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She Grows Louder

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music (Composition)

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ABSTRACT

She Grows Louder (2019-24) proposes and defines ‘spontaneous song’ as a distinct methodology for song-making by asking the question “*How can we harness spontaneity to perform, capture, produce, and release original songs?*”. Spontaneous song as a methodology has its roots in religious practice through spirituals, gospel, and blues as a form of protest, but the term is reframed here to document and reflect my experience in the studio and beyond. With its conceptual anchor in Kristin Hersh’s *The Future of Songwriting* (2024), via autotheory and comparable practices, and through a personal, multimodal, and practice-based inquiry, spontaneous song is explored and foregrounded through the lens of desire, with the outcomes being the essential 34-track, three-hour concept album/artefact, *Space Junk* (2023), and associated, orbiting works. These pieces attempt to undo dominant epistemologies and conventions of popular music through subverting modes of production and embracing strategies of spontaneity to counter the homogeneity of algorithmic reproduction. The works are documented and disseminated through the nonconventional commentary ‘*out loud*,’ published direct-to-reader on Substack as a personal and political testimony foregrounding and reflecting the spontaneous methodology. In the final stages, the project embraced, and went beyond, ‘wild research’ as a way of understanding the spontaneous methodology within a broader and related research context. I am the first to publish a PhD thesis on Substack, and in the unique way I have. Throughout the project, I addressed the lacuna in popular music research on songwriting practices, as relayed by songwriters, over scholars, especially that of women. By delving into this intense and voluminous body of work, and uncovering disparate materials, positionings and evocations by artistic intuitive practice in a spontaneous way, I disturbed the binaries between the artistic and academic, and forged new ways of knowing, researching and understanding in which the intimate and personal fold back onto the universal and culturally shared. Central to this inquiry is the assertion that this holds value as a social practice for exploring emotion and originating responsive affective material, for both the artist and the audience. Art is not an industry; it is that which saves us.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where otherwise specified through references, that this thesis "*She Grows Louder*" is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution or edited by a third party beyond the regulations of the University of Glasgow.

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1. INTRODUCTION

She Grows Louder (2019-24) proposes and defines ‘spontaneous song’ as a distinct methodology for song-making by asking the question “*How can we harness spontaneity to perform, capture, produce, and release original songs?*”. The Oxford English Dictionary (2003) defines ‘spontaneity’ as being “from the Latin *spontāneus* (*sponte* of one’s own accord, freely, willingly)”. Spontaneous song as a methodology has its roots in religious practice through spirituals, gospel, and blues as a form of protest and a vehicle for performance (Evans, 1974; Kizer, 1983; Pratt, 1986; Lacava, 1992; Horsfall et al., 2015; Hollis 2017; Saliers and Saliers, 2019). The term is also interchangeable with ‘invented song’, ‘improvised song’ (Barrett, 2006, 2010), and ‘spontaneous vocalisations’ (Sole, 2017) in early infant behavioural studies on the private, spontaneous songs of babies. I define spontaneous song as a vehicle for performance in which original songs are composed in the moment of production and captured in one-take, with music and lyrics surfacing in tandem. I then expand the term in the studio and beyond – to include album/EP production, digital liner notes, music videos, an audiovisual show, and live, durational performance art. In this discussion, I use the term song-making as opposed to songwriting to better capture the liveness, spontaneity, and dynamic nature of creating a song, including the processes of producing and releasing the work. The purpose of this framing document is to introduce the key concepts explored in the work and then point to relevant Substack posts and pieces from the portfolio that exemplify these concepts. I have also submitted an HTML archive of the Substack publication for electronic archival purposes.

Scholarly accounts of songwriting can be disciplinary, textual, and are often written by the male scholars who dominate the field (Frith, 1989, 1996; Middleton, 2000, 2006; Negus, 2010; Astor and Negus, 2014; Till, 2016; Auslander, 2023). They are often interview-based (Flanagan, 1987; Zollo, 2020; Wolfe, 2021; Sodajerker, 2022), or draw upon established methodologies (Whiteley, 2000; Brackett, 2008; Williams and Williams, 2016; Gleeson and Gordon, 2020). Donna Matthews (2024) studies states of consciousness when improvising through her doctoral artefact *Un/doing Wor(l)ds* (which I also perform in). While Bea

Hebron (Asléane) (2021) interrogates process over finished product in song-based and experimental music, here the album as essential artefact was my aim. I appreciate this may complicate matters, being seemingly incongruous with methods rooted in spontaneity; however, the album serves to timestamp a life and gives *form to feeling* (Langer, 1953). Moreover, my proposal was motivated by self-releasing my debut album of spontaneous songs *Mer-Made* (2018) at the age of forty, affirming that “[t]he recording plays a particular role in the construction of an artist’s biography” (Grubbs, 2014, xx).

Songwriter’s own accounts of their practices and processes, as relayed by *songwriters*, over scholars, particularly those of women, remain underrepresented in the field (Astor and Negus, 2014), an oversight I attempt to correct throughout this inquiry. For the purposes of this study, existing literature does not address the role of spontaneity in song-making, nor does it address the role of desire or more intimate subjectivities or testimonies. Examples of roaming female performance practices, carnal explorations of transience and desire, or performance music video which resonate with my own exist (Calle, 1981, 2015; Morgan and Jonas, 2006; Perpetua, 2010; Drag City, 2013; Scout Niblett, 2013; Busby, 2014, 2017, 2019; Nomadic Female DJ Troupe, 2017a, 2017b) as do mainstream confessional, existential or spiritual memoirs or biographies on song and artistic vocation (Gauthier, 2021; O’Connor, 2021; Cave and O’Hagan, 2022; Harry, 2022; Morrison, 2022; Rose, 2022; Hollander, 2023; Hersh, 2024) yet theories of spontaneous song which reflect my experience in the studio or beyond are not freely available. I have therefore struggled to find a home for my research and to effectively situate it within a traditional ‘Composition’ PhD. Diane Cluck’s *Monarcana* (2006) is a sprawling, yet relatively short album of 23 “spontaneous song-sketches” featuring recited poetry and pre-verbal spontaneous song, while *Space Junk* creates force, energy, intensity, and lyrical cohesion through songs which can exceed nine minutes in an album of 182 minutes. This latter point is prescient in a time when songs are getting ever shorter.

As Gioia (2024c) points out:

Bite-sized, formulaic songs are everywhere, and it's not just AI that's making them. Real flesh-and-blood musicians are composing in formats shorter than a New York minute. ... to *please* the algorithm (italics in original).

