

# THE MUSIC PROFESSORS OF YOUTUBIVERSITY

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the current use of YouTube in music studies in higher education while suggesting a reconsideration of the academic as both source and resource in the neo-information age. In it, I summarize interviews with ten current YouTube content creators who run music education channels, focusing on their role as teachers in an invisible classroom. I also share findings from a nationwide survey of instructors who teach music studies in higher education. The results illustrate how music professors use YouTube for teaching and learning in a post-pandemic world. I aim to bridge the divide between the ivory tower and cybersphere by highlighting current collaborations between traditional and YouTube academics and suggesting how the two can cooperate to maximize learning effectiveness for Generation Z. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction and provides a brief history of YouTube. Chapter 2 offers a literature review. In Chapter 3, I review the sociology of knowledge, hyperreality, and the idea of the “unacademic,” all of which are philosophical concepts central to my discussion of YouTube content creators and their role as educators in relation to traditional professors in higher education. Chapter 4 describes the survey results and Chapter 5 summarizes the content creator interviews. In the conclusion, Chapter 6, I offer my thoughts on the future of music studies in the traditional university and YouTubiversity.

This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Michael L. Klein.

I am forever grateful.

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When I began my studies at Edinboro University as an undergraduate music major, I knew I was starting a path toward a Ph.D. I did not know that it would take me twenty years after finishing high school to reach the end of that path. I am not sure I would have realized my goal without the support and encouragement of my advisor and mentor, Dr. Michael Klein. He has been my teacher, advocate, and guide for almost fifteen years. My life and career would be quite different without his influence and support, and I am endlessly grateful to him. He inspires me as an educator and continues to teach me much about being a mentor, colleague, and administrator in higher education.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

My interest in YouTube began in 2015 when I was asked to design an online music appreciation course for non-majors. With only a few months to create the course and no prior video editing experience, I turned to YouTube to see what was already available. I spent hours sorting through videos, discarding those inappropriate for my target population or containing content errors. If the video was longer than ten minutes, I thought the students were unlikely to watch it and tried to find videos that could explain concepts succinctly.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, my efforts yielded a collection of highly-produced videos with proven educational value, allowing me to offer my students a better pedagogical experience than I would have been able to provide in a series of recorded PowerPoint lectures.

When YouTube failed to deliver, I filled in the gaps. I decided to take an impersonal approach because I was creating this as a template course that other instructors would use. I modeled my videos after a YouTuber who used simple

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1. For a detailed study on common methods teachers use to search for videos and the role of YouTube's algorithm, see Matthew Fyfield, Michael Henderson, and Michael Phillips, "Navigating Four Billion Videos: Teacher Search Strategies and the *YouTube* Algorithm," *Learning, Media and Technology*, June 17, 2020, 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2020.1781890>.

animations to visualize concepts. Most of my videos are unlisted on YouTube and visible only to those with the direct link. In one case, I decided to publicize a video on musical texture that I believed filled a particularly glaring void so I could be a contributing member to this communal resource. Returning to the video's page a few months later, I was surprised by its many views and the number of comments. The page's most "liked" comment is in figure 1.1.

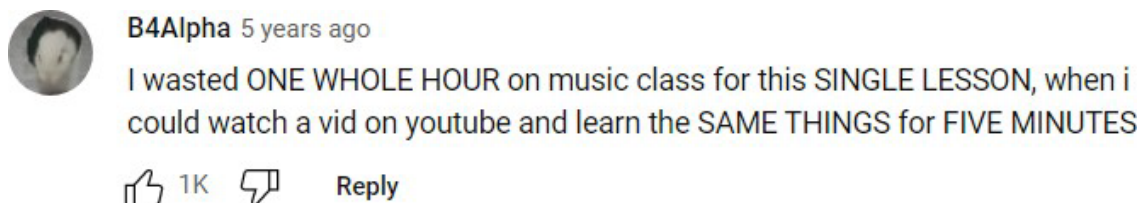


Figure 1.1. Comment on “Musical Texture” video from YouTube user B4Alpha

This comment made me wonder why this YouTube user was watching this 5-minute video if they had already spent an hour learning this material in what was presumably a traditional classroom lesson. As I scrolled down the page, I found similar comments echoing B4Alpha's sentiment. A sample of these comments is in figure 1.2.





Figure 1.2. Sample of student comments on “Musical Texture” video.

Reflecting on my teaching style while considering these comments, I realized I typically allocate more time to teaching concepts in face-to-face classes. The script was co-written with fellow Temple University instructor Ephraim Schäfli, and through many re-writes and careful editing, we had condensed a topic that usually takes me the better part of a 50-minute class period to cover, albeit with copious examples, some historical context,

Students increasingly report turning to YouTube as an information source to supplement or even supplant lecture content. According to a 2018 Harris Poll, 59 percent of college students report that YouTube is their preferred learning method, and 55 percent

believe it has significantly contributed to their education.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps recognizing this, teachers are tapping into YouTube as a resource in and out of the classroom. I noticed several comments from people who purported to be instructors in higher education stating that they were using the musical texture video in their classes (figure 1.3)



Figure 1.3. Sample of instructor comments on “Musical Texture” video.

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2. Pearson Research Center and The Harris Poll, “Beyond Millennials: The Next Generation of Learners,” Global Research & Insights (Pearson Education, August 2018), [https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/news/news-announcements/2018/The-Next-Generation-of-Learners\\_final.pdf](https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/news/news-announcements/2018/The-Next-Generation-of-Learners_final.pdf).

Many studies demonstrate a positive correlation between student achievement and using videos in higher education,<sup>3</sup> particularly in the flipped classroom model,<sup>4</sup> suggesting that videos provide a more succinct, deliberate, and meaningful way for students to understand and retain content. However, YouTube is an open platform for anyone who wishes to contribute. Most content does not undergo an editing or review process. Elaine Tan's work on digital literacy in student learning revealed that most students know the need for a level of discernment when selecting YouTube videos but are unsure how to vet them. Many rely on criteria such as community ratings and peer recommendations. More concerningly, some say they can "just feel" when a video contains credible academic content.<sup>5</sup>

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3. See Suzanne M. Ogilby, "Enabling a Comprehensive Teaching Strategy: Video Lectures," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 7 (January 1, 2008), and H. David Brecht, "Learning from Online Video Lectures," *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice* 11 (2012): 227–50, <https://doi.org/10.28945/1712>.

4. See "The Flipped Classroom: A Meta-Analysis of Effects on Student Performance across Disciplines and Education Levels | Elsevier Enhanced Reader," accessed December 13, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100314>, Li Cheng, Albert D. Ritzhaupt, and Pavlo Antonenko, "Effects of the Flipped Classroom Instructional Strategy on Students' Learning Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 67, no. 4 (August 1, 2019): 793–824, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-018-9633-7>, and Kuo-Su Chen et al., "Academic Outcomes of Flipped Classroom Learning: A Meta-Analysis," *Medical Education* 52, no. 9 (2018): 910–24, <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13616>.

5. Elaine Tan, "Informal Learning on *YouTube* : Exploring Digital Literacy in Independent Online Learning," *Learning, Media and Technology* 38, no. 4 (December 2013): 463–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2013.783594>, p. 470.

Reputable organizations such as Khan Academy, TED Conferences LLC, and MIT OpenCourseWare have long used YouTube to distribute educational content. In 2009, YouTube launched YouTube EDU to provide high-quality videos for classroom use. The availability of these resources increased the number of students and teachers alike turning to YouTube for educational purposes. However, many popular YouTubers who run educational channels are unaffiliated with accredited institutions. Some do not even hold degrees in a related field. YouTubers rarely model the research practices professors often require of their students, frequently failing to cite sources or provide references. In some instances, the content creators themselves strive for anonymity. It can be difficult for students to apply common information literacy strategies to assess the credibility of a YouTube video as a source of information. Students increasingly rely on college educators to identify valid and academically sound content and report that they prefer them to do so.<sup>6</sup> When a college educator assigns a video, they lend credence to and legitimize the content and the content creator.

Although professors have routinely used YouTube in higher education for over a decade, the mass shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic prompted educators to rely even more heavily on the platform to support their virtual classrooms.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Tan, “Informal Learning on *YouTube*.”

7. Zulnaidi Yaacob and Nor Hasliza Md Saad, “Acceptance of YouTube as a Learning Platform during the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Moderating Effect of Subscription Status,” *TEM Journal*, November 27, 2020, 1732–39, <https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM94-54>.

Some began publishing their content on YouTube for easy student consumption, further blurring the lines between professor and YouTuber as they publicly disseminated knowledge that has historically been sequestered in the halls of academia. This active participation suggests a shift in how educators view the platform as an academic resource.<sup>8</sup>

University professors have unlocked the ivory tower by incorporating YouTube videos into the curriculum. Guided by established social ideologies, an elite minority has historically served as gatekeepers, exercising value judgments that Terry Eagleton argues have more to do with exercising power than collective taste.<sup>9</sup> For Eagleton, the academization of the humanities seeks legitimacy by intentionally divorcing the object from the hedonistic elements that make it pleasurable to consume.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the commonly-taught canon is a product of social and political power dynamics validated by an elite social group who have academized an extravagant pursuit. In theory, a public platform removes these barriers, allowing the music educators of YouTubiversity a back-door entrance to participate in a previously inaccessible space virtually without restriction.

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8. Madhumitha Srinivasan, "Loading ... Learning," *The Hindu*, September 19, 2020, sec. Education, <https://www.thehindu.com/education/how-youtube-is-gaining-significance-in-a-post-pandemic-learning-ecosystem/article32647592.ece>.

9. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 1996), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=827065>, 166.

10. *Ibid*, 14.

This dissertation explores the current use of YouTube in music studies in higher education while suggesting a reconsideration of the academic as both source and resource in the neo-information age. To this end, I designed a two-pronged approach to update and expand existing studies of how music professors use YouTube and, uniquely, unmask the content creators behind popular music education channels through interviews that critically consider their role as teachers of an invisible classroom.

Chapter two summarizes the relevant literature. Scholars have conducted considerable research on the general use of YouTube in higher education. The first wave of publications appeared in 2009.<sup>11</sup> However, there has been little research specific to music studies and YouTube, although that has recently started to change.

Chapter three presents philosophical frameworks to contextualize my research. The sociology of knowledge studies the relationship between human understanding and society. In this theory, knowledge is a sociological construct primarily used to create an understanding of reality. As such, it is not limited to that which can be scientifically proven. Because knowledge is collective and social, it has a reciprocal relationship with culture. In a digital age, cultural boundaries are no longer limited by geography, and Web 2.0 allows for communal participation in virtual knowledge construction. People have

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11. Norlidah Alias et al., "A Content Analysis in the Studies of YouTube in Selected Journals," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 13th International Educational Technology Conference, 103 (November 26, 2013): 10–18, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.301>.

access to any number of cyber-societies with distinct ideologies at their fingertips and can select the one they choose to believe. Artificial intelligence also participates in the human construction of knowledge, selecting which resources to show the user based on algorithms, ad revenues, and social media connections.

The hyperreal emerges when the socially constructed real world and the virtual world begin to collide and overlap. The highly curated hyperreal videos that are possible on YouTube create condensed learning experiences that are “more real than real,” which could explain students’ preference for learning on YouTube. Information can be presented faster and more intimately than in a traditional classroom, and students can pause, replay, slow down, or speed up the video at will. Understanding hyperreality and how it impacts content creators and consumers also helps contextualize those who teach on YouTube in relation to traditional brick-and-mortar professors, particularly in terms of parasocial relationships.

In K. Daniel Cho’s Lacanian understanding of higher education, the existence of the academic presupposes and is contingent on the existence of the unacademic. The elite members of academia historically delineated this dichotomy with the boundaries of higher education. As the academic and unacademic lines now blur and converge in higher education classrooms, I use Cho’s argument to problematize the traditional understanding of the academic and reconsider what this term means in the age of Web 2.0. The online sphere thrives on participative spaces encouraging freely accessible information and user-generated content while fostering virtual communities through social networking.

Few researchers have studied how faculty in any discipline use YouTube in their classrooms. The most extensive study, by Kirsten Dougan, happened to be of music faculty and occurred over a decade ago, in 2012.<sup>12</sup> I thought it was important to update that information, particularly considering the COVID-19 pandemic. I designed a survey loosely modeled after Dougan's that I sent to faculty teaching music studies courses in higher education across the United States. I describe the methodology and results of that survey in chapter four.

The second facet of my research takes a qualitative approach. Using Ken Bain's pioneering study of college educators as a model for my research questions, I interviewed ten current YouTube content creators working in music studies. Some have achieved high levels of commercial success, while others have different pedagogical aims. I sought to discover not only what makes them effective "Music Professors of YouTubiversity" but also to bridge the divide between the ivory tower and cybersphere by learning about their educational backgrounds, research methods, and views on teaching. I summarize these findings in chapter five.

Chapter six reflects my concluding thoughts as I link these pieces together. I also share what the interviewees had to say about their roles as knowledge-bearers and if they

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12. Kirstin Dougan, "'YouTube Has Changed Everything'? Music Faculty, Librarians, and Their Use and Perceptions of YouTube | Dougan | College & Research Libraries," *College & Research Libraries* 75, no. 4 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.75.4.575>.



believe YouTubiversity will supplant the current system. Finally, I offer three suggestions based on the results of my research and reflect on the future of music studies.

### **Brief History of YouTube**

YouTube was founded in 2005 by Steven Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim, who met while working for PayPal in the early 2000s. There are a few variations on the backstory and motivations behind their creation of YouTube. According to Rebecca Rowell, author of *YouTube: The Company and its Founders*, two significant events in 2004 inspired the entrepreneurs: Janet Jackson's wardrobe mishap at Super Bowl XXXVIII and the Indian Ocean tsunami.<sup>13</sup> Finding an online video was often difficult or impossible if you missed the live coverage of a significant news event or a public display of accidental nudity.

In a 2006 interview with Charlie Rose, Chen tells a different variation of the origin story, explaining how a dinner party inspired the idea. Guests were taking photographs and videos of the event and wanted to share them. They could easily send the pictures via email, but sharing videos proved more challenging due to their file size. According to Chen, this event inspired him, Hurley, and Karim to develop the idea of a video-sharing platform.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Rebecca Rowell, *YouTube: The Company and Its Founders* (Edina, Minnesota: Abdo Publishing Company, 2011), p. 47.

14. Steven Chen and Chad Hurley, "Interview with YouTube Co-founders," interview by Charlie Rose, August 9, 2006, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7E6E9q8Jebw>.

The platform was up and running by February 2005, and the beta version of YouTube launched in April 2005. The founders' first attempt to monetize their idea was to create an online video dating site based on the then-popular "Hot or Not" website, which allowed people to rate the attractiveness of users who uploaded their photographs. Despite being equipped with the catchy slogan "Tune in, Hook up," their attempts to launch the platform as a dating site were futile, quite possibly because their marketing strategy consisted of a Craigslist ad encouraging "beautiful women" to post videos of themselves on the platform in exchange for \$20.<sup>15</sup>

Their next idea was to capitalize on the success of eBay by creating a platform for hosting videos for online auctions, but they quickly abandoned that project. After these setbacks, the entrepreneurs moved away from these narrow plans and returned to their original idea of a broad video-sharing platform.

The first video uploaded to the platform, titled "Meet me at the zoo," was less than 19 seconds long and featured Jawed Karim at the San Diego Zoo, standing in front of a couple of elephants and commenting on their trunks.<sup>16</sup> They piloted new social media features in June 2005, including the ability to quickly share a video with a friend

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15. Stuart Dredge, "YouTube Was Meant to Be a Video-Dating Website," *The Guardian*, March 16, 2016, sec. Technology, [khttps://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/16/youtube-past-video-dating-website](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/16/youtube-past-video-dating-website).

16. See jawed, "Me at the Zoo," April 23, 2005, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNQXAC9IVRw>

via email, embed a video on websites such as MySpace, and provide a way for users to interact via the comments section. They also created a recommendation feature that suggests other videos that may interest users to keep them engaged on the website for extended periods. These features did boost YouTube's popularity, which allowed Chen, Hurley, and Karim to obtain \$3.5 million in financing from Sequoia Capital.<sup>17</sup> By the beginning of December 2005, the beta version of YouTube was streaming about 3 million videos daily. The founders officially launched YouTube on December 15, 2005. The next ten months posed significant challenges to running and maintaining YouTube, including high bandwidth and storage space operating costs. Users were also offended by inappropriate content, including nudity, animal cruelty, violence, and copyright infringements.<sup>18</sup>

Less than a year later, in October 2006, YouTube held a larger share of the online video market than Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and AOL combined.<sup>19</sup> Karim had already left the company to pursue a master's degree at Stanford when Chen and Hurley announced that Google acquired them for \$1.65 billion. The others would continue working on YouTube in their then-current roles as Chief Technology Officer and Chief Executive

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17. Rowell, *YouTube*, 52 – 53.

18. *Ibid.*, 67 – 71.

19. *Ibid.*, 63.

Officer, respectively.<sup>20</sup> This acquisition was an exciting step forward, especially because journalists suspected the company was losing up to \$500,000 per month.<sup>21</sup> Under Google's direction, YouTube started selling highly lucrative ad space. Because of high operating costs, it took them another three years to start turning a profit, but as the company continued to expand, so did the revenue. In 2021, YouTube reported a profit of \$28.8 billion, up from \$19.7 billion in 2020.<sup>22</sup> According to Statista, this change resulted from the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>23</sup> Currently, YouTube is the leading social media platform in the United States, with 81 percent of internet users reporting that they regularly access YouTube, followed by 69 percent of users who are active on Facebook. It is also the world's leading music app, beating out iTunes and Spotify.<sup>24</sup>

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20. Paul La Monica, "Google to Buy YouTube for \$1.65 Billion," *CNN Money*, October 9, 2006, [https://money.cnn.com/2006/10/09/technology/googleyoutube\\_deal/index.htm?cnn=yes](https://money.cnn.com/2006/10/09/technology/googleyoutube_deal/index.htm?cnn=yes).

21. Rowell, *YouTube*, 73.

22. Mansoor Iqbal, "YouTube Revenue and Usage Statistics (2022)," *Business of Apps*, May 22, 2018, <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/youtube-statistics/>.

23. Laura Céci, "U.S. YouTube Usage Increase Due to Coronavirus 2020" (Statista, August 23, 2021), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1106313/youtube-usage-increase-due-to-coronavirus-home-usa/>.

24. Laura Céci, "YouTube - Statistics & Facts" (Statista, February 7, 2022), <https://www.statista.com/topics/2019/youtube/>.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

My research focused on faculty use of YouTube in higher education and the content creators behind some of the most popular educational music studies channels. While there is a plethora of research on YouTube in general, only a handful of articles related to YouTube and music studies were published before 2021. An increased interest in public musicology spawned more scholarship in this area, culminating in a collection of essays titled *YouTube and Music: Online Culture and Everyday Life*, published in early 2023, only weeks before I completed this dissertation.<sup>25</sup> This collection marks a significant step forward in a nascent field that portends more scholarship on the horizon.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context for the two studies I conducted. To this end, I summarize the findings on the efficacy of using video for educational purposes, provide a brief history of YouTube in higher education, and survey the extant scholarship on music studies YouTube videos and content creators. The philosophical frameworks are detailed at length in Chapter three, and the research framework used as a model for the interviews is addressed in Chapter five.

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25. Holly Rogers, Joana Freitas, and João Francisco Porfirio, eds., *YouTube and Music: Online Culture and Everyday Life* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/61935>.

## Video Learning in Higher Education

The benefits of using video as a learning tool has been well-established in the literature. A comprehensive review of 105 texts by Michael Noetel et al. found that exchanging video for traditional teaching methods led to measurable improvements in demonstrated performance on student learning outcomes. These substantially increased when video was used in tandem with existing teaching methods, suggesting that a hybrid approach produced optimal results.<sup>26</sup> A 2017 study by Michael Carmichael, Abigail-Kate Reid, and Jeffrey Karpicke also found that using videos has a demonstrable positive impact in higher education but questioned whether it was an ideal tool in all circumstances. In particular, they could not categorically determine if video learning positively affects critical thinking skills.<sup>27</sup> They concluded that over-reliance on video could have a detrimental effect on core competencies that are incompatible with this medium.

Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology in Australia challenged the overall effectiveness of video, presenting case studies demonstrating that many video resources may be inefficient because they do not fully utilize the medium's

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26. Michael Noetel et al., "Video Improves Learning in Higher Education: A Systematic Review," *Review of Educational Research* 91, no. 2 (April 1, 2021): 204–36, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321990713>.

27. Michael Carmichael, Abigail-Kate Reid, and Jeffrey D Karpicke, "Assessing the Impact of Educational Video on Student Engagement, Critical Thinking and Learning," *Sage Publishing*, February 10, 2018.

capabilities. Their findings prompted them to caution practitioners against blind acceptance of the format.<sup>28</sup> Video is a powerful learning tool that operates most successfully when it is well-designed, accompanied by active learning, and used with consideration of the specific pedagogical approaches afforded by the medium.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the literature on video use in higher education has focused on using video as part of the flipped classroom model, a pedagogical technique that requires students to engage with materials before class, typically through pre-recorded lectures, videos, or written materials. Students spend in-class time participating in active learning exercises such as discussions, labs, problem-solving, or group work. A quick search using the terms “flipped classroom” AND “meta” AND “video” on Google Scholar or any robust university library website will likely uncover more than a dozen meta-analyses on the effects of the flipped classroom technique on student learning outcomes. Some of these are confined within a specific discipline, many are interdisciplinary, and virtually all demonstrate the effectiveness of flipped classroom learning on a graduated scale of weak to strong. There are so many meta-analyses that Khe Foon Hew et al. conducted a meta-

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28. Andrew Thomson, Ruth Bridgstock, and Christiaan Willems, “‘Teachers Flipping out’ beyond the Online Lecture: Maximising the Educational Potential of Video,” *Journal of Learning Design* 7, no. 3 (December 1, 2014): 67–78, <https://doi.org/10.5204/jld.v7i3.209>.

29. Matthew Fyfield et al., “Videos in Higher Education: Making the Most of a Good Thing,” *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 35, no. 5 (November 22, 2019): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5930>.

analysis of the meta-analyses, reaffirming the overall positive correlation between this pedagogical practice and positive student learning outcomes.<sup>30</sup>

Students show a strong preference for video when using self-directed learning.<sup>31</sup> When it comes to formal learning, Elaine Tan found that they are more inclined to traditional interactions that occur in a face-to-face classroom setting and perceive these as being of higher educational value.<sup>32</sup> Despite this, students can appreciate the use of videos during live lectures, but only if the videos are relatively short, well-integrated, and do not disrupt the lecture flow.<sup>33</sup>

### ***YouTube in Higher Education***

By early 2008, YouTube had begun to gain popularity among the academic community. Burke et al. assessed faculty usage of YouTube as a teaching resource in the health sciences in 2009 and found that 41.7% of faculty were already using YouTube in

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30. Khe Foon Hew et al., “Meta-Analyses of Flipped Classroom Studies: A Review of Methodology,” *Educational Research Review* 33 (June 1, 2021): 100393, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100393>.

31. Pearson Research Center and The Harris Poll, “Beyond Millennials: The Next Generation of Learners.”

32. Tan, “Informal Learning on *YouTube*.”

33. Frank Alpert and Chris S. Hodkinson, “Video Use in Lecture Classes: Current Practices, Student Perceptions and Preferences,” *Education + Training* 61, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 31–45, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-12-2017-0185>.



the classroom. However, 80 percent used it less than six times per semester.<sup>34</sup> By the 2019–2020 academic year, Daniel Pattier found that number had increased, with approximately 88 percent of all faculty in higher education using YouTube, regardless of discipline, and 23.4 percent using YouTube videos more than six times a week.<sup>35</sup>

W. Marc Jackman provides examples of the pedagogical benefits of YouTube videos at the university level in eight categories. These include summarizing subject content, clarifying complex phenomena, concretizing abstract ideas, modeling skills and behaviors, reinforcing domain-specific jargon, virtual labs, interviews, and augmented learning.<sup>36</sup> Jackman identifies the educator’s critical role as facilitator to curate the students’ learning experience but does not explicitly advocate for them to teach information literacy skills to help students learn to assess the credibility of these sources on their own.

Some scholars have expressed concerns about teachers’ abilities to locate and critically evaluate YouTube videos. Matthew Fyfield, Michael Henderson, and Michael

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34. Sloane C Burke, Shonna Snyder, and Robin C Rager, “An Assessment of Faculty Usage of YouTube as a Teaching Resource,” 2009, 8.

35. Daniel Pattier, “Teachers and YouTube: The Use of Video as an Educational Resource,” *Ricerche Di Pedagogia e Didattica. Journal of Theories and Research in Education* 16, no. 1 (June 28, 2021): 59–77. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1970-2221/11584>.

36. W. Jackman, “YouTube Usage in Tertiary Education: An Argument for Its Pedagogical Benefits,” *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* Vol 14 (May 14, 2019): 157–66, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i09.10475>.

Phillips conducted a case study suggesting that some teachers used hurried or indiscriminate practices when selecting YouTube videos for their classes. They propose that this methodology could increase the negative influence of the YouTube algorithm on capricious selection practices, thereby diminishing the overall quality of future search results and perpetuating a cycle of poor-quality content.<sup>37</sup>

In response to the lack of a video vetting process on the YouTube platform, Dimitri Rudenkin and Veronkia Grushevskaya have challenged the legitimacy of YouTube resources, claiming that those in higher education significantly overvalue the benefits. While conceding that it has merit as a supplementary and illustrative source, they allege that YouTube is overused and has decreased instruction quality.<sup>38</sup> However, they used a single and highly-specific case study for their thesis. Replicate studies are required to test and substantiate this hypothesis.

In addition to functioning as a teaching tool, YouTube became a public platform for intellectuals to exchange ideas and share findings with a larger audience than would typically be reached through a closed circuit such as a conference or academic journal.<sup>39</sup>

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37. Fyfield, Henderson, and Phillips, “Navigating Four Billion Videos.”

38. D. Rudenkin and Veronika Grushevskaya, “Youtube as an Instrument of Learning in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges,” in *Proc. Eur. Conf. e-Learn., ECEL*, vol. 2019-November (Academic Conferences Limited, 2019), 684–86, <https://doi.org/10.34190/EEL.19.039>.

39. Jeffrey R. Young, “Thanks to YouTube, Professors are Finding New Audiences,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 9, 2008. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/thanks-to-youtube-professors-are-finding-new-audiences-381/>.

On 16 February 2007, just over one year after YouTube's official launch, Henry Jenkins published an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* titled "From YouTube to YouNiversity." Jenkins asserts that the contemporary university "preserves often rigid borders between disciplines and departments and even constructs a series of legal obstacles that make it difficult to collaborate even within the same organization."<sup>40</sup> He argued that if academic departments operated more like YouTube or Wikipedia, they could more efficiently and quickly disseminate expert information. By releasing knowledge from behind the paywalls of journals and books, data could be more easily accessible and potentially benefit a large portion of the population who could use it to generate new knowledge. More importantly, Jenkins projected that sharing ideas on a social media platform could redefine academic fields as scholars reap the benefits of interdisciplinary learning and collaboration.

Jenkins' article was followed by one from Jeffrey Young, which is full of quotes by professors touting the benefits of uploading their lectures to YouTube, from posting more refined and polished lectures to adding a layer of accountability.<sup>41</sup> Andrew Maynard, a university science professor and creator of the YouTube channel Risk Bites,

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40. Henry Jenkins, "From YouTube to YouNiversity." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, (February 16, 2007), para. 5. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/from-youtube-to-youniversity/>.

41. Jeffrey Young, "Thanks to YouTube, Professors Are Finding New Audiences," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 9, 2008, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/thanks-to-youtube-professors-are-finding-new-audiences-381/>.

argues that YouTube provides an opportunity for academics to contribute to rich, reliable, diverse video content and mobilize their knowledge for society's betterment. He also debunks the notion that high editing skills are required to break into the platform.<sup>42</sup>

In recent years, YouTube has become the subject of significant academic scholarship. Chareen Snelson's literature review of journal articles and conference papers from 2006–2009 illuminated how researchers studied YouTube as a teaching tool across academic disciplines in its earliest days.<sup>43</sup> At that time, only four journal articles and two conference papers related to YouTube and the performing arts had been published, and only one of those presented empirical research. Despite the proliferation of scholarship on YouTube that has appeared since then, surprisingly little research on the academic study of music and YouTube followed until recently.

**Music Faculty Use of YouTube.** Kirsten Dougan's 2012 study on how librarians and music faculty used YouTube for teaching and research and their perceptions of YouTube remains the largest and most important scholarship on the topic available today,

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42. Andrew D. Maynard, "How to Succeed as an Academic on YouTube," *Frontiers in Communication* 5 (2021), <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2020.572181>.

43. Chareen Snelson, "YouTube Across the Disciplines: A Review of the Literature," *MERLOT Journal of Online Teaching and Learning* 7, no. 1 (2011): 12.

analyzing data from 2,156 music faculty and 331 librarians from across the United States.<sup>44</sup> It was unprecedented and has not been replicated on that scale.<sup>45</sup>

Although Dougan's survey was ample and contained a wide variety of data, the study's central focus compared faculty use of YouTube and other freely available streaming services with university library systems. Consequently, the answer choices provided to questions related to YouTube use assumed that most respondents were employing it to listen to music or show examples of a particular musical instrument or performance, not for tutorial purposes. Admittedly, substantially fewer music studies tutorial-style channels were available at the time of Dougan's study than today. For example, while a few content creators I interviewed for this study had YouTube channels at the time, none of them had begun posting the sort of content for which they are best known today.

Dougan found that a third of faculty respondents reported posting personal content to YouTube, most of which were performances.<sup>46</sup> Grouped in with an eight

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44. Dougan, "YouTube Has Changed Everything'?"

