Dissecting Sound & Music

AN EDUCATIONAL MUSIC ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EARLY-STAGE COMPOSITION AND PRODUCTION STUDENTS

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‘Dissecting Sound & Music’

Daniel Testas – 2017

Alan Lomax (in 1957): “The development of modern recording machines and their use by researchers in many parts of the planet have indicated the existence of a number of styles of song in the world. These song style families are very old, very slow to change and are continental in their extension. Under the term song style one includes not only melody, rhythm, harmony, etc. — the formal musical characteristics — but the tone of voice, the motor behaviour, the social organization, the audience response and the inherent emotions that produce the musical whole.”

“Musical styles change only very slowly. There seem to be only 8-10 main musical styles on earth.”

Charles Seeger: “View music as a language with its own grammar, phonemes, and families.”

1. The research problem

This research proposal has been written by me, in my capacity as a composer/producer and as a teacher in the CMS (composition, music and studio production) department of Prins Claus Conservatory. In the CMS department we educate and train not the musicians who perform the music but the composers who write the music. Many styles and (sub) genres of music exist and they all differ strongly in the way they are being composed, produced, recorded and performed. The CMS department doesn’t exclude any composition and production style. Because of the construction of the CMS curriculum, where composition, production and songwriting courses are combined, we often speak – when referring to CMS students – of Music Designers.

When students pass the entrance exam obviously we have detected the presence of talent, basic theoretical skills and the emergence of musical personality, as well as a certain amount of passion and drive for the creation of music. But of course everything is still quite immature and undeveloped. As a school of ‘Music Design’ one of the tools to develop these talents is the Analysis and Synthesis method.

- Analysis: what are the characteristics and ‘rules’ of a certain musical style?
- Synthesis: if I find out what they are, what can then I do with them?

There are several objectives we aim for with taking this approach:

1). First year students have the tendency to get lost in the musical possibilities and creative options. By giving well-defined assignments in a certain specific musical context, we are more or less forcing them into limiting themselves. Analysis of a certain musical context will supply them with a set of characteristics that define that style. Working only with this set of rules to create a specific piece of music strongly limits one’s possibilities. This process of (self-) limitation is very liberating: within these boundaries there is freedom.
2). Inspiration in a creative process often doesn’t come as a lightning stroke from above. A student at CMS is working on a tight time schedule to finish her/his assignments. The creator has to pro-actively search for inspiration and analysis is a very strong tool in this process. There’s a lot of specific music that inspires us on an intuitive level. The questions are: why does this music touch me when I listen to it? What musical tools in it are so inspiring and is it possible to make these things concrete? Can you then work with them?

But also: how did other Music Designers cope with the musical problems and choices a student will find on their path? Analysis will supply answers that will give direction to a creative process and will trigger the imagination. Once the answers are obtained, synthesis is the phase where those ‘rules’ are being implemented. The student’s talent and musical personality should guarantee an original synthesis process.

3). CSFM stands for composition and sound design for film and media and this is one of the main areas of study within CMS. Also music for theater and dance fall within this category. The composer has to work with a director, advertisement agency, choreographer etc. These people have often strong ideas about the ‘sound’ they feel is required. They even often come up with a series of music examples for the composer. It is then the composer’s job to come up with an original sounding piece of music which is exactly in the style of the examples.

4). After implementing this process for some time a student builds up a big load of musical baggage (rules and characteristics) from which this student learns to draw on for inspiration in an intuitive way.

So how does this Analysis and Synthesis approach work? It is mainly done by listening. When I give students a specific assignment, for instance Britpop songwriting, a certain amount (10-15) of those specific Britpop songs will be supplied. These tracks are selected to be spot on within the style. Students will have two weeks to listen and analyze these tracks. This analysis subsequently is the starting point for the bigger assignment: the creation and production of an original Britpop song.

