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## Production Process Of Music And Significance Of Understanding Music

From a sound and film perspective about music videos, it's been said that music videos have been around since 1894. It's also been said that the things people were making in 1894 were moving images with sound/musical accompaniment that differed pretty significantly in both technical and aesthetic features, yet might be considered a predecessor to contemporary music video (Joseph, S. and Edward, M.) and its appeal has survived since this present day. Music videos is a performance on film or videotape of a musical recording accompanied by synchronized actions, such as a dramatic interpretation of lyrics or a series of, sometimes surreal, images (Collins dictionary, 2024). In recent years, film makers would suggest that the quality and production of music videos has increased due to more advanced technology (comcast business, 2024). Although we have more advanced technology and more opportunities than ever before, some artists may choose other areas to divert the large chunk of their budget into. Referring back to artists, they feel a bond when they are able to share experiences and emotions on camera and not think of the budget component or have a bond with technology however, although music videos are exciting to create, to be in, and to explore

different technology with they are also very interested to know the production process of music videos.

The production process of music videos mainly focuses on eliminating unnecessary meetings, prioritizing work based on key results, delete, defer, delegate, or diminish, leveraging your team's strengths, map out a plan before beginning, and many more (Martins, J, 2020). While overall music videos have been around since the 1800's till present days and are making success with the kind of productions they are making, musicians, non musicians, and people outside of the film industry are wondering about what goes on during the production process of it all in terms of budget, travel, wardrobe, the pay, and positions and are also wondering why it may be important in the making of a music video.

To start, let's discuss what music videos mean from the perspectives of film and media studies scholars Roger Beebe and Jason Middleton and filmmaker and animator Tom McGrath. McGrath wrote a book called "MTV: The Making of a Revolution"(1996) where he talks about the history of MTV, charting the evolution of the most significant cultural influence during the 80's, and explaining its surprising success. He also gave us a closer look at the rebellious mentality which gave birth to MTV, the discouraging conditions posed by a fledgling cable television industry, and the cultural factors which explain the wild success of the MTV phenomenon. Although these are all interesting components that McGrath addresses, it's also important in regards to my research to look into the history of MTV (music videos) and its success from his perspective. MTV is an entertainment brand for music videos, pop culture, celebrity interviews, reality shows, and movies. MTV launched in 1981 on August 1st in New York, NY. McGrath gives his

acknowledgements to many individuals that helped him to be able to discuss MTV. He goes on to say that “my goal in writing this book was simple—to chronicle how MTV grew into a successful and influential pop culture institution, and to capture what it was like to be part of that growth”(4). MTV became an international phenomenon, which now leads us to talk about how MTV became an occurrence from his perspective.

MTV truly became an international phenomenon because of pulling in gross revenues like VH1 and Nickelodeon of more than \$500 million and MTV became the first true global television network to reach more than 200 million homes in seventy countries around the world”(McGrath, 7-8). Although we are noticing MTV's success already in terms of television, let's see if we are able to see if McGrath discusses MTV's success in regards to music videos. McGrath goes on discussing how the channels that MTV had made an impressive impact on popular culture and he mentions that “MTV had transformed the music, television, and film industries. Indeed, the terms MTV-like—a synonym for fast moving images set to loud music had entered the language. Some even argued that the channel and its visual style had started to change the very way young people's minds worked ... and over the years many people had debated it but you couldn't deny that the influence was great” (8). MTV made numerous impacts by film, tv shows, reality shows, and music videos. It seems that music videos overall haven't changed the way it impacts people regardless if you are a musician or not.

Different platforms have been used to access music videos, from MTV to YouTube, and regardless of platform it is clear that music videos have had numerous impacts. Scholars of film, media, and music revisit and revise existing research as they provide historically and theoretically expansive new perspectives on music video as a

cultural form. *Medium Cool* takes on a range of topics, including questions of authenticity, and the tension between high-art influences and mass-cultural appeal. Beebe and Middleton discuss in the introduction of the book that music videos have disappeared from MTV. It was mentioned that a man named Andrew Goodwin had said that “MTV was increasingly moving towards televisual programming schedules and further from a “simple radio with images”, the twenty four hour flow of videos that it seemed at first to be”(1). However when Goodwin said what he felt, MTV moved in that direction and in 2004, MTV acknowledged its abandonment of music videos (1).

