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# Mood playlists, biopower, and the “functional turn” in online media: What happens when a pre-digital social control technology is transferred to the internet?

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, we explore the transfer of functional music as a social control technology from pre-digital to digital media. Muzak, the closest ancestor of online functional music, was expert-designed to improve worker productivity. Ironically, today users themselves are creating mood playlists to enhance their work performance and to manage their emotional states in everyday life contexts. We examine the motivations and practices of users by analyzing their comments on online forums and the descriptions they attach to the mood playlists they create. Our findings indicate that functional music goes through a significant transformation in online media, which brings forth both an expansion of its social control effects and the emergence of novel uses that have a rather ambiguous relationship with social control. We propose that this double mechanism can be used as a basic model for analyzing the interactions between biopower and new media.

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## Introduction

Over the last few years, we have seen an exponential rise in the number and popularity of mood playlists,<sup>1</sup> with online listeners relying on them for a range of uses, from relaxation to “mood elevation” (Anderson 2015).<sup>2</sup> Although mood playlists were introduced and promoted by commercial streaming services like Spotify, they are not the only actors contributing to this new development. Now, users themselves are creating “user-generated” mood playlists in thousands, frequently “tagging” musical works in functional terms such as the kind of occasions, activities, or emotional states they suit best (Celma 2010; Hagen 2015; Kibby 2009; Lamere 2008).

The economic, institutional, and ideological interests that fuel the involvement of streaming services in such processes have already been noted in the literature (Burkart and Leijonhufvud 2019; Eriksson and Johansson 2017; Eriksson et al. 2019; Morgan 2020). In this article, we focus on a different aspect of this “functional turn” in online media, viewing it as a new phase in the long history of the utilization of the emotional effects of music for social control purposes (DeNora 2000; Schwarz 2018). This functional turn is

different from the widely observed capacity of online streaming and recommendation systems to shape the “music taste” and preferences of users – thereby operating as a control technology for structuring the relation of users to *music as an art form* (Beer 2009; Cheney-Lippold 2011; Johansson et al. 2018; Morris 2015; Nag 2018). Rather, it points to the potential of online media to provide a fertile ground for the use of *music for non-artistic purposes* such as affecting a change in the conduct and emotional states of users (Anderson 2015; Brown and Volgsten 2005). In this article, therefore, we deal with a different problem than the one dealt in previous studies: *not* how new media can function as social control instruments, but how, and with what consequences, an existing social control instrument can be articulated to new media.

In contradistinction to its highly localized uses in the pre-digital era, functional music can now accompany users everywhere and be easily modified according to their changing moods and activities (Anderson 2015; Eriksson and Johansson 2017; Skånland 2012). Moreover, as we shall see, the pre-designed and top-to-down applications of pre-digital functional music have been largely displaced with the streaming services allowing individual users to engage in playlist

creation – which is evocative of Toffler’s (1980) observation about the emergence of the “prosumer” as a new kind of socio-economic actor (also see Leijonhufvud 2018, 104–105 and 210–211). The identification of these new possibilities, however, is not enough for grasping the sociological and political consequences of the transfer of functional music to online media. It is also essential to investigate what users make of these possibilities – especially since they are not just the recipients of functional music anymore. This is the focus of our inquiry. Our findings indicate that functional music goes through a significant transformation in online media, which brings forth both an expansion of its social control effects and the emergence of novel uses that have a rather ambiguous relationship with social control.

While this double transformation is partly contingent upon the practices of the users of music media, we doubt that this is an exceptional outcome. The occurrence of similar transformations in other cases suggest that the analysis here can shed light on not just what happens to functional music in online media, but also on the processes that are at work in the integration of mechanisms of power to new media in general. We shall return to this important point that constitutes the key theoretical concern of the study in our conclusion.

### Conceptual framework

Historically, the concept of social control in the sociological literature has drawn attention to the multiplicity, as well as multi-dimensionality, of power relations that underlie the relative stability of institutions in a society (Chriss 2019). As such, it aligns with Foucault’s (1978, 1982) conceptualization of power relations: social control exists whenever an actor attempts to “conduct the conduct” of others through diverse means and strategies, in order to stabilize the relations in a given domain of activity despite resistance. It is primarily in this sense that we use the concept in this article.

Three aspects of this broad definition are particularly important for our concerns. First, social control is always mediated through various techniques and technologies, ranging from gossip to digital cameras – a point also widely underlined by actor network theorists (Law 1992). These technologies are essential for linking the actors in a power network, even though they might not originally be invented for social control purposes (Foucault 1982; Karakayali 2010). Secondly, the effects of social control technologies are

profoundly historical, since their functions tend to change as they become assembled into new networks, giving way to novel uses and practices. And, finally, social control can be exerted by very different actors for a variety of purposes (organizational, commercial, economic, and so on), which means that power relations in a society cannot simply be accounted for by reference to a single actor like the state.

Indeed, historical uses of functional music offers a perfect illustration of these points. Sometimes it is performed collectively to engender cooperation (e.g., work songs; ritual music); sometimes, it is used by owners of means of production for increasing the productivity of workers (e.g., factory music); sometimes, by business owners for affecting the behavior of consumers (e.g., post-industrial Muzak); sometimes, by administrators of music streaming websites for attracting users (e.g., Moodagent); and, as we shall see, sometimes by the users themselves for self-disciplinary purposes.

Foucault studied such historical changes by delineating different modes in which power is exercised in a society. Given our interest in the current uses of functional music as a power technology, of utmost importance to us is his concept of *biopower*, by which he delineates a specific mode of social control in modern societies. Biopower, first of all, is driven by a sustained concern with the health, sanity, and well-being of the individual “bodies” constituting the “body politic,” necessitating expert knowledge on human subjects and populations, as well as an expansion of the domains in which power is exercised. Moreover, it is characterized by a change in the strategies of social control from exclusionary toward disciplinary methods, the ultimate goal of which is to inculcate in free subjects the propensity for self-government and self-discipline. As such, biopower is inextricably linked to a new mode of subject-formation, which aims to create docile yet functional subjects (Foucault 1978, 1982, 2008).

Although Foucault mainly focused on biopolitical systems in the pre-digital era, his suggestion that biopower required “continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms” (1978, 144) has been highly insightful for researchers exploring the articulation of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) with biopower in the digital era. In a pioneering text, Deleuze (1992, 6) talked about the coming of “societies of control,” which “operate with machines of a [new] type, computers” that enable continuous regulation more effectively than earlier disciplinary technologies. Following Deleuze’s lead, others have

focused on cases such as computational genomics (Rabinow and Rose 2006), the internet (Galloway 2004), algorithmic systems (Cheney-Lippold 2011), and digital surveillance (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). These studies suggest that new ICTs can facilitate a far more flexible and constant system of control than before (Deleuze 1992; Galloway 2004; Haggerty and Ericson 2000; Nadesan 2008; Rabinow and Rose 2006) – not the least, we should add, because they allow for new self-control practices. Indeed, a crucial point to note here is that, for Deleuze (1992), control societies can succeed largely because many individuals are “motivated” to participate in it and voluntarily subject themselves to continuous regulation.