This leads to the following formulation of the research problem:

The students are asked to perform an analysis on an amount of tracks/songs of a specific style. But how do they actually go about this analysis? Where do they start? How do they know what is important when listening to these songs I gave them? Over the last few academic years I began to realize that this can be a very difficult process for students. So what can be done about that?

A possible solution for the problem is to strongly encourage the analysis/synthesis way of thinking with our students. To do this we have to create some kind of structure in the process.

My research question therefore: is it possible to develop a tool, a sort of a model that will work for a range of different musical styles (for instance: pop, rock, dance, jazz, soul, country etc.)? It will have the shape of a list of questions, which I will call: ‘the Checklist’. With this list the students will have a strong structuring tool to perform the analysis with. The procedure will be like this: after multiple concentrated listening sessions, a student needs to formulate detailed answers to the questions of the Checklist one by one, and in doing so will end up with the desired set of characteristics of the specific genre.
The tool will mainly be meant for first or second year composition and production students because I expect, and this is also my objective, that the tool will help develop the analytic skills of the student in such a way that the necessity for use of the Checklist will be reduced. When students develop themselves in this way and become more experienced, the analysis will be performed in a much more intuitive way and the Checklist might only be used as a sort of a reference tool or not even at all anymore.

2 The research design

The research design used here is a five step educational design process.

Step 1: ‘The Checklist’

The starting point for this research project was to put together a working list of relevant musical questions. For this process I drew inspiration from several areas. First of all my own experience and educational history. During my Music Technology study at the HKU (Utrecht School of Art) one of my teachers was Gerard van Wolferen, a musicologist with a special interest in musical structure and perception; music and education; music and anthropology. He was experienced in analysis and synthesis of music, musical cognition, anthropology of music, perception and musical meaning, musical algorithms for analysis. He had a great influence on my way of thinking towards the analysis and categorisation of music and musical elements. During the compiling of the list I dug deep in my memory of his lessons and in the documents I created during his lessons.

Another place for inspiration was the website http://www.auralsonology.com This is a companion website to a book, and although the website (as well as the book) focuses much more on the analysis of art (sound based) music instead of ‘pop’ music, it is very interesting and inspirational to learn how the analysis process is structured, classified and encoded.

The website Comparative Musicology (http://compmus.org/key_issues.php) was another place for finding interesting and enticing material.

Also beneficial in this process was reading about the methodological classification approach Alan Lomax developed in the 1950s for song and musical styles. (http://research.culturalequity.org/psr-history.jsp)

I compiled a rough start-up collection of 45 questions categorized in four main areas:

1. Musical content
2. Structure and arrangement
3. Production
4. Other (questions about: lyrics, vibe, function, concepts, backgrounds, etc.)

With this ‘demo’ Checklist I entered the next phase of this project.

Step 2: ‘feedback on the Checklist by colleagues’

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1 Emergent Musical Forms: Aural Explorations
The first step after designing the initial checklist was to get feedback from some music specialists and professionals. Since the objective of this research project is to develop a finalized and working Checklist the main focus within the research design was on finding ways to develop and improve the initial Checklist.

The professionals:

- Media composer Ivo Witteveen, who apart from being a colleague at the Prins Claus Conservatoire – CMS department, has his own company in media music. (respondent nr. 1 – R1)
- Composer Jorrit Tamminga, who apart from being a composition teacher at other two institutes (HKU, the Conservatoire of Amsterdam), works as an independent electronic and computer composer. (respondent nr. 2 – R2)
- Producer/songwriter Rob Gaasterland, who has credits (as a producer, songwriter and performer) on an almost endless list of productions, albums, singles and remixes etc. (respondent nr. 3 – R3)
- Media composer Ingmar de Vos, an alumni of Prince Claus Conservatoire, who after his studies at CMS went on to do a Master programs in Los Angeles (California State University CSULA). (respondent nr. 4 – R4)

Step 3: ‘sharpening the Checklist using the feedback of the selected colleagues’

The obtaining of feedback of the professionals took place in December (2015) and January (2016). I used this feedback in the first stage of the improvement process of the Checklist. With this revised Checklist I then entered the next stage of the research project.