It seems that MTV started going downhill because of the new generation. On a website called “The Quad” it mentioned how MTV started going downhill because of reality tv. Thinking about that you might think that’s interesting to say because MTV was a channel that featured reality tv however according to this website they mentioned because of the channel airing more tv and commercial specials it caused less and less music. In an article from NPR written by WNYC Soundcheck, they had mentioned that MTV also went downhill because of featuring eight hours per day and then in the year 2008, saw an average of three hours of music videos on MTV. Beebe and Middleton stated that with this sudden change of MTV that “music videos have started showing up in forms that belie the confusion of music videos (as a form) and music television (as a delivery technology for that form): music videos now comes to us on DVDs and enhanced CDs; on PDAs, cell phones, and other wireless communication devices; and, perhaps most importantly, on the internet” (2-3). It's clear that MTV has disappeared because of the “new millennium”(3).

Railton and Waston are both authors and they wrote a book together called *Music Videos and the Politics of Representation* where they provided frameworks for how to describe and analyze a music video. Railton and Waston decided to use case studies from internationally well-known artists, such as Alicia Keys, Shakira, and Beyonce to explore issues of representation of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. This book also contributes to literature and new ways of thinking about narratives, genre, representation, and form. It's also very important before getting into the production process to understand what the politics of music videos are. When they are examining the politics of representation what they mean is examining the political issues in music videos like racism, sexism, etc. Nowadays you should be careful of what you put on social media because everyone is watching and can be quick to make points of your music videos that you didn't realize you made however in the book, Railton and Waston state that "in order to do this, you need to re-evaluate music videos not as mere commercial products associated with the purchase of artists songs or complete albums, but as primary products in their own right, purchasable or easily available to the public as a separate product" (1). This quote is very interesting because it seems as though Railton and Waston are basically letting viewers know that instead of re-evaluating music videos as a mere commercial, re-evaluate music videos as a product. Why? They're identifying a change from thinking about music videos serving mainly to advertise a whole album or artist, to instead being something that people seek out on their own. Music videos are indeed born out of the song and music they promote (performers), but music here acts as the agent for a series of visual representations involving and stimulating different political interpretations and readings (1)". Basically to elaborate, Railton and Waston are simply saying in this statement that

you are able to notice the political representation in a music video by choice of images and lip syncing. The authors go on to explain that you're able to see the political side of the music videos through well-known artists like Tupac, Lady Gaga, Eminem, etc. Raiton and Waston go on by saying that "the comprehensive analysis goes as far as to consider various versions of the same video, evidencing the implications of different languages and frames ... Furthermore, in the course of such analyses the diversity of musical genres is never ignored: on the contrary, R&B, rock and pop music are all considered as being based on different heritages and are therefore distinguished according to their conventional representations and the codes governing the actions and behaviors both of the musicians and of their fans (2)".

In pop culture today you are well aware of the different views of political representation happening in music videos like for example Miley Cyrus's "Wrecking Ball" music video which was released in the year 2013 on August 25th. It's an example to showcase why Raiton and Waston are doing case studies on music videos for this specific reason. That song has an amazing message about falling in love with someone and having that person wreck your heart afterwards. In the music video you see Miley Cyrus swinging and stripping on a bulldozer ball, practically wearing no clothes, and licking objects. The representation we are able to notice is gender because once this music video was released in 2013 the music video received a lot of criticism for its surprising choice of images and caused Miley Cyrus to be labeled as a bad role model to her fans which include young girls and teenagers. The authors go on to talk about the different representation of music videos including sexuality and ethnicity and one example was when Raiton and Waston discussed about ethnicity in Christina Aguilera's

2003 “Can’t Hold Us Down” music video because the authors go on to say that the music video “... traces the inscription of blackness and whiteness on the bodies of the performer and most interestingly and unexpectedly, the results are compared to and read through victorian discourses of evolution, colonization, exploration and domesticity (3)”. The authors argued that iconological markings of whiteness and blackness still have an impact on contemporary women's experience and make a thorough comparison between other music featuring artists like: Kylie Minogue’s “Can't Get Out Of My Head” and Beyonce’s “Baby Boy”(3)”. The authors go on to state that between Christina, Kylie, and Beyonce’s music videos they all capture the entire volume for different characteristics of raced femininity minutely traced in all of the visual and technical aspects of it. Overall, Railton and Waston’s initial aim was to present music videos as a form of popular capable of sustaining serious scrutiny on it’s own terms, as well as their intention to demonstrate, in their words, the ways in which the practices and conventions of representation in music video constrain and make possible ways of thinking about ourselves as individuals within contemporary society (10)”. Also, it seems after reading this book that viewing the political representation of ANY music video isn’t necessarily a bad thing because therefore you are able to discover something interesting and special about the music video that you weren’t able to discover before.

