

PROGRESSIVE HOUSE: FROM UNDERGROUND TO THE BIG ROOM

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ABSTRACT

The electronic dance industry consists of many different subgenres. All of them have their own history and have developed over time, causing uncertainties about the actual definition of these subgenres. Among those is progressive house, a British genre by origin, that has evolved in stages over the past twenty-five years and eventually gained popularity with the masses. Within the field of musicology, these processes have not yet been covered. Therefore, this research provides insights in the historical process of the defining and popularisation of progressive house music. By examining interviews, media articles and academic literature, and supported by case studies on Leftfield's 'Not Forgotten' and the Swedish House Mafia's 'One (Your Name)', it hypothesizes that there is a connection between the musical changes in progressive house music and its popularisation. The results also show that the defining of progressive house music has been - and is - an extensive process fuelled by *center collectivities* and gatekeepers like fan communities, media, record labels, and artists. Moreover, it suggests that the same center collectivities and gatekeepers, along with the on-going influences of digitalisation, played a part in the popularisation of the previously named genres. Altogether, this thesis aims to open doors for future research on genre defining processes and electronic dance music culture.

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INTRODUCTION

On June 24 2012, the electronic dance scene found itself in a state of shock. On this day, the Swedish House Mafia shared a message on their website saying “We came, we raved, we loved” (Swedish House Mafia 2012). With this message the famous threesome announced the end of their long-term collaboration, promising their fans one last tour as a goodbye. The enthusiasm for this tour was overwhelming, to say the least: the Madison Square Garden in New York City sold out in nine minutes and within a week all seats of the remaining 49 stadia were filled, resulting in a ticket sale of one million (Larson 2014). These numbers confirm the enormous popularity of the Swedish musicians, whose music was consumed by a both large and diverse audience. The commercial success of the Swedish House Mafia seems to have played a major role in the popularisation of (progressive) house music (Larson 2014). Since the separation of the Swedish House Mafia, many artists that have followed their style achieved large successes within the mainstream charts: tracks by Axwell \wedge Ingrosso - an initiative by two former members of the Swedish House Mafia -, Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike, Alesso and Martin Garrix dominate the Spotify Top50 for weeks and are played in venues all across the globe (Spotify 2018).¹

The current popularity of house music was probably not anticipated by its pioneers. The 2017 house music descends from a long tradition that finds its origin in the Chicago of the seventies. Disc jockeys like Frankie Knuckles and Ron Hardy introduced the typical acid house style, that later would serve as a foundation for all other house genres (Rietveld 1998, 6). One of these originated in Britain in the early nineties, amidst a fully flourishing rave culture. Music journalist Dom Phillips was one of the first to address this genre in his article in *MixMag*, one of the most renowned DJ magazines in the United Kingdom of the 1990s. Philips was under the impression that

There’s a new breed of hard but tuneful, banging but thoughtful, uplifting and trancey British house that, while most at home with the trendier Balearic crowd, is just as capable of entrancing up a rave crowd. Once again, it’s possible to go

¹ Spotify playlists are adjusted constantly. Therefore, the amount of dance tracks featured in Top50 playlist depends on the season. The number will be higher between April and September because of ongoing music festivals and new releases. The average will be slightly lower from October through March.

out and hear mad but melodic music that makes you want to dance. Progressive house we'll call it. (MixMag 1992, 7)

Record labels and record stores originally used the term progressive house as a marketing label to distinguish the new British house - artists like Leftfield and Spooky - from the traditional American house music (Rietveld 1998, 42). Even though progressive house has its roots in the acid house style, the music itself differs from its predecessor in multiple ways. For instance, in opposition to acid house, early progressive house focuses largely on melodies, supported by heavy bass lines and ascending piano parts (Reynolds 1998, 378). Also, the tracks are considerably longer than the American tracks that formed the standard in earlier years. Furthermore, progressive house tracks are more suited for mixing due to the longer, more basic intros and outros, making it easier for disk jockeys to develop a fluid style of DJing (1998, 272).

It is also in the 1990s that the musicological study of electronic dance music (EDM) originates. Musicologist Simon Reynolds takes lead with his book *Generation Ecstasy* (1998), in which he focuses on the drugs-based dance music culture that created the rave culture of the nineties. A few years later, musicologist Mark J. Butler becomes one of the first to subject EDM to musical analysis. In *Unlocking the Groove* (2006), Butler discusses the musical - and especially the rhythmic - functions of techno music. Reynolds and Butler, along with all authors that followed their example, offer a useful framework for further musicological research on EDM. However, this framework is not without limitations. For instance, most of the literature on dance music refers to the music with the term EDM without making a clear distinction between different subgenres. Those who do, like Reynolds, only briefly name subgenres without elaborating on their definition. Moreover, due to the rapidly and constantly changing dance industry, literature tends to age quickly. This is evident especially in music histories: all histories on EDM only discuss house music from its origin in the Chicago acid style until 2011. The past seven years, in which a substantial shift occurred within progressive house music, are both from a historical and musicological point of view untouched. The result is that progressive house music is still defined by many as a separation from the Chicago

acid house style, even though the music that is currently defined as progressive house differs greatly from the progressive house music of the nineties. It is the previously named shift that will be the main focus of this thesis. In the following pages, I will be focussing on the historical process of the defining of progressive house music as a genre on the one hand, and on the popularisation of this genre between 1990 and 2012 on the other. As pioneers of the more commercial version of the progressive house genre, the role of the Swedish House Mafia within this process will function as a case study throughout this thesis, and will be compared to the music of Leftfield, one of the first progressive house artists. This research is divided into three-part structure: a discussion on the defining of genres - and progressive house music in particular -, a case study in support of my findings and a study on the popularization of progressive house music. Findings are based not only on academic literature, musical fragments, media articles and interviews, but also on indirect sources such as social media, streaming services and Internet forums. Whilst these sources are not reliable when isolated, they do contribute to the formation of possible hypothesises and are always placed in context through the use of notes. In the end this thesis is an attempt to provide a view on the development of progressive house music as a genre. It also aims to open doors for further musicological research on EDM.

CHAPTER 1 - ON THE DEFINING OF GENRE

Within various disciplines of research, among which musicology, many have written on the subject of genre classification. Almost all consider genre to be deeply connected to social contexts. For instance, Fabian Holt is convinced that genre “refers to a particular kind of music within a distinctive cultural web of production, circulation and signification” (Holt 2007, 2). Holt continues to say that

discourse plays a major role in genre making. A genre category can only be established if the music has a name. Naming music is a way of recognizing its existence and distinguishing it from other musics. The name becomes a point of reference and enables certain forms of communication, control, and specialization into markets, canons and discourses (2007, 3).

But what happens when a genre changes in definition? This phenomenon is rather common within popular music. Simon Frith has argued that “popular music genres are constructed—and must be understood—within a commercial/cultural process” (Frith 1996, 89). With this, Frith means that genres are never solid concepts: they originate and change because of commercial and cultural factors. These factors mainly include *center collectivities*, anyone and anything on the inside of a genre that plays a major role in its development. Examples of center collectivities are influential fan communities, critics, record producers, and artists whose iconic status marks them as leading figures (Holt 2007, 21).

Since EDM is considered popular music, the theories Frith, Holt, and others propose are applicable to dance music as well. Moreover, EDM might actually be more sensitive to such genre changes because of its reliance on technological developments. Due to these technological developments, the possibilities for EDM-artists expand by the day. This could be a partial explanation for the fact that over 65 different genre names currently

circulate within the electronic dance industry (Musicmap 2018; Every Noise 2018)². This fragmentation within EDM causes musicologists to rarely distinguish between subgenres. In most academic literature, the term EDM is used as a label for a heterogeneous group of musics made with electronic dance instruments for the purpose of dancing (McLeod 2001, 89). This use of EDM as an umbrella term is understandable in some respects. Since subgenres tend to overlap, it is difficult to distinguish them from each other. Kembrew McLeod emphasizes that in EDM, “the field of cultural production (music making and consumption) overlaps significantly with the economic field (i.e., how or where electronic/dance music is marketed, merchandised, and sold)” (2001, 61). The use of an overarching term can therefore avoid confusion.

Besides the similarities between many subgenres of EDM, the subgenres sometimes tend to change in definition themselves over the years. Even different people at one point in time might define a genre in different ways, due to a lack of consensus. This makes it hazardous to use them without providing a clear definition. Since clear definitions are difficult to establish in a rapidly changing music industry, musicologists tend to avoid them altogether. However, when researching within the field of musicology, it is important to look deeper into the origin and development of subgenres within EDM. Since this thesis is centred on the development of progressive house music as a genre, I will briefly discuss the development of EDM as a whole.

