Poppiholla, Angel and A Sky Full Of Stars

Cynthia Ong

Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics

Module 6 Assignment

March 2015

ELAL,

College of Arts & Law

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT

United Kingdom

MMC/14/04

Collect between three and five pieces of music that might be taken to represent a particular artist, genre, style, or mood and present an analysis in terms of the social semiotic approach to music. You might like to concentrate on one or more of the following:

Timing
Sound quality
Melody
Perspective
Tagg's Sign Typology

Reflect briefly on how useful you found the framework in identifying how the pieces of music you chose might work to make meanings.

CONTENTS PAGE

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper employs the social semiotic approach to music in the analysis of three pieces of uplifting Dance music. Following from the introduction, developments in social semiotics leading to the social semiotic approach to music will be detailed. Section 3 outlines the analysis procedure while Section 4 presents the analysis of the three music pieces. Section 5 discusses the usefulness and limitations of the framework in providing insight to musical meanings before the essay is concluded. It was observed that the social semiotic approach was effective in surfacing characteristics of and meanings conveyed in the music pieces, yet further interdisciplinary analyses and in-depth sectional studies would provide additional insight to their functions and meanings.

2. THE SOCIAL SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO MUSIC

This section details developments in social semiotics leading to the social semiotic framework to music analysis, based on the works of Volosinov and Halliday. Volosinov (1973) viewed communication as expression of meanings for different purposes in various social situations via the use of signs, which are motivated by ideology. In line with Volosinov's viewpoint, Halliday (1978) proposed the idea of ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions behind language use, emphasizing the existence of a systematic link between language and its social functions. The application of Halliday's approach to multimodal analysis resulted in social semiotic frameworks, allowing for the study of semiotic resources and their semiotic potential for meaning making and communication.

The social semiotic approach to music adopts a referentialist perspective in which music conveys meanings about the external world. According to van Leeuwen (1999),

musical meanings may be made via experiential association with real-life entities and provenance, association with social and/or cultural experiences. An understanding of experiential motivations may be obtained via analyses of timing, perspective, sound quality and melody in soundscapes. Timing refers to the rhythm of music and may be measured or unmeasured. Perspective is concerned with foregrounding and backgrounding of musical sounds via the levels of figure, ground and field, in decreasing proximity to the listener. Sound quality comprises items such as tension, raspiness, nasality, pitch and melody, loudness, breathiness, and use of vibrato, reverb and/or echo (Machin 2010), which would reveal the emotions in music.

Provenance may be analysed via Tagg's (1999b) Sign Typology examining anaphones, episodic markers, style indicators and genre synecdoches. Anaphones are references to sounds outside of the music world and comprise sonic, kinetic and tactile anaphones. Sonic anaphones mimic sounds made by real-life entities such as thunder, kinetic anaphones signal movement such as walking or running while tactile anaphones relate "musical structure with the sense of touch" (Tagg 2013:603), expressing sensory feelings. Episodic markers are short musical excerpts instrumented differently from their surrounding sections, functioning as lead-ins to signal new themes or sections. Style indicators describe the typical traits of music from particular genres via their use of specific instruments or musical arrangements while genre synecdoches express characteristics different from the 'home' musical style of a piece of music, such as employing the sounds of an *erhu*, a Chinese spike fiddle also known as the Chinese violin, in Western music to incorporate oriental influences. The procedure to the application of the social semiotic approach to music in the analysis of the above aspects in three Dance pieces will be detailed in the next section.

3. PROCEDURE

The framework will be applied to a selection of radio edit versions of uplifting Dance music, namely Poppiholla by British electronic musician Chicane, A Sky Full Of Stars (ASFOS) by British alternative rock band Coldplay, as well as Angel by American pop musician Lionel Richie. While the three songs feature different instrumentation, they have been selected for analysis based on their generic classification as Dance music comprising mood heightening and movement inducing melodies and rhythms.

The three pieces will first be examined for their musical structures and broken down into their musical sections, after which each section will further be demarcated into measures and analysed. Timing will be identified via the use of a metronome while perspective examined via identification of instruments at the levels of figure, ground and field as well as in the roles they play within the music, of either melody, accompaniment or rhythm. The four aspects of Tagg's Sign Typology will be identified, with anaphones classified according to their main functions in the music and episodic markers identified as different, one-off sounds linking up sections. Style indicators will be surfaced via examination of each of the pieces' compositional styles while genre synecdoches highlighted via identification of instrumentation entities that differ from the rest of the music. Sound quality and melody will then be examined to surface timbre observations that further reinforce the meanings conveyed in the pieces. The next section presents the analysis of the three pieces of uplifting Dance music.

