The process of 'collective creation' in the composition of UK hip-hop turntable team routines

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This article looks at the compositional processes of hip-hop teams based in the UK, focusing on those that have emerged from the practice of creating team 'routines'. Turntable teams, such as the Scratch Perverts, the Mixologists and the DMU Crew, do not create their original compositions from within the Western art tradition of an independent artist creating work in isolation, which is then communicated to performers through staff notation. Instead, turntable teams compose and perform as a collective to create original compositions from existing records, and in doing so have developed innovative compositional strategies.

To be able to analyse and discuss the creative processes of hip-hop turntable teams it has been necessary to construct my own model framework to enable me to identify similar patterns in the creative processes of the teams discussed. In the article, I discuss and analyse one routine from each of the three teams using this framework, focusing on the emergent process of 'collective creation'. The article concludes by establishing a number of characteristics of the compositional processes used by UK turntable teams. Until now, scholarship has neglected the music of hip-hop. Previous work on hip-hop music has been concerned with either sociological or cultural and historical aspects. This article offers a new approach to hip-hop scholarship because it focuses on the actual music of turntable teams and the emergent processes that have developed to create it.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article explores the compositional processes of turntable teams working within the hip-hop genre to collectively compose original music using turntables. Since the development of the gramophone at the end of the nineteenth century, the turntable has become an instrument of creation as well as reproduction, changing the shape of music history (Poschardt 1998: 235). This has led to the ground-breaking compositional strategies of hip-hop turntablism, including the development of flexible compositional processes. Poschardt regards the progressive compositional processes inherent in hip-hop turntable music as making the genre one of the final avant-gardes of the twentieth century (Poschardt 1998: 392). This is an important area to study as little work has been undertaken so far into the innovative work of groups of DJs working in popular culture. Although the turntable work of art music composers such as John Cage and Pierre Schaeffer is relatively well known amongst the academic music community, little scholarly work has been undertaken into the equally interesting turntable music taking place in popular culture.

Previous work on hip-hop composition has fallen into two camps – either sociological studies that focus on the representation of race or the creation of identity in popular culture (Rose 1994; Dimitriadis 2001) or cultural and historical studies that chart the development of hip-hop music through interviews with influential DJs (Brewster and Broughton 1999; Poschardt 1998). There have been a number of short works written concerning DJing in live performance (White 1996; Allen 1997) and one book concerning sample-based hip-hop created in a studio context (Schloss 2004), but by and large the processes of creating live hip-hop have been neglected. Schloss comments how the aesthetic goals of hip-hop artists have been excluded from academic work (Schloss 2004: 2), asserting that most hip-hop scholars have emerged from disciplines concerned with the study of text or social processes rather than musical structures and are not interested in the actual music. This study aims to fill these 'blank spaces' (Schloss 2004: 2) and to demonstrate that hip-hop music is worth academic attention not just in its role within popular culture, but as music itself.

This article offers a new approach to hip-hop scholarship not only because it focuses on the compositional processes, but because in order to do so I have developed an analytical methodology and notational system that is suitable for the analysis of hip-hop turntable composition.[1] In order to give a clear picture of this new area of research, I have not attempted to give any in-depth comparisons between the compositional processes of turntable teams and other music-making practices within popular culture. This, I feel, is not in the scope of this article but may well be an interesting area of focus for another. Neither have I gone into detail regarding the wider historical, social and cultural contexts of hip-hop culture as a whole. The focus of

[1]In order to analyse the routines discussed in this article, I developed and used my own system for the notation of turntable team composition. This resulted in the creation of three scores for the highlighted routines, but these are only intended for analytical purposes rather than for the re-creation of the routines in future.

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this article is specifically to outline the process of 'collective creation' in the composition of UK hip-hop turntable team routines and any in-depth discussions relating to the place of UK turntablism in hip-hop culture as a whole is not within the scope of this article.