Dance music is splintered into various subgenres that develop constantly, due to multiple factors. For one, the electronic dance scene is known to evolve in terms of the music itself. New technologies like the like the Roland TB-303 and the Roland TR-808, enabled musicians to experience with new sounds (Rietveld 1998, 9). Besides technological developments, dance artists are also faced with a great variety of subgenres to gather inspiration from. On the other hand, an electronic dance scene develops at the audience's end. The defining of genres, as will be discussed in chapter two, benefits the marketing strategies of record companies dealing with accelerated consumer culture. Furthermore,

² Music Map is an initiative by Kwinten Crauwels, a Belgium music consumer. Over the course of eight years and based on 214 different sources, he created an extensive genre database. The site has not been updated since 2016; therefore more genres could now exist. Every Noise is a similar genre database, created from algorithms based on tracked and analysed Spotify data for 1540 genres.

according to McLeod, the naming process functions as a gatekeeping mechanism that generates a high amount of cultural capital - precise understanding of all codes, values and practices - to enter the different electronic dance communities (McLeod 2001, 61). As McLeod claims,

gate keeping occurs on a both a large scale (in electronic/dance music magazines and on the Internet) and a localized level (the record store). These are gate-keeping sites where subgenre names emerge and which are central to maintaining or limiting the circulation of these terms (61).

This goes hand in hand with the theories Holt and Frith propose on genre formation. Genres that are named in these places by center collectivities eventually end up at dance clubs, rave sites, and their accompanying promotional material.

1.1 THE ORIGIN OF PROGRESSIVE HOUSE MUSIC AS GENRE

The electronic dance scene as we know it has evolved over a long period of time, with the earliest influences dating back to the 1970s disco. Like EDM, disco is often associated with the frequent use of the synthesizer and is characterized by “its unrelenting, repetitive beat, which often was created with drum machines, synthesizers, and other electronic instruments” (2001, 62). Disco resembles EDM in social aspects as well: both genres originated in local subcultures and rapidly became part of a mainstream circulation (2001, 62). The initial audience of EDM, when it came to live in the club scenes of Chicago and Detroit, was also predominantly black, working class, urban and often gay. When pioneers like Frankie Knuckles and Ron Hardy entered the disco club scenes of Chicago, they built their empire on the disco tradition and turned it into a new brand of music, later called house music (Rietveld 1998, 12). Over time, the genre gained popularity, both in its cities of origin and in other major American cities. It was in the 1980s that house music reached Europe, drastically changing both the audience demographics as well as the music (1998, 24). In Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Britain, different styles of dance music came to life, all influencing each other constantly and causing the definitions of dance genres to be all but solid. Initially, Britain was primarily

a consumer of dance music, as most of the tunes were imported from the US, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium (1998, 26). Eventually Britain gained a genre of its own, a heavily trance-influenced strain of house music that grew to prominence with the rise of the British rave scenes (Insomniac 2014). Similar to trance music, the rhythm section featured kick drums on every beat and open hi-hats on the upbeat or every 1/8th division of a bar (Snoman 2009, 252). The genre was known for its many dramatic builds, crescendos and breakdowns and, according to journalists like Dom Phillips, Dave Dresden, and Josh Gabriel, unofficially began in 1990 with the release of Leftfield’s classic track ‘Not Forgotten’ (Reynolds 1998, 129; Mixmag 1995, 9; Insomniac 2014).

From the beginning, “progressive” meant just that: a dance track that develops in stages, proceeding step by step while adding and subtracting layers. Reynolds describes the subgenre as trippy and trancey, distinguished by long tracks, big riffs, mild dub inflections and multitiered percussion (1998, 376). This style can be seen as the first wave of progressive house music, that would soon transition in a second and third wave.

For a good part of the nineties, there was a fine line between progressive house and trance music. The resemblances lie mainly within the rhythm section, as can be seen in figure 1 and 2.



Figure 1. Progressive House. Bedrock feat. KYO - “For What You Dream Of” (1993) at 3:13.



Figure 2. Trance. Age of love - “Age of love” (1992) at 1:46.

Both genres featured multitiered percussion, with kicks on each beat and hi-hats on the upbeat or every 1/8th division of a bar. Moreover, both trance and progressive house made use of piano lines made up from sixteenth notes. The genres were easiest to distinguish by their average tempos: trance before 1996 was a little faster than traditional progressive house (Insomniac 2014). Due to all similarities, trance DJs like Paul van Dyk often consciously and subconsciously crossed over into progressive house playlists.

Once the late nineties era of trance was ushered in by artists like Tiësto and Armin van Buuren, the progressive house genre as a whole aimed at distinguishing itself from its more uplifting counterpart (Butler 2006, 41). The result was a second, darker wave of progressive house music. As can be seen in figure 3 and heard in the full track, the second wave progressive house replaces the uplifting pianos and breakdowns full of major chords by sound effects filtered through the use of reverb and delay (Insomniac 2014). Instead of trying to preserve house's disco roots, dark progressive house was “no-nonsense pumping house” with little to no innovation, now aimed mainly at heterosexuals (Reynolds 1998, 402).

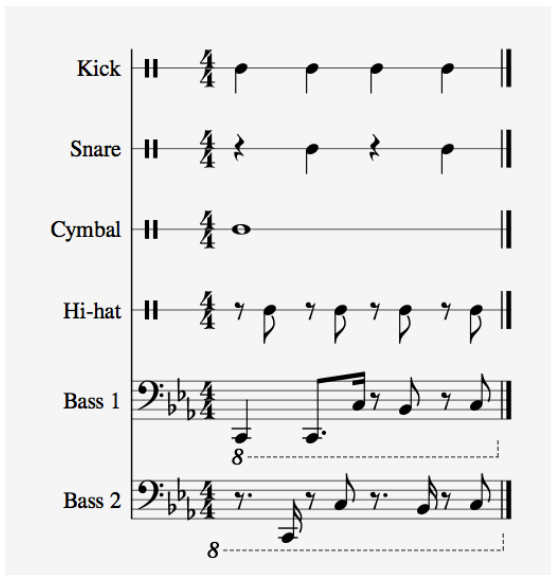


Figure 3. Pole Folder & CP - “Apollo Vibes” (2001) at 2.15.

At this point, progressive house music was anything but solely British. DJs from all over Europe had started producing what they themselves called ‘progressive house music’,

causing the genre to inspire a new generation of DJs like Steve Angello, Sebastian Ingrosso, and Eric Prydz. Since 2004 they released track after track, largely based on progressive house but with added melodic lead riffs and big drums commonly found in trance. This third wave of progressive house resembled the first one in terms of being trance-influenced, but was more commercial in design, for instance by using more distinct build-ups and drops with fewer material.

CASE STUDY

In order to make the musical differences between the first and third wave of progressive house music more visible, I will compare two tracks based on the analysis methods of Butler (2006), supplemented with spectrograms made in Sonic Visualiser. The first track is Leftfield's 'Not Forgotten', named by many as the first progressive house track, and the second is 'One (Your Name)' by the Swedish House Mafia, one of the most famous progressive house tracks from the 2010s (Billboard 2010). The analysis material for 'Not Forgotten' and 'One (Your Name)' can be found in appendices A and B respectively. Firstly, the tracks were decomposed into all their separate musical items, which were then categorised into four groups:

- Rhythmic: repetitive loops
- Articulative: brief loops appearing at or near structural boundaries
- Atmospheric: dynamically soft loops that contribute to the mood, generally lacking clear rhythmic articulations
- Melodic:³ loops with strong melodic functions.

The material presented within each pair of repeat signs is a loop that is repeated throughout the track. The duration involved in each repetition is shown in the column titled "loop length" (Butler 2006, 180). Thereafter, all material is transformed into a visual representation, showing every layer that is added and subtracted throughout the

³ Butler does not use this fourth category in his analysis since his research focuses on genres in which melodic loops do not appear often. However, since progressive house tends to have a significant amount of melodic loops, the category will appear in this thesis.

track.⁴ Lastly, to make the build-ups and drops more visible, spectrograms have been added at the end of each appendix.

LEFTFIELD - NOT FORGOTTEN

Leftfields 'Not Forgotten' was positively received by both fans and music critics, and sampled by dozens of DJ's across Britain (Melody Maker 1992, 23). Due to its popularity, many versions have been published since the original, but in order to study the very first progressive house music, this analysis will focus on the original 1990 mix. Since 'Not Forgotten' was considered the first progressive house track in history, its features correspond with the first wave of the progressive house movement. For instance, the track lasts 6:40 minutes, which is considerably long for a popular music track. The song is built in many layers with the help of over fifteen instruments (Appendix A). Besides electronic sounds such as synthesizers, Leftfield uses a lot of synthesized acoustic instruments that are not necessarily associated with electronic music. For example, trumpet, guitar and bongo occur multiple times throughout the song (Appendix A). Vocals appear as well, but they are used as atmospheric sounds rather than melodic sounds. Percussion plays a major role within the track, considering the presence of beatrium, bongo, hi-hat, kick, toms, triangle, finger snap, cymbal and multiple snares (Appendix A). The track is indeed progressive in structure: it features an intro and from 00:45 onwards, layers are added and subtracted constantly, until the track eventually makes its way back to the outro, featuring the same materials as the intro (Appendix A). However, the overall structure is rather consistent. As can be seen in the spectrograms, there is a clear difference between the intro, the main song, and the outro, but no extreme climaxes occur (Appendix A).