4. ANALYSIS

This section details the application of the social semiotic approach to music in the analysis of three uplifting Dance pieces to surface meanings conveyed. Timing, perspective and Tagg's Sign Typology will be examined, following which further analysis on melody and sound quality will be conducted.

4.1 TIMING

The three pieces of music were composed in measured time with Poppiholla being metronomic and both ASFOS and Angel exhibiting slight non-metronomicity, revealed through metronomic tempo checks. Poppiholla's strict adherence to timing and rhythm repetitions, characteristic of Electronic Dance Music (EDM) (Butler 2003), classifies it under this musical genre and creates a sense of technological modernity that encourages submission to regulated time (Machin 2010). In contrast, ASFOS and Angel exhibit traits of pop music – albeit with EDM influences – with natural timings and sounds created by real musicians, signalling personal individuality within conformity (ibid.).

All three songs feature regular and monorhythmic timing at fast tempos: ASFOS at 124 beats per minute (bpm), Poppiholla at 128 bpm and Angel at the equivalent of 130 bpm. With instruments playing in regular duple time, a natural rhythm of regulated movement akin to walking or running is encouraged. Together with tempos of above 120 bpm, associated with "the most natural speed to perform simple repetitive movements" (Moelants 2003:649), these songs induce repeated spontaneous dance moves, conveying excitement and acquiescence to the rhythm.

4.2 PERSPECTIVE AND TAGG'S SIGN TYPOLOGY

Analyses of perspective and the aspects of Tagg's Sign Typology, namely episodic markers, anaphones, style indicators and genre synecdoches, will be presented below; detailed tabulation of perspective and episodic markers in the three pieces is found in appendices 1a to 1c.

Poppiholla has a typical structure of EDM compositions, outlined in Butler (2003), as follows: Introduction – Buildup 1 – Core 1 – Breakdown – Buildup 2 – Core 2 – Conclusion, which is further delineated into subsections via measures, tabulated in Table 4.1. Featuring melodic hook repetitions, layering of sounds via addition or removal of instruments and a "sudden, dramatic drop" in texture in the breakdown section (ibid.:290), Poppiholla can further be classified under the EDM sub-genre of Trance (Wikipedia 2015).

Poppiholla	Measures
Introduction	4
Buildup 1	11
Buildup 1 (cont'd)	11
Core 1	11
Core 1 (cont'd)	11
Core 1 (alt)	11
Breakdown	4
Buildup 2	11
Core 2	11
Core 2 (cont'd)	11
Core 2 (alt)	11
Conclusion	4

Table 4.1: Poppiholla Structure

Table 4.2 shows the episodic markers beginning and ending the sections in the first segment of Poppiholla, as well as the instruments employed in the perspective levels of figure, ground and field in each section. Poppiholla begins with rhythm synthesizer sounds in figure, which prevails throughout the music in ground and field before ending the piece in figure with synth pad in ground. Such texture-thin beginnings and endings allowing for blending into prior or following music (Wikipedia 2015) are characteristic of Trance music, reinforcing Poppiholla as a Trance track. The relegation of kinetic anaphone rhythm synthesizer to ground in Buildup 1 and the introduction of tactile anaphones keyboards and synth pad in figure and field respectively generate an uplifting tune, depicting a sense of positive progression and spaciousness, inducing uninhibited movement.

Poppiholla	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	End	Figure	Ground	Field
Introduction			Rhythm Synthesizer		
Buildup 1			Keyboards	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad
Buildup 1 (cont'd)	Synthesizer	Pause	Keyboards	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad
Core 1	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
		Omitted Hihat + Drum	Keyboards		Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 1 (cont'd)	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 1 (alt)	Synthesizer	Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer	Keyboards, Synth Pad

Table 4.2: Poppiholla First Segment

Kinetic anaphone hihat/drum introduced in Core 1 at ground displaces rhythm synthesizer to field, heightening the sense of movement and excitement with more prominent rhythmic sounds. Core 1 alternate extends the sense of movement with

hihat/drum and rhythm synthesizer in figure and ground respectively, but with the melodic keyboards toned down in field appearing to lower the energy in anticipation of the mood change in the breakdown section. Episodic markers are employed to signal progression to and within sectional groups, with additional emphasis via pause and omission of hihat/drum before Core 1 and Core 1 continuation respectively, highlighting the layers building the song texture to provide a "drifting sensation" (Wikipedia 2015). This segment of Poppiholla may be interpreted as communicating a positive sense of uninhibited progression within a state of heightened consciousness.