2. THE BACKGROUND TO HIP-HOP TURNTABLISM AND SOME DEFINITIONS

In the early 1970s, a 'new and revolutionary genre' (Brewster and Broughton 1999: 192) developed in The Bronx, a borough of New York City, that came to be known as hip-hop. This new genre encompassed music (in DJ-ing and MC-ing), visual art (in graffiti) and dance (in break dancing), as well as style, fashion and 'ideologies, performance and attitudes of mind' (Poschardt 1998: 151). The term 'DJ-ing' is derived from an abbreviation of 'disc jockey', describing an individual who selects and plays pre-recorded material. The term MC-ing is derived from an abbreviation of 'master of ceremonies', describing an individual who introduces the DJ and keeps the crowd informed about occurrences during the hip-hop performance. Sometimes spelt 'emcee', this element of hip-hop culture is generally associated with what has become known as rapping.

By using only records, turntables and microphones, the musicians of early hip-hop culture created original music that, to many, sounded like a completely new musical language (Brewster and Broughton 1999: 321). In order to compose music entirely from parts of other records, hip-hop DJs perfected incredible record manipulation skills. Malcolm McLaren reflected:

> It's using the debris of old music … Finding little beats inside other people's records and mixing them together … [it] doesn't follow the old fashioned format of verse-chorus … That's what makes it one of the newest and the most interesting types of music being made today. (Taylor 1998: 15)

By remaining in relative isolation throughout the culture's formative years, hip-hop music was free to develop without imposed boundaries. From 1973 to 1979 the fundamental elements of hip-hop music, including the appropriation and re-use of existing musical texts and the development of compositional processes, had all been established. In 1995 the term 'turntablism' emerged to reflect the artistic practices of the hip-hop DJ. The term was first used by DJ Babu of the Beat Junkies crew, who stated, 'My definition of a Turntablist is a person who uses the turntables not to play music, but to manipulate sound and create music' (Gragg 1999). Although the term is not embraced by all hip-hop DJs and musicians, it is generally recognised and used within hip-hop culture. Within this context, a turntable team is a group of turntable musicians who come together to collectively compose and perform original music through the manipulation of records on turntables. Team members usually refer to the finished composition as a 'routine'.

3. THE TURNTABLE TEAMS AND THEIR ROUTINES

Three turntable teams are discussed in this article, all of which are based in the United Kingdom – The DMU Crew (based in Leicester), the Mixologists (based in London), and the Scratch Perverts (based in London). Because all three teams are based in the UK, they could be accessed easily for both interviews and performances. It was vital to my research to have as much contact and discussion with the teams as possible. Schloss feels that the aesthetics of hip-hop composition can only be studied fully from within the hip-hop community and sees this as lacking in much research, commenting, 'Most researchers who have written about hip-hop have not sought or have not gained access to that community' (Schloss 2004: 21). To fulfil my aim of writing about the composition of hip-hop team turntable music, as well as the resulting artistic product, it was necessary for me to get as close to the creative processes of the teams as possible, which meant accessing and participating in the community.

The three teams were chosen for specific reasons. The Mixologists and the Scratch Perverts are both internationally renowned professional turntable teams who have been established for a number of years. The routines chosen for analysis are examples of hip-hop turntable music at the highest level. Although the third team, the DMU Crew, includes a number of professional DJs, the team itself does not work professionally and the routine studied was completed early in the team's formation. The contrast in the abilities of these three groups enabled me to gain a wider picture of the processes of hip-hop turntable teams than would have been possible if only the established, professional teams were analysed. This approach will demonstrate how compositional processes are similar across the UK hip-hop turntablist community, regardless of the level of the team in either ability or status.

