite work” (Demers, 2010, p. 10). In the same way, the presence of an acoustic instrument carries its own meaning and associations when integrated into an EDM track. According to Solberg (2014), “acoustic features afford certain kinds of bodily movements and also emotional experiences” (p. 64). Scholars like Lakoff and Johnson (1993, 2003), Lemán (2008), Godøy and Lemán (2010), and Larson (2012) (as cited by McCallum 2021) working in the fields of music psychology and embodied cognition have discovered correlative systems between musical stimuli and bodily responses, with Larson (2012)’s study focusing on the metaphor of orientation. In the final section of this chapter, I demonstrate how the saxophone orients EDM listeners to a history of live performance in jazz while simultaneously bringing into the foreground the flexible components of EDM that Butler writes about in improvisatory terms. In other words, I map out through an analysis of EDM tracks how the saxophone freights works of EDM with improvisatory possibility across a spectrum of each track’s components.

Artists Big Gigantic, GRiZ, and GoldFish deploy horn sections in their music much like horn sections in funk bands, big bands, salsa bands, or Latin pop bands. Multiple horns playing “hits” or “stabs” adds a dense, powerful sound that stands up to equally dense and powerful electronic sounds of the EDM genre. The resulting effect is a dynamic of live versus recorded playing that constantly shifts the listener’s orientation.

*"Good Times Roll" (2015)*

"Good Times Roll" is a collaborative track by Big Gigantic and GRiZ. The track draws together funk and soul elements with EDM engineered drum rises, drops, and filtering effects. Acoustic instruments and electronic instruments dovetail in "Good Times Roll" in structural ways that meld their intent. Thus, the liveliness most evident at the start of the track becomes threaded throughout its more fixed components. The trumpet and tenor sax start the track by playing "stabs" in unison: short but fat punctuations on the downbeats of every other bar.

Figure 19191919 - "Good Times Roll" Big Gigantic (0:18)

The musical score for "Good Times Roll" by Big Gigantic (0:18) is presented in a multi-staff format. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The instruments included are Vocals, Trumpet in B $\flat$ , Tenor Sax, Synth, Guitar, Electric Bass, and Drum Set. The vocal line begins with the lyrics: "Well I ain't got no thin but a little soul a little tune to play to make the good times roll \_\_\_ No". The instrumental parts show a mix of funk and soul influences, with the trumpet and tenor sax playing stabs on downbeats. The guitar part includes a chord change to E $\flat$ m. The drum set part features a complex rhythm with triplets and syncopation.

4

Vox. I ain't got no thin but a little soul a little dan cin shoes and my friends with me \_\_\_ Well I ain't got no thin but a little soul a little

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sx.

Synth.

Gtr.

E.B.

D. S.

7

Vox. tune to play to make the good times roll \_\_\_ No I ain't got no thin but a bag of green Two dan cin shoes and my friends with me \_\_\_ Here we

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sx.

Synth.

Gtr.

E.B.

D. S.

10

Vox. *go Na na na na na na na Na na na na na na na Na na na na na na na Na na na na na na na Here we*

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. *^*

T. Sx. *^*

Synth. (applause+computerized fall) (synth rise)

Gtr.

E.B.

D. S. *x*

14

Vox. *Go go*

(pitch rise filter) (pan echo left/right)

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. (pitch filter rise)

T. Sx.

Synth.

Gtr.

E.B.

D. S. *x*

(beat repeat accel.)

What becomes clear through transcription is the convergence of two opposing forces—the acoustic instruments and the electronic ones. Tension is created with their opposition, and we hear them very clearly as separate entities, but then they converge rhythmically to create a new feeling of anticipation—the beat repeat rise, and we hear the two as one sound. The significance of this phenomenon goes beyond acoustic instruments converging with electronic ones—it also demonstrates the convergence of the performance practices of a horn section with production practices in the EDM sphere.

After the drop occurs at 0:57, the horns and electronic sounds revert to opposing roles, but in different ways. At the drop, the vocal melody is taken over by the lead synth in two bar phrases. When the horns answer at (1:04) and (1:13) they echo the blues language of the synth, effectively weaving the melody back into an acoustic frame.

Figure 20202020 - "Good Times Roll" (0:57)

(0:57)

The musical score for "Good Times Roll" at 0:57 features seven staves. The vocal line (Vox) has lyrics "Na na na na na na na na" starting at measure 18. The B♭ Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.) and Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.) parts enter at measure 18 with a bluesy melody. The Synth part has a lead line with a "sfz" dynamic marking. The Guitar (Gtr.) part has a "rise" annotation and a "5 1/2" fret marking. The Electric Bass (E.B.) part has an "(organ)" annotation. The Drum Set (D. S.) part has a consistent rhythmic pattern with "x" marks above some notes.

22  
Vox. E very bo... dy

22  
B♭ Tpt.

22  
T. Sax.

22  
Synth

22  
Gtr.

22  
E.B.

22  
D. S.

The resulting call and response structure between synth and horns conjures a sense of acknowledgement in the track typical of the funk genre. Later in the track at (1:45) this call and response dynamic shifts to the vocals and the horn section, returning the track firmly to the funk genre. The toggling between acoustic and electronic voices in the call and response structure of the track thus blurs the line between what *sounds* live or acoustic, or recorded, synthesized, or sampled.

Figure 21212121 - "Good Times Roll" call & response

(1:55)  
27  
Vox. Na na na na na... Na na na na na... Na na na

27  
B♭ Tpt.

27  
T. Sax.

27  
E.B.

31

Vox. na na na na na — Na na na na na na na na —

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sax.

E.B.

35

Vox. Na na na na na — Na na na na na — Na na na

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sax.

E.B.

39

Vox. na na na na na — Na na na na na na na na —

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sax.

E.B.

*“c h r o m e s t h e s i a” (2021) and “Astro Funk” (2021)*

Producer and saxophonist GRiZ uses horn lines to introduce the opening of the album *Rainbow Brain* (2021)—“c h r o m e s t h e s i a,” a preamble that then leads into “Astro Funk,” the first full track of the album. The horn lines, played by tenor sax and trumpet, are subtly

brought in under a filter at 0:40 in “c h r o m e s t h e s i a” and then transition to the sonic foreground at the beginning of “Astro Funk” – i.e. they are presented at the start of “Astro Funk” unfiltered and accompanied only by hi hat and a rising synth sound. While the line seems repetitious at first glance, there are subtle changes that occur within the line and in the surrounding contexts that conjure the sense of live variation. First, the two horns go up an octave but then as the track builds the line changes.

Figure 22222222 - "chromesthesia" GRiZ

Swing (0:33)

The image shows a musical score for the track "chromesthesia" by GRiZ. It is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Trumpet in Bb and Tenor Sax. The second system includes parts for Bb Trumpet and T. Sax. The Tenor Sax part begins with a five-measure rest, followed by a melodic line. The Bb Trumpet part also begins with a five-measure rest, followed by a melodic line that is an octave higher than the Tenor Sax part. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and trills.

In jazz it is common to hear horns take the melody or head up an octave for the second time at the beginning of a tune or for the final statement at the end. What is most intriguing here is GRiZ’s compositional decision to play quarter notes on the tenor (with trumpet doubling an octave higher) at the peak of this build, when it is most intense—right before the drop of the track. In the following transcriptions I include hi hat, snare/claps, bass drum, bass, and an FX line.

Figure 23232323 - "Astro Funk" GRiZ

Swing (0:00)

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Tenor Sax

Electric Bass

Drum Set

FX

(synth rise)

Detailed description: This system of music is for the first four measures of the piece. It features five staves. The top staff is for Trumpet in B-flat, the second for Tenor Sax, the third for Electric Bass, the fourth for Drum Set, and the fifth for FX. The key signature has four flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Swing' and the time is '(0:00)'. The Trumpet and Tenor Sax parts play a melodic line starting with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes. The Electric Bass staff is empty. The Drum Set staff shows a simple pattern of quarter notes with 'x' marks above them. The FX staff has diamond-shaped notes with upward-pointing arrows, labeled '14' at the end of the first and third measures, and '(synth rise)' below the staff.

B $\flat$  Tpt.

T. Sx.

E.B.

D. S.

FX

(cymbal rise)

Detailed description: This system of music is for measures 5 through 8. It features five staves. The top staff is for B-flat Trumpet, the second for Tenor Sax, the third for Electric Bass, the fourth for Drum Set, and the fifth for FX. The key signature has four flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The Trumpet and Tenor Sax parts continue the melodic line from the previous system. The Electric Bass staff is empty. The Drum Set staff shows a pattern of quarter notes with 'x' marks above them, ending with a triplet of eighth notes in the eighth measure. The FX staff has diamond-shaped notes with upward-pointing arrows, labeled '5' at the beginning of the first and third measures, and '(cymbal rise)' below the staff.

9

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt.

T. Sx.

E.B.

D. S.

FX

13

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt.

T. Sx.

E.B.

D. S.

FX

(cymbal)

17

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt.

T. Sx.

E.B.

D. S.

FX

(vocal sample)

21  
B♭ Tpt.

21  
T. Sx.

21  
E.B.

21  
D. S.

21  
FX

GRiZ’s exposure of the horns at the very beginning of the track positions them in the centre of the listener’s awareness, and with only hi hat and a synth effect the listener can really feel the presence of the unfiltered acoustic instruments. This positioning places acoustic sound at the front of listener awareness from the very beginning, orienting listeners to a “live” way of listening to the material that follows.