Cassidy Frost (2024), a San Francisco artist and manager, in her debut solo LP *Live In Private* (2024) mirrors my experience of capturing songs, with lyrics emerging in one-take the very first time they are played through and heard, in which time is to “never repeat” (Grubbs, 2014, xii). Meanwhile, similarly to me, Poppy H, a working-class artist makes invisible the “urgency of field recordings” in public space by deploying the smartphone as a tool which lends itself to the impulse to capture sounds. Interviewed in the December issue of *The Wire*, he observes: “When you get a phone out to take recordings ... nobody bats an eyelid because it's just another person holding a phone” (Tomson, 2024, p.16). Comparatively, The anchoress (2023), Dr Catherine Anne Davis, is vocal on the role of class and DIY practices in fostering creative autonomy (Sodajerker, 2022). Patti Smith's *Devotion* (2017) is an intimate account of her creative process, whereas PJ Harvey's latest album *I Inside the Old Year Dying* (2023) includes an in-depth and multimedia song-by-song analysis of her own as presented on her website (Harvey, 2024). These examples of songwriting and process-based inquiry fuse spontaneity, studio practice, performance, field recording and themes of desire, class, commerce, volition, personal testimony, and spirituality.

Drawing on Kristin Hersh's existential meditation on song and commerce *The Future of Songwriting* (2024), by means of reference to Nick Cave and Seán O'Hagan's *Faith, Hope and Carnage* (2022) and Jacques Attali's *Noise: A Political Economy of Music* (1985) through autotheory and comparable practices, my objective in this study is to explore the unconscious hinterland of my song-making practice without concern for the audience (Rubin, 2023). As Neil Young puts it bluntly in an interview with *The Music Biz Guide* (2024): “First of all, you have to trust yourself, ... there's nobody else that matters, it's just over if you start looking to other people”. The tension is that I desire to be heard and seen. Through a personal, multimodal, and practice-based inquiry, I foreground a corporeal

approach to theorising spontaneous song through the lens of desire – “the language of the body” (Dufourmantelle, 2019, p.130). The relationship with the microphone is never *not* erotic. It is an act of love.

Deepening the discourse on songwriting influences, and addressing the apparent influences in the work, Bob Dylan, Patti Smith, PJ Harvey, Kristin Hersh, Jack White, Bono, Lana Del Rey, Sinéad O’Connor, Scout Niblett, Kim Gordan, Stevie Nicks, Cat Power, and Neil Young all surface in the commentary; as do Nick Cave’s incomparable and deeply felt excavations upon his creative process, including his mailer *The Red Hand Files* (Cave, 2025). Prince’s fusion of the sensual and spiritual, coupled with his urge to make records as moments in time is also germane. The Magnetic Fields’s triple three-hour concept album *69 Love Songs* (1999), and Laurie Anderson’s five-record *United States Live* (1982) are, in their excess, analogous to *Space Junk*. Cognate to my wild, intuitive, and transdisciplinary practice, Anderson’s oeuvre has been opined as “an insistent violation” (McClary, 1991, p.135) of genre, provoking both “new models of pleasure” (McClary, 1991, p.140) and socio-political nuance. Harvey and Nicks share my proclivity towards writing in private, with the former eschewing recording studios to conceive of her demos at home; and the latter, blasé about following the ‘rules’ of songwriting, composing as she wishes to incense, candles and wine. Of note, Harvey has confided that all her albums are a search for love, and Nicks considers herself a consummate romantic. With age, these female icons become ever more relevant in assuaging any estrangement for not having had children. As Nicks states in an interview with Jim Ladd, in 1983 (In Her Own Words, 2024): “I didn’t come here to be a mother ... I came here to be a poet.”

Jack White, who shows up in *Saloon*, makes his set lists up ‘on the fly’, reckoning they are symptomatic of the capitalist machine (Taylor, 2025). Whilst rapper Jay-Z’s unconventional method of humming falsetto over a beat and “head-writing” is arguably spontaneous, he memorises his lyrics before recording them, as clarified in this extract below from an interview with Sway in 2003, on freestyling:

> Sway: ... And so, stuff just comes through your head spontaneously?

> Jay-Z: Absolutely, like a gift, you know what I'm saying? ... It ain't just spontaneous ... it's really organised though, it's not like just like that, I think about what I'm gonna' say, you know what I'm saying? I think about what I'm gonna' do but it's just never pen to paper ... I think it through. (Hov Videos, 2018, 0:26-1:26)

These artists, too, own an exotic and raw vocal style, through which they render emotion, and carry “conviction”, that most coveted quality in rap and hip-hop (West, quoted in Taysum, 2021). Frith's (1996) key claim that song lyrics are tied to performance, in that they contain so much more than their literary or semantic properties would suggest, stands.

Spontaneous song defies predictability, standardisation, and generative artificial intelligence, subverting the homogeneity of popular music and culture and countering the loss of what Liu laments in conversation with Joshua Citarella (2024, 01:28:38-01:28:41) as “the relative wildness of the mode of production”. Being ‘written’ through the body, spontaneous songs challenge popular songwriting conventions (Pattison, 1992, 2011; Till, 2016) questioning whether they should be released at all. Yet, if songs really are “little dangerous bombs of truth” (Cave, cited in Cave and O'Hagan, 2022, p.36), then they should be.

On a broader scale, I interrogate how, as researchers or para-academics whose discourses Wark advocates “one might think of as a kind of alternative field” (Wark and Gordon-Farleigh, 2020), the project unfolds to refigure Attali's (1985) provocation in *Noise...* “[o]f the only worthwhile researchers: undisciplined ones. The ones who refuse to answer new questions using only pre-given tools” (p.133). Equally, as contended by Ahmed, interviewed by *The Paris Review*, the more innovative work in universities comes from precariat academics, over those exercising what she terms “institutional polishing” (Binyam, 2022). I engage with the research as a personal and emotional inquiry, embracing spontaneity, risk, and contingency. As underscored by Eno, artists “deal in the world of feelings ... Art isn't about information, it's about feelings. It's about presenting opportunities for people to have feelings” (Eye of The Storm Podcast, 2024, 00:04:25-00:04:39). How do researchers, then, account for such feelings? One way is through body-centred methods. In *Sexual Personae...*

(1990), for example, Paglia observes that “[t]he penis is like eye or hand, an extension of self reaching outward. But a girl is a sealed vessel that must be broken into by force” (p.23). Still, what if, as women, we also reach out and explore, extending ourselves?

Space Junk is a 34-track experimental album curated into five pieces, Fire Pouring, Thrust & Drag, Orbiting, Harpoon, and Re-Entry, with recursive commentary shared through interconnected thematic posts which ‘bleed’ into other posts, and works. Through publishing ‘out loud’, I find a form to disseminate the research which *feels* right. I avoid answering the research question in isolation, or definitively in any one post, instead uncovering recurring themes as I write. I see “night driving” as a metaphor for artistic research and its tolerance of ambiguity (Fisher et al., 2013), hence, entitling my publication *Blackout Baby: Night Drives on Music & More*, echoing Gauthier and Mazza’s analogy (2020).