SWEDISH HOUSE MAFIA - ONE (YOUR NAME)

Exactly twenty years after the release of 'Not Forgotten', 'One (Your Name)' charted at number one on Beatport.com.⁵ Since, the hit track was rewarded with multiple awards, among which International Dance Music Awards for Best Break-Through Artist - Group,

⁴ Visual representations do not include anacruses, fade-ins and fade-outs for neither instrumental nor vocal materials.

⁵ Beatport is an online destination for dance music DJs, producers, and the electronic music community.

Best Artist - Group, and Best Progressive Track (Winter Music Conference 2018). The Swedish House Mafia released multiple versions of the song, with and without the vocals of Pharell Williams, in both an original and a radio edit.

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, original progressive house edits feature long, basic intros and outros to make them easier for DJs to mix (Reynolds 1998, 272). Eventually, although an exact period in time cannot be verified, artists started to bring out radio edits alongside the original versions. These were shorter mixes with more commercial utility (Langford 2014, 387). In the case of 'One (Your Name)', the radio version differs only slightly from the original mix in two ways. Firstly, the original mix features a 47 second intro and a 63 second outro, used for the purpose of mixing. Secondly, some materials are looped more in the original version. Since it is the radio edit with Pharell Williams that gained most popularity within the charts, and since the edit does not differ much from the original version, this version will be the subject of the following analysis (Spotify 2018).

Like in 'Not Forgotten', the track consists of multiple synthesiser loops and has a progressive structure through the adding and subtracting of different layers. However, the number of differences is significantly higher. The Swedish House Mafia use both fewer instruments and less material. All instruments sound fully electronic, and the focus lies mainly around the synthesizers (Appendix B). Although the track is built from little material, it is filled with synthesizers that appear in various octaves, with various electronic effects to make them sound just a little different from the previous loop. Eventually, five main synthesizer loops can be identified, of which four are rhythmically identical and the fifth serves as a bass line (Appendix B). The average number of beats per minute is also marginally higher (126 resp. 123). Furthermore, the Swedish House Mafia have a different approach on vocals. Pharell Williams vocals are used as melodic instead of atmospheric material, a commercial approach that has since been used by many artists. Unknown artists, but also more established artists like Justin Bieber, Rihanna and, Nicky Minaj, are featured on dance tracks. Where structure is concerned, the track has more distinct build-ups and drops. As can be seen in both the visual representation and the spectrogram, 'One (Your Name)' features three drops - at 1:02, 1:32 and 2:03 - that

are distinct from the build-ups (Appendix B).

Altogether, the first and third wave of progressive house appear to be rather different in musical respect. The structures found in ‘Not Forgotten’ and ‘One (Your Name)’ can also be found in other tracks that are considered progressive house in their time.⁶ Therefore, it would seem safe to assume that the definition of progressive house has changed over the past twenty years. Differences include the average BPM, number of instruments used, song lengths, instruments/octaves per loop, use of vocals, number of percussion instruments and degree of structural consistency. Similarities, such as the return to less dark material and an emphasis on synthesizers do show that the later waves originated from the first.

The question remains whether these musical differences contribute to the growing popularity of progressive house as a genre. There are indeed certain features within the third progressive house movement that seem to correlate more with the conventions of popular music. For instance, the fact that artists in the third wave of progressive house music release both original and radio edits makes their tracks more commercially appealing. Moreover, whereas the structure of the first wave of progressive house seems rather consistent, the 2010s progressive house is characterized by more distinct build-ups and drops. This could possibly be a way for artists to make their tracks stand out more, drawing a larger audience, both in clubs/festivals and in online playlists.

⁶ For more exemplary progressive house tracks, see Appendix C.

CHAPTER 2 - ON THE POPULARISATION OF GENRES

The change in the defining of progressive house music is deeply intertwined with the popularisation of the genre. As will become clear in this chapter, each new wave of progressive house appeared to have more commercial success than its predecessor(s). The commercial appeal of progressive house can be contributed to multiple factors. For one, as was shown in the case study, it seems that progressive house music has adapted to popular music conventions in some musical respects. Also, it might be partly due to the introduction of the Internet and the process of globalisation. For instance, social media and music distribution apps both play essential roles in the attraction of a broader audience. Michael Thivaos, part of the disk jockey duo Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike, states that

for us social media has played a very big role. We can make a new track and with one click, it'll be spread all over the world. Twenty years ago you had a vinyl, and that vinyl had to go to a distributor, and six months later maybe another country would have the vinyl (Alvarado 2015).

The founding of companies like YouTube in 2005 and Spotify in 2008 has expanded the possibilities for global music distribution. It is the same digitalisation, amongst other factors, that makes it difficult to determine the success of certain artists and tracks. Until the 2000s, one could look at record sales, reviews in printed magazines and line-ups for clubs and festivals. Today, we can add various other aspects to the list, such as the amount of followers and likes on social media, the number of Spotify and YouTube plays, and Beatport ratings: all indirect measurements that are open for interpretation.

When relating these (indirect) measurements to the popularity of progressive house music, an ascending line can be found. Leftfield did not hit any popular or dance music chart with their release 'Not Forgotten'. They did however experience commercial success with *Leftism*, their first album. The record brought Leftfield double platinum in Britain and opened doors for them to perform at larger venues (BPI 2018). These larger venues included clubs with a capacity of around 5000 and headliner positions on the

smaller festival stages. From 1996 onwards, Leftfield performed at multiple festivals with visitors' numbers varying from 17.000 to 40.000 (Barnes and Daley 2017). This was only the beginning for the commercial success of progressive house music, as would later become clear. On this process, Neil Barnes writes that

it felt like we were being recognised for this new form of music, but this idea that electronic music would become the dominant sound in 20 years, I don't think anyone would have known or guessed. I mean it's the most popular music, along with hip-hop (Barnes and Daley 2017).

Barnes seems right to consider EDM a dominant genre. Whilst the financial worth of the industry has not been researched until 2012, the industry grew from 4 billion in 2012 to 7.4 billion in 2017 (Watson 2017, 34). The expansion of the industry is partly due to digitalisation processes, but is also caused by the growing capacity of festivals. As can be seen in figure 4, the three largest dance festivals have quintupled their capacity in the past ten years (2017, 30). The growth of the industry as a whole has an impact on the growth of progressive house music as well, since many progressive house artists are headlining these festivals, are played on Spotify and are followed on social media (Tomorrowland 2017; Spotify 2018; Facebook 2018).

	Main Event Capacity (k)	
	2008	2017
Tomorrowland Boom, Belgium	50	360
Electric Daisy Carnival LA / Las Vegas, USA	65	400
Ultra Music Festival Miami, USA	70	165
Total of 'Big 3' Events	185	925

Figure 4. Main event capacity of the dance industry's three largest festivals (Watson 2017, 30).

This raises the question: how did progressive house transform into this mass-consumed genre? Besides musical characteristics, the rise of a specific subgenre can be attributed to

multiple parties, predominantly the *center collectivities* proposed by Fabian Holt: disk jockeys themselves, clubs, record labels, magazines and fans (Holt 2007, 21). Most progressive house DJ's don't seem to aim for the masses instantly: they establish themselves in the relatively small genre, binding a small core of fans to their name. Some artists eventually choose a more commercial direction and pursue various tactics. For instance, some make use of extensive social media marketing, collaborate with artists that are already big in the popular music scene and produce radio edits more suitable for the mass public. Artists with commercial potential are subsequently brought to the masses by record labels seeking for higher sales rates. The same commercial and economic interests are important to festivals, clubs, record stores and magazines.

However, the digital developments have reduced the power of the former gatekeepers, diminishing the role of dance media in dictating taste, influencing trends and promoting new artists (Paterson 2015). People have more opportunity to decide for themselves what music they want to consume. The result is that the consumers have become gatekeepers themselves, alongside the media, artists and record labels. The audience chooses what music it consumes instead of the gatekeepers choosing options for the audience (2015).