The gender split of the teams was extremely one-sided. Only one of the team members is female, reflecting the gender bias in this area of hip-hop as a whole. The ethnicity of team members is also extremely biased. The majority of team members are white, one is Asian. In my approach to ethnicity in this study, I share the view of Schloss who does not specify ethnicity when discussing hip-hop musicians and their creative work in *Making Beats*. Making such distinctions, he feels, would be distorting, as the difference in ethnic background does not manifest itself in any stylistic difference between the practices of hip-hop musicians:

> All producers – regardless of race – make African American hip-hop. And those who do it well are respected, largely without regard to their ethnicity. (Schloss 2004: 9–10)

Hip-hop, he says, is African-American music regardless of the ethnicity of its creators:

> … African-derived aesthetics, social norms, standards and sensibilities are deeply embedded in the form, even when it is being performed by individuals who are not themselves of African descent. (*ibid.*: 3)

The routine by the Leicester-based turntable team the DMU Crew (Tim, Kate, Jon and Adam) was created for performance in Leicester in May 2002. The routine by the London-based turntable team the Mixologists (Beni G and Go) was made for performance at the DMC 2001 World Team Championship (formally the DMC DJ Team Championship) at the London Apollo in September 2001. The routine by the London-based turntable team the Scratch Perverts (Tony Vegas, Prime Cuts, Mr Thing and First Base) was created for performance at the 1999 DMC Team Championships at the Hammerstein Ballroom, New York City in September 1999.

4. THE CREATIVE PROCESSES OF HIP-HOP TURNTABLE TEAMS

In order to establish the creative processes of the hip-hop turntable teams, I undertook an empirical examination of the working methods of the three teams using both observation and interview. It became apparent during my examination that similar processes were involved in the groups' creation of a collective work. Turntable teams such as the Scratch Perverts, the Mixologists and the DMU Crew do not create their compositions from within the Western art tradition of an independent artist creating work in isolation, which is then communicated to performers through staff notation. Instead, turntablist teams compose and perform as a collective, creating collaboratively with no use of traditional notation. The collaborative group work of artists is discussed in Michael Farrell's book *Collaborative Circles*, which focuses on the work of artistic groups. He describes artists working within such a framework as forming a 'collaborative circle' (Farrell 2001: 7) within which peers share similar artistic goals and develop a common artistic vision through an exchange of support and ideas (*ibid.*: 266). In relation to the artistic work of hip-hop teams, the level of collaboration is often much greater than that outlined by Farrell, existing not only in the formation and development of the group but also in their creative work and artistic output. In Farrell's description of collaborative circles, artists may exchange ideas and support each other's artistic work (the 'creative work' stage) and may even carry out a project together, for example a performance or an exhibition ('collective action' stage). However, this collective action rarely manifests itself in co-created pieces of work as produced by the turntable teams. For them, the creative work and collective action stages are intertwined. As Farrell does not discuss such co-created artistic work, for the purpose of this article I will use the term 'collective creation' to describe the process. Through analysing interviews with musicians from turntable teams, it becomes apparent that the compositional process is not regarded as a separate facet of the genre but is seen as a natural extension to practising and experimenting with sounds and techniques. For hip-hop turntable teams, practice, the acquisition and attainment of skills and techniques related to performance, is synonymous with the creation and development of original material, composition. The creation of new music is part of the learning process, not separate from it. As in many popular music genres, turntablists may begin by imitating favourite musicians and experimenting with techniques in order to learn to play their instrument. Learning through imitation and experimentation allows for a development of both manual and technical skills, and in hip-hop turntablism this leads quickly to the composition of original material. The reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, the music of turntable teams is constructed from manipulated parts of records. Unless the young turntablist is fortunate enough to own the same records as owned and used by the recorded artist, they will be unable to imitate the track in any great detail. What the young turntablist can imitate however, is the manipulation techniques used on the record, such as mixing and scratching – techniques that effect both material and form. Many of the techniques are well known and recognisable, both visually and aurally, to turntable musicians, and tutorials are available through a variety of media including DVD and the Internet. The execution of these manipulation techniques can vary slightly from musician to musician depending on factors such as hand size and finger strength which alter the execution of the technique slightly, but essentially the technique remains recognisably the same. The turntablist would use these techniques on the records available, thus developing a personal style and technique and creating original music from the outset. Turntable musicians may incorporate techniques pioneered by other musicians into their routines but they would not want to be seen as imitating or recreating an existing routine. Indeed, the individual style of musicians is of great importance in turntablism. Whereas many classically trained musicians acquire skills that enable them to perform the work of other composers, hip-hop turntablist musicians learn techniques that enable them to create and perform their own original routines, in the case of turntable teams, within an artistic group.

