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The role of the recording studio

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The role of the recording studio

Artistic Persona – seen as a mixture of performance and studiotekhnique

The artistic persona

Much of what is written today about popular music outside musicology circles centers around the persona of the artist more than anything else and certainly more than music. Although the word seldom is used, the persona is what readers will want to hear about as writing and reading about the music itself can be fairly difficult as every musicologist knows. The subject of the *persona* in itself might very well be adressed however and also related to the work in the recording studio. I will argue here that the persona is partly profiled through the tools of the studio and draw some principal outlines on possible ways to view the concepts and discuss it on a slightly different and more general level than what would be done in music journalism. This paper will however not concentrate on the obviously masked stage acts like those of the David Bowies or Marylin Mansons of rock, how interesting they may be, but on the persona in singer/songwriters of mainstream popular music, especially connected with various notions of authenticity, and how it can be enforced in studio work.

It seems like the concept of the persona runs throughout all of rock music. From the first seed of the young kid miming in front of a bedroom mirror to the works and stage performances of fully developed artists like Bob Dylan, Neil Young and others.

Whether an artist wants it or not, or desires it, he will produce something of an *artistic persona* through his work and his appearance. Most often he will desire it. This persona will be percieved differently by different members of the audience and become confused with notions of the actual private personality of the artist, although the persona and the private self in many cases might not be equivalent. Being a difficult thing to grasp it can almost ghostly be transparent in same time as it acts like a mask. A mask covering a face and in certain aspects this mask is also being a part of that face.

The doubleness and the transperency of the persona is most interesting and in fact a inherent feature of its very nature, as is noted by Robert J. Landy in his book *Persona and performance* in what he calls a “role ambivalence”¹ As he says; “The question is not to be or not to be, but to be AND not to be”!

¹ Landy 1993:13.

The word *persona* is said to originally have signified a mask that the actors in the ancient greek dramas wore to depict different characters, often changing masks during a play. Today the common understanding of the word is that it conceptualizes not the personality itself, but what is seen by the outer world or shown to the outer world of aspects of it. The austrian psychologist Carl. G. Jung likened persona to a coat that someone wears to make a certain impression on the outer world which also functions as to hide and guard the inner person. A play around with translations of words points at its importance in the artistry of rock 'n roll. In my own native tongue, the swedish language, a translation of the words "rock n'roll" illustrates a few connections to Jung here. The word "rock" actually means coat and the word "roll" means role in swedish (as in the casting of a play). So we end up in Sweden with the two words "coat" and "role" handsomely referring to the persona in rock n role music.

This persona might be something that is consiously and carefully constructed on one hand, or it might on the other be just an offspring out of sheer engagement and enthusiam for music, playing and performance, involving no particular planning or speculation in any venue at all. So what we percieve as a persona might not necessarily be a constructed "false" image aimed to seduce us. But of course, we must also be prepared that artists seeming to be as authentic as ever might be taking us for a ride. It could although be rightly said that a persona includes a mixture of speculative elements as well as the "real" fingerprints of its bearer.

Thus we can certainly find a dicotomy between on one hand the more och less deliberate construction of an artistic persona and on the persona that rises involuntary from, to borrow the words of canadian Daniel Lanois, the artist's "soul mining". He writes: "*that never ending commodity is in the bottom of your heart -- it's called passion. DannyLanois is going down one more time with coal dust in his eyesgoing down --- soul mining*". (Daniel Lanois' speech from SXSW -- 03/13/03)². What Lanois points at is honesty and interest rising from emotional investment. This has to be respected by the musicologist and deconstruction out of distrust is not my intention.

My own use of the concept "artistic persona" originally came out of my dissertation work about a Swedish artist *Olle Adolphson*. I was studying whatever I could percieve as an onlooker/listener, being well aware that this is not by necessity the same as his private "personality". After all he might be putting on a show for us. And why not? His job isn't firstly to stand there being honest with the rest of the world, but rather involved giving performances constructing illusions the listener will accept.

här!

In this case it became more or less necessary to invent this concept as I was writing about a living person to guard myself against making claims of saying more about the artists private psychological build-up than I

² Lanois 2003.

actually could reasonably know about in order not to hurt or upset him. I found the concept useful and one that it could be applicable in many cases and on many artists and infact opening up for new levels and fields of observation.