Step 4a: ‘the actual testing of the Checklist on students’

The testing of the Checklist was done by 1st and 2nd year CMS students. They performed analysis on several styles and genres of music strictly guided by the Checklist. These analyses will show if and how the designated user will benefit from working with the list.

There are several study modules in the first and second year where the Analysis/Synthesis method is being used and which thus are very suitable for the implementation and testing of the Checklist. Specifically those modules were: ‘Hip-hop songwriting’ in the 1st year, and ‘Groove songwriting’ in 2nd year.

The 1st year module ‘Hip-hop songwriting’- which always takes place in the 2nd semester - started in February 2016. The students were provided with a selection of specific music (12 songs) by me. These tracks were carefully chosen to have uniformity in style, musical approach and in sound, because the more clearly the style is defined and delimited the more distinctly the specific characteristics of that style will be shown.

The students were instructed to listen meticulously to the supplied music multiple times and then to use the Checklist to perform a detailed and thorough analysis on it. The students had two weeks to do this first assignment. This module covers a period of 8 weeks in total. The final assignment of this module is to create a finished product in the form of a Hip-hop track within the boundaries of the framework of this specific genre.
The 2nd year module ‘Groove songwriting’ - which always takes place in the 2nd semester - started in April 2016. In this module the students ‘dive’ into the world of the groove. What are the secrets behind a really good groove song? Again, I provided the students with a selection of this specific music. This selection is a little larger than the Hip-hop selection and it is also a little less strictly delineated. This means that the analysis will be a bit more complex. This extra complexity works well for students who have advanced further in their study and are a bit more experienced in performing an analysis. Often they already are able to put a frame around a selection of tracks - within the selection of music supplied by me - that inspire them and then take this specific selection as a starting point for the analysis and the final assignment of this module: a finished product in the form of a Groove song. For the analysis they will still need to use the Checklist.

Step 4b: ‘individual and group Interviews with students about working with the Checklist’

This is an important aspect of the research project and the development of the ‘final’ Checklist: what does the designated user think of the Checklist? How does it help her/him in conducting the required analysis? Does it structure the analytical process? For the 1st and 2nd year student interviews I have used two different approaches. All 1st year students were interviewed by me in February 2016. The 2nd year students were interviewed as a group in June 2016 (in both interview settings I have used a narrative interview technique2). After the personal interviews it seemed interesting and sensible to see if a group evaluation would give me different and additional insights.

Step 5: ‘sharpening the Checklist after testing and feedback of the students’

Both the personal and the group interviews were recorded and later transcribed. These transcriptions together with the analyses (made by the students) were used to improve the Checklist further.

3. Research results

From December 2015 until the end of May 2016 I was executing the research plan as mentioned above. During this period I created a first version of the Checklist, collected feedback from a number of colleagues and improved the initial Checklist in accordance with their comments. With this updated Checklist I then proceeded to the following step in the research process by testing the list on the target group: the CMS students. Their analysis made with the Checklist together with the individual and group interviews served as a basis for further development of the Checklist. Below one can find a description of the most relevant feedback and suggestions made by professionals and students. I will also describe which conclusions I have drawn from the collected material and how these conclusions provided input for the ‘final’ improvement of the Checklist.

3.1: Feedback from the ‘Specialists’

The overall reactions of the professionals were enthusiastic and positive and their feedback showed that people find that the concept of an analysis tool in the form chosen by me - a detailed list of questions – is a very good one. They agreed that, for students, there could be a strong need for such a tool and that the checklist as initially constructed by me, was already functioning in a very reasonable way, and everybody was quite convinced of the usefulness of such an educational analysis tool.

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2 ‘The Narrative Interview’ – by Peter Alheit
“The checklist as a basic tool seems perfect to me. A very good starting point and very instructive. For many students this process of listening, comparing, tracing, and researching will be of great help to them.” (R4)

“Great design!” (R2)

“I think the background, the starting point is really good!” (R1)

Besides the positive comments the respondents gave, they also had some constructive criticism. They provided me with useful suggestions and feedback to improve the Checklist.