At the same time, many of these authors also suggest that new information technologies might facilitate “new forms of resistance” (Deleuze 1992) and counter-practices – though, what specific forms these could take is not extensively investigated. We have, of course, many examples of “internet activism” and “hacker communities” that leverage the affordances of digital media for political purposes (Kubitschko 2015). However, three decades ago, Deleuze (1992, 6) observed that it was not strategies like “sabotage” or “trade-unionism” but rather subversive uses of computers (e.g., “piracy”) that constituted a “danger” to the control societies. We could, therefore, say that another “new form of resistance” in this milieu entails *the use of a given social control technology for purposes other than social control*. In this context, the redeployment of algorithm-based systems by users “for purposes they were not originally intended” constitutes one major example of this practice (Kitchin 2017, 26; Karakayali, Kostem, and Galip 2018). The fact that they are not deliberately articulated with a political agenda should not lead us to attribute a lesser significance to them. We shall return to this in the analysis of our findings.

In this respect, the transfer of functional music, as a pre-digital biopolitical technology, to online media can shed much light on contemporary forms of biopower. Ironically, “functional music” gained its current meaning with the emergence of the modern conception of music as an individual artistic expression, which can be enjoyed for its own sake (Adorno 1978, 2002a; Blackstone 2011), such that, today, the term is usually understood as music that fulfills any other function than a purely esthetic one. For Adorno, this development stems from the erosion of the organic ties between musicians and their community in modern society. Throughout history, music has almost always been performed as part of a

collective activity (e.g., a ritual, labor process, or warfare) and, as such, served a social function. In this sense, many historical examples of functional music such as work songs (Gioia 2006) can be retrospectively characterized as serving biopolitical ends insofar as they modified the “vital characteristics” of a population such as bodily prowess and mental rigor (Foucault 2008, 317). But, here, music is often a part of everyday life and its esthetic and social functions are integrated. According to Adorno, this “unity” begins to break down at the dawn of the modern age, giving way to the differentiation between “serious” and “light” music. As “art music” turns into a specialized activity removed from everyday life, the void left behind is filled by – “light” – “background” music, which “inhabit[s] the pockets of silence that develop between people molded by anxiety, work and undemanding docility” (Adorno 2002a, 289; Adorno 2002b). It is in this context that new forms of functional music emerge in the twentieth century (Attali 1977; Lanza 2004; Radano 1989) that incorporate the most salient elements of modern biopower identified by Rabinow and Rose (2006, 195): they are designed according to scientific procedures by “experts” and employed as “strategies for intervention upon collective existence.” Especially the “products” of Muzak brand, which have been used in workplaces from late 1930s onwards with the objective of boosting worker productivity, epitomize these modern forms. Eventually, as a pioneering example of “custom made functional music” (Lanza 2004, 40), “Muzak” became a generic name for all similar forms of modern “background” music.

A key conceptual problem here concerns *how* Muzak, if at all, could move the workers to increase productivity. Early Muzak researchers said that this could be achieved through some form of “emotional control” (Burriss-Meyer 1943), such as “cheering up” the workers (Antrim 1943; MacLeod 1979). As such, Muzak belongs to a long lineage of efforts to tame and utilize emotional effects of music (DeNora 2000; Schwarz 2018). Lately, researchers have suggested that the same mechanism continues to operate also in online media in the form of mood playlists. More specifically, it is suggested that, in online media, functional music, enhanced by new technological capabilities, takes the form of “personal care products for affect management” (Anderson 2015, 811), which are particularly appealing to “entrepreneurial subjects who strive to lead better, happier, and more productive lives” (Eriksson and Johansson 2017, 78).

We find these pioneering studies very insightful but we also wonder whether these are the *only* outcomes of the articulation of a biopolitical instrument based on affect management to new media. Perhaps the most pressing question here is whether affect management is always put to the same kind of uses in this new media as in the past. The absence of detailed investigations of actual user practices makes it difficult to answer that question, which is precisely what we aim to undertake in this article. However, first, a brief look at the new possibilities online media creates for functional uses of music is in order.

### Muzak and functional music in online media

Although Muzak is the closest ancestor of online functional music, the two differ significantly with respect to where and when the music is utilized; by/to whom it is “applied”; and, through what methods/mechanisms “functionalization” is realized. Let us, then, begin by briefly reviewing these differences, which can give us important clues about the peculiarities of online functional music.

1. *Where/When – mobility and accessibility:* Muzak is produced for specific settings such as factories or shopping malls (Greene 1986; Jones and Schumacher 1992). In effect, despite its ubiquity in public space (Bradshaw and Holbrook 2008), Muzak is essentially “sedentary,” awaiting us in various places we visit. Although there are also examples of online playlists that are meant to be used in particular places, it is usually the listener who *brings* the music to that place. This mobility, of course, begins with portable listening devices that predate the internet era (Beer 2010; Bull 2004, 2013; Heye and Lamont 2010; Hosokawa 1984; Thibaud 2003). However, the mobility rendered possible by even the most advanced versions of these devices was compromised by storage limitations because only a limited set of musical works could be “carried around” by listeners. In contrast, new streaming systems can provide access to virtually infinite variety of functional playlists at anytime and anywhere. In short, whereas one enters and exits Muzak, online functional music can accompany users everywhere.
2. *By/To whom:* Muzak is designed by specialists, who arrange and edit popular tunes to induce particular affects in a specific population, like workers in a factory. It is therefore applied “from above” to the members of the target population

(Jones and Korczynski 2006), who have no *direct* influence on this design process – though, indirectly, the listeners’ responses have often been analyzed by producers of modern functional music from 1930s onwards (Baade 2006; Jones 2005; Reynolds 1942). This feedback mechanism is far more developed in online media where continuous user input is essential for several reasons. Firstly, data about user preferences is invaluable for record companies and artists (Morgan 2020), as well as marketing and branding agencies (Prey 2018). More importantly, constant flow of information about user activities/preferences is necessary for the operations of the recommender algorithms that facilitate the personalization of the choices offered to users by streaming services (Beer 2009; Cheney-Lippold 2011; Karakayali, Kostem, and Galip 2018). Of the several methods by which recommender systems can process user information, two are particularly noteworthy in the case of music streaming. The first, exemplified by Pandora’s recommendation system based on Music Genome Project, is an item-based approach that focuses on the musical items that a user prefers and recommends further items that have similar properties (Prey 2016). Although this system makes use of a giant database constructed by experts who classify songs according to a wide range of variables (“musical DNA”), continuous user input in the form of thumbs up/down messages is still essential for its operation (Szymanski 2009). A second, widely used method is collaborative filtering, where, this time, preferences of a user are matched with those of other users and recommendations are based on the commonalities between user profiles. In addition to this, Spotify, for example, makes use of The Echo Nest – a highly complex “music intelligence” platform – which collects and analyzes information about how users and artists describe musical works, and matches these descriptions with the musical properties of songs (Eriksson 2016; Leijonhufvud 2018; Prey 2016). Ultimately, all these methods serve the datafication of musical works as well as the listening experience of users with the aim of decreasing the uncertainty about user preferences. However, this does not mean that algorithmic systems can simply do without user input, because such input is essential for them to go on recommending new items to users (Karakayali, Kostem, and Galip 2018; Prey 2018). Thus, even when a mood playlist is exclusively designed by specialists