“Vibe Check” (2021)

GRiZ’s “Vibe Check” uses a similar technique. In this track the alto functions like the horn section—punctuating or commentating around synth parts.

Figure 24242424 - “Vibe Check” GRiZ

(0:00)

This musical score system includes five staves: Alto Sax, Synth Lead, FX 1, Piano, and Drum Set. The Alto Sax staff features a melodic line with accents and an echo effect. The Synth Lead staff is mostly silent. The FX 1 staff contains sound effects like white noise hiss and reverse cymbal. The Piano staff has a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. The Drum Set staff shows a consistent drum pattern.

(reverb, echo)

This musical score system includes five staves: A. Sx., Lead, FX, Pno., and D. S. The A. Sx. staff has a melodic line with reverb and echo. The Lead staff is silent. The FX staff has a synth rise effect. The Pno. staff has a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. The D. S. staff shows a drum pattern with a tambourine effect.

The image shows a musical score for a track, likely 'Vibe Check'. The score is arranged in a multi-stem format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- A. Sx. (Alto Saxophone):** Starts at measure 17 with a melodic line. A 'beat repeat' section is indicated by a dashed line over the final two measures.
- Lead:** Consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The bass line features a descending sequence of notes.
- FX 1:** Labeled '(synth-warp)'. It contains a melodic line with a '2.142' annotation and a curved line indicating a pitch bend or warp.
- FX 2:** Labeled '(airplane rise sound)'. It contains a melodic line with a curved line indicating a pitch rise.
- Pno. (Piano):** Consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with mostly rests.
- D. S. (Drums):** Features a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes, including a section of repeated notes marked with 'x'.

Yet in contrast to the horn sections in the aforementioned Big Gigantic tracks, the alto saxophone in “Vibe Check” changes roles quite drastically at the drop. Rather than a commentary role occurring after a synth melody, the alto saxophone in “Vibe Check” plays a countermelody in the first bar of each two-bar phrase with the synth. The reverb and echo give the alto saxophone a softer and less aggressive timbre in the higher register of the instrument that contrasts the warbling, bright tone of the synth bass in the center of the listener’s melodic focal point. GRiZ’s reverb and echo treatment of the alto also allows the instrument to fill more space in the track without contributing more material—it also decreases in volume at the same time the synth bass line is descending, allowing for more clarity of that line. In a way it does still have a commentary role, but it poses a question to the synth rather than the answer—and that conversational dynamic is what ultimately makes the track retain a live feeling.

In conclusion, saxophone solos enhance or are a driving force behind major musical events. They represent an intersection between EDM conventions and improvisational practices in jazz. These saxophonists—and their solos—can broaden a groove or contribute

melodic material that drives a rise into a drop, which is typically the densest and most intense part of dance tracks. They can play the tracks in and out of breakdowns, unravelling the time and acting to deconstruct or reconstruct the groove. Saxophonists operating in electronic dance genres embrace the conventions of dance music in their improvisations and weave together in myriad ways the fixed and flexible affordances groove oriented electronic music provides.

## Chapter Two – Case Study of Anders Nilsen’s “Salsa Tequila” (2014)

On the surface “Salsa Tequila” is a seemingly silly dance pop track with nonsensical Spanish lyrics and a catchy saxophone riff. However, Anders Nilsen’s inspiration and ideas on how to make “the ultimate summer song”—and ultimately the success of the track—is a culmination of multiple movements within European dance music. These include the injection of and influence of Latin American genres like reggaeton and kuduro, the prevalence and effect of the “Calabria” saxophone sample, and the power of the *sound* of something—the timbral presence of the saxophone and the sound of Spanish lyrics. In an interview Nilsen gave with BuzzFeed in 2014, his recipe for the ultimate summer hit is, “the beat, saxophone, accordion, and Spanish lyrics on top of it, we thought it sounded really funny.” The popularity of the song, reaching #1 in the Netherlands and Norway and charting above #72 in countries like Germany, Belgium, Finland, and Sweden—certainly proves Nilsen’s theory, but the reason why it stands true is due to the influences in the construction of the groove, sampling, and sound memories associated with the saxophone.

To understand how a saxophone riff contributed to Anders Nilsen’s hit “Salsa Tequila” (2014) it is first necessary to understand musical irony and parody in jazz, and the ways in which jazz musicians using it operate in multiple musical and cultural spaces. Ingrid Monson (1996)’s analysis of several jazz recordings, notably John Coltrane’s “My Favorite Things,” explains how two seemingly divergent styles of music are reimagined by an artist with a “doubleness” (p. 106)—in Coltrane’s case being a Black American musician performing a white, Euro-American Broadway song. Monson (1996) puts forward the idea of Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1984, p. 291) that “Resemblance thus can be evoked cleverly by dissemblance” (p. 107). Monson (1996)’s analysis of “My Favorite Things” unpacks the ways in which African American

musical aesthetics and values are reflected in the tune, even describing it as “Coltrane’s version beating the European American musical standards at their own game” (p. 118) to create a version that many listeners consider to be better than the original. This idea of doubleness and reinventing a seemingly vastly different kind of music can create a work that is not only legitimate, but also highly regarded by listeners is exactly what “Salsa Tequila” achieves. Using jazz and its predecessors as a historical antecedent, Kitts & Baxter-Moore (2008) highlight the presence of humour in hit songs across a broad spectrum of popular music genres. Bridging the musical elements of a song with ridiculous—and at times outrageous—lyrics, is Michael Mooradian Lupro’s example of Weird Al Yankovic (Kitts & Baxter-Moore (2008, p. 239), who is best known for his parodies of pop songs, covering them and writing satirical lyrics. Nilsen is a Norwegian producer who created a massive dance hit fusing a Euro-dance beat with kuduro melodies and countermelodies. While “Salsa Tequila” is an original song, like Yankovic the lyrics are absurd enough to parody the European perception of the sound of Spanish lyrics. “Salsa Tequila” did stir some questions surrounding cultural appropriation, but intention is critically important in this context. In this chapter, I argue that Nilsen’s goal was never to make a kuduro or reggaeton track, rather that “Salsa Tequila” is a social commentary on the European consumption of these genres despite relatively low percentages of Spanish speaking people in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway where tracks like “Danza Kuduro” (Don Omar, 2010) and “Gasolina” (Daddy Yankee, 2004) were hugely popular.

While Nilsen’s use of Spanish lyrics is a commentary on the popularity of Daddy’ Yankee’s “Gasolina,” the saxophone riff and accordion lines are absolutely a reflection of the sound of kuduro.

“Danza Kuduro” Accordion Introduction:

Figure 25252525 - "Danza Kuduro" Don Omar, Lucenzo (0:00)

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time. It features four staves: Accordion, Vocals, Electric Bass, and Drum Set. The Accordion part begins with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, marked with a 'sim.' (simile) dynamic. The Vocals staff shows a vocal line starting with the lyrics 'Dan za Ku'. The Electric Bass staff is mostly silent, with a few notes. The Drum Set staff shows a steady rhythm of eighth notes.

The second system of the musical score continues the 4/4 time signature. It features four staves: Acc. (Accordion), Vox. (Vocals), E.B. (Electric Bass), and D.S. (Drum Set). The Acc. part continues with the same melodic and bass lines. The Vox. part has lyrics 'du ro plo plo plo cen zo Al right'. The E.B. part has a few notes, marked with a 'sim.' dynamic. The D.S. part shows a steady rhythm of eighth notes.

Figure 26262626 - "Salsa Tequila" Anders Nilsen (counter melody)

(0:44)

T. Sx.

Acc.

Vox.

Ta co E va Men dez... Grin go co sta co ri zo... San ta Ma ri a Tex Mex Sha ki ra na cho sal sa... Som

Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D

Gtr.

Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D

Pno.

D. S.

FX

(metallic/bells fall)

9

T. Sx.

Acc.

Vox.

bre ro ga to ne gro... Mo ji to Old El Pa so... Ma drid Chi hua hua A de len... Por fa vor bai lan do...

Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D

Gtr.

Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D Ebm A# G# D# Bb/D

Pno.

D. S.

FX

(sweep)

Both accordion lines share the same rhythm, featuring the syncopated sixteenth note phrase at the beginning of each bar that propels the rhythm forward. Both songs also employ the same chord progression: vi-IV-I-V, with the differences being that harmonic rhythm of “Salsa Tequila” occurs on a two-bar loop with a chromatic walk up leading back to “vi,” and “Danza Kuduro’s” harmonic rhythm is on a four-bar loop. The way the accordion line is harmonized is also strikingly similar—with diatonic thirds occurring on the latter parts of the sixteenth note

half of the bar and on eighth notes later in the bars. Nilsen successfully emulates the kuduro accordion sound, with similarity in phrase shaping and harmonic progression to “Danza Kuduro.” Nilsen’s successful emulation of the *sound* of kuduro serves the purpose of parody of the song, by satisfying the listener’s association of the sound of elements of the genre with the sound of summer.

In addition to the accordion line sounding like Kuduro, an important orchestrational feature of “Salsa Tequila” is that the accordion trades its countermelody responsibilities with the saxophone. The effect of hearing both timbres coming in and out of the mix fulfills a structural purpose—of denoting new sections—but also constantly reinvigorating all the musical memories associated with those two timbres to the listener.