45. I have been unable to locate any other large-scale studies surveying faculty on their use of YouTube in the classroom, regardless of discipline. Nigerian researchers conducted a study based on Dougan's at Kwara State tertiary institutions, but their sample size was exponentially smaller (twenty librarians and fifteen music lecturers). See Tella Adeyinka, Felix Okemute, and Adedeji Tella, "Perception and Use of YouTube by Music Lecturers and Librarians in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria," *International Information & Library Review* 50, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 108–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2018.1435148>.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 579.

percent collective “other” are lectures. Dougan does not provide information regarding faculty use of YouTube for asynchronous or flipped classroom purposes.<sup>47</sup>

Dougan also collected data on student use of YouTube, particularly concerning their use of library resources, and several researchers have used this data to expand on Dougan’s research. Katie Lai’s 2013 study focused on undergraduate use of YouTube compared to physical media resources such as compact discs (CDs) and digital video discs (DVDs). While Dougan’s study showed that undergraduate students preferred YouTube when searching for audio recordings, underclass students at the institution where she conducted her research used the library’s multimedia collection more often for completing assignments and papers. Although Lai did not identify the reasons for this behavior through the survey, she hypothesized that it may have been due to the undergraduate library orientation workshop provided to all incoming first-year students at the institution.<sup>48</sup>

Marianna Czeisel and Veronica Smith found that by 2020, student perceptions of commercial streaming services increased, typically at the expense of their usage of

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47. Kirstin Dougan, “Music, YouTube, and Academic Libraries,” *Notes* 72, no. 3 (2016): 491–508, <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0009>

48. Katie Lai, “How Are Our Undergraduates Using YouTube? A Survey on Music Students’ Use of YouTube and the Library’s Multimedia Collection,” *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (October 1, 2013): 199–217, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2013.843361>

library resources.<sup>49</sup> The researchers theorized that this was partially due to the reduced availability of compact disc players, which no longer come as standard features on many new automobiles and laptops.

### **Extant Scholarship on Teaching Music Studies on YouTube**

Published scholarship about music studies on YouTube has been scarce. One of the earliest examples comes from Thomas Rudolph and James Frankel, whose 2009 book *YouTube in Music Education* is partly a how-to manual for teachers wishing to use YouTube to create their own videos and partly a list of strategies for integrating YouTube into the music curriculum.<sup>50</sup> The book was limited by the content available on YouTube at the time and the platform's dynamic nature. Perhaps realizing the futility of trying to keep up with such a rapidly changing landscape in a print medium, the authors have not released subsequent editions.

In 2014, Jennifer Whitaker, Evelyn Yorman, and Cornelia Yarbrough conducted a content analysis of music education videos on YouTube.<sup>51</sup> A keyword search of “music

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49. Marianna J. Czeisel and Veronica D. Smith, “University Music Students’ Choice of Music Listening Sources: Use of Library Resources as Compared with Non-Academic Streaming Services,” *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (October 2, 2021): 194–220, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2020.1854568>.

50. Thomas Rudolph and James Frankel, *YouTube in Music Education*, Edition Unstated (New York: Hal Leonard, 2009).

51. Jennifer A. Whitaker, Evelyn K. Orman, and Cornelia Yarbrough, “Characteristics of ‘Music Education’ Videos Posted on YouTube,” *Update: Applications*

education” produced 1,761 results. The researchers categorized relevant videos as teaching, performance, industry, or public relations and subcategorized them by genre or topic. They found thirty-four videos dedicated to teaching music theory. The number of music history videos was so negligible that the researchers categorized it as part of a collective nine videos labeled Other. This study was limited to videos connected to the “music education” keyword. With more than five hundred hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute<sup>52</sup> and the increased influence of the algorithm on individual search results, such a study would be virtually impossible to replicate today with any degree of neutrality or fair representation of the variety of content on the platform.

Catherine Schmidt-Jones explored the challenges and barriers to independent learning on YouTube by comprehensively analyzing viewer comments.<sup>53</sup> Hypothesizing that independent learners may be more likely to seek out theory lessons presented in the context of their instruments, Schmidt-Jones selected the guitar and digital audio workstation (DAW) as samples. She collected and analyzed over 15,000 comments left on 139 videos designed to teach music theory through the guitar or popular DAW

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*of Research in Music Education* 33, no. 1 (November 1, 2014): 49–56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314540662>.

52. Laura Céci, “YouTube: Hours of Video Uploaded Every Minute 2022,” Statista, March 22, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259477/hours-of-video-uploaded-to-youtube-every-minute/>.

53. Catherine Schmidt-Jones, “Instrument-Based Music Theory on YouTube: Entries and Barriers to Lifelong Learning,” *Journal of Music, Technology & Education* 14, no. 1 (April 2021): 5–20, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte\\_00031\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte_00031_1).



systems and identified common challenges the viewers encountered. Based on her findings, she provided recommendations for content creators to address these challenges and another set for educators to teach their students how to evaluate educational content on YouTube and become active participants in the vetting process by using likes, comments, and replies most effectively.

Other significant research in music education and YouTube has focused on instrumental music. Notably, Janice Waldron has conducted extensive research on informal online music performance groups that use YouTube to connect and build community.<sup>54</sup> Nathan Kruse and Kari Veblen researched the characteristics, content, and teaching methods of those teaching traditional and folk music through YouTube instructional videos.<sup>55</sup>

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54. See Janice Waldron's articles "Conceptual Frameworks, Theoretical Models and the Role of YouTube: Investigating Informal Music Learning and Teaching in Online Music Community," *Journal of Music, Technology & Education* 4, no. 2/3 (February 2012): 189–200, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189_1), "YouTube, Fanvids, Forums, Vlogs and Blogs: Informal Music Learning in a Convergent on- and Offline Music Community," *International Journal of Music Education* 31, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 91–105, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761411434861>, and "User-Generated Content, YouTube and Participatory Culture on the Web: Music Learning and Teaching in Two Contrasting Online Communities," *Music Education Research* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 257–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.772131>.

55. Nathan Kruse and Kari Veblen, "Music Teaching and Learning Online: Considering YouTube Instructional Videos," *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* 5 (May 22, 2012): 77–87, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.5.1.77\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.5.1.77_1).

The heightened interest in those teaching music studies on YouTube in recent years has been evidenced through conference papers, round tables, and panel discussions. The current attention is closely related to the burgeoning interest in public musicology. In 2015, the American Musicological Society started its online platform Musicology Now, a blog that professes to be written “for the general public.” The creators describe the blog as “invested in facilitating dialogue, cultivating communities, and making research accessible in diverse formats.”<sup>56</sup> Colleges and universities are also increasingly invested in promoting public musicology. In 2014, Westminster Choir College of Rider University became the first program in North America to offer a master’s degree in American and Public Musicology. However, as of 2022, the degree has been archived.<sup>57</sup> Columbus State University launched the first public musicology undergraduate certificate program in 2022. As a public platform where academics, practitioners, aficionados, and students can access and create content equally, YouTube is prime fodder for investigative study.

In October 2021, Oxford University Press began publishing individual articles from its *Handbook of Public Music Theory*. One of these is “Music Theory YouTube,”

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56. “About – Musicology Now,” *AMS Musicology Now* (blog), accessed April 2, 2023, <https://musicologynow.org/about-musicology-now/>. Some music scholars and practitioners challenge the idea of “public musicology.” For a succinct consideration of the issue, see Judith Malafronte, “Going Public with Musicology,” *Early Music America: The Magazine of Historical Performance* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 28.

57. Dr. Sharon Mirchandani, who was instrumental in initiating the program, stated that the Music Theory, History, and Composition Department has appealed the Provost’s decision to archive the degree. She is optimistic that the degree will be reinstated in the near future. Personal communication with the author, April 10, 2023.

co-authored by university instructor Julianne Grasso and music theory YouTuber Cory Arnold, creator of the 12tone channel.<sup>58</sup> This essay provides a concise and practical introduction to the state of music theory on YouTube, including its history, challenges, key players, and relationship to academia. They also introduce a system for categorizing videos by genre to help the casual user better understand the purpose and functions of music theory YouTube content.

The most recent contribution to the field is a collection of essays titled *YouTube and Music: Online Culture and Everyday Life*. The twelve chapters are in three sections: Transmedia, Performance, and Digital Spaces; Pedagogy and Interpretation; and Music Listening and Circulation. John Moore's essay "The New Language of Music Theory in the Digital Age" is most relevant to this dissertation and amplifies many of Grasso and Arnold's main points, such as the decreasing gap between music theory in academia and digital spaces, concerns about the lack of editorial review, and the need for further dialogue.

### **Summary**

Some of the most significant risks and challenges with writing about social media are its transience and mutability, which could explain the relative dearth of research on

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58. Julianne Grasso and Cory Arnold, "Music Theory YouTube," in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory*, ed. J. Daniel Jenkins (Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197551554.013.32>.

the topic. However, YouTube has been on a steady upward growth trajectory for over fifteen years and shows no signs of stopping. The recent surge of momentum toward online learning spawned by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has made YouTube a more popular learning tool than ever. Although the rival video-sharing platform TikTok is also rapidly growing in popularity, a recent study shows that it is not currently a preferred tool for educational purposes among students in higher education.<sup>59</sup> Even if it does overtake YouTube for this purpose, many of the same trends and issues related to one video-sharing platform will likely apply to the other, making investing time in studying public video platforms in higher education worthwhile.

While there is a copious amount of literature on using video in higher education, most relate to flipped classroom learning. Research specific to using YouTube to teach music studies is minimal. I predict that the next few years will see a significant uptick in publications, incited by the growing interest in public musicology and fueled by publications such as the *Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory*.

One topic that has received almost no scholarly attention is the content creators themselves. Grasso's and Arnold's "Music Theory YouTube" essay is a notable exception. As a collaboration between an academic (Grasso) and a professional

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59. Birol Çelik, Hüseyin Uzunboylu, and Nur Demirbaş-Çelik, "Higher Education Students' Social Media Platform Preferences for Educational Purposes," *Revista de Educación a Distancia (RED)* 23, no. 72 (January 9, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.6018/red.491551>.

Youtuber (Arnold), the result is fodder for discussing how the Academy may reconsider acceptable pathways to earn credentialed status in music studies.

By combining the results of an updated and revised version of Dougan's faculty survey on YouTube use with information from and about popular music studies content creators, I hope to lessen the divide between those using and creating YouTube content. I designed my interview questions to highlight the content creators' expertise as subject matter experts and teachers and address some of the main concerns voiced by Youtuber critics, such as managing errors and curiosity about research practices. Conducting the interviews has allowed me to initiate relationships that I hope will lead to future collaborations that further complicate the definition of the academic in the twenty-first century.

## CHAPTER 3

### PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **The Sociology of Knowledge**

In the words of Karl Mannheim, “The sociology of knowledge seeks to analyze the relationship between knowledge and existence.”<sup>60</sup> Simply put, it studies knowledge as a product of cultures and societies. This description leaves ample room for interpretation, and philosophers have defined both knowledge and society in diverse and sometimes divergent ways.

The sociology of knowledge is fundamentally a product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has been developed and debated since the 1920s. Some scholars openly recognize valid concurrent interpretations. For example, Freitas presents the contemporary understanding of the term using the analogy of a seed that has landed on three terrains, each of which has fertilized the basic concept with different theories.<sup>61</sup> As McCarthy explains, the sociology of knowledge as it is understood today is “a series of theoretical works and research agendas.”<sup>62</sup> To approach the topic, McCarthy suggests that one can either take a

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60. Karl Mannheim as quoted in Werner Stark, in *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351302760>, p. 12.

61. Renan Springer de Freitas, “The Sociology of Knowledge and Its Movements,” *Sociologia & Antropologia* 10, no. 1 (April 2020): 267–87, <https://doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752019v10110>,

broad approach by recognizing the variety of works that deal with the social nature of knowledge as part of the discipline or take a particular approach by examining only the works written by recognized specialists in the field.<sup>63</sup> The broad approach treats the sociology of knowledge as a framework, not a specific subdiscipline of sociology. For this literature review, I will be adopting McCarthy's particular approach.

While its definition may be subject to interpretation, the basic tenants of the sociology of knowledge are as follows:

1. Knowledge is collective and social.
2. Knowledge is not restricted to that which can be proven by science.
3. An individual's social milieu, including place, time, and positionality, has an unavoidable influence on how that person perceives the world, and scholars must acknowledge that influence.

Early scholars such as Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, who theorized the sociology of knowledge, adopted a relativist position toward collectively held belief systems such as mythology and religion, regarding them as a form of knowledge that was a kind of truth. In this understanding, truth is inextricable from the social context that created it. Therefore, what may be true in one time and place may not be true in another time and place. As critics Charles Gehlke, A.A. Goldenweiser, Edward Schaub, and William

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62. E. Doyle McCarthy, "Sociology of Knowledge," in *Encyclopedia of Sociology* (New York: MacMillan Reference USA, 2000) p. 2954.

63. Ibid.

Dennes pointed out, the theory is somewhat paradoxical because it necessitates its own absoluteness. They argued that it is pointless to consider this theory if we are products of the ideas the theory seeks to profess.<sup>64</sup> In other words, they claim that we must accept that the sociology of knowledge has an absolute, not relative, truth, which contradicts the nature of the theory.

### *Historical Context*

Stark and Kecskemeti cite World War I as the most salient force in shifting the public schools of philosophical thought from whence this theory emerged.<sup>65</sup> The term “sociology of knowledge” first appeared in print in the 1920s in essays by Scheler and Mannheim, but Mannheim’s 1929 publication *Ideology and Utopia* codified and set the standard for the field.<sup>66</sup> Paul Kecskemeti outlines three significant influences that contributed to the development of the sociology of knowledge conceived by Mannheim.<sup>67</sup> The first is Marxism, a philosophy that examines how social conditions affect different social classes (primarily the bourgeoisie and the proletariat). Mannheim’s ideas rely

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64. Paul Kecskemeti, “Introduction,” in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1952), <https://archive.org/details/essaysonsociolog00mann>.

65. Werner Stark, *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1958), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351302760>, p. 2.

66. McCarthy, “Sociology of Knowledge,” p. 2955.

67. Kecskemeti, “Introduction,” pp. 3 – 9.



heavily on Marx's thesis of ideology as a collective force of beliefs within a culture that become social facts and form the governing structure of a society.

The second is historicism, which grew out of a movement toward synthesis in the cultural sciences. A growing belief in historicism led to a rejection of positivism, which is the philosophy that knowledge is not theoretical but derived from the sensory experiences of natural phenomena and interpreted through reason and logic. Historicism promoted the idea that human cultural products, such as art, must be interpreted through the social framework of the people who created them. This philosophy contributed to Mannheim's belief that no singular conceptual system can claim to be universally valid across time and space.

The third current is the school of phenomenology, founded by Edmund Husserl to challenge the Kantian school of thought. For Husserl, objects of knowledge were mere reflections of a preexisting mental schema that established possible knowledge. The actual object of knowledge, the *Ding an sich*, exists on a plane beyond our senses, and we can only know things in their manifestations as we perceive them. Phenomenology allows for objectively studying things typically regarded as subjective, such as emotions and experiences. Mannheim did not fully embrace phenomenology but adopted the doctrine of intentionality, which postulated that the intentional attitude toward studying an object must correspond to the object's type. For Mannheim, this supported studying something within its cultural context.

Another early figure is French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who some credit as the key founder of the movement. Durkheim has a significant body of work that deals with the sociology of knowledge, particularly related to religion. As a cultural relativist, Durkheim believed science is rooted in and inseparable from culture. The key to understanding Durkheim's sociology of knowledge is that the world only exists as far as it is represented. Like Mannheim, he rejects the idea of the transcendent thing-in-itself, the *Ding an sich*, and ascribes to the concept of collective consciousness, a shared set of values or beliefs a society holds. Cultures create legitimate truths, even if one cannot verify these truths through scientific means. For Durkheim, interactions between the physical world and society create *collective representations*, socially constructed symbols used to represent or refer to things in reality that help people make sense of the world. Individuals cannot solely build them, although they contribute to their creation. One example is language, a social construct that only works if society agrees on the meaning of the sounds (symbols) representing objects, concepts, and ideas in the world. For Durkheim, language and other social realities could be a social fact, a "thing" that exists in the real world. However, a specific society creates these collective representations in a particular time and space, so they cannot be universally and timelessly true.

Subsequent proponents of the sociology of knowledge took the field in new directions. In 1942, Becker and Dahlke attempted to clarify Scheler's sociology of knowledge by defining it as "the analysis of the functional interrelations of social processes and structures on the one hand and the patterns of intellectual life, including the

modes of knowing, on the other.”<sup>68</sup> Werner Stark’s landmark text *Sociology of Knowledge* summarized the existing work while attempting to reconcile the differences between Scheler and Mannheim’s theories.<sup>69</sup> Berger and Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) expanded the field to include all knowledge held by a society, regardless of the researcher’s perception of the validity of that knowledge. They also suggested a reciprocal relationship between knowledge and social reality. Society constructs knowledge, and knowledge constructs society.<sup>70</sup>

The field also influenced Michel Foucault, who revolutionized the study of history by focusing on the relationships between power and cultural concepts like madness, sexuality, and punishment. Removing himself from the positivism/historicism debate, he distinguished between the French terms *savoir*, meaning “to know,” and *connaissance*, “to be familiar with.” For Foucault, *savoir*, a “positive unconsciousness of knowledge,” can only be discovered after the fact by the historian who uses a constructed framework based on the historical era and place. This construct may differ from one

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68. As quoted in Stark, in *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 14.

69. E. Doyle McCarthy, “Introduction: The Sociology of Knowledge: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the History of Ideas,” in *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351302760>. pp. x-xi.

70. McCarthy, “Sociology of Knowledge.” p.7

historian to the next, and the positionality of the historian invariably shapes their construction of the framework.<sup>71</sup>

Many other notable philosophers and sociologists contributed to the field, including Robert K. Merton, Clifford Geertz, Kurt Wolff, and Basil Bernstein. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a New Sociology of Knowledge school emerged, spearheaded by E. Doyle McCarthy and explored by feminist scholar Dorothy E. Smith, collaborators Nico Stehr and Volker Meja, and Reiner Keller. Keller established the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse, which uses discourse analysis to understand societal knowledge. This approach analyzes verbal, written, or signed communications within its linguistic and sociological context to derive qualitative meaning beyond the sentence. The field continued to expand as scholars applied the sociology of knowledge to many other disciplines, including science, nursing, education, and the fine arts. It can also be used as a framework to understand how knowledge is created, disseminated, consumed, and accepted on large-scale social media networks such as YouTube.

### ***On Knowledge***

Suppose society constructs knowledge, and accepting and believing in that construct imparts truth writ large. In that case, all social knowledge is true for the

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71. Devereaux Kennedy, "Michel Foucault: The Archaeology and Sociology of Knowledge," *Theory and Society* 8, no. 2 (1979): 269–90, p. 271.

participants in that society if they believe it to be true. By that logic, subjective experiences can become “facts” when social interactions reinforce them. Statements like these may cause academics and absolutists to cringe. After all, some truths must be more valid than others, and not all social facts can be true. As William Westerman puts it, perhaps the easiest way to think about this is to acknowledge that all forms of knowledge communication are similar. We cannot measure the degrees of truth between knowledge in one society and the next on the same axis. Bias is unavoidable because everyone is a member of a biased community.<sup>72</sup> The sociology of knowledge not only recognizes but also centers bias. It need not concern itself with acting as an arbiter of truth. We are left to grapple with how bias can be filtered and reconciled, particularly when knowledge extends beyond its social borders.

### ***The Impact of Technology***

The invention of the internet opened the virtual realm of society, allowing people who may otherwise never have met to exchange ideas, construct knowledge, and share that knowledge. Social media platforms like YouTube provide a digital space that encourages idea-sharing. When someone posts an educational video on YouTube, they teach; they share their knowledge with other members of the digital society. The recipients of this knowledge must rely on their own experiences shaped by their society

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72. William Westerman, “Epistemology, the Sociology of Knowledge, and the Wikipedia Userbox Controversy,” in *Folklore and the Internet*, ed. Trevor J. Blank, Vernacular Expression in a Digital World (University Press of Colorado, 2009), 123–58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgrx5.9>, p. 2.

to determine if they accept what they see and hear on YouTube as truth. If they do, it seems rational to assume that they are more likely to trust that person as a valid source of knowledge and accept their ideas. This interaction is analogous to a professor and a student in a physical classroom. Teaching and learning are similar, but there are two fundamentally essential differences between the “YouTubiversity professor” and the traditional professor: scale and the algorithm.

People who share ideas in the digital world today can theoretically reach all 4.88 billion people with internet access.<sup>73</sup> When Mannheim, Scheler, and Durkheim theorized in the 1920s and 30s, their conception of place referred to a physical location, an integral factor in creating discrete, limited social communities that produced different knowledge. A prime example is in E. Doyle McCarthy’s 1996 book *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge*. He makes it a point to explicitly separate and parse out the German, French, and American contributions to the field within the contexts of their respective societies. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I argue that an individual can be a full member of two societies simultaneously: their society as manifested in the physical world and a digital one. Participation in one affects the person’s experience in the other and vice versa. Still, the digital society is a new plane of existence that we should consider in its own right. Those who participate in the globalized society of YouTube bring the experiences of their localized societies. They participate in the knowledge construction of

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73. Simon Kemp, “Digital 2021 October Global Statshot Report,” accessed January 4, 2022, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-october-global-statshot>.

the globalized digital community, affirming knowledge that they believe is valid through the visible acts of “liking” a video or leaving positive comments and through the invisible actions of view counts and watch time. This act of affirmation reciprocally affects what the content creators produce by incentivizing them to make content similar to that with many “likes” and views.

**The YouTube Algorithm.** The role of the digital realm in the sociology of knowledge cannot only be considered because of its nature but also because it introduces a new agent: the YouTube algorithm, a complex process designed to recommend videos to users. When I interviewed YouTube content creators, I did not specifically ask them about the algorithm. Nevertheless, all ten interviewees brought it up, explicitly or implicitly. Despite being financially invested in understanding it, none claimed to know precisely how it worked. Several stated that their perception of the algorithm's operation had changed significantly.<sup>74</sup> YouTube is not fully transparent about the inner workings of its algorithm. However, it does provide some basic information about how it generally operates and how it has changed to adapt to the shifting needs and focus of the platform.<sup>75</sup>

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74. Adam Neely (Adam Neely YouTube channel) in conversation with the author, July 16, 2021. Cory Arnold (12tone YouTube channel) in conversation with the author, August 9, 2021.

75. For a very basic and colorfully-illustrated explanation, see Christos Goodrow, “On YouTube’s Recommendation System,” [blog.youtube](https://blog.youtube/inside-youtube/on-youtubes-recommendation-system/), September 15, 2021, <https://blog.youtube/inside-youtube/on-youtubes-recommendation-system/>.

An algorithm is the sequenced instructions that allow a computer system to recognize a problem and trigger specific programming commands to resolve or react to that problem. In the case of YouTube, the problem is determining which of the platform's billions of videos to recommend to an individual user on their home page or their "up next" page. YouTube's algorithm operates on two levels: candidate generation and ranking. In candidate generation, the algorithm seeks to identify which of the billions of videos on YouTube may be relevant to the user based on their history and content. The candidate generation processes find as much information about the user as possible. The model is not trained on explicit feedback mechanisms (such as thumbs up/down<sup>76</sup> or positive/negative comments) but on implicit models based on user behavior, such as watching a video to completion. This collective data creates the user's watch history. Search history is also stored and scanned for keywords and searches related to a particular topic. User demographics also play a role, whether they are freely offered by the YouTube user in their profile or guessed by the algorithm based on watch patterns and search history.<sup>77</sup> YouTube's algorithm also has a specific process for counteracting

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76. On November 10, 2021, YouTube hid video dislikes from public view. Viewers can still click the dislike button, but only the number of "likes" will be visible to the public. The content uploader can see both likes and dislikes. See <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/update-to-youtube/>. This removal of the dislike function is problematic as it was a helpful mechanism for sorting through videos for quality content. In my experience, videos with many factual errors often had a higher percentage of dislikes.

77. This can create some interesting results. YouTuber Cory Arnold (12tone) does not post explicitly about trans icons or trans content but stated that they have recently gained a large trans audience. Cory believes this is due to their interest in tuning theory, a



the natural tendency for programs to rely more heavily on the past to continuously introduce fresh content using engineered training models to “teach” the algorithm how to do this effectively.

The ranking side of the algorithm uses impression data to create a profile of an individual user based on the videos the user watches. Impression data includes how many videos a user watched on a particular channel, how long ago they watched them, whether they clicked on a suggested video, and other related statistics. The ranking algorithm then translates that data into predictions about a user’s expected watch time for a given video. These two factors create the algorithm that produces suggested YouTube videos for individual users.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the algorithm contributes to constructing knowledge in the digital sphere by selecting what information it will offer individual users. Because YouTube is a capitalist enterprise, so-called “algorithmic experts” have made it their

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topic they have found is of general interest to those who create electronic music. According to Cory, a significant portion of electronic music fans are also trans, and so the algorithm often recommends their videos on tuning theory to trans fans of electronic music, who, as electronic music consumers, not producers, might have had little to no prior interest in or significant exposure to music theory. As a result, Cory claims that their channel now has a disproportionately large number of trans viewers relative to the population.

78. This information about YouTube’s algorithm comes from Paul Covington, Jay Adams, and Emre Sargin, “Deep Neural Networks for YouTube Recommendations,” in *Proceedings of the 10th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys ’16: Tenth ACM Conference on Recommender Systems, Boston Massachusetts USA: ACM, 2016)*, 191–98, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2959100.2959190>. The authors are Google engineers who helped to create the YouTube algorithm.

mission to “crack” the algorithm to use this knowledge to advise YouTubers on how best to create content likely to be favored by the algorithm. The benefits of algorithmic favoritism are increased view counts, leading to financial gains from YouTube ad revenue and a higher probability of securing paid sponsorships.<sup>79</sup>

In Durkheim’s sociology of knowledge, individuals within a society share a collective consciousness. Social knowledge is created by and becomes part of that collective consciousness. When artificial intelligence, such as the YouTube algorithm, becomes a factor in the collective consciousness, might a new theory of the sociology of knowledge be necessary to account for this element? YouTube’s algorithmic code was written by humans and trained on human models. As it evolves, the ranking and candidate generation algorithms continuously interact and react, creating an increasingly complex code. As algorithms “learn” to operate more independently, it is not out of the realm of possibility to imagine a world where the algorithms can no longer be understood or controlled by their creators. How could we account for an emancipated algorithm's role in creating collective knowledge?

A secondary factor regarding the sociology of knowledge is the academic’s role. Our culture has clung to a socially-constructed belief that university academics are more authentic keepers and creators of knowledge. Stark addresses this belief by separating the

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79. See Sophie Bishop, “Algorithmic Experts: Selling Algorithmic Lore on YouTube,” *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 2056305119897323, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119897323>.

sociology of knowledge into two variations: micro-sociology, referring to the insular culture of academia that faces the challenge of producing and disseminating knowledge, and macro-sociology, which deals with society at large.<sup>80</sup> In the micro-sociological world, participants may actively reinforce and uphold punitive truths that may not be true, such as the inherent superiority of the university over the YouTuber. However, as professors increasingly bring YouTube into the classroom, they endorse and legitimize this social media platform as a valid source of knowledge. This type of endorsement contradicts how universities have historically regarded truth standards of knowledge. For decades, peer review was considered the gold standard for authenticating information. Hence, professors tout academic journals, encyclopedias, and books published by reputable publishers to their students as the ultimate trustworthy knowledge sources. YouTube content is rarely reviewed before dissemination unless sponsored by an overarching governing body (such as an academic organization). It is up to the individual consuming the content to determine its veracity.

The introduction of artificial intelligence as a participating agent in knowledge production opens new avenues of thought, particularly when considering how connected the average person is to the internet and all its algorithmic functions. To what degree has the knowledge chosen by the algorithm impacted our thought processes, and what implications might that have on future knowledge construction?

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80. Stark, *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 22 – 23.

## Hyperreality

Hyperreality is a postmodern concept developed by sociologist Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard coined the term in his 1981 text *Simulacra and Simulation*, which reconceptualizes cultural theory by challenging Marxist economic understandings of cultural production. The concepts of simulacra and simulation are essential to understanding the postmodern condition by addressing electronic media culture, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. Baudrillard's ideas also foreshadowed social media, where users can take a more active role in creating copies of copies by replicating what they see and posting their own simulations in a never-ending cycle.

Hyperreality occurs when the lines between physical reality and simulated perceptions of reality blur and become indistinguishable. Because the hyperreal is a simulation, it does not exist in a physical space and is not subject to those limitations. As the simulations become more prevalent in society, the simulated reality of the hyperreal can appear "more real than real."<sup>81</sup> In some ways, the distinction between physical reality and hyperreality is irrelevant as people derive meaning from both.

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81. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Shelia Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), [https://www.press.umich.edu/9900/simulacra\\_and\\_simulation](https://www.press.umich.edu/9900/simulacra_and_simulation), 81.

### *System of Objects and The Real*

Before developing his theory of hyperreality, Baudrillard was writing about the ways that humans use and ascribe value to commodities. Karl Marx distinguished between the use value and the exchange value of products. Use value relates to the physical properties of a product with a clearly defined utility to fulfill human needs, such as shelter or a vehicle. Exchange value refers to a commodity with a market value but no functional use, such as gold. Baudrillard added a third metric: sign value, which refers to the added value ascribed to a commodity based on how society perceives it. A commodity can gain sign value through branding, marketing, or association with a celebrity or members of a high-ranking social caste. A fourth value, the symbolic, encompasses the sentimental value of an object based on gift-giving and personal meaning. Baudrillard argued that in the postmodern world, sign value had become the dominant force in consumerism. Humans value objects based on what they represent more than their functionality, and they organize society around the consumption and display of commodities.

Baudrillard's theory of the hyperreal builds on Jacques Lacan's concept of the Real. For Lacan, the Real is that part of existence that cannot be represented in symbolic or unconscious thought.<sup>82</sup> It is a natural state of being that becomes impossible to regain

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82. Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 25 – 27.

once humans begin using language, or what Lacan calls *the symbolic order*. Although we cannot comprehend the Real in symbolic terms, the Real persists in our everyday lives. As Slavoj Žižek describes it, “In a way, the notion [of the Real] coincides with its opposite . . . We don’t have the Real and the obstacle which makes the Real impossible; the Real is the obstacle itself.”<sup>83</sup> We experience the Real as strange, traumatic, or even transcendent events that we cannot adequately verbalize. Expanding on the concept of the Real, Baudrillard argued that reality is a construct that is impossible to prove.<sup>84</sup> Still, it is a useful concept to distinguish between the socially produced notion of physical reality and the virtually fabricated simulacra of hyperreality.