From a personal point of view, production processes are so important in music videos because of who’s working behind the music video and because of who’s helping in the making of the music video which showcases these amazing visuals you see in pop culture today. How? Well, these music videos that we see in pop culture today look amazing because of the kind of people that work in the production process of music



videos like the director which are people that assist with the crew members to get the job done, assistant director, production assistant which are people that talk with the client to arrange the high level goals and expectations, etc however, that's half of the people that work the production process of music videos because there is many more like mixer which are people who control audio levels, camera operator, gaffer which are people in charge of electricity, editor which are people who trim and arrange the music video, etc. With that being said, all of these positions in the making of a music video are important because those specific positions help create that amazing music video and or help you turn your dream music video into reality. However, you can easily create a music video on your own but you won't be able to receive the best outcome because you aren't receiving help to make it an amazing music video. To be able to create an amazing music video that's going to reach millions of viewers, you will need to hire people that have experience in film to make it an amazing music video therefore you have a better chance of reaching millions of viewers.

Cal State University of Monterey Bay alumni Terry Mirande will explain in depth why it's important and also explain his contribution in the making of music videos. (Refer to the Appendix section on page 11) He started filming in high school and hasn't stopped filming since then. He has a BA in cinematic arts and frequently gets asked to film a lot of concerts due to his great work. His contribution when he's not the camera operator is being a mixer and editor where he is arranging and trimming the music video and coloring the music video. "When it comes to the production process of music videos it's really about the artist no matter what" (Mirande, 2024). Of course as stated before, the reason why music videos look amazing is because of the kind of people that are

working in the making of the music videos; however what also makes a music video appealing/amazing is also the contribution of the artist (performer/celebrity). Terry expressed that it's always amazing to be a part of the making of a music video (aka on set) because of seeing the artist's vision or story come to life. Another thing that was interesting to hear from Terry was why music makes a difference in the making of a music video and he stated that "having music in a music video gives him the ability to see into the artist that you wouldn't be able to notice on the radio or youtube (2:25)". To elaborate, Terry is expressing that by hearing music from the artist while working on set alongside the artist, you are able to see through the artist personally rather than relating to/seeing the artist through the radio or social media platforms. He also mentioned that by working with the artist on set that it's "... a way into their head (2:41)" Well, what does that mean? It means that as a crew member and working alongside the artist, you are able to understand the artist. Overall, Terry goes on to say that the people that go through the production process have to go through a lot in order to make a music video amazing and also mentioning what crew members have to be aware of or accept in terms of making a music video with the artist present.

To Conclude, all of this information makes me want to give the people that work the production process of music video so much credit because without them, music videos wouldn't be amazing and since music videos were around since the 1800s it also makes sense how even back then music videos were popular due to what was being showcased, certain technology, who was apart of the making of a music video, popular artist at the time, etc and can also understand why MTV was becoming successful too. People like the director, producer, editor, etc work hard and it's important as people, non

musicians, musicians, film makers, and non filmmakers to understand that people that work in the making of a music video are important because of all the dedication they put into making a music video for that artist. I was very excited to do research about this because as mentioned before as someone who used to make music videos for fun, I never understood why music videos looked so amazing. Now doing research and realizing that it's because of the people behind the scenes (the production process) really makes me view music videos differently, especially as a performer myself.

What do music videos look like in the future? Well, from doing research on the history and then having conversations with filmmakers it's to my assumption that music videos will have more advanced technology to create even better visuals which can lead to affecting the music and or sound of music videos however that is an assumption because as individuals we cannot predict on what's going to happen in the future especially when discussing about technology in music. Even though AI is the most popular use of technology to help people become artists and also create a video that's going to reach billions of viewers, as mentioned, to my assumption there might be advanced technology for music videos in the future that possibly will affect music or sound in the creation of a music video.

## Appendix: Interview Questions

How long have you been filming for?

Are you familiar with music videos?

Have you ever shot a music video?

If you have never shot a music video, have you ever contributed to someone who was shooting a music video and could you explain to me what your contribution was?

Do you believe that music makes a difference when it comes to shooting a film and or music video and if so, can you tell me why?

What can you tell me about what goes on when creating and preparing for a music video or a video in general?

How long does it take?

To the best of your knowledge, could you tell me what music videos are?

As a filmmaker, can you tell me what the hardest part is when prepping and creating a music video or video?

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