

<p><b>Institution: University of East London</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 36</b></p>
<p><b>Title of case study: Dance Music Culture</b></p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research and public engagement activities by researchers at the University of East London (UEL) in the field of DJ music, dance floor culture and its history have developed and popularized new forms of musical expression, contributed to the cultural life and regeneration of East London, influenced the convergence between dance music culture and the art world, shaped media discourse, and created reusable learning and information resources. The impacts of the research have been delivered via contributions to record labels (including Mercury-nominated Hyperdub, Soul Jazz), live music venues (Cafe Oto, Sonar Festival), party spaces (Fabric, Plastic People), and arts institutions (ICA, Southbank Centre, TrouwAmsterdam), as well as through coverage of the research itself and important social issues pertaining to it in national and international media outlets (BBC, Guardian, History Channel, Le Monde, South Bank Show).</p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research underpinning the impacts described here was conducted within UEL's Dance Music Culture cluster, which emerged out of formative work by Professor Andrew Blake (<i>The Land without Music</i>, 1997, editor <i>Living Through Pop</i>, 1999; member of UEL staff 1988-96 and 2005-11) and Ash Sharma (co-author, <i>Dis-Orienting Rhythms: Politics of the New Asian Dance</i>, 1997; member of staff since 1994).</p> <p>Jeremy Gilbert, who joined the University in 1995 and is now Professor of Cultural and Political Theory, developed this research agenda with his co-authored <i>Discographies: Dance Music Culture and the Politics of Sound</i>, the first comprehensive theoretical analysis of dance music culture [1], and with 'Becoming-Music', his essay on music, collectivity, improvisation and dance [2].</p> <p>Tim Lawrence (joined UEL in 1999, now Professor of Cultural Studies) introduced an historical dimension to the cluster's work in the field with his groundbreaking study of the foundations of modern dance music culture, <i>Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970-79</i> [3], widely recognised by scholars, journalists and music fans as the first major history of its kind. Research conducted since then has included his 2009 biography of the composer and dance music producer Arthur Russell, <i>Hold On to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene, 1973-92</i> [4].</p> <p>Steve Goodman (joined UEL in 2002, now Senior Lecturer) further enriched the cluster's research via his cultural practice, which includes pioneering work as a producer of dubstep, an innovative genre within the field of electronic dance music. Goodman's <i>Memories of the Future</i> [5], released in 2006 under his DJ and production moniker Kode9, synthesised his contributions to FWD&gt;&gt;, an influential night held at Plastic People in Shoreditch, with earlier 12" releases. Developed in parallel with his DJ and studio work, Goodman's 2010 book <i>Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear</i> [6] explores the politics of frequency, including bass-heavy dubstep.</p> <p>Work within the Dance Music Culture research cluster is united by the researchers' shared focus on the theorisation of sound and the body, and the cultural history and political potential of social dance. It foregrounds innovative and socially resonant themes, addressing the history, theory and practice of DJ culture and the different ways in which the DJ has become a paradigmatic figure of creative practice in an information-rich environment. It has engaged with questions relating to the social and political significance of dance music culture, including the dancing crowd's capacity for collective expression and its embodiment of new forms of conviviality in the contemporary city [1, 2, 3, 4, 6].</p> <p>The research has further explored issues of bodily affect and musical aesthetics in both philosophical and empirical terms [1, 2, 3, 4, 6], whilst contributing to the rejuvenation of dance aesthetics [5]. Finally, it has brought these issues to bear on the analysis, documentation and facilitation of musical and aesthetic innovation outside of the institutionalised contexts of art and commercial music.</p>

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**3. References to the research**