It might be this process that caused progressive house music to be pulled into a rapid slide towards mass consumption. When the Swedish House Mafia entered the scene, they had already made a name for themselves as individual disc jockeys. Once the three artists joined forces, the group rapidly rose to the top of the dance industry, gaining the status of 'faces of mainstream progressive house music' (BBC Music; EDM Identity; Magnetic). Their success reflected in multiple aspects. Many of their tracks received golden and platinum rewards for their sales' numbers (Sverige Topplistan 2018; BPI Awards 2018). These tracks were also consumed through online streaming services like Spotify, resulting in close to 300 million plays for one track (Spotify 2018). While partly due to the fact that Spotify did not exist in the 1990s, this number is extremely high when compared to Leftfield, whose most consumed Spotify track has fewer than 300.000 clicks (Spotify 2018). The group still maintains a fan base on social media as well: their Facebook-page is liked over 7.5 million times, in contrast with 117.000 reserved for the

pioneers of Leftfield (Facebook 2018). On the question what made the Swedish House Mafia stand out this much, member Axwell responded that

the secret is that it's not something that we planned; the whole thing was created organically and developed out of fun. That's what was great about the whole thing – we didn't try to manufacture or force the experience, it just came very naturally. (Hedfors 2012).

Although this statement is rather idyllic, one could question its accuracy. The success of the Swedish House Mafia might also be caused partly by good marketing. Whereas earlier progressive house artists were known merely for their music, the Swedish House Mafia were marketed as a brand. The group engaged in several partnerships with companies like Absolut Vodka, grabbing attention from larger festivals that saw opportunities (Absolut Vodka 2013). The Swedish House Mafia were also one of the first to successfully combine the existence of a small core of devoted fans with large-scale fandoms and media coverage. Manager Amy Thomsson has focussed on the binding of the two, working under the motto of think of the fans first, not the VIPs (Mason 2013).

After the separation of the Swedish House Mafia, progressive house became an equivalent to *big room*, a genre played on the main stages of festivals like Tomorrowland and Ultra (Beatport n.d.). The trend of the third wave of progressive house seems to continue, although the future of progressive house music as a genre remains unsure. Disk jockey David Guetta comments on the future of genres in electronic dance music by saying that “it's an evolution. Every musical genre starts from the underground, gets trendy, then it becomes popular, and then it dies or it is reinvented in a different way” (Alvarado 2015).

CONCLUSION

The progressive house scene is a complex one. As for many other music branches, progressive house as a genre is all but a solid concept. The genre is constantly influenced by many commercial and cultural factors, such as fan communities, critics, record producers, and artists. Their roles as gatekeepers, alongside technological developments and commercial interests of institutions, caused the genre progressive house to change in definition over the course of twenty-five years. As a result, the progressive house movement experienced three large waves, gaining popularity as time went by. As was shown in an extensive case study on Leftfield's 'Not Forgotten' and the Swedish House Mafia's 'One (Your Name)' and supported by a supplementary list of progressive house tracks, the music within each wave is clearly different. Musical differences lie mainly within the timbre - the use of purely electronic instruments in contrast synthesized acoustic instruments -, length of the songs, use of little material, and a structure that has a larger focus on sharp build-ups, drops, and breakdowns. These features may have contributed to the growing popularity of progressive house music within the popular music culture. Other important factors seemed to be the upswing of the Internet, the more common collaborations between house artists and pop music artists, a shift in gatekeeping functions, and different marketing approaches. The Swedish House Mafia seem to have formed their group at the exact right time. Having been in the electronic dance scene for years, the Swedish House Mafia joined forces to experiment with a more commercial form of progressive house. This in combination with good marketing and a focus on both a core of devoted fans and mass consumption created their golden formula, one that others have tried to copy ever since.

Multiple questions have been raised whilst getting insight in the historical process of the defining and popularisation of progressive house music as a genre. For instance, what is the future of genre labelling in general within electronic dance music? What is the correlation between authenticity and popularity? And (how) will gatekeeping function in the future electronic dance music scene? The door is now open more than ever, ready for more musicologists to enter the house.

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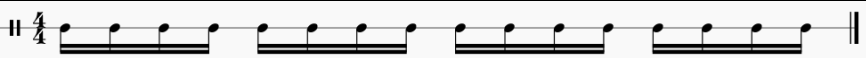
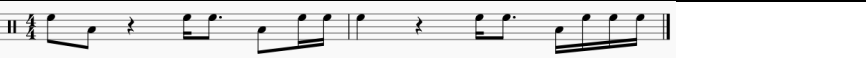
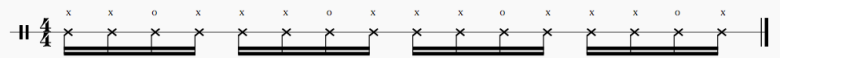

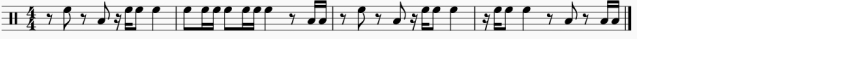
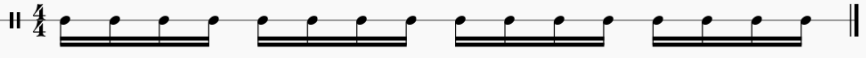
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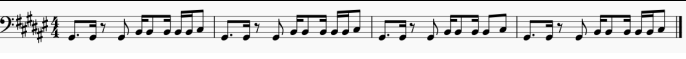

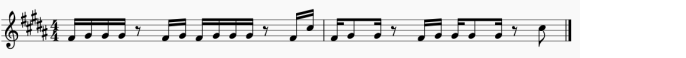
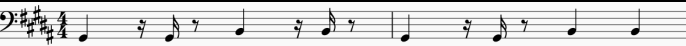
APPENDIX

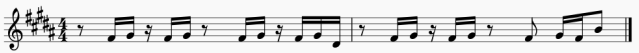

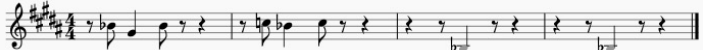
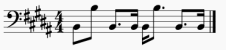
A. Leftfield - "Not Forgotten"

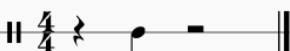
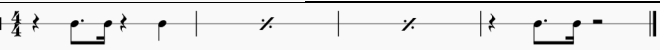
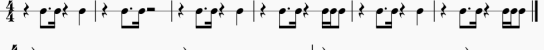
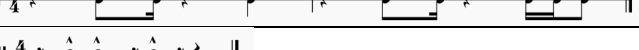
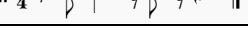
g# minor key

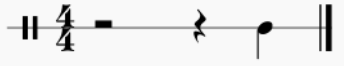
ca. 123 BPM

Rhythmic sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Beating		1	
Bongo		2	
Hi-hat		1	
Kick		1	
Toms		4	
Triangle		1	

Melodic sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Bass		4	
Guitar (intro)		4	
Guitar 1		2	
Guitar 2		2	

Keys		2 ◉	
Synthesizer		4 ◉	
Synthesizer 2	Synthesizer sounds other than the motive above are used in various manners throughout the song	N/A	
Trumpet		4 ◉	Legato
Vocals 1		◉	No text

Articulative sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Finger snap		◉	
Snare 1a		4 ◉	
Snare 1b		6 ◉	
Snare 1c		2 ◉	
Snare 2		◉	

Atmospheric sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Cymbal		1	
Vocals 2	<i>“What is wrong with these people?”</i>	N/A	Spoken text appearing multiple times over the course of the song
Vocals 3	Vocals	N/A	Shouts

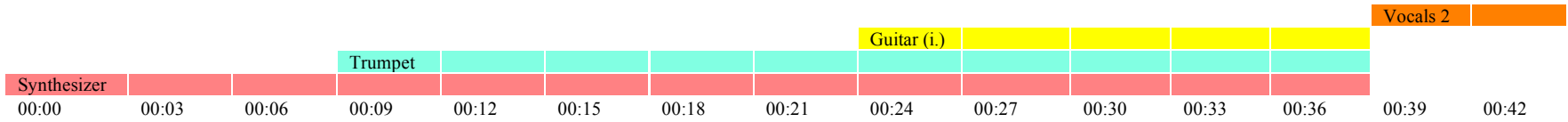
Loops according to length	
1	Beating, hi-hat, kick, triangle, vocals 1, finger snap, snare 2
2	Bongo, guitar 1, guitar 2, keys, snare 1c
4	Toms, bass, guitar (intro), synthesizer, trumpet, snare 1a
6	Snare 1b