### ***Simulacra and the Hyperreal***

Baudrillard posited that as society shifted from a use-value system in the modern era to a sign-value society in the postmodern era, any traces of reality were replaced with copies, leaving us with a simulated world that emulates real-world processes. There are four stages of simulation:

1. Faithful reflections. These simulations represent reality in a likeness, such as a novel, a painting, or a map.

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83. Deleted scene from *Žižek!*, 2005. Excerpt uploaded to YouTube by grebmops, “Slavoj Zizek - The Real Explained,” 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA8tn89-exk>, 3:17 – 3:34.

84. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 21.

2. Perversions. These simulations are malicious appearances that mask and distort reality.
3. Privation and pretense. These simulations function as authentic copies that mask the lack of reality.
4. Pure simulacra. In this stage, simulacra are wholly divorced from reality. The replications have progressed so far that they no longer pretend to have any relationship to physical reality.

For Baudrillard, postmodern society has progressed to a state where all human experience is a construct saturated with omnipresent simulacra. Baudrillard divides simulacra into three orders:

1. Counterfeits. In this first order, simulacra point to signs, which no longer refer to real-world objects and ideas. Counterfeits are obvious replicas and do not pretend to be otherwise. Baudrillard gives the example of an automaton, a mechanical counterpart of a human.
2. Production of counterfeits. This order has industrial connotations. The replica is not a counterfeit because it has no referent in the physical world. The sign refers to the meanings invested in objects, not the objects themselves. An example here is a robot. It is not made to resemble a human, like an automaton, yet it is more functionally and referentially humanoid.
3. Ultimate simulation. Here, the signified and the signifier are entirely detached. An ultimate simulation is a construction of signs and symbols without

reference to real objects. The simulacrum constructs its own reality. An example is the clone. Baudrillard calls this “hyperreality,” a state of being that is more real than real.

Ironically, this simulacrum is the furthest from reality but is also the closest to the Real. It does not pretend to be something it is not. “It is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.”<sup>85</sup> As the simulated world and the world that most closely copies the Real merge, they influence each other and become indistinguishable.

While the hyperreal is not limited to media and the online world, they have a clear connection. Today more than ever, the average person spends much of their time in a hyperreal world. According to Statista, the average Internet user worldwide spends 147 minutes per day on social media (which includes YouTube)<sup>86</sup> and an additional 153 minutes watching television/streaming services.<sup>87</sup> The global average among those who play video games was 8.45 hours per week.<sup>88</sup> As people spend more time engaging with

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85. Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster, 2nd edition (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001), 166.

86. “Global Daily Social Media Usage 2022,” Statista, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>.

87. “U.S. Time Spent Watching Television 2024,” Statista, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/186833/average-television-use-per-person-in-the-us-since-2002/>.

88. “Weekly Hours Video Games by Country 2021,” Statista, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/273829/average-game-hours-per-day-of-video-gamers-in-selected-countries/>.



simulations, they lose the ability to keep the real world separate from the online world. However, the distinction becomes less important since people derive equivalent meaning and value from the consensually agreed-upon version of reality (the physical world) and the virtual world.<sup>89</sup>

### ***Online Learning and Hyperreality***

Online learning predates YouTube by several decades. Early online courses in higher education began in the 1980s. With the advent of the World Wide Web in 1991, the University of Phoenix began to offer fully online courses. Some other colleges and universities began experimenting with online course offerings in the early to mid-1990s. However, there was no real growth in online education among traditional nonprofit institutions until 1998, when New York University created NYU Online, a for-profit subsidiary. Other programs followed, many piloted by brick-and-mortar institutions.<sup>90</sup>

Transitioning to online teaching poses challenges that many instructors are unprepared to face. There is a disconnect between how professors learned to teach, primarily through mimicking how professors taught them, and how content needs to be

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89. Kian Bakhtiari, "Welcome To Hyperreality: Where The Physical And Virtual Worlds Converge," *Forbes*, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kianbakhtiari/2021/12/30/welcome-to-hyperreality-where-the-physical-and-virtual-worlds-converge/>.

90. Hope E. Kentnor, "Distance Education and the Evolution of Online Learning in the United States," *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue* 17, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2015): S21–S21.

delivered most effectively online.<sup>91</sup> This disconnect can lead to instructors bringing traditional classroom teaching methods to an online learning environment. Some instructors do not receive formal training before teaching online. Even if they do receive training, Mansureh Kebritchi, Angie Lipschuetz, and Lilia Santiague suggest that many people who provide online-training courses are not adequately qualified due to the relative newness of this teaching methodology and therefore supply inadequate preparation.<sup>92</sup>

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced online learning in 2020, educators who had previously resisted entering this realm had few options: adapt, retire, or resign. Many existing support and training systems were not equipped to handle the volume of new instructors entering the sphere of online learning, resulting in an atmosphere where everyone had to manage the unprecedented situation as best as they could. Some students and instructors discovered a penchant for online learning. In particular, hybrid courses were a newly-favored modality.<sup>93</sup> Online learning was already widespread before the

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91. Mansureh Kebritchi, Angie Lipschuetz, and Lilia Santiague, “Issues and Challenges for Teaching Successful Online Courses in Higher Education: A Literature Review,” *Journal of Educational Technology Systems* 46, no. 1 (September 1, 2017): 4–29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239516661713>, pp. 16 – 17.

92. *Ibid.*, 18.

93. Jaleesa Bustamante, “Distance Learning Statistics: Online Education Trends,” EducationData, April 12, 2020, <https://educationdata.org/online-education-statistics>.

COVID-19 pandemic, and the forced shift has amplified its popularity. Hesitant or resistant professors can no longer realistically expect to elude it.

Not all online learning involves the creation of video lectures, although this is common. Video creates a strange intimacy unmatched in reality. A professor in a brick-and-mortar situation with a well-rehearsed lecture and accompanying slide show may deliver an engaging presentation, but there is an unnatural familiarity with seeing a professor up close in their living room, studio, or other personal space. In some ways, the viewer is closer to them than they normally would be in the classroom or lecture hall, despite being more physically distanced. In Baudrillard's terms, the hyperreality of the online situation is more real than the flesh-and-blood professor standing in a classroom.

A similar phenomenon happens with the professors of YouTubiversity, but on a heightened level through curated videos that become more real than real. The traditional online professor is often on a more restrictive schedule than a YouTuber and may not have the time, editing skills, or incentive to perfect the video quality or redo things that may go wrong. For example:

- A professor in an introductory video holds up the required textbook, which appears in mirror image.
- A pet cat walks in front of a lecturer's camera.

- The instructor loses their place transitioning between the PowerPoint slide and another website and apologizes to the viewer, taking fifteen to thirty seconds to recover.

These issues are frequently left unedited, particularly if the professor may not plan to reuse the videos in the future. When these things occur, it reminds the viewer that they are watching a simulation, unblurring the boundaries of the virtual and physical worlds.

YouTubers, though, can present information in a highly curated format. They can edit out mistakes, remove the spaces between sentences to increase their speaking pace or add space for dramatic effect, and use production tools to create visually striking images. They can insert jump cuts to rapidly transition from one scene to the next and advanced audio editing techniques called *J cuts* and *L cuts*, which allow the viewer to hear the next scene before they see it or continue to listen to the preceding scene after they visually progress. Animated musical notes align with layers of sound that have been digitally extracted from their respective songs or symphonies, and multiple camera angles allow for smooth transitions between the lecturer's face and their hands moving up and down the piano keyboard. This type of video presents a hyperreality—a learning experience that is more real than real and cannot exist in a consensus physical reality.

What happens to the integrity of the online learning environment when hyperreality clashes with physical reality? In a now infamous example from Concordia University, student Aaron Ansuini posted a viral tweet conveying shock upon discovering

that the professor he believed was teaching his online course had died two years earlier.<sup>94</sup> Ansuini and many of his classmates were upset by the jarring realization that a phantom professor was teaching them. This anecdote serves as a cautionary tale. While the hyperreal is, by definition, curated, students are only willing to accept it if they do not perceive it as deception.

Advances in technology constantly add new dimensions to the hyperreal. For example, Chat GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is a language-model processing tool that allows users to have hyperreal conversations. Applications like Hour One take written text and transform it into a video presentation by a realistic-looking virtual human. With such technologies, a non-existent virtual human who responds to student questions using Chat GPT can conceivably deliver reasonably coherent class lectures.

### ***Conclusion***

I argue that these hyperreal experiences can be more effective learning methods than video lectures alone. Not only is the viewer undistracted by issues that may appear in unedited videos, but the professors of YouTubiversity are personally and financially motivated to keep viewers' attention for as long as possible when delivering so-called curiosity content or explaining concepts as succinctly and clearly as possible when delivering how-to content. They are often skilled editors who combine rich visual aids

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94. Aaron Ansuini [@AaronLinguini], "...That Feeling When a Tenured Professor Is Still Giving Classes from beyond the Grave" Tweet, *Twitter*, January 20, 2021, <https://twitter.com/AaronLinguini/status/1352010172697350147>.

with musical examples. Their scripts have been carefully crafted and are rarely given ad hoc. The most successful of them have mastered the art of the hyperreal to create immersive learning experiences that the average professor cannot easily replicate.

There is some debate about the ethics of using extant resources for online courses, which seems to contradict the almost universal acceptance of textbooks, which have been widely accepted as standard auxiliaries to college courses for decades. Many textbooks come with resource packets, including pre-made PowerPoints, test banks, and online resources that instructors can import into a learning management system. The main issue seems to be that sources like those posted to YouTube are free, while textbooks are usually expensive, sometimes prohibitively so (an argument reinforcing Baudrillard's theory about our society's credence in sign value).<sup>95</sup>

As the volume of high-quality freely available resources continues to grow, I believe that after collecting, vetting, and organizing materials, a professor's time is often better spent interacting with the students by discussing those materials, engaging in activities, providing feedback, and the like, rather than repeating information that has

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95. For a spirited discussion on the matter, see "My Professor Is Not Teaching His Online Course Himself, but Uses Publicly Available Videos Instead. Is This Appropriate?," Quora, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.quora.com/My-professor-is-not-teaching-his-online-course-himself-but-uses-publicly-available-videos-instead-Is-this-appropriate>. Anecdotally, I serve as the online course coordinator for the Department of General Education at my university and recently had a meeting with a higher-up about this issue. They were surprised to learn that I do not believe that all online courses need to have instructor-created lecture videos to be a quality course and can still have a strong instructor presence in other ways.

already been packaged in a concise, digestible, format that students prefer. Research supports the added learning benefits of combining video with in-person instruction, which suggests that instructors should consider using these resources, regardless of course modality.<sup>96</sup> In particular, hybrid or “flipped” courses have repeatedly produced higher learning outcomes than fully online or in-person classes.<sup>97</sup>

### **Reconsidering the Academic**

While the Academy tenaciously attempts to retain its status as keeper of the highest forms of knowledge, the ubiquitous social impact of Web 2.0 has already spawned a definitive and permanent change in how people acquire, use, and create knowledge. Any last vestiges of the old guard who resisted the influence of online learning communities were abruptly dismantled in March 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As professors scrambled to adapt to an entirely virtual world, many adopted tailor-made resources for online learning from platforms such as YouTube, tacitly legitimizing them in the process.<sup>98</sup>

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96. Barbara Means et al., “The Effectiveness of Online and Blended Learning: A Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Literature,” *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education* 115, no. 3 (March 2013): 1–47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811311500307>.

97. Bustamante, “Distance Learning Statistics.”

98. Yaacob and Saad, “Acceptance of YouTube as a Learning Platform during the Covid-19 Pandemic.”

K. Daniel Cho, a Lacanian psychopedagogue, convincingly argues that a binary notion of the academic necessitates accepting the false negative of the unacademic, a fallacy that belies the true opposite, the absence of the academic.<sup>99</sup> By rejecting the idea that all knowledge the university has not consecrated is unacademic, we can re-evaluate what this term means and who may claim it.

Cho's ideas about the academic and unacademic are rooted in the semiotic concept of the signifier, which is, in Lacan's words, "what represents the subject to another signifier."<sup>100</sup> A signifier is a material thing, i.e., that the senses can grasp, that points to something else. As established above, the sociology of knowledge recognizes that what constitutes knowledge (truth) in one society is culturally determined and not absolute. This indicates that signifiers are also not absolute and function to reference the real.

For Lacan, the absence of an object does not presuppose the opposite of the object. In the classic example, the true opposite of day is day's absence. The night is the opposite of day only insofar as it represents the absence of day with the signifier night.<sup>101</sup>

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99. K. Daniel Cho, "Teaching Abjection: The Politics of Psychopedagogy," in *Psychopedagogy: Freud, Lacan, and the Psychoanalytic Theory of Education* (Springer, 2009), 153 - 154.

100. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), p. 694.

101. Jacques Lacan and Jacques-Alain Miller, *The Psychoses: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315800189>, p. 148 – 149.



By the same logic, the notion of the academic presupposes the existence of the unacademic. As Cho explains, “the academic is the positive term that relies on the presence of some negative term against which it can become meaningful.”<sup>102</sup> The question, then, is what signifies the unacademic?

Cho explores this question through the lens of Lacan’s theory of discourses, which encompasses verbal or written exchanges of ideas and the social relations that govern them. Lacan identifies four types of discourses, each with a different means of producing and understanding truth. In Lacan’s theory of the university’s discourse, knowledge is dominant. The university discourse efficiently produces bureaucratized knowledge that prioritizes efficiency over truth, creating subjects who cannot “actively make living knowledge; rather, they are automatons, filled with the university’s dead information.”<sup>103</sup>

In Cho’s reading of Lacan, the education provided by the university is regulated, prescribed, and subject to being controlled by non-academic forces. To support his idea, he presents a detailed case study of the California State Board of Education’s decision to standardize education. For Cho, the state board takes a formal stance on the academic and

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102 Cho, *Psychopedagogy*, p. 153.

103. Ibid., p. 51. The question of whether those who participate in academia are truly at liberty to freely pursue the creation of knowledge when academic institutions are, to an increasingly obvious degree, fundamentally capitalist enterprises, is one of great interest that I have considered length. Nonetheless, it is not a subject I choose to explore here for political reasons, a decision that itself sheds some light on the matter.

unacademic by creating educational standards rooted in Western ideology. This formal proclamation of the state board's academic standards makes for an ideological battle of knowledge as it endorses a belief in the legitimacy, or truth, of Western knowledge that, in many cases, overtly excludes that of other cultures.<sup>104</sup> As Cho aptly puts it, “. . . knowledge is always someone's knowledge . . . And thus the exclusion of knowledge and its labeling as 'unacademic' is always the exclusion of a social group and a labeling of that social group as 'unacademic.'”<sup>105</sup>

Traditionally, labeling someone an academic signifies a person recognized by society to possess knowledge through virtue of being endowed and endorsed by academia, the institution that produces the people who construct knowledge. Academia is problematic, as it hand-picks its members and serves as its own accrediting agency. Today, people increasingly live in a confluence of the physical real and the hyperreal. Students, and other members of society, turn to YouTube content creators as a primary source of knowledge, and academics reinforce this behavior when they use YouTube in their classes. These circumstances necessitate a reconsideration of both the academic and the teacher. Can the academic exist without the Academy? Can someone who educates but does not assess, provide feedback, or interact with students be considered a teacher?

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104. Ibid., p. 154 - 155. As an example, Cho presents Standards 12.9.4 – 5 which list Japan, Haiti, and Latin America as examples of “tyrannies” and “illegitimate power.”

105. Ibid., p. 178.

Cho points to the 1987 book by Jacques Rancière, titled *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*. One such lesson described how a French professor, Jacotot, was asked by Flemish-speaking students to teach them how to speak and read French. Because Jacotot was not fluent in Flemish, he was uncertain how to teach Flemish students. His solution was to give the students a French novel and instruct them to study it. The assigned reading was not a textbook intended to teach the French language, yet through studying it, the students learned to speak and write French without the direct facilitation of the teacher. This realization startled Jacotot, who previously believed that a master's explication was essential for successfully transmitting knowledge. But in this case, no explanation had occurred, forcing the professor to reconsider his preconceived notions. If the book explains the content, why must the teacher explain it?<sup>106</sup>

As Rancière argues, Jacotot realized that when human intelligence takes possession of its power, learning can occur without the intermediary of the teacher's intelligence.<sup>107</sup> The teacher may be necessary when the student lacks the will to learn, but no true learning can occur without the student's choice. Therefore, as Cho understands it,

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106. Cho, *Psychopedagogy*, pp. 62 – 63. In some cases, YouTube educators do fulfill the role of the tertiary explicator. Students are assigned to read a chapter of a textbook, attend a lecture on the same material, and yet may still turn to YouTube for further explanation of the same content.

107. Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, 1st edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 10.

“learning content is the sole power and responsibility of the student; the teacher’s role is to strengthen the will.”<sup>108</sup> Jacotot’s accidental discovery revealed that “one can teach what one doesn’t know if the student is emancipated, that is to say if he is obliged to use his own intelligence. The master is he who encloses an intelligence in the arbitrary circle from which it can only break out by becoming necessary to itself.”<sup>109</sup>

Considering this in light of how knowledge is created, distributed, and used on YouTube is somewhat complicated because of the varied ways consumers and content creators employ the platform. YouTube content creators do not fall under Lacan’s and Cho’s conception of the true opposite of the academic. Such a definition implies a negation of their intelligence or capacity to participate in creating and transmitting knowledge. And yet, they can be aptly categorized as unacademic in that they operate outside academia. Often, these YouTube educators are not connected to a higher institute of learning and may not have the appropriate letters following their name to indicate that they have done their time laboring through the socially constructed hurdles that society accepts as benchmarks of knowledge. That is not to say that these creators are inevitably less masterful than those anointed by academia. Yet, our society implies that this is the case through its rhetoric and monetary valuation. How can content “freely”<sup>110</sup> available

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108. Cho, *Psychopedagogy*, p. 65.

109. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 15.

110. I acknowledge that Internet access is not without cost and that there are still people who do not have access to the internet due to the lack of broadband. These

on YouTube impart equivalent knowledge to university courses costing thousands of dollars?

The situation is complicated because when professors use YouTube videos in their classrooms, they implicitly endorse YouTube as an authentic source of knowledge. However, they often do not take the time to provide students with the tools to make informed decisions about what constitutes legitimate knowledge, and many students are ill-prepared to do this on their own.<sup>111</sup> To problematize matters further, some prominent educational YouTubers are becoming active participants in traditional academia, even without terminal degrees. For example, Calder Hannan, organizer of the 2021 Columbia Music Scholarship Conference, wanted Adam Neely to be a keynote speaker but was unsuccessful for scheduling reasons.<sup>112</sup> Cory Arnold, whose formal university education ended with a bachelor's degree in vocal performance, was invited to participate in a 2021 roundtable discussion hosted by the Society for Music Analysis in partnership with the University of Liverpool. In collaboration with music theory professor Julianne

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numbers are shrinking dramatically every year, and access to publicly-available internet increased by leaps and bounds during the height of the COVID pandemic when distance learning became the norm. Despite this, the least-developed countries still lag dramatically behind wealthier nations. See "Despite COVID-19 Connectivity Boost, World's Poorest Left Far Behind," UN News, December 1, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/12/1106862>.

111. Tan, "Informal Learning on *YouTube*."

112. Calder Hannan in discussion with the author, May 12, 2021. Adam Neely holds a master's degree in jazz composition from the Manhattan School of Music.

Grasso, Arnold co-authored the 2021 essay “Music Theory YouTube” published in the *Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory*.

As these public figures grow in popularity and become more renowned for their scholarship, we see Jacotot’s revelation about the will to learn in action. When I asked my interviewees how they picked their video topics, most of them stated they were motivated by subjects that interested them, even if they knew that topic was unlikely to attract a lot of views. In most cases, their formal education is over, but these YouTube educators are driven by an independent desire to learn, which does not require the facilitation of a teacher.

In his interpretation of Rancière, Cho states that “the ultimate pedagogical act is thus always to remove the teacher’s intelligence so that the other intelligence can be heard.”<sup>113</sup> Pedagogical researchers have long touted the need for the role of the professor to change, moving from the “sage on the stage” (all-knowing academic passively disseminating wisdom) to the “guide on the side” (facilitator of knowledge production). Allowing students to interact more directly with ideas and concepts without the academic filter of teacher-explainers may be one way to do this, necessitating a redefinition of what it means to be a teacher in both the colloquial and the formal sense. By sidelining the authoritative force of the traditionally academic and foregrounding the so-called

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<sup>113</sup> Cho, *Psychopedagogy*, p. 67.

unacademic, students may be empowered to become more active and discerning participants in knowledge creation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **STUDY ON THE USE OF YOUTUBE BY MUSIC FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The primary goal of this study was to gain some insight into how professors in the field of music studies are currently using YouTube as a teaching and learning tool other than for playing musical recordings or viewing taped versions of live music performances. Specifically, I wanted to know how professors were using YouTube to teach academic topics as a supplement to or substitute for traditional lecture methods and to what extent they scrutinize the veracity of the videos before showing or assigning them to students.

I had also hoped to collect data on student use and perceptions of YouTube. However, I did not have direct access to student contact information and instead asked the faculty subjects to share a separate survey with their students. This method generated only twenty results, statistically insignificant relative to the total student population. Therefore, I opted to exclude the results from this dissertation.

#### **Research Methodology**

I collected data through a survey approved via Temple University's Institutional Review Board process in April 2022. The survey was distributed electronically via email.



## Recruitment and Participation Procedures

In the fall of 2022, I surveyed 713 faculty members at postsecondary institutions throughout the United States. I used purposive sampling to select the target population from the College Music Society membership list and distributed the survey via email. The College Music Society is a professional organization comprised of approximately 4,400 members. The organization describes itself as a “consortium of college, conservatory, university, and independent musicians and scholars interested in all disciplines of music” that “provides leadership and serves as an agent of change by addressing concerns facing music in higher education.”<sup>114</sup> I opted to draw my sample population from this organization because I had access to the membership email address list and could have more control for purposive sampling by screening potential participants.

For this research, “music studies” was defined as any non-performative academic music subject. I included faculty members who appeared to be currently employed as teaching faculty in a music studies department at a college or university. I also included performance faculty members who teach music studies courses. All others, such as administrators, librarians, and those not affiliated with a postsecondary institution were not invited to participate. Of those who met the criteria, part-time, adjunct, visiting, and full-time faculty were included; emeritus faculty were not. The survey was distributed

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114. “College Music Society Home,” The College Music Society, accessed January 30, 2023, <https://www.music.org/>.

between October 31, 2022, and November 15, 2022, and remained open until December 4, 2022. As an incentive to participate, subjects who completed the survey were given the opportunity to enter a raffle for one of six \$50 Amazon.com gift cards.

The first three survey questions were designed to screen out those who had not taught a music studies course, not used YouTube as a teaching tool, or who used YouTube as part of a course designed by someone else (“template” course). Only those who used YouTube as a teaching tool in a music studies course from 2018–2022 and were responsible for vetting and choosing which YouTube videos to use were included in the study. “Use of YouTube as a teaching tool” was defined as any educational use of the platform other than for viewing performances or listening to musical recordings.

### **Instrumentation**

I designed and administered the survey using Alchemer, a survey software platform with advanced security settings to protect the data and preserve participants’ anonymity. If participants chose to enter the raffle, they were asked for an email address to notify them if they won. This information could potentially identify respondents and was segregated from the rest of the data and destroyed after the raffle drawing. Each email address was assigned a number to protect participants' personal information. The numbers were entered into a randomizer app to determine the winners of the gift cards, and those winners were notified via email.

I used nominal and ratio measurements to collect data. Nominal measurement, also known as categorical measurement, represents data from labeled variables without an ordinal rank. Ratio measurements are scalar to allow research subjects to report data more precisely.<sup>115</sup> The survey had twenty-three categorical questions and four scalar questions. Some categorical questions included a write-in option. Three optional open-ended questions generated qualitative responses.

The survey had three sections. The first section was designed to gather information about faculty use of YouTube as a teaching tool in various subjects under the music studies umbrella and in different modalities. The second section asked if faculty had changed their use of YouTube due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The final section explored the methods faculty use to evaluate educational YouTube videos. A full copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

## **Results**

The survey generated 169 responses, a 23.7 percent response rate. According to a meta-analysis of online survey response rates conducted by Meng-Jia Wu, Kelly Zhao, and Francisca Fils-Aime, the average online survey response in the education-related

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115. Malcolm Williams, Richard D. Wiggins, and W. P. Vogt, *Beginning Quantitative Research* (London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Limited, 2022), p. 88.

field is 44.1 percent.<sup>116</sup> Of the 169 surveys, 141 were complete, and 28 were partially complete. Partial responses were excluded from the data.

### ***Use of YouTube by Subject and Modality***

Survey respondents were asked to select which music studies courses they had taught during the past four years (2018 – 2022). Each respondent could choose as many courses as applicable. Respondents could enter up to four additional subject areas. Four respondents indicated Aural Skills in the write-in category. I opted to include this category in the data. Twenty-seven respondents indicated a course other than those provided, each with only one response. Some of these, such as Music and Cultures, Music Fundamentals, and American Music Studies, could potentially have been categorized in one of the given classifications, such as interdisciplinary studies, music theory, ethnomusicology, etc. I did not want to extrapolate and risk unintentionally misrepresenting these classes by factoring these responses into the given categories based solely on the titles. Therefore, all twenty-seven “Other” responses that could not be clearly matched to an existing classification were excluded from the study as outliers (see Table 4.1).

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116. Meng-Jia Wu, Kelly Zhao, and Francisca Fils-Aime, “Response Rates of Online Surveys in Published Research: A Meta-Analysis,” *Computers in Human Behavior Reports* 7 (August 1, 2022): 100206, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100206>.

Table 4.1. Courses taught by survey respondents

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Music Theory	45	40.2%
Music History	38	33.9%
Other	27	24.1%
Music Education	25	22.3%
Music Appreciation	24	21.4%
Composition	19	17.0%
Elements of Music	17	15.2%
Popular Music Studies	14	12.5%
Ethnomusicology	11	9.8%
Music Technology	11	9.8%
Film Music	10	8.9%
Interdisciplinary Studies	7	6.3%
Jazz Studies	5	4.5%
Other: Aural Skills	4	3.6%
Ludomusicology	3	2.7%
Music Business	3	2.7%
Music Therapy	3	2.7%
Music Industry	2	1.8%

Respondents were also asked to indicate their use of YouTube as a teaching and learning tool by subject matter and course modality, excluding performances and musical recordings (see Table 4.2). Those teaching ludomusicology (the study of video game music) did not report using YouTube for teaching and learning purposes except in one instance. Consequently, this category was omitted from the rest of the data as an anomaly. Excluding the outliers, a total of 448 different courses are represented, 352 of

which used YouTube. Most representative courses met at a set time with live interaction, either in person or through a synchronous video conferencing platform. I had hoped for a greater comparative sample of asynchronous online courses. The first column in each category indicates the total number of courses using YouTube by modality. The second column indicates the number and percentage of those courses that use YouTube for teaching purposes. Note that the combined total columns in each category are greater than those in Table 4.1 because most respondents reported teaching in more than one modality.

Table 4.2. Use of YouTube by subject and modality

	<b>In-Person</b>		<b>Synchronous</b>		<b>Hybrid</b>		<b>Asynchronous</b>		<b>Totals</b>	
	<b>Tot.</b>	<b>YT</b>	<b>Tot.</b>	<b>YT</b>	<b>Tot.</b>	<b>YT</b>	<b>Tot.</b>	<b>YT</b>	<b>Tot.</b>	<b>YT</b>
Music Theory	37	27 (73%)	27	19 (70%)	13	12 (92%)	6	3 (50%)	83	61 (73%)
Music History	34	28 (82%)	23	19 (83%)	11	8 (72%)	9	3 (33%)	77	58 (75%)
Music Education	25	22 (88%)	19	16 (84%)	9	6 (67%)	3	3 (100%)	56	47 (84%)
Music Appreciation	18	13 (72%)	10	8 (80%)	10	9 (90%)	11	10 (91%)	49	40 (82%)
Composition	14	9 (64%)	12	6 (50%)	1	0 (0%)	0	-	27	15 (55%)
Elements of Music	11	7 (64%)	8	4 (50%)	4	3 (75%)	3	2 (67%)	26	16 (62%)
Popular Music	9	9 (100%)	4	4 (100%)	4	4 (100%)	3	2 (67%)	20	19 (95%)
Ethnomusicology	10	8 (80%)	6	5 (83%)	3	2 (67%)	1	1 (100%)	20	16 (80%)
Music Technology	8	8 (100%)	7	5 (71%)	3	3 (100%)	1	1 (100%)	19	17 (89%)
Film Studies	8	8 (100%)	6	5 (83%)	5	5 (100%)	1	1 (100%)	20	19 (95%)
Interdisciplinary	5	5 (100%)	6	5 (83%)	2	1 (50%)	0	-	13	11 (85%)
Jazz Studies	3	3 (100%)	3	2 (67%)	3	3 (100%)	2	2 (100%)	11	10 (91%)
Aural Skills	3	2 (67%)	1	1 (100%)	3	2 (67%)	1	1 (100%)	8	6 (75%)
Music Business	2	2 (100%)	3	2 (67%)	1	1 (100%)	2	2 (100%)	8	7 (86%)
Music Therapy	3	2 (67%)	2	2 (100%)	0	-	0	-	5	4 (80%)
Music Industry	2	2 (100%)	1	1 (100%)	2	2 (100%)	1	1 (100%)	6	6 (100%)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>192/155 (81%)</b>		<b>138/104 (75%)</b>		<b>74/61 (82%)</b>		<b>44/32 (73%)</b>		<b>448/352 (79%)</b>	

Overall, instructors used YouTube in 79 percent of their classes, regardless of modality. The courses where instructors are most likely to use YouTube are Music Industry (100%), Popular Music Studies (95%), Film Studies (95%), Jazz Studies (91%), and Music Technology (89%). The courses where instructors are least likely to use YouTube are Elements of Music (62%) and Composition (55%). The overall use of YouTube in different modalities was similar, ranging from 83 percent for in-person courses to 75 percent for synchronous courses. Surprisingly, courses that met in a physical space (in-person) had higher percentages of YouTube use than the two fully online course modalities (synchronous and asynchronous). However, I must note that I did not ask participants to differentiate between hybrid courses that met in person or synchronously online.