The breakdown section exhibits dramatic energy decrease as hihat/drum is removed and synthesizer takes the figure position in Table 4.3, functioning as tactile anaphone to express anticipation.

Poppiholla	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	**End**	**Figure**	**Ground**	**Field**
Breakdown	Slow Synthesizer		Synthesizer	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad

Table 4.3: Poppiholla Breakdown

This leads to buildup and core sections of the same instrumentation as those in the first segment, with the exception of a position swap between synth pad and rhythm synthesizer in Buildup 2, which highlights the sense of spaciousness rather than movement compared to Buildup 1. The use of hihat/drum throughout the Core 2 sections induces continual movement, enhanced via the use of fewer episodic markers. This segment thus anticipates then heightens the sense of positive uninhibited movement, inducing submission to a euphoric state of uplifting trance.

In comparison, ASFOS in Table 4.4 and Angel in Table 4.5 are observed to be written in Pop music style, exhibiting structures comprising verse, pre-chorus and chorus combinations characteristic of Pop music (Stolpe 2007) and featuring lyrics that convey song meanings expressed by vocals through the melodic lines, complemented by accompanying music and rhythm. The lyrics for ASFOS and Angel are found reseptively in appendices 3a and 3b.

ASFOS	Measures		Angel	Measures
Introduction	8		Verse 1	8
Verse 1	8		Pre-Chorus 1	8
Verse 1 (cont'd)	8		Chorus 1	8
Pre-Chorus 1	8		Chorus 1 (cont'd)	8
Pre-Chorus 1 (cont'd)	8		Interlude	4
Chorus 1	8		Verse 2	8
Chorus 1 (cont'd)	4		Verse 2 (cont'd)	8
Verse 2	8		Pre-Chorus 2	8
Verse 2 (cont'd)	8		Chorus 2	8
Pre-Chorus 2	8		Chorus 2 (cont'd)	8
Pre-Chorus 2 (cont'd)	12		Bridge	6
Chorus 2	8		Chorus 3	8
Chorus 2 (cont'd)	8		Chorus 3 (cont'd)	8
Conclusion	8		Conclusion	8
Conclusion (cont'd)	8		Conclusion (cont'd)	8

Table 4.4: ASFOS Structure   *Table 4.5: Angel Structure*

Further analysis revealed genre synecdoches in both. While ASFOS emphasizes non-electronic sounds such as the piano in its verses and pre-choruses, the main message-conveying choruses employ the electronic synthesizer for its melody and feature EDM melodic hook repetitions and sound layering. Similarly, Angel incorporates movement-inducing rhythms amidst electronic acompaniment sounds of the synth pad throughout the song. These observations reveal EDM influences in both pieces of Pop

music, more prominent in ASFOS through contrasting instrumentation compared to the relatively subtle incorporation in Angel.

ASFOS begins with a bass-chords piano riff in figure, functioning as tactile anaphone to connote the night sky, which serves as background for the lyrical plot, and is sustained throughout the music via its variation introduced in Pre-Chorus 1, tabulated in Table 4.6. Vocals take over figure in both sets of verses and pre-choruses, with the accompanying piano and tambourine alternating between ground and field in the first set, the latter instrument functioning as kinetic anaphone to introduce a sense of progression. The introduction of tactile anaphone synth pad in field in Pre-Chorus 1 adds a sense of vastness and hints at EDM infiltration, which becomes obvious in Chorus 1 with tactile anaphone synthesizer in figure connoting an expansive starry night sky, accompanied by hihat/drum and clap in ground and piano in field functioning as kinetic anaphones, altogether communicating a motivational ambience of movement.