A. Leftfield - "Not Forgotten" | Visual representation

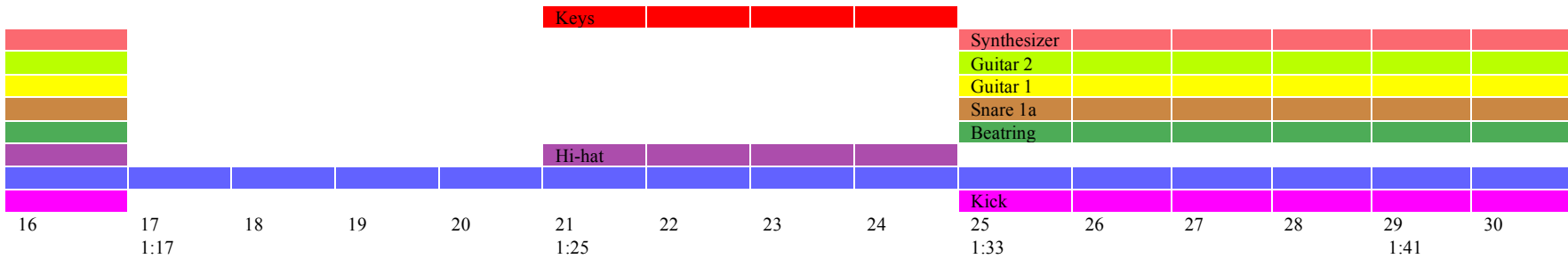
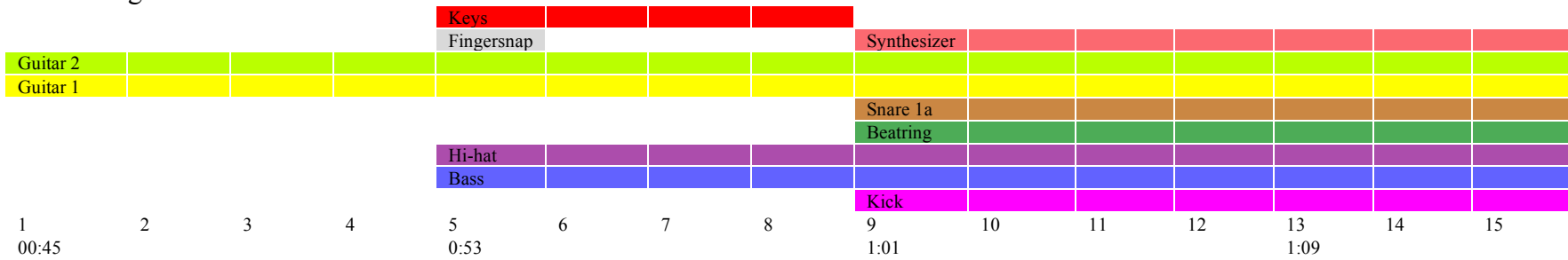
g# minor key

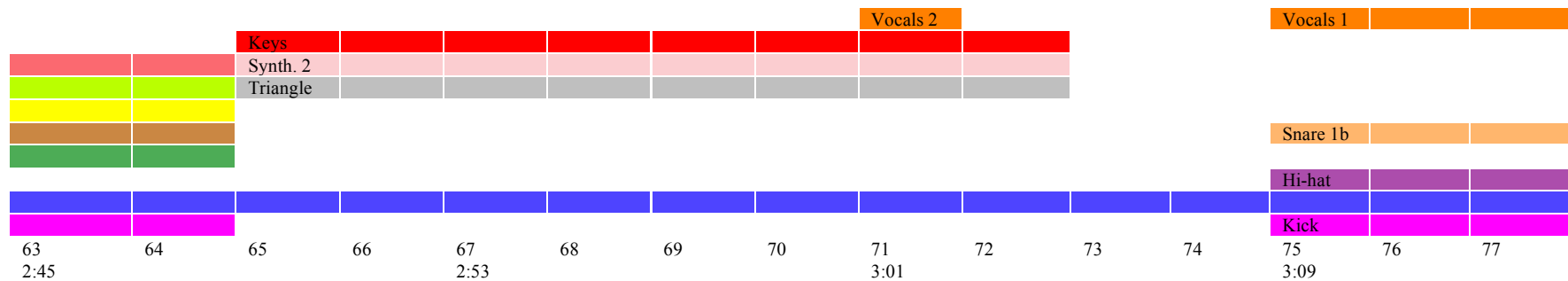
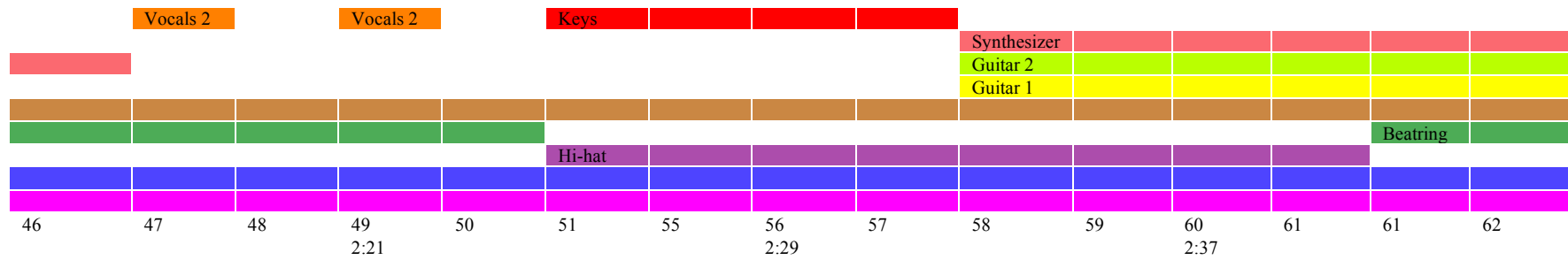
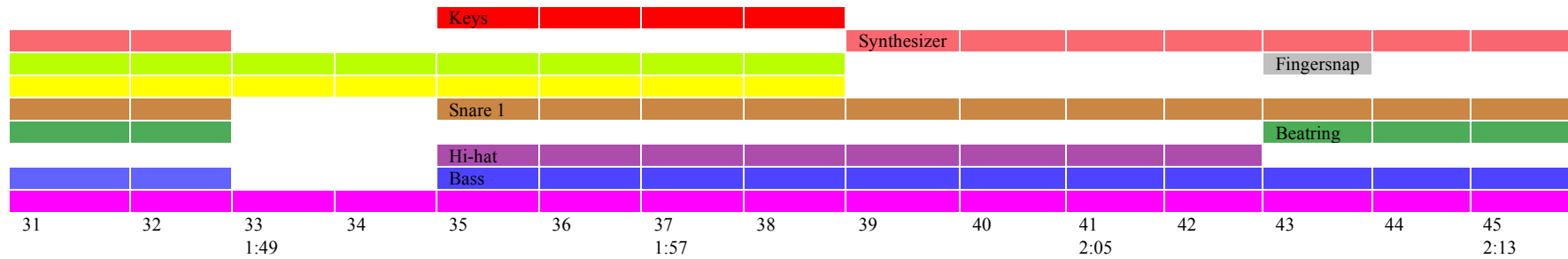
ca. 123 BPM