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5. DEVISING PROCESSES

In the work of the UK hip-hop turntable teams studied, collaboration occurs within a larger creative framework in which the group members work together to create an original piece of music. Within contemporary dance and theatre, the process of a group working collaboratively to create an original work is known as 'devising', a practice that has many similarities to the working methods of hip-hop turntable teams. As Sue Gibbons explains in Gill Lamden's book *Devising*:

> It's about ownership, negotiation, compromise, developing and exploring feelings, ideas and philosophies. It's about spontaneity, excitement and originality. It's about the dynamics and chemistry of this group of people at this moment in time, which changes from day to day. (Lamden 2000: 7–8)

Devised performance originates from within the group rather than relying on an interpretation of an existing text. Alison Oddey explains how the work is shaped through the group's experimentation with ideas within a pre-determined framework established by the group:

> Devising is about thinking, conceiving and forming ideas, being imaginative and spontaneous as well as planning. It is about inventing, adapting and creating what you do as a group. (Oddey 1994: 1)

To look at the compositional process of turntable teams as involving devising processes does not mean that we must reject the importance of the collaborative circle. Indeed, Torunn Kjølner (2001), Lamden and Oddey all stress the centrality of collaboration in the devising process. Kjølner states that devising is characterised by its reliance on collaborative processes and Oddey cites collaboration as one of the four major elements of devising along with process, multivision and artistic creation (Oddey 1994: 3). Although the collaborative circle outlines the structure in which team turntable music is made, the process of devising may help us to see the process of *how* it is made.

6. A DEVISING FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF HIP-HOP TURNTABLE TEAMS

To be able to analyse the creative process of hip-hop turntable teams from a devising standpoint it is necessary for me to compare their creative process with devising models outlined by the authors Alison Oddey (1994), Gill Lamden (2000), Leigh Landy and Evelyn Jamieson (2000), and Torunn Kjølner (2001). To assist in this I constructed my own model framework of the devising process, based on the major elements outlined by these authors. This framework was created not to provide a practical detailed template for devising groups to follow, but to enable me to identify any similar patterns in the creative processes of the teams studied (see Table).

7. ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE CREATION OF UK HIP-HOP TEAMS

7.1. Stage 1: pre-devising administration

In the creation of all three routines, much of the pre-devising administration occurred before rehearsals, both socially and in alternative creative contexts such as live DJing. In all three cases, group members were known to each other before, usually having worked together previously. Both social and creative work parameters had already been formed and common artistic ground had been established prior to the rehearsal process. For the Mixologists and the Scratch Perverts, individual skills of the members and the general allocation of roles were established before the creation of this routine, as were the working parameters of the group. The common artistic approach of the Mixologists, for example, is based on two premises, both of which are reflected in their routine. Firstly, a routine must incorporate different sorts of music, and secondly, it has to offer something new. The most important impetus behind the Mixologists' creation of routines is that they must create something original, finding samples that have not been used before to create 'fresh' sounds:

> You'll always be thinking 'Is this going to work well? Is it going to be too cheesy? Has someone already done it?' You're always thinking about that when you get samples, when you get sounds and get ideas. (Beni G 2002)

At this stage of the creative process the DMU Crew, developing their first group routine, assigned musical and non-musical roles according to the strengths and weaknesses of each group member.