or expert algorithms, this process presupposes continuous user input (for a detailed description, see Pierce 2015). In short, online functional playlists are constructed through a continuous information exchange between different actors (e.g., specialists in streaming services, recommendation algorithms, and users), which indicates a more complex mode of operation than the “top-to-down” system of Muzak.

Of course, like Muzak, many featured playlists exist on *Spotify* created by the company’s global editorial staff as well as other mood playlists curated by certain “verified accounts,” including those of artists, record labels, third-party playlist services, popular brands like Coca Cola, renowned music festivals<sup>3</sup> and even political figures like Barack Obama.<sup>4</sup> With regard to their relation to social control, however, these featured playlists differ from Muzak in two key respects. First, although some of them are likely to encourage users to embrace biopolitical values such as productivity and health (e.g., Coca Cola’s “Your Study Group” or Spotify’s “work out” playlists), unlike Muzak producers, the actors who curate these mood playlists are not primarily interested in using them as disciplinary tools but are motivated by commercial or promotional purposes. In fact, as we shall see, if these playlists serve biopolitical ends, it is because, as Deleuze (1992) put it, *some* users are already willing to employ them for self-disciplinary purposes. And, secondly, in online media, not only do users frequently compile their own functional playlists (Hagen 2015; Nag 2018) but also, regardless of who constructs a mood playlist, they still have considerable control over where, when and for what purpose it will be used in daily life.

3. *By what methods (functionalization of music is realized):* Classical Muzak operated with the assumption that *not* all music is suitable for functional use. Thus, functionalization of music required both a pre-selection process and the re-arrangement of popular tunes by cleansing them from “distractive” vocals and rhythmic aberrances (Radano 1989, 450; Reynolds 1942). In contrast, the songs in online functional playlists consist of original works composed with artistic intentions. These playlists operate by the assumption that any music can be put to functional use without special editing. In fact, prior to the emergence of mood playlists, Muzak itself was going through a similar change. Already by late 1960s, a small company, Yesco, began to market music

“packages” consisting of original (i.e., unedited) songs for commercial and leisure environments. After two decades of hesitation, Muzak has also adopted this strategy and even bought Yesco. By late 1980s, the “old-style” Muzak arrangements were largely out of fashion (Jones and Schumacher 1992; Lanza 2004). Nevertheless, online functional music differs from this “new” post-industrial Muzak in two important respects. First, mood playlists far exceed the commercial, prepackaged Muzak lists in number and diversity. And, secondly, while the latter are exclusively offered to business owners, the former can be utilized as well as curated by any individual user.

To sum up, then, online media creates the possibility of putting any kind of music to functional use, by linking it with any emotional state or activity, at any time or place. This means that, potentially, many new domains of activity can become targets of affect management. At the same time, affect management does not have to be employed from above by a single group of experts or administrators as in the past because online media also renders it possible for users with diverse interests to become involved in the creation and utilization of functional playlists. In short, in online media, both the “targets” and “employers” of functional music can potentially go through a diversification. In what follows, we shall explore how these new potentials are played out in practice.

## Data sources and methodology

While macro-sociological approaches provide important clues about the ideological and commercial interests of service providers, they do not consider how users *respond* to what is offered to them. Therefore, recently, some researchers have begun to move away from this “product-focused” perspective toward a “user-focused” one (e.g., Friesen, Feenberg, and Smith 2009; Kibby 2009). Here, we follow this latter methodological trajectory by adopting a netnographic approach, focusing primarily on the activities, interactions, and comments of users on the internet.

We use two data sources. One is online forums (e.g., Spotify discussion groups<sup>5</sup>, Reddit, Quora), where users give accounts of their experience with functional music. While we pay close attention to forum discussions on mood/activity playlists, functional music in online media is not limited to such playlists. Forums also have deliberations about the use of esthetically intended works for functional purposes,

where users often attempt to link a given artistic genre to a particular function, mood or activity. Since these latter discussions also reveal much about user practices, they are equally valuable for us. Two, we surveyed the “descriptions” individual users attach to the playlists they create for functional purposes – an option the Spotify interface offers all users on start of a playlist creation process. In these brief texts, which are meant to serve as a kind of “manual” for other users, the curators are, in effect, describing how *they* utilize the playlists.<sup>6</sup>

These unsolicited narratives (Robinson 2001) open a window into the practices of users as both consumers and curators of online functional music.<sup>7</sup> The users are highly reflective about their practices, frequently raising questions about the kinds of music that work best with a particular mood or activity.<sup>8</sup>

We begin our analysis by identifying the specific purposes for which users employ various playlists, paying close attention to how they choose or construct them and in which particular contexts they tend to use them. We then compare each type of usage with Muzak in terms of its potential to serve biopolitical ends such as enhancing productivity, bodily health, mental concentration, or emotional stability of the users. On the basis of this criterion, we devised a typology of uses: enhancing productivity, aestheticization of everyday life, and, “self-moodification.” This typology should be seen as a “spectrum,” ranging from usages that overlap with pre-digital uses of functional music in terms of serving biopolitical ends, to those that deviate from those uses and have more complex relations to biopower. Alternatively, it can also be read as three different employments of “affect management” that constituted the key technique of Muzak. As such, this is *not* merely a *descriptive* typology; rather, it is meant to help us address the broader theoretical questions about the encounters between biopower and new ICTs.