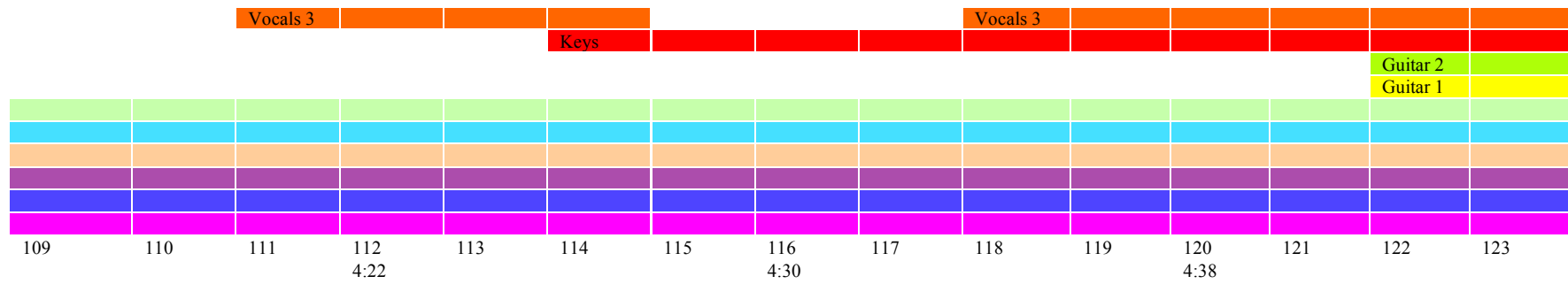
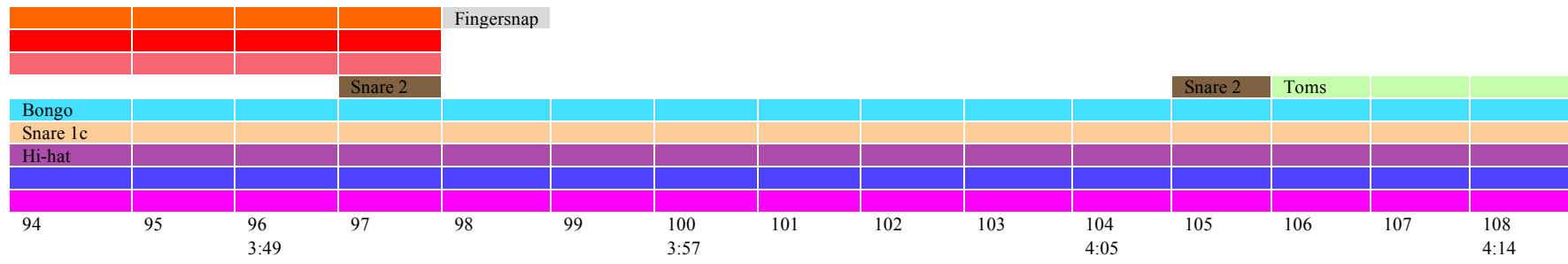
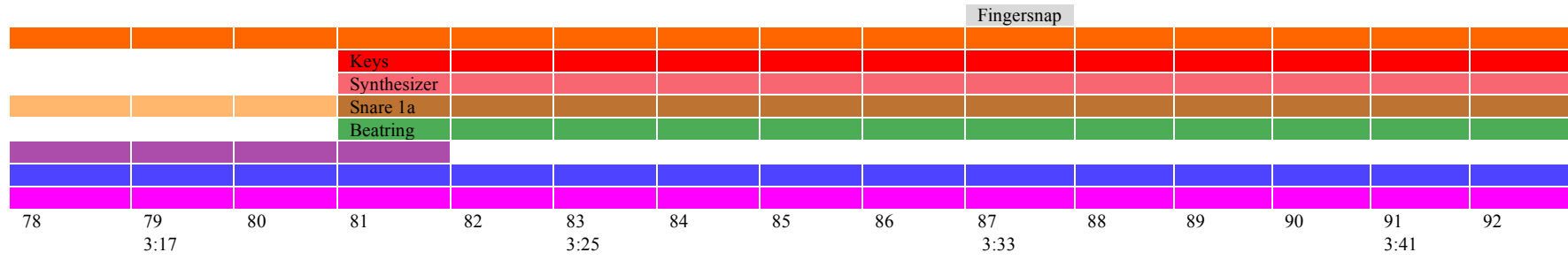
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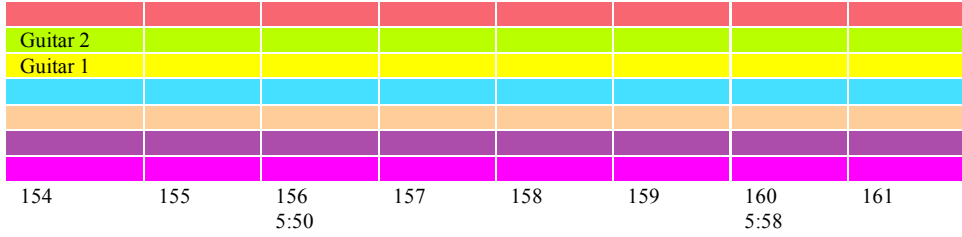
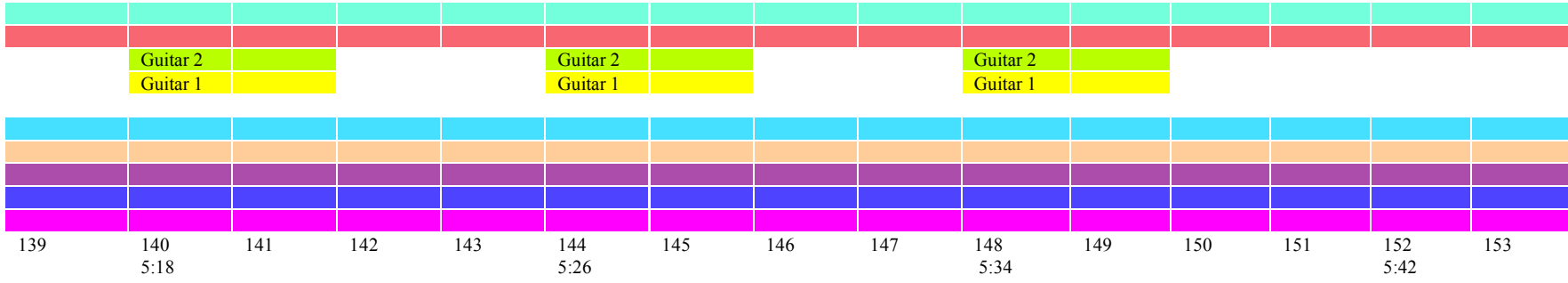
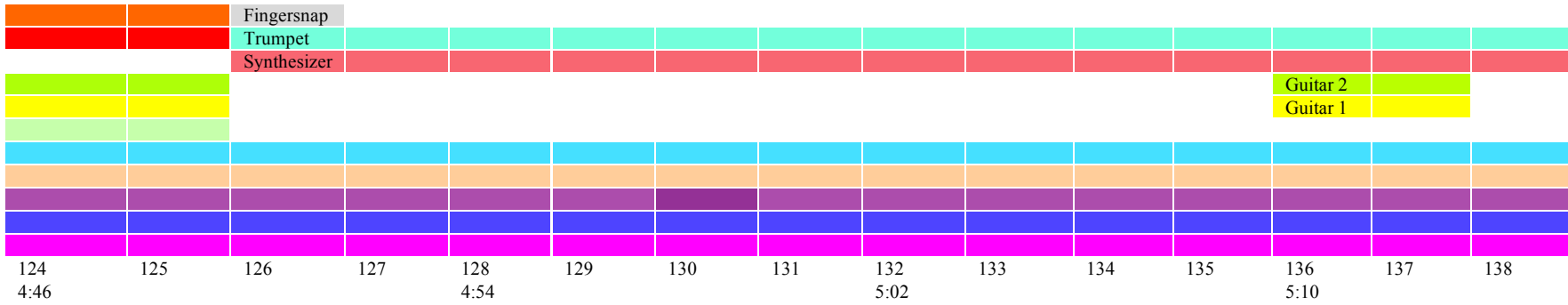