7.2. Stage 2: preliminary rehearsals

For the DMU Crew and the Mixologists, the rehearsals began by members establishing the desired nature of the end product and how best to achieve their aims. Establishing aims for the artistic work was especially important and would help in both the initial idea stage and the later development of the work. In the case of the Mixologists' 2001 routine, both members were concerned with reflecting their own team identity and ability whilst also creating a routine which would be enjoyed by the audience (Beni G 2002).

Much of the DMU Crew's first rehearsal was spent generating and sharing ideas. Different roles came to the fore throughout the rehearsal, the group working together to experiment with different styles, textures

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Table. Model framework of the devising process (adapted from Kjølner, Lamden, Landy and Oddey).

Stage 1	Pre-devising administration	• Team building • Establishing the working parameters of the group • Allocation of roles • Establish skills of individuals • Establish common artistic ground
Stage 2	Preliminary rehearsals	• Discuss theme and end product • Establish parameters for a constructive process • Generate and share ideas • Create and share material
Stage 3	Rehearsals phase 1	• Establish creative framework • Create basic 'template' for structure • Generate material • Try sections
Stage 4	Rehearsals phase 2 Inner cycle of development and evaluation – the devising loop	• Develop ideas and content • Set and work on individual and group tasks • Share with group • Select and discard material • Reflect and evaluate • Re-work according to feedback
Stage 5	Final rehearsals and performance	• Rehearse and perform

and structures. For the Mixologists, however, their greater experience has led to the development of a sense of what does and does not work, and this experience is drawn upon to give a vision of the routine before they begin the creative process. Beni G remarks that inspiration can come at any time – often whilst practising but also during day-to-day activities such as watching television. Before they even get to the turntables the members search through a lot of material, finding sounds that they want to use. Usually, one of two things acts as a catalyst for the routine at this stage – either a technique or a sound:

> Sometimes there'll be a technique, a way we do something with a certain sound which won't work, but if we pull out one of the other records that we like the sound of, it might work with that sound instead. (Beni G 2002)

Here, in using the term 'works', Beni G describes finding a sound that fits well, both sonically and rhythmically, with the other sounds being used.

For the Scratch Perverts also, ideas for the routine can be generated anywhere, at any time, both individually and with others. For both the Mixologists and the Scratch Perverts, these ideas are then shared and developed within the team, a process which is explained by Plus One who has witnessed the creation of Scratch Perverts' routines:

> … they were experimenting … and I was just like, hold on, try that, try this, so they started practising other stuff … we're all feeding so many ideas … watching musicians jam together and then just suddenly this thing arrives which with a little bit of fine tuning became … what I thought was genius as a routine. (Plus One)

7.3. Stage 3: phase 1 rehearsal

For the DMU Crew during this rehearsal phase, much more focus was placed on structure, order and content than in earlier rehearsals. A major factor in this first rehearsal stage of the devising process was the generation of material that in turn would be placed into the determined structure, sometimes structure and material developing simultaneously. Much of the third rehearsal was spent searching through records for the desired sounds or textures as well as experimenting with and discussing the sounds already found, a process made simpler by the group members' expert knowledge of their record collections:

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> I know instantly there were a couple of my records – obviously I know my record collection pretty much inside out – so it didn't take too long to think of a number of options. (Tim, DMU Crew 2003)

At this time it is techniques that are experimented with as well as material, to deem their suitability in generating an appropriate musical component.

For the Mixologists, this first main rehearsal phase began with the team establishing a creative framework within which to work, including finding sounds, experimenting with sounds and techniques, and generating and structuring the material. Within this framework, especially within the first three weeks, the team like to incorporate some flexibility:

> No-one ever told us what to do or what not to do, so we just do what we normally do … to have a target, but no real structured way of doing stuff so you don't limit yourself to certain angles or possibilities, basically. I really think it's good not to be too structured … 'cos then you just lose sight of certain things that might be quite important. (Beni G, 2002)

At this stage in the creative process the Mixologist team met to share material and to experiment with that material together, forming it into larger sections. The basic structure of the routine was established. Every section of the routine was rigidly structured and did not allow for any improvisation. After the members chose what material to select and discard, they began to form a structure into which all the elements could be incorporated. It was important to the Mixologists that the structure was formed after much of the experimentation and generation of ideas and material had taken place, to allow a full creative development.