Participants indicated how they used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning. I provided five categories and an example for each:

- to teach or review a topic (such as a basic intro to \_\_\_\_\_ video)
- to demonstrate or model a technique or provide examples of said technique (such as how to do a musical analysis)
- for practice/homework (such as a video designed to help practice aural skills)
- to introduce a subject for discussion (such as a person stating their opinion on a topic)
- to provide first-hand accounts (such as composer interviews or documentaries)

Participants could create up to three write-in categories. When analyzing the data, I discovered that many write-in responses fit into the provided categories and reclassified them accordingly to provide more concentrated data. For example, I determined that the write-in responses “to supplement lecture materials with additional presentations of material” and “for students who needed alternate explanations of a topic” matched the provided category “to teach or review a topic.” Similarly, some respondents opted to describe specific examples that were covered by the generic categories. For instance, “prerecorded tuning/temperament demonstrations for classes where it wasn't possible to bring a harpsichord into the room” could be categorized as “to demonstrate or model a technique or provide examples of said technique.” Other write-in responses were a near identical match for the given categories, such as “Holocaust testimonies” and “documentaries,” which fit under “to provide first-hand accounts (such as composer interviews or documentaries).”

In some instances, write-in responses likely could have been merged into given categories but were too vague for me to classify. An example includes “TED talks,” which could have been used to teach a topic, model a technique, introduce a subject for discussion, or provide a first-hand account. Similarly, “flipped classroom assignments” could fit under any of the five categories. I did not consolidate obscure or potentially multifunctional write-in responses into preset categories.

Table 4.3 indicates the amalgamated data on how respondents report using YouTube for teaching and learning purposes presented as a percentage of the total



number of courses reported to use YouTube. Data is indicated in total and across learning modalities under the five preset categories, with all applicable write-in responses included in the totals.

Table 4.3 Purposes of YouTube use by subject across modalities as percentage of total courses using YouTube

Subject	Total	Teach or review topic	Demo/model technique	Practice or homework	Introduce discussion	First-hand accounts
<b>Music Theory</b>						
In Person	27	23 (85%)	18 (67%)	14 (52%)	8 (30%)	5 (19%)
Synchronous	19	16 (84%)	15 (79%)	11 (58%)	8 (42%)	4 (21%)
Hybrid	12	10 (83%)	10 (83%)	7 (58%)	4 (33%)	2 (17%)
Asynchronous	3	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>52 (85%)</b>	<b>46 (75%)</b>	<b>34 (56%)</b>	<b>21 (34%)</b>	<b>12 (20%)</b>
<b>Music History</b>						
In Person	28	15 (54%)	12 (43%)	3 (11%)	18 (64%)	20 (71%)
Synchronous	19	16 (84%)	8 (42%)	4 (21%)	10 (53%)	11 (58%)
Hybrid	8	5 (63%)	3 (38%)	0 (0%)	7 (88%)	6 (75%)
Asynchronous	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>37 (64%)</b>	<b>25 (43%)</b>	<b>8 (14%)</b>	<b>37 (64%)</b>	<b>40 (69%)</b>
<b>Music Education</b>						
In Person	22	17 (77%)	15 (68%)	9 (41%)	17 (77%)	14 (64%)
Synchronous	16	10 (63%)	11 (69%)	10 (63%)	11 (69%)	8 (50%)
Hybrid	6	4 (67%)	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	3 (50%)
Asynchronous	3	2 (67%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33 (70%)</b>	<b>34 (72%)</b>	<b>26 (55%)</b>	<b>36 (77%)</b>	<b>28 (60%)</b>
<b>Music Appreciation</b>						
In Person	13	12 (92%)	6 (46%)	3 (23%)	10 (77%)	11 (85%)
Synchronous	8	7 (88%)	5 (63%)	4 (50%)	3 (38%)	6 (75%)
Hybrid	9	8 (89%)	2 (22%)	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	7 (78%)
Asynchronous	10	9 (90%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	9 (90%)	7 (70%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36 (90%)</b>	<b>18 (45%)</b>	<b>12 (30%)</b>	<b>29 (73%)</b>	<b>31 (78%)</b>
<b>Composition</b>						
In Person	9	5 (56%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (67%)
Synchronous	6	2 (33%)	5 (83%)	2 (33%)	3 (50%)	5 (83%)
Hybrid	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asynchronous	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7 (46%)</b>	<b>8 (53%)</b>	<b>3 (20%)</b>	<b>3 (20%)</b>	<b>11 (73%)</b>

Table 4.3 (continued)

Subject	Total	Teach or review topic	Demo/model technique	Practice or homework	Introduce discussion	First-hand accounts
<b>Elements</b>						
In Person	7	5 (71%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)	4 (57%)	3 (43%)
Synchronous	4	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Hybrid	3	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)
Asynchronous	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13 (81%)</b>	<b>9 (56%)</b>	<b>6 (38%)</b>	<b>9 (56%)</b>	<b>5 (31%)</b>
<b>Popular Music</b>						
In Person	9	5 (56%)	4 (44%)	0 (0%)	5 (56%)	5 (56%)
Synchronous	4	2 (50%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Hybrid	4	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	3 (75%)
Asynchronous	2	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11 (58%)</b>	<b>13 (68%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>	<b>13 (68%)</b>	<b>12 (63%)</b>
<b>Ethnomusicology</b>						
In Person	8	5 (63%)	1 (13%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)
Synchronous	5	5 (100%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Hybrid	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Asynchronous	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13 (81%)</b>	<b>5 (31%)</b>	<b>7 (44%)</b>	<b>5 (31%)</b>	<b>11 (69%)</b>
<b>Technology</b>						
In Person	8	5 (63%)	4 (50%)	3 (38%)	3 (38%)	2 (25%)
Synchronous	5	4 (80%)	4 (80%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)
Hybrid	3	2 (67%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)
Asynchronous	1	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11 (65%)</b>	<b>10 (59%)</b>	<b>6 (35%)</b>	<b>9 (53%)</b>	<b>3 (18%)</b>
<b>Film Music</b>						
In Person	8	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	1 (13%)	7 (88%)	6 (75%)
Synchronous	5	5 (100%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	3 (60%)
Hybrid	5	5 (100%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	4 (80%)
Asynchronous	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17 (89%)</b>	<b>9 (47%)</b>	<b>4 (21%)</b>	<b>15 (79%)</b>	<b>14 (74%)</b>
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>						
In Person	5	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	3 (60%)
Synchronous	5	3 (60%)	3 (60%)	3 (60%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
Hybrid	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)

Table 4.3 (continued)

Subject	Total	Teach or review topic	Demo/model technique	Practice or homework	Introduce discussion	First-hand accounts
Asynchronous	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5 (45%)</b>	<b>6 (55%)</b>	<b>3 (27%)</b>	<b>9 (82%)</b>	<b>9 (82%)</b>
Jazz Studies						
In Person	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)
Synchronous	2	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Hybrid	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)
Asynchronous	2	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3 (30%)</b>	<b>8 (80%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>8 (80%)</b>
Aural Skills						
In Person	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Synchronous	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Hybrid	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asynchronous	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6 (100%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>6 (100%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>
Music Business						
In Person	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Synchronous	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Hybrid	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Asynchronous	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>4 (57%)</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>
Music Therapy						
In Person	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Synchronous	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Hybrid	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)
Asynchronous	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (50%)</b>	<b>3 (75%)</b>	<b>4 (100%)</b>	<b>4 (100%)</b>
Music Industry						
In Person	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	1 (50%)
Synchronous	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Hybrid	2	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	1 (50%)
Asynchronous	1	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4 (67%)</b>	<b>1 (17%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>5 (83%)</b>	<b>3 (50%)</b>
<b>All Totals</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>259 (74%)</b>	<b>194 (55%)</b>	<b>119 (34%)</b>	<b>209 (59%)</b>	<b>198 (56%)</b>

I found it somewhat surprising that a relatively high percentage of in-person and synchronous courses reportedly use YouTube “to teach or review a topic,” particularly when the prompt explicitly stated that respondents should only include data “other than for viewing/listening to musical performances” and gave the prompt “(such as a basic how to \_\_\_\_\_ video).” The high positive association was particularly true in the case of music theory. In this category, 85 percent of in-person instructors and 84 percent of synchronous instructors reported using YouTube to teach or review a topic for in-person classes. At first glance, this may seem odd. Why use YouTube to teach a topic that the professor is physically or virtually present to teach? Some of the optional and write-in comments shed light on this phenomenon. For example, one response stated:

I’ve found that some content creators on YouTube introduce music theory and aural skills concepts in a clear and engaging way that is honestly much better than what I’m able to do in the classroom. I look especially for videos on theory and aural skills examples from popular music to connect with a variety of students, since my training is primarily “classical” in nature.

Others commented on the high quality of YouTube content, with one person admitting, “the video was better than anything I could concoct myself.”

In a 2018 qualitative study exploring how high school teachers used instructional videos from YouTube, Matthew Fyfield found that some early career teachers occasionally used YouTube as a lecture tool when uncertain about the subject matter.<sup>117</sup>

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117. Matthew Fyfield, “YouTube in the Secondary Classroom: How Teachers Use Instructional Videos in Mainstream Classrooms,” *Technology, Pedagogy and*

While one would hope this is not the case in the hallowed halls of academia, the reality is that 47 percent of those who teach in those concrete or simulated halls are only employed part-time, and 75 percent are contingent faculty.<sup>118</sup> Searches for tenure-track faculty are typically done by committee and involve multiple rounds of extensive interviews, reference checks, and teaching demonstrations, and may require that the applicant has peer-reviewed publications to prove their expertise. A single person can hire a contingent faculty member at a moment's notice with little to no review process. Such hiring practices may be necessary as part-time faculty can leave suddenly if a more lucrative opportunity presents itself, which is relatively common as these positions are typically low-paying. In 2019, 6.4 percent of over three thousand contingent faculty reported receiving less than one week of notice for their most recent teaching appointment. 4.3 percent were given their appointment after the semester started, leaving no time for the faculty member to prepare adequately.<sup>119</sup> It would be challenging to uncover if teaching faculty used YouTube lectures to cover knowledge gaps, especially if they had little to no job security.

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*Education* 31, no. 2 (March 15, 2022): 185–97,  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2021.1980429>.

118. “An Army of Temps: AFT 2020 Adjunct Faculty Quality of Work/Life Report” (Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers, 2020). These numbers come from a survey completed between May 22 – June 30, 2019 and therefore do not reflect any impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have had.

119. “An Army of Temps: AFT 2020 Adjunct Faculty Quality of Work/Life Report.”

Not all survey respondents were willing to turn their classrooms over to the professors of YouTubiversity: “I trust my own interpretations more than most YT lectures--not all YT lecturers are authorities.” “I try to avoid using youtube as much as possible.” “A lot of content is slightly in accurate [sic]. I need my students to have clarity so I find very few that work. Also I feel that if I am using too much YouTube, I am not doing my job as a teacher.”

### ***Change in YouTube Use Due to COVID-19 Pandemic***

I asked survey respondents to report any change in their use of YouTube as a teaching and learning tool for college courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results can be seen in Figure 4.1. Half of the 108 people who answered this question reported that their use did not change. Forty-nine indicated some degree of increased use, and five marked the question “not applicable.” No one reported decreased use.

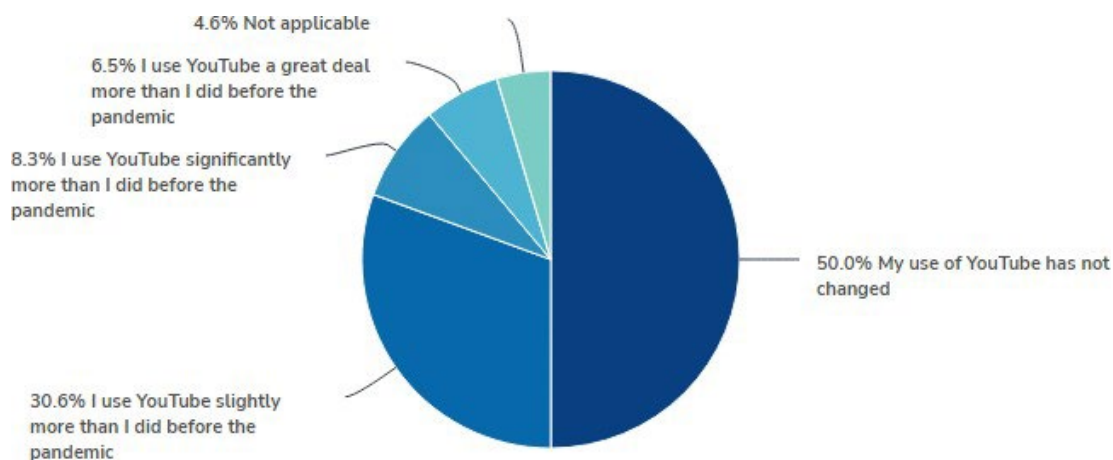


Figure 4.1. Chart illustrating post-pandemic change in YouTube use.

When asked why their usage changed, some respondents indicated necessity: “I was forced to learn how to use it as a teaching tool, and like now using it for content,” “it became the only way I could show them things,” “in person instruction was not an option, and YouTube is a medium that is both convenient and familiar for most students.” Before the COVID-19 pandemic, two people used physical media to play recordings (specifically referencing videotapes, CDs, and DVDs). They found that they could not do so during the pandemic and were obliged to explore YouTube, finding the other resources it has to offer in the process. Others appreciate the easy access to musical scores with accompanying recordings and convenient musical examples. “There are some excellent



and quite scholarly videos that introduce important concepts in the theory and performance of early music on YouTube,” and “some excellent music theory materials.”

### ***Time Spent Locating and Screening Videos***

I asked instructors to approximate how long it took to locate and screen videos before selecting one to use as a teaching and learning tool for their college courses. Most instructors reported spending between 5–14 or 15–29 minutes finding and screening YouTube videos, with an additional 22.4 percent (24 respondents) reporting an average of 30–59 minutes. With the wealth of available content, it is unsurprising that 9.3 percent of participants routinely spend over an hour combing through content before assigning or showing a video to their students. What may be more surprising is that the same percentage of respondents reportedly take fewer than four minutes to evaluate videos before selecting them for use (see Figure 4.2).

### ***Errors and Ensuring Video Accuracy***

All survey respondents indicated that they used some method to ensure the accuracy of the YouTube videos they selected for their students. The results can be seen in Figure 4.3. The most common write-in response was to watch some/most/part of the video. The second-most common was to trust the recommendation of a colleague. Most of the remaining write-in responses were variations of the given categories (such as “research the organization associated with the video” and “check the presenters’ credentials”).

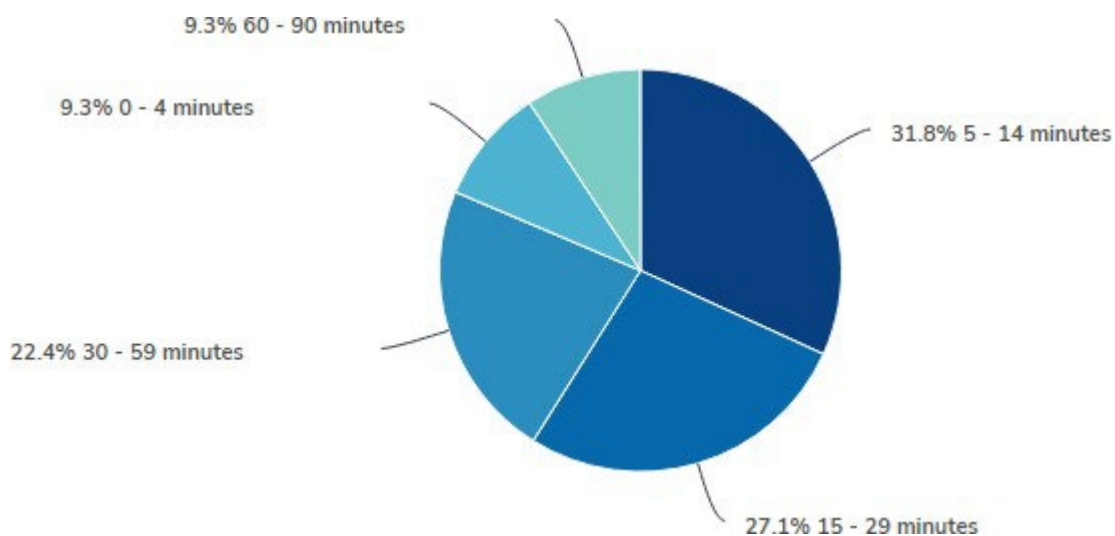


Figure 4.2. Time spent locating and screening YouTube videos.

Value	Percent	Responses
Watch the entire video prior to showing/assigning it to students	94.4%	101
Research the author/content creator/uploader	57.9%	62
Only use trusted YouTube channels (such as those previously vetted or from a reputable organization)	31.8%	34
Check the comments section	20.6%	22
<u>Other - Write In</u>	11.2%	12

Figure 4.3. Steps to ensure the accuracy of YouTube videos.

Nearly all respondents (94.4 percent) state that they watch the entire video before showing or assigning it to students,<sup>120</sup> presumably fact-checking the information against their own knowledge database. More than 50 percent say they research the person who created or uploaded the video, although this is not easy to do in some cases. For example, when presented with the option to share some of their favorite YouTube channels, three survey participants listed 12tone, a music theory channel created by Cory Arnold. Arnold is one of the people I interviewed for this dissertation (see Chapter 5). When I began this research in early 2021, I found it challenging to find their legal name, not to mention the kind of information that an academic would typically look for, such as the highest educational level they achieved and the degree-granting institution. However, the majority indicated eponymous channels (Seth Monahan, Dr. Kati Meyer Music Theory, David Bennett Thomas), channels run by well-known institutions (Berklee, TED Talks, National Association for Music Education), or channels that are easy to research or generally well-known (Two Set Violin).

Only 31.8 percent use YouTube channels they trust. 20.6 percent check the comments section as a means of verifying content accuracy. As Rick Beato mentioned in our interview, YouTube users can be gleefully quick to point out errors, and these comments will often appear near the top of the thread. Before November 2021, visitors to

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120. Although survey respondents were not asked about preferred video length, this information, combined with the data regarding the average time it takes instructors to locate and screen videos, suggests that most instructors are using videos of relatively short duration.

YouTube were able to view both the number of “likes” and “dislikes” on a video. This like/dislike ratio was sometimes a clue as to the video’s accuracy, but the number of dislikes is now hidden from public view.

If respondents found a minor error in a video they wanted to use, most of them used it anyway but let the students know about the error. A few purists (18.7%) did not use videos with errors, while others (14.0%) used it as a teaching opportunity and asked their students to identify the error. Three people in the write-in responses stated that they had never encountered an error in a YouTube video. Two reported that they would notify the content creator (see Figure 4.4).

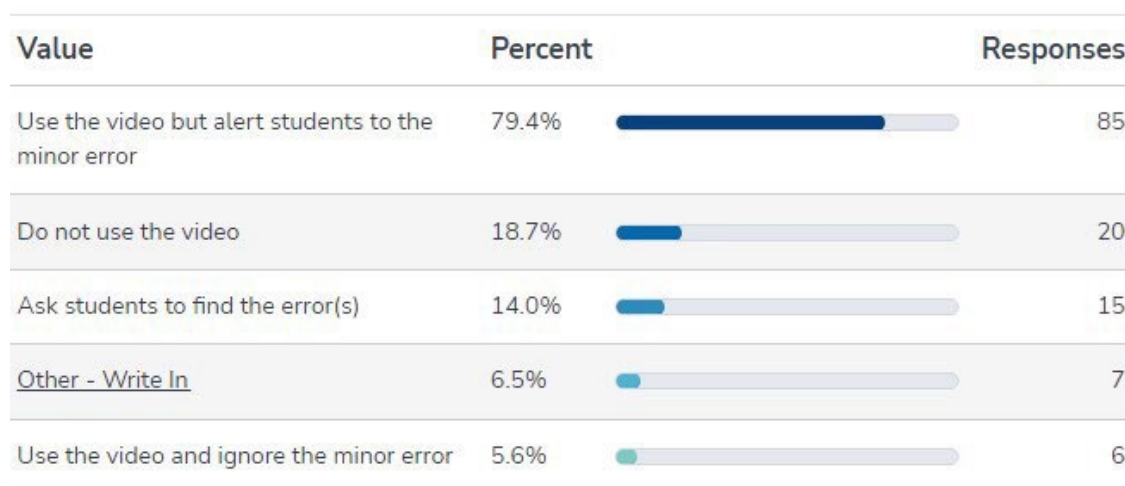


Figure 4.4. Responses to minor errors in YouTube videos.

Six people admitted they would not acknowledge the error and use the video anyway, which is problematic in light of Tan's study revealing that students often rely heavily on their professors to provide sound academic content and accept it unquestioningly.<sup>121</sup>

There are many reasons a content creator may choose not to edit or take down a video with a minor error, even after they are made aware of it. Once a video is posted, the ability to make changes to it through the YouTube editor are minimal. The uploader can trim from either end, cut a section out of the middle, make something appear blurry, or add audio. When I write this dissertation, it is impossible to add a section of original content, download and re-upload an edited video version, or otherwise change the video. The quality of the video would likely be compromised by most choppy edits that are possible through YouTube's rudimentary studio editor. The content creators I interviewed who earn their living through YouTube do not take down or attempt to edit published videos except in rare instances because amending the error and uploading a new video would affect the revenue stream. Older videos continue to generate revenue, and older videos can go viral at any time based on changes in pop culture. For example, Thomas Little, creator of the Classical Nerd video channel, made a video about Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind in March 2017, which received almost no attention. When the film *The Greatest Showman* came out in December of that year, Little's video got thousands of views within days.

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121. Tan, "Informal Learning on *YouTube*."

Most survey participants (57.9%) do not currently teach students how to assess YouTube content. Of those who do, most teach students to cross-reference the information to assess the accuracy or to research the content creators.

Value	Percent	Responses
Cross-reference the information	75.6%	34
Research the content creator's credentials	73.3%	33
Check for references/citations	57.8%	26
Use trusted channels	44.4%	20
<u>Other - Write In</u>	13.3%	6

Figure 4.5. Methods taught to students to assess YouTube videos.

Write-in responses included looking for bias and considering the overall amount of content the person had posted.

### ***Challenges and Other Issues***

Survey respondents report that the biggest challenge with using YouTube is the commercial advertisements that typically appear before the videos.<sup>122</sup> Write-in responses

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122. Some popular content creators, such as Adam Neely, have commercials that may be built into the beginning or end of their videos as part of a sponsorship deal. However, most of the advertisements on YouTube are from a third-party, served through AdSense auction, Google Ad Manager, and other YouTube-sold sources. These ads can

included not wanting YouTube to display video suggestions related to personal use, finding videos that have good content but are too long or not engaging enough, encountering blocked content, lack of information about video content (such as unidentified performing groups), and poor audio/visual or other quality issues (see Figure 4.6).

One issue not explicitly addressed in the survey that repeatedly came up in multiple participants' write-in responses relates to student privacy. Instructors appear to be using YouTube as a repository for and platform to share potentially sensitive student work, such as requiring students to use the platform to record assignments, for teaching observations and practicums, and as a dissemination tool for peer review work. Even if they are taking precautions by marking such videos as "unlisted," I would caution instructors against posting such content on YouTube, particularly for class distribution purposes which may require the instructor to share a link that could then be posted anywhere on the internet.

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easily be automatically blocked by third-party browser extensions such as Adblock Plus, eliminating that particular challenge. Content creators earn a small amount of money from ad-stream revenue when the ad plays in its entirety. If you skip the ad, they generally do not receive that revenue. To reduce frustration and conserve class time, I recommend installing Adblock and supporting your favorite YouTube content creators in other ways. For example, if you click on their "About" page on their YouTube channel, they may have a Patreon page where you can become a subscribing member, often for as little as \$1, \$3, or \$5 a month.

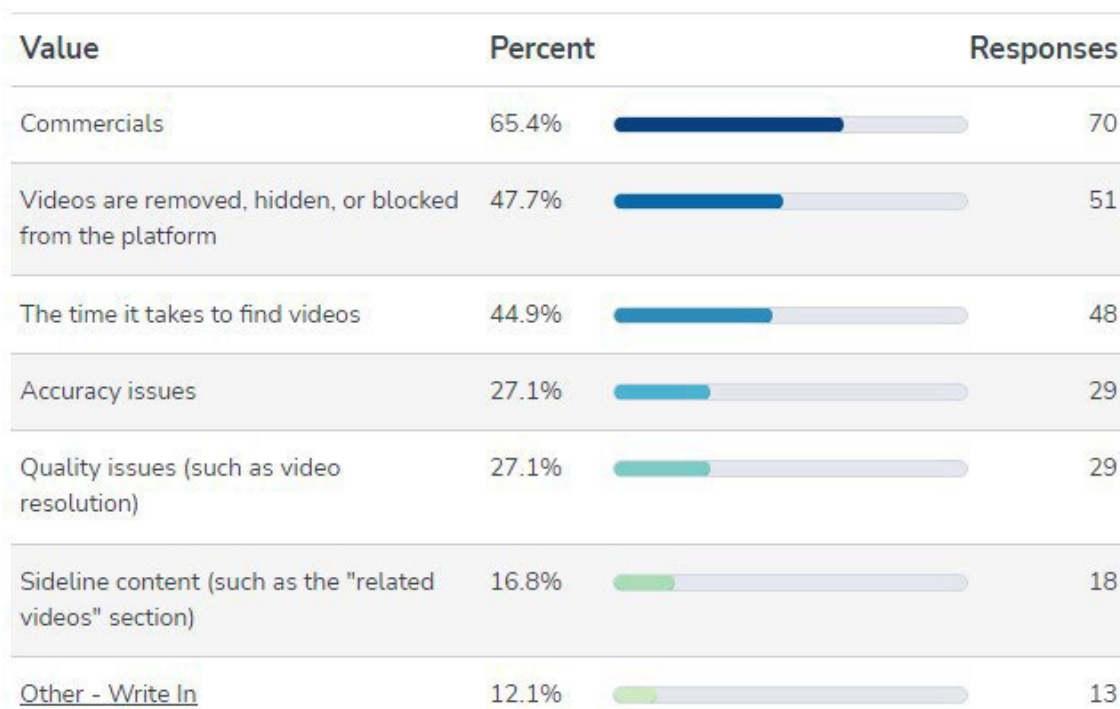


Figure 4.6. Reported challenges using YouTube for teaching purposes.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of the survey includes the relatively low response rate of 23.7 percent. However, this number is comparable to the 22.5 percent response rate received by Kirstin Dougan in her 2012 survey of music faculty.<sup>123</sup> Another limitation is that despite the screener question about this research investigating faculty use of YouTube for purposes other than viewing performances and repeating this frequently

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123. Dougan, “‘YouTube Has Changed Everything?’”



throughout the survey, some participants still seemed to be answering questions with this use in mind.

My perspective as a music historian and pedagogue inadvertently limited my questions. If I were to repeat the study, I would consult with people in other disciplines when creating survey questions, particularly when crafting the examples. For instance, one of the answer options provided for a question asking instructors how they used YouTube was “to demonstrate a technique.” The example was “such as how to do a musical analysis.” People who taught music education did not equate this answer option with demonstrating a teaching methodology, and people who taught ethnomusicology did not consider it applicable for modeling a way of thinking about the discipline. I intended the word technique to be interpreted in its broadest sense to encompass all disciplinary practices, but it was not construed that way.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE MUSIC PROFESSORS OF YOUTUBIVERSITY

A Harris poll found that those born in the mid-to-late-1990s through 2010, otherwise known as “Generation Z” or “Zoomers,” preferred YouTube as a primary source of information over textbooks.<sup>124</sup> When college educators use YouTube in class or assign it as homework, they tacitly reinforce YouTube as an authentic source of information. However, the survey described in Chapter four revealed that most professors fail to teach students how to assess the veracity of content posted on this platform. Many admitted that they do not even know much about content creators.<sup>125</sup> I interviewed a sample of YouTubers in music studies to learn who these “Professors of YouTubiversity” are and what motivated them to start their channels. In this chapter, I summarize the key findings from those interviews.

#### Channel Selection

Over 38 million active YouTube channels exist,<sup>126</sup> and there is no current system to categorize or filter videos topically beyond broad topics such as “music,” “shopping,” “trending,” “learning,” and so forth, which makes identifying channels that specifically

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124. Pearson Research Center and The Harris Poll, “Beyond Millennials: The Next Generation of Learners.”

125. See Appendix A for the full survey results.

126. Céci, “Statistics & Facts.”

deal with general music studies challenging. I began with channels I had discovered and subscribed to for teaching purposes. I also conducted searches on Reddit, Quora, and Google to find additional channels using keywords such as “YouTube vlogs AND music,” “YouTube channel AND education AND music,” “teaching AND music AND YouTube,” “video essay music analysis YouTube” and “music video essays YouTube.” I sought recommendations from colleagues and YouTube interviewees and browsed YouTubers’ recommended video lists to find similar channels. To limit the scope of my research for this portion of the project, I focused on channels that met the following criteria:

- were not used exclusively for teaching a particular musical instrument or vocal technique
- were not produced commercially by an organization (e.g., Vox Earworm, Khan Academy, PBS, etc.)
- had at least 75% of its content dedicated to topics in music studies<sup>127</sup>

Through this process, I amassed a list of fifty-four channels. Due to time and resource constraints, I used purposive sampling to select channel creators for interviews. I chose channels with different levels of commercial success, years in existence, and a wide-ranging number of channel subscribers. I also deliberately chose YouTube channels with a wide variety of content, ranging from introductory music theory and history (Five

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127. Defined as the academic study of music, distinct from music performance.

Minute Mozart, Classical Nerd, Odd Quartet, 12tone), upper-level lecture-style videos (Samuel Andreyev), eclectic commentary, analysis, interviews, and theory (Adam Neely, Rick Beato), and visual essayists/analysts (Polyphonic, Trash Theory, Howard Ho). Some channels are more suited for classroom use than others, but all might have a place in a university setting. Despite the variation in size and subject matter, all these channels had a very high ratio of meaningful positive to negative feedback, indicating that people found the channels informative, interesting, or otherwise useful. Information about these channels is in Table 5.1.

I was mostly successful in contacting and interviewing my top choices. However, I could not reach the YouTuber who runs the channel Sideways, which was unsurprising as this person goes to great lengths to conceal their identity. I contacted David Bennett (channel name David Bennett Piano) but could not proceed since he requested financial compensation for his time. I contacted and attempted to interview three female YouTubers, Aimee Nolte (Aimee Nolte Music), Nahre Sol (Nahre Sol), and Allysia Van Betuw (Piano TV). Aimee Nolte and Nahre Sol initially responded to my interview requests. However, they were both so busy that we could not find a mutually agreeable time to hold the interviews. I was unable to get in touch with Allysia Van Betuw. All the YouTubers I interviewed are male-presenting and white-presenting, except Howard Ho, who is Asian. Josh Wells, who recognizes that he appears white, is Latino. I addressed the lack of diversity in the interviews.