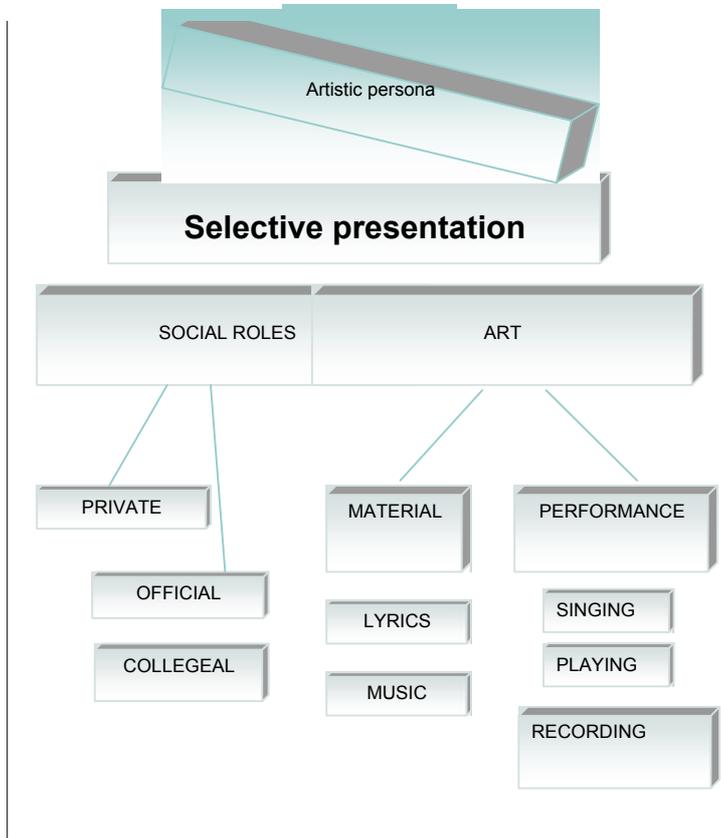
As Confucius is reported to have said “The man who re-invents the wheel will spend his time going in circles”. I don’t want to do that, so I want to give a motivation for adding the prefix *artistic* to the concept of the *persona*. By this addition I want to mark an inclusion of the works of the artist, in this case, the music or performances to the other components that constitute the persona, in the concept. Alternatively one can talk about just *the persona of an artist*, though that would somehow diminish the stress on the works themselves. Some writers have used the concept of *musical persona* as is being done by William Echard. The problem with that in this connection to my understanding is that more exclusively points to the works excluding the person himself in his social and private roles.

The word *image* has also been used, but I find it too onesidedly connected to the commersialisation and PR-management. One could talk about *personality* and this would maybe be the words used by the producer or technician. But it wouldn’t cover the efforts of construction that I see as being involved with the concept of the persona that actually will fall somewhere inbetween *personality* and *image*. Robert J. Landy uses “role” as a synonym to persona³, something I don’t find satisfactory from my point of view since the role in Landy’s terms refers to a given amount of archetypal roles acted out in drama throughout the centuries, as well as in the human life. In that way we get narrower and somewhat simplified understanding in comparison with the more fleeting nature of the artistic persona that runs through both work and individual.

If we compare the artistic persona with the “evryday use” of the word persona (though it probably isn’t used evryday!) it shows more a planned strategics. The artist will in one way or another look for his own healing through his artistic output, as art in most cases acts therapeuticy for the artist himself. In a twofold way: in the art itself as well as the social position his artistry hopefully will help him to concieve (Though this will probably be in an alternative hiearchy compared to the mainstream social ladder of society. Some artists will more or less strategicly, deliberately and consiously try to construct a certain persona through their work as the artist creates himself through his (artistic) persona in his works.

So the totality of an artist’s output will constitute an artistic persona, and therein must his recording be included, and with this inevitably the work of the studiopersonel involved in shaping of sound.

³ Landy 1993:



One way of understanding the artistic persona is to view it as a *selective presentation of the self* that can be manifested in both the social roles of evryday life and in art. The former associated with mortality and the latter with divinity and extensions of the borders of the individual.

My approach to the understanding of the persona is not terribly heavily semiotically driven. Methodically I am not following or trying to apply any special formal scheme at this stage, simply trying to investigate how the artistic persona can be related to studiototechnology.

Looking at the contruction of the artistic persona, one of the first observations to make is that it is put together by a row of concious or unconcious choices. One must not forget that in this, it is formed partly of what is excluded in the choices. Looking at different styles in rock'n roll culture we find this particularly obvious as the musical and expressive material that is used is often very limited.

The achievement of esthetic coherence in a product can stem out of the exclusion of alternatives for different reasons. It may come out of a dogma that says "this is the only way we know how" or it might stem out of concious and strategic choices of what shall remain absent in the work. This will be evident in instrumentation and arrangement as well as in the mix and the shaping of sound in the studio. Many times these choices might not be concious at all or understood by the agents involved. Naturally it also applies to the choices of takes and recording to include in an album. It was for instance a mystery to evrybody why

Dylan choosed to exclude the brilliant “Blind Willie McTell” from the Infidels album at the last minute, as Clinton Heylin comments in his book on Dylan’s studio work.⁴

Auditive vs visual identity

I would suggest a division of the the artistic persona as contituted by a few groups or classes of ingredients, though I would be a bit hesitant to put them in order of hierarchial importance, but maybe first comes first:

- * Musical and lyrical material, style. Expressive modes.
- * Auditive identity in recordings. Sound
- * Visual identity in videos. Photography and live performances.
- * The artist’s behaviour in front of press and audience and colleagues.