ASFOS	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	**End**	**Figure**	**Ground**	**Field**
Introduction	Cymbals + Drum		Piano		
Verse 1			Vocals	Piano	
Verse 1 (cont'd)			Vocals	Tambourine	Piano
Pre-Chorus 1	Cymbals + Drum		Vocals	Piano	Tambourine
			Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Pre-Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Synthesizer	Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Chorus 1	Cymbals		Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum	Piano
Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Electric Guitar	Synthesizer	Clap	Piano

Table 4.6: ASFOS First Segment

The song takes on more prominent qualities of EDM music in the second segment in Table 4.7, with the continual employment of electronic sounds from Verse 2 continuation to the end. The electric guitar on melodic accompaniment in ground serves as tactile anaphone, its short, high-pitch reverberating sounds signifying twinkling of stars, while the synthesizer returns on melody in figure of Chorus 2, culminating in a climatic ending comprising both electronic and non-electronic instruments, communicating a heightened state of emotions. ASFOS has thus been observed to evoke an inspiring imagery of a sky full of stars and convey a sense of progressive optimism, complementing its lyrical meanings, via increasing usage of complementing EDM instrumentation as its music develops.

ASFOS	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	End	Figure	Ground	Field
Verse 2 (cont'd)		Electric Guitar	Vocals	Electric Guitar, Guitar, Clap	Piano
Pre-Chorus 2	Cymbals + Drum		Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine
Pre-Chorus 2 (cont'd)			Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine
			Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
		Synthesizer, Electric Guitar	Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Chorus 2	Cymbals		Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar	Piano, Tambourine
Chorus 2 (cont'd)	Cymbals	Vocals	Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar	Piano, Tambourine
Conclusion	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar, Synthesizer	Piano, Tambourine, Synth Pad
Conclusion (cont'd)			Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar, Synthesizer	Piano, Tambourine, Synth Pad
			Electric Guitar	Tambourine, Clap	Synth Pad

Table 4.7: ASFOS Second Segment

Similar to Poppiholla, episodic markers are employed throughout ASFOS, signalling transition to the verse, pre-chorus, chorus and conclusion sections via cymbals/drum or cymbals, but with more obvious lead-ins after Pre-Chorus 1 continuation via use of synthesizer and electric guitar. These reveal ASFOS's objective of sustaining focus on the music and its meaning that unravels though the entire song, characteristic of Pop music (Stolpe 2007), via more salient episodic markers that keep listeners engaged as increasingly intricate sections are introduced.

In Angel, EDM influences are observed from the incorporation of tactile anaphones synthesizer and strings synthesizer, detailed in Table 4.8, the former introduced in ground of Verse 1, then relegated to field in Pre-Chorus 1 and joined by the latter in Chorus 1. These generate upbeat and positive-sounding melodic accompaniments, adding a comptemporary and lively youthfulness to the music.

Angel	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	**End**	**Figure**	**Ground**	**Field**
Verse 1		Cymbals	Vocals	Synthesizer	
Pre-Chorus 1			Vocals	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad, Maracas
Chorus 1	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer	Strings Synthesizer, Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Rhythm Synthesizer	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer	Strings Synthesizer, Synthesizer, Synth Pad

Table 4.8: Angel First Segment

Rhythm synthesizer is observed to function as sonic anaphone in ground of Pre-Chorus 1 to simulate the sound of the human heartbeat, connoting feelings of excitement while kinetic anaphone maracas in field signals and induces movement, and after which as kinetic anaphone together with hihat/drum from Chorus 1 to Chorus 2 and Conclusion, conveying a heightened sense of movement and energy. The strings synthesizer is repositioned to ground from Verse 2 continuation to Chorus

2 continuation and Chorus 3 continuation to the end, expressing more intense sentimental surges, while the employment of tactile anpahone synth pad in field throughout the song adds a spacious dimension to the music, creating a subtle EDM-based ambience.

The Bridge comprises synthesizer and trumpets as sonic anaphones simulating backup vocals, and funk guitar, maracas and synthesizer extending the sense of excitement and movement, shown in Table 4.9, featuring a different instrumentation from the rest of the music to reinforce Angel's adherence to the Pop music style of a contrasting bridge section.

Angel	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	End	Figure	Ground	Field
Bridge	Cymbals	Cymbals + Drum	Trumpets, Vocals	Synthesizer, Funk Guitar, Maracas	Synthesizer
Chorus 3	Cymbals		Vocals		Synth Pad
			Vocals	Synthesizer, Maracas	Synth Pad
Chorus 3 (cont'd)	Cymbals	Rest	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Clap, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Conclusion	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Conclusion (cont'd)			Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad

Table 4.9: Angel Second Segment

Chorus 3 is observed to begin thinly with vocals and synth pad, functioning to lower the song's energy before it builds up with synthesizer and maracas in ground, followed by the more prominent sounds of hihat/drum, clap and strings synthesizer in Chorus 3 continuation, communicating a sense of anticipation for the intensified emotions declared through full ensemble sounds in the conclusion sections before fading out.