Table 5.1 Channel statistics of YouTubers interviewed as of April 10, 2023

Channel Title	Creator Name	Subscribers	Videos	Video View Count	Relevant Content
Rick Beato	Rick Beato	3.42M	1.1K	565M	commentary, analysis, theory, interviews
Adam Neely	Adam Neely	1.69M	476	213M	analysis, theory
Polyphonic	Noah Lefevre	1M	242	108M	history, analysis
12tone	Cory Arnold	657K	344	47.5M	theory, analysis, pop music
Trash Theory	withheld	405K	104	40M	history and analysis
Howard Ho	Howard Ho	119K	56	14M	musical theater, analysis
Samuel Andreyev	Samuel Andreyev	51.6K	127	3M	theory, analysis, interviews
Classical Nerd	Thomas Little	51K	261	3.4M	history
Odd Quartet	Josh Wells	42.4K	118	3.8M	history, theory
Five Minute Mozart	Dan Lupo	26.9K	143	3M	theory

I conducted the interviews through Zoom and recorded and transcribed each session. Before each interview, I extensively researched the content creator, predominantly building on past written, video, or podcast discussions. This preliminary background investigation gave me a snapshot of how widespread the YouTuber's internet presence is and helped me avoid asking basic duplicate questions such as biographical information. It also provided a baseline to determine if their earlier opinions had evolved.

### **Methodology**

To my knowledge, no existing studies are similar enough to the present one to provide a replicable model for my research. Because I am primarily curious about the idea of these content creators as educators, I adapted Ken Bain's theoretical framework outlined in his landmark study of college educators, *What the Best College Teachers Do*.<sup>128</sup> After identifying top educators from across the country based on how well they succeeded in helping their students achieve lasting results, Bain sought to uncover what made these teachers great. Bain constructed his study on the following foundational questions:

1. What do they know and understand about how we learn?
2. How do they prepare to teach?
3. How do they conduct class?

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128. Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 1st edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).

4. What do they expect of their students?
5. How do they treat their students?
6. How do they evaluate their students and themselves?

YouTubers may not engage much with those who watch their videos, and the content creators do not evaluate YouTube learners. Janice Waldron has adapted frameworks from ethnomusicology in her work on informal on- and off-line music performance communities,<sup>129</sup> which could help expand this research to study the online communities that most closely follow these channels. This expansion requires more extended time to “lurk” in these cyber groups, which was beyond the scope of this study. Still, thinking of content creators as “teachers” and the viewers as “students” provided a functional lens to examine the videos, comments sections, and channel activity. It also offered a starting point to guide my interview questions. The following sections reflect my modifications to Bain’s foundational questions and subsequent lines of inquiry.

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129. Janice Waldron, “YouTube, Fanvids, Forums, Vlogs and Blogs: Informal Music Learning in a Convergent on- and Offline Music Community,” *International Journal of Music Education* 31, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 91–105, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761411434861> and Janice Waldron, “Conceptual Frameworks, Theoretical Models and the Role of YouTube: Investigating Informal Music Learning and Teaching in Online Music Community,” *Journal of Music, Technology & Education* 4, no. 2/3 (February 2012): 189–200, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189_1).

***What Do They Know and Understand?***

Bain’s study asked, “What do great teachers know and understand about how we learn?” I broadened this question to reflect that I am equally interested in learning about the YouTubers’ educational background as I am in their ability to teach through this medium. Bain found that outstanding teachers know their subjects “extremely well,” even if they are not published scholars.<sup>130</sup> They can distill their knowledge into simple forms, clarify complex ideas, and have robust metacognitive abilities. Importantly, they were taught or have an innate understanding of how humans learn. For these teachers, learning is more than memorizing facts—it involves grappling with ideas, constructing knowledge, and leaves a lasting effect on how a person thinks.<sup>131</sup>

All channels selected for this study are educational. Some content creators have a financial incentive to make their YouTube videos entertaining because their channel is their primary form of income, and they rely on entertainment to attract new viewers. Others eschew the idea of couching knowledge in a beguiling bubble and see YouTube as a platform for knowledge distribution, targeting those who wish to satisfy a curiosity or expand their mind.

Questions in this area focused on the YouTuber’s (1) educational background, (2) motivation to start their YouTube channels, (3) topic selection, (4) understanding of

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130. Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 15.

131. *Ibid.*, 16 – 17.



themselves as a teacher or academic, and (5) understanding of how students and educators use their videos.

**Educational Background.** One of the biggest challenges with YouTube and researching its contributors is the potential for anonymity. While many educational content creators use professional names, others use an alias or channel name. A moniker can complicate verifying someone’s teaching qualifications and academic credentials, discouraging a college instructor from attempting to track down the information they would typically verify before inviting a guest speaker into their classroom. Students can reasonably assume that college professors have an advanced degree or equivalent professional experience in their field, but anyone can pose as a professor on YouTube. Thomas Little, who hosts a music history channel, freely admitted, “I was not qualified to start the channel when I did in terms of my education . . . I was still 19 at the time . . . I had only one semester of conservatory training under my belt, and the music history courses didn’t start until the second year.”<sup>132</sup>

All ten YouTubers had some college education, but only seven have a degree in music (see Table 5.2). Adam Neely and Rick Beato have master’s degrees in jazz studies, and Samuel Andreyev and Thomas Little have master’s degrees in composition. Little is pursuing a Ph.D. in composition (started Fall 2021) at the time of publication.

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132. Thomas Little (Classical Nerd YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, July 23, 2021.

Table 5.2. Educational background of YouTube content creators

Content Creator	Bachelor's	Master's	Ph.D.
Samuel Andreyev	Composition	Composition	
Cory Arnold	Vocal Performance		
Rick Beato	Music	Jazz Studies	
Howard Ho	Musicology Communications	Professional Writing	
Noah Lefevre	Journalism Elective music classes		
Thomas Little	Composition	Composition and Music Theory	Composition (In progress)
Dan Lupo	Degree unconfirmed Was enrolled as a college music major		
Adam Neely	Jazz Studies	Jazz Studies	
“Trash Theory”	Film Studies		
Josh Wells	Business (Music Minor)		

Those who did not have music degrees had some musical background. Lefevre is an amateur musician whose journalism career focused on concert reviews, band interviews, and album reviews.<sup>133</sup> Trash Theory was also a music journalist for magazines and

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133. Matt Warren, “Exploring the Video Essay Form with Polyphonic’s Noah Lefevre,” *Film Independent*, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.filmindependent.org/blog/exploring-video-essay-form-polyphonics-noah-lefevre/>.

websites.<sup>134</sup> Wells had taken music lessons since the first grade and entered college as a music education major. Lupo was a self-taught musician and played in bands throughout high school and college.

**Motivation to Start Channels.** Most YouTubers I spoke with started their channels to fill a void in online material. Dan Lupo began Five Minute Mozart partly because he was frustrated by what was available online while he was a music major at the local community college. “I just felt like a lot of the content that was on the internet at that time wasn’t very clear . . . you’d watch a video about the circle of fifths, and it would be a 14-minute video, and I would just be thinking to myself, ‘why does this need to be 14 minutes [when] you can pretty much get the point across in a couple of minutes or less?’”<sup>135</sup> Josh Wells of Odd Quartet expressed similar sentiments. “There was some good music theory stuff out there. It just wasn’t being presented in a ‘YouTube kind of way’. . . it was usually somebody standing in front of a dry-erase board or chalkboard for an hour and a half. It was really good stuff; it just wasn’t really made for YouTube.”<sup>136</sup> Samuel Andreyev, a composer and professor who has taught at brick-and-mortar

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134. Anonymous (content creator, Trash Theory YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, August 12, 2021.

135. Dan Lupo (Five Minute Mozart YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, August 19, 2021.

136. Josh Wells (Odd Quartet YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, August 10, 2021.

universities and whose videos tend toward the esoteric, was inspired to start his channel after benefiting from other professors who shared their content on YouTube when he was interested in learning phenomenology.

I'm doing the best job I can at distilling whatever knowledge I have and presenting it in as clear and straightforward and hopefully engaging a way as I can with the hope that I can reach more people who are interested in this kind of work. One of the things that always struck me was that a great deal of musicology takes place in journals like *Perspectives of New Music*, for example, or *TEMPO* or these other journals that have a very small readership, and it's a peculiar kind of readership. Of course, these things go on JSTOR, and they're available all over the place, and libraries buy them and so on, but the number of people actually reading the articles seriously and being able to benefit from the insights that are contained within them, I think, is very small compared with the potential number of people who are curious about these things or who are open-minded enough to want to know more about the music. . . there was a bit of an issue of the medium sort of scaring people away. These recondite journals that are very expensive that are pitched to a specialist audience are difficult to read, especially if you don't know the technical terminology. I wanted to get away from that and get back to something that was a lot closer to what Arnold Schoenberg attempted to do in the years immediately following the First World War between 1918 and 1921. He had the society for private musical performances in Vienna, and what he was targeting was not the professional audience, not the academic audience, but rather the enlightened amateur . . . I interviewed his son a few weeks ago and he told me that his father was obsessed with the idea of communicating with people who are not professional musicians but who are open-minded, cultivated, and cultured, and this is a class of person that we've completely ignored and that I think is in danger of disappearing.<sup>137</sup>

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137. Samuel Andreyev (Samuel Andreyev YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, August 12, 2021.

Anecdotally, Andreyev has been connecting with just that sort of audience. He regularly receives emails from beginners, rock musicians, retirees, and jaded academics worldwide, many of whom solicit his advice or wish to engage in more personal conversation.

**Topic Selection.** Personal curiosity was the primary motivation for most content creators when selecting topics. Rick Beato said, “every video I’ve made has been something that I’ve come up with that’s interested me . . . you never know [what will interest the public], so I never even tried.”<sup>138</sup> Samuel Andreyev spoke to the relationship between personal interest and video quality: “My inclination has always been to go with the subjects that I’m currently obsessed with because I’m far likelier to be able to do something compelling if it stems from a genuine personal interest.”<sup>139</sup> Neely agrees, particularly when he is making a longer video that requires extensive research: “I’m trying to hook my own curiosity honestly, and find things that I didn’t learn in school, that I didn’t experience firsthand. A lot of the time for those videos which are not coming from a place of expertise, it’s mainly just me getting excited about something and getting the chance to learn . . . a good YouTube video, for me, I have to be absolutely passionate about.”<sup>140</sup> Sometimes working from a place of personal interest can create conflict

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138. Rick Beato (Rick Beato YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, September 14, 2022.

139. Andreyev, in conversation with the author, 2021.

140. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

between personal and financial interests, particularly if a content creator's interests shift after building up an established audience, as Noah Lefevre, creator of Polyphonic, explains:

I think the biggest difficulty is the ebb and flow between what I want to do and what performs well in the algorithm because this is still my job at the end of the day. I do still rely on it for income. When I started out, I was really interested in classic rock and stuff like that. I still love the music these days, but I'm not as interested in exploring those topics just because I've been through many of them, and a lot has been said about them. My favorite stuff to do is more along the lines of the Sister Rosetta Tharpe [video]. One of my favorite videos I ever did was on Scott Joplin. I really like exploring the more niche corners of history, and I've also made a point to try to highlight more artists who are people of color or queer because I reached a point where if someone looked at my channel, the impression they would get was that it was almost entirely white men and a couple of black men who made music history, and so I've been wanting to highlight more of [the other people]. But then, at the end of the day, a lot of my audience is here for the classic rock videos. They're here for Led Zeppelin and Bowie and Pink Floyd, so one of the biggest difficulties is the ebb and flow. Generally, I've been able to balance it by finding what I consider to be compelling, novel angles on some of these stories.<sup>141</sup>

Some YouTubers will make videos based on fan suggestions. Thomas Little (Classical Nerd) has a playlist of viewer requests with over a hundred videos. Others will incorporate requests into their Patreon perks. Patreon is a membership platform that allows creative professionals, such as YouTubers, to solicit one-time or sustaining donations from fans. Creators can offer incentives in

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141. Noah Lefevre (Polyphonic YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, July 29, 2021.

exchange for these donations, most commonly through early access to public videos or exclusive content. Cory Arnold (12tone) used to take individual song analysis requests. They quickly realized that was not the best way to serve their audience and switched to a more democratic Patreon polling system:

I spent a bunch of time in a college vocal department at a school that had a lot of rock fans which meant that no one would ever shut up about Chris Cornell. Dude's great, but that, I think, drastically over-inflated my impression of how much the average person cared about Audioslave and specifically cared about "Like a Stone," and so that video just completely collapsed. No one watched it. It was one of my worst-performing song analysis videos. The nice thing about the Patreon poll is now I can put something like that I'm interested in talking about . . . [and find out] do people still care? No one cared . . . so I didn't have to publish a video that bombed and could potentially hurt future videos.<sup>142</sup>

Several of the YouTubers have sponsors. I asked if sponsorship affected their video content or subject matter. They all emphatically said that it did not. "My agency is really good at negotiating and making sure sponsors don't get a say in the video," said Lefevre, "If there is something that I think is like a little too heated and political, I'll just run a video without a sponsor."<sup>143</sup> "I very explicitly do not give sponsors editorial control," said Arnold, "when I finally signed with an agency, the very first video I did was about some weird tuning theory because I had to prove to myself that I could still do

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142. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

143. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

whatever I want.”<sup>144</sup> A common theme among the interviewed YouTubers was a strong sense of autonomy and independence, which they wanted to maintain even if it meant a financial loss.

**Understanding of Themselves as a Teacher.** In a 2018 live-streamed interview hosted by Adam Neely, featuring 12tone and two other popular music YouTubers known as Sideways and 8-bit, a viewer asked if they had considered returning to school to get a D.M.A. degree. Neely responded: “There’s something about this [meaning YouTube content creation] which is like its own teaching position, in a way. . . I mean, it’s different, but it at least has some of the prestige of a university teaching position. Maybe not the longevity or anything else. We shall see . . .” Sideways interjects: “We’re not tenured!” \*Neely chuckles\* “That’d be great. Can I get the tenure track, please?”<sup>145</sup>

When I interviewed Neely in 2021, his perspective had changed:

The way that I think of myself very often is like an entertainer, not so much as an educator, especially in more recent years, talking to educators and becoming a little bit closer to the academic community. The way that I’m thinking about things is very different as a storyteller and an entertainer using music and using music education kind of as a jumping-off point. I hate the term “edutainment,” but that is a pretty good approximation of what a lot of people on YouTube end up doing because what we do is we try and get people to watch videos . . . to maximize watch time and maximize engagement, because you’re competing with

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144. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

145. Adam Neely, “12 Tone, Sideways and 8-Bit Music Theory Livestream | Musica Analytica,” June 8, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZgLf4tUuhA>.



basically everything and anything available on YouTube, at the time, so you're trying to keep people hooked.<sup>146</sup>

Noah Lefevre, whose channel is an eclectic mix of popular music analysis, musician biographies, jazz, and music and society, also used the word “storyteller:” “I think of myself as a journalist and a storyteller. I am informing the population. I don't really think of myself in the context of teaching. Cory from 12tone has called me a musicologist before. I'm not really comfortable with calling myself that, but I have been called it.”<sup>147</sup> Light on technical terms and theory and visually rich, Polyphonic videos provide an accessible channel beneficial to both musically literate and amateur audiences.

Howard Ho has a different perspective: “I am teaching; I am being a teacher.” As a composer, songwriter, and lyricist who has written two musicals, most of Ho's videos are theoretical analyses of musical numbers with a particular focus on the works of Lin-Manuel Miranda. From the video comments and private communication he receives, Ho learned that his videos have served as gateways for further study of music theory. “I can reach people who don't even know they care about music. Some people don't even have any idea what I'm talking about, but they still love to watch the video and get absorbed by this complexity.”<sup>148</sup> Ho sometimes returns to UCLA as a featured guest lecturer. “I'm

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146. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

147. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

148. Howard Ho (Howard Ho YouTube channel), in conversation with the author, September 16, 2022

kind of doing the job of the professor who invited me, but sometimes the students prefer the YouTube version. I don't think I'm doing a better job of it; I think maybe I'm just talking about the type of music that they want to talk about or something that is more relevant to their daily life. I think that's very gratifying.”<sup>149</sup>

Thomas Little’s channel, Classical Nerd, is devoted to music history, covering primarily composer biographies. Little sees himself as an educator, academic, and archivist. “I’ve always thought of [my role in maintaining my channel] as being the curator of a library. I have a bunch of titles in the back catalog, and I don't really care if someone clicks on a video the day it's uploaded or clicks on the video two years later as long as I'm still proud of the content and think that it still holds up and can give someone some information they wouldn't otherwise get.”<sup>150</sup> Unlike most content creators, he prides himself on not creating videos designed to appeal to the masses. “I feel like if I do produce a viral video, I’m doing something kind of wrong because I’m not adding to the discussion in any way . . . I would prefer to create content that people can access in a format that maybe is more accessible to them for whatever reason. Maybe it’s easier for them to listen than to read. Maybe they just learn better if someone’s lecturing to them or if they just want to review things.”<sup>151</sup>

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149. Ibid.

150. Little, in conversation with the author, 2021.

151. Ibid.

Rick Beato, who taught college classes in the 1980s, says that he does view himself as a teacher and would consider himself an academic. His early videos include a series on ear training, scales and modes, and film scoring. His “What Makes This Song Great?” series breaks down well-known classic rock songs layer by layer as he explains the form, chord progressions, and unique characteristics of each. One of Beato’s most popular series is his “Top 10” or “Top 20” videos, which have little to no theoretical analysis and include titles such as “Top 20 Acoustic Guitar Intros of All Time,” “Top 20 One Hit Wonders of the ‘90s,” and “Reacting to the Top 10 Songs iTunes. . . BTS WTF?” One facet of Beato’s channel is his growing interview series, including Pat Metheny, Ron Carter, Keith Jarrett, and Sting. “I’m trying to put together these first-person accounts of people that created this iconic music in all different genres. That’s kind of the next phase of my channel—for future historians, hopefully.”<sup>152</sup> In this way, Beato functions as an oral historian and archivist.

Others less connected to academic communities were more hesitant to categorize themselves as teachers or academics. The content creator behind the Trash Theory channel, who prefers to remain anonymous, described himself as follows: “I see myself more as the guy at the back of the pub who’s talking your ear off about his favorite band for like 20 minutes. I’m an enthusiast.”<sup>153</sup> Josh Wells considers himself his viewers’ peer,

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152. Ibid.

153. Trash Theory, in conversation with the author, 2021.

sharing knowledge about subjects that interest him. “I feel like I'm learning alongside somebody, so that's kind of how I try to present it: if I wanted someone to explain it to me, this is how I would want it to be explained. I'm along for the educational journey . . . if I have learned anything, it is that I know very little about a lot of these topics, and the more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know, so I try and take that attitude when I'm making the videos.”<sup>154</sup>

**Understanding of How Their Videos Are Used in Educational Settings.** All ten channels in this study can be classified as educational, even though Rick Beato has cautiously started to distance himself from that term. He said he began as a music teaching channel but has morphed into a music appreciation channel. “You can’t get to three million subscribers unless a huge amount of them are just average people that are fans of music, or I’m talking about their favorite artists, whomever they may be.”<sup>155</sup>

Many YouTubers’ audience members have told them they were using their videos in educational settings. Samuel Andreyev said people write to him “all the time . . . I get a lot of emails from teachers [and] professors who tell me they’re using them in a classroom setting.”<sup>156</sup> Thomas Little gets “occasional emails from educators from middle

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154. Wells, in conversation with the author, 2021.

155. Beato, in conversation with the author, 2022.

156. Andreyev, in conversation with the author, 2021.

school through college and even continuing education programs [stating] that they have used [my videos] as a resource either in class or they have it in their syllabus . . . especially with teaching online it's 'instead of me teaching about this, watch one of these videos,' . . . so that's another thing that really helps the channel."<sup>157</sup> Cory Arnold of 12tone also believes that professors use his videos for their college courses.<sup>158</sup> "I do get the sense that my videos get more engagement from traditional music theory academics than most music theory YouTubers do. I hear from them a lot . . . and I tend to be sort of floating in those circles more than most, and students will watch as well."<sup>159</sup> Noah Lefevre of Polyphonic said many teachers and professors had told him they use his videos in their classes. Dan Lupo of Five Minute Mozart and Josh Wells of Odd Quartet also affirmed that teachers and students were using their videos. Trash Theory was the only one who did not receive feedback about classroom use. A possible explanation may be that their channel is about popular music, which is not taught as frequently as music theory. It could also be because of the creator's anonymity. However, Polyphonic also uses a moniker and produces popular music videos, which teachers use more regularly. I

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157. Little, in conversation with the author, 2021.

158. This is supported by the survey data. Several professors specifically mentioned using Arnold's channel, 12tone, in their classes.

159. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

theorize that the channel name may be the determining variable. “Trash Theory” hardly inspires the same confidence level as “Polyphonic.”

Adam Neely, who may be one of the better-known music theory YouTubers among academics, spoke about his experience witnessing a panel about music theory on YouTube presented at the 2019 Society of Music Theory conference:

It was a very strange thing to see music theorists trying to be anthropologists, talking about people on YouTube as weird, distinct people, like: “Who are these people? Why are they talking about theory on YouTube?” There was a moment when somebody called it a bunch of amateur music theorists teaching on YouTube, and I was very upset because people DM (direct message) me on Instagram all the time [telling me they are] seeing my stuff in [college] classrooms, but then there is this very strange antagonistic relationship. Since then, I've kind of been like, “All right, that's fine, as long as people are watching them and enjoying them, that's fine.” But it was a very strange moment, seeing people in the academic world look down on this, and then immediately when the pandemic started, they were using all of these resources . . . which are there for free in ways that were packaged specifically for online learning. Yeah, it was odd.<sup>160</sup>

His demeanor during our interview made it clear that this presentation bothered him. He said that while the presenters were not quite disparaging, their portrayal annoyed him at the time.

**Conclusions.** Returning to Bain’s study, we see many of the same qualities in these YouTubers that Bain found in the best college teachers. Most notably, even if they

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160. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

do not think of themselves as teachers, most have developed an intuitive understanding of how humans learn. Only Little had mentioned taking a formal class on how to teach music at the college level, which was part of his master's degree. Some, like Arnold and Wells, create videos that teach in a style that mirrors the way they want to learn. Others, like Lupo and Andreyev, sought to fill a perceived gap in online learning tools. All interviewees are experts at simplifying complex subjects and presenting them in accessible formats.

Bain found that questions are critical factors in knowledge construction, and the best teachers understood this.<sup>161</sup> These YouTubers model that in the way they seek topics for their videos and run their channels. Most are driven by curiosity and intrinsically motivated to continue their work, selecting subjects that interest and engage them. Not all topics that interest the content creators may interest their audience, and sometimes creators make conscious decisions to forgo exploring specific themes on their channels for financial reasons. When that happens, they swap out one subject of interest for another.

The interviewees may not all have been experts when they started their channel, as Little admitted, but a certain level of expertise is essential. Andreyev, Beato, and Little have taught college courses. Little is working on his Ph.D., and Neely, Beato, and

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161. Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 31.

Andreyev have Masters' degrees in the field. Beato, the oldest of the interviewees, has decades of experience working in the music industry. He has a music degree from UCLA and is an active composer, and Lin-Manuel Miranda has recognized his work analyzing *Hamilton*. Those who do not have experience in higher education have a musical background.

### ***How Do They Prepare?***

Bain asks, “how do the best teachers prepare to teach?” His study centered around four fundamental inquiries focused on the learners and how the teachers could tailor their instruction to foster learning. Such inquiry does not translate to YouTube, where interactions between “teacher” and “learner” are infrequent and not a core function of the job. One could argue that there is a correlation between the quality of perceived student learning and the number of likes or subscribers on a YouTube video akin to positive student evaluations of teacher effectiveness in college classes. However, without data on why people “like and subscribe,” I do not wish to make any such claims.<sup>162</sup>

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162. The relationship between student ratings and teacher effectiveness is debated. Based on his study, Bain affirms a positive correlation (see *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 15). However, a 2017 meta-analysis found no connection. See Bob Uttl, Carmela A. White, and Daniela Wong Gonzalez, “Meta-Analysis of Faculty’s Teaching Effectiveness: Student Evaluation of Teaching Ratings and Student Learning Are Not Related,” *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 54 (September 2017): 22–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.08.007>).



I focused on how YouTubers prepare to make their videos. Questions related to this topic asked about (1) their research practices and how they ensured content accuracy and (2) how they dealt with content errors.

**Research Practices.** In 2018, YouTube began to take some control over its platform to preserve its credibility by targeting commonly recognized conspiracy theories (such as the flat-earth theory) by including links to sources such as Encyclopedia Britannica on videos that spread false information. In 2020, they doubled down on their fact-checking efforts to curb the spread of misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic and the results of the 2020 presidential election by employing the help of FactCheck.org, PolitiFact, and The Washington Post Fact Checker, among others.<sup>163</sup> YouTube's fact-checking capabilities, however, are finite and typically reserved for the most prominent and wide-reaching topics. The educational videos I examined for my study are unlikely to come under such scrutiny. While not notable enough to warrant YouTube's fact-checker, many of the videos on the most popular of these channels have garnered thousands and even millions of views, and the potential for widespread misinformation is a genuine concern. It was important to me to discover where and how

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163. Elizabeth Culliford, "YouTube Expands Fact-Check Feature to U.S. Video Searches during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Reuters*, April 28, 2020, sec. Media and Telecoms, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-alphabet-youtube-factchecking-idUSKCN22A2Y1>.

YouTubers learned the foundations of their content and how they approached this pedagogical aspect of their work.

“So much of my job involves learning, reading, and doing research,” says Arnold of 12tone. “I have a formal undergraduate education in theory, and everything from there has been reading SMT (Society for Music Theory) articles, other journal articles . . . a lot of this is very much self-taught.”<sup>164</sup> While many of the topics these YouTubers cover come from their respective areas of expertise, their curiosity-driven impulses often lead them to explorations of the unfamiliar. Arnold provided an example of this: “About six months into the channel . . . [a fan said] ‘I would love an explanation about neo-Riemannian theory,’ and I was like ‘an explanation of what?’ I had never heard this term, so I Googled, did a bunch of reading, and I wound up making a video, and it's becoming one of my favorite models . . . I think it's a really interesting way to think about harmony, and I had no indication that this thing existed.”<sup>165</sup> Neo-Riemannian theory is a topic that many music students may not encounter until graduate school. Having not pursued collegiate higher education beyond a bachelor's degree, Arnold was initially unfamiliar with the term. Despite that, his four-and-a-half-minute video has over two thousand “likes” and is the most-viewed YouTube video on the topic.

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164. Arnold in conversation with the author, 2021.

165. Ibid.

Andreyev, Arnold, Little, Neely, and Wells, whose videos primarily deal with topics in music history and music theory, use journal articles and related sources. Wells says he often “agonizes” about accuracy in his videos. “There are people who have spent lifetimes researching these specific composers or this specific genre or era of music and I don't want to get something wrong.”<sup>166</sup> Because of that, he spends considerable time researching before writing his video scripts.

Little, who also produces many composer biography videos, also spends ample time studying and relies heavily on cross-referencing information, especially for more obscure composers or topics. “I prefer not to have sources that are too close to the subject matter . . . I do keep track of dates and times and see what adds up. Sometimes there's a number that's wrong, like looking at Les Six and the break with Satie . . . do I trust the Les Six compendium here or do I trust the more recent [Satie] biography? To what extent are these stories compatible?”<sup>167</sup> Little, whose impressive library is displayed prominently behind him in many of his videos, is the only interviewee who provides complete citation lists with his videos. “There are experts who are willing to go toe-to-toe with me, which is part of the reason I cite my sources. If you disagree, I’m citing my sources here, so it's not like I’m just making stuff up out of thin air.”<sup>168</sup>

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166. Wells, in conversation with the author, 2021.

167. Little, in conversation with the author, 2021.

168. Ibid.

In addition to the journal articles, there is also “a lot of Googling,” says Neely. “I’m not sure if there’s much of a strategy to the research for the longer videos, which are more essay-based and more research-intensive; it’s more I need to get something out, I need to create content.”<sup>169</sup> Neely describes his workflow as a balancing act between these more extensive projects that require additional time and attention and lighter content, such as his Q&A videos. In addition to academic sources, he has recently started using content editors for specific videos. “For the ‘Music Theory and White Supremacy’ video,<sup>170</sup> I had Phil Ewell and Ethan Hein and [Cory Arnold from 12tone] review the script just to make sure everything was fine. There was a lot of stuff that they suggested that was incredibly helpful . . . it’s tricky, though, because my schedule for a long time was weekly, and to add that extra workflow in there, it’s just one more thing to do.”<sup>171</sup> Some of Neely’s videos also feature brief interview clips with expert scholars in the field, which adds credibility to his work.

Other YouTubers work from different sources. Lefevre starts with Wikipedia. “I think Wikipedia is a great starting point. It can't be your endpoint. [It] will lead me to old

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169. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

170. This video is based on Philip Ewell’s article “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame” in *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 1, 2020), <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html>. It is one of Neely’s most-watched videos, having accumulated well over two million views to date. See Adam Neely, “Music Theory and White Supremacy,” September 7, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr3quGh7pJA>.

171. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

archived websites, or they'll cite books that I can look up on Google books . . . *New York Times* archives . . . stuff like that.”<sup>172</sup> Trash Theory, whose channel deals with more recent artists, tends to rely on interviews with the band, autobiographies, and magazine articles. He also recently started paying a fact-checker to review his scripts. Arnold finds that creating videos that require extensive research is often disincentivized by the audience: “[I’ll spend] tens of hours of researching all these weird obscure things, digging up like historical documents . . . those videos do fine, but if you look at my most viewed videos, they’re song analyses and they’re practical songwriting advice, and that’s basically it.”<sup>173</sup>

Beato relies heavily on his first-hand experience in the industry. “One of the most helpful things in my channel is that I have all these professional people that I’ve known for years and years who are real pros, and that’s something that I think differentiates my channel from other channels. People value experience. When I go into an interview, for example, people say, ‘How long did it take you to prepare?’ and I say, ‘Well, I don’t have to prepare’ . . . What am I going to ask Sting? Everything I’ve ever wanted to ask!”<sup>174</sup> Beato is, by far, the most prolific of all the interviewees, consistently putting out several videos a week. As I write this, he has over one thousand videos on his channel. By

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172. Lefevre in conversation with the author, 2021.

173. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

174. Beato, in conversation with the author, 2022.

comparison, Adam Neely, the second-most popular YouTuber in this study, publishes about two monthly videos. While some of Beato's videos, such as the interviews, take time and planning, he often decides what he wants to talk about the same day he records.<sup>175</sup> While some videos require more extensive preparation, he can also rely on his guitar skills and storehouse of knowledge to create content that requires little to no additional research and minimal preparation.

As a music analyst working with contemporary musical productions, Howard Ho is in a different position than the others. He depends heavily on what he learned at UCLA while working with Susan McClary and Robert Fink when constructing his analyses. "I think the main comment that I get a lot of times is 'You're over-analyzing it' or 'You're reading too much into it, there's no way that [the composer] intended this' . . . I try my best to show my work [and the viewers] can come to their own conclusion."<sup>176</sup> When the negative comments created doubt, Ho sought advice. "I asked [my mentor from UCLA] Professor Fink about this. [He said], don't let a composer's intention take away what you're getting out of the piece, because everyone has their own interpretation which is equally valid. Just because the composer didn't intend it doesn't matter because the complexity is still there; it's still part of the piece whether they intended it or not." Ho found Fink's support highly encouraging. "It's just like he gave me the sense of

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175. Ibid.

176. Ho, in conversation with the author, 2022

permission, and he also said he was proud of me, which was kind of cool because I thought like maybe he'd say, 'oh, you just bastardized all these sacred techniques,' but no, he was the opposite."<sup>177</sup>

**Managing Errors.** There are very few blatant errors on these channels. The ones I found are minor, mainly from early in the channels' history. As Wells put it, "If you mess up something and put it on YouTube, you will hear about it. People will let you know."<sup>178</sup> One of the biggest challenges with video errors is the limited ability to edit YouTube videos once published. The YouTube Studio Editor only allows for minimal editing of published videos, such as trimming and cutting frames, blurring, adding audio elements, changing the thumbnail, and the like. You cannot edit the content of the video itself. The only way to do that is to re-upload a revised version of the video, which will create a new video URL. This action will cause the channel owner to lose the view count, likes, and comments associated with the original flawed version, resulting in lost ad revenue. This could harm the channel if the mistake is undetected for an extended period, which is more likely when the channel is young and has fewer subscribers. Because of this problem with editing on YouTube, many creators choose not to redo older videos that may have minor errors, such as mispronunciations. Josh Wells of Odd Quartet made a slight mispronunciation error in one of his first music history videos that still haunts

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177. Ibid.

178. Wells, in conversation with the author, 2021.

him. “I did not do my due diligence, and I mispronounced a very well-known piece of music. You get people who come back and are like ‘you don’t know what you’re talking about because you got this very obvious thing wrong’ . . . it was something so small that I could have just done two more minutes of work on . . . trying to avoid those small, easy mistakes is something that I think about all the time.”<sup>179</sup> Because that is one of the most popular videos on his channel, deleting and reuploading it could result in a significant loss of revenue for Wells’ channel, which is already one of the comparatively smaller channels, so he decided to leave it up.

Dan Lupo has also made some small mistakes. One of his videos has a composer’s birthday off by two months, which critics quickly pointed out in the comments section. However, Dan believes it is best to keep pushing forward and does not wish to revise his past work. “I felt like redoing an old video wasn’t the best use of my time.”<sup>180</sup> He has also received criticism about the pronunciation of several composers’ names, most of which were from videos narrated by his wife.

Trash Theory also struggles with the content creator’s conundrum: to remake or not to remake. He said he often wanted to hide his old videos because they were “less accurate” than the newer ones. “About two years ago is about the point where I’m still proud of my videos. Beyond that, I’m not too happy with it.” When I asked him what he

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179. Ibid.

180. Lupo, in conversation with the author, 2021.



meant by that, he said, “It’s the error of omission, I guess. There’s so much missing.” He specifically mentioned a video on the history of punk that haunts him. “Smaller genres have gotten longer videos. . . so yeah, I need to go back to that.....The [early] videos are kind of lacking accuracy just because I just rushed it, or just didn’t spend enough time on it at the moment . . . obviously they’re wrong in some way, but they’re still up..... ideally, I feel like I just need to take a few weeks and remake [the early videos].”<sup>181</sup>

The more popular a channel becomes, the faster errors or mistakes can be caught and corrected before the video garners too many views. For instance, Rick Beato once uploaded a video that had a high-pitched tone running through the first eight minutes of the video. Although he does not typically read most of the video comments, he pays attention during the first hour after uploading, specifically for reasons like this. Because the viewers and Beato caught it quickly, he could fix the issue and re-upload the video without losing more than a few hours’ worth of views. However, he does not fix typos. “People don’t care. They’re used to that stuff. I mean, I wish I could fix them, but you can’t [without taking down the video and reuploading].” Instead, he will usually pin a comment at the top of the page acknowledging and correcting the typo. “If it’s got wrong

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181. Anonymous, in conversation with the author, 2021. Since our interview, he published a remake of the punk video with a disclaimer at the beginning. See Trash Theory, “Before 1976 Revisited: How Punk Became Punk,” January 22, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lyoAczdMSM>.

information, I'll take it down and fix it, or I'll just take it down. But I haven't taken down a video in years. I don't usually get things wrong.”<sup>182</sup>

The audience is much more critical about mistakes that undermine the content creator’s perceived expertise. “Once I put a video out there, and it’s wrong, and I get a bunch of comments saying ‘this is bad,’ I potentially ruin my reputation, and I am relying on my reputation to keep me employed effectively,” said Arnold of 12tone.

I don't tend to get that much pushback on things that are factual because I tend to be pretty specific about those, but when we get to analytical stuff, which is fundamentally subjective, I will get people who say, ‘Here's my thought, here's my analysis.’ I did a video on “Africa” by Toto. One key in the verse is very complicated . . . I said it was A Lydian, sort of to match what they were doing in the chorus, and I got a bunch of people yelling at me that I was very wrong, but they couldn't agree on the right answer. There's a bunch of people who said “No, this is definitely B major, and a bunch of people were saying, ‘This is obviously C# minor.’ . . . When I was looking at the comments, Adam Neely said, ‘Hey I very strongly disagree with this. I think if you look at just the chords, this makes sense, but if you look at the melody, it is very clearly B major.’”<sup>183</sup>

While analysis can be subjective, Arnold acknowledges that sometimes it can be erroneous. “There's one video I did where I do not stand by the analysis I published, ‘Hurt’ by Nine Inch Nails. Basically, what happened there was I was rushing the video for production reasons. I didn't have a lot of time to do it, I saw something on the page,

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182. Beato, in conversation with the author, 2022.

183. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

and I didn't bother double-checking it by listening to the song. I wound up analyzing the pre-chorus in just completely the wrong key. . . It was a mess. I will own that.”<sup>184</sup>

Sometimes, errors may never come to light unless an expert points them out, which happened in the “The Dreampop Enigma of Cocteau Twins & Lorelei | New British Canon” video by Trash Theory. In the video, Trash Theory comments on Roger Guthrie’s guitar playing during the Cocteau Twins’ performance of their hit song “Lorelei” for a taping of the BBC television music show called *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. One of the top comments on this video is from the Cocteau Twins bass player, Simon Raymonde, who corrected Trash Theory’s narration, writing:

It was me playing the guitar and Robin [the guitarist] playing the bass! We were actually just on stage messing about while they got the lights and cameras in the right place and had swapped instruments for a laugh. At the end of the run through they said, “great! That’s it, we have everything we need! Next band up please . . .” We argued that this wasn’t a proper take, and we weren’t even playing our right instruments, but they wouldn’t have it. We had a big falling out with the producers and didn’t appear on the BBC again for about 10 years or more!<sup>185</sup>

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184. Ibid. At the time of publication, the “Hurt” analysis video is still live on 12tone’s channel. See 12tone, “Understanding ‘Hurt,’” January 5, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8n78hRFSeW>. The pinned comment at the top of the page recognizes that there may be a mistake in the transcription and acknowledges that there is a “better” way to analyze the pre-chorus, as pointed out by his commenters.

185. Simon Raymonde, comment on Trash Theory, “The Dreampop Enigma of Cocteau Twins & LORELEI | New British Canon,” August 21, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5djsipzIWUc>.

In retrospect, that error, while understandable, was avoidable. Trash Theory shows the footage from the BBC production, focusing on the guitarist during this moment in the script. Despite the band's name, the two men are not twins and are physically distinguishable from each other.

**Conclusions.** All interviewees were aware of the need for accuracy and took it seriously. Many of them use academic journals, books, and autobiographies. Neely occasionally uses content editors or conducts interviews with experts in the field. Trash Theory employs a fact-checker for his scripts. Lefevre draws on the research skills from his journalism background and cross-references his sources. Lupo sticks to his wheelhouse, keeping his biographies short and surface-level and providing basic theory tutorials. Beato does not produce as much research-based content as he used to but will fix or take down videos with inaccurate information.

Because none of the interviewees filter their comments, the comments sections on YouTube videos function like a peer review process. Viewers are often quick to catch errors and eager to point them out. Comments questioning their expertise could quickly tarnish their reputation, incentivizing them to avoid mistakes. Ultimately, though, unlike the classroom professor, the Professors of YouTubiversity only need to appear as an expert one video at a time. In other words, they do not need the same depth of knowledge of the field that traditional professors do to be successful.

### *How Do They Structure Their Videos?*

YouTubers do not “conduct class” as the teachers in Bain’s study do. My exploration of this topic looked at the production and pedagogical techniques commonly used by content creators in their top-performing videos.

After graduating with my Master’s degree in 2010 and starting to teach college classes, I became interested in pedagogy in higher education. For over a decade, I participated in workshops, took continuing education courses, and attended and presented at local and national conferences dedicated to teaching in higher education. One cautionary phrase that followed me throughout these experiences was a reminder not to be a “sage on the stage” but a “guide on the side.” The preferred role of the professor was to design engaging experiences and operate as a facilitator while the students constructed knowledge through active learning. The perceived denigration of the traditional lecture came as an affront to many, and the national debate about lecturing in class is well-known to many in higher education.<sup>186</sup>

YouTube is essentially a lecture-based platform with little apparent capacity for interactivity, yet college students indicated that YouTube was their preferred learning

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186. For two brief examples representing either side of the debate, see Alex Small, “In Defense of the Lecture,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 27, 2014, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/in-defense-of-the-lecture/>, and Dan Berrett, “The Making of a Teaching Evangelist,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 5, 2016, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-making-of-a-teaching-evangelist/>.

platform.<sup>187</sup> Most professors Bain surveyed employed strategies and designed learning experiences involving active learning, but the study revealed that the modality alone does not determine effective teaching. A lecture, problem-based learning, or playing “guide by the side” can be stunningly successful or fail miserably based on application and technique.

**Video Length.** One of the most vital indicators of an effective teacher that applies to traditional and YouTube teaching is capturing and sustaining learners’ attention. Although many studies claimed that students’ attention lapses ten to fifteen minutes into lectures, others have challenged this, suggesting that the length of attentiveness depends more on working memory capacity, motivation, arousal, and the presentation style of the lecture material.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, research in online learning endeavored to define ideal video lengths. A large-scale study from MIT that mined data from nearly seven million video-watching sessions recommended that videos should last less than six minutes.<sup>189</sup> Kaltura

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187. Pearson Research Center and The Harris Poll, “Beyond Millennials: The Next Generation of Learners.”

188. Karen Wilson and James H. Korn, “Attention During Lectures: Beyond Ten Minutes,” *Teaching of Psychology* 34, no. 2 (April 1, 2007): 85–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00986280701291291>.

189. Philip J. Guo, Juho Kim, and Rob Rubin, “How Video Production Affects Student Engagement: An Empirical Study of MOOC Videos,” in *Proceedings of the First ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale Conference* (Association for Computing Machinery Conference on Learning, Atlanta Georgia USA), 41–50, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2556325.2566239>.

conducted a survey that found both instructional designers and educators believed the optimal educational video should be no more than ten minutes long.<sup>190</sup> Many YouTubers' videos fall beneath this threshold, but others are significantly longer. Trash Theory's videos average twenty minutes in length. Thomas Little (Classical Nerd) began by doing shorter biographies of composers, such as his six-minute video on John Cage. However, he has gradually and intentionally expanded them. For example, he recently published a ninety-two-minute feature on Duke Ellington. Andreyev's videos vary dramatically from his "explained in 10 minutes" series to his analysis videos, which can average closer to an hour.

One reason for the variation in video length is the difference between the "how-to" videos and what Adam Neely described as "curiosity content."<sup>191</sup> When people come to YouTube to find an answer to a question or want to understand a concept, they typically seek out the most succinct, practical video possible. Odd Quartet, 12tone, Five Minute Mozart, early Rick Beato, and some of Andreyev's content include "how-to" videos and brief topic overviews, such as short biographies.

According to Adam Neely, the YouTube algorithm incentivizes creators to make long-form content. "They want to keep people on the platform for as long as possible,

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190. "The State of Video in Education 2015: A Kaltura Report" (New York, NY: Kaltura Inc., 2015).

191. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

and so what YouTube does is recommend videos that people watch for the longest amount of time, which means that videos generally need to be longer and more engrossing, so [content creators] put a lot of effort into telling a good story.”<sup>192</sup> That requires YouTubers to think more imaginatively to keep people engaged for extended periods. In an extreme example, one of Andreyev’s videos, which comes in at just under six hours long, is composed of him listening to the notoriously long Morton Feldman String Quartet No. 2 while wearing headphones. The audience cannot hear the quartet in Andreyev’s video as it would almost certainly be flagged for copyright violation if it were played, which would demonetize it. They only see Andreyev’s reactions to the music as he sits in a hotel room and provides periodic commentary. At the present time, the video has only been posted for two months and has over eleven thousand views.<sup>193</sup>

**Pedagogical Style.** For comparative purposes, the ten channels in this study can be categorized as tutorial, animated video essay, lecture, blended, sketch illustration, and vlog.

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192. Ibid.

193. See Samuel Andreyev, “Can I Survive Morton Feldman’s Second String Quartet?” February 4, 2023. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejBC\\_fut2Es](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejBC_fut2Es). It is important to clarify that a viewer only needs to play thirty seconds of a video to count as a “view” on YouTube. Only the channel owner can see how many viewers made it to the end of the video.



**Tutorial.** The tutorial style is straightforward, informative, and impersonal. These are primarily “how-to” videos. For Dan Lupo of Five Minute Mozart, entertainment is not an objective: “My videos are not ‘fun.’ That wasn't the focus. It was more like, let me present this information and not make it about me or anything but the information in a short and easy-to-understand way.”<sup>194</sup> This channel has playlists titled “Piano Tutorials,” “Music Theory Education,” and “Composer Biographies.” True to his channel name, most videos are under five minutes long and are formulaic, perspicuous, and succinct (see Figure 5.1). Viewer comments show that they appreciate this straightforward approach, particularly for those independently learning music theory.

Josh Wells (Odd Quartet) has a Music Theory Crash Course series. His animated videos are less sterile than Lupo’s. He occasionally brings in some historical context or uses a simple image to emphasize a concept, such as an ice cream cone with three different colored scoops to illustrate the idea of three different “flavors” of minor scales.

**Animated Video Essay.** The style that employs an animated-video essay can be likened to a mini-documentary. Visually stimulating video essays are typically highly produced, have a faceless narrator, and tend to move relatively quickly to keep the audience engaged. This style is normally heavier on production than research regarding time invested, particularly if the content creator works alone. Video essayists often take

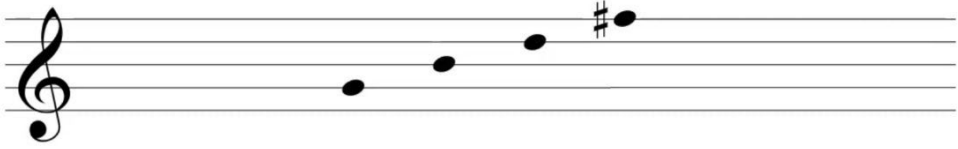
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194. Lupo, in conversation with the author, 2021.

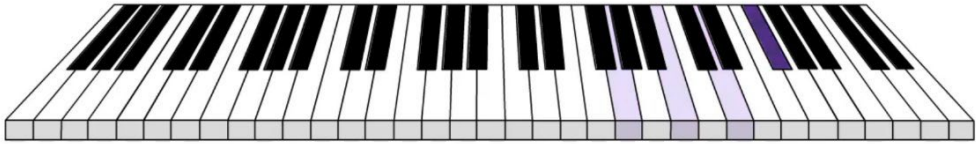
much longer to produce content than other creators. Noah Lefevre, Trash Theory, and Howard Ho use video essays as their primary pedagogical style.

**G Major 7**

First	Third	Fifth	Seventh
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**G    B    D    F#**



By playing these four notes, either melodically or harmonically,  
we will have created a G Major seventh chord

FM/1

Figure 5.1. Screenshot from “Half Diminished Seventh Chord Construction” video by Dan Lupo (Five Minute Mozart).

Noah Lefevre (Polyphonic) describes himself as a digital artist and music journalist. His videos have individually curated looks that begin with the thumbnail. Once he designs the thumbnail, he can develop a color palette, font, and general style. “I’m

kind of straddling the gap between education and entertainment. I consider what I do to be akin to art . . . I like making every video look different. It's a challenge.” A sample of the diversity in his videos is represented in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2. Sample of diverse styles from Noah Lefevre’s videos. Video titles from top left: “The Woman Who Invented Rock n’Roll,” “Bob Marley’s Most Radical Moment,” “Scarborough Fair/Canticle: How Simon and Garfunkel Created a Timeless Song,” “Why Did Bob Dylan Release a Christmas Album?”

Lefevre’s videos can take over fifty hours to animate. Although he uses some pre-existing film clips and images, he creates many elements. “I don't think it should be this

way, but I think that production value is more important than accuracy in hooking an audience. I try to make sure I'm accurate, but at the end of the day, if it's just a low-res poorly-lit image of me talking at a camera, it doesn't matter how accurate I am because people just aren't going to watch it . . . from an educational standpoint, I can give a visual aid you can latch your memory onto.”<sup>195</sup>

Also a video essayist, Trash Theory focuses almost exclusively on popular music but does not do as much animating or design. He relies heavily on video clips from live performances, music videos, photographs, and album covers, which serve as the backdrop for his narration. Unlike Polyphonic, his videos are homogenous and thematic. Every thumbnail uses the same template, which creates an attractive display on his home page.

Howard Ho, a theorist specializing in the work of Lin-Manuel Miranda, uses clips from Broadway productions, films, and various standard and modified notational techniques to analyze music. He typically studies musicals that are trending in popular culture. In addition to *Hamilton*, some of his most-watched videos are on music from *Frozen*, *Encanto*, and *Six*. Even though he could easily repack his analyses into a paper on par with those that gain acceptance into even the most prestigious academic music conferences, his approachable take on trending music attracts a broad audience.

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195. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

His videos assume the viewer has basic music theory and terminology knowledge. However, he will also briefly explain some terms in context, such as “syncopation.”

**Lecture.** Samuel Andreyev and Thomas Little (Classical Nerd) take a more traditional academic approach. Most of their videos feature themselves on screen, usually in front of a bookcase (see Figure 5.3). Their videos feature relatively few animations. Words or images occasionally appear on the side of the screen to illustrate a point, or the screen will cut away to an image, quote, or musical score in much the same way a professor may refer to a slide, but most of the video is unillustrated. The main difference between Andreyev and Little is in their lecture style. Andreyev takes a more serious and direct approach, while Little inserts more humor.

**Blended.** Adam Neely’s video essays blend the lecture and video animation styles seamlessly, and the results are engaging videos that constantly jump between the two modes of presentation in rapid succession. Neely’s dry humor emerges in the dialogue, quick visual puns, and witticisms. Unlike the lecturers, he uses snappy editing techniques to speed up his vocal pace by cutting out the breaths between sentences and *J cuts* and *L cuts* to overlap the sound from one scene to the next. The result is a curated way of speaking that supersedes the typical patterns of the human voice.



Figure 5.3. Screenshot of Thomas Little from the “Franz Liszt: Titan of the Piano” video from the Classical Nerd channel.

*Sketch Illustration.* A lecture-based learning style does not work well for Cory Arnold, who has aphantasia, which is the inability to form mental images. As they put it, they “don’t have an internal mind’s eye or mind’s ear.” For them, many concepts in music theory that other people may conceptualize in a sound-based way need to be abstracted into something almost “geometric,” which involves thinking about the concept like a structure or a visual metaphor. “Being able to show those structures was really important to me from very early on because a lot of it makes sense in my head, but then bringing it out and trying to put it into words to communicate to someone can be really

hard, so it was really useful to be able to draw.”<sup>196</sup> Arnold’s channel, 12tone, is comprised almost entirely of videos of Arnold narrating while drawing a series of cartoon-like images on staff paper, as shown in Figure 5.4.

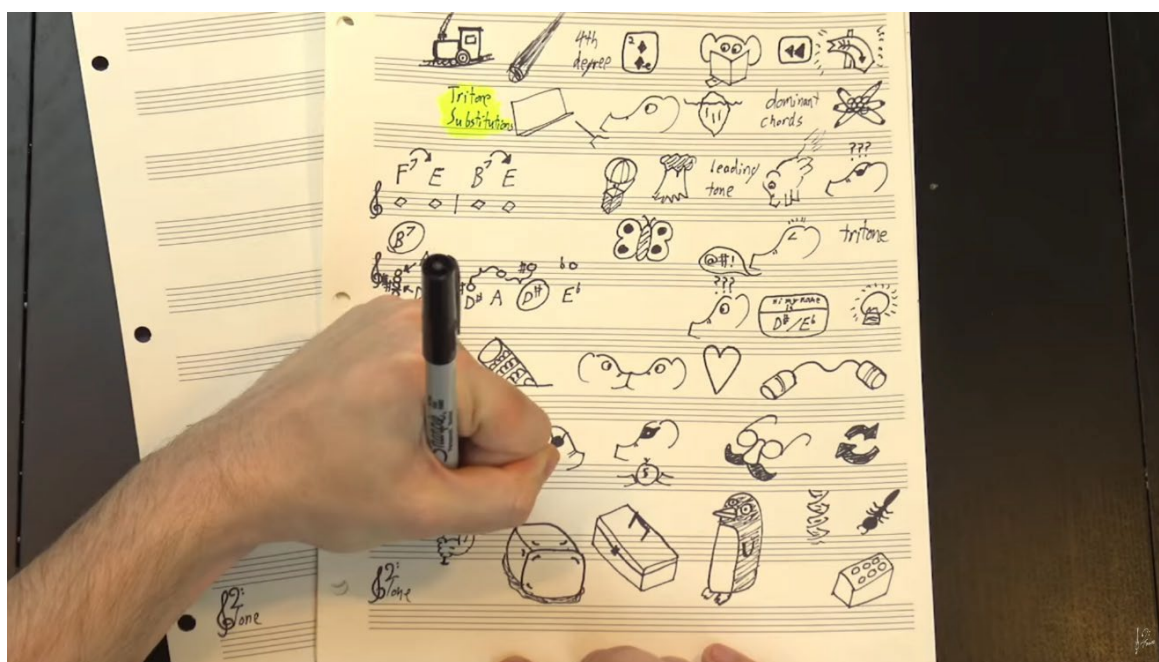


Figure 5.4. Screenshot from “Building Blocks: Tritone Substitutions” video by Cory Arnold.

196. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

Arnold's images, which prominently feature elephants, are not all music-related but seek to make mental connections in various ways. They hope this method can benefit others who may struggle with relying only on traditional music notation to understand theoretical concepts.

**Vlog.** Rick Beato is too casual and off-the-cuff to be categorized as a lecturer, although that is the style he most closely resembles from a visual perspective. By far the most popular YouTuber in this study, Beato proves that the amount of time spent on a video does not correlate to the number of views. While Polyphonic averages about twenty-three videos a year, Beato regularly puts out two or three videos a week, most of which feature Beato in his studio sitting in front of a keyboard, often with a guitar in hand. The animation is typically limited to graphics and minimal text (see Figure 5.5).

Beato's musical talent, years of experience in the music industry, and personality attract viewers; he resorts to few bells and whistles. Viewers seem to respect his opinions since his "Top 10" and "Top 20" lists are some of his most-watched videos. He often shares personal thoughts and tells stories from his career. Like Howard Ho, Beato also does some theoretical analysis and interpretation, although Beato's are not typically colorfully packaged or highly animated.





Figure 5.5. Screenshot from “Top 10 Metallica Riffs of All Time” video by Rick Beato.

### *How Do They Interact with Their Audience?*

Bain had two areas of inquiry related to students: 1) what do the best teachers expect of their students, and 2) how do they treat them? Social media content creators have audiences of thousands or millions and do not frequently interact with individual members. These individuals, however, may develop nonreciprocal connections to the content creators. Questions in this area focused on direct and indirect interactions between the content creator and the viewers.

**Parasocial Relationships.** In 1956, psychologists Horton and Wohl coined the phrase “para-social relationships” to explain the illusion of a face-to-face relationship with mass media performers.<sup>197</sup> These relationships can develop to more significant levels on social media platforms where fans have direct access to content creators,<sup>198</sup> such as Twitch, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Chih-Ping Chen’s study on parasocial relationships on YouTube found that content creators often directly or indirectly encourage these parasocial relationships.<sup>199</sup> One of the most powerful ways to foster parasocial relationships occurs when YouTubers allow viewers glimpses into their personal lives. Fans seek out these experiences, which can be curated to reflect any image the creator wishes to share—a moment of “performative intimacy.”<sup>200</sup>

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197. Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl, “Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction,” *Psychiatry* 19, no. 3 (August 1, 1956): 215–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>, p. 215.

198. Kate S. Kurtin, Deya Roy, and Linda Dam, “The Development of Parasocial Relationships on YouTube,” 2018, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Development-of-Parasocial-Relationships-on-Kurtin-Roy/1713da74f55ec2edef19225b6db96e4dbeaf7201>, p. 236.

199. Chih-Ping Chen, “Forming Digital Self and Parasocial Relationships on YouTube,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 16, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 232–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514521081>, 250 – 251.

200. Bradley Bond, “Following Your ‘Friend’: Social Media and the Strength of Adolescents’ Parasocial Relationships with Media Personae,” *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 19 (October 12, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2016.0355>, p. 657.

**Anonymity and Celebrity.** Four interviewees (Samuel Andreyev, Rick Beato, Thomas Little, and Adam Neely) almost always appear on camera in their videos. Beato is highly recognizable and has even gone on tour to do live shows. Neely, who lives in New York City, regularly gets recognized on the street. “I’m very introverted, and I’m not too pumped about that aspect of things . . . I’m not super comfortable with it, to be honest.”<sup>201</sup> He has also had one or two uncomfortable interactions with fans who disagree with things he has said on his channel. Samuel Andreyev described the strangeness of reconciling his internet celebrity with the normalcy of his everyday life:

Nobody in my neighborhood knows that I do this, and yet online, hundreds of thousands of people view my stuff every month. It's a strange kind of ‘fame,’ if you like, because it's very virtual. I don't meet most of these people, they manifest to me as words on a screen, as comments, as tweets, as emails, but when I go to bigger cities, I get stopped on the street, and the disconnect between those two things, between what my daily life is actually like, which is very anonymous, and then what happens when I step outside of the region I live in is something that hasn't quite hit home.

Noah Lefevre (Polyphonic), Dan Lupo (Five Minute Mozart), Cory Arnold (12tone), Josh Wells (Odd Quartet), Howard Ho, and Trash Theory do not appear in their videos and have varying degrees of anonymity. Wells, however, has recently been moving away from animation, posting more videos featuring himself. Lefevre prefers to keep his face off his channel. One of the questions he responded to in a Q&A video was, “Can you do a face reveal?” The answer was “no,” but he did provide a cartoon image to

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201. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

approximate his appearance.<sup>202</sup> Trash Theory met me in a live video stream but declined to provide his name even for our interview to protect his privacy. “In my mind, I’m not that big, but friends have said that they were just talking about a band with some random people and they were like, ‘oh, have you seen the Trash Theory video on them?’ So yeah, that in itself is weird.”<sup>203</sup>

**Comments.** The comments section offers the easiest way for viewers to respond to a video. Content creators can disable this feature but rarely do. None of the videos I viewed for this study had the comments sections deactivated. YouTube also has a feature that allows the channel owner to screen and approve comments before they appear publicly. None of the participants used this tool because their channel volume was too large. A spam detector and a filter system can also flag keywords and prevent comments with those words from being automatically posted. Most of the content creators in this study had filters to protect their channels. Cory Arnold (12tone) says they do not worry too much about the comments section getting out of hand. “The majority of the people watching the video will be people from my audience who have reasonable basic human empathy, and so the stuff that floats to the tops of comment sections is mostly good, or at the very least is mostly valid criticism. You sort of have to go digging to find the people who are making bad-faith arguments. I don't worry about it as much anymore because the

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202. Polyphonic, “Polyphonic Q&A,” June 14, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBrvhnFjzlo>. 2:44 – 3:07.

203. Trash Theory, in conversation with the author, 2021.

community takes care of it for me.”<sup>204</sup> Comments also have like and dislike buttons, and comments with more “likes” tend to appear higher on the comment list than those with more “dislikes.”

Fans who use the comments section may believe that they are engaging directly with the YouTubers who appear in the videos. That is not always the case. Many of the creators responded to comments when their channels were young, but most stopped when their audience grew large enough that the volume of comments became overwhelming. One participant who still reads almost every comment is Dan Lupo, who also has the smallest channel in the study sample. The other is Trash Theory, whose channel is roughly fifteen times larger than Lupo’s. “I’m quite obsessive,” said Trash Theory, “I try not to keep or take all of them in, but I think the best ones are the stories [about the bands]. . . a lot of the audience members are remembering [events] from their youth.”<sup>205</sup>

Reading the comments can also take a toll on one’s mental health, as Noah Lefevre illustrated with this anecdote: “I really could not name any of the thousands of comments praising me, but I can tell you that four years ago somebody commented that I pronounced the word ‘vague’ weird in my Fleetwood Mac video. It's just this thing that

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204. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

205. Trash Theory, in conversation with the author, 2021.

the human brain does where you'll let you let the praise kind of wash over you and shrug it off, but then the littlest things will kind of dig in and drive you mad.”<sup>206</sup>

**Patreon.** One common platform where fans can potentially gain more intimate access to creators is Patreon, a membership community designed to allow creative professionals to receive financial support from people who appreciate their work. Creators can set membership levels at various dollar amounts, starting at a mere one-dollar-a-month donation. In exchange, donors can receive perks established by the creators. Many low-tier perks provide extra content, such as additional videos, outtakes, or the ability to view new videos before the general public. Upper-tier rewards may provide more direct access to the creators. For example, \$5 a month buys access to Adam Neely’s discord channel, where fans can chat directly with Adam and other fans. Classical Nerd offers monthly composition lessons at the \$ 45-a-month level. For \$100, Samuel Andreyev will meet with you one-on-one on Zoom for thirty minutes.