## The uses of functional music in online media: A typology

### Type 1: Enhancing productivity in and beyond the workplace

Type 1 is closest to Muzak in terms of its social functions and is most vividly exemplified by some users’ attempts to employ online playlists to increase their productivity, especially when they are doing a monotonous job. Thus, these playlists are usually put to use in a variety of workplaces often with the aim of alleviating boredom:

Boring office talk got you down? Need something to vibe out to while you work? Well you’ve found the right playlist. No stress and most importantly no distractions! This playlist was curated to help you be more productive ... (Raphael\_delaghetto)<sup>9</sup>

[Here is a playlist of] music for construction work-sites, based on suggestions from some of my favorite construction company owners and workers I know! (Tim Brown)<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, this usage is not only confined to specific settings but also to specific hours of the day, which was also a great concern for Muzak producers (Antrim 1943). For example, the mood playlist, *Re-Energize*, curated by Spotify editors invite users to “forget [their] afternoon coffee and beat the slump with this re-energizing playlist!” Such is the case with user-created playlists as well:

Hitting the 3pm wall? Try our Ultimate Office Afternoon Playlist on Spotify for an energy boost (League).<sup>11</sup>

In some cases, users even adopt the idea of “scientific” playlist making to increase productivity, which was a trademark of Muzak:

A playlist I designed through my PhD studies ... based on scientific theory to psych you up, then draw you in. Containing plenty of rocking minimalist tunes to help you concentrate and zone in, without the distractions of the human voice (James CSøren).<sup>12</sup>

The omission of vocals mentioned by this user – and emphasized by many others – constitutes a key technique used in Muzak arrangements. For this purpose, besides using only instrumental music on their playlists, some users also prefer familiar pieces, again as in Muzak (Fairchild 2008; Greene 1986; Radano 1989).

Online playlists, then, are sometimes used to improve the work performance of users.<sup>13</sup> As such, they fulfill a disciplinary social control function akin to Muzak. There are, however, also important differences. Firstly, here, it is the individual users themselves who actively curate and/or employ these playlists to increase their own productivity. Thus, in comparison to Muzak, we can describe this as a more *refined* form of biopower, where users continuously engage in practices of self-discipline (see Rabinow and Rose 2006). Secondly, given its technological infrastructure, Muzak could only hope to control the behavior of a worker population by exposing all its members to the same musical input. The “science” behind it, therefore, operated with the – rather dubious – assumption that the same musical arrangement could produce roughly similar effects on each member (Jones 2005). The absence of a mechanism for

addressing individual differences, therefore, was an important limitation for its efficiency, such that at least for some workers, Muzak “seemed to have little or no effect” (Wyatt and Langdon 1937, 36). In contrast, in online media users continuously experiment with whatever works best for them:

If I have an intricate meticulous task to do, I'll blast some psytrance ... and I plow through it like a machine in no time (anachronic).<sup>14</sup>

For work purposes, i need something heavy with a high BPM to keep me productive like some Industrial Metal or techno (PedroP).<sup>15</sup>

[While coding] I always listen to the Peaceful Piano playlist of Spotify! (Flo Barriol).<sup>16</sup>

Insofar as productivity oriented uses of functional music are concerned, then, this flexible configuration offers more precision and efficiency than Muzak.

Finally, there is also an expansion in the domain of usage. Unlike Muzak, productivity oriented uses of online playlists also involve tasks that are mentally challenging and demand creativity and concentration (e.g., “coding,” film editing or dissertation writing). In addition to the Spotify playlists like *Creativity Boost*<sup>17</sup> and *Music for Concentration*,<sup>18</sup> users themselves often deliberately utilize different playlists for different tasks depending on the amount of concentration they demand:

When I do easy tasks I listen to playlist like “Massive Pop Remixes” and “New Pop Revolution.” It gives me some energy to avoid [boredom]. When I do more complex tasks like designing or reading I listen to something like “Instrumental Study.” It helps me to be focused on a task. (Oleg Krasavin)<sup>19</sup>

... it depends on what I'm doing. Sprinting: Aggrotech, Hellektro, Industrial, Trance, EDM. Research and learning new patterns: Classical. Tackling challenging pieces of code or debugging/refactoring: Death/Black Metal. (shakycode)<sup>20</sup>

The users also create their own “concentration” playlists for activities such as reading, studying, dissertation work,<sup>21</sup> designing and programming,<sup>22</sup> and even fiction writing:

Creativity Juice: Writing Playlist: A writing playlist for writers by a writer. Turn on some ambient lights, push play and get in the zone. Perfect for Science Fiction, Fantasy, et al. (123409734)<sup>23</sup>

The expansion of the biopolitical functions of mood music, however, goes far beyond the work domain. It reaches, for example, the “private” realm of relaxation and sleep, targeted by numerous dedicated playlists. As the curator of such a playlist titled

*Sleeping Pill* puts it: “A series of songs with slower tempos and less BPMs [beats per minute] to slow the heart rate and relax the body, hopefully making it easier to wind down and sleep” (Haeley Smith).<sup>24</sup> Users often stress that they use these playlists as an antidote to the stressful rhythms of modern life: “Eclectic easy listening after a hard day's work, on a Sunday morning or Saturday afternoon” (indiefolkradio).<sup>25</sup> One might almost sense a “therapeutic” tone in many of these comments. One user states that the list s/he designed aims “to put [the listeners] at ease” (1140267330)<sup>26</sup>, while another suggests that by listening to his/her playlist, users can “feel [their] worries float away” (alexrnbrdmusic).<sup>27</sup> In fact, “meditation” playlists can also be partly included here – though, as we shall see, this is not the only utilization of such playlists.

All this, however, does not mean that this type of usage is simply antithetical of the previous one. Rather, the two often complement each other, such that, if the former helps increase productivity, the latter allows the producer to rest and reproduce him/herself. Thus, for example, the following user employs a sleep playlist to prepare oneself for the activities of the next day:

When it's the night before an exam/job interview/driving test and your brain decides to throw a party, you can't call the cops to shut it down. Your best shot just might be this ... playlist. Good luck with your insomnia. (Simon Bosmans)<sup>28</sup>

At least in this respect, then, relaxation playlists too can be considered as part of a system of biopower because, after all, by allowing users to rest and relax, they are expected to contribute to a “healthy and productive” life.

Beyond productivity and relaxation, another expansion of the biopolitical functions of music can be seen in the uses of playlists for accompanying positive “mood regulation” practices such as building up “self-confidence” or inducing “joyful” emotions. Playlists intended for such usage are quite common on Spotify. *Confidence Boost*, for instance, is curated to remind users that they “are on top of the world,”<sup>29</sup> while *Happy Hits!* offers a selection of songs that would “boost your mood and fill you with happiness!”<sup>30</sup>

Let us, however, immediately stress that it is never just the moods at stake here. There is usually an ulterior utility in sight, which differentiates this usage from Type 3 we shall discuss below. To cite some examples:

Preparing for a big audition? Listen to these tunes to give you an extra boost of confidence (Playbill)<sup>31</sup>



So this playlist of mine pertains to motivation. I tune to this every time there are team practices or even simply just dealing with everyday challenges to keep me going ... (donmarco)<sup>32</sup>

Individual users are indeed keen on curating playlists that would improve their self-confidence *so as to* face the struggles of everyday life:

Has anyone told you that you're awesome today? If not, this playlist of confidence lifting, self-esteem boosting pop tunes should do the trick. (thinkpacifica)<sup>33</sup>

As we noted earlier, Muzak too was expected to increase worker productivity through some form of “emotional control” (Antrim 1943; Burris-Meyer 1943; MacLeod 1979). In this respect, this usage can be seen as an expansion of this basic technique into new domains, allowing users to, as Anderson (2015, 815) puts it, “manage their diverse portfolios of resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy.”