One of these issues concerned the doubts that a respondent had about the length of the list and about the questions on the list being slightly too concrete and maybe being linked too much to a specific style and genre.

“It might be good to make the questions a little less concrete and not to use pop music contexts as a starting point. The questions are now mainly phrased with words as ‘vocals, drums, bass, chords etc.’ I think that taking the list one abstraction level up could be an improvement. Phrasing the questions more with terms as ‘rhythm / melody / texture / horizontal or vertical organised / structure etc.’, trying to use less style dependant descriptions.” (R1)

The professionals also offered me some other specific suggestions to improve and complete the Checklist. Questions that they thought were currently missing and that would provide the students with essential information about a certain style of music during the analysis process.

“The question that I miss in the Checklist is: are there other sources that can be used during analysis, apart from the music that was provided? Can students find information online about this style or the composer/producer, for instance interviews, YouTube videos, etc.? Are there scores or lead sheets?” (R2)

“If you compare this piece of music to other compositions (of this composer / in this style of music / from this period) what do you notice? What makes this composition unique or striking in this genre?” (R1)

“Is this style mainly homophonic or polyphonic?” (R1)

3.2: Feedback from the Students

The interviews with the students also showed clearly that they had a positive opinion about the Checklist. They believe that there is a need for such a tool because they think that it helps them in the process of performing a detailed analysis in order to get a thorough understanding of a specific style or genre. The configuration of this tool, a detailed list of specific questions, stimulates them to listen much more accurately to the music provided.

“I think it is very good that in the Checklist things are made very concrete. It is very practical and you can also at any time return to the list to check some things. I think that I couldn’t have
produced that track\(^3\), if I wasn’t forced to look into that style in such a structured way. Listen often and really use the Checklist a lot. Listening, that is what the Checklist forces you to do. It makes it that you can identify certain things and that you gain insights.”

- “I had never made an analysis before. I think that without the list I could not have made such a good analysis.”

- “The list helped me in creating the analysis, because it really contained questions that I wouldn’t have thought of.

Also the students made recommendations during the personal and group interviews for the improvement of the list. In the following areas there was, according to the students, room for improvement:

**The design plan of the analysis tool**

One student had doubts about the length of the list. He wondered if the extensiveness of the list was really necessary, and that maybe a more compact list could work better in some cases.

- “I thought that is was a good and complete list. But it I think it is possible to make it a bit more concise. If you want to do it in this way then you really need all these questions and it is a really good list. But there might be another angle. That you first start with a sort of a main or key question and then a set of more general questions that ensure that you dig deeper.”

**The formulation of the questions**

A number of students had difficulties with the formulation of the questions here and there. They thought that sometimes it was too long-winded and repetitive. In this area they found that there was room for improvement: a sharper formulation of the questions could enhance the workflow of the analysis process.

- “Sometimes the questions were spread out over multiple questions, where in my opinion, it could have been formulated in one question. There were a couple of questions about the background of specific music. That could have been; ‘what is the background of this music’? and then in parentheses, for example, social, economic backgrounds etc. That way you could combine all these things into one longer answer whereas now I noticed that I was repeating myself on several questions.”

- In the first couple of questions the phrase ‘in other words’ is used frequently. I think you can replace this phrase with a comma, or maybe just formulate it a little different”

**The absence of specific questions**

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\(^3\) The finished product that the student makes as a result of his analysis.
Also the students were missing some questions in the Checklist and offered some specific suggestions to make the list more complete.

- “Name one or more artists (or songs/albums) that played a special role in this genre; the so called key artists”

- “What is your personal opinion about this style of music?”

- “I think the list is quite complete but I am wondering if there are enough questions about the element of ‘text’ in the list. There could be questions like; is the text the same every pre-chorus? Those kind of things.”