The persona is most often constructed or underlined by visual means in the making of videos or photographic pictures of an artist. In this case we can talk about the construction of a *visual identity*. The *auditive identity* as opposed to an artists “visual identity” is shaped by the playing itself and the sound achieved through the whole of the recording process. The audative identity be evident both in the staging of the voice as the soundscape as a whole. The task at hand is to try to be observant on how the artistic persona can be enforced in the recording process through various studiotekniques. In doing this I will not concentrate on obvious and clear examples of effects put on the singing voice, as in what Lacasse describes as *syntagmatically contrasting* effects⁵ in anlyses of songs like *The Beatles* “A day in the life”, but more on the staging of the voice that will occur throughout a whole recording and enforces it in relation to style and repertoire, which would correspond to Lacasse’s concept of *paradigmatic contrast*.

In the studio – nothing you can do that cant be done

Perception and enchantment of the artistic persona

One might argue that the persona is something that is carried by the artist alone and carried into the studio to to simply be recorded by some engineers and pieces of recording equipment and that there is nothing more to it.. This will however be rather unsatisfactory description. The ability of the team of

⁴ Heylin 1995:149 ff.

ke wh⁵ Lacasse 2000:175. A survey of illustrative examples of these has been done in Lacasses work and need not be repeated here.

artistproducer/technician to convey whatever sounds is being made in the studio to the recording tracks is absolutely crucial. The knowledge and sixth sense to make the sounds sound good in transferring process from actually performed music to recording will make or break the project.

The recordist will deal with a few main stages in the sound creation. The recording itself and the mix. Both will put different demands on the personal in the studio who certainly must have a sixth sense of psychology throughout the process.

In certain cases with artists that work from the paradigm of “hit, cut and run” like Heylin describes Dylan’s philosophy in the studio. and there it won’t be time for too much choosing, but more a question of catching a bird in the middle of a flight.⁶

To discuss the auditive deconstruction and construction of the artistic persona it will be difficult go into single equipment pieces like brands and models of reverbs, compressors or plug-ins in the virtual studios. More fruitful would be considering the treatment of sound and music as a whole, looking at combined result of performance, arrangement and recording to see how this works⁷. The artist responds to what works well and sounds good through the equipment he’s working with. Sometimes it happens that the recording team have geared their equipment to suit a special ideal of sound that they will try to mould the artist’s sound into this to make their machinery deliver it’s best.

So we have the three phases:

1. *Preproduction, (choices, arrangement)*
2. *Recording*
3. *Mixing*

1 *Preproduction* phase

At the starting point of a recording project firstly it’s likely that he will listen in to what is unique about the artist, try to find his musical personality. If he hasn’t already done this through listening to demos or previous recordings, he will just sit down and listen to the more or less straight signal coming through the speakers. When he’s got a picture of what there is special to capture there he will try to stress this through all the stages of production from arrangement to filtering and reverbs, and in doing this starting to do his part of moulding the piece of clay that will come out as an artistic persona. A wrong studio team can easily kill an artist. So the meeting a the two is always a most crucial one. The technician gets a sense of what aural spectrum to focus on⁸. In connection with the artist he decides on a particular mode of expression for the song or record. As Sergé Lacasse says... “recordists spend quite a long time in choosing appropriate vocal staging of a song: even though the effects is subtle, it becomes a particular

⁶ Heylin 1995:xi.

⁷ See also Lacasse 2000:190-191.

⁸ Frith 1996:240.

element, among others, in the construction of a specific atmosphere or musical context corresponding to the musical style the recording belongs to”.⁹

2 *Recording phase*

If you would want to emphasize the breathiness in a soft voice and the intimacy of a halfwhispered and smooth singing voice, you try steer the gear for this purpose for example in adjustment of fairly low level of the treshhold for compression, a close miking and seeing that the filtering captures this in the higher frequencies in the breathiness as well as making a faked approximately effect by boosting some upper bass frequencies. You must have good quality machinery to be able to have a descent level of control over the sound. A louder singing voice will be placed a bit further away from the microphone, the compression will be different, the levels will be different as well as the filtering to reflect this way of singing.

How does the performer respond in performance to variations in foldback sound. Will a singer sing differently to a clear and loud high quality foldback than to a muffled one. Is this determined by style and mode of singing i.e. highly individualised voice close to speaking-mode like Leonard Cohen for instance vs. a louder and higher voice moulded to cut through a stronger accompaniment signal. In for example some rapmusic, the musician can construct his music through juxtapositioning loops as he goes along. There are special software designed for this. In another kind of music a musician will know that he can follow his in-signal to a recording equipment down to almost zero level in his performance and boosting the outsignal without being drowned in any hiss or noise at all. He can experience compression letting him shift from shouting to wisper in the spur of a second. His response as performer to the monitor signal will be directly depentant on the sound he hears. And he will most certainly be able to hear other things today than before.

3 *Mixing phase*

Levels of the mix reflects certain aspects of the persona as does the hierachical acoustic placing and order of the instruments in the mix. Simon Frith calls this an ideological acoustic hierachy and this may well well be motivated.¹⁰

You also have to consider how different timbres of the sounds of individual instruments and voices signifies other music and attitudes and emotions connected to this music. In this way you will make an auditive painting consisting of many different components, many of them with their own connotations. A

⁹ Lacasse 2000:172.