For the Scratch Perverts, this stage of the creative process is a lengthy one. Prime Cuts comments that it may take up to sixty hours to create one minute of a routine, comparing this to the creative processes of animators (MajikFist 2004). Tony Vegas explains how a number of frameworks may be created which are then adapted to suit individual members. The framework must allow for all team members to input into the process:

> … there's definitely, definitely, definitely not one person saying 'Right. We'll do this, you do that', I mean, that's just not going to happen. I don't think that's any way to work musically when you've got four people trying to come up with something. (Wax Factor)

The process itself is split between trying out particular ideas suggested by team members and improvising as a group. These ideas would be developed to create a section, which would then lead to the creation of the next:

> Someone might say, 'Right. I've got this really good idea, shall we give it a go?' That's how, I'd say, about 50% of the routine came up, and then the other 50% was just us jamming. We'd do something and be like 'Oh no, hang on. No, that's good' and then that'd snowball into something else which would snowball into something else and then, hey, you've got a minute and a half of a routine and then you blend it into another idea and so on so forth. (Wax Factor)

The routine is tightly structured and there is no room for improvisation, Tony Vegas explains:

> … it's hard work and the idea is that you create six minutes of music that is rehearsed, that is performed like a piece of music, is performed in a band or an orchestra or anything. (Scratch Perverts 2000)

7.4. Stage 4: phase 2 rehearsals

For the DMU Crew, a substantial amount of time during these rehearsals was spent with group members developing both ideas and content, often in relation to the developing structure. The material and ideas were shared with other members and discussed to ascertain the suitability for the composition, and the members chose to select, experiment with or discard the material. Lengthy and detailed discussions were had between group members, covering the roles and activities of the members during performance, cues, timings and details such as volume and panning. As well as the content of the main body of the composition and any transition sections, these discussions also covered different combinations of material and textures and how best to mix and blend them together. This highly detailed analysis enabled the group to see if there were any areas that had not been fully considered or any other material that was needed.

For the Mixologists, the second rehearsal phase also saw the team developing ideas and content through individual and group tasks, sharing results and selecting and discarding material. Beni G comments that the process of sharing the material, then selecting and discarding elements can be problematic. Members may bring many ideas and all could be rejected, causing friction in the team, but he feels that he and Go have established a good working relationship that deals with such situations:

> It's almost like democracy in a certain way – if someone really doesn't like it that much you've got to question why … A bit of pride gets in the way obviously, 'cos you think what you've got is good and then they turn around and say I'm not using that … at the end of the day we talk through it now … me and Go have got to the stage where we can really talk through it so it doesn't really get to the point where we want to punch each other out … which obviously happens a lot! (Beni G 2002)

As is evident from the discussion and creative activities that took place throughout this second phase of rehearsals, reflection and evaluation occurred throughout the creative process of the groups and was

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inextricably linked to other elements of the phase such as developing ideas and content, selecting and discarding material, sharing with the group, confirming content and clarifying sections. Indeed this whole phase can be seen to reflect the 'inner cycle of development and evaluation' as outlined by Landy and Jamieson and evident in Stage 4 of my model framework of the devising process, earlier in the article (see Table). Reflection and evaluation were ongoing throughout, concerning elements such as timescale, material and audience reception:

> … it is on your mind quite a lot you're always thinking, 'are we going to get finished in time? We've got so much to do, is it really that good?' … when you're actually starting to build it and you know you've got a battle coming up, it is your mind a lot of the time … there is an element of nervousness and of 'are people going to like it', are we going to be able to pull it off … ? (Beni G 2002)

As they reached the final stages of the rehearsals, the Mixologists taped the routine and listened back to establish what worked well and what was more problematic and needed to be changed. Beni G reflected how this process gets quicker with experience and rather than persevering with an idea that is not working they will discard it and move on to another.