*Table 1111- Structure of "Salsa Tequila"*

<b>Section</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>	<b>Saxophone</b>	<b>Accordion</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Intro	(0:07)	x		Low pass filter opening
First drop	(0:15)	x		
First chorus	(0:29)		x	
First verse	(0:45)		x	
Verse 2	(1:00)	x		Low pass filter opening
2 <sup>nd</sup> Drop	(1:15)	x		
Chorus 2	(1:30)		x	
Verse 3	(1:44)		x	
Verse 4	(2:00)	x		

Breakdown	(2:14)	x		1 <sup>st</sup> two beats of riff repeated, condensed to 1 <sup>st</sup> beat, beat repeat effect to create a "rise"
3 <sup>rd</sup> Drop	(2:29)	x		
Chorus 3	(2:45)		x	
Outro	(3:00)	x	x	

The track predictably alternates between the two instruments until the outro, when the texture is stripped down to saxophone, accordion, vocals, and guitar, following the format of a pop song.

Figure 27272727 - "Salsa Tequila"

(2:59)

13

T. Sax.

13

Acc.

13

Vox.

Ho la som bre ro Cuan ta co sta se ñ or i ta En chi la da Ro na ldo

E9m A9 G9 D9 B7/D E9m A9 G9 D9 B7/D

13

Gtr.

13

Pno.

13

D. S.

13

FX

(metallic/bells fall)

Perhaps the motivation behind Nilsen’s choice to split the countermelodies between two saxophone sounds and to exclude the accordion is because they possess similar ranges and or generate similar frequencies. The saxophone riff is exactly as we hear it throughout the track, however the accordion leaves behind its “Danza Kuduro” style riff to play the vocal melody. This gives the vocals the freedom to do speaking riffs, unpitched and with more nonsensical, random Spanish words and names. The exit of the other chordal instruments and rhythm section gives the saxophone and accordion the space they need to play these two lines without getting in each other’s way and crowding the overall texture. One possible reason for Nilsen’s choice to abandon the accordion countermelody in this situation is that the two lines are too rhythmically similar and would overwhelm that rhythmic space. Here are the two lines viewed together:

Figure 28282828 - "Salsa Tequila" saxophone & accordion

When listening to the two lines together in isolation the two parts compete, ultimately making it impossible to draw a sonic focal point. Instead, the syncopated Kuduro style saxophone line and the accordion playing the vocal chorus melody occupy different rhythmic spaces to create counterpoint:

Figure 29292929 - "Salsa Tequila" sax & accordion 2



In addition to the rhythmic separation of the saxophone supplying syncopation and sixteenth note feel, and the accordion supplying consistent eighth notes, the pitches of each line complement each other to imply the harmonic progression. In this way the same role is fulfilled by two different sounds, which exemplifies the importance of timbral change in dance music.

### The “Calabria” Lick

I first heard this saxophone line in Enur ft. Natasja’s track “Calabria 2007,” (2007) a remix of Rune Reilly Kölsch’s original “Calabria” (2003). After becoming aware of the sample’s presence in several dance tracks, I traced its presence in tracks from 2003 to 2023. The passing down of this melodic idea from artist to artist is akin to the way jazz improvisers evoke their connections to musical elders by learning and implementing their vocabulary. Each time the idea reappears in another track, all of the listener’s aural memories associated with that sound are evoked. Like in jazz, the longer the idea remains in the collective consciousness as shared vocabulary the more that idea becomes charged with historical

connection. Therefore by 2022 when Nathan Dawe used the sample, that idea brings the musical memories of many tracks since the original “Calabria” (Rune Reilly Kölsch, 2003).

Although the idea remains the same, the lick evolves in different ways from artist to artist. In jazz, improvisers often evoke their connections with jazz greats by quoting their ideas while reinvigorating them with varying degrees of variation. Aside from varying filtering and audio effects, the “Calabria” lick remains the same—making a strong case for all instances of it being created with sampled saxophone sounds as opposed to an original saxophonist playing it with later samples. Where it diverges is in these aspects: key and how it sounds/would sit on a real saxophone, position(s) within the track, and filtering and audio effects (see table 2). Tempo changes and additional effects are also present, but I have included those that best demonstrate the passing on of this piece of melodic vocabulary. It is also notable that there are varying degrees of thresholds for each audio effect, but a deeper analysis of these effects would shift focus towards production and away from the role of the saxophone. Other manipulations like beat repeat or cutting the sample in different ways are also present in this list of tracks, however these manipulations still keep the material quite close to the original sample.

*Figure 30303030 - "Calabria" original sample*



Table 2222 - Tracing the “Calabria” Lick

Track and year	Artist(s)	Intro	Build	Drop / Chorus / Breakdown	Harmonic	Groove	Filtering / effects	Key (concert pitch)	Number of Plays (Spotify)
“Calabria” (Original Mix) 2003	Rune Reilly Kölsch		(1:16)	(3:33) breakdown			Delay, echo, reverb	Eb	Unknown
“Destination Calabria” 2006	Alex Gaudino, Crystal Waters	(0:00)		(0:56) drop (2:04) breakdown-build (3:05) drop	Until (0:56)	Until (0:56)	High pass filter, low pass filter, delay	D	302, 795, 781
“Calabria 2007” 2007	Enur ft. Natasja	(0:15)		(0:30) chorus (1:31) chorus (2:17) breakdown (2:47) chorus	(0:14) (1:16)	(0:14) (1:16)	Low pass filter	Eb	124, 960, 929
“Calabria – Firebeatz Remix” 2014	Rune RK, Firebeatz	(0:31)	(0:47)			(0:31)	Delay, reverb, beat repeat	Eb	57, 683, 311
“Destination Calabria” 2021	Masove, Brendan Mills, Tess Burrstone	(0:00)	(0:46) build (1:56) build	(0:53) drop (2:06) drop			High pass filter, low pass filter	D	56, 703, 893
“Calabria (feat. Fallen Roses, Lujavo & Lunis)” 2021	Dance Fruits Music, DMNDS, Fallen Roses	(0:00)	(0:12) (0:58) (1:40)	(0:21) drop (0:43) verse (1:10) drop (1:26) breakdown (1:53) drop			Low pass filter	Eb	174, 877, 528
“21 Reasons Why” 2022	Nathan Dawe, Ella Henderson	(0:00)		(0:35) drop/chorus (1:21) drop/chorus (2:00) final drop			Delay, high pass filter, reverb	Eb	271, 120, 224

"Calabria (Master Remix)" 2022	Teddy Specter	(0:02)	(0:53) (1:33) (2:34) (2:51)	(1:02) drop (fragmented) (1:19) chorus (fragmented) (1:49) drop (3:04) drop (fragmented)	(2:19)	(2:19)	Echo, high pass filter, reverb	Eb	451, 368
"Destination Calabria (Niteblue Remix)" 2023	Masove, Tess Burrstone, Niteblue	(0:00)					Low pass filter, delay, reverb	D	156, 462

In tracing nine tracks with the "Calabria" sample I found that all either kept the sample in its original key or down one semitone. There are two possible reasons producers chose to use those keys, even though sampling allows for many manipulations including changing the key to anything else. One is that the original key carries a certain sound feel and timbre, and one semitone down is either close enough and served producer's other compositional considerations. Another is that those two keys—the original and transposed down—are very comfortable keys on alto or tenor saxophone. For alto saxophone concert Eb and D transpose to C and B on the instrument, and then F and E on tenor saxophone. Concert Eb and D are very common keys saxophonists would learn jazz standards in, as well as play in genres like Latin, pop, or R&B—making it easy for saxophonists to play these remixes live or improvise over them. From my perspective as a jazz saxophonist working in these genres, I would also prefer these keys over other adjacent keys like concert E or Db—for reasons such as simply having to play in these keys in professional situations more frequently, therefore feeling more comfortable. Concert Eb and D also contain notes on the saxophone that cut better and allow altissimo notes in those keys a little bit easier, allowing for the saxophonist to employ techniques like altissimo and growling more naturally. The sample repeatedly used in the same key, or one close to it, also has implications for triggering musical memories to the listener.

While it is certainly recognizable to the listener in a different key as the same melody, there is something about hearing it in the same key, in the same range of the instrument, and with the same phrasing and inflection that calls those memories up faster.

### **Other Influences—Reggaeton, Kuduro, and Pop**

While Reggaeton and Kuduro have gained a growing presence in electronic dance music, so has the saxophone in pop and American hip hop, and the Eurovision song contest stage. Songs like “Edge of Glory” (Lady Gaga, 2011), “Thriftshop” (Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, 2012), “Talk Dirty” (Jason Derulo, 2013), and “Problem” (Ariana Grande, 2014) helped the instrument become a familiar sound in the mainstream by featuring saxophone riffs and solos. This trend is absolutely a reflection of the instrument’s long history of “honking and screaming” in Black American music and the “epic sax solo,” which is traced in the work of Miller (1995). However, there was another moment in Eurodance music that brought the instrument into the spotlight of pop culture and internet memes—Sergey Stepanov’s performance at the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest of “Run Away” with SunStroke Project and Olia Tira representing Moldova. Despite finishing in 22<sup>nd</sup> place, Stepanov’s performance of the song’s catchy riff and his unique dancing while playing went viral, with him becoming known as “Epic Sax Guy.” The original video of Stepanov at the Eurovision song contest amassed twenty-six million views<sup>1</sup>, inspired countless internet memes, spoofs, parodies, remixes, and catapulting Stepanov to a level of fame not enjoyed by many Moldovan/Transnistrian musicians prior. Stepanov’s viral fame planted the saxophone in the consciousness of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHXDMe6QV-U>

millions of people it reached via social media, furthering the instrument's association with internet humor, parody, and social commentary.