Main song

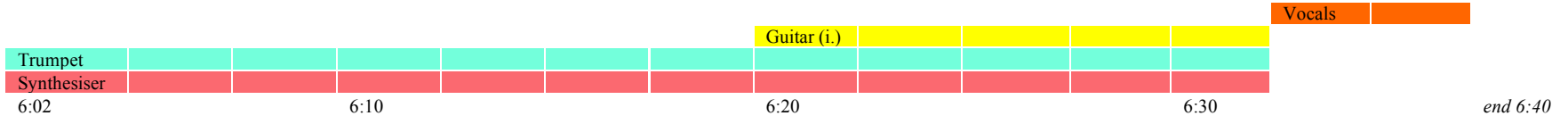




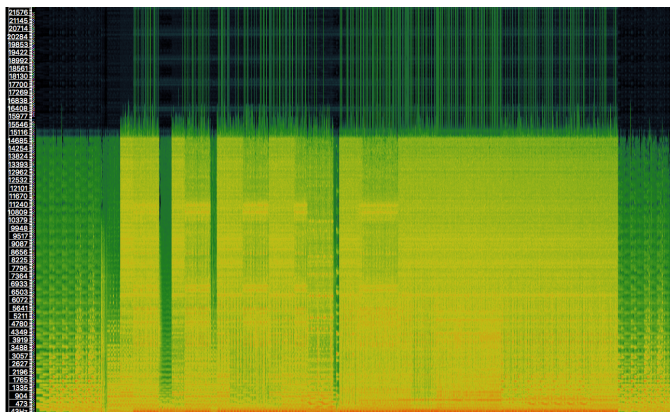
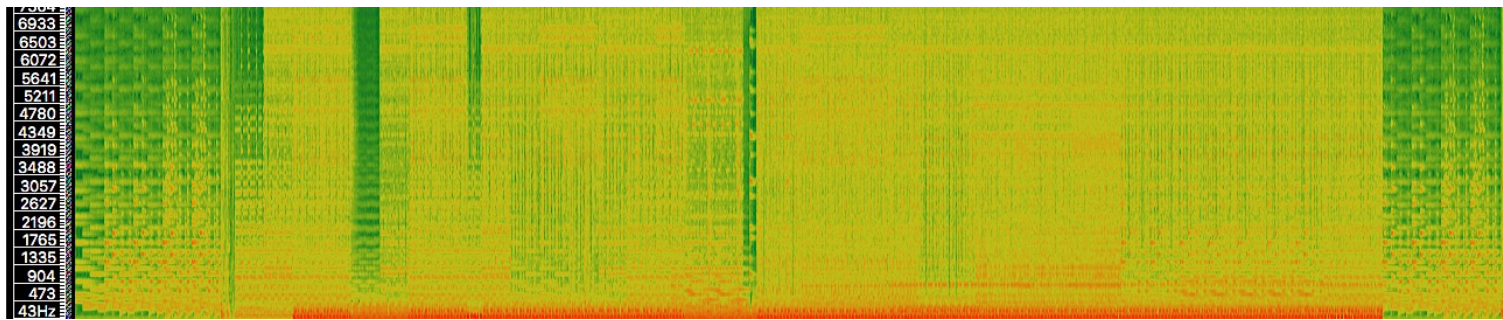
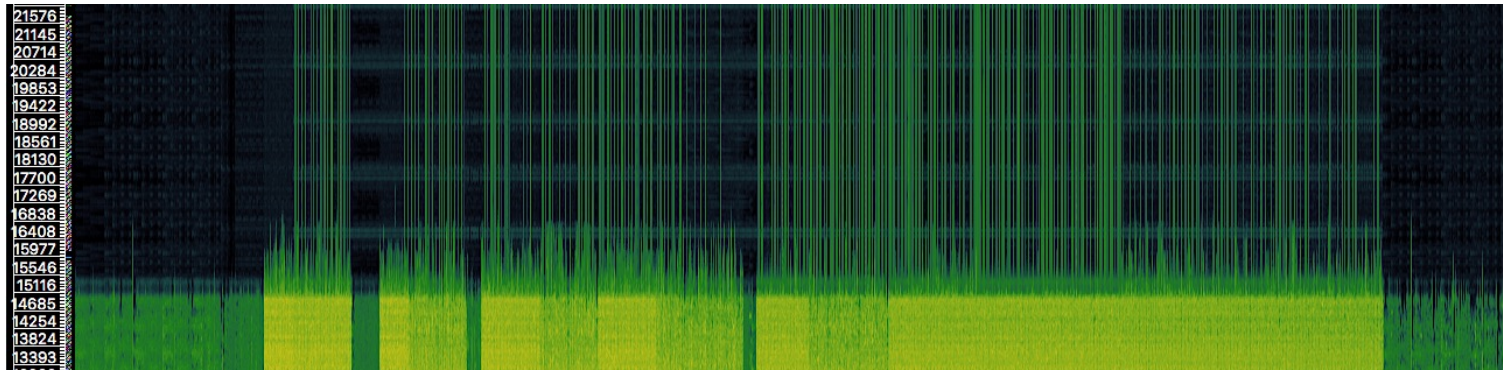




Outro



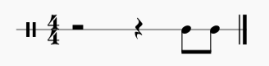
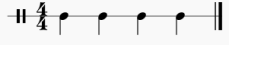
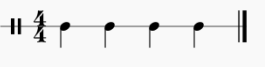

A. Leftfield - “Not Forgotten” | Spectrogram


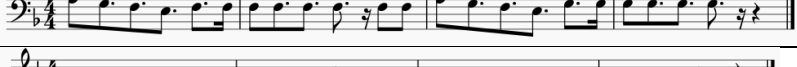
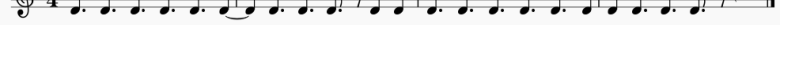

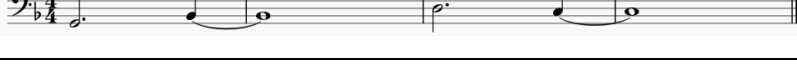


B. Swedish House Mafia - “One (Your Name)”

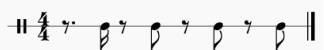
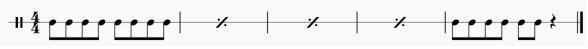
d minor key

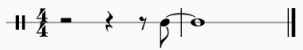
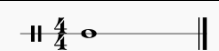
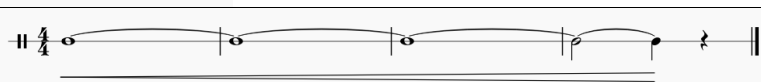
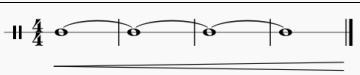
ca. 126 BPM

Rhythmic sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Clap		4	
Clap 2		4	Emphasizes and appears simultaneously with the kick
Kick		4	
Synth 3		4	

Melodic sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Synth 1a		4	Appears in both C and c'
Synth 1b		4	
Synth 1c		4	1a motive on one tone, also played as a glissando between 1:02 and 1:32
Synth 2		4	
Bass synth		4	Is occasionally doubled in the C2 octave
Vocals	<i>I wanna know your name You just kill me, could you at least do that?</i>	N/A	As sung by Pharrell Williams

	<i>I wanna know your name Or better yet, stand there Just do that</i>		
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Articulative sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Snare 1		1	
Snare 2		5	Representation excludes fade-in

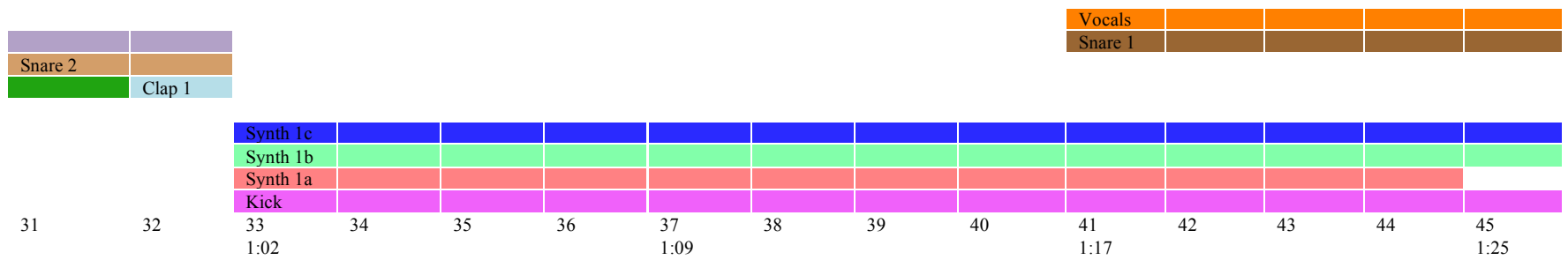
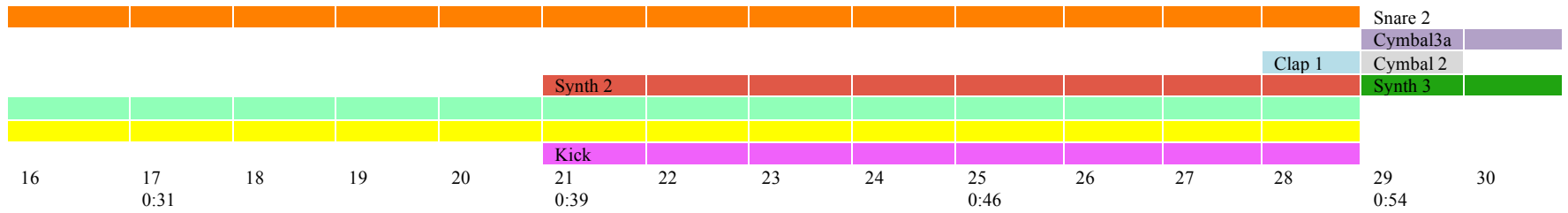
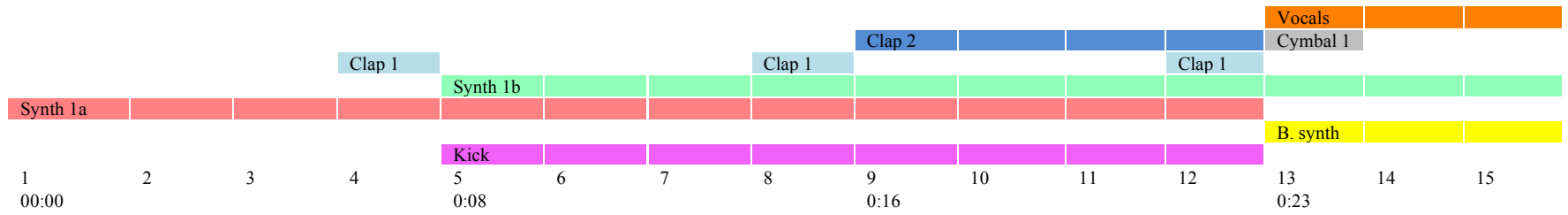
Atmospheric sounds			
Sound name	Most concise representation	Loop Length	Other comments
Cymbal 1		2	
Cymbal 2		1	
Cymbal 3a		4	All notes represent rolls
Cymbal 3b		4	All notes represent rolls