7.5. Phase 5: final rehearsals and performance

Final rehearsals were an important part of all teams' process. The DMU Crew set aside a specific period for rehearsal of the finished piece, regarding this aspect of the creative process as vital for developing confidence prior to the performance, to ensure that all members were comfortable with their own parts and roles and responsibilities. Following the run-throughs of the routine, the team discussed and evaluated particular aspects, including the material cues and structure. The Mixologists set aside a week at the end of the creative process specifically for practice. During this time, they would practice every day, repeatedly performing the six-minute routine. Again, the reasons for this relate to confidence in performance also to enabling them to practise what to do if a mistake is made during the performance, either from human or technical mishaps. Tony Vegas from the Scratch Perverts also refers to a specific period of rehearsal in the creation of routines in general, '… it's hard work and the idea is that you create six minutes of music that is rehearsed …' (Scratch Perverts, Scratchcon 2000)

8. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLECTIVE CREATION OF UK HIP-HOP TURNTABLE TEAMS

The exploration of the collective creation of the three routines has resulted in the development of a number of characteristics of the collective creation of hip-hop turntable teams which are listed below.

8.1. The routines are created through a devising process

What is clear from the discussion of the creation of team routines through the devising framework is that all the teams do exhibit characteristics of each stage of the devising process.

8.2. The teams work within a similar devising framework

After analysis, it is evident that each team created the routine within the flexible devising framework that I established.

8.3. Details within the devising framework differ from team to team

Although each team creates within the devising framework, there are variations from team to team. For all three teams, stage one, pre-devising administration, occurred prior to the collective creation of the routines. In stage two, all three teams generate, create and share ideas, but their methods of doing this vary. The Mixologists and the Scratch Perverts describe how this often happens away from the turntables, even whilst undertaking everyday activities, but the DMU Crew take a more hands-on turntable-based approach. In stage three, all three teams begin to establish creative frameworks and structure their routines but, again, do so in different ways. The Scratch Perverts create a number of frameworks that are then adapted to suit individual members. The DMU Crew decide on a framework and then generate material to put in it, the structure then developing alongside the material. The Mixologists, however, only form a structure after they have experimented fully and generated material, as they do not want the structure to shape the creative development. In stage four, all teams display characteristics of the cycle of development and evaluation, the 'devising loop' as outlined in the model framework of the devising process. All continue to develop ideas and content both individually and as a group. Again, this is achieved in different ways. The Scratch Perverts, for example, try out ideas and improvise as a group developing through practical application. The DMU Crew, on the other hand, develop mostly through discussion and then try out what they have decided. For all teams, reflection and evaluation is ongoing throughout, covering aspects such as timescale, material and reception, and are inextricably linked to other elements of the phase. For the Mixologists this sometimes takes place through recording the routine and listening back to it, but for the other two teams it is mostly through discussion following practice runs. All three teams

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describe the final stage of rehearsing the routine as a distinct phase both to build general confidence and to develop a range of approaches to deal with any mistakes.

8.4. The devising framework is used unconsciously

The three turntable teams have developed their compositional processes in isolation from the practices of traditional Western art and do not work in artistic environments where they would be aware of devising as a creative model. Their use of this creative process is not a conscious artistic decision, rejecting other creative models, but rather the most natural process to achieve the desired artistic product. Beni G reflects:

> … it's just something that I don't ever think or talk about … It's just like, that's what we do – we get together and we do it, and Go won't be like, 'Oh, this is great that we've spent so much time looking for samples that we're now ready at week three to go on to the next stage', it just don't work like that! … When you swim you jump in the pool, move your arms, go to the end and get out. It's the same with us. We'll go into rehearsal, we get our records, we fuck about, we get some ideas, we might write them down, we go home, whatever. It's like a process we go through and you never think about it until you're asked for it. (Beni G 2002)

For the DMU Crew, the Mixologists and the Scratch Perverts, devising is not an imposed process but occurs naturally through the social nature of the teams and sharing of skills and ideas. The artistic team is formed through friendships and acquaintances coming together to share common interests and goals as well as ideas and techniques resulting in the collective creation of a routine.