Finally, of course, another widespread target of online functional music is the “body.” Workout playlists (a distinct category on Spotify) are not only meant to accompany users during physical exercise but also, as the curator of a user-generated list puts it, “to get [them] in the mood to workout.”<sup>34</sup> They are expected to “put a spring in your step” while running (*Fun Run 150–165 BPM*<sup>35</sup>), give “a punch of intensity” (*Power Workout*<sup>36</sup>) to “get your body right” (*Workout Twerkout*<sup>37</sup>), and so on. While sharing their own exercise playlists, users also highlight similar aims:

This playlist is for whenever you work out, or go to the gym, and need some music to motivate you. All the songs in this playlist are very high intensity, and most have some sort of motivation to them. (joshilsangtani)<sup>38</sup>

As such, operating as a resource for “musical entrainment” (DeNora 2000, 78), online workout playlists constitute a most vivid example of a biopolitical usage that goes far beyond the domain of classical Muzak.

In sum, then, as is predicted in the literature on contemporary biopower, the different usages discussed so far signal the emergence of a biopolitical technology that, in comparison to Muzak, is far more expansive, less sedentary, more attuned to individual differences and, thereby, capable of enabling constant modulation and optimization of a wide array of user practices (Deleuze 1992; Haggerty and Ericson 2000; Nadesan 2008; Rabinow and Rose 2006). As we shall see in a moment, however, not all uses of online functional music have such a straightforward connection to biopower.

## Type 2: Aestheticization of everyday life

On the one hand, this type of use is unlike the above-discussed Type 1 use because it is not goal oriented. Rather, in some current usages, users employ mood music for nothing other than to generate and sustain a particular mood or to enjoy a particular activity. In this respect, this usage is quite akin to Simmel's description of the “play-form” – an activity whose “end” is itself (Simmel and Hughes 1949). On the other hand, however, this usage is unlike the experience of music as a work of art because what is “enjoyed” here is not just music. It is important to note that when a playlist is utilized in this manner, users always link it with particular times, places, people, situations, and feelings. The playlist works as part of an assemblage, as one element among many, contributing to the overall experience:

If [this] playlist played before 7:00 PM, [it] doesn't show its full potential of hitting you in the feels. This can only be played at night in a car, a room or a bonfire. When everyone is not hype ... (lorddoan)<sup>39</sup>

This [playlist] was made to enjoy while having a pool day, afternoon or sunset vibe with your friends. (emmanuelnunez)<sup>40</sup>

Best played around a campfire with friends. (shane.clark.76)<sup>41</sup>

So, it is still functional music because it serves a purpose. But this purpose is not devoid of an aesthetic dimension:

Please tell me I'm not the only one who listens to certain tracks during my commute so as to make the trip a little more exciting. I normally have to walk to a bus stop, board it, stop at the metro, take the metro and then walk to my destination. A lot of this is replicated barring the bus ride in P5 so I thought I'd spice up my commute with the following tracks. ... I know listening to these almost transports me to Shibuya, making my trip less boring than it's ever been. (ThePhantomArcher)<sup>42</sup>

For this user, through the help of a playlist, the commute is “spiced up,” rendered “exciting” and turns into an enchanting journey – in other words, it is *aestheticized*.

In fact, this type of usage also occurs in work contexts but, unlike Type 1, it primarily targets the aestheticization of the work process, rather than increasing productivity:

It's amazing when something in your work really starting clicking just as the climax is building, makes working so much more passionate and fun. (bonestamp)<sup>43</sup>

Work and commuting are not the only examples. The aestheticizing use of mood playlists is directed to a whole range of other everyday activities such as studying, house cleaning, having a coffee, cooking, driving, and so on. Indeed, virtually, any moment of daily life can be an object of this aestheticizing use. The main function of music in Type 2, therefore, can be defined as *aestheticization of everyday life*.

Although this practice does not have an artistic aim, it does allow users a certain control over their experience of their everyday life:

I found myself stuck in a routine many times where listen[ing] to new music on the commute or at work really gave my day a different feel. Edit: If you want something easy this [playlist] is my daily driver ... I always try to add new songs to it to keep my days refreshing. (StickyKeys)<sup>44</sup>

This control over the “feel” of everyday activities, we suggest, can be defined as esthetic control, which endows users with, to borrow DeNora’s (2000) term, “aesthetic agency” (see also Bull 2004). Although this is also a form of affect management, its outcomes are no longer dictated either by experts or specific biopolitical objectives; it does not primarily supplement (self-)disciplinary endeavors but rather functions as a means of playfulness.

A closer look at user experiences indicates that we are indeed in a gray zone here. For example, in a forum discussion one user claims that, although people do not perform better when they listen to music, they “still choose to work with music because it makes them feel better about their performance” (oracular\_duck)<sup>45</sup> – and, many other users concur. More generally, for many users, through aestheticizing use of playlists, the drudgery of daily routines becomes more bearable – even “sweeter”:

No ones favorite day of the week just got a little more fun. High on caffeine, stuck in traffic, counting down to Friday, with these tunes, traffic jams are my jam (Thomas Engels)<sup>46</sup>

We can therefore say that aestheticization of ordinary life can induce a sense of well-being among the members of a population, though whether this effect can be seen as a biopolitical accomplishment is open to different interpretations. For example, earlier Muzak researchers observed that, even in the absence of any “increase in measured production,” workers *felt* “they got more work done with [Muzak]” and that work *seemed* “easier” and less monotonous (Gardner and McGehee 1959, 412–413; see also MacLeod 1979, 23). In this respect, the “well-being effect” can be seen as lubricating the operations of a disciplinary

technology. On a slightly different note, one can argue that such an effect hinders users from developing a critical attitude toward the repressive and alienating aspects of their daily lives. Seen from this perspective, esthetic control appears as a supplement to social control, and mood playlists resemble the products of a “culture industry” – though one that is far more personalized and effective than Horkheimer and Adorno (1997) could possibly imagine (see also Illouz 2018).