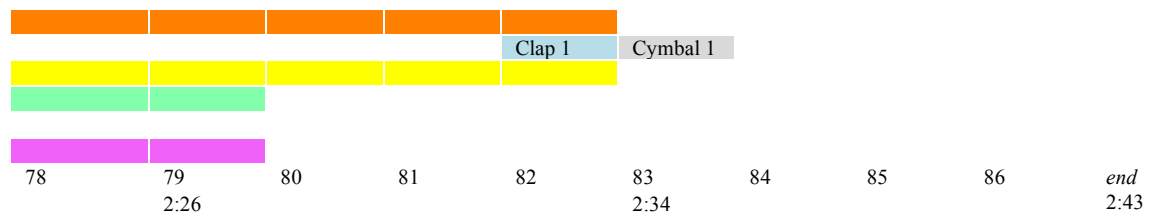
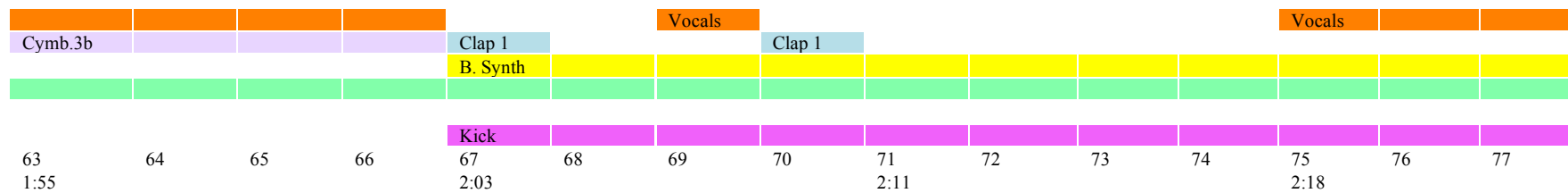
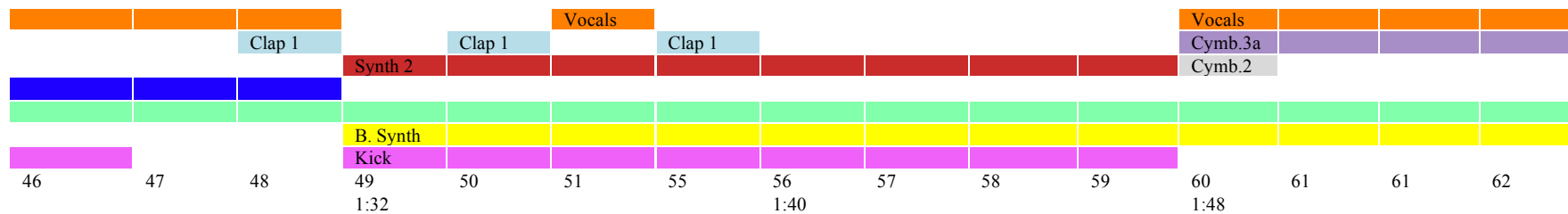
Loops according to length	
1	Clap, clap 2, kick, synth, snare 1, cymbal 2
2	Cymbal 1
4	Synth 1a, synth 1b, synth 1c, synth 2, bass synth, cymbal 3a, cymbal 3b
5	Snare 2

B. Swedish House Mafia - "One (Your Name)" | Visual representation

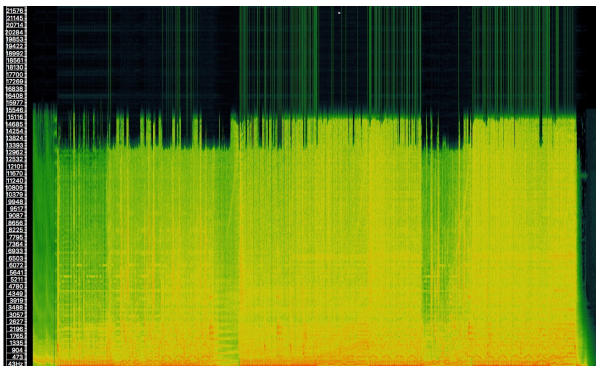
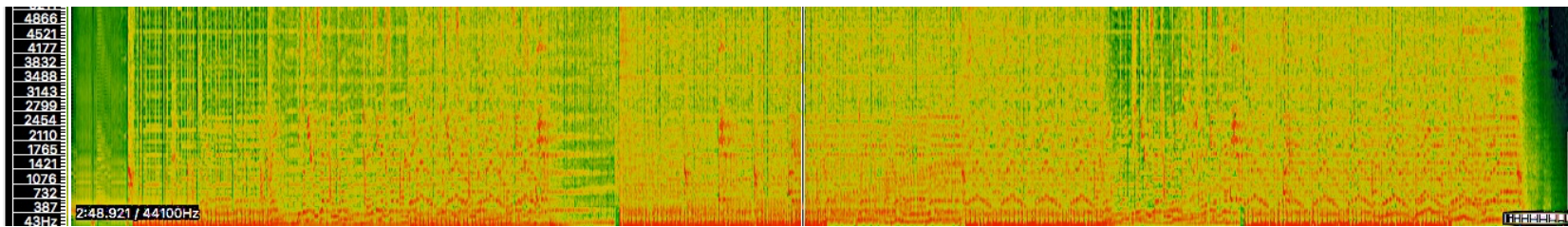
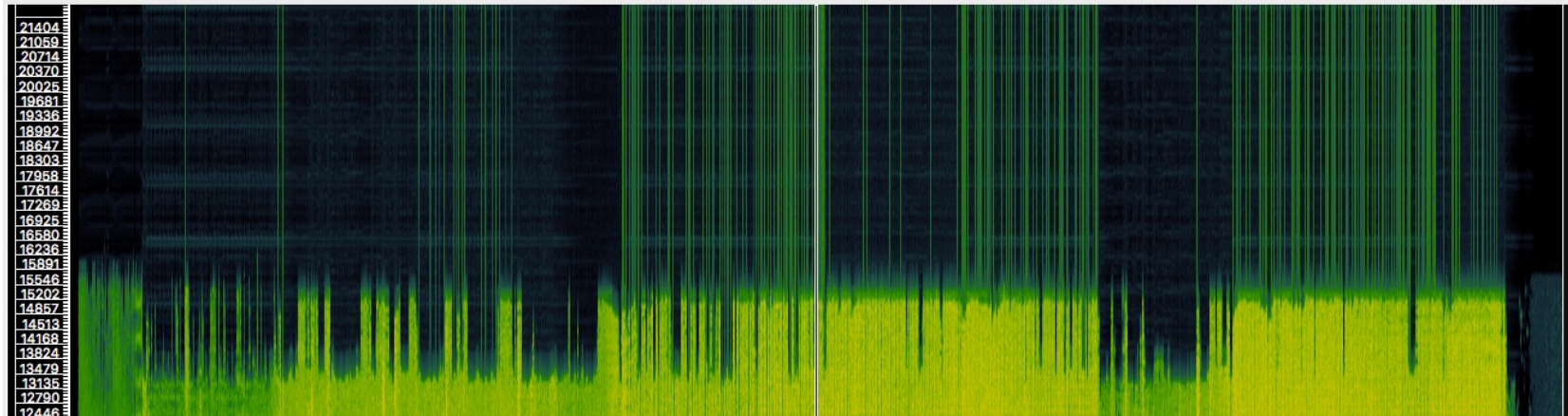
d minor key

ca. 126 BPM





B. Swedish House Mafia - "One (Your Name)" | Spectrogram



Appendix C. List of progressive house tracks

Progressive House 1990-1995

1990	Leftfield	-	“Not Forgotten”
1992	Spooky	-	“Don't Panic”
1992	Gat Decor	-	“Passion”
1993	Bedrock feat. KYO	-	“For What You Dream Of”

Progressive House 1995-2005

2000	Satoshi Tomiie	-	“Love In Traffic”	(Creamer & K Remix)
2000	Photek	-	“Mine To Give”	(Satoshi Tomiie Remix)
2001	Pole Folder & CP	-	“Apollo Vibes”	
2001	Madam	-	“Penetration”	

Progressive House 2005-2012

2008	Eric Prydz	-	“Pjanoo”
2010	Swedish House Mafia	-	“One (Your Name)”
2012	Calvin Harris	-	“Sweet Nothing”
2012	Hardwell	-	“Spaceman”
2013	Alesso	-	“If I Lose Myself”