My ontological and epistemological position is that I am an independent female singer-songwriter-self-producer and a working-class, first-generation doctoral student. My stance is body-centred, practice-based, critical and subjectivist in that I interrogate reality and power relations in ways which aim to emancipate the researcher. Lorde (1984) best expresses this implicit cognition, in that “[b]eyond the superficial, the considered phrase, ‘It feels right to me,’ acknowledges the strength of the erotic into a true knowledge” (p.56).

This brings me to autotheory, an artistic practice and emerging methodology grounded in feminism and originating in the literary field, which foregrounds the body to bridge theory, philosophy, and autobiography (Fournier, 2021), in that “theory can do more the closer it gets to the skin” (Ahmed, 2017, p.10). This requires a degree of self-disclosure, exposing the gaps between life, art, theory, and self. It also connects to how we talk and write about music because it is tied to our personal ontology, or who we could be (Frith, 1996), without it being able to “pin us (all the way) down” (Knight, 1998, p.485).

Distinguishing between spontaneity and improvisation, the latter tends to assume a predominantly male, secular, and exclusionary canon, as with free jazz and avant-garde circles, carrying ‘baggage’ I was reluctant to handle. An alternative voice (whose teachings were overlooked at the time due to her minority status) is that of Jeanne Lee, the black jazz

singer, poet, and scholar best known for her solo free-form album *Conspiracy* (1974), the title track of which reads: “Take a breath. Let it go. Don’t get scared... of that sound you heard.”

Such ‘letting go’, and relinquishing of control demands receptivity, as in, *‘I do not write songs, they write me’*; whereas improvisation can incur games of chance, rules, and strategies for indeterminacy. In contrast, spontaneity evades capture, and, in line with the ‘wild research’ manifesto, all that can be measured and analysed. It ushers in a radical phenomenology of time, acting like a cultural antibiotic for an overly rationalised era. When one can no longer ‘flag down’ a taxi but must download an app, the conditions for spontaneity are diminished, yet ever more vital. Additionally, with its positive connotations, it is, unlike ‘impulse’, expansive and consciousness raising, whereas improvisation is neutral.

In *Feminine Endings...*, McClary (1991) equates spontaneity with sexuality, commenting that music is that “mysterious medium within which we seem to encounter our ‘own’ most private feelings” (p.53). In this vein, the body unconscious in female vocal performance art has been explored in depth by scholar Theda Weber-Lucks (2020), but not in relation to songwriting. When going into the vocal booth ‘naked’, unarmed with lyric sheets, one reckons with the unconscious, soul, or psyche.

Improvisation tends to be theorised as a group phenomenon, whereas I composed solo. In doing so, I transmuted the isolation, atomisation, and estrangement of the doctoral journey through Covid-19, and beyond, coupled with precarity, and much uncertainty, into song. Unobserved, and uncompromised, I treated the vocal booth like a cocoon, growing louder in an era of psychic enclosure and taking erotic pleasure in doing so. In his chapter, “The Live Creature” in his seminal text on aesthetics, *Art as Experience*, Dewey (2005, p.17) prefigures Hersh’s call for “living song bodies” (2024, p.9) when detailing spontaneity, in that:

To the being fully alive, the future is not ominous but a promise; it surrounds the present as a halo. It consists of possibilities that are felt as a possession of what is now and here. In life that is truly life, everything overlaps and merges.

Although I demonstrate pre-verbal spontaneous song in *Saloon* (Sam Lou Talbot, 2023a), it is beyond the scope of the project to go into depth on vocal performance art pioneers, such as Meredith Monk, Yoko Ono, Diamanda Galás, Franciska Baumann, Joan La Barbara (1976), Mary Margaret O'Hara (1988), and Maggie Nicols (2020). Neither have I room to account for the lyrics and their storytelling properties, stream-of-consciousness (James, 1891), or troubling of grammar by rearranging time as in the outro to "Butterfly". This latter observation is reinforced by Hersh, who points out that songs “don’t commit to linear time – they whiz around your memories ... they tell the future and they tell the past” (cited in Mann, 2019, p.41). To add, whilst I acknowledge the perceived limitations of a first-person testimony and/or retrospective analysis so ‘close to the bone’, such intimate and embodied subjectivities are the richest mode of qualitative data.

My commentary has parallels with Fisher’s blogging alias *k-punk* (2018), which he credited as both an alternative form of thinking to his doctorate (Wilson, 2017) and a way of existing in public space. Comparatively, my alias, *Blackout Baby...* enables me to narrativise and publish my research process as porous, multimodal (Brabazon et al., 2020; Tara Brabazon, 2021, 2024) experiments in form. As a micro-publishing platform, Substack encourages spontaneity and the opportunity to bond directly with an audience outwith the algorithm.

In the final stages of the project, I embrace ‘wild research’ – a term coined by Professor David Archibald – and currently being theorised by fifty artists/scholars at the University of Glasgow, The Glasgow School of Art and beyond who reject the implications of ‘captured’ institutions upon the ways artists work by exploring the potential of ‘wild research’ to open up alternative modes of knowledge production, as proposed here.

I will now set out a more nuanced discussion of the ‘wild research’ manifesto (Archibald, 2023) and state where/how closely my work relates to this.

The manifesto calls for that which is: unfunded; which deliberately operates outwith of the regulatory frameworks of higher education and/or cultural/industrial sectors; which knows not what it is doing; which seeks to decolonise the academy in form; which is interdisciplinary; which demands the right to opacity; which rejects the Scramble for Impact;

which refuses to worship at the high altar of the written word; which moves to its own beat; which is confident of its own interior logic; which theorises how we might understand ‘wild’ or ‘wildness’.