However, it is also possible to develop a counterargument here again in light of Adorno’s work. As noted above, Adorno (2002b, 506) was highly critical of the withdrawal of art music from everyday life and even complained that “[i]n our immediate life there is no longer a place for music.” Nevertheless, this did not mean that music was “entirely eliminated” from daily life. Indeed, one major form in which music, “exiled” from everyday life and “pushed to the edge of existence, holds out loyally there” is “music as background” (Adorno 2002b, 506). More importantly, background music could occasionally move to the foreground and create a critical counterpoint to the humdrum of everyday life by injecting an esthetic element into it (Leppert 2005). Thus, for example, “anyone who, moved, startled out of his conversation or thoughts” for a brief moment and becomes aware of the music in the background is likely to feel “dwarfed” by that experience (Adorno 2002b, 509). In those rare moments, Adorno seems to suggest, background music functions as a reminder of a time when esthetic and social functions of music were still integrated. For Adorno, this implies a critical potential as it allows one to become aware of the alienating nature of a reified everyday existence, of which the separation of “aesthetic” and “ordinary” experience is a symptom.

The crucial point is that aestheticizing uses of mood playlists can indeed be seen as a realization of this critical potential in a more sustained manner, where users are actively engaged in bringing an affective dimension to their daily lives. In this respect, Type 2 has important parallels with the attempts of modernist artistic movements to bridge the divide between “aesthetic” and “ordinary” experience. In artistic movements ranging from Dadaism to Warhol’s pop-art, such attempts entail the recasting of ordinary objects as artworks as well as the use of mundane environments for artistic activities like “installations” and “street art” (Featherstone 1991).<sup>47</sup> Modernist artists, of course, did not expect these strategies to result in an immediate transformation in their societies. But some (e.g., Henri Lefebvre and the Situationists) did see a potential in them to “revive

and ... revolutionize the everyday by registering its rich and mysterious particularities” (Felski 2002, 608–609; cited in Highmore 2004, 320). Although, of course, the aestheticizing use of mood playlists is not a “movement” led by artists, the above-quoted user comments suggest that its practitioners do tend to “register” aspects of their everyday lives differently than before.

We can, then, think of the aestheticizing use of mood playlists as constituting an alternative practice with respect to two essential aims of biopolitical subject-formation: docility and functionality. Firstly, by redeploying mood playlists for aestheticizing rather than self-disciplinary purposes, the users prioritize “playfulness” over productivity and functionality. And, secondly, to the extent that “aesthetic control” enables users to give new meanings to their everyday activities (see Bull 2004), this can indeed be considered as a step away from docility. Thus, for example, to experience the labor process as an exciting activity need not just serve the creation of docile workers but it could also lead one to question whether labor should merely be considered as a means to an end to be measured by productivity. As Elliott (2018) points out, it might also create a new attitude toward labor as an activity meaningful in itself, triggering a yearning for “reconfiguration of work” – a yearning that is highly reminiscent of the brief awareness that results from the occasional move of “background” music to the foreground, according to Adorno (see also Highmore 2004). In short, although Type 2 use does not entail an immediate disruption in daily routines, it does involve a deviation with respect to biopolitical applications of functional music in online media.

### Type 3: Self-moodification

The third type can best be described as a mutation of the previous one, where in addition to managing their feelings about their daily activities, users also attempt to “mo(o)dify” their overall experience of *themselves*. The following users’ creation of an “epic” atmosphere around ordinary tasks is one vivid example of such “moodification”:

Music like this is awesome for getting through work, it makes you feel like you’re managing to accomplish something epic even if you’re just rearranging spreadsheets. (danceswithronin)<sup>48</sup>

It’s like I’m working for something much more important than what it really is, as if it could save humanity from something disastrous (Lolmarmalade)<sup>49</sup>

Here we can see that as their work tasks are given a new sense, the users themselves pass from an

“ordinary” to a “heroic” mode. This process, however, is not limited to the “heroization” (see Featherstone 1992) of work efforts but encompasses many different activities and modes/moods:

Have you ever had this mood when you feel like a lonely detective walking through dark streets in an old “film noir”? Here [is] ... a ... playlist [that] throws you into the fantasmatic universe of the detective novel. ... Have a nice walk! (GillianDelvigne)<sup>50</sup>

Such cases reveal that “aesthetic control” can extend from changing the perception of an external object/activity to re-configuring the whole mood and mode of existence of the user. This “self-moodifying” use, therefore, operates as a “technique of the self” in Foucault’s (1997, 225) sense, i.e., as a tool that “permit[s] individuals to effect ... a certain number of operations on their own ... conduct and way of being.”

One version of this can be observed in certain uses of “Meditation” playlists. The descriptions attached to such playlists by their curators often refer to aims such as “enhanced compassion and self-awareness”<sup>51</sup> or “experien[ing] great bliss, divine wisdom,”<sup>52</sup> rather than improvements in health or work performance. In other words, they primarily accompany practices that target, as some users put it, “spiritual” self-transformation.

But perhaps the purest examples of “self-moodifying” uses of playlists are those that facilitate various forms of experimentation with distinct moods of existence:

My mood playlist – sad, bittersweet and uplifting, curated in that order and to be listened as such; I like to think it [sic.] as a journey through emotions and you emerge anew! (makh)<sup>53</sup>

What matters here is the *journey* of the self, along a spectrum of self-chosen emotional states. It is crucial to note that this is not simply a “mood elevation” attempt, since such experiments might very well include the exploration of moods that are deemed “undesirable”:

This is my Melancholy Playlist. Perfect for when you’ve got a feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause. (Ben\_Jamin)<sup>54</sup>

Self-moodification should therefore be distinguished from “mood enhancement” for purposes of better work performance or some other ulterior utility. Rather than facilitating an “external” achievement, here the playlist becomes a vital medium for the relation of the *self to itself*: “[This is] a playlist story of who I am, what I feel, and the person I want to be.”<sup>55</sup> Here, affect management does not primarily serve the

purpose of motivating users to adjust their conduct to realize fixed objectives but rather to experiment with different moods/modes of existence, opening up a space of freedom that might potentially be used for critical self-reflection and transformation (see Karakayali 2015).

## Conclusion

Online media are not simply new outlets for various preexisting types of functional music – even though many types of mood music have existed in non-digital formats for a long time (Schwarz 2018). Rather, they constitute a space of affordances where new functional connections between music and user activities can be forged. In other words, we can say that new media play a transformative role vis-à-vis functional music, leading to a diversification in *both* its uses *and* social functions.

This transformative role is inseparable from the two key capabilities of online media. One, the possibility of linking affective powers of music with any emotional state or activity, at any place or time. As we saw, some users leveraged this capability to use mood playlists as “personal care products for affect management” (Anderson 2015, 811). Such efforts turn functional music into a more expansive and flexible control technology than before. Two, online media also make it possible for individual users to engage actively in the creation and utilization of functional playlists. Although this second capacity is essential for the self-disciplinary applications of mood playlists, it is also employed by some users for various esthetic, ethical, and even “spiritual” objectives, which do not have a straightforward connection to social control as in the first type of usage.