**The written and verbal instructions**

There were students who thought that the instructions that they were provided with were not quite sufficient and could be improved.

- “It is important that it is made clearer (in the list of instructions at the top of the Checklist) that the analysis may only be performed on the specific collection of music that is supplied by the teacher. Apart from this point I think the guidelines at the top of the list were clear enough. If the list is meant to be a functioning tool for others as well, it is questionable if the instructions that accompany the list are sufficient without the verbal explanation we had during the lessons.”

- “I think that you should explain to us in a better way why we have to work with the list. What is the purpose of making analysis, what should we learn from it? Now it is an obligatory thing and it is unclear to me why you think we should do this.”

- “There could be a clearer explanation per question. If it now says: ‘what does the lead vocal do?’, a few examples could be added to that. For instance; does it use many rising or falling melodies? Big intervals? Within the harmony or outside? “

### 3.3: Improving the Checklist

I think that I can conclude on basis of the feedback of the professionals as well as the students that the concept of this educational analysis tool is good one and the Checklist which I initially compiled already worked reasonably well. But I also received valuable feedback and suggestions about ways to improve the checklist. Below I will describe how I processed and implemented the suggestions, handed to me by the professionals and the students, for improving the Checklist.

**The design plan of the analysis tool**

The feedback about the design plan of the Checklist as mentioned earlier in 3.1 and 3.2 was not incorporated point by point in the improvement process of the list. The justification for this is as follows: this Checklist is an analysis tool specially developed for the early-stage students. I think that they specifically are in need of a very concrete and structural instrument that can guide them through
the difficult process of trying to grasp a musical style. Raising the abstraction level of this tool would overshoot the mark, it would become too complex and difficult to understand. In my opinion, in this case, the more clear and concrete the questions are the more efficient it will be and the better it will work as a tool.

*The formulation of the questions*

The suggestions about the formulation were very useful and have stimulated me to review critically the wording of the questions. In the most recent Checklist the formulation of certain questions have been adjusted. See addendum 1 ‘The Checklist’ questions 2 up to and including 5, 20, 21 and 35.

*The absence of specific questions*

A number of questions proposed by the professionals and the students to make the Checklist more complete were – although somewhat adjusted sometimes – incorporated in the Checklist. See addendum 1 ‘The Checklist’ questions 7, 18, 20, 36 up to and including 41.

*The written and verbal instructions*

In response to the feedback of the students the introductory information and instructions of the Checklist where redefined and improved. See addendum 1 ‘The Checklist’ at the top of the list.

4: *Conclusions*

As a result of the feedback of people involved in the project, I have become convinced that I have developed an effective and functional educational tool.

After the improvement of the initial Checklist on account of the feedback given to me by the professional colleagues, the next step in the research process was a testing phase. CMS students used the Checklist for analysis assessments. The level of quality of these analysis demonstrated to me that the list in this phase was already functioning quite well.

Thirteen analysis have been created with the Checklist: five by 1st year students and eight by 2nd year students. These analysis are by far the most extensive and detailed documents that I - as a CMS teacher - have seen of 1st and 2nd year students so far.

The facilitation of this educational tool has proven to be very useful because the analysis are becoming more advanced and detailed. It is hard to say if this will eventually result in a higher quality level of the second part of the project, the synthesis process. After performing the analysis on a specific style, the students have to start working on a composition/production that is based on the characteristics of that style. The final assessment of this module being a so called finished product. I am inclined to presume that the level of quality of these finished product is indeed increasing. I think that with a clearer perception (by an improved analysis) of the ‘rules’ of a style, the students will have a clearer mental image of the direction in which the composition/production should develop and to what musical and sound standards the finished product should comply.