In response, my project unfolds in regenerative refusal of constructions of research which are characterised by power imbalances and the commodification of knowledge within the metricised logic of the neoliberal university, which is unsustainable. By forging new methods and approaches which are deliberately undisciplined, I reject hierarchies of knowledge production and exchange, over-regulation, and class pacification: writing without a ‘safety net’. Deploying autotheory as a politics of citation, I penetrate new ground, by repositioning who, or what, gets voiced. Centred upon my own positionality, I naturally decolonised my research by entangling discourse on class, gender, embodiment, sexuality, and black music and scholarship, with high theory and popular culture. Whereas interdisciplinary research has been highlighted as a priority in recent UKRI, AHRC, and SFC strategic plans (Hicks, 2025), mine is a transdisciplinary intervention. Going beyond ‘wild research’, and theorising, I have upturned commercial songwriting conventions, the album release cycle, and normative epistemologies of popular song. I have also published these works on digital platforms via Freesound and the independent research lab Midjourney. Substack is a venture-capitalist platform, which should be acknowledged. In turn, my PhD was self-funded. *Saloon*, however, was realised through a collaborative ‘Community Building Award’ to embed practice research beyond the university and performed at an alternative music venue to a ticketed audience. Pragmatically, my actions have encouraged others to enter into conversation, to perform, to run a Substack, to access a part of themselves that is hidden; yet such real-world ‘impact’ cannot be quantified in the short-term. It exists on the blog and in stories, dialogue, memorabilia, email, moments shared, and new trajectories. *Blackout Baby...* is also unbound by the timeline of the PhD. Of note, on performing my paper at the ‘Wild Research’ symposium, I refigured the erotic as an epistemic and political practice (Lorde, 1978). My provocation was darker in tone than the rest. I sensed I was making the audience uncomfortable, yet I was upturning the impotence of refusal.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

My art-based methods incorporated songwriting, explorations of song form, live and recorded performance, voicework, embodiment, visual media, recorded artefact, music production, critical writing, and transdisciplinary poetics. Photography and video afforded “defamiliarisation” (Shklovsky, 2015, see “Art, as Device”), which is a way to present objects (including the self) in new and unfamiliar ways. This incurred a self-conscious reflexivity typified by female performance art from the 1970s, negating the erasure of the body (Knafo, 2009).

With ‘desire’ as an interdisciplinary thematic unit, the commentary uncovered signature themes and tendencies rather than imposing a theoretical purview from the outset. As Borgdorff (2012, p.72) emphasises: “We should not say: ‘Here is a theory that sheds light on artistic practice’, but ‘Here is art that invites us to think’”. Accordingly, the literature was integrated into the commentary in a porous, even sensual manner; permitting “lingering” (Han, 2024, p.19) over excesses of information, which we tend to click and consume rather than come into knowledge in ways which empower us (Levy, 2024). Such epistemic shifts occurred and are voiced in "No Exit" and "On Distraction". They are also alluded to in the closing lyrics on *Space Junk*, from the track "LA", with its highly effective minimum raw production, vocal placement, and proximity effect.

Space Junk (released September 29th, 2023) takes the audience on a sonic journey through five pieces. The 34 tracks were created through real-time/spontaneous composition, experimentation, vocals, instruments, extended vocal techniques, percussion, sounds, and samples sourced in Venice/Glasgow or from the platform Freesound (under a CC0 License) from 2021 to 2023. I went into the studio with intent but without premeditation. Eno (2017, p.187) describes a similar account of “in-studio composition”, in that one may: “come with ... a bare skeleton of the piece, or perhaps with nothing at all. ... [putting] “the composer in the identical position of the painter ... working directly with a material”. I then arranged the songs into more complex structures, repudiating traditional song form (cf. Lisa Busby, 2015), as with "I Want to Love You Like Fellini Would Do"; or left them alone as relatively

unadulterated single-channel, one-take recordings, textured with vocal harmonies, and outsourced the mastering process. What I did not do at any point was re-write or re-record the song.

Whilst methodological notes, or ‘interruptions’ run through the commentary, essential readings on methods/rationale are listed below. I included the podcast/video transcripts in the word count as they are considered ‘readings’.

- "Vehicles for Abandon" – *Blackout Baby* Podcast episode/project statement
- "Space Junk Digital Liner Notes" – maps to *Space Junk*, and incorporates the liner notes
- "I Sing the Body Electric" – maps to *Space Junk* and the music video "The Land of Nod"
- "Why I Carried an Amp Across Europe" – maps to the documentary footage of the performance "Dream Catcher"
- "Cold Intimacies" – maps to the live show *Saloon*
- "Sex, the Cosmos, and Carriers of Chaos"
- "Do You Wish to Continue?" – maps to the music video "Do You Wish to Continue?"
- "On Not Punching It In", "The Path of Totality" and "That Night in Hawaii When I Turned into a Panther..." – map to the one cut vinyl EP *Blackout Baby*

The secondary readings, "Against Content", "No Exit", "Elle", and "On Distraction" contend with online/offline tensions. These intimate, unscripted, and unedited voice notes/podcast episodes draw upon more subversive feminist practices relating to my background in Fine Art. They also resonate with the conference "Autotheory: Thinking Through Self, Body & Practice" – a three-day digital and in-person exploration upon the theme held at the University of Glasgow and Tramway in 2022, which I co-organised, chaired and presented at along with Lauren Cooper (2025) and Dženana Vucic (2022), (who recently completed their doctorates on the subject) and which led me, through conversation, to Lorde's (1984) reclaiming of the erotic as power as theorised in "Sex, the Cosmos, and Carriers of Chaos".

I consulted a broad range of scholarly sources, critical and cultural theory, philosophy, interviews, lectures, popular music magazines, album reviews, memoirs, biographies, social media, podcasts, vlogs, and underground theory. Defending my retrospective analysis and foregrounding ‘emergence’ (Hübner, 2024) as a rationale for artistic research, I second Haarmann in arguing for a “reflective methodology” at the recent online symposium *What Methods Do. Exploring the Transformative Potential of Artistic Research*, in that “only afterwards you look back and understand it” (quoted in Research Catalogue, 2024).

There is a “radical contingency” to practice research, which gets magnified in the doctoral context, in that: “Art is thought, not theory. It actually seeks to postpone ‘theory’, to reroute judgments, opinions, and conclusions, and even to delay or suspend them indefinitely” (Borgdorff, 2012, p.71). There are also values and meanings that can only be gauged in the immediacy of music or art, and which can never be fully made explicit or codified in language. Shrag (2019) goes some way towards distinguishing the uniqueness of my approach, when he states that practice research does not necessitate finding out what others know, or reading interviews, etc., which I would dispute, not to curtail its horizons.

On investigating theses in Music, for their formal properties and variations on style, several had little, if any, relation to the real world as if composition is an exclusionary practice. On the contrary, *Blackout Baby: Night Drives on Music & More* is read across 16 US states and 14 countries. Many of the academics I cite, including Slavoj Žižek, Iain McGilchrist, Ted Gioia, Catherine Liu, and Sara Ahmed, are now publishing on the platform; as are artists and producers including Rick Rubin, Patti Smith, Kathleen Hanna, Juliana Hatfield, Laura Marling, Katy Crutchfield, LoneLady, and Penfriend (Stone, 2025). As of May 2025, both Bandcamp and Billboard have a Substack.