- [1] Gilbert, Jeremy, and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture, and the Politics of Sound*, Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0-415-17033. Peer-reviewed, submitted RAE 2001.
- [2] Lawrence, Tim, *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970-79*, Duke University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8223-3198-5. Peer-reviewed, submitted to RAE 2008, honourable mention 2005 Woody Guthrie Award (IASPM).
- [3] Gilbert, Jeremy, 'Becoming-Music: The Rhizomatic Moment of Improvisation', in Buchanan, Ian, and Marcel Swiboda (eds), *Deleuze and Music*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004, 118-39. ISBN 0-7486-1869-4. Peer-reviewed by editors.
- [4] Lawrence, Tim, *Hold On to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene, 1973-92*, Duke University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8223-4485-8. Submitted to REF2.
- [5] Kode9 and the Spaceape, *Memories of the Future*, Hyperdub, 2006. Extensively reviewed. Available on request.
- [6] Goodman, Steve, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear*, MIT Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-262-01347-5. Submitted to REF2.

**4. Details of the impact**

The research outlined above has had wide-ranging impacts on beneficiaries in London, across the UK and internationally. Benefits resulting from the work conducted at UEL include the following.

Development and popularization of new forms of musical expression

Working under the moniker Kode9, Goodman has played a pioneering role in the creation and international popularisation of dubstep as an original, London-based electronic dance music genre. The widespread national and international engagement with and awareness of its existence as a form of musical expression – among the general public as well as practitioner and consumer audiences – was achieved in part by extensive coverage in both the trade and popular media of Goodman's work as a dubstep producer and DJ. Much of this coverage included critical acknowledgment of the significance of his work, its contribution to dance music broadly and its basis in the underpinning research outlined above [a].

Goodman's second album, *Black Sun*, was released in 2009 and sold 12,816 copies. In its review of the album, BBC Music described Kode9 as occupying 'the very scalpel-sharp edge of its [dubstep's] boundary-slashing evolution' [b]. Goodman has also taken dubstep to a global audience via dozens of DJ appearances, including the 2008 Mutek Festival (Montreal, 2,000 attendees), 2011 Sonar Festival (Tokyo, 4,000), 2012 Electraglide Festival (Tokyo, 4,000) and the 2012 Sonar Festival (Barcelona, 8,000). In addition, he has curated and marketed original work by numerous artists on his label, Hyperdub, releasing 12 albums and 64 singles since 2008. The catalogue includes Burial's *Untrue*, which was nominated for the UK Mercury Prize in 2008 and has sold more than 100,000 copies.

Contribution to the cultural life of East London, including through the preservation and renewal of social dance traditions

In 2003, Gilbert and Lawrence co-founded Lucky Cloud Ltd. to preserve and renew the distinctive social dance tradition analysed in their research. Since 2008, Lucky Cloud has organised 24 dance music events at the Light, Shoreditch, attracting 320 paying guests per party. Co-founded in 2005 by Gilbert, and growing out of Lucky Cloud, Beauty and the Beat holds bi-monthly dance events at the New Empowering Church, Hackney, attracting a younger crowd of c.350 per party. Goodman has continued to DJ regularly at Plastic People and has also worked as a resident at Smithfield's Fabric, playing to crowds of c. 2,000. In 2011-12 Lawrence worked with Wire editor Tony Herrington to stage the four-part symposium series Critical Beats: Electronic Dance Music, Club Culture and the East London Connection at performing arts venue Stratford Circus, which attracted a total audience of 313 and was subsequently broadcast on NTS [c].

These events have contributed to East London's soaring international reputation for artistic and

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musical diversity and excellence. 'Known for its cutting-edge bars, offbeat galleries and ethnic restaurants, East London is by far the city's trendiest area,' the New York Times reported in April 2012. 'Wear comfortable walking (and dancing) shoes to discover its neighbourhoods east of the Tower of London, namely, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Hackney Wick and Dalson' [d].

#### Informing and influencing practice among international music, arts and museums professionals

Research and expertise has been shared through formal and informal consultancy and advisory activities with a range of practitioners and professionals in the music, art and museum sectors. As a result, it has informed professional practice, supported the development of major public exhibitions, and contributed to important trends such as the recent public convergence between dance music culture and the art world.