I must acknowledge though that this is an unsupported but instinctive assumption on my part because a direct link is very hard to prove but in the end that might not even be such an important issue altogether. I find that it is much more a matter of learning and developing these investigating skills
that they need to grasp as much as possible of the habits, solutions and clichés of musical styles and genres. See part one of this research: ‘the objectives we are looking to achieve’. The following quote of composer and musician Miles Davis reflects this perspective in a very beautiful way. All though his quote relates about the performing instead of the composing of music, as far as I am concerned he is definitely talking about the same kind of mechanisms.

"In order to become a musician, you have to learn a bunch of clichés. If you pick up an instrument and you learn it, these clichés, [all] these little melodies that you’ve ever heard, will come out in everything. Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself."
- Miles Davis

I would like to thank the following people for helping me with the realisation of this project: Evert Bisschop Boele, Ivo Witteveen, Jorrit Tamminga, Ingmar de Vos, Rob Gaasterland, Sara Stegen, Allan Murray, Cordellia Frommelt, Wilko Schmidt-Dannert, Fabian van der Dussen, Hidde Kramer, Wietse de Haan, Mirte de Vrieze, Sem van Royen, Bart Bruinsma, Tobias Gradenwitz and last but not least, the Prins Claus Conservatoire for giving me the opportunity to work on this project.
The Checklist

ADDENDUM 1

Instructions and information:

✓ You will be provided with a collection of tracks in a specific music style.
✓ Use this collection of music as material for an extensive analysis.
✓ Only the music provided may be used as analysis material.
✓ Listen several times, really focussed and analytic, to the music.
✓ Then thoroughly and in detail, formulate answers to the questions of the Checklist.
✓ After this you will have obtained an extensive list of style characteristics and features.
✓ At a later stage you will use this set of ‘rules’ to create an original composition exactly within the framework of the specific music style.
✓ There are 41 questions in 4 categories: A) Musical content, B) Structure and Arrangement, C) Production, D) Other.
✓ When a question has no relevancy for this specific style, you can skip this question and move on to the next one.

“It’s not where you take things from, it’s where you take them to.” - Jean-Luc Godard.

“My freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles. Whatever diminishes constraint diminishes strength. The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one’s self of the chains that shackle the spirit.” - Igor Stravinsky

A): Musical content questions

1. When listening to the music, what is the first thing that strikes you?

2. How many instrument and/or sound-layers do you perceive? For instance: can you hear a vocal-layer, a drum and/or percussion-layer, a piano-layer, a guitar-layer, an electronics-layer, etc.?

3. If you perceive a vocal-layer, map in an extensive and detailed way exactly what is happening musically in that layer and how it is put together. Think for example of the following things:
   - Do you hear vocalists, or rappers, or samples, or maybe a vocoder, etc.?
   - Describe in detail what is happening in the vocal-layer melodically and rhythmically.
   - Do you perceive a lead vocalist as well as backing vocalists?
   - How do these two interact (e.g. in a ‘question and answer’ mode, or is the lead doubled in unison or in harmonies, etc.)?
   - How is the vocalist singing (e.g. falsetto or chest voice, airy, soft or loud, grunting etc.)?
   - What can you say about the emotion of the vocal performance (e.g. happy, sad, spiritual etc.)?
   - What else can you say about this layer?

4. If you perceive a drum and/or percussion-layer, map in an extensive and detailed way what exactly is happening musically in that layer and how it is put together. Think for example of the following things:
• Which rhythm instruments do you detect (bass drum, hi-hat, snare drum, conga’s, bongo’s, djembe, samples etc.)?
• Describe in detail what and how you can hear these instruments playing (e.g. complex or simple patterns, snare on the ‘2 and 4’, hi-hat on the offbeat, etc.).
• Do you perceive a typical style groove (e.g. a disco beat, or break beat, or jazz swing groove etc.)? Describe how such a groove works and what it makes so specific.
• What else can you say about this layer?

5. Investigate in the same extensive and detailed way how every other layer that you have perceived in question 2 is working and is put together.