### **Real or the sound of it?**

I have previously discussed the ways in which "Salsa Tequila" is a representation of the saxophone's role in producing the ultimate summer song. "Salsa Tequila" does not use an acoustic saxophone sound, but the presence of a saxophone sound—real or not—demonstrates the power that the implication of the instrument's sound has to aesthetics and structural function. Without seeing Nilsen's DAW or conducting an interview to discover exactly how he engineered the sound(s) behind the "Salsa Tequila" riff, the most educated guess of what comprises the sound I can make is that it is tenor saxophone sound samplings used in the range of the alto saxophone. I was able to explore this theory by recreating that process in Ableton Live, inputting the riff to a tenor saxophone sampled instrument—which created the timbre and register heard in "Salsa Tequila." NikoFlax made an excellent video remaking the track and demonstrating all the track's layers on his YouTube channel<sup>2</sup>. This invites the question of why Nilsen would choose this process instead of to leave the riff in the traditional range of the alto saxophone. Using the range of the alto saxophone with a tenor saxophone sound creates a new, different sound. The timbre and range combination is not quite the sound of the alto, nor the sound of the tenor, which gives a familiar sound a different tinge. This exemplifies the work of Lavengood (2020) in her analysis of the role of timbre in an instrument's role changing from a functional one in a piece of music to a *novelty* one. The timbre reflected by Nilsen's production choices changes the way the saxophone is heard in this track from contributing functionally to being a novelty sound in the overall mix. This also

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38JSOJIDKu4>

harkens back to the value of possibility in EDM, this is an example of how producers can use the tools available to create a new sound with familiar sound memories. However, there is another possibility, perhaps Nilsen—consciously or subconsciously—wanted a slightly “fake” saxophone sound. The “fake” sound almost sounds corny or cheesy, pointing the song’s humour. The decision not to use an acoustically produced saxophone sound is part of the parody—which would complement the absurdity of the song’s lyrics. In any case, all of the aesthetic and structural components filled by an acoustic instrument are satisfied here even with a synthetic substitute.

In addition to employing a sampled saxophone sound, Nilsen uses completely nonsensical Spanish lyrics. Nilsen is honest about his lack of Spanish language skills, stating at the end of the song, “no hablo español” (I do not speak Spanish). In the introduction of the official lyric video<sup>3</sup>, Nilsen announces that he thinks he has made that summer’s hit, with his friends presenting a check list: accordion, saxophone, and lyric video. After announcing Spanish lyrics “to top it off,” one friend poses the question of when Nilsen learned Spanish, to which he replies, “sí” (yes).

*Lyrics (with annotations):*

*Spanish*

Burrito, gasolina, dale!

*\*chorus*

Salsa, tequila, corazon

Cerveza, muy bueno

Salsa, tequila corazon

Cerveza muy bueno

Salsa, tequila corazon

Cerveza muy bueno

Salsa, tequila corazon

Muy bueno

*English*

Burrito, gasoline (reference to Daddy Yankee song), okay!

Salsa, tequila, heart

Beer, very good

Salsa, tequila, heart

Beer, very good

Salsa, tequila, heart

Beer, very good

Salsa, tequila, heart

Very good

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77Ms1oCiDH4>

Taco, Eva Mendez  
Gringo, costa, chorizo  
Santa Maria, Tex Mex  
Shakira, nacho, salsa  
Sombrero, gato negro  
Mojito, old el paso  
Madrid, Chihuahua, Adelén  
Por favor, bailando

Taco, Eva Mendez  
White guy, coast, chorizo (sausage)  
Saint Mary, Tex Mex  
Shakira, nacho, salsa  
Hat, black cat  
Mojito, old el paso  
Madrid, Chihuahua, Adelén (cities)  
Please, dancing

Guacamole, jalapeño,  
Salma Hayek, Ricky Martin  
Bacalao, muy bueno,  
mariachi, gasolina  
Calamari, muchas gracias,  
Macarena, mi amigo  
Livin' la vida loca,  
Antonio Banderas, dale!

Guacamole, jalapeño,  
Salma Hayek, Ricky Martin  
Codfish, very good  
Mariachi, gasoline  
Calamari, thank you very much  
Macarena, my friend  
Livin' the crazy life  
Antonio Banderas, okay!

*\*chorus*

Las ketchup desesperado<sup>4</sup>  
Mallorca sí cortado  
Corazon La Bamba  
Arriba Carlos Santana  
Selena Gomez porque  
Machete, enchilada  
Uno dos tres quatro Tony Montana

The (plural/feminine) ketchup, desperate  
Mallorca (island) yes cortado (type of coffee)  
Heart La Bamba (song)  
Above Carlos Santana  
Selena Gomez why  
Machete (knife), enchilada  
One two three four Tony Montana

Guacamole, jalapeño,  
Salma Hayek, Ricky Martin  
Bacalao, muy bueno,  
mariachi, gasolina  
Calamari, muchas gracias,  
Macarena, mi amigo  
Livin' la vida loca,  
Antonio Banderas, dale!

Guacamole, jalapeño,  
Salma Hayek, Ricky Martin  
Codfish, very good  
Mariachi, gasoline  
Calamari, thank you very much  
Macarena, my friend  
Livin' the crazy life  
Antonio Banderas, okay!

Uno! Dos! Tres! Tequila!

One! Two! Three! Tequila!

*\*chorus*

Hola sombrero  
Cuanta cuesta señorita

Hello hat  
How much does this cost young lady

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<sup>4</sup> Desperados is a type of beer from France Nilsen may be referencing

Enchilada Ronaldo Futbol  
Ricky Martin  
No hablo Español

Enchilada Ronaldo Football (soccer)  
Ricky Martin  
I don't speak Spanish

If the listener has limited understanding of Spanish this song could sound rather authentic, especially because it has many references of foods that do not have translations in other languages anyway, ex: salsa, taco, guacamole, enchilada, etc. These are all familiar words to the non-Spanish speaker, making them pronounceable and memorable to Nilsen's audience. In his 2014 interview with BuzzFeed Nilsen said that when Daddy Yankee's "Gasolina" took Europe by storm, when people sang along "it was like, gibberish, gibberish, gibberish GASOLINA." If you are a Spanish speaker or possess any Spanish language skills, the parody of the song is even more abundant, making the lyrics even funnier (see lyrics with translation). Then again, Nilsen never intended to produce serious lyrics, as "the ultimate summer song" the humor and lightheartedness certainly fits. Even above the meaning of the lyrics, the most important achievement is that the lyrics *sound* like Spanish which still achieves the intended result.

There have been many socio-cultural factors driving the uptake of the saxophone in mainstream pop and dance music to an extent that it is considered an essential component of the "ultimate summer song." I have traced the undercurrents that set the stage for "Salsa Tequila," such as the rise of popularity of Reggaeton and Kuduro in Europe, the relationship of the accordion and saxophone in dance music, the history of parody and irony in jazz, the intermusicality of "Calabria," and the phenomenon of "Epic Sax Guy." Understanding these movements explain how Anders Nilsen was able to successfully incorporate the elements of accordion, saxophone, and Spanish lyrics to create a massive hit that started as a parody. I have argued that nonsensical lyrics and a non-acoustic saxophone are part of the parody by

Nilsen, and that the perceived effect of a sound is in some ways more powerful than authenticity. When timbre and socio-cultural factors are considered, a much deeper web of musical connections is revealed—making the song a reflection of the forces that drive these connections.

### **Chapter Three—DJing & Playing a Set, Exploring these concepts in live performance**

<https://youtu.be/He1PdFvdawk>

The creative component accompanying this thesis includes a live DJ set in which I am playing and improvising on saxophone and includes two original tracks that I produced. It must first be understood that electronic dance music and the practice of DJing are created and practiced first and foremost for the purpose of “non-stop dancing” (Peixoto Ferreira, 2012, p. 4). With music created explicitly for dancing, the goal of the DJ is to mix through different tracks—through various techniques—to keep the dance floor moving. Kai Fikentscher (2012) offers this description of what a DJ producer does, “people who entertain audiences using mediated music, usually vinyl records or CDs, or who work as remixers or record producers by extending the commercial life of a pop song, thereby providing fellow DJs and dancers with music to liven up an evening of clubbing” (p. 83). In this performance, I take the role of producer, DJ, and live instrumentalist. I chose to use a studio for a controlled environment to record—free of variables and hazards that might cloud the quality of the product for submission, such as background noise, equipment limitations, and the unpredictability of live audiences. Typically, a DJ live would be a solo performance,

sometimes they may collaborate with another DJ or instrumentalist—in more rare instances a DJ might be responsible for the decks and play an instrument live. A prime example of a DJ who doubles as an instrumentalist—or an instrumentalist who DJ’s—is Big Gigantic, though in live performance they have two performers to share the responsibilities of managing the decks and their instruments. Though the field is changing, DJing has long been a male dominated performance practice. Gadir’s (2017) work highlights the challenge that female DJ’s have recently made against the idea that “aesthetic qualities of art reign supreme over concerns about equality” (p. 51) as a justification of the continuation of the status quo in DJ culture and practice. My performance practice as a female DJing and playing saxophone live—with tracks I have produced—then challenges the status quo on several levels.