Such double transformation is unlikely to be unique to functional music. Similar processes, for example, have been widely observed in the case of another major social control technology – surveillance. While digital surveillance carried out over the internet often assumes a “panoptic” configuration, it has a scope of application that was unimaginable in Bentham’s – and even Foucault’s – time (Haggerty and Ericson 2000; Lyon 2001). At the same time, surveillance tends to gain new uses and social functions that did not – and, perhaps, could not – exist in the pre-digital era such as being turned against elite groups in society (Albrechtslund 2008; Dennis 2008). As such, two “classical” instruments of social control, Panopticon and Muzak, go through strikingly similar transformations in the digital era. And, in both cases,

we see the same structural dynamics, which can be schematized as follows.

On the one hand, online media creates the possibility of extending the operations of any given control technology toward new social activities and contexts, and thus providing a favorable environment for proliferation of power networks. On the other, however, since in order to function properly such networks need to open up to new actors with diverse interests, the possibility of subversive – or, at the very least, unintended – redeployments of this technology also increases. In a sense, therefore, these two potentials presuppose each other but they do not necessarily always work in tandem. It is as if as “power” taps into the hitherto untouched regions of users’ lives through a new technical apparatus, users might also tap into the “dormant” affordances of the same apparatus. Thus, to use Feenberg’s (2019) terminology, a co-construction process is set to motion, where proliferating power networks become entangled with novel “world-making” efforts of users.

This model, of course, is not meant to foretell us the specific outcomes of the encounters between social control technologies and new media; if anything, it highlights their inherently open nature. Indeed, implicit in this model is the idea that a new type of political space might be in the making in the productive environment engendered by such encounters. We have already seen this in the case of functional music. Muzak is a political technology because it was designed to serve a specific social function. In contrast, we can say that functional music in online media is political because it does not serve a single aim; its social functions are neither predetermined, nor unchangeable, but emerge out of the dynamic interactions of multiple actors. It has, of course, been underlined by scholars with diverse perspectives that the internet has ambiguous sociological implications and can serve different – even diametrically opposed – political interests (e.g., DiMaggio et al. 2001; Feenberg 2019; Karakayali, Kostem, and Galip 2018). While our observations can partly be considered within this broad framework, we need to stress that what we see here is not a political space in the classical sense of the term, which can be described in terms of a confrontation between different political orientations. The user narratives we have analyzed, for example, involve no reference to political resistance or struggle, even if, as we have seen, some user practices do end up opening a space for employing functional music for purposes other than social control. As such, what makes this space politically significant is that it

allows haphazard experiments and improvisations, the results of which might not be easily anticipated and, hence, managed, by a system of power – at least not in the short run.

Thus, even in the absence of deliberate political resistance, strange things tend to happen to social control technologies in online media. They are, for example, turned into tools of playfulness by the very subjects they were expected to render productive, or employed as instruments of “counter-surveillance” by the very agents they were expected to scrutinize. It seems that, in its encounters with new media, “power” finds at its disposal an irresistibly versatile instrument (for extending its networks), which, however, it cannot fully control. In all likelihood, such encounters and their intriguing outcomes will be a part of our cultural landscape for a while, though it is too early to say whether this might lead to more profound sociological changes. Nevertheless, we think it is a question worth exploring further, for which, we hope, our analysis of the “functional turn” in online music media can provide a useful reference point.

## Notes

1. As of May 2019, mood playlists constitute roughly one third of all playlists on Spotify and have over 64 million followers.
2. This tendency is also attested by the addition of the categories of Moods and Themes to the search interface of the largest online music database AllMusic in 2011, which until then allowed searches only through the classic category of Genres. AllMusic characterizes Themes as “activities or events particularly suited for a song” and Moods as “adjectives that describe the sound and feel of a song” (<https://www.allmusic.com/faq/topic/moods>). In effect, unlike Genres, Moods and Themes are primarily based on usage-related characteristics (see Mount 2013). These two new categories, furthermore, are not marginal features of AllMusic search engine; together they have 471 sub-categories, while Genres has only 21 sub-categories.
3. See Kjus (2018).
4. Playlists created by Spotify editors and “verified users” show a blue tick, denoting that this is an official page. Unless otherwise noted, all the playlists we refer to in this study are user-generated.
5. <https://community.spotify.com>
6. Data regarding user comments and user-created playlists were gathered between November 2017 and May 2019. We surveyed over 300 user posts from 7 different websites (Reddit, Quora, and Spotify forums being the most important sources). User-created playlists were reached either from the links provided by users themselves or through the Spotify interface.
7. We do not, of course, claim that our data is representative of online music media users. Indeed, for the most part, it is impossible to identify the age, gender, and ethnicity of the 37 users we cite in this study with certainty, since in most cases, the user identities are not disclosed. However, by inspecting the user-names, the content of the comments and playlists, and sometimes the users’ Facebook accounts, we conjecture that the users we cite are predominantly young-adult, white males. This is largely in accordance with Leijonhufvud’s (2018, 186-187) observations about Spotify’s user population.
8. For example, for a lively discussion on whether music without vocals suits “online work” or not, see: <https://www.seoclerk.com/faq/23207/What-is-your-playlist-while-you-are-working-online>
9. [https://open.spotify.com/user/raphael\\_delaghetto/playlist/6g3u3ft7wiqUcOb6JcFdEM?si=QLfTYTfQSQiVwU\\_qgcaCMA](https://open.spotify.com/user/raphael_delaghetto/playlist/6g3u3ft7wiqUcOb6JcFdEM?si=QLfTYTfQSQiVwU_qgcaCMA)
10. <https://open.spotify.com/user/122749549/playlist/2zW7VqT6LPXj9cFDYyIbDy?si=bYiTwcFRRvSdSS5QlmuRQg>
11. <https://open.spotify.com/user/iw53grq60xpiqv8hpwte68o2/playlist/0iFsFylytzUSu90ClgxznX?si=crGp90N9TimpbOgVwAx3Gw>
12. <https://open.spotify.com/user/1298599689/playlist/0sxnBm8SU4ReRaDkmXIFH?si=ekwi01rgTcyXF9zE-mAeVg>
13. There are also a vast number of playlists on Spotify, which specifically target consumption-related activities. Business owners use these playlists very much like Muzak was employed in commercial settings to “manage” consumption in the post-war era (Jones and Schumacher 1992; Lanza 2004, 159-166; Sterne 1997). No individual user, however, seems to employ these playlists to make himself/herself consume more!
14. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt\\_love\\_to\\_play\\_music\\_while\\_working\\_play\\_a\\_video/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt_love_to_play_music_while_working_play_a_video/)
15. <https://www.seoclerk.com/faq/23207/What-is-your-playlist-while-you-are-working-online>
16. <https://dev.to/jezrielbajan/any-spotify-playlist-you-can-recommend-to-boost-coding-concentration-thank-you-e11>
17. [https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX56qfUZBncF?si=nmUhf5ZuRPWtcn11pbk\\_CQ](https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX56qfUZBncF?si=nmUhf5ZuRPWtcn11pbk_CQ)
18. <https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX3PFzdbtx1Us?si=HR1G6LRIQRaZ6m7ExT3khQ>
19. <https://dev.to/jezrielbajan/any-spotify-playlist-you-can-recommend-to-boost-coding-concentration-thank-you-e11>
20. <https://gorails.com/forum/what-do-you-listen-to-while-coding>
21. <https://open.spotify.com/user/12151115887/playlist/7ozpSJoH6WRXzXG1eP14Oq?si=J2ENqX-dRfGPUqksWPQt5Q>
22. [https://open.spotify.com/user/1167460967/playlist/4xxwsMXSPPkTrOLYs542rT?si=gGvy\\_O\\_ySqSm4ucvSDQ5bQ](https://open.spotify.com/user/1167460967/playlist/4xxwsMXSPPkTrOLYs542rT?si=gGvy_O_ySqSm4ucvSDQ5bQ)
23. <https://open.spotify.com/user/123409734/playlist/37EwTM1r33Bdz9n2Mw4Qiq?si=xYQXOYGSr-KLc209hWEH6A>  
See also: [https://open.spotify.com/user/1167460967/playlist/4xxwsMXSPPkTrOLYs542rT?si=gGvy\\_O\\_ySqSm4ucvSDQ5bQ](https://open.spotify.com/user/1167460967/playlist/4xxwsMXSPPkTrOLYs542rT?si=gGvy_O_ySqSm4ucvSDQ5bQ)