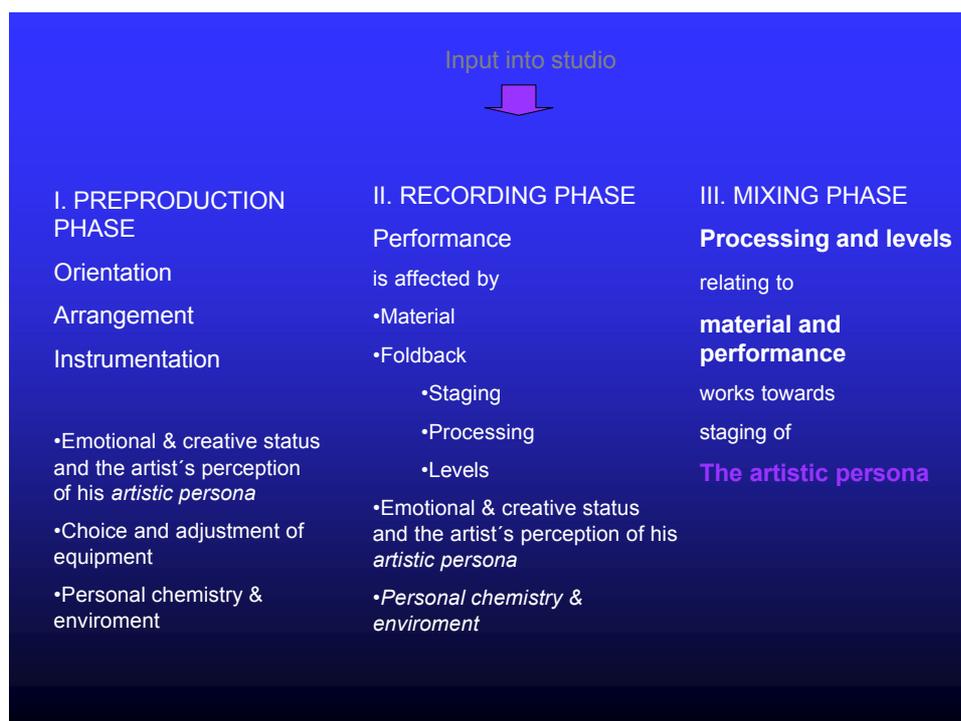
¹⁰ Frith 1996:230.

painting with color and form that will hopefully constitute a unified and balanced composition where only a few of those colors and forms will dominate. In the world of art this unifying light would be named by the painter Claude Monet as “enveloppe”¹¹. We’re not talking here about laying a sweet soup of reverb over the complete final mix, but to sensitively adjust every component through the whole of the recording process. This auditive “enveloppe” will relate to, enchant and also be a part of the constitution of the artistic persona.

The auditive deconstruction and reconstruction of the persona in the studio – How to get closer?

Looking at technical parameters - one can follow different lines trying to dive into these areas. We can look chronologically at the development over time – the *timespan*. We can look at different *genres* of music, we can look at different groups of equipment and follow them one by one. We’ll probably end up in the same places.

Looking at the artistic persona and how it is created and supported through the studio and technology one must look not only at the material and performance but of the sound as a whole, the arrangement, the playing, sound creation and the emotional content of the music.



So the artistic persona can be viewed both from the self and the outer world. The artist will have his own conception of his artistic self, which might be different to his or her persona as a private person as well as

¹¹ Copplestone, Trevin, The history and Techniques of the great masters, Monet. London 1988:22.

also different from his external artistic persona or image outward. This selfimage is something that is almost always perceived as important to the artist in his creation of himself, and something that he continuously is working to develop further or reinforce. Noticed or not by the outer world. Many times the audience think they know the artist when actually they don't know him or her at all.

The question is if the artistic persona becomes a meeting place between the individual and the collective, between the individual and the other. Especially in a time when the self is weak (although not selfishness) the individual turns to the persona instead to create himself.

An individual has many roles in his life in different situations and in art we make choices which roles to pursue. The tools of the studio become tools that the artist (and his crew) uses to create himself. I would welcome a more performance and recording oriented research since much today takes its starting points in the written music score.

changes in texture often coincides with changes in rhythm markers as well as flooding of effects. If for example strings are supposed to stress a bridge or a refrain, you find that they often are rather heavily treated with reverb. I think it would be good for the musicologist to make contact with studio personnel when researching a musician's art, this would go for classical music too..

crucial is the response of the singer to the soundscape. he may discover new qualities in his voice through the equipment he is working with.