I pre-selected a group of tracks to mix, however this performance will highlight the improvisatory processes in DJing where I draw on the curated tracks but mix in and out of them in ways that are not predetermined. In this way, when I play horn lines, double vocals, and or double electronic instruments these are also unplanned and are part of the improvisation and live performance. This performance also includes sections where I have decided to improvise freely—in conjunction with different instrumentations in the track or as the centerpiece where the improvised solo is intended to be aural focus. My discussion of the two self-produced tracks (both remixes) will highlight the ways in which they draw upon and demonstrate the different processes and conventions examined in the preceding analytical chapters.

## Equipment

To create this set, a Pioneer DDJ-SB3 controller, Serato DJ software, a Sennheiser wireless microphone, reverb effect, a laptop, and an alto saxophone were used. Original tracks were produced using Ableton, a digital audio workstation (DAW) software program. Pictured below is an aerial view of my controller—displaying its two jog wheels, various faders, EQ filters, hot cue points, loopers, tempo and volume controls. There are controllers and decks with more or fewer capabilities, but for my practice I find that the DDJ-SB3 has the right number of features to manage playing saxophone live simultaneously.

Figure 31313131-Pioneer DDJ-SB3 Controller



In addition to the controller, the other viewpoint that I am managing in a performance like this is software on my laptop that the controller is connected to. Some functions like placing a cue point into a track can be done on the laptop, but the controller offers a much higher degree of precision. In my practice, I essentially do everything tactilely from the controller

with the exception of searching for or loading tracks and using the live tracking in the sound file to keep track of where I am in a given track. The screen capture below shows the cue point that I have placed in my second track with the first track displayed on top of it—displaying the upcoming transition.

Figure 32323232 - serato DJLite software screen capture



The Sennheiser Wireless Brass Set has become my microphone of choice because of its high gain and sensitivity—qualities that help me project over a sound system and still retain nuances like timbre variations, pitch manipulations, and can accommodate a wide range of sounds—from high and loud altissimo to a whispering subtone. The Selmer Mark VI alto has been my main instrument for the better part of the last fifteen years, for its versatility, consistency, and feel. A saxophone specific consideration for this performance though is

reed choice. For this situation I typically choose a slightly softer reed than I would in a small group jazz setting for example, for the extra edge and brightness that it affords.

### *Preparation*

To prepare for this performance I curated a group of tracks and experimented with different configurations of a set list, practicing mixing in and out them away from the saxophone at first. Notably the only retentions from set lists in the live performance are the opening and closing tracks- “The Garden” (Navos, 2023) and “Melody” (Sigala, 2023) respectively. Tracks that appealed to me for the curation of this set come mostly from the house umbrella of genres, featuring “four on the floor” styles of beats and tempos between 120 and 130bpm. For my live performance practice I look for tracks with catchy, singable melodies that translate well on the saxophone, with chord progressions or sections that lend themselves well to looping that I can improvise over. In the tracks I curated for this performance I looked for vocals that paired well with the range of the alto saxophone and or allowed for octave doubling, a common texture in saxophone remixes that I highlighted in previous chapters. While DJing and playing live I must mix with the consideration of being ready to play and improvise in ways that complement the mixing for a cohesive performance of the mix as a whole. My original track list with a possible set list going into this performance was:

“The Garden” Navos

“Unholy - Disclosure Remix (feat. Kim Petras)” Sam Smith, Kim Petras, Disclosure (2022)

“My Heart Goes (La Di Da)” Becky Hill, Topic (2022)

“San Francisco” Dom Dolla (2019)

“Belly Dancer” Imanbek, BYOR (2022)

“Goodies” Dillon Francis (2023)

“Deep Down (feat. Never Dull)” Alok, Ella Eyre, Kenny Dope, Never Dull (2022)

“Make Your Move - Joe Stone Edit” Anton Powers, Redondo, Joe Stone (2019)

“Crazy What Love Can Do” David Guetta, Becky Hill, Ella Henderson (2022)

“I Don’t Wanna Wait” David Guetta, OneRepublic (2024)

“Calabria 2007 (feat. Natasja) - Radio Edit” Enur, Natasja

“21 Reasons (feat. Ella Henderson)” Nathan Dawe, Ella Henderson (2023)

“Drinkee - Addal Remix” Sofi Tucker, Addal (2016)

“All Night Long (All Night) - 2020 Edit” Benjamin Ingrosso (2020)

“Feeling You feat. Yasmin [Deep Mix]” Sonny Fodera (2016)

“Only Want You (Sam Feldt Remix” Rita Ora (2019)

“Drums (Feat. Kim Petras)” James Hype, Kim Petras (2023)

“Da Vinci” Aazar & Bellecour (2018)

“Rain (feat. Astryd Brown)” Mark Stent & Pascal & Pearce (2016)

“I’m Good (Blue)” David Guetta, Bebe Rexha (2022)

“Bad (feat. Vassy) - Radio Edit” David Guetta (2014)

“Remember” Becky Hill, David Guetta (2021)

“Lasting Lover” Sigala, James Arthur (2023)

“Feels This Good” Sigala, Mae Muller, Caity Baser, Stefflon Don (2023)

“Where Did You Go?” Jax Jones, MNEK (2022)

“Losing It” FISHER (2018)

“Do It To It” ACRAZE, Cherish (2021)

“Tremor - Sensation 2014 Anthem” Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike, Martin Garrix, Like Mike (2014)

“Ratata” Skrillex, Missy Elliot, Mr. Oizo (2023)

“Mi Gente - Cedric Gervais Remix” J Balvin, Willy William, Cedric Gervais (2017)

“Danza Kuduro – Tiësto Remix” Don Omar, Lucenzo, Tiësto (2024)

“I Like It – Dillon Francis Remix” Cardi B, Bad Bunny, J Balvin, Dillon Francis (2018)

“Move It” Valentino Khan, Dillon Francis (2022)

“Take It” Dom Dolla (2017)

“Wasted Love (feat. Lagique)” Ofenbach, Lagique (2022)

“Melody” Sigala (2023)

By comparing my pre-curated track list to what I actually played in live performance, it can be seen how improvisatory the process is. Tracks that I did not play saxophone over are not discussed in this portion of the analysis. A playlist of the original set list of these tracks can be heard here<sup>6</sup>. Part of the creativity of mixing live that I aim to demonstrate is exploring the different ways these tracks can be juxtaposed, as well as all the different techniques that can be used to mix in and out of them to create a cohesive extended set. My discussion of this performance follows it chronologically, including the more detailed descriptions of my process producing the remix and original track.

### *“The Garden” Navos*

I chose “The Garden” (Navos) as my opening track because compositionally it has quite a slow build up, easing the listener in. The drop and groove are not particularly heavy or intense either, leaving me with many options of directions to follow it with. During this build I also climb higher in the range of the instrument, a technique commonly employed by saxophonists in sections like this. This is a reflection in practice of my findings in Chapter One, analysing the contributions of saxophonists to rises. My first entry on the saxophone is at (0:24), doubling the vocal melody—which I then use as a point of departure to ad lib around the vocals, adding to the build and increase of intensity to the drop at (1:01). During this build I also climb higher in the range of the instrument, a technique commonly employed by saxophonists in sections like this. The next notable section of improvisation is

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<sup>6</sup> <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3pV5a8BSju10qNMuLYKOUA?si=04cd1c8dd1774667>

the track's arrival at the breakdown, a common way saxophonists contribute to structural cues in dance music. The texture at this section (1:32) is sparse, and my improvised ideas are driven by providing a layer of sound to fill out the space—resulting in longer notes sustained, longer phrases, and less rhythmically driven ideas. With the initiation of the build beginning at (1:46), my improvised statements shift towards shorter, more rhythmically driven ideas that are repetitive—contrasting my approach during the breakdown.

*“Unholy - Disclosure Remix (feat. Kim Petras)” Sam Smith, Kim Petras, Disclosure*

From “The Garden” I mix into “Unholy - Disclosure Remix” with a simple, overlapping fade in. For this transition I did preset a cue to mark where exactly I wanted the end of “The Garden” to fade into “Unholy,” which required placing a cue point in “Unholy.” To achieve a smooth transition with this type of fade, the volume for “Unholy” must be at full send to the sound system before “The Garden” concludes to avoid a discrepancy in sound. The track is brought in with the full groove present, where I wanted to let the listeners orientate themselves in this new track before adding saxophone to the mix. A breakdown occurs at (3:29) where I double the vocals. I opted to not play at the next breakdown because I used it to mix into a new track, “My Heart Goes (La Di Da)” (Becky Hill, Topic). I wanted to expose the repeated vocals at (4:59), “slowly” to line it up with Becky Hill’s vocals, “my heart goes.”

*“Crazy What Love Can Do” David Guetta, Becky Hill, Ella Henderson*

After opting not to play over “My Heart Goes (La Di Da)” (Becky Hill, Topic), I enter relatively quickly after mixing into “Crazy What Love Can Do.” At (8:14) I harmonize with the lead vocal, in diatonic thirds above before dropping out to expose the vocals for the verse. I

then double the vocal melody at (9:28), expanding the texture in the absence of the kick. The following breakdown at (10:15) I contribute only short, sparse improvisations, getting out of the way and preparing myself to loop and apply a low pass filter to the looped vocal to mix into the next track—my remix of “Cool 2B Queer” (Chela).