8.5. Roles, responsibilities and techniques are shared between group members

The roles and responsibilities of individual group members differ from team to team.[2] In their uses of different techniques, each group member is either a primary user – a group member who uses the technique frequently, a secondary user – a group member who used the technique but less frequently than the primary user, usually in a support role, and a minimal user – a group member who uses the technique very infrequently. In the DMU Crew, members are mainly primary users of techniques and tend to have sole responsibility for those techniques assigned to them. Only three techniques have secondary user support. In the Mixologist team, each member is responsible for a number of different techniques and less than half of these are shared between members. Team members are rarely secondary users of techniques as there are only two members to create the routine over six turntables. In order to create the routine with so few members they are usually primary users, either alone or simultaneously. In the Scratch Perverts team, two members, Prime Cuts and Tony Vegas, are the two main primary users of techniques and share the majority of these. The other team members adopt those not covered by them. As there are four members creating the routine over six turntables, they can support through the secondary use of techniques to a greater extent than the Mixologists. They also display a greater secondary use of techniques than the DMU Crew. Approximately half of the techniques are used in one degree or another by at least three or more members. Members of the Scratch Perverts are the only musicians across the three teams to display a minimal use of some techniques, reflecting the spread of techniques used across the team.

[2]Specific techniques used by the turntablists included punch-phasing, back-spinning, scratching, beat juggling, using the pitch regulator, tapping the record, changing the record, hand claps and the generation of sounds from the audio signal cable. The notation I have developed and the notation of each of these routines for analysis depicts how these techniques are used and shared within the turntable teams.

9. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the compositional processes of the hip-hop turntable teams The DMU Crew, The Mixologists and The Scratch Perverts, has discovered a number of characteristics in process and product. Fundamental to these is that the turntable is used as a productive musical instrument in both the creation and performance of routines, all of the turntable teams studied creating original music by manipulating isolated parts of existing records. In the creation of these original routines, the hip-hop turntable teams make a collaborative circle. This is formed through friendships and acquaintances and a desire to share common interests, goals, ideas and skills that results in the creation of a collective work. The creation of this collective work involves a high level of collaboration and the creative processes used by all teams demonstrate the existence of devising processes. The teams work within the same five-stage devising framework but details within each phase differ from team to team. Methods of generating and sharing ideas vary, creative frameworks and structures are established differently, and reflection and evaluation take place in different ways. The teams' creation and use of such a flexible framework means that each team is able to work in a way best suited to the team and the individuals within it, customising their own compositional process. It is important to remember, however, that although the teams clearly demonstrate the use of collaboration and devising as central to their creative process, the framework itself is used unconsciously, as the natural process through which to achieve the desired artistic product.

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Roles and responsibilities for particular manipulation techniques are shared between team members. The teams use similar creative processes and within these processes use similar techniques. However, because of the different inputs of the individual members, each routine is different, reflecting the different styles and influences of each member and the team as a whole.

All three teams studied compose using a similar devising process, regardless of their ability or status. This demonstrates that devising is consistently used as a compositional process in all areas of the hip-hop turntable community, ranging from amateur teams early in their formation (The DMU Crew) to teams at the relatively early stage of their professional career (The Mixologists) to experienced professional teams at the height of their careers (The Scratch Perverts). Such a flexible devising process can accommodate different levels of ability and status because central to this process is the creative input and interaction of individual team members who are able to input at their own level. This even allows for teams consisting of members of different ability levels to function positively.

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