Semiotic aspects on these matters will be difficult since it will not be able to exclude the onlooker, the researcher. You will find different handling of effects and texture to have signifying functions, though these are mostly multifaceted and often difficult to reduce to clear cut explanations.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>Semiotics??</i> | <i>Are we looking for significations?</i> |
| <i>Genres</i> | <i>genre esthetics?</i> |
| <i>Timespan</i> | <i>popular music history</i> |
| <i>Analys</i> | <i>- chronologic schemes</i> <i>-pitch graph/waveform</i> |

(the concept of the persona might rise especially in one's mind when one is dealing with someone who seems to be a bit too good or strong to be true, who maybe seems to keep some important side totally hidden

away from the audience, be it strengths or weaknesses. Like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle missing. Some artists personas seems so incredibly electrified, like they were constructed in detail and not constructed at all at the same time, while other artists simply strikes you as being very nice persons and not electrified in this sense at all. One might include that it could be said that the latter might in fact often turns out to be the real artists, when it comes to managing the art of living itself. As an aspiring young singer and songwriter I many times wished I were in Bob Dylan's, Tim Buckley's or Nick Drake's shoes (when they were alive!), but seeing the pain there has been there; No; thanks I'm not so sure about that anymore. I must take it on from here, in my own life. On all levels of creation of arts there is a price to pay for everybody coming sooner or later. The stress on the artistic persona is different in different subcultures within popular music.)

Looking back I find one of many interesting examples of a construction of a sort of artistic persona in the construction of The Band's second album, *The Band* today commonly called "the brown album". The whole set up of preconceived information was provided about the band moving to the countryside along with families and Bob Dylan and friends making music in an old house refurnished as a studio outside of Woodstock, produced an image and certainly a defined artistic persona of the group. This was supported with cover photographs by photographer Elliot Landy of the musicians in typical old timey rural clothing as well as photos from the studioroom, that in addition to the music and the songs on the album reflected a rural lifestyle much more than an urban one. These were pictures of their actual reality, but it also showed a play with identities, and in a way the cover can be seen in the light of *Sgt Pepper* in regards of the cover art being a part of a concept album and as an antidote to it, as a part of the same communal conversation.. The musicians in the Band had the experiences of having toured the cities of the United States from shore to shore in many years and were not by any means ordinary country folks. Many songs reflected a course of returning back to the sources of the soil. *Oh, to be home again... the ol' rocking chair won't go nowhere...* The impression is definitely one that the album was recorded in the famous house *The Big Pink*. Much later we learn that the album read as text by the consumer turns out to be somewhat of an illusion. In the video about the making of the album, it turns out that it wasn't recorded at all in the rural settings in the woodlands surrounding Woodstock, but in fact in Sammy Davis Jr's poolhouse in Miami with the musicians shifting between lazing around the pool and making music as it suited them. Now this doesn't punctuate the artistic personas of Robbie Robertson and the band to any greater extent. Their music remains as great as ever. But it is an illustrative example of how delusive the artistic persona can be and how easily the audience wants to be fooled or seduced. källa!!!

Timespan:

burl ives, cash, sinatra elvis, folkies,
beatles, stonies, dylan, springsteen, MJ thin like a childs voice low gain, noorah jones,

In the early phases of popular music recording the music was definitely prefabricated before entering the studio and a live performance was recorded more or less as it was. This is something that still is not uncommon, but whats more common is that music is put together in the studio as the result of combined efforts of the studiopersonel and performer. The increasing quality of consumer or semipro homerecording equipment gives artists today possibilities to do a lot of preproduction work at home. Possibilities that many take advantages of. The ball started rolling in the eighties with the development of affordable eighttrack recorders from TEAC/TASCAM and Fostex, the came the portastudio with it's possibilites definitely when Bruce Springsteen recorded his LP *Alaska* on it and got it released on CBS in xxx. Digital was on its way. Next stop and step was the development of the ADAT machines that completely took the semipros and homestudios by storm all over the world. This was digital taperecorders using videotape and delivering splendid sound and quality for 5000 dollars. Today, five years later, those machines are worth next to nothing and you won't get 500 for one, thanks to the explosive development of harddiskrecording systems that completely outdated the ADAT. (in a way a bit sad, since the ADAT was a well developed piece of technology that could have deserved a slightly longer life.)

Digital vs analogue audio

Digital audio means much work can be done at home on a PC - not hot pressed of time. Frees the recording process from the expensive studio cost on good and bad conssequenses. The deadlines and the fixed recording times also meant a concentration that forced and skilled the artist to do his best once for all when the red light shone.

Genres

– *different sound etstethics:*

mesomusic, balladrock, hard rock, disco, pop, jazz

Technical parameters

filtering, distance to mic, volume in actual performance vs volume in mix, room acoustics, reverbs, delays, compression

- relations to accompaniment.

Lacasse suggests a structuring of the possibilities that can be useful when discussing various parameters. He uses classic Greek concepts to enlighten us about three acoustic modelings: *Proskenion* i.e. Spatialization, *Prosopon* i.e. electric alteration of voice timbre and *Cronos* i.e. manipulation of the voice in time. The biggest trouble with this structure is the overlapping of functions between the functions also that equalization and compression is not included in the *Prosopon*. Why is beyond my understanding.¹²

Social parameters

Environment, emotional and technical support, advice or freedom from advice.

Time to work

Avhandlingen

Biography

Vowel sounds disposition in melodic movement

Word/music analysis

Performance analysis – computer aided

The possibility to make use of waveforms, spectrograms and pitchgraphs in the research was helpful to pinpoint observations of what was actually happening in a vocal performance.

¹² Lacasse 2002:175 ff.