Although academics have been developing their audiences and testing new ground on the platform for several years now, ‘short-circuiting’ hierarchies, serialising new books (Gioia, 2023), and gaining traction beyond traditional publishing cycles and gatekeepers, as well as paid subscribers (On Substack, 2023), I am the first to publish a PhD thesis on the platform, and in the original way I have. Doing so was my way of circumnavigating the problem of

articulation and how to frame artistic practice within the conventions of academic writing through an intuitive process-based and transdisciplinary inquiry centred around conceptions of song form. By communicating my research in this way, with an *expansiveness*, I draw parallels with a long-time influence of mine, John Berger, who “developed a form of thinking and writing which might start with art but reaches out in almost every direction” (Marr, 2016); and Mark Fisher, for his reconciliation of high theory and popular culture in an anti-elitist, wondrously ‘off-the-cuff’ and associative manner (as with Žižek and Paglia), which defied an insular or institutional *modus operandi*. *Blackout Baby* was growing, and my ideas would be read, seen, heard, and felt; my art, received, or so it felt.

By retrospectively analysing the works, I have connected the writing to the music in a way that chimes with Joni Mitchell’s (2022) creative process, which she describes as “crop rotation”. It was imperative to ‘round up’ the practice first, without burdening the works with analysis: to do so kills spontaneity. Yet universities tend to overlook the “hap-hazard” (Borgdorff, 2012, p.61) or unruly ways in which research trajectories and findings take shape, which can have their own internal logic.

Autoethnography tends to be the default method and heuristic research tool adopted by practice researchers to legitimate and validate their research (Moriarty, 2013), the central tenant of which is ‘reflexivity’ (Anderson, 2006; Adams et al., 2015; Bochner and Ellis, 2016; Ellis and Adams, 2020), with “verisimilitude” (Gouzouasis, 2020) being key; yet the rebel in me wanted to forge another means. I saw autotheory as an ‘open range’, which I have expanded into both Composition (broadly conceived), and popular music. Zwartjes (2019) observes that in the doctoral context autotheory presents a challenge as it demands that the reader always be ‘on’ without a dominant theoretical purview or form to rely on. Accordingly, this thesis traverses voices and registers, the personal and political, singular, and universal. It is also a transgression, and an attempt to negate (self-) censorship, as with the songs. Through unpacking my methodology so, it remains my intention to convey to a certain extent my struggling to find a route through a system and traditional forms of assessment and the specific ways and means by which I circumvented that tension with courage and conviction. In justifying my approach in relation to industry practice, being a

working-class artist/academic, The anchoress, Dr Catherine Anne Davis, puts it to us in an interview with Sodajerker (2022, 00:51:59): “Who is allowed to be creative? Who is allowed to write?”, and I would hope that this thesis makes the case that anyone can.

3. WORKS

3.1. Portfolio

- The essential 34-track, five-piece album/artefact, *Space Junk* (182 mins.) and track list (released 29 September 2023)
 - o "The Land of Nod" (03:25 mins.) - track two, performance music (vertical) video (premiered 10 September 2023)
 - o "Do You Wish to Continue?" (05:44 mins.) - track nineteen, AI music video, with visuals by The Department of Entertainment, generated in Midjourney in Open Beta (premiered 6 August 2023)
 - o "Space Junk Digital Liner Notes" – podcast episode (m4a) (25:39 mins.) and 54-page lyric booklet (mp4) (04:15 mins.)
 - o "Dream Catcher" (13:15 mins.) audiovisual documentation of live, durational performance from the "Space Junk Album Launch" (28 October - 10 September 2023) (published 13 October 2023)
- *Saloon* (2023) (07:20 mins.) highlights footage of the live, audiovisual show/installation co-created and performed with the Scottish filmmaker, Simone Smith, at The Old Hairdresser's, Glasgow (9 February 2023)
- *Blackout Baby* (2023) (20:20 mins.) four-track EP (released 20 December 2023), and one-cut black heavyweight 45rpm vinyl artefact (released February 2024)

3.2. **Commentary (in reverse chronological order)**

- "With Or Without You"
- "Space Junk Digital Liner Notes"
- "Pneuma/Non-Commodity"
- "No Exit" 🎧
- "Hymen"
- "On Distraction" 🎧

- "Don't Stop Making Music"
- "Elle"
- "A Love Supreme"
- "On Not Punching It In"
- "Volcano"
- "Karawane"
- "Vehicles for Abandon" 🎧
- "Do You Wish to Continue?"
- "That Night in Hawaii When I Turned into a Panther..."
- "The Path of Totality" 🎧
- "The Path of Totality" 🎥
- "I Sing the Body Electric"
- "Cold Intimacies"
- "Technofeudalism"
- "Rebel of Structure"
- "Draft Zero"
- "Confessions of a Sick Artist"
- "Against Content" 🎧
- "Sex, the Cosmos, and Carriers of Chaos"
- "From Spontaneous Songs to Speed Songs"
- "Hot Mics, Masters, Mess, and Miracles"
- "Why I Carried an Amp Across Europe"
- "What We Talk About When We Talk to Ourselves"

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Performing

In the case of one-takes becoming the definitive version, as contextualised [here](#), I used voice, guitar, Logic, and a Neumann U87 condenser microphone to perform a musical style of raw, unmediated expression, since “[t]o improvise, to compose, is ... related to the ... rediscovery and *blossoming* of the body” (Attali 1985, p.142, my italics). My vocals are foregrounded in the mix, soulful and dynamic, blending blues, punk, folk, and lo-fi. As a self-taught guitarist (classically trained in flute), I favour percussive rhythm guitar and intense, spacious playing using barre chords, power chords, ‘cowboy chords’, fingerpicking, and alternative tunings, including DADGAD, prioritizing emotion over technique. A persistent root chord hums throughout *Space Junk*.

In "[The Land of Nod](#)" (Sam Lou Talbot, 2023f) music video, my erotic performance is similarly intense. I employed experimental cut and paste techniques in the editing. I also performed and produced my own artwork for the album and EP, the photographs of which have been dispersed throughout the commentary and liner notes. The *Blackout Baby* (Sam Lou Talbot, 2024a) one cut vinyl features mono matte prints of me disguised in a platinum wig, as I was in [Saloon](#) which, as with my live performances, demonstrated the ‘here and now’ radical body experience, unlike recordings which can detach and ‘deaden’ it.