*Original Track #1 – “Cool 2B Queer Summer Remix” (Mariela Mulder 2024-unreleased)*

Performed by: Chela

Written by: Anthony Egizii, Chelsea Wheatley, David Musumeci

Produced by: DNA

Source: Spinning Top Records (2022)

Originally recorded as a pop song at 100bpm, the summer remix brightens the tempo to a typical dance house speed of 120bpm and adds sounds and timbres associated with the tropical house subgenre such as steel drums, snaps, bright piano, “donk” synth bass, and saxophone, see (Snoman 2019, ch. 23) for detailed examples of house music subgenre sound design examples. The structure of the arrangement is typical of the tropical house genre and is as follows:

Bar 1-8: First statement of the groove (kick, hi hats, clap, vocals)

(0:16): First breakdown (vocals exposed, steel drums/bright piano/kick/hi hat staggered entrances, chord progression introduced)

(1:04): First drop/chorus (full groove, vocals)

(1:20): Verse (bass, kick, snap, vocals, hi hats added)

(1:36): Pre-chorus build

(1:52): Build

(2:24): Drop/chorus 2

(2:40): Chorus refrain (vocal ad libs added)

(2:56): Return to first groove (intro- kick, hi hats, clap, vocals)

In the recorded, unreleased version of the track there is no saxophone present. This was done purposely to leave space to improvise on saxophone freely while performing live. This

is precisely how saxophonist Lovely Laura performs live—there are released, radio edits of songs with her well known solos and when performing live her DJ partner Ben Santiago uses live mixes without saxophone so that Lovely Laura has the freedom and sonic space to improvise. Lovely Laura is a British saxophonist with a jazz background who has become well known for her performances in Ibiza, a hub for house music and clubbing. She has become famous for her bright costumes, audience interaction, and some of her solos have become so well known that audience members sing along with her. A prime example of a performance like this is a show she and Ben Santiago did at Ocean Beach Club Ibiza in 2014<sup>7</sup>. In this way, the frequencies taken up by the saxophone are not doubled and fighting for the same sonic space. It also allows Lovely Laura on “Jubel,” and me on “Cool 2B Queer Summer Remix” to incorporate expected parts of the songs into improvisation and enhance or play with listener expectation—expanding the live experience of a track. To release a radio edit of “Cool 2B Queer Summer Remix” I would record my ad libs and solos on saxophone to create a new mix, that I would not use on live performances like this.

To perform this track live, there are additional compositional decisions that I made in its production as well as DJ techniques I used live to mix in and out of this track. In terms of arrangement, there are eight bars of the groove or beat at the opening and closing of the track—these do not include bass or any instruments or sounds that have strong harmonic implications. This allows me to overlay another track while mixing in or out without the restriction of key or chord progressions. At (9:44) I employ a live two bar loop of “Crazy What Love Can Do” (David Guetta, Becky Hills, Ella Henderson) and apply a low pass filter to set up triggering “Cool 2B Queer Summer Remix). On the first build (10:37) I double the

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qpdAST-P0I&t=323s>

vocals on saxophone, introducing a new timbre to break the repetition of the vocals previously and generate excitement for the impending drop at (10:53). The subsequent improvisations in this section start in the higher register of the alto saxophone, continuing the energy of the drop, and then descending in register as the track calms down to the verse (11:07). At this moment the texture is also stripped down to vocals, bass, kick, snaps, and hi hat, contrasting the previously heard intensity. I repeat the same process of doubling the vocals on saxophone to enhance the build at (11:54) for a more intense drop at (12:11), where I start this solo section with growls on an altissimo note—one of the more intense sounds that can be produced on the instrument acoustically. It is also important to note that a different improvisational approach has the potential and power to completely change the energy and emotional feeling of the track. Finally, I mix out of the track by filtering “First Time” (M-22 feat. Medina) with the high frequencies filtered out with a live, low pass filter to layer on top of the last eight bar groove of “Cool 2B Queer Summer Remix.”

*“I Don’t Wanna Wait” David Guetta, OneRepublic*

This track is mashup that borrows the main theme of O-Zone’s “Dragosta Din Te” with new lyrics for the choruses, and new lyrics and music written for the verses. Upon “Dragosta Din Te’s” release in 2004, it topped charts in several countries (Eurochart Hot 100 Singles, *Billboard* and *Music and Media Magazine*), with a remix released by W&W 2021 renewing the melody’s presence in the dance music zeitgeist. David Guetta and OneRepublic’s incorporation of the “Dragosta Din Te” theme is the tune’s latest reappearance in popular dance music has resulted in over 112 million streams on Spotify as of June 2024. This track is fantastic example of how producers can reimagine a melody in a way that brings a completely new experience to the listener while evoking all of the musical

memories associated with it. In using this track in live performance, my addition is the added sound of the saxophone at (15:18), playing the “Dragosta Din Te” melody in conjunction with OneRepublic’s vocals. Looking back to my tracing of the “Calabria” lick and how it has been cemented as a piece of shared vocabulary, the same process can be observed with this melody. This process of how melodies become shared vocabulary—particularly calling back to my discussion of jazz language—is what connects a song created by Moldovan artists in the Romanian language, to David Guetta, and finally to live saxophone performance. Hearing the melody played on saxophone perhaps reminds the listener subconsciously that it was originally heard played by a synth. At (16:05) with a refrain of the chorus, the saxophone is then released into improvisation. Since I previously doubled the vocals, here I chose to play around the vocals, joining back with them until the stripping down to just vocals where I then need both hands to mix into the next track, “Here to Stay” (Mariela Mulder).

*Original Track #2 “Here to Stay” (Mariela Mulder 2024 - unreleased)*

“Here to Stay” is a melodic house track that I produced featuring and inspired by a speech given by U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar, in which she delivers an inspiring message about representation and belonging that resonated particularly strongly with me during the current crises and political climates around the world. This track joins a practice of producers in this genre sampling speeches with quite deep and serious messages into light, melodic dance tracks. “Here to Stay” draws on structural components and sound design of two tracks in particular- “Verona” (Klingande, ft. Lovely Laura) and “One Day (Vandagg) – Radio Edit” (Bakermat). These two tracks feature the speaking voice and the saxophone as co-lead vocals in a way, with the voice carrying the lyric responsibility and the saxophone taking the

melodic leader role. I have found it quite difficult to trace the original audio and source that Klingande samples, but the part(s) used by Klingande in “Verona” are:

The thing for the hour is save the children  
And we're all very serious about that  
Because we are expecting the children to save us all  
But how can they save us?

If they don't even have any examples  
Well what kind of examples, preacher?  
Example of leadership, love, peace, joy and harmony  
Those examples of caring and sharing  
See we must break those generational curses  
That peck our families and communities  
They must know that knowledge is power  
And wisdom is gaining understanding  
The Bible says train up a child in the way they should go  
And when they become old, they shall not deport from it  
I always hear us praising that famous slogan  
Each one - teach one  
But are we really doing our best to be effective in lives of our children?  
Only God can save our souls!

Bakermat’s “One Day (Vandaag) – Radio Edit” features and samples Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech. I extracted the audio from Representative Omar’s speech from the original video aired on C-SPAN<sup>8</sup>, which I selectively pared down to highlight some of its most impactful moments. I wanted to capture the message of her speech in ways that also fit musically with the track. The samples of Representative Omar’s (2023) speech that I sampled were:

This debate today is about who gets to be an American  
They see me as a powerful voice that needs to be silenced  
I will continue to speak up

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd43njvStKY&t=54s>

Because representation matters  
When you push power, power pushes back

I am here to stay  
And I am here to be a voice against harms around the world  
Continuing to expand our ideas of who is American,  
And who can partake in the American experience, experiment, is a good thing  
I am an American  
My voice will get louder and stronger  
And my leadership will be celebrated around the world as it has been

All of the sounds and instruments that I selected in its production were chosen for their enhancement or cooperation with the vocal samples. For example, I chose the key of G after experimenting with what keys allowed the frequency of the vocal audio to be couched in the texture. Like in “Verona” and “One Day (Vandaag) – Radio Edit,” my goal with sound design was to make the spoken vocal samples sound homogenous with the track. Consequently, the parts of the arrangement with speech samples are also sparser in texture—including a deep, bass synth, sustained strings, a pulsating mid-range synth, and shakers.