6. What keys or modes do you hear (minor, major, pentatonic, church scales etc.)?

7. Is this style of music horizontally (polyphone - melody) or vertically (homophone – harmony) orientated?

8. Do you hear modulations in this style of music (key changes)?

9. What is happening harmonically in this style? Do you perceive chord progressions? Describe them.

10. What can you tell about the groove of the music? You know, how are the musicians timing their parts? For instance: on time (on the grid) or ‘lazy’ (after the grid) or ‘rushing’ (before the grid). This can also be programmed by the producer.

11. What about syncopation? Do you perceive many syncopated notes in this style?

12. Are they using polyrithmics?

13. What meters do you hear a lot (e.g. 4/4, 6/8, 7/4 etc.)?

14. Do you hear meter changes going on?

15. Which tempi are being used as a rule in this style (talking bpm here)?

16. Do you think this music is mostly composed, or do you hear also a lot of improvisation?

B): Structure and arrangement questions

17. What kind of form structures do you find (e.g.: verse/chorus/verse/chorus/bridge/chorus, or AABA form, or a typical blues form, or maybe something totally different)?

18. How are the transitions between the different parts – the so called ‘form transformations’ - established (e.g.: fills, breaks, sweeps etc.)?

19. What else can you say about the structures you find in this style (e.g.: long intros, or often starting with a chorus, or very slow developments and long tension spans etc.)?

20. What can you tell about the arrangements in this style? In other words; what is the relationship between all the different layers that you have observed in question 2. Think for example of the following things:
   • How are the layers used to usually build up the arrangements in this style?
   • Do you perceive foreground and background layers?
   • Where do you find the climaxes?
   • How are these established (musical and/or production tools)?
   • What can you tell about the breaks and the drops (especially relevant in EDM or drum & bass)?
• What else can you say about the arrangements?

C): Production questions

21. What are the specific characteristics of the ‘sound’ of the production? Think for example of the following things:
   • What is the sound of the vocal-layer (e.g.: natural or more processed, how then)?
   • What is the sound of the drum-layer (e.g.: the bass drum, snare drum, drum samples etc.)?
   • What is the sound of the guitar-layer (e.g.: distorted rock guitars, funky wah guitars, etc.)?
   • What is the sound of all the other layers?

22. Would you say that in this music style it is a matter of a warm ‘vintage’ analogue kind of production or rather a more clear ‘digital’ and transparent kind of production?

23. Do they use a lot of compression in this style? If yes, how do they use it (e.g.: parallel or bus compression, NY, LA or UK style)?

24. Do they use a lot of effects in this style (e.g.: reverb and/or delay)? Think for example of Phil Spector’s ‘Wall of sound’, or Trevor Horn’s three dimensional effect-layers.

25. Can you hear a lot of acoustic instruments or do you hear more amplified instruments?

26. What about electronics? Do you hear a lot of synthesizers and/or samplers?

27. If that is the case, what kind of synthesis techniques would you say they are using (e.g.: FM synthesis, subtractive synthesis, granular synthesis, sample synthesis)?

28. How then are the electronics usually being deployed (e.g.: as soundscapes, as synth basses, or as instrument emulations, etc.)?

D): Other questions

29. What is the function of the music of this style (e.g.: dance music, religious music, or meditation music, etc.)?

30. What is often the emotional vibe of this style?

31. Which concepts do you find often in this style? In other words: what is it about, what are the themes?

32. Do they use a lot of text in this style?

33. If that is the case, what can you then say about the utilization of the text? How is it being used?

34. Where do the musical roots of this style lie?

35. Are there any social, historical, cultural or economic backgrounds that are of importance in this style?

36. Can you name one or more artists/composers/producers that have played a special key role in this style? (research online!)

37. What specifically made them so important and relevant?

38. Do you find these specific things also with other artists/composers/producers in this style?
39. Is there, apart from the provided music, any other important (online) information that can be found about this style of music (e.g.: interviews, Youtube video’s etc.)? If that is the case, what specifically does it tell you?

40. Is there anything else, anything at all, that really strikes you in this style of music?

41. Last but not least: what is your personal opinion about this style of music?