Other creators are not as comfortable allowing their fans direct access to them. Noah Lefevre (Polyphonic) only has a \$1-a-month level on Patreon because he does not want anyone who chooses to support him there to expect too much. “I’m very uncomfortable with the idea of building relationships on a platform where somebody is paying for access to me. Well, what if I don’t like this person? What if engaging with this person is bad for my mental health? I like to keep a lot of distance between myself and

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206. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

my fans. I have issues with parasocial relationships.”<sup>207</sup> Josh Wells also uses Patreon but keeping up with the connection with his patrons can be a challenge. “It comes down to just being comfortable with sharing more. I don't know if I'm a really private person, but I'm not the kind of person who just shares everything online, so it's been hard for me to do the same thing with the channel . . . you kind of always have to be there.”<sup>208</sup>

The number of platforms to maintain can be overwhelming. In addition to YouTube and Patreon, most content creators are on some combination of Discord, Twitch, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok. Dan Lupo thinks that branching out to other platforms is vital for anyone who wants to make this a long-term career, pointing out how quickly social media platforms can come and go.

**Livestreams and Q&As.** Only a few content creators in this study engage in regular livestreams, but the most popular one, Rick Beato, does them about once a week. Thousands of people view these in real-time, and tens of thousands more watch them after they air. Although there are far too many people commenting in the chat for Beato to engage with them individually, his audience relishes the opportunity to see him raw and unedited, separated by space but not time.

Adam Neely frequently posts Q&A videos directly responding to questions on his Instagram account. Most of the other channels have Q&A videos as well. Livestreams

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207. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

208. Wells, in conversation with the author, 2021.

and Q&As can be relatively easy ways to engage with fans and produce content when a creator needs more time to finish a more extensive project or has a creative block.

### *How Do They Evaluate Themselves?*

Bain asked how the best teachers check their progress and evaluate their efforts. For him, the key to this question was in the students. Successful teachers inspire what Bain calls “deep learning” instead of surface learning or strategic learning. Surface learning entails doing as little as possible to get by, while strategic learning encourages students to chase after high grades rather than seek understanding.<sup>209</sup> There is no formula or pattern to follow to become a good teacher. Many strategies and approaches can engender deep learning, and teachers can use a variety of assessments to measure student learning.

I did not find a comparable approach to measuring what qualifies one as a member of the best professors of “YouTubiversity.” In many ways, educational YouTube channels are perfectly engineered for deep learning. Determining who is watching a video and for what purpose would be a herculean task. Still, if one can assume that the primary motivation behind most views is curiosity, the fundamental ingredient for deep learning—a desire to know—is already present. Many people seem to come to these

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209. Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, pp. 150 – 151.



channels because they want to learn, as evidenced by the comments sections. People may subscribe because they find the video helpful, engaging, or entertaining.

A YouTuber's personal marker of success is highly individualized. Each creator has a different vision for their channel and motivation to continue producing content. "I try to think as little as I can about monetary stability if I'm being honest," said Cory Arnold (12tone), "I make enough money to pay bills and not be worried about my financial future, at least in the short term. And if my channel imploded tomorrow and I lost all of that, I couldn't coast on the money I've already made forever, but I make enough that I have some savings built up."<sup>210</sup>

YouTube does not generate a large amount of revenue for composer Samuel Andreyev, but it publicizes his online teaching, which grew from about three or four students to between thirty or forty. "That's turned into my most reliable income source at this point . . . it's become stable enough that I now have the freedom to choose what I want to do, and that, for me, is like hitting the jackpot. What I always wanted to do was to be able to sit in a room and write the music I want to write with nobody interfering with that process."<sup>211</sup>

Rick Beato does think about channel growth and the financial success that comes with that. As a father of three entering his sixth decade of life, he wants to make fiscally

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210. Arnold, in conversation with the author, 2021.

211. Andreyev, in conversation with the author, 2021.

sound decisions to provide for his family and considers his channel a full-time job. He hired an assistant to help him with some of the more technical aspects of the channel and recently built a new studio to accommodate his equipment and provide a comfortable space designed specifically for his interview series.

Noah Lefevre (Polyphonic) sees himself in a more bohemian light: “I consider what I do art, and I'm putting myself out there. I think because of that, I prioritize self-expression over algorithmic success. I'm putting more of myself in.”<sup>212</sup> For Lefevre, success is defined by becoming a better artist, telling stories more compellingly, and creating visually beautiful stories about music.

### **Limitations**

One of the most obvious limitations of my study was the lack of diversity of my interviewees. The YouTube community skews male, not only among content creators but also among viewers. YouTube provides analytics on select viewer demographics from the last twenty-eight days, and I asked a few interviewees if they could quickly check their gender statistics. The Classical Nerd and Odd Quartet channels had about 75% male viewership. Adam Neely was much higher at just over 90% male. I was disappointed that I could not interview any female YouTubers for this project, particularly as a female

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212. Lefevre, in conversation with the author, 2021.

researcher. Similarly, there is a distinct lack of racial diversity among music studies YouTubers. This problem extends to the academic professions as well.<sup>213</sup>

All the interviewees were generous with their time, allowing me to continue asking them questions beyond the allotted one-hour time slot. Sometimes our conversations deviated from my predetermined questions into fascinating detours. Consequently, not all interviewees responded to all questions, which is something I would be more conscientious about if I conduct more interviews in the future.

Bain's model was hardly a perfect fit for this study. I faced some challenges when attempting to reconcile Bain's model with this survey of content creators on YouTube. The most difficult was addressing the lack of student-teacher interaction and assessment. If I were to repeat this study, I would endeavor to create a new model tailored to the unique features of YouTube, its content creators, and its audience. When I embarked on this project, I felt I lacked the knowledge and context to accomplish this task. After immersing myself in the culture, conducting these interviews, and viewing this world through Bain's lens, I believe I have acquired the expertise necessary to build a reliable framework for future research.

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213. See Carol Oja, "Race and the American Musicological Society: Founding the Committee on Cultural Diversity," *AMS Musicology Now* (blog), April 30, 2021, <https://musicologynow.org/race-and-the-american-musicological-society-founding-the-committee-on-cultural-diversity/>; and Noriko Manabe, "How SMT Could Become More Welcoming," *Music Theory Spectrum*, February 3, 2023, mtac023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtac023>.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

According to the sociology of knowledge tenants, human understanding is socially constructed and not subject to scientific proof. For societies to have a unified conception of reality, a regulating body must govern knowledge so it can be classified as true or untrue. The perceived need for regulators gave rise to the Academy, a coterie of societal elite dedicated to pursuing knowledge. Most often associated with a university or college, academics traditionally create knowledge through years of study and research and disseminate it through teaching, lectures, and written works that undergo rigorous editing processes to ensure the knowledge they contain is validated by other academic elites. Once consensually approved, the written work is published—an academic stamp of approval decreeing the work to be certified knowledge. People wishing to access this knowledge must often pay high fees through college tuition costs, journal subscriptions, or inflated book prices. Inextricably linked to wealth and privilege, this system regulates who becomes the next generation of knowledge creators.

Web 2.0 created new possibilities for the dissemination of knowledge. Access and power shifted as the participatory culture grew, and user-generated content on social media became the norm. Founded in 2005 and acquired by Google in 2006, YouTube quickly became the leading video-sharing platform. Access to this content is ostensibly free, at least to those with internet access. Publication is usually unregulated, provided the content does not violate copyright law. The platform is open to anyone of legal age or

with parental consent, provided they have not violated community standards. In theory, this democratizes the playing field, paving the way for people who may otherwise not have a voice. While some content creators I interviewed are unlikely to secure a traditional higher-education teaching job without obtaining more advanced degrees, a few of them (Andreyev, Beato, and Little) have taught college classes. However, after speaking with them, I believe that any can pursue that route if they choose to do so. As the university becomes more accepting of YouTubers as scholars and perhaps more open to relinquishing some control over knowledge production to those outside academia, maybe the need for additional letters after one's name as a prerequisite for a university professorship will change.

Although this sounds promising theoretically, the playing field does not look diverse in practice. YouTube's search results are also too reliant on algorithmic trends, which appear to mirror the discriminatory practices already commonplace in the Academy.<sup>214</sup> All ten of my interviewees identify and present as male, and only two are non-white, despite my attempts to use purposive sampling to increase the diversity of my sample. Both the creators and the viewers skew heavily white and male.

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214. Sina Fazelpour and David Danks, "Algorithmic Bias: Senses, Sources, Solutions," *Philosophy Compass* 16, no. 8 (2021): e12760, <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12760>.

At first glance, the difference between the university and YouTubiversity may seem vast, but the divide is rapidly shrinking. Professors may be just as likely to assign students a YouTube video as a journal article, perhaps not only for convenience but also because they know this is where most students prefer to go for information.<sup>215</sup> Over 88% of faculty use it in some capacity as a teaching tool regularly,<sup>216</sup> and more academics are participating in YouTube content creation themselves.<sup>217</sup>

The survey used for this study focused specifically on those teaching topics in music studies. Interestingly, the most common way these faculty reported using YouTube was to teach or review a topic, an area of specific expertise one might assume the teacher would reserve for themselves. However, pedagogical trends in education have encouraged video use in flipped classroom models with promising results.<sup>218</sup> Students learn the topic before coming to class and spend class time engaging in active learning to apply what they learned or construct new knowledge through creative work. The comments made by users on my musical texture video complaining about wasted class time if the same learning result could be achieved in a five-minute video anecdotally support this practice.

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215. Pearson Research Center and The Harris Poll, “Beyond Millennials: The Next Generation of Learners.”

216. Pattier, “Teachers and YouTube.”

217. Maynard, “How to Succeed as an Academic on YouTube.”

218. Hew et al., “Meta-Analyses of Flipped Classroom Studies.”

Of course, the flipped classroom model assumes students receive accurate content. Because topics in music studies deal with music as a function of society, issues related to history, culture, and humanity are difficult to avoid, which causes concern about how these topics may be presented. One frequently cited problem with YouTube content is the lack of formal oversight to prevent the propagation of undesirable, inaccurate, or potentially harmful information. Grasso states that there is no peer review process on YouTube.<sup>219</sup> In the most traditional academic understanding of this term, she is correct. As a counterpoint, one may convincingly argue that there is little oversight in the college classroom as well, and even more problematically, one may point to the unchecked whitewashed, sexist, and discriminatory way music studies has been represented in textbooks and the canonic repertoire for decades. However, I argue that peer review does occur on YouTube in an ongoing dynamic process on several levels. My interviewees confirmed that mistakes, no matter how minor, are quickly and eagerly pointed out by viewers. In the case of music analysis, which can be subject to interpretation, YouTube democratizes the process by allowing participants a platform to share ideas, discuss alternate readings of the music, and vote on their favorite version using the like and dislike buttons on individual comments. Another form of peer review is through response videos critiquing each other, which is common among YouTubers.<sup>220</sup>

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219. Grasso and Arnold, "Music Theory YouTube."

220. A quick Google search revealed four response videos to Adam Neely's "Music Theory and White Supremacy."

Another concern is the financial incentive. Content creators who acquire large followings and generate views can monetize their channels and collect ad revenue, acquire sponsorships, receive donations on Patreon, and use their celebrity to promote other business enterprises, such as online courses. They have a financial incentive to grow their channel that may affect what content they create and how they present it. University professors are theoretically protected from financial concerns through the tenure process. They have academic freedom to pursue knowledge without fear of retaliation. In practice, less than half of all full-time faculty have tenure, and most teaching is by non-tenured and part-time faculty who are hired on a contingent basis<sup>221</sup> and may adapt their content or teaching style based on financial concerns.<sup>222</sup>

### **The Future of Music Studies in the University and YouTubiversity**

As Baudrillard understands it, we live in a world of simulacra, replicas of replicas far removed from reality. The professors of YouTubiversity are yet another simulacrum, replicating the educational experience historically relegated to in-person transmission. They exist in the realm of the hyperreal. Although they may be distant from the Real in the Lacanian sense, they have substantial power to define what is true in the sociology of

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221. National Center for Education Statistics, “Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty,” U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, May 2022, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csc/postsecondary-faculty>.

222. Brenda S. Sonner, “A Is for ‘Adjunct’: Examining Grade Inflation in Higher Education,” *Journal of Education for Business* 76, no. 1 (September 1, 2000): 5–8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832320009599042>.



knowledge. Ivory towers, tuition dollars, or paywalls do not limit their reach. However, at least in music studies, they have no desire to compete with or dismantle the university. “I don’t think that YouTube and purely online resources are replacements for traditional modes of education,” said Adam Neely, “I’ll never see what I do, and what anybody else does on the platform in any way, shape, or form as a replacement . . . [my videos are] the popcorn version, the cotton candy version of music theory. . . to learn music is a long process of internalizing that can’t be done by staring at a screen.”<sup>223</sup> Cory Arnold agrees: “Please do not use my videos as a replacement for getting a music degree.”<sup>224</sup> Samuel Andreyev expands on this, stating that “the purpose of undergraduate programs is to teach students how to think critically, how to expand their world view, and how to figure out what they’re good at.”<sup>225</sup> Using that logic, it follows that the most critical role college educators can fulfill is not as knowledge-bearers but as facilitators, co-creators, and motivators—roles a YouTuber is ill-equipped to do. This viewpoint aligns with research confirming the success of flipped classroom pedagogy on learning outcomes.

Some professors express frustration with YouTube, seeing it as an indication of a flawed university system. “It’s sort of infuriating that students are going to YouTube to

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223. Neely, in conversation with the author, 2021.

224. Cory Arnold, Society for Music Analysis, “SMA Study Day Roundtable - Adam Neely, 12tone, Julianne Grasso, William O’Hara, John Moore,” March 26, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT9QS96Hq7U>, 41:35 – 41:40.

225. Andreyev, in conversation with the author, 2021.

get more accessible content and that we [traditional university professors] can't provide it to them," said Julianne Grasso.<sup>226</sup> Many content creators I interviewed started their channels because they felt something was missing from their college education or because they struggled to learn using traditional methods. "In a lot of ways, I think what Adam [Neely] and I do and what most music theory YouTubers do is a quasi-rebellion against academic standards," said Cory Arnold, "but we're also still very reliant on the Academy doing what they do, and it would be really nice if they did it better."<sup>227</sup> Arnold does not offer suggestions for how to put this into practice. Thus, the lingering question remains: what can music professors do better in academia and with YouTubiversity?

First, there is a need for categorization. 27.1 percent of survey respondents spent an average of 15–29 minutes searching for videos, while 22.4 percent spent between 30 minutes to an hour. A crowd-sourced peer catalog repository could save countless hours for music teachers. Videos can be linked through a website that tags them by topic, level, and length of time, summarizes the content, and flags videos that may be inappropriate or problematic. Purposive cataloging could mitigate algorithmic bias by highlighting videos that may otherwise go unnoticed and address the peer-review concern.

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226. Julianne Grasso, Society for Music Analysis, "SMA Study Day Roundtable - Adam Neely, 12tone, Julianne Grasso, William O'Hara, John Moore," 41:11 – 41:35.

227. Arnold, Society for Music Analysis, "SMA Study Day Roundtable - Adam Neely, 12tone, Julianne Grasso, William O'Hara, John Moore," 41:35 – 42:19.

Second, teachers should have open conversations with their students about how they evaluate and select open-source materials, the impact of algorithms, and how social knowledge is created and by whom. Such discussions will help students become critical consumers of knowledge and participators in knowledge creation, which is increasingly essential in a hyperreal world. Today's college students, who are part of the first generation to have grown up with Web 2.0, reported that a primary means of determining YouTube video accuracy was intuition, based on nothing more than their ability to "just feel" if the information was correct.<sup>228</sup> An over-reliance on gut reaction without the temperance of critical investigation can lead to what Grasso and Arnold call aesthetic credibility—"confident presenters with good editing skills"<sup>229</sup>—taking precedence over accuracy. Whether the flaws or biases are deliberate or unintentional on the part of the content creator matters little if the effect is the same. The more people who watch, share, like, and subscribe, the more likely the algorithm will recommend the content, and if enough people accept the information, it becomes social knowledge. The survey of music professors showed that the majority (57.9%) do not currently teach students how to evaluate YouTube videos for content accuracy, but over 40 percent do, which is encouraging. Learning to think critically about the information they consume is a valuable skill for students to develop.

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228. Tan, "Informal Learning on *YouTube*," p. 470.

229. Grasso and Arnold, "Music Theory YouTube."

Third, we can embrace a redefinition of what it means to be an academic. Despite the high numbers of college faculty using YouTube, there is a noted and understandable reluctance to relinquish control over knowledge production. Although there has been a movement to embrace public musicology, this term is not yet fully understood. In many cases, it still seems to promote an imbalance of power, with traditional academics benevolently bringing watered-down musicology to the masses instead of people combining their knowledge in co-creative experiences. Musicologists need to work to normalize the practice equitably and meaningfully. Programs such as the undergraduate certificate in Public Musicology at Columbus State and collaborations between ivory tower academics and cybersphere specialists such as the Music Theory YouTube article by Grasso and Arnold of 12tone and Adam Neely's inclusion of short interview segments with academic professionals in select videos<sup>230</sup> and distillation of Philip Ewell's controversial journal article<sup>231</sup> are valuable models.

With the accelerating rate of technological change, social media platforms can disappear as quickly as they emerge. While this dissertation represents a current look at the state of higher education concerning music studies, it points to broader issues that have gone unresolved but not unnoticed for decades. The increased reliance on

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230. As an example, see Adam Neely, "The Nintendo-Fication of Jazz," February 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKWgLe-jQjc> which features James Heazlewood-Dale, a Ph.D. student at Brandeis University.

231. Adam Neely, "Music Theory and White Supremacy."

“unacademic” sources of information to teach students (YouTube) instead of academic sources (textbooks), which was amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought more of these conversations into the foreground, particularly at a time when college enrollments have been in steady decline since 2018.<sup>232</sup> Questions about who the gatekeepers of knowledge are and why they have this power will continue as the “unacademics,” the academics without an academy like the professors of YouTubiversity, become increasingly prominent sources of knowledge. Conversations about the next major innovation in student learning are centering around “unprofessors,” virtual chatbots that can confidently generate responses to student queries. While YouTube remains a preferred learning tool for students and professors, forward-thinking music lovers who want to share their passion with others can continue to explore collaborative ways to reinforce and maximize the potential of both the traditional academic and the new academic without trivializing the authority of either.

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232. U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “61.8 Percent of Recent High School Graduates Enrolled in College in October 2021,” *The Economics Daily*: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2022/61-8-percent-of-recent-high-school-graduates-enrolled-in-college-in-october-2021.htm>.

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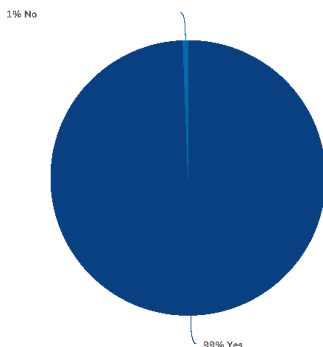
## APPENDIX A FACULTY SURVEY

### Report for The Educational Use of YouTube in Music Studies - Faculty Survey

#### Response Counts

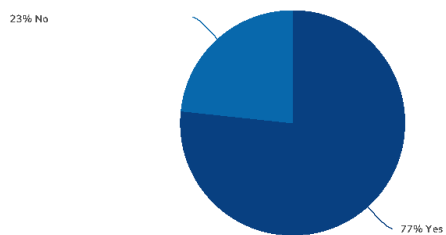


1. Have you taught a Music Studies course at any point from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022? For the purposes of this research, "Music Studies" is defined to include topic areas such as: Composition Elements of Music Ethnomusicology Film Music Interdisciplinary Studies Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance) Ludomusicology (video game music) Music Appreciation Music Business Music Education Music History Music Industry Music Technology Music Theory Music Therapy Popular Music Studies Any other topic that focuses on the academic study of music For the purposes of this research, "Music Studies" does not include: Performance-Based Studies, such as Band Choir Ensembles Group Lessons (instrumental or vocal) Individual Lessons (Instrumental or vocal) Orchestra



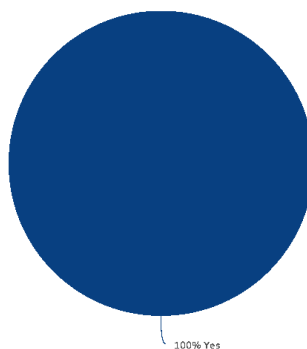
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	99.4%	160
No	0.6%	1
<b>Totals: 161</b>		

2. Other than for playing recordings or viewing performances, have you used YouTube as a teaching and learning tool in any of the music studies courses you taught from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	76.7%	115
No	23.3%	35
Totals: 150		

3. Did you choose/select the YouTube videos for at least one of the courses you taught? Sometimes, instructors may teach a course with predetermined content and are not responsible for vetting or selecting materials.



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	100.0%	114
Totals: 114		

4. Please place a checkmark next to the type(s) of Music Studies undergraduate music course(s) you have taught from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022.

Value		Percent	Responses
Composition		17.0%	19
Elements of Music		15.2%	17
Ethnomusicology		9.8%	11
Film Music		8.9%	10
Interdisciplinary Studies		6.3%	7
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)		4.5%	5
Ludomusicology (video game music)		2.7%	3
Music Appreciation		21.4%	24
Music Business		2.7%	3
Music Education		22.3%	25
Music History		33.9%	38
Music Industry		1.8%	2
Music Technology		9.8%	11
Music Theory		40.2%	45
Music Therapy		2.7%	3
Popular Music Studies		12.5%	14
Other - Write In		25.0%	28
Other - Write In		1.8%	2

Other - Write In	Count
Aural Skills	4
18tg Century Counterpoint	1
American Music Studies	1
Applied Pedagogy	1
Choir	1
Electro-acoustic Music	1
Intro to Grad Studies in Music	1
Introduction to Orff Schulwerk	1
Music Analysis (why isn't this listed?; it's not the same thing as Music Theory)	1
Music Fundamentals	1
Music Research	1
Music Theory Pedagogy	1
Music and Cultures	1
Music and Genocide	1
Music and the Mind	1
Music of Change	1
Music of War and Peace	1
Music recording	1
Musician's Health	1
Orchestration	1
Psychology of Music	1
Singing Diction Seminar	1
Women in Music	1
music integration	1
woodwind techniques	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>

Other - Write In	Count
Music and Violence	1
Musical Theatre	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>

Other - Write In	Count
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>

Other - Write In	Count
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>



## 5. From Fall 2018 - Fall 2022, which of these courses have you taught fully in-person?

Value		Percent	Responses
None of these		5.5%	6
Composition		12.7%	14
Elements of Music		10.0%	11
Ethnomusicology		9.1%	10
Film Music		7.3%	8
Interdisciplinary Studies		4.5%	5
Music Appreciation		16.4%	18
Music Education		22.7%	25
Music History		30.9%	34
Music Technology		7.3%	8
Music Theory		33.6%	37
Popular Music Studies		8.2%	9
Other - Write In		20.9%	23
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)		2.7%	3
Ludomusicology (video game music)		0.9%	1
Music Business		1.8%	2
Music Industry		1.8%	2
Music Therapy		2.7%	3
Other - Write In		1.8%	2
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	

6. In which of these fully in-person courses did you use YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning other than for viewing/listening to musical performances?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	7.7%	8
Composition	8.7%	9
Elements of Music	6.7%	7
Ethnomusicology	7.7%	8
Film Music	7.7%	8
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.8%	5
Music Appreciation	12.5%	13
Music Education	21.2%	22
Music History	26.9%	28
Music Technology	7.7%	8
Music Theory	26.0%	27
Popular Music Studies	8.7%	9
Other - Write In	19.2%	20
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	2.9%	3
Ludomusicology (video game music)	1.0%	1
Music Business	1.9%	2
Music Industry	1.9%	2
Music Therapy	1.9%	2
Other - Write In	1.0%	1
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	



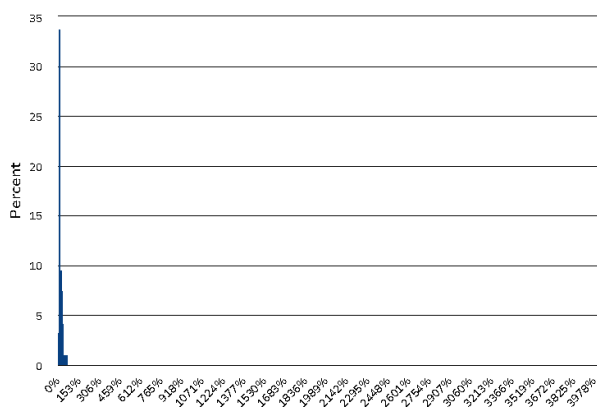
	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation	Music Business
I must have misunderstood the question--I use YT constantly to play recordings, but not for most of the above purposes:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Model a way of thinking about the discipline:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to compare versions of the same piece by different performers:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to invite students to do research on a topic, collecting clips themselves:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to provide a group observation opportunity (for a music education course):Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
transcription study:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%





	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation	Music Business
To review a concept as a video in order to present the info in a different modality :Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to distribute videos of in-class micro-teaching episodes so students can watch and reflect on their teaching:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to provide an example/model of music teaching:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following fully in-person courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
<b>Total Checks</b>									
Checks	15	20	20	24	15	9	1	48	5
% of Total Checks	3.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.7%	3.0%	1.8%	0.2%	9.5%	1.0%

8. Approximately what percentage of the teaching and learning that occurs in your in-person classes happens through YouTube?



9. From Fall 2018 - Fall 2022, which of these courses have you taught synchronously online (set meeting times via video conferencing platform such as Zoom)?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	21.3%	23
Composition	11.1%	12
Elements of Music	7.4%	8
Ethnomusicology	5.6%	6
Film Music	5.6%	6
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.6%	6
Music Appreciation	9.3%	10
Music Education	17.6%	19
Music History	21.3%	23
Music Technology	6.5%	7
Music Theory	25.9%	28
Popular Music Studies	3.7%	4
Other - Write In	10.2%	11
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	2.8%	3
Ludomusicology (video game music)	0.9%	1
Music Business	2.8%	3
Music Industry	0.9%	1
Music Therapy	1.9%	2
Other - Write In	1.9%	2
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	



10. In which of these synchronous online courses did you use YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning other than for viewing/listening to musical performances?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	15.3%	13
Composition	7.1%	6
Elements of Music	4.7%	4
Ethnomusicology	5.9%	5
Film Music	5.9%	5
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.9%	5
Music Appreciation	9.4%	8
Music Education	18.8%	16
Music History	22.4%	19
Music Technology	5.9%	5
Music Theory	22.4%	19
Popular Music Studies	4.7%	4
Other - Write In	9.4%	8
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	2.4%	2
Music Business	2.4%	2
Music Industry	1.2%	1
Music Therapy	2.4%	2
Other - Write In	1.2%	1
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	

11. Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses:

	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation	Music Business
to teach a topic (such as a basic intro to _____ video) Checks Row Check %	2 2.5%	3 3.8%	4 5.0%	5 6.3%	3 3.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 8.8%	2 2.5%
to demonstrate a technique (such as how to do a musical analysis) Checks Row Check %	5 7.8%	3 4.7%	2 3.1%	3 4.7%	3 4.7%	2 3.1%	0 0.0%	5 7.8%	0 0.0%
for practice/homework (such as a video designed to help practice aural skills) Checks Row Check %	2 4.4%	1 2.2%	3 6.7%	1 2.2%	3 6.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 8.9%	0 0.0%
to introduce a subject for discussion (such as a person stating their opinion on a topic) Checks Row Check %	3 4.5%	3 4.5%	2 3.0%	4 6.0%	4 6.0%	2 3.0%	0 0.0%	3 4.5%	1 1.5%
to provide first-hand accounts (such as composer interviews or documentaries) Checks Row Check %	5 7.9%	1 1.6%	5 7.9%	3 4.8%	5 7.9%	2 3.2%	0 0.0%	6 9.5%	2 3.2%
Intro to disciplinary thinking: Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
musical play-along for ukulele: Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%



	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation	Music Business
to provide examples (both positive and negative) of teaching and presentational techniques:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
for comparison of artworks and music:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
for comparison of recordings and conductors:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
to play along with a music video:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
Teaching solfège syllables:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following synchronous online courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
<b>Total Checks</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>
Checks	17	11	17	17	20	6	0	28	5
% of Total Checks	4.9%	3.2%	4.9%	4.9%	5.7%	1.7%	0.0%	8.0%	1.4%

12. Approximately what percentage of the teaching and learning that occurs in your synchronous online courses happens through YouTube?

ResponseID	Response
22	10%
17	25
56	5
63	5
20	40
62	10%
124	10%
78	25
58	40
27	25
93	80
122	40
123	5%
79	20%
128	about 2%--really, just a video on the history of vaudeville, for American
173	30%
148	10
171	10
160	20-25
70	10%
140	5
85	20
108	>1%
101	40%
138	10
50	20%
61	5
	5

ResponseID	Response
	5
	5
	5
	5
	5
	10%
	10%
	10%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	10
	10
	25
	30%
	30%
	30%
	15%
	15%
	15%
	20
	20
	20%
	2
	2
	25%
	25%
	30
	30
	1
	1%
	15
	2%
	2%?
	3%
	6

13. From Fall 2018 - Fall 2022, which of these courses have you taught as a hybrid course (some set meeting times and some asynchronous work)?