Investigating the performance aimed at showing that artistry in popular music is just as important to study as ever performances of the sonatas and symphonies of the old masters. The same goes for the music in written form although we know that rock and classical differ widely in this aspect.

One can argue that a vast amount of popular music is just bad music qualitywise and not worth to spend researchers time and money on from academical point of view.

Risking to be seen as scholars of lesser intellectual resources one can say that this is wrong (it depends to a certain degree on which your standards are). Indeed myriads of popular music productions are dull, unimaginative, repetitious and totally artistically and musically uninteresting, but then a lot of the old classical composers that were also rather mediocre to say the least (after all the Mozarts and Beethovens are quite few!)

One tends to fall into another trap here in talking about popular music academically as more or less “one music” (although all of us are aware of its diversity) while in the canon of classical music the composers all have individual names. This seems to be to be an outspring of the old tendency that popular music, if studied at all in musicology, is seen as primarily a social occurrence while artmusic is just that; “art” and studied as such. In fact one has of course to acknowledge the existence of mastery as well as mediocrity in both rock and classics music cultures.

Microphones/Placement of microphones/Microphones respond to the room/singers respond to foldback sound?

Level of voice in mix/intensity of accompaniment

auditive identity / as opposed to an artists “visual identity” shaped by the playing and the sound achieved

Often great care is taken in the recording of the voice to achieve the right combination of sound and performance. It is often stated that voice is an indication of ones personality but here the investigations stops. I have not yet seen exactly what these connections really consists of. that is not to say that I don't believe they exist. I certainly do. but it would be interesting to know what we're talking about here. After all we might be kidding ourselves. Voices can after all lie to us, and does so quite often actually. not only through the word but also through the paralinguistical components. And voices can lie not only to the outer world but also to the self. There we are entering a zone where the artist might construct a picture (true or false, probably with elements of both truth and fantasy) of his artistic persona for himself. One might add here that it is not unusual for artists to at one time or another in their lives to be something of a mythomaniac. not totally unheard of amongst young striving rockers as well artists on top (or just hitting the downward slope) of their careers.

Att göra

Semiotics??

Schema visualisera!!

Music analyser?

Lyssna!!

Power point??

Läs om digital utveckling i Frith bla o tidskrifter

Intervjuer ? Svenska Per G, Nalle B? Peter E? Lundell?

tekniker miljö

Digital vs analog klipp flödande performance.

Analyser?

Val av musik att analysera

Vad undersöka?

Vad skall analyserna leda till? Vilken sorts kunskap kan jag eventuellt utvinna? levels, compression, delays and echoes a little.

Vocals; how various ways of using the voice corresponds to emotional states and personality.

From the point of the producer he will try to capture and enchant the artists persona in the sound he tries to achieve.

The artistic persona cannot be avoided: Music in itself will speak, albums will have pictures and cover art, photographs will be taken and interviews needs to be made, so it will be a matter of choices, strategic or not, of how you want this output to be received.

*Johnny Cash

[Lightfoot](#)

Dylan, times they are a changin

[The band,](#)

Very dry sound in general supporting the “no frills, but down to roots and reality” puring out of the whole production. The voices are not extremely close up miked and only colored with discreet reverb. The arrangements and recording focusing on the songs themselves. The hierachy of sounds in the mix aimes for clarity although the voices remain as beingone among the collective od sounds making itself heard through a mix of a spacy arrangement and fairly strong vocalizing. The sound is emphasized by the unusual sound drums with their almost muted springs of the snare drum.

*Leonard Cohen susanne / dance me to the

*Springsteen born to run/ the river *nebraska* / *tom joad*

Daniel Lanois

Emmylou Harris *where will I be*

*Michael Jackson MJ thin like a childs voice low gain.

elvis, folkies,

beatles, stones, , , noorah jones,

My main interest lies with the voice but this also includes the mix as a whole as the placement of the voice in the mix and how it relates to the rest of the music largely affects what nuances we hear of it.

Proposal - innehåll

From analogue to digital

How to think about sound and performance

- ? How does the detailed soundquality in feedback affect the singing close up sound vs one with the body of sound.
- ? Replays, cuts and inserts can be done in an an instant as not to interupt the recording process so much
- ? Large palette of different sounds

Different styles affectted in different ways

Sequencer software, drummachines and, samplers cuts into the music creating process in multiple ways in contemporary rockmusic production. Those new tools will by necessity be connected with a development of new ways of thinking about music and performance as has been a fact throughout the history of rock music.

Recording was connected with physical movement of a tape running through time. Music was accessed by the head of the tape machine, so that anything that were somewhere else on the tape could not be accessed at the same time without some fastforwarding or rewinding, often with considerable inexactness where to

slow down and stop. Different parts of a piece could be compared only with difficulty. Today different parts are accessed without more delay than the speed of the harddisk is responsible for. One may wonder how this affects the way a musician thinks about performance

Signal processing affects the esthetics

Studio technique interlinked with music so that we can't in fact even rethink what popular music would be without the recording studio.

Equipment

Brand, quality placement of microphones etc.