To mix into “Here to Stay” live, I filter in the introductory beat over the concluding acapella section of David Guetta and One Republic’s “I Don’t Wanna Wait” (16:37). The warm timbres and mid-range vocals of “I Don’t Wanna Wait” setup a smooth connection to the similarly warm timbres of “Here to Stay.” The first breakdown strips the texture down to only piano and saxophone (16:51), a technique discussed in my analyses to facilitate a reset before building the track back up, which occurs at (18:01)—with the saxophone improvising over the full groove. But during this first breakdown, the live decision that made improvising was to get out of the way of the vocals and stop playing, removing that sound from the aggregate texture. However, after centering the speech as the aural focal point, once the full groove is introduced (kick, clap, bongos, djembe, shaker, synth bass, pulsating synth) the

improvising saxophone steps into the melodic foreground. At (19:05) I improvise around the speech samples in short phrases that allow the saxophone to then launch into an unrestricted solo with the departure of the vocals at (19:38). The last statement by the vocal speech samples providing the sendoff for the saxophone is a particularly powerful one, “I am here to stay and I am here to be a voice against harms around the world. Continuing to expand our ideas of who is American and who can partake in the American experience, experiment, is a good thing. I am an American. My voice will get louder and stronger and my leadership will be celebrated around the world as it has been” (Omar 2023). Ilhan Omar’s story and journey as a refugee fleeing war torn Somalia in the nineteen nineties to becoming a United States congresswoman is incredibly inspiring, a story she shares in a podcast interview with Senator Bernie Sanders<sup>9</sup>. She is one of the politicians around the world who advocates for people who do not have a voice—at the cost of being censored, attempts to silence her, and racist and bigoted attacks directed at delegitimizing her as a sitting elected official. She delivers a powerful message on why representation is so important, and I wanted to carry that representation into the musical form of this track. I wanted to incorporate the power of her message in this address into a track with an energy that looks forward, and allows for bluesey, emotional melodic ideas improvised on the saxophone. In addition to the ways Lovely Laura and Ben Santiago use mixes live that do not include saxophone, Big Gigantic uses a similar live performance practice in which they loop sections to improvise over in a similar way to jazz performance. In an interview with Sam D’Arcangelo for Relix Magazine (2015), saxophonist Dominic Lalli compares this process to a game of “choose your own adventure” to describe how he and musical partner Jeremy Salken make

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj1QU6eYu7Y>

these decisions on the fly in live performance. “Here to Stay” is an example of a track designed specifically for my live performance practice, integrating live mixing and live improvisation. Like my remix of “Cool 2B Queer,” a different improvisational approach also has the potential here to dramatically change the sound and feel of the track. My mix out of this track is into Dom Dolla’s “San Francisco” also features sampled speech, but with a much heavier hitting sound with several synths. I wanted to continue the sound of speech but use the groove of this track to steer the performance back towards heavier dance tracks. My transition into “Belly Dancer” (Imanbek, BYOR) is achieved by filtering out the low frequencies of “San Francisco” to drop the lower frequency vocals of “Belly Dancer.”

*“Belly Dancer” Imanbek, BYOR*

Introducing this track at its highest frequency level intensifies the drop and addition of the saxophone at (22:58). In this statement of the chorus the saxophone doubling of the vocal melody is one octave higher, a common texture explored in the different ways an acoustic instrument can enhance intensity. At (24:08) after doubling the vocal melody again, I launch into improvisation as the aural focal point. The funkiness and minor key of this track invites bluesy, double time melodic ideas. I play out this track and drive the ending in a very similar way that David Poole does on GoldFish’s “Late Night People,” in fact, the two tracks are even in the same key (concert F) so it is no accident that the ideas I play are quite similar. Concert “F” is also a very prevalent key for jazz players in standards and 12 bar blues forms. This is a fleeting, short moment but it demonstrates my background as a jazz improviser and how I draw on other jazz players working in the dance music space.

*“Take It” Dom Dolla*

“Take It’s” main theme is presented by quite a nasally timbred synth lead with lots of pitch bending applied. (25:25) is the first instance in this performance where I directly double a synth. Since I am playing live, the listener can see and knows that part of what they are hearing is being produced by an acoustic instrument—but what this highlights is the way that electric and acoustic sounds can be blended, particularly in the ways I must adapt my playing to create one sound with the synth. The pitch bends are quite wide, requiring greater physical accommodation of the embouchure to blend with the synth. In this way, I am playing live in a way that makes the acoustic saxophone behave like an electronic instrument, while also adding a more human touch to the synth sound. The listener is reminded that in this moment, the music is being played by a person and a live instrument.

*“Mi Gente - Cedric Gervais Remix” J Balvin, Willy William, Cedric Gervais*

I was made privy to this remix while performing a live set with Los Angeles based DJ and producer Christy Lawrence for Sydney Mardi Gras’ 2024 Eden party. My mix into it from “Take It” is a standard drop into a cue point at the conclusion of a phrase—this method makes it easy to facilitate transitions between tracks with incompatible keys. In this instance “Take It” is in concert C minor and “Mi Gente” is in concert E minor. At (26:07) the texture of Take It” thins at the end of the phrase, and the cue point where I trigger “Mi Gente” only has one synth sounding at that time, connecting the two tracks at compatible textural levels. Like in “Take It,” the theme played by the synth—that is also key melodic content of the song—is also an electric sound that has quite an extreme contrast to an alto saxophone played acoustically. By juxtaposing the two sounds I am able to insert an acoustic sound into this track and continue to remind the listener that the electronic music that they hear is indeed a live performance. My improvised contributions in this part of the set come during the build

at (26:39), where I begin by echoing the vocals in a call and response, with my contributions getting closer and closer together in tandem with the vocal repeated phrases until the drop at (27:00). At this moment I let the track play without contributing any saxophone sound until (27:08) in the second iteration of the drop melody, expanding the texture and reintroducing an acoustic sound. At (27:31) the final refrain of the chorus occurs and I chose to double the synth throughout this section, with the track at one of its higher moments of intensity. To mix out of this track, I changed my mind with what I wanted to play next with very little of the “Mi Gente” track left—forcing me to put the saxophone down quickly to prepare a transition. However, during live performance mistakes can happen and that is what occurs at (27:55)—I went to cue in the next track but I stopped the side of my controller playing “Mi Gente” instead, causing a stoppage in the music. Recovery is also part of live performance, and I managed to bring in “Danza Kuduro” at a part of the track that is quite relaxed, perhaps giving the impression that I had done an intentional sudden stop and reset—which is a technique DJ’s use.

*“Danza Kuduro – Tiësto Remix” Don Omar, Lucenzo, Tiësto*

Part of live DJ performance is also presenting the listener with fresh takes on familiar material. Originally performed by Don Omar and Lucenzo, “Danza Kuduro” is going through a similar process to “Calabria” and “Dragosta Din Te”—being remixed and reimagined by producers, DJs, and instrumentalists in ways that are keeping it in dance music consciousness. Tiësto’s remix gives the Latin a hit an electro-house sound with familiar sounds like the accordion retained. In tracing the elements that went into making Anders Nilsen’s “Salsa Tequila” a summer dance hit, the relationship between the accordion and saxophone sharing or trading melodic responsibilities became vitally important to

understand the success of that song. This awareness informed the moments in performance of this track where I chose to double the accordion or trade with it. This is why I chose to come in with the accordion melody during the build at (28:33) and continue playing into the drop. The listener knows this melody, and Tiësto's remix gives it a familiar house dance sound—so the invigorating sound is the saxophone.

*“Rain (feat. Astryd Brown)” Mark Stent & Pascal & Pearce*

The drop sections of this track are quite intense—thick textures, multiple layers of synths, and driving, hard hitting beat. To contrast this feature of the track I decided to wait for its breakdown and use that structural component for my improvisation at (31:47). I wanted to create interplay between the saxophone ad libs and the vocals during the suspension of the time and beat. My statements and rhythmic ideas become more active and higher in range throughout the build. To give the listener a new experience of the drop at (32:45) I continued to improvise, hitting a high F (concert Ab) at the downbeat of the drop. In that moment of improvisation, I cannot say for certain if this was intentional, but improvising on an acoustic instrument over such an intense and hard-hitting beat almost softens their affect—as a solo instrument the saxophone in a way diverts the listener's attention. The result is almost to aid in playing the track down for my next mixing transition—into the piano line of David Guetta and Bebe Rexha's “I'm Good (Blue).”

*“I'm Good (Blue)” David Guetta, Bebe Rexha*

My mix into this track was a bit abrupt, but it worked because I bridged the thinning texture of “Rain” into following sound being only piano. In this track I completely took over

the melody at the first drop at (33:47), doubling the piano melody but effectively making it a subservient sound to the live saxophone. It is also important to note that this track is also a mashup and remix of “Blue,” originally released by Eiffel 65 in 1998. Remixing and resurgence of melodies that become shared vocabulary invites further reimagining of it, which is what makes the melody sound new and fresh again on the saxophone live. Furthermore, even in this remix mashup, the listener has still only heard the melody played by piano – changing the orchestration with a wind instrument introduces a new realm of possibilities. An example of this occurs at (34:33) where I am heard bending pitch, something that without production engineering would not be possible with the use of piano.

#### *“Melody” Sigala*

Becoming conscious of time and knowing that my set was almost finished, I mixed quickly out of “21 Reasons (feat. Ella Henderson)” (Nathan Dawe, Ella Henderson) and into Sigala’s “Melody” because I wanted to play most of the track and use it as a conclusion. This is also the only track that I played nearly in its entirety during the whole set. I brought in “Melody” at the chorus, requiring precision to cut out of “21 Reasons” at exactly the right time to maintain the time and not disrupt the beat. I wanted to finish the set with a big, centerpiece solo at the refrain at the conclusion of this song, playing over the vocals and driving the track to its conclusion. My signal to orient the saxophone solo at the foreground of the listener’s awareness was holding a high D (concert F) at the beginning of the drop. This note on the alto saxophone lends itself well to growling and splitting, making it easier to intensify this note even in comparison to its chromatically adjacent notes. The predominant use of eighth notes in the vocals in this section left space to improvise sixteenth note lines around them, alternating them with sustained high notes—a technique commonly employed

in by saxophonists in dance music during solos in similar musical situations. I also wanted to leave the listener with the saxophone as the very last sound—meaning that I would need to carefully play the solo into the last phrase to land exactly with the vocals. Even though I did predetermine that this was how I wanted to end the set—even practicing and preparing improvisational approaches—the end result is still improvisation.