24. <https://open.spotify.com/user/22vnpwplakzdnkkmwvuf3a/playlist/70aFdH8SKUP4H9vH3XPIYT?si=aRBR9dQRQP-6yc3oJt8Gw>
25. <https://open.spotify.com/user/indiefolkradio/playlist/7xvjPaJ35ZpD6cOCly95Eo?si=15h2R0fnS8Cixe6zzFe2fA>
26. [https://open.spotify.com/user/1140267330/playlist/1nSmLKqr6ubGNiBD77D7Zp?si=YNvohDUQROCThKA\\_0xdzvg](https://open.spotify.com/user/1140267330/playlist/1nSmLKqr6ubGNiBD77D7Zp?si=YNvohDUQROCThKA_0xdzvg)
27. <https://open.spotify.com/user/alxrnbrdmusic/playlist/6YSm3oZ7eHqFiG2700SSlZ?si=5WG5f2FMRxSu1PJ3aF0BOw>
28. <https://open.spotify.com/user/1111991616/playlist/5Mifcw4pYe7mVq3iA7EUIF?si=dBITTgBcQrK4W6tyUDILBQ>
29. [https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX4fpCWaHOned?si=W\\_yd7WPSSX-r5v4eV\\_H2ow](https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX4fpCWaHOned?si=W_yd7WPSSX-r5v4eV_H2ow)
30. [https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DXdPec7aLTmLC?si=gos\\_Zy0wT\\_2FvVKRgo6iTww](https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DXdPec7aLTmLC?si=gos_Zy0wT_2FvVKRgo6iTww)
31. <https://open.spotify.com/user/playbill/playlist/6nN2c6fCEPIR4vQ22vJrrl?si=xdjs1QoaR8ypnoOHGgegwxw>
32. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
33. <https://open.spotify.com/user/thinkpacific/playlist/2H3v57XTfuLa6k2frUQys?si=vZ2tLFrQTx-HOQfgbZxwLw>
34. <https://open.spotify.com/user/1268461069/playlist/5rPmTcITXsY8BtNyt4Mca5?si=3QA0NkS1SWeazNbtXM44tg>
35. <https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DXadOVCGhS7j?si=HNLYb1SGTwOQs8Dw6EcwFw>
36. <https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DWUVpAXiEPK8P?si=vNkBJUeiRQ2M9xh60JdLwA>
37. <https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX0HRj9P7NxeE?si=cuHnkF4DQaita9cwrR8mew>
38. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
39. <https://open.spotify.com/user/lorddoan/playlist/6fJBLXy2abBLMTAyskUqi?si=uAPr4HOJRXCPggXF8f25Q>
40. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
41. <https://open.spotify.com/user/shane.clark.76/playlist/2jKZQAXjtpLDVAPcwIjPVP?si=aGWH-jTRfq-PhjNrhHBTQ>
42. [https://www.reddit.com/r/Persona5/comments/709t05/p5\\_daily\\_commute\\_playlist/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Persona5/comments/709t05/p5_daily_commute_playlist/)
43. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt\\_love\\_to\\_play\\_music\\_while\\_working\\_play\\_a\\_video/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt_love_to_play_music_while_working_play_a_video/)
44. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/47h3hu/lpt\\_if\\_you\\_have\\_a\\_long\\_commute\\_listen\\_to\\_stand\\_up/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/47h3hu/lpt_if_you_have_a_long_commute_listen_to_stand_up/)
45. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt\\_love\\_to\\_play\\_music\\_while\\_working\\_play\\_a\\_video/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt_love_to_play_music_while_working_play_a_video/)
46. [https://open.spotify.com/user/116774146/playlist/2Wwj5BWwcWa9x2K5Blj7hG?si=vJBU\\_aJaQxquxg7yTAI77Q](https://open.spotify.com/user/116774146/playlist/2Wwj5BWwcWa9x2K5Blj7hG?si=vJBU_aJaQxquxg7yTAI77Q)
47. John Cage's *Muzak-Plus* – the “listeners” of which are also its “performers” – is perhaps the ultimate synthesis of such attempts (see Vanel 2008).
48. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt\\_love\\_to\\_play\\_music\\_while\\_working\\_play\\_a\\_video/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt_love_to_play_music_while_working_play_a_video/)
49. [https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt\\_love\\_to\\_play\\_music\\_while\\_working\\_play\\_a\\_video/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LifeProTips/comments/3gviwd/lpt_love_to_play_music_while_working_play_a_video/)
50. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
51. <https://open.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/37i9dQZF1DWVSIrecTqXh?si=CPHDX3NPSjmeXHmxIqm6VQ>
52. <https://open.spotify.com/user/jwpy0s3oix4e6i8r3lsww4brz/playlist/5kmMHL0ZwFaiFT6xKvsv9F?si=4M1ZDDYiTcW3Wa1BVe1b8Q>
53. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
54. <https://community.spotify.com/t5/Playlist-Exchange/Promote-Share-your-favorite-Playlists/td-p/1548401>
55. [https://open.spotify.com/user/lydiamartain/playlist/6NsGz2C7yp4CQILWxk1hUl?si=PbPob9nlRmSyHFmkPu\\_rxQ](https://open.spotify.com/user/lydiamartain/playlist/6NsGz2C7yp4CQILWxk1hUl?si=PbPob9nlRmSyHFmkPu_rxQ)

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