Value		Percent	Responses
None of these		57.4%	62
Elements of Music		3.7%	4
Film Music		4.6%	5
Music Appreciation		9.3%	10
Music Education		8.3%	9
Music History		10.2%	11
Music Theory		12.0%	13
Popular Music Studies		3.7%	4
Other - Write In		7.4%	8
Composition		0.9%	1
Ethnomusicology		2.8%	3
Interdisciplinary Studies		1.9%	2
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)		2.8%	3
Music Business		0.9%	1
Music Industry		1.9%	2
Music Technology		2.8%	3
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>	
Totals		0	

14. In which of these hybrid courses did you use YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning other than for viewing/listening to musical performances?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	13.0%	6
Elements of Music	6.5%	3
Ethnomusicology	4.3%	2
Film Music	10.9%	5
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	6.5%	3
Music Appreciation	19.6%	9
Music Education	13.0%	6
Music History	17.4%	8
Music Industry	4.3%	2
Music Technology	6.5%	3
Music Theory	26.1%	12
Popular Music Studies	8.7%	4
Other - Write In	13.0%	6
Interdisciplinary Studies	2.2%	1
Music Business	2.2%	1
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>	
Totals	0	





	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation
score study:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following hybrid courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
to provide video recordings of classes for students to reference after the fact:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following hybrid courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Assessment :Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following hybrid courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Reinforce a topic already explained/experienced:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following hybrid courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
compare alternative soundtracks:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following hybrid courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
<b>Total Checks</b> Checks % of Total Checks	0 0.0%	10 5.0%	6 3.0%	20 9.9%	4 2.0%	9 4.5%	0 0.0%	27 13.4%

16. Approximately what percentage of the teaching and learning that occurs in your hybrid courses happens through YouTube?

ResponseID	Response
69	50%
41	25
54	40
20	2%
32	10%
133	40 to 60
63	25
58	5%
50	80
148	50
184	20
28	50
153	20%
90	10
27	15%
39	15%
18	20
138	20%
42	4
	15%
	15%
	15%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	5%
	20
	20

17. From Fall 2018 - Fall 2022, which of these courses have you taught as an asynchronous online course (no set meeting times)?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	71.3%	77
Music Appreciation	10.2%	11
Music History	8.3%	9
Music Theory	5.6%	6
Other - Write In	4.6%	5
Elements of Music	2.8%	3
Ethnomusicology	0.9%	1
Film Music	0.9%	1
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	1.9%	2
Music Business	1.9%	2
Music Education	2.8%	3
Music Industry	0.9%	1
Music Technology	0.9%	1
Popular Music Studies	2.8%	3

#### Other - Write In

#### Count

Totals

0

#### Other - Write In

#### Count

Totals

0

#### Other - Write In

#### Count

Totals

0

#### Other - Write In

#### Count

Totals

0

18. In which of these asynchronous online courses did you use YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning other than for viewing/listening to musical performances?

Value	Percent	Responses
None of these	22.6%	7
Elements of Music	6.5%	2
Ethnomusicology	3.2%	1
Film Music	3.2%	1
Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	6.5%	2
Music Appreciation	32.3%	10
Music Business	6.5%	2
Music Education	9.7%	3
Music History	9.7%	3
Music Industry	3.2%	1
Music Technology	3.2%	1
Music Theory	9.7%	3
Popular Music Studies	6.5%	2
Other - Write In	12.9%	4
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	
<b>Other - Write In</b>		<b>Count</b>
Totals	0	

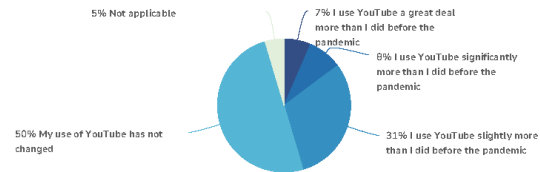
19. Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following online asynchronous courses:

	Composition	Elements of Music	Ethnomusicology	Film Music	Interdisciplinary Studies	Jazz Studies (not including jazz performance)	Ludomusicology (video game music)	Music Appreciation	Music Business
to teach a topic (such as a basic intro to _____ video) Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	2 7.4%	1 3.7%	1 3.7%	0 0.0%	1 3.7%	0 0.0%	9 33.3%	2 7.4%
to demonstrate a technique (such as how to do a musical analysis) Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	0 0.0%	2 9.5%	0 0.0%	4 19.0%	0 0.0%
for practice/homework (such as a video designed to help practice aural skills) Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	1 7.7%	1 7.7%	1 7.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 23.1%	0 0.0%
to introduce a subject for discussion (such as a person stating their opinion on a topic) Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	1 3.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 7.7%	0 0.0%	9 34.6%	1 3.8%
to provide first-hand accounts (such as composer interviews or documentaries) Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	1 3.7%	1 3.7%	1 3.7%	0 0.0%	2 7.4%	0 0.0%	7 25.9%	2 7.4%
TED Talks:Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following online asynchronous courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
Technical demonstration :Please indicate how you used YouTube as a tool for teaching and learning in each of the following online asynchronous courses: Checks Row Check %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
<b>Total Checks</b>									
Checks	0	6	4	4	0	7	0	34	5
% of Total Checks	0.0%	5.0%	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	28.6%	4.2%

20. Approximately what percentage of the teaching and learning that occurs in your asynchronous online courses happens through YouTube?

ResponseID	Response
54	50%
19	5%
72	33
104	25%
100	50
18	5%
103	80
73	20
166	20%
69	35
21	15%
20	10%
70	5
120	10
27	40
49	5%
	20
	20
	15%
	40
	5
	50%
	2%
	40%

21. How has your use of YouTube as a teaching and learning tool for your college courses changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Value	Percent	Responses
I use YouTube a great deal more than I did before the pandemic	6.5%	7
I use YouTube significantly more than I did before the pandemic	8.3%	9
I use YouTube slightly more than I did before the pandemic	30.6%	33
My use of YouTube has not changed	50.0%	54
Not applicable	4.6%	5

Totals: 108

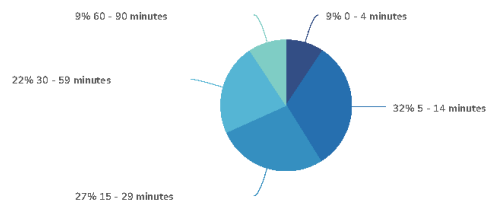


## 22. In a few words, why do you think your usage changed?

ResponseID	Response
17	I realized that it was more efficient to have my students watch videos on how to create bibliographies and footnotes than to make them myself. I also found that there are some excellent and quite scholarly videos that introduce important concepts in the theory and performance of early music on YouTube.
20	I appreciate the open availability of recordings with the scores.
21	For an online course that is asynchronous I find that using You Tube enhances the content of the course and allows for more visual comprehension.
22	easier to convey topics.
26	I identified useful videos of classroom practices that I continue to use now even though we also have in-person clinical experiences again.
27	A few reasons. Access to live concerts was very limited, so I offered the opportunity to do their concert reports on online concerts, and often that's YouTube. Also, access to course music was not consistent among students so in order to find the best recordings I started finding them on YouTube so they could all access the same quality/version of the music. I also could not demo things as well over Zoom because the program cuts music out like background noise, so I had to rely on YouTube for some of that, too.
34	The video was better than anything I could concoct myself and presented color-coded score with the actual music after the explanation. I did not know these videos existed on YouTube. The pandemic forced me to explore these resources.
40	The need to provide more out-of-class content.
41	I learned how useful it was during the pandemic and stuck with it. I know you're not asking for this, but Vimeo and individuals' personal websites with video content have also been extraordinarily helpful.
42	Having to teach virtual/asynchronous courses on an LMS that did not allow direct video embedding (like Panopto, which would obviate most of my YouTube use)
50	I was forced to learn how to use it as a teaching tool, and like using it now for content. Students can refer to video lectures repeatedly outside of class time
55	In person instruction was not an option, and YouTube is a medium that is both convenient and familiar for most students.
58	I no longer rely on the hard copies (videotapes, CDs, DVDs, etc.) of performances/instructional videos/documentaries, etc. that I used to use. I couldn't use them during the pandemic and found things to use instead that were posted online.
62	The biggest change has been to incorporate YouTube as part of practicum observations due to reduced access to onsite practica experiences.
67	I think I just use technology more in general, not necessarily because of the pandemic, but because more good content is available.
70	It became the only way I could show them some things.
73	With more time spent in front of the computer, I found myself searching for supplementary YouTube videos more than I did in the past. My usage cases didn't change, but the amount of time that I spent locating and implementing these supplementary videos did increase as a result of the conditions of the pandemic.
75	Easier to assign
77	Ease of access to musical notation and transcriptions
78	I had to spend time looking for good videos during the pandemic. Now I use them.
87	To engage students, especially when teaching online via Zoom. It helped promote discussions.
88	More material is now available in the last 5 years.
89	I found some excellent music theory materials that provide another point of entry to basic concepts.
90	Being forced to explore alternate pedagogical tools led me to explore the possibilities offered by YouTube.
93	It's not pandemic related for me. I've just introduced new topics (pop music analysis, anti-racist pedagogy) that aren't covered in detail elsewhere.
105	I find having students view and analyze video outside of class can help them prepare for richer in-class discussion and activities.
116	Video seemed to be a way to focus and engage learners
120	I needed material quickly that fit my teaching.
121	Synchronous online courses forced me to find other ways of demonstrating materials in my lectures and lessons. Often, carefully vetted YouTube videos helped pick up the slack when I could not easily demonstrate things in-person in a classroom setting. While I do not necessarily use YouTube more now than before the pandemic, I certainly use it in more strategic and targeted ways.
124	Looking for more relevant and engaging content.

ResponseID	Response
126	I used more videos for homework, discussion boards; introduction to concepts that we covered during our Zoom sessions but needed to be reinforced and accessible to the students since I was not on campus for extra help.
137	Inclusion of more musical examples in general, probably not related to the pandemic
138	I couldn't possibly make all the instructional videos myself. Students also needed to record assessments.
139	I make my own videos and use some already on YT. I make students record themselves in aural skills.
159	Obviously, covid sent us all to online resources. But also, there's such a vast catalogue of new stuff there, it's got things that databases don't have.
160	Sound equipment for CDs was removed from our classrooms, so I needed recordings and videos I could access online.
161	more access to 20th/21st century music than audio only sources
162	I provided more examples of a topic through YouTube since we could not meet face to face.
166	The pandemic compelled me to seek out classroom resources that could work in a remote/asynchronous setting, and so naturally I came to rely more on recorded content that could be shared using YouTube.
167	Need to find pre-created content quickly.
176	I found more resources during the pandemic
180	I think my use of Youtube has slightly increased just as a result of a shift of focus toward technology. I used to bring instruments to class and pass them around to make music as a group. Now students use their own tech as instruments, and I pull-up Youtube videos to make the experience more enjoyable.
182	More resources, better resources now available through YouTube.

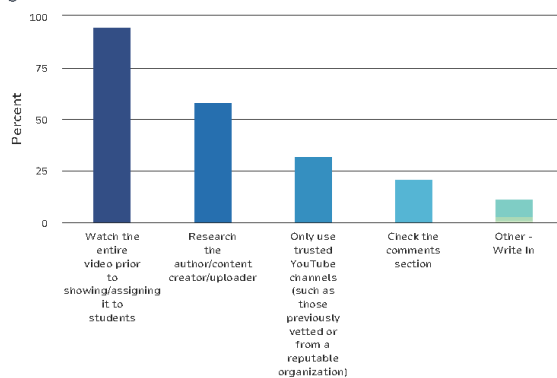
23. On average, approximately how long does it take you to locate and screen videos before selecting one to use as a teaching and learning tool for your college courses?



Value	Percent	Responses
0 - 4 minutes	9.3%	10
5 - 14 minutes	31.8%	34
15 - 29 minutes	27.1%	29
30 - 59 minutes	22.4%	24
60 - 90 minutes	9.3%	10

Totals: 107

24. What steps do you take to ensure the accuracy of a YouTube video before using it as a teaching and learning tool for your college courses?

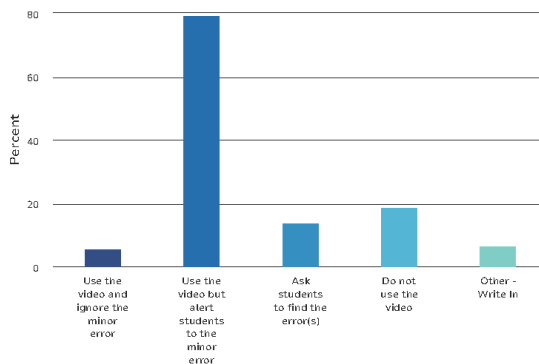


Value	Percent	Responses
Watch the entire video prior to showing/assigning it to students	94.4%	101
Research the author/content creator/uploader	57.9%	62
Only use trusted YouTube channels (such as those previously vetted or from a reputable organization)	31.8%	34
Check the comments section	20.6%	22
Other - Write In	11.2%	12
Other - Write In	2.8%	3
Other - Write In	0.9%	1

Other - Write In	Count
Check for poster/presenter (i.e., person in the video) credentials	1
Check from a copyright OK location when possible	1
Determine whether I agree with the analysis	1
Mostly use trusted YouTube channels by a reputable organization	1
Use videos recommended by worth of mouth	1
Usually only use it for performances	1
Watch most of the video	1
reputable ensemble/performer	1
verify quality of video and sound	1
watch parts of the video	1
watch some of the video	1
Totals	11

Other - Write In	Count
Assess whether the creator uses the same terms as me. Many concepts have more than one label and some terms have more than one definition. I want them to line up	1
Research organizations associated with the video	1
passing inspirations vs. planned content	1
Totals	3

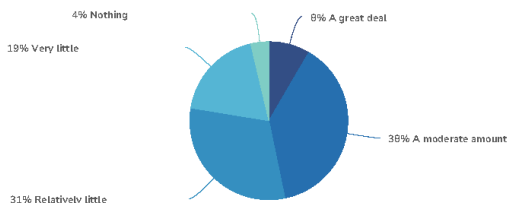
25. What do you do if you find a minor error (such as an incorrect date or a mispronunciation) in a YouTube video?



Value	Percent	Responses
Use the video and ignore the minor error	5.6%	6
Use the video but alert students to the minor error	79.4%	85
Ask students to find the error(s)	14.0%	15
Do not use the video	18.7%	20
Other - Write In	6.5%	7

Other - Write In	Count
Cannot think of such an instance	1
Have not encountered this.	1
I haven't found such errors in the videos I use.	1
Notify the creator	1
Use error as teaching moment (find the error; why might this error have occurred, (how) does it affect value of video/content)	1
if possible write to creator	1
include multiple videos on the same topic	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7</b>

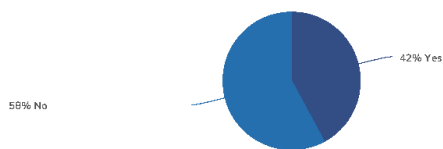
26. On average, how much would you say you know about the content creators who make the YouTube videos that you use as teaching and learning tools for your college courses?



Value	Percent	Responses
A great deal	8.4%	9
A moderate amount	38.3%	41
Relatively little	30.8%	33
Very little	18.7%	20
Nothing	3.7%	4

Totals: 107

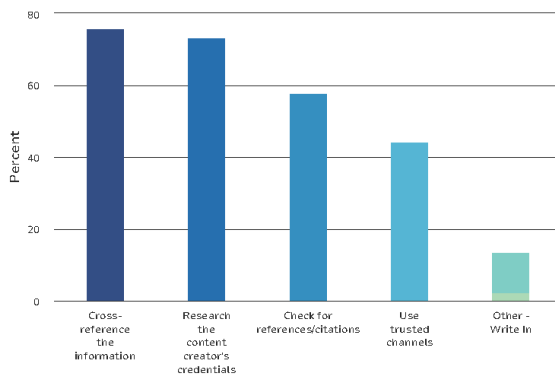
27. Do you teach your students how to assess the accuracy of a video?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	42.1%	45
No	57.9%	62

Totals: 107

28. What methods do you use to teach your students how to assess the accuracy of a video?



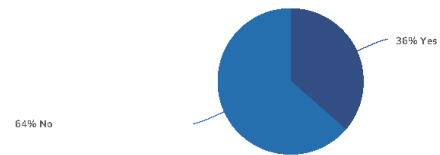
Value	Percent	Responses
Cross-reference the information	75.6%	34
Research the content creator's credentials	73.3%	33
Check for references/citations	57.8%	26
Use trusted channels	44.4%	20
Other - Write In	13.3%	6
Other - Write In	2.2%	1

Other - Write In	Count
Discuss like any other resource	1
Investigate for bias in references/citations and information	1
Look for specifics like permission to post statements	1
Read the comments	1
comparison with other performances on youtube or other media	1
we have a librarianship unit that teaches how to assess accuracy of sources (video, written, etc.)	1
Totals	6

Other - Write In	Count
Check for how much content they've created	1
Totals	1

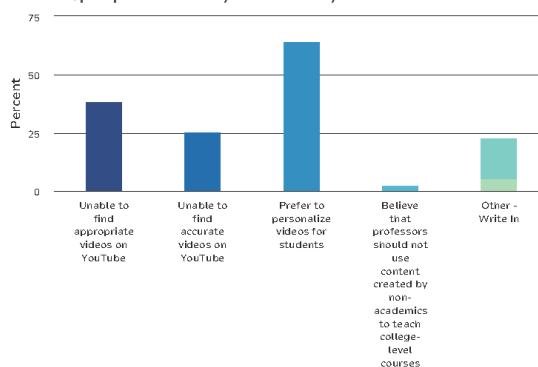
Other - Write In	Count
Totals	0

29. Do you ever create your own YouTube videos for educational purposes?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	36.4%	39
No	63.6%	68
		<b>Totals: 107</b>

## 30. What are the primary reasons/purposes that you create your own videos?



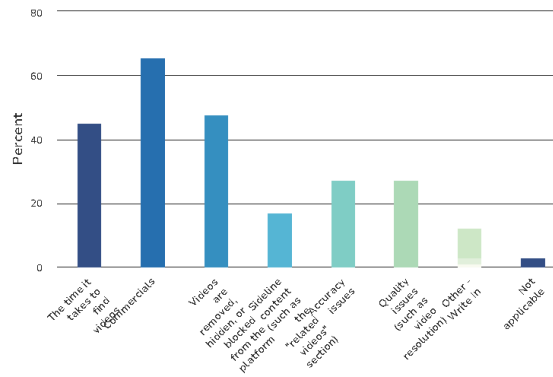
Value	Percent	Responses
Unable to find appropriate videos on YouTube	38.5%	15
Unable to find accurate videos on YouTube	25.6%	10
Prefer to personalize videos for students	64.1%	25
Believe that professors should not use content created by non-academics to teach college-level courses	2.6%	1
Other - Write In	23.1%	9
Other - Write In	5.1%	2

Other - Write In	Count
Acquaint the students with our platform, how to find assignments, links for homework submission, discussion boards, etc.	1
Created own text book (open music theory v. 2)	1
Enjoy the process of video creation	1
I create videos to model certain assignments and share them via YouTube on an unlisted channel	1
I may have a different approach to a topic or have knowledge that could not be found on a specific topic.	1
It's lazy to exclusively use others' work for your teaching.	1
Needed to create content videos in Spring 2020.	1
Not YouTube but my own video recordings through our university's software.	1
recruiting	1
Totals	9

Other - Write In	Count
I demonstrate specific concepts in music by using Keynote slides, interspersed with my own demonstration at the piano.	1
Use YouTube as a platform for distributing videos of students' in-class teaching, so they can watch and reflect (without me having to send large files via email or other)	1
Totals	2



31. What are some of the biggest challenges you face when using YouTube for your college classes?



Value	Percent	Responses
The time it takes to find videos	44.9%	48
Commercials	65.4%	70
Videos are removed, hidden, or blocked from the platform	47.7%	51
Sideline content (such as the "related videos" section)	16.8%	18
Accuracy issues	27.1%	29
Quality issues (such as video resolution)	27.1%	29
Other - Write In	12.1%	13
Other - Write In	2.8%	3
Other - Write In	0.9%	1
Not applicable	2.8%	3

Other - Write In	Count
Ads and suggested videos from my personal use of YouTube or the internet in general	1
Lack of information about performers etc.	1
Language accessibility (e.g., does the closed captioning translation work well enough for foreign language translations so that students can understand interview/content)	1
Need to crop videos (e.g., download and video editing)	1
Occasional copyright issues (i.e., if copyrighted material is used in a teacher-created video and content is blocked)	1
The time it takes to make my own videos	1
Video length (sometimes too long)	1
Video recency (i.e., too old)	1
availability of videos on specific topics	1
difficulty of easily accessing specific sections	1
superfluous information	1
they're not always engaging	1
time efficiency vs. reading material	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>
Video focus (sometimes not focused enough)	1
quality of sound vs. a DVD or CD	1
strong opinions	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>
scores are usually to small vs. printed scores	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>

32. Optional: Who are some of your favorite educational YouTube content creators, or what are some of your favorite YouTube channels related to music studies?

ResponseID	Response
17	Early music sources Orchestra of the enlightenment Alice Chuaqui Baldwin, harpsichordist Peter Schubert Psallentes: Hendrik vanden Abeele Stephan Georg chant score animations
21	I often use historical videos by Ken Burns for the various styles of music we cover.
23	TED Talks, BBC
32	Voces8 BBC Proms
35	CelloBello related videos
40	The Classical Nerd, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Keep it Classical
41	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/SethMonahan">https://www.youtube.com/c/SethMonahan</a> , <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/DrMollyGebrian">https://www.youtube.com/c/DrMollyGebrian</a>
47	National Geographic - Incredible Human Machine with Dr. Zeitel and Steven Tyler Kodaly class videos Orff Dalcroze Jazz singers
50	Myself
56	Early Music Sources
69	EuroArtsChannel, BBC documentaries (posted by various content creators but not their creation), Documentary Base, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, VideoCollectables, Early Music Sources, Opera America, Bayreuth Baroque, Smithsonian Channel, CrashCourse, Oxford Contemporary Opera, Idagio, Apollofirebaroque, The New York Times
72	Do not know.
78	I honestly don't remember the names of the content creators.
79	Bow Tie Music, National AOSA (American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Dalcroze Society of America, Other Dalcroze/Eurythmic organizations, Suzuki schools
89	Seth Monahan
93	Adam Neely, 12 Tone Music, 8 Bit Music Theory
100	Berklee
101	Dr Kati Meyer Music Theory
108	Aural Skills Guru
121	Adam Neely 12tone Austin Patty
124	TedTalks, Anderton's, JHS, PBS
126	John Green; interviews with Stephen Hough and Jeremy Denk;
127	Andy Mullen (Out in the Field with MLT) TED talks (TEDx and other)
133	Rob Amchin
135	Musician on a Mission
136	Keeping Score - Michael Tilson Thomas Berlin Philharmonic Bio.com
137	Rick Beato, Adam Neely, Sarah Jeffery/Team Recorder, Trent Hamilton
139	Kati Meyer Tabletop Composer David Bennett Thomas
147	Jazz at Lincoln Center Jazz Academy TED Talks/TEDx Professional organizations such as NAFME
149	NA
159	Howard Ho does amazing music theory stuff, and Seth Rudetsky is the absolute best at close reading of musical theatre (which is one of my main music history courses).
160	I use them mostly for musical examples; have also used an example on how to read Gregorian chant and very rarely on another topic.
173	Rick Beato, Jacob Collier, Adam Neely, Seam Atkinson, Proaudiofiles, wickie media, sweetwater
174	12 Tone Theory, Note Doctors
180	Two set violin - their videos are very entertaining, and some of them are highly educational.

## 33. Optional: Is there anything else you would like to share about YouTube and higher education?

ResponseID	Response
17	Good videos give access to expertise, sounds, and visual materials unavailable at my institution. They also help to level the playing field for students who are non native speakers or who have reading difficulties.
23	I find YouTube to be an important instructional tool. It captures the attention of students, breaks the similitude of a 3-hour lecture class, brings a fresh perspective, teaches in a way that may address a different modality, provides musical examples that cannot be replicated in the classroom (ex. multicultural music), enriches and supplements curriculum in textbook and readings, increases students' awareness of music and ideas beyond their typical area of experience.
28	I've found that some content creators on YouTube introduce music theory and aural skills concepts in a clear and engaging way that is honestly much better than what I'm able to do in the classroom. I look especially for videos on theory and aural skills examples from popular music to connect with a variety of students, since my training is primarily "classical" in nature.
32	I try to avoid using youtube as much as possible. 1. audio and video quality is often very poor. 2. I try not to bring commercial ads into the class. 3. It is hard to prepare specific selections or clips to avoid wasting time.
36	Music studies in Higher Education seems disproportionately inconvenienced by Copyright Compliance when compared to the other humanities. I find myself leaning on the "spontaneity" justification more than I would care to, and I would like to see legislative change that brings Copyright Compliance into the realities of the digital age.
40	YouTube is a powerful tool for teaching as long as it is used carefully. I use videos with scores often, almost every week.
41	Students are going to use it anyway, so we should be teaching them how to use it effectively.
60	Although outside the scope of most of these questions because they are arguably a "performance" of the work, the use of scrolling score videos has been incredibly helpful so students can follow along with content. I also try to prioritize letting authors and performers speak for themselves, so showing interviews and allowing students to assess them, and YouTube has been invaluable in providing these types of primary sources for classroom use.
61	I use YT the same way I used to use cassettes, LPs, and CDs. I grit my way through the ads. As a teaching and learning tool, I trust my own interpretations more than most YT lectures--not all YT lecturers are authorities
65	I find it a good platform to encourage students to make classical music available and show that it is something to be celebrated and treasured even if it is not live or recorded by a record label.
68	A lot of content is slightly inaccurate. I need my students to have clarity so I find very few that work. Also I feel that if I am using too much YouTube, I am not doing my job as a teacher
69	YouTube is a giant archive with immense accessibility, making it ideal for college students and education. We should make use of it! For history courses, especially, it's an ideal way to supplement the classroom with visuals and transport the students to a time in place. Yet it is the professor's responsibility to control the content and balance it with primary sources and secondary scholarship.
70	I wish my institution paid for ad free you tube as a part of our tech services
78	There is a bunch of junk out there, and this survey has prompted me to think about teaching students how to evaluate what's out there.
79	I do not show many YouTube clips in class but assign them as part of students' class prep. I use Nearpod and can insert the video into the digital lesson. Within Nearpod, I can ask open-ended questions for students to answer within the video (EX: I can insert the questions at any point within the video.)
85	It is resourceful when teaching students to use critical thinking. Also resourceful when teaching music therapy students to connect the song, the artist, and the social context where music occurs.
100	no
105	YouTube is handy because of its ability to auto-caption videos. I find it makes sense to point students to videos on YouTube (including those I create for them) rather than upload videos directly to the learning management system, in case they need this accessibility feature.
112	I especially appreciate being able to show clips from operas, film scores, etc.
121	It would be nice if institutions of higher education had subscriptions to YouTube, so that computers on campus could skip advertisements.
124	Can be a valuable tool - in providing a variety of engaging content and source interviews.
126	When we met in person, I used videos of Renaissance dance and had my students engage in a Pavane around the lecture hall. Even the athletes!!
127	I love the availability of resources. I additionally use YouTube for student observation videos which can be easily uploaded onto multiple university platforms (goReact, Canvas/Blackboard, etc.)
139	The best use for me is making students record themselves for aural skills exercises
149	I find a lot of time vs. what is covered and what is actually learned.
155	I use a flipped model for many of my classes and YouTube is an attractive option to many of the students, as opposed to reading a chapter in a textbook.

**ResponseID** **Response**

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167	I always download them and do not link to youtube.
180	It is amazing to be able to watch old videos of the great performers when they are available. When I was a student, I was lucky to be able to find good audio recordings in the library - now we can watch performances on our various devices. It is hugely beneficial.
184	Dealing with the increase of commercials has been challenging. I mute them and skip to video if offered. Nevertheless, I still believe that the strengths outweigh the weaknesses of using YouTube in higher education.

**APPENDIX B**  
**IRB APPROVAL FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH**



Research Integrity & Compliance      Institutional Review  
 Board  
 Student Faculty Center      Phone: (215) 707-3390  
 3340 N. Broad Street, Suite 304      Fax: (215) 204-4609  
 Philadelphia PA 19140      e-mail: [irb@temple.edu](mailto:irb@temple.edu)

Approval for a Project Involving Human Subjects Research that is Approved as Exempt

Date: 25-Apr-2022

Protocol Number: 29423  
 PI: ALISHA NYPAVER C  
 Review Type: EXEMPT  
 Approved On: 25-Apr-2022  
 Risk: Minimal risk  
 Committee: A1  
 Sponsor: NO EXTERNAL SPONSOR  
 Project Title: The Educational Use of YouTube in Music Studies

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 The IRB approved the protocol 29423.

The study was approved under Exempt review. The IRB determined that the research **does not require a continuing review**, consequently there is not an IRB approval period.

As this research was approved as Exempt, the IRB will not stamp the consent or assent form(s).

**Note that all applicable Institutional approvals must also be secured before study implementation.** These approvals include, but are not limited to, Medical Radiation Committee ("MRC"); Radiation Safety Committee ("RSC"); Institutional Biosafety Committee ("IBC"); and Temple University Survey Coordinating Committee ("TUSCC"). Please visit these Committees' websites for further information.

**Finally, in conducting this research, you are obligated to submit the following:**

- **Amendments - Any changes to the research that may change the Exempt status of this study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.** Examples

of such changes are: including new, sensitive questions to a survey or interview, changing data collection such that de-identified data will now be identifiable, including an intervention in the methods, changing variables to be collected from medical charts, decreasing confidentiality measures, including minors or adults lacking capacity to consent as subjects when previously only adults with capacity to consent were to be enrolled, no longer collecting signed HIPAA Authorization, etc. Please reach out to the IRB Staff with any questions about if a change to the study warrants an Amendment.

- **Reportable New Information** - Using the Reportable New Information e-form, report new information items such as those described in HRP-071 Policy - Prompt Reporting
- Requirements to the IRB **within 5 days. Closure report** - Using a closure e-form, submit when the study is permanently closed to enrollment; all subjects have completed all protocol related interventions and interactions; collection of private identifiable information is complete; and analysis of private identifiable information is complete.

**For the complete list of investigator responsibilities, please see the HRP-070 Policy – Investigator Obligations,**

**the Investigator Manual (HRP-910), and other Policies and Procedures** found on the Temple University IRB website: <https://research.temple.edu/irb-forms-standard-operating-procedures>.

Please contact the IRB at (215) 707-3390 if you have any questions.

If you would like to tell us how we are doing, please complete this 5-minute Satisfaction Survey: <https://forms.gle/9EcgYGDEEANnvMw37>