### *Conclusions*

My primary goal in submitting this performance is to demonstrate that the ways improvising saxophonists have embraced EDM conventions in recorded tracks are also very much part of live performance practice. Driving structural transitions like breakdowns, builds or playing out the conclusion of a track are all ways in which an improvising instrumentalist can embrace these processes in dance music in ways that draw on shared vocabulary. This shared vocabulary demonstrates the intermusicality between producers, DJs, and instrumentalists—and in this performance pieces of melodic, rhythmic and aesthetic choices reflect the influence of the performers and producers examined in the analytical chapters. This performance is also a live demonstration of the interplay between electric and acoustic instruments analyzed as well. One of my goals as an improvising saxophonist in this setting is to play in a way that allows me to enhance and embrace the track and the mixing in a way that embeds the saxophone into the sound as a whole. As a performer, this is where the creativity in reimagining this music from the perspective of an improviser truly lies. Also in reflecting on this performance, there were certain producers, aesthetics, or harmonic structures that I gravitated more towards to improvise—something that could be investigated

in further research, either through the analysis of those producer's practice and or producing music with similar conventions.

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Gaudino, A., & Waters, C. (2007, February 19). *Destination Calabria - Radio Edit*. Written by  
Alfonso Fortunato Gaudino, LINN SHARON MAY, Rune Reilly Kölsch, Stefano  
Scarpellini.

GoldFish. (2017, October 6). *No One Has To Know*. Armada Music Albums.  
Written by A. Miller, D. Peters, D. Poole

GoldFish, & Soweto Kinch. (2017, October 6). *Late Night People*. Armada Music Albums.  
Written by D. Peters, D. Poole

Grande, A., & Azalea , I. (2014, August 22). *Problem*. Produced by Max Martin, Ilya, and  
Shellback .

GRiZ. (2021a, July 23). *Astro Funk*. Written and produced by Grant Kwiecinski.

GRiZ. (2021b, July 23). *chromesthesia* . Written and produced by Grant Kwiecinski .

GRiZ. (2021c, July 23). *Vibe Check*. Written and produced by Grant Kwiecinski .

Guetta, D., & Bebe Rexha . (2022, August 26). *I'm Good (Blue)*. Produced by David Guetta  
and Timofey Reznikov .

Written by Bebe Rexha, Phil Plested, David Guetta, Gianfranco Randone, Massimo Gabutti,  
Maurizio Lobina and kamille

Guetta, D., & OneRepublic. (2024, April 5). *I Don't Wanna Wait*. Produced by Brent Kutzle,  
David Guetta, Jakke Erixson, Timofey Reznikov and Tyler Spry.

Written by Gregory Hein, Jakke Erixson, Michael Pollack, Ryan Tedder, Brent Kutzle, Dan  
Balan, David Guetta, Josh Varnadore, Timofey Reznikov, Tyler Spry

Guetta, D., Showtek , & VASSY. (2014, November 10). *Bad (feat. VASSY) - Radio Edit*.

Produced by David Guetta, Manuel Reuter, Sultan+Shepard, Showtek and Sultan.  
Written by Giorgio Tuinfort, David Guetta, Manian, Ned Tanner, Shepard, Nick Turpin,  
Ossama Al Sarraf, Sjoerd Janssen, VASSY, Wouter Janssen

Henderson, E., & Dawe, N. (2022, April 29). *21 Reasons (feat. Ella Henderson)*. Produced by  
Nathan Dawe, Punctual .

Written by Ealand Morgan, Nathan John Dawe, Rune Reilly Koelsch, William Martyn Lansley

Hill, B., & Guetta, D. (2021, June 18). *Remember* . Produced by Luke Storrs, Scott Lowe,

David Guetta and Lewis Thompson .

Written by Karen Ann Poole, Kye Elliot Sones, Lewis Thompson, Rebecca Claire Hill, David  
Guetta, Luke Storrs

Hill, B., Guetta, D., & Henderson, E. (2022, April 8). *Crazy What Love Can Do*. Produced by

David Guetta, Jordan Riley, Lewis Thompson, Neave Applebaum, Rob Harvey.  
Written by Becky Hill, Digital Farm Animals, Ella Henderson, Jordan Riley, Lewis Thompson,  
Neave Applebaum, Rob Harvey, David Guetta

Hill, B., & Topic. (2021, August 24). *My Heart Goes (La Di Da)*. Produced by Topic, Josh

Wilkinson .

Written by Charlotte Jane Haining, Rebecca Claire Hill, Frank Nobel, Josh Wilkinson and  
Linus Nordström

Imanbek , & BYOR. (2022, February 18). *Belly Dancer*. Produced by Georgii Poliashov,

Imanbek Zeikenov, Timur Shafiev .

Written by Aliune “Akon” Thiam, Lynval Golding, Neville Staples and Terrence Edward Hall

Ingrosso, B. (2020, July 17). *All Night Long (All Night) - 2020 Edit*. Produced by Silvio

Lisbonne, Pierre-Laurent Faure, Hampus Lindvall.

Written by Lionel Richie

James Hype, & Kim Petras. (2023, October 6). *Drums (Feat. Kim Petras)*. Produced by James

Marsland.

Written by Kim Petras, Pharrell Williams, Chad Hugo, Gene Elliot Thornton Jr., James  
Marsland, Johannes Shore, Joshua Grimmatt, Justin Timberlake, Michele Carmine, Terrence  
Thornton

Jax Jones, & MNEK . (2022, February 4). *Where Did You Go?* Produced by MNEK .

Written by Mark Ralph, Uzoechi Emenike, Wayne Hector, SIBA and Timucin Lam

Killington, J., & Lovely Laura. (2020, September 25). *Painkiller* . Produced by M-22.

Klingande. (2014, January 1). *Jubel - Radio Edit*. Produced by Klingande.

Written by Cédric Steinmyller, Edgar Catry

Klingande . (2019, November 15). *Verona* . Produced by Cédric Steinmyller.

Lady Gaga. (2011, May 23). *Edge of Glory*. Produced by Fernando Garibay.

Written by Paul Blair, Fernando Garibay and Lady Gaga

Lagique , & Ofenbach . (2022, September 2). *Wasted Love (feat. Lagique)* . Produced by Jen

Jis and Ofenbach .

Written by Haris Alagic, Jihad Rahmouni, Sophia Ayana, César Laurent de Rummel, Dorian  
Laudiique

Lovely Laura, & Santiago , B. (2022, August 5). *Gotta Get Away*. Produced by Laura Gibson,

Ben Gibson, Tom Ingamells, Mark Maitland.

Written by Ben Gibson, Laura Gibson, Tom Ingamells

Lovely Laura, & Santiago, B. (2018, May 26). *Just Want Your Body - Radio Edit*. Written by Ben Gibson, Laura Gibson, Matt Schwarz .

Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, & Wanz. (2012, October 9). *Thriftshop (feat. Wanz)*. Written by Ben Haggerty, Macklemore, R. Lewis, Ryan Lewis

Mark Stent, & Pascal & Pearce . (2016). *Rain (feat. Astryd Brown) [Remixes] EP*. Written by Mark Stent, Pascal & Pearce and Astryd Brown

Masove, Niteblue, & Burrstone , T. (2023, August 31). *Destination Calabria (Niteblue Remix)*.

Produced by Masove.

Written by Alfonso Fortunato Gaudino, LINN SHARON MAY, Rune Reilly Kölsch, Stefano Scarpellini

Mills, B., Masove , & Burrstone , T. (2021, April 16). *Destination Calabria*. Produced by Frank

Huckriede and Brendan Mills.

Written by Alfonso Fortunato Gaudino, LINN SHARON MAY, Rune Reilly Kölsch, Stefano Scarpellini

Missy Elliot , Mr. Oizo , & Skrillex . (2023, February 17). *RATATA* . Produced by Skrillex . Written by Melissa Elliott, Christopher Stein, Darryl McDaniels, Debbie Harry, Joseph Simmons, Paul Simon, Quentin Dupieux, Skrillex

Mulder, M. (2024). *Cool 2B Queer - Tropical Remix (unreleased)*. Produced by Mariela Mulder.

Performed by Chela, Written by Anthony Egizii, Chelsea Wheatley and David Masumeci

Mulder, M. (2024b). *Here To Stay (unreleased)*. Produced by Mariela Mulder.

Written by Ihan Omar

Navos. (2023, December 1). *The Garden*. Produced by Navos and Punctual .

Written by Poppy Baskcomb, John Morgan, Ross Harrington, William Lansley

Nilsen, A. (2014, July 1). *Salsa Tequila*. Written and produced by Anders Nilsen .

Ora, R., & Feldt , S. (2019, April 5). *Only Want You - Sam Feldt Remix* . Produced by Andrew

Watt and Louis Bell.

Written by Alexandra Tamposi, Andrew Wotman, Emily Warren and Louis Bell

Rune Reilly Kolsch . (2003). *Calabria*. Written by Rune Reilly Kolsch .

Rune RK, & Firebeatz . (2014, October 27). *Calabria - Firebeatz Remix*. Produced by Rune

Reilly Kölsch.

Written by R. Kolsch, Rune Reilly Kölsch

Sigala . (2023, March 2). *Melody* . Produced by Sigala and Jakke Erixon .

Written by Jakke Erixson, Steve Manovski, Yk Koi, Bruce Fielder, Ida Botten, Jakke Erixon, Shaun Farrugia

Specter, T. (2022, April 22). *Calabria - Master Remix*.

Tira, O., & Sunstroke. (2022, December 9). *Run Away*.  
Written by Alina Galetskia and Anton Ragoza