In Angel, increasing sectional emphasis as the song progresses compels focus on the music, encourages personal connection with its meaning and induces expression through movement. Similar to ASFOS, Angel uses episodic markers to signal sectional transitions throughout the music, with more prominent signalling in the second segment via addition of synthesizer sounds to cymbals from the end of Chorus 1 continuation and extending episodic markers to transitions within sections such as the strings synthesizer ending Verse 2. These concentrate listeners' attention on the progression to each subsequent section, prompting physical involvement with the music.

The above analyses of Angel surfaced its stricter adherence to Pop music structure amidst incorporation of EDM elements compared to ASFOS, and more significantly, its message of youthful energy and surging emotions, transmitted via uplifiting melodies that inspire individual expression through dance. The next sub-section examines the sound quality and melody of the three pieces.

4.3 MELODY AND SOUND QUALITY

Poppiholla's melodic line comprises repeated melodic hooks with alternating rising and falling phrases, reinforcing the drifting sensation characteristic of Trance music, and features high pitch keyboards conveying "brightness and energy" (Machin 2010:124). Exhibiting smooth electronic sounds, Poppiholla connotes modernity, beginning softly and relaxed to increase in volume in measure 4 of Buildup 1 continuation to generate a sense of anticipation, then increasing in tension in Core 1 via controlled hihat beats to induce submission to the rhythm. The piece releases tension and adopts quieter instrumentation in Breakdown, increasing in volume again in Buildup 2 and culminates in tension from Core 2 to Core 2 alternate, creating a continuous passage that intensifies consciousness, inducing further submission to the

music before it builds down towards the Conclusion. Together with the use of reverb to signal expansiveness, the above traits further emphasize the characteristic uplifting drift and resulting hypnotic movement and submersion in Trance music.

ASFOS commences with an announcement by cymbals and drum, followed by prominent piano chords, setting the 'sky' backdrop for the rest of the music before dropping in volume in Verse 1, which introduces nasal and breathy vocals from measures 5 to 8 amidst smooth and low-pitch instrumentation, conveying intimacy and authentic emotional intensity. In Pre-Chorus 1, the use of rising melodies, high-pitch nasal vocals and tension while volume increases and vocals end breathily altogether express an upsurge in emotions. The beginning of Pre-Chorus 1 continuation sees a drop in melodic pitch, providing tension relief before the melody rises again then fall, signalling an obvious break and anticipation of Chorus 1, in which contrasting EDM instrumentation takes over the loud and high-pitch melodic line, communicating pure and intensified emotions.

While the tension, raspiness and pitch transitions remain the same from Verse 2 to Chorus 2 continuation, vocals retain their nasality till the end of the piece and lose their breathiness, indicating a more declarative stance of emotional expression. Volume increases from the last four measures of Pre-Chorus 2 continuation as the melodic pattern repeats, emphasizing transition to Chorus 2 and the piece concludes climactically with a loud, high-pitch and tense Conclusion before receding, expressing heightened feelings. Reverb in the music conveys a sense of vastness while echo effects in the verses, pre-choruses and conclusion sections heighten the sense of spaciousness. The above observations reinforce ASFOS's creative use of EDM instrumentation to achieve its objectives of vivid imagery elicitation and communication of heightened emotions.

In Angel, raspy, nasal vocals are employed in the melodic line, expressing emotional tension, which is heightened with the introduction of controlled hihat sounds from Chorus 1 to Chorus 2 continuation and from Chorus 3 continuation to the end. The transition of the melody from lower pitch range in the verses to higher pitch range in the pre-choruses and choruses signals increased energy, complemented by louder volume from Chorus 1 to the fade out at the end, with the exception of the sparser Chorus 3 conveying anticipation for and leading to more energetic sections. Breathy vocals from Chorus 2 to the end indicate intensified emotions while rising melodic endings at sectional transitions from Verse 2 to Bridge compared to falling melodic transitions in the rest of the music signal continuity, channelling heightened emotions to the energetic outburst in the loud, high-pitch Bridge featuring screaming trumpets and tight funk guitar sounds. While the echo ending Chorus 3 continuation serves as lead-in to Conclusion, the use of reverb in Angel provides a sense of modernity and space. Angel has thus been interpreted to convey youthful emotions and energy that culminates in an expressive emotional declaration.