The researchers have propagated DJ/dance culture within the arts and museum sectors particularly through their contribution of original artworks, cultural resources and specialist knowledge to partners in those sectors. Gilbert introduced the *Tape Crackers* film at the 2010 ICA and curated the conference at the NetAudio digital arts festival (2011). Goodman's 'Dead Record Office' installation, which explores the weaponisation of sound from World War Two to the present, as analysed in [5], showed at galleries and festivals including Art in General/New York (2011), CTM festival/Berlin (2012), New Forms Festival/Vancouver (2012) and Site Gallery/Sheffield (2013). He also screened his remix-inspired remake of *La Jetée, Her Ghost*, at the BFI (2012), Mutek Festival/Montreal (2012) and Pompidou/Paris (2013). Lawrence co-curated the Arthur Russell tribute night held at the ICA (2010), co-produced the 'Artefacts of Arthur Russell' display at the Modern Institute, Glasgow (2011), and spoke about Russell at Modern Art Oxford (2010) and remix culture at the Cole Gallery (2013). The researchers have also drawn on their work to deliver talks on the value of dance culture in eight national and 17 international art, museum and cultural centre settings, including Basso/Berlin (2010); Festival Arte Contemporanea/Faenza (2010); Gray Area Foundation/San Francisco (2010); Modern Institute (2010); Museo della Musica/Bologna (2010); Palais de Tokyo/Paris (2008); Southbank Centre (2010, 2013); and TrouwAmsterdam/Amsterdam (2013) [e]. Audiences typically range from 50 to 100 and feature artists, arts administrators, critics, musicians and members of the public.

In 2013 the owner/curator of the Deitch Projects Gallery/New York employed Lawrence as the principal consultant for his forthcoming exhibit on disco, acknowledging his core contribution to the 'intellectual foundation of the project' while describing *Love Saves the Day* as 'one of the best books on the history of music and contemporary culture'. The Curatorial Co-Director of the first iteration of the exhibition, developed at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, likewise acknowledged the contribution made by Lawrence's work to its development, writing: 'Your book and many articles have been enormously helpful and important to us as we have been organizing what we hope will be a comprehensive exploration of Disco' [f].

#### Enhancing public engagement with and understanding of dance music culture through contributions to media discourse and the development of reusable information resources

The research team has contributed authoritative commentary on dance music (including 25 single-authored articles/album liner notes and 60 interviews) to opinion-leading national and international media outlets, including the Globe and Mail/Canada (average daily readership of 291,571), Guardian (average daily readership of 193,780 and the UK's most widely read quality daily newspaper website, with over 8 million visitors), History Channel/USA, Le Monde/France, Los Angeles Times/USA, South Bank Show and Sunday Times, plus specialist publications such as De: Bug/Germany, Mixmag, Pitchfork/USA and Red Bull Music Academy Magazine/Germany-US, with Groove/Germany and Wire running covers stories on Goodman during 2009 [g]. Gilbert, Goodman and Lawrence have influenced a new generation of bloggers and critics, as exemplified by leading voice Simon Reynolds' reference to *Discographies* as 'the best academic treatment of techno and culture' [h].

Lawrence provided director Matt Wolf with information and contacts that shaped the making of *Wild Combination*, the acclaimed 2008 Arthur Russell documentary, which screened at more than 65 film festivals and independent cinemas, and the publication of *Hold On to Your Dreams* inspired a Guardian leader about Russell, introducing a new public audience to this relatively unknown