As a time-based process, spontaneity is contextualised in the posts: "[What We Talk About When We Talk to Ourselves](#)", "[Why I Carried an Amp Across Europe](#)", and "[A Love Supreme](#)". I also expand this discourse through commentary on flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2014) and associated states such as repetition-compulsion, right-brained activity, altered consciousness, and sublimation [here](#), and [here](#). This ties into the broader idea of an aesthetics of spontaneity which undoes conventional music production, where repetition and refinement are the norms. I tend to not recall what I have played or sung, generating a sense of surprise when listening back to my recordings, in common with songwriters who similarly convey being an [antenna for the music](#). I also reject conventional songwriting methods like co-writing, workshops, and ‘free writing’ exercises as they tend to

depend on literary techniques and metaphor (Pattison, 1992, 2011). I find these unappealing because they are formulaic and tend to over-rationalise the creative process; whereas my methodology feels *othered* yet confessional, which interests me. To add, spontaneous strategies can temporarily “disentangle” us (Berardi 2009, 2015) from capitalist logic; reclaiming focus, attention (Wu, 2016) and our subjectivity of time, as seen in the "The Path of Totality". For example, through specific acts such as carrying an amp around Venice, Portugal, and Spain and making a noise. (The Venice documentation has not been included due to scope, but it acted as a precursor to the launch and can be viewed here.) The initial post introduces desire, consumption, and psychoanalysis in a porous, playful, and experimental fashion. Whereas "Cold Intimacies" uncovers desire, love, and risk, and the “event” (Žižek, 2014), mapping to the live show Saloon, the centrepiece of which was a vocal orgasm performed on all fours with a water pistol.

Saloon was co-created/performed at The Old Hairdresser’s, Glasgow, on February 9th, 2023, with the Scottish filmmaker, Simone Smith, as part of a funded project to disseminate practice research beyond the university. It expanded the aesthetic dimensions of wildness to include shouting, singing, and shooting on stage, which can only ever be an echo of the live event. I also embodied sound as a tool for expressing and shaping desire in a way that mirrors sexual energy and its flow (McClary, 1991). Comparatively, Middleton (2006, p.104) echoes Patti Smith’s own interpretation of her incantatory signature style and rhythm in *Horses* (1974) (whose lyrics recur in this post), as being suggestive of the “female orgasm”, unfolding in waves. Similar patterns of which map here, and here, and to the outro of "Volcano". As Rose (2022, p.45) states, Smith gets:

louder, emphatic, declarative. The singer is speaking directly to us, and she wants to make sure we can hear her. ... Is the narrator singing about herself? Is she singing about a man? In either case she is singing about desire.

4.2. Capturing

I detail how lyrics are captured live, in private, in the moment of production, as well as detailing more phenomenological aspects of the recording process and microphone

technique, stationing myself around it, rather than it, around me, in the following posts: "From Spontaneous Songs to Speed Songs", "A Love Supreme", "Vehicles for Abandon", "Draft Zero", "Hot Mics, Masters, Mess, and Miracles", "Sex, the Cosmos, and Carriers of Chaos", and "Space Junk Digital Liner Notes". I captured the full lyrics in the liner notes, designed to be 'flicked through' as smoothness eliminates distance (Han, 2018) and amplifies pleasure, as does the ritual of pressing 'record' and being wrapped in sound.

Track 14 on *Space Junk*, "A Herd of Buffalo Run Across the 60-Inch Flat Screen TV" is an exception as it explores desire, consumption, and techno-capitalist culture through scripted voiceover. Whereas I recorded the intense twelve-minute single-channel, one-take "Freezer Delight" on the floor in the booth, with the electric guitar in my lap and with a disco party lamp as the overhead lights had blown. Its lyrics deal explicitly with class rather than pacify it (hooks, 2000, 2006; Cruz, 2019, 2021; Liu, 2021) as class still exerts a grip on the ways in which we feel, think, work, and make. Such criticism maps to "Confessions of a Sick Artist", "On Not Punching It In", "A Love Supreme" and "That Night in Hawaii When I Turned into a Panther...". I also captured spontaneous field recordings on my smartphone while wandering through Venice and Glasgow, which I later mixed into the tracks "Girl Online", "Pluto", "Do You Wish to Continue", and "Influencer".

Spontaneous strategies can obfuscate the "relentless capture and control of time and experience" (Crary, 2013, p.40). As Kim Gordan (2020, p.70) notes in her essay 'Music on the internet has no context', bringing us back to the body: "Everything I do is out of impulse, so I don't know if that's punk or rock. I've always just followed my impulses and created sounds that emanate from being myself." In a similar fashion, Paglia accents spontaneity as a romantic impulse, and improvisation as connate to Freud's free association technique in that it "takes you by startling leaps and pulses to the heart of the matter" (1994, xiii). Explicitly, when capturing spontaneous songs, one never knows what will come out. This was the case with the very raw "Astronaut", for example, which I considered not releasing but felt had gravity. Perpetua (2010), reviewing the album *The Calcination of Scout Niblett* by the alternative singer-songwriter Scout Niblett conveys something of this property, in that listening to it is "more like bearing witness to a ritual ... it's not so much for us as something

that Niblett obviously needs to do for herself. This is a very uncompromising work of art”. Such a description could just as easily map to “Astronaut”, "Halo", "My Warholian Exhibition", "Hotel Dressing Gown", "LA", "A Thousand Promises You Never Made All Coming into Being", "Forever Chemicals", "Room 203", and "Like Stevie Nicks Says", which give a sense of my style and story; or to the dark devotionals on the EP, "Butterfly", "Pop Shield", and "Lunatic". Accordingly, *risk* as a proposition runs through the project, from learning Logic ‘on the go’ and taking the pivotal decision to mix the album myself as a creative process over one of instruction; to performing *Saloon*; to carrying an amp around Europe and performing impromptu; to ‘dropping’ a 34-track album without an audience; to embracing ‘wild research’ in the latter stages of the project; to publishing ‘*out loud*’, and self-funding and submitting a non-traditional ‘Composition’ commentary.

4.3. Producing

I produced five music videos for *Space Junk* (including Volcano and Pneuma/Non-Commodity), two of which are in the portfolio for comparison. The generative artificial intelligence collaboration "Do You Wish to Continue?" (Sam Lou Talbot, 2023c) is relayed here; whereas the performance music video "The Land of Nod", mirroring feminist art aesthetics and self-produced albums like *Uh huh her* (PJ Harvey, 2004), is covered here.