The usefulness and limitations of the social semiotic approach to music will next be discussed.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 USEFULNESS OF FRAMEWORK

The social semiotic approach to music was useful in revealing the characteristics of the three pieces of uplifting Dance music, classifying them under each of their sub-genres as music styles that induce movement and expression, as well as the meanings conveyed in the pieces via analyses of timing, instrumentation and sound qualities, a tabular summary of which is found in Appendix 2.

All three songs feature regular timing and fast tempos that induce excitement and repetitive movements, classifying them as music incorporating dance music elements. Poppiholla was revealed to be a metronomic Trance track with typical characteristics of sparse beginning and ending, repeated melodic hooks, sound layering and a drastic breakdown section, conveying modernity and a heightened sense of drift, encouraging trance-like submission to the music. ASFOS exhibits more obvious EDM influences with its contrasting electronic chorus sections compared to Angel, which incorporates electronic sounds only in its accompaniment and rhythm. Both signalling individuality and non-conformity within regulated time, ASFOS reinforces its lyrical meaning through innovative employment of electronic and non-electronic instruments in creating textures and sounds for imagery evocation, communicating optimistic feelings of heightening emotions while Angel expresses youthful passion through its dynamic tempo and upbeat music, inviting listeners to connect with and join in its emotive declaration.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF FRAMEWORK

Within the social semiotic framework, analysing each musical quality separately facilitates understanding of the meanings communicated, yet musical meaning is not transmitted by parts in a piece of music, but as a combination of sounds and textures. Thus, additional analyses of musical sound combinations as integral entities effecting a combined musical message (Tagg 1982) would provide a comprehensive understanding of the whole meaning of each piece of music. There were also technical problems of coinciding transcribed musical analyses with actual musical phrasing in the music, such as instances of actual musical phrases that begin in between measures. Such instances have been interpreted as being part of the measure in which bulk of the musical phrase occurred to facilitate analysis.

While the framework efficiently surfaced traits and meanings of the three pieces of music, they could be interpreted more comprehensively via a holistic analysis of a combination of musical, historical, cultural, social and/or psychological aspects of music, such as via Asaf'ev's (1976) Intonation Theory, which has been applied to the study of pop music, incorporating all levels of "musical expression and perception" (Tagg 1982:44). Such interdisciplinary analyses would provide supporting or alternative perspectives and add depth to the meanings surfaced from the current analysis.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

The constraints of the current essay limit discussions to broad analyses of musical meaning. More detailed studies such as analysis of meanings at the level of musical phrases and their progression in the music would provide specific insight into messages conveyed within each musical phrase and how they link up to form a whole discourse that serves particular functions, not unlike written and spoken texts. In addition, it may be beneficial to include song lyrics in analysis to examine their effects on accompanying music and vice versa, which could facilitate more accurate interpretations of music styles and qualities. For example in Angel, a study of the lyrics revealed its message of declaration of amorous feelings, which required the music to build up to a heightened intensity of emotions and excitement to complement the high point of declaration in the lyrics to serve its function of expressing amorous emotions.

Lastly, while this essay adopts a referentialist approach to analysing music, it may be advantageous to incorporate formalist approaches focussing on formal music structures as they complement rather than contradict the social semiotic perspective (Tagg 1982). In so doing, the relations and meanings between sections and parts within a piece of music as well as the meanings conveyed by the music as a whole would be revealed, providing a more complete analysis of musical functions and meanings.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper examined three pieces of uplifting Dance music and attempted to identify the meanings communicated in each of the pieces via the social semiotic approach to music. While the framework surfaced specific musical traits and qualities particular to each piece of music and allowed for the explication of meanings, incorporation of approaches that examine music from other sociocultural, cognitive or formalist perspectives would reinforce the rigorousness of findings from social semiotic studies as this. Such interdisciplinary researches, while requiring extensive collaborative efforts between specialists from various disciplines, will surely substantiate current research work in examining music as a meaning-making tool that serves different functions in various social contexts.