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musician [i]. Lawrence's contextual essays in the art book and CD *Voguing and the Gay Ballroom Scene of New York City* (Soul Jazz, 2011) contributed to combined sales of c.11, 000 and informed Jenn Nkiru's Channel 4 voguing film (2013). His research-led website [www.timlawrence.info](http://www.timlawrence.info) receives over 1,000 unique visitors per month.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[a] For illustrative examples of critical acknowledgment both of the public impact of Goodman's work as a producer and DJ and its basis in the underpinning research outlined in section 2: Anon, 'FACT Mix 159: Kode9,' FACT, 7 June 2010: <http://bit.ly/17BggMM>; Deviant, 'Kode9 & the Spaceape, Black Sun,' Sputnik Music, 8 May 2011: <http://bit.ly/1izOv8O>; Goodman, Kelvin, 'Kode9 & the Spacape - Black Sun,' Drowned in Sound, 20 April 2011: <http://bit.ly/1h5godJ>; Macpherson, Alex, 'Kode9 & The Spaceape: Black Sun—Review,' Guardian, 14 April 2011: <http://bit.ly/1f7MyAH>

[b] For the BBC Music review of Black Sun (Adam Kennedy, 'Kode9 & the Spaceape—Black Sun—Review,' 26 April 2011) see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/reviews/wnb6>

[c] For NTS broadcasts of the Critical Beats events (held on 3 November 2011, 8 December 2011, 23 February 2012 and 14 June 2012) see, for instance: <http://bit.ly/19WENeY>

[d] Jennifer Conlin, '36 Hours in East London', New York Times, 26 April 2012.

[e] A full list of dates and locations is available on request.

[f] Copies of email correspondence attesting to the influence of Lawrence's work on both Deitch's understanding of the history of disco and DJ culture in the US and of its impacts on the development of Deitch's exhibition, are available on request, as are copies of correspondence with the Curatorial Co-Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

[g] For examples of the national and international media discourse about the research or issues relating to it, see (in the order cited above):

- Morris, Dave, 'Strike a Pose: Voguing Is Back', *Globe and Mail* (Canada), 20 April 2012 <http://bit.ly/HvHwCZ>
- Hancox, Dan, 'Hyperdub Label Celebrates Fifth Birthday', Guardian, 22 October 2009, <http://bit.ly/1aNR5r9>
- '70s Fever', History Channel (USA), two-hour special, 12 July 2008
- Siclier, Sylvain, and Clément Sirdey, 'Comment le Cinéma a Perverti L'esprit Libre et Novateur du Disco', *Le Monde*, 7 April 2008, <http://bit.ly/HilDVK>
- Weiss, Jeff, 'Cracking the Kode: Kode9 on the Future of Dubstep, Hyperdub, Flying Lotus and New Burial', Los Angeles Times (USA), 9 April 2009: <http://lat.ms/16R7vzK>
- 'The South Bank Show: Grime, Bow and How UK Hip-Hop Found its Voice', Sky Arts, 18 May 2012
- Lawrence, Tim, 'Anfang Loft: The Sonic and Social Legacy of the 1970s', De:Bug (Germany), July-August 2010, 13, translated into German by Sven von Thuelen
- Muggs, Joe, 'Occupy the Dancefloor', Mixmag, 16 February 2012: <http://bit.ly/19WCW9Y>
- Sisson, Patrick, 'Kode9', Pitchfork (USA), 23 November 2009: <http://bit.ly/1gqw7oL>
- Finlayson, Angus, 'Interview: Kode9', Red Bull Music Academy, 13 June 2013: <http://win.gs/1aYuCV4>
- Lawrence, Tim, 'New York Stories: David Mancuso', interview with David Mancuso reproduced in Daily Note, published by Red Bull Music Academy (Germany and USA), 27 May 2013: <http://win.gs/1f7LOXt>
- Lawrence, Tim, 'From Disco to Disco: New York's Global Clubbing Influence', Daily Note, published by Red Bull Music Academy, 10 June 2013: <http://win.gs/18IQbr9>
- Groove Magazine, November/December 2009; Walmsley, Derek, 'Kode9: Travels in Hyperdub', Wire, May 2009: <http://bit.ly/19WCKrf>

[h] Reynolds, 'Energy Flash Discography and Bibliography': <http://bit.ly/1aLHrDy>

[i] 'Editorial, In Praise Of... Arthur Russell', Guardian, 1 February 2010: <http://bit.ly/17wNCPe>