Continuity and changes

Louder singing voice a singing mode that is to be well heard over the accompaniment without explicit miking. Everything recorded live.

Crumbling division

Proposal – text

Development of the artistic persona through a mixture of studioteknik and performance.

The transformation from analogue to digital recording techniques has not only changed the ways of working for the studioteknik, but affects the musician in the way he thinks about performance and sound, and therefore also his actual performance. The signal processing and the staging of instruments and singing voice in the studio is both influenced by, and influences the esthetics of popular song performance.

In my dissertation on Swedish popular ballad singer and composer Olle Adolphson: "Visans Kontinuum" (The continuum of [popular] ballad: words, voice and music. Studies of the music and performances of Olle Adolphson) I have looked closely upon the changes in sound and performance in popular music recordings by studying recordings of his voice done over a timespan of 40 years. Continuity and changes were fruits of his own efforts to develop **his music and artistic persona**, but at the same time largely they reflect the development of recording industry, technique and esthetics in general on an international level.

I think it is important to point out the impact studio technique and management have over the recorded presentation of the artistic performance and how interlinked with the music it really is. One has to look both at continuity and changes, and for example acknowledge the impressive results that we still can hear from the best quality recordings from the early days of rock and popular music.

The ways music is captured or constructed in the studio largely determines the components of the listening experience. This holds true for many aspects inclusive how musical arrangements are carried out or made live in the studio, placement of microphones, filtering, compression and effects such as reverbs or delays, as well as for the recording equipment itself such as microphones, preamps, mixer or recorders, digital or analogue. Not to mention the individual human mind of the engineers and producers and their access to the sensitivity to use it. If a good and expressive voice is well recorded and mixed, it will

be there right in front of the soundscape communicating with you. And this will not only be a question of levels.

Musicology, as far as performance studies are concerned, easily overlooks the important part that is played by the studio, the recording engineer and producer. An ignorance that probably is rooted in an heritage from seeing the works, the written scores of classical music as the most central objects of analysis and observation. Popular music presents a different picture here. The dividing lines between artistic performance and the recording equipment, studio and production have been crumbling for a long time, they are in fact intimately linked to each other, which is a subject I'd like to address in my presentation.

http://rffrederick.diaryland.com/020815_74.html

I had a quick look on the net to see what could be found on this concept and I found a few uses of the concept similar to mine. the website of Californian singer Robin Frederick says in her diary:

"I have been thinking about 'artistic persona' today. Memorable artists have a strong persona, which acts like a foundation on which their best work rests. As I've mentioned in earlier diary entries, this persona is not a false image projected by the artist; it is a true representation of one portion of the artist's personality, exaggerated, honed and shaped. The persona is often one that has mythic or archetypal overtones. I often use Bruce Springsteen as an example; the 'rebel on the edge of town' is a potent American icon which he has explored in all of his more successful work. If he were to depart from that image, his work would not have the power that it does."

....

Don Was who had just finished producing an album with the Rolling Stones. I, on the other hand, had just finished producing an album called Bugs Meets the Beatles in which I had to find Beatles songs that could be performed by the Looney Tunes characters. In order to give the audience of music biz types something they could relate to, I pointed out that all recording artists are like cartoon characters. That got a big laugh. But Don Was (bless his heart) immediately understood what I was saying.

Every song, every note, every performance must be in keeping with the artist's persona. Don [Was] told of working with Mick Jagger on the very first vocal for the album he had just finished. Never having worked with Jagger before and being just a tad in awe, Don didn't know quite how to tell His Lips that the vocal was really, really boring. So he let him do three or four passes but it wasn't getting any better. Then, said

Don, on the fifth pass, Jagger straightened up, arched his back, his lips got bigger, the famous pout appeared, and suddenly the vocal leaped to life! In other words, said Don, Mick Jagger the man suddenly became "Mick Jagger" the character.

Dear Robin!

My name is Frans Mossberg I am an artist and musicologist (phD) in Sweden. Thank you for a very nice site and beautiful songs and music.

I have on my own here as well you yourself “conned” and used the concept “artistic persona” out of necessity to find an adequate concept in my dissertation about an old Swedish singer/songwriter (2002). As this artist I was writing about was still alive at the time of working on the dissertation I wanted to somehow make clear that I was not making claims about his private psychological person and build-up but rather that I was discussing what I perceived of his artistic persona through his music. I found it a quite handy concept to use in that connection.

This year I have been invited to make a speech at an international IASPM (conference in May in Ottawa, Canada, around these things and just made a quick check on the Internet to see if other people has been using the same concept. Then I came upon your site. The conference will mainly be centered around the role of the recording studio and as I am personally very interested in recording and studio work I am contemplating to discuss the ways we try to auditively stress, enchant or even construct an artistic persona in the studio in the choices and uses of equipment; the acoustics in the room, microphones, filters, amplifiers, compressors, reverbation etc.

I am just grabbing a bird in its flight in writing you this to hear what your thoughts would be on the subject if you have the time and kindness to answer.