REFERENCES

Butler, M. J. (2003) 'Unlocking the groove: rhythm, meter, and musical design in electronic dance music'. Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978) *Language as Social Semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.

Machin, D. (2010) *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text*. London: Sage.

Moelants, D. (2003) 'Dance music, movement and tempo preferences'. In *Proceedings of the 5th triennial ESCOM Conference* (pp. 649-652). Hanover University of Music and Drama.

Stolpe, A. (2007) *Popular Lyric Writing: 10 Steps to Effective Storytelling*. Hal Leonard Corporation.

Tagg, P. (1982) 'Analysing popular music: theory, method and practice'. *Popular music*, *2*, 37-67.

Tagg, P. (1999b) *Introductory notes to the Semiotics of Music*. Available at: http://tagg.org/xpdfs/semiotug.pdf.

Tagg, P. (2013) *Music's Meanings: a modern musicology for non-musicians*. Mass Media Music Scholar's Press.

Tull, J. R. and Asaf'ev, B. V. (1976) *BV Asaf'ev's Musical form as a process: translation and commentary* (Vol. 3). Ohio State University.

Van Leeuwen, T. (1999) *Speech, Music, Sound*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Volosinov, V. N. (1973) *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press.

Wikipedia (2015) *Trance (music genre)* [online].

en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Trance_(music_genre) [Accessed February 3rd 2015].

APPENDIX 1A: PERSPECTIVE & EPISODIC MARKERS - POPPIHOLLA

Poppiholla	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	**End**	**Figure**	**Ground**	**Field**
Introduction			Rhythm Synthesizer		
Buildup 1			Keyboards	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad
Buildup 1 (cont'd)	Synthesizer	Pause	Keyboards	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad
Core 1	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
		Omitted Hihat + Drum	Keyboards		Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 1 (cont'd)	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 1 (alt)	Synthesizer	Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer	Keyboards, Synth Pad
Breakdown	Slow Synthesizer		Synthesizer	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad
Buildup 2			Keyboards	Synth Pad	Rhythm Synthesizer
Core 2	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 2 (cont'd)	Synthesizer		Keyboards	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Core 2 (alt)	Synthesizer		Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer	Keyboards, Synth Pad
			Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad	
Conclusion			Rhythm Synthesizer	Synth Pad	

APPENDIX 1B: PERSPECTIVE & EPISODIC MARKERS – A SKY FULL OF STARS

A Sky Full Of Stars	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	End	Figure	Ground	Field
Introduction	Cymbals + Drum		Piano		
Verse 1			Vocals	Piano	
Verse 1 (cont'd)			Vocals	Tambourine	Piano
Pre-Chorus 1	Cymbals + Drum		Vocals	Piano	Tambourine
			Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Pre-Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Synthesizer	Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Chorus 1	Cymbals		Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum	Piano
Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Electric Guitar	Synthesizer	Clap	Piano
Verse 2			Vocals	Guitar, Clap	Piano
Verse 2 (cont'd)		Electric Guitar	Vocals	Electric Guitar, Guitar, Clap	Piano
Pre-Chorus 2	Cymbals + Drum		Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine
Pre-Chorus 2 (cont'd)			Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine
			Vocals	Electric Guitar, Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
		Synthesizer, Electric Guitar	Vocals	Piano	Tambourine, Synth Pad
Chorus 2	Cymbals		Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar	Piano, Tambourine
Chorus 2 (cont'd)	Cymbals	Vocals	Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar	Piano, Tambourine
Conclusion	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar, Synthesizer	Piano, Tambourine, Synth Pad
Conclusion (cont'd)			Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Electric Guitar, Synthesizer	Piano, Tambourine, Synth Pad
			Electric Guitar	Tambourine, Clap	Synth Pad