Symbolising knowledge coming *through* the artefacts into the world, the commentary signals Benjamin’s ‘The Author as Producer’, (1998, p.87) in that “the rigid, isolated object (work, novel, book) is of no use whatsoever. It must be inserted into the context of living social relations.” Moreover, as digital material is *unfixed*, moving about in space and time, this mode of research dissemination suits the spontaneous rationale. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, desire stems from lack; the polarity of which is excess, or drive. It holds then, that recording in isolation, through the pandemic and beyond, I produced in excess. Yet, in terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) oppositional theory of “desiring-production”, desire becomes regenerative, actualised through labour, and seen positively. More to the point, “one can find oneself in music’s way of happening, ... [in that] ‘as this music happens, so do I’” (DeNora, 2000, p.158). This holds as *Space Junk* is a sprawling statement on excess, desire, and consumption, (self-) commodification, modern day alienation, virtual

intimacies, work, and the philosophy of time and new technologies. The tracks "One Tick Man", "Girl Online", "Spreadsheets", "Pneuma/Non-Commodity", "Stars (Disappearing Messages)", "Eternity Doesn't Even Happen to Flowers, and It Certainly Won't Happen to Me", "Influencer", and "Cloud Throne", alluding to "Technofeudalism" (Varoufakis, 2023), all delve into these themes uniquely. The complete lyrics to the album and EP are also arranged on my personal website.

I critique artificial intelligence song generators and generative AI's capacity to obliterate process from the equation in the posts "A Love Supreme", "On Not Punching It In", "From Spontaneous Songs to Speed Songs", "Vehicles for Abandon", and "Elle"; quoting Chayka in a recent interview with *Dazed*, who reasons, "[p]ugging some words into a generator and then being like, I have now completed a cultural circuit. That feels so masturbatory to me" (Yalcinkaya, 2024). Such methods map to the music video "Do You Wish to Continue?". Whereas the onus on artists to be 'content' providers, introduced in this post, recurs in "I Sing the Body Electric" and "Against Content", with reference to Sontag's *Against Interpretation* (1967).

I explored the aesthetic dimensions of wildness through "The Land of Nod" and extended vocal techniques on *Space Junk*. For example, in the opening instrumental track "Glory Skin", and in track 10, "Object Voice" as considered here. I also demonstrated pre-verbal spontaneous song and wildness in *Saloon* responding in situ to live glitches and Smith's manipulation of the production. Regarding my aim to account for feelings, and bond with readers, a comment on "I Sing the Body Electric", read: "A superb and brilliant essay by Sam Lou Talbot, who writes *Blackout Baby*. Not merely thought provoking but feeling-provoking too" (Powell-Jones, 2024). The final piece, the one cut vinyl EP - *Blackout Baby* - was 'lights out' on the project. Ironically, as a recorded artefact, it could be viewed in Cageian terms as the end of spontaneity (Grubbs, 2014). However, I respun it as a prop in "The Path of Totality", which I also published as audio-only. In turn, I discarded the commercial gatefold with printed lyrics due it not being right for the work and re-housed it in a rare black sleeve. I then placed ten original mono photographs inside to *spill out* on being handled. As I write about the experience of receiving the masters back from the

engineer in more phenomenological terms (Merleau-Ponty, 2012), I would request that the examiners listen to the vinyl, over the digital release, if possible.

4.4. Releasing

With algorithms skewing our freedom, rather than creating from within, we tend to be tethered to our smartphones and screens, undifferentiated, and scrolling, ever susceptible to desire, and creating for ‘likes’ (Fisher, 2009, 2021; Berardi, 2015; Han, 2015, 2017, 2024; Wu, 2016; Varoufakis, 2023). In *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, Berardi describes “the enslavement of the soul” captive to work and “captured in the precariousness of virtual networks” (2009, p.24). Instead, pursuing an “idea” that could also relieve me from what the American filmmaker, David Lynch (whose aesthetic influenced *Saloon*) terms “drudgery work” (The Atlantic, 2017, 2:06-2:10), I walked approximately 300 km from Porto-Santiago de Compostela on the Camino with an amp on my back, without GPS, ‘releasing’ the album via a series of impromptu performances by The Atlantic Ocean and in the Spanish mountains. Doing so, I exhibited outward strategies of spontaneity, as opposed to inner ones experienced in composition and studio practice, aestheticising my life as “art in germ” (Dewey, 2005, p.19). The resulting “Space Junk Album Launch” (September 28-October 10, 2024) maps to "Dream Catcher" (Sam Lou Talbot, 2023g), and the track which I deconstruct here.

This alternative album launch is chronicled in a photographic format in "Why I Carried an Amp Across Europe" and touched upon again in "I Sing the Body Electric". Through this promotional ‘stunt’, and spiritual undertaking, I enacted music as a “locus of subversion, a transcendence of the body” (Attali, 1985, p.13), releasing on own terms to negate the inevitability of the album *‘sinking without a trace’* on digital service providers. Such a contingent act also embodies how spontaneous encounters are more likely when we step into unfamiliar terrain, such as embarking on a journey like the Camino. Moreover, with the amp becoming a burden I had to overcome, I tend to view this piece in more existential, even transgressive terms, and as a case of “self reaching outwards” (Paglia, 1990, p.23). It also prompted me to enter many conversations on what I was doing, and why, which refined my thinking, and extended my ‘reach’. Similarly, my conversations on ‘wild research’ with

Professor David Archibald occurred in a serendipitous fashion on street corners in our locale, leading to my conference proposal. Such spontaneous strategies can disrupt habitual proceedings and initiate an “event” (Žižek, 2014), which retrospectively creates its own meaning.

‘Confidence’ – as tacit knowing – is demonstrated in these release strategies, and in how artists tend to work. Cocker (cited in Fisher et al., 2013, p.79) shores up its epistemological value, remarking that in “the narratives formed around practices, in the stories artists tell, artists make themselves and begin to map their future production.” Such insights map to "That Night in Hawaii When I Turned into a Panther...", "A Love Supreme" and "Vehicles for Abandon", which I presented at the ‘Wild Research’ symposium at The Revelator, Glasgow, 2024 (Talbot, 2024; Wild Research, 2024).