Yours Frans Mossberg
phD musicology Lund university, Sweden

P.S. Just another line about something else. Nice to learn about your knowledge about Nick Drake. I now remember having seen some of your material on him before on the web. I am myself born '51 and I actually saw one of Nick few performances in London in the earliest seventies at the folk club “Cousins” in Soho. I remember that the room was very dark and small and there was no place for the artists to reside before getting upon stage, but to stand amongst the audience. Nick was standing right behind me in a corner tall as he was, and making his way up to the stage when it became his turn to perform. He was very nervous and fumbling, didn't say hardly a word between the songs. His capodastro jumped off his guitar

unfortunately in the middle of a song (Could have been “Hazy Jane”). He didn’t say a word but picked up the capo and continued. I loved it.

I bought his first album when it was released and then had just bought the second one and somehow I could hear all the string arrangements coming out of his lonely guitar there on stage. Beautiful.

I later made a program on radio here in Swedish radio about him.

Impressed by your diary. You must be working very hard.

I came to think of the concept of authenticity which is obviously next of kin to the artistic persona. This is often used as a measure of “artistic” quality and has certainly developed its own romanticism around it. The so called “street credibility” goes along with it. Both concepts can be seriously misused in my mind.

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- ? I will discuss the ways we try to auditively stress, enchant or even construct an artistic persona in the studio in the choices and uses of equipment; the acoustics in the room, microphones, filters, amplifiers, compressors, reverbation etc.

Dear Daniel!

My name is Frans Mossberg I am an artist and musicologist (phD) in Sweden. Thank you for beautiful songs, productions and music.

This year I have been invited to make a speech at an international IASPM (conference in May in Ottawa, Canada, The conference will mainly be centered around the role of the recording studio in music and as I am personally very interested in recording and studio work I will discuss the ways we try to auditively stress, enchant or even construct an *artistic persona* in the studio in the choices and uses of equipment; the acoustics in the room, microphones, filters, amplifiers, compressors, reverbation etc.

I have used the concept “artistic persona” out of necessity to find an adequate concept in my dissertation about an elderly Swedish singer/songwriter (2002) Olle Adolphson. As he was still alive at the time of working on the dissertation I wanted to somehow make clear that I was not making claims about his private psychological person and build-up but rather that I was discussing what I perceived of his artistic persona through his music. I found it a handy concept to use in that connection.

I am just grabbing a bird in its flight in writing you this to hear what your thoughts would be on the subject if you have the time, interest and kindness to answer.

Yours Frans Mossberg
phD musicology Lund university, Sweden

Dear John!

My name is Frans Mossberg I am an singersongwriter/musician and musicologist (phD) in Sweden. Thank you for beautiful productions, songs and music.

This year I have been invited to make a short speech at an international IASPM (International association for studies of popular music) conference in May in Ottawa, Canada. I will be coming to NY first and then to Ottawa. The conference will be centered around the role of the recording studio and production in music and media, and as I am personally very interested in recording and studio work I will discuss the ways we try to audibly stress, enchant and help to construct an *artistic persona* of an artist in the studio in the choices and uses of equipment; the acoustics in the room, microphones, filters, amplifiers, compressors, reverbation etc.

Looking at music that strikes me as interesting to discuss I found one red line, if you want, running through some Canadian music, and what more; a name that appeared with more than one of my favourite artists was yours!

I was born 51' and *The Band*, *Leonard Cohen* and *Gordon Lightfoot* has been long time favourites. Since my son has now grown up to be a really good bassplayer, he has discovered the Band's second album which means that the old vinyl still runs almost daily in this house. And sounds as great as ever.

I have been using the concept of "artistic persona" in my dissertation (2002) about an elderly Swedish singer/songwriter Olle Adolphson. I did this out of necessity to find an adequate concept as he was still alive at the time and I wanted to somehow make clear that I was not making claims about his private psychological person and build-up, but rather that I was discussing what I perceived of his *artistic persona* through his music. I found it a handy concept to use in that connection.

Artists like Dylan, Cohen and the Band strikes me as very strong *personas* and makes me wander about the concept in general. Since the work of the artist certainly is a great part in the constitution of an artist's persona, an artistic persona if you will, the output – the recordings will include the treatment of the sound in the studio..

I've recently listened again to your work on Leonard Cohen's 1st album. Of course so much of Leonard's persona comes through his songs and singing, but I also think that your arrangements is somewhat congenial there. They are very personal and unusual both at the time and now, from what I think. It makes me wonder how you worked them out. They certainly contribute a lot and help to create this persona that comes across "the phonograph needle" in their discreteness and mixing.

Don't know really about your musical part in the 2nd Band album though I enjoyed the film about it. Great. My very vague question to you would be if you could say something about your experiences of how you view the artist's persona as producer and recordist.

Here is where I am just grabbing a bird in its flight in writing you this to hear what your thoughts from your experiences would be on the subject if you have the time and interest to answer

Yours Frans Mossberg

phD musicology Lund university, Sweden

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abba wilson känslolägen klangideal / vissa tider /

a band or single artist/singer can have a persona.

THE BAND: rough voice yet refined always conjunj expression with the word simple and powerful yet refined new material close to tradition