APPENDIX 1C: PERSPECTIVE & EPISODIC MARKERS – ANGEL

Angel	Episodic Markers		Perspective		
	Beginning	End	Figure	Ground	Field
Verse 1		Cymbals	Vocals	Synthesizer	
Pre-Chorus 1			Vocals	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad, Maracas
Chorus 1	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer	Strings Synthesizer, Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Chorus 1 (cont'd)		Rhythm Synthesizer	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer	Strings Synthesizer, Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Interlude	Cymbals	Rhythm Synthesizer	Synthesizer	Hihat + Drum	Rhythm Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Verse 2	Cymbals	Strings Synthesizer	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Verse 2 (cont'd)			Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Pre-Chorus 2	Cymbals	Rest	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Chorus 2	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Chorus 2 (cont'd)	Cymbals	Rhythm Synthesizer	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Bridge	Cymbals	Cymbals + Drum	Trumpets, Vocals	Synthesizer, Funk Guitar, Maracas	Synthesizer
Chorus 3	Cymbals		Vocals		Synth Pad
			Vocals	Synthesizer, Maracas	Synth Pad
Chorus 3 (cont'd)	Cymbals	Rest	Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Clap, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Conclusion	Cymbals		Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad
Conclusion (cont'd)			Vocals	Hihat + Drum, Rhythm Synthesizer, Strings Synthesizer	Synthesizer, Synth Pad

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF SONG MEANINGS

	Poppiholla	ASFOS	Angel
Timing	Metronomic • EDM • Technological modernity • Submission to regulated time Regular and monorhythmic at fast tempos • Excitement • Acquiescence to rhythm	Slightly non-metronomic • Pop with EDM influences • Personal individuality within conformity Regular and monorhythmic at fast tempos • Excitement • Acquiescence to rhythm	Slightly non-metronomic • Pop with EDM influences • Personal individuality within conformity Regular and monorhythmic at fast tempos • Excitement • Acquiescence to rhythm
Perspective & Tagg's Sign Typology	• EDM Trance • Positive uninhibited progression within heightened consciousness • Anticipation then heightening sense of positive uninhibited movement for euphoric submission	• Pop music with EDM influences via contrasting instrumentation • Imagery evocation • Progressive optimism • Sustain focus on music and its meaning	• Pop music with EDM influences in background accompaniment • Youthful energy and surging emotions • Individual expression through dance
Melody & Sound Quality	• Uplifting drift • Hypnotic movement and submersion	• Vivid imagery elicitation • Communication of heightened emotions	• Youthful emotions and energy • Expressive emotional declaration

APPENDIX 3A: A SKY FULL OF STARS LYRICS

Introduction
(Instrumental)

Verse 1
'Cause you're a sky, 'cause you're a sky full of stars
I'm gonna give you my heart
'Cause you're a sky, 'cause you're a sky full of stars
'Cause you light up the path

Pre-Chorus 1
And I don't care, go on and tear me apart
And I don't care if you do
'Cause in a sky, 'cause in a sky full of stars
I think I saw you

Chorus 1
(Instrumental solo)

Verse 2
'Cause you're a sky, 'cause you're a sky full of stars
I want to die in your arms
'Cause you get lighter the more it gets dark
I'm gonna give you my heart

Pre-Chorus 2
And I don't care, go on and tear me apart
And I don't care if you do
'Cause in a sky, 'cause in a sky full of stars
I think I see you
I think I see you

Chorus 2
(Instrumental solo)

Conclusion
'Cause you're a sky, you're a sky full of stars
Such a heavenly view
You're such a heavenly view

APPENDIX 3B: ANGEL LYRICS

Verse 1
I just want to tell you
All the things you are
And all the things you mean to me

Pre-Chorus 1
When I find myself believing there's no place to go
When I feel the loneliness inside my heart

Chorus 1
You're the answer to my prayer
And you're with me everywhere
You're my angel, miracle
You're all I need tonight
Give me shelter from the rain
You breathe life in me again
You're my angel, miracle
You're all I need to know, tonight

Interlude
(Instrumental)

Verse 2
Life is just a moment
We're blowing in the wind
We're trying to find a friend
And only time can tell us
If we win or if we lose
And who will stand beside us

Pre-Chorus 2
When there's darkness all around me, you're the light I see
When I need someone to ease my troubled mind

Chorus 2
You're the answer to my prayer
And you're with me everywhere
You're my angel, miracle
You're all I need tonight
Give me shelter from the rain
You breathe life in me again
You're my angel, miracle
You're all I need to know, oh tonight

Bridge
Oh, you're my angel

APPENDIX 3B: ANGEL LYRICS (CONT'D)

Chorus 3
You're the answer to my prayer
And you're with me everywhere
You're my angel, miracle
You're all I need tonight
Give me shelter from the rain
You breathe life in me again
You're my angel, my miracle
You're all I need to know, tonight

Conclusion
You're all I need to know
(Angel, my angel, my angel)
Oh, you're my angel
(Angel, my angel, my angel)