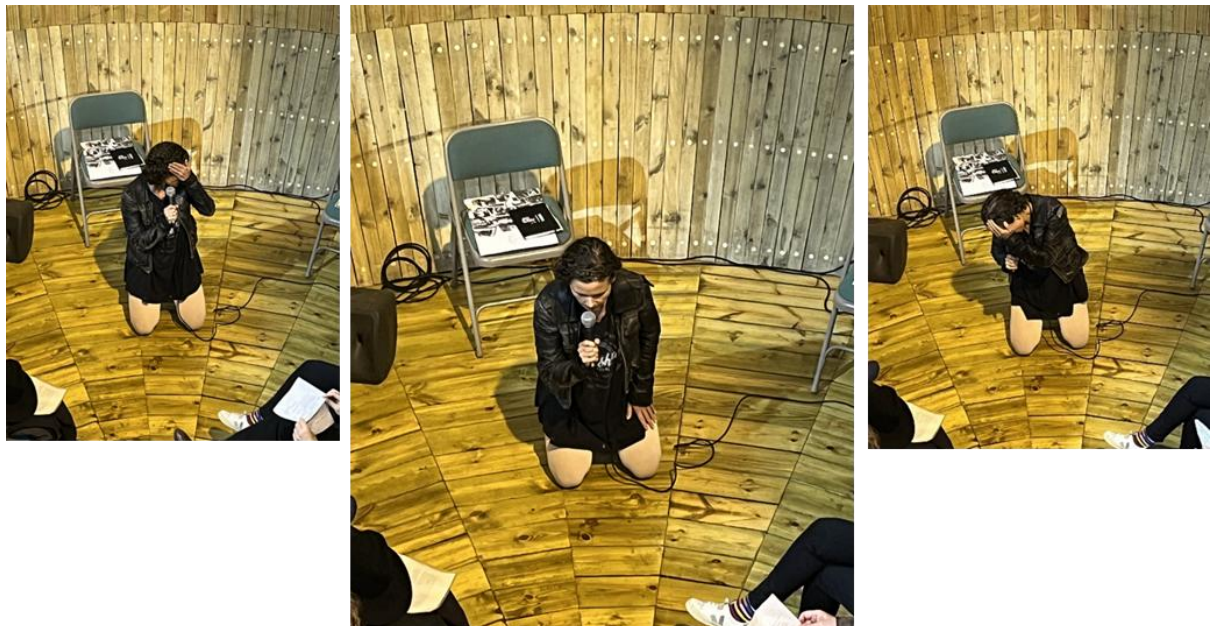


Figure 1. Talbot, 2024. *Vehicles for abandon: On strange, pointless, intensely libidinal things*. Wild Research, September, 13/14, The Revelator, Barclay Curle, Glasgow. Photo credit Bob Anderson.

Figure 1 shows me tangled up in wires, amidst the hardware, as I was in *Saloon*, displaying my tendency to expose the hardware in the music videos and make process visible. For context, The Revelator is an illegal, unfunded, nomadic structure and artistic in-the-round.

Regarding audience, the more defiant I became about the scope and scale of *Space Junk*, taking inspiration from albums such as *United States Live* (Laurie Anderson, 1984) and *69 Love Songs* (The Magnetic Fields, 1999) the less I cared about its reception. Resistance is thus reframed as ontological through the practice of creating a material position which allows for an alternative self/narrative to emerge beyond given power relations. Such anti-containment gestures “toward living song bodies and away from dead product” (Hersh, 2024, p.9) making “us feel less alone, existentially” (Cave, cited in Cave and O’Hagan, 2022, p.80). The singer/self is amplified: *she grows louder*.

Nearing submission, Level Music informed me they were ceasing operations and my music has since been removed, except on Bandcamp. The one cut vinyl remains the only tangible object.

CONCLUSION

To recap, the research question was:

How can we harness spontaneity to perform, capture, produce, and release original songs?

As Nick Cave intuitively, “records are built out of an unconscious yearning for something” (Cave and O’Hagan, 2022, p.35). Spontaneous song can uncover what that is in ways which more rational means cannot. My relationship with the microphone is erotic, in that the hardware is both a ‘line out’ of the vocal booth and an intimate interlocutor. Regardless of ongoing tensions around audience, I poured myself into these works as *anti-containment* became a strategy. That alone is justification for their existence outside of value exchange or reception. I also achieved my aim to let this spontaneous wild research centred around conceptions of song form unfold in messy dissent rather than impose meaning upon it, so as not to impoverish the works. Had I not implemented and pursued spontaneous strategies; the findings would not have transpired. Publishing ‘*out loud*’ then became part of the epistemological and ontological contribution as symbolised in the title, which was revealed during the editing of this document and which kept *tugging* on me.

Spontaneous song not only yields original music but engages us in ‘soul work’ for the autonomous joy and pleasure of it, liberating us in the moment from capital, regimes, or other forms of ideological bondage. By modelling spontaneity, I embody an alternative way of being in the world which invites others into their own. My novel production/release strategies reimagine ways to make and share songs, including performing and recording spontaneously in the studio and beyond; producing music videos; collaborating with filmmakers and video makers; through live, and durational performance; carrying an amp across Europe through Venice, Portugal and Spain, to recentre the body, and launching *Space Junk* on my own terms through durational performance/endurance art. Such emboldened acts refigure Paglia’s (1990) prompt for women to go out into the world and explore, ritualising and aestheticising their experience. This is also anchored to the social

value of this inquiry in its capacity to invoke affect and emotion, in both myself, and the audience, and to carve a line from the political to the spiritual.

Whilst acknowledging the perceived limitations of a first-person study and retrospective analysis, the research is not limited by singularity but entangled in a web of cultural and critical theory and philosophy. I also extend autotheory into Music, whilst retaining its political impetus beyond the academy. The project could not be straitjacketed and has been presented in the only way it could have been embodying and exchanging distinct modes of thought and feeling.

None of these songs were rewritten or re-recorded, raising the question of how to perform them, which is open to inquiry. *Space Junk* could be further explored through audiovisual collaboration, exhibition, remixes, a reissue, or a textual analysis of the lyrics which are uncontrived and often exquisite in their conception, and timely, and which could not have been written by other means.

I will evolve the song-making and its affective role through live performance, production, and audio effects, including the interplay of song and spoken word; music video and audiovisual experiments, coupled as promotional material; and behind-the-scenes glimpses (cf. Harvey, 2024) of my next album, *Sensoria*, and new solo project, *Unrecorded Nights*. I am also considering tangible releases.

The findings of this work – particularly the methods employed – will be of interest to other artists, academics, and universities as a framework for an emergent or ‘wild PhD’ through which one might seek to read, think, feel, and imagine otherwise. The Substack posts could be anthologised and published as a visual monograph. I would also be open to developing the project through a postdoc. Specifically, I recently submitted an Abstract for the special issue of the *Journal New Media and Education* on ‘Wild Research’ to be published in 2026. This audiovisual piece with research statement will serve to patent my methodology, which I will also unpack on Substack. It will be invaluable to other scholars curious to learn how I persisted with my vision for my PhD, resolving in a purposefully unplanned yet strikingly seamless body of work which is unique in scholarship. Other avenues are [The Songwriting](#)

Studies Research Network, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM), Riffs, Innovation in Music Conference, The F-List, KISMIF, the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR), Metalabel, and my website. Further inquiry could comprise recording residencies, touring, courses, workshops, and one-on-one sessions. I have also written to Dan Stone, the Head of Culture and Music at Substack to raise awareness of my publication.

In closing, in a culture caught up between the algorithm and authenticity, when everything is only a ‘swipe’ away, and there is no longer the need for exploration or thought, spontaneous song is an antidote – one cannot ‘fake it’.

Going beyond ‘wild research’, I will not stop making music.

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