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'Wot do u call it? Doof doof': Articulations of glocality in Australian grime music

ABSTRACT

Grime music emerged at the turn of the millennium in the United Kingdom. While grounded and street-level at its outset, the form has since become global in reach. This article focuses on performance practice in the East Australian grime scene and its development over time. Principally, it attends to how MCs and DJs articulate a sense of belonging to both the UK and their local communities in Melbourne and Sydney, through lyrical and musical signification. These articulations are shown to be an example of 'glocal' performance practice, which is locally situated yet globally rendering. The article also demonstrates how these artists' conceptions of legitimate practice are heavily mediated by YouTube videos of canonical UK practice, owing to their geographical dislocation from the genre's initial point of origin. As a result, radio performances – known as 'sets' – and live shows are often prioritized over recorded releases. These findings are supported by interviews with Australian artists, and musical analysis of two key performances: a radio set on Australian broadcaster Triple J from November 2018 and a global grime showcase on London's Rinse FM from January 2019.

KEYWORDS

grime music
mediation
Australia
media ecologies
glocality
transnational flow
hip hop
youth studies

INTRODUCTION

Fraksha and Scotty Hinds, founding members of Melbourne's pioneering grime collective Smash Brothers, are not Australian. When they first visited Australia in 2002 from the United Kingdom, grime music barely existed. It did not even have a name. But it was here that they met lifelong friends, Diem and Murky, with whom they formed the collective on their return in 2006.[1] By this point, grime music – initially formed in inner-city London – had become an autonomous performance genre in the United Kingdom, with its own protocol, ethical structure and technical cachet. In Australia, however, it was still a largely unknown quantity. While grime's most famous figures, such as East London MCs Dizzee Rascal and Wiley, had experienced some trans-atlantic notoriety – Dizzee's debut *Boy In Da Corner* received a coveted 9.4 from Pitchfork upon its release – the form hadn't yet broken into the Southern Hemisphere (Plagenhoef 2003: n.pag.).

In a documentary from September 2019, Fraksha and Hinds were asked about the state of the Australian scene, when they arrived permanently in the mid-2000s. 'There was definitely no grime', said Fraksha. This was reaffirmed by Hinds: 'It was non-existent. I think we were playing a Risky Roadz [grime compilation] CD in 2006. They [friends] asked us 'Why are you lot listening to doof doof?' Some of those hip hop people [had] a kind of vibe. [They thought] anything electronic was doof (rave music). They like the MCs but don't like the beats' (Filter Zine 2019).

Although Sydney hip hop has substantial pedigree, with artists such as Def Wish Cast and Sound Unlimited actively performing since the early 1990s, there exists a disjunct between the boom-bap aesthetic of rap music and the ferocious electronic influences that were part of the pre-Internet UK underground in the 1990s. These electronic influences – alongside a substantial basis in reggae sound system traditions – deeply undergird grime practice. Hence the confusion. Rather than seeing grime as correlate or comparative to existing hip hop practice in eastern Australia, the artists' friends immediately related grime to 'doof' or rave music (Luckman 2003: 320). Positing a link between hip hop and grime seemed incongruous since the musical developments that led to grime's emergence in the United Kingdom were undocumented or incorporated within an Australian setting. Since 2006, however, Smash Brothers, Sydney collective That's Them, and a variety of other artists, have developed one of the most established grime scenes outside of the M25 Orbital. Grime artists can be found in nearly every major Australian city, regular events showcase MCing talent, and in 2018 a number of artists were invited to perform on public broadcaster Triple J, a platform with just under two million weekly listeners (Triple J 2017).

This article critically examines the means by which grime has developed in Australia, specifically Melbourne and Sydney – from embryonic moments, to contemporary practice in 2019 – and how this rise to prominence has been affected by both local and global networks. Rather than merely replicating the sonic characteristics of the UK scene, this Australian circuit has myriad distinctive performance styles and local idiosyncrasies, while still readily affirming association to the music's initial point(s) of origin.

MODELLING 'GLOCAL' GRIME PRACTICE: ISSUES OF NATIONALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND MEDIATION

There are a number of issues that must be considered throughout, principally issues of nationality, global affiliation, and how music flows transnationally. This article does not uncritically juxtapose a homogenized understanding of

Australian Grime, with a generalized UK practice. Within both countries there is substantial local variation. The principal artists featured throughout are based in Melbourne and Sydney, while artists' interviewed reference British regional forms of grime production (such as in Birmingham and Nottingham) in addition to London-based artists as part of their practice.[2] These considerations, in fact, build into its fundamental model of transnational flow.

This article uses 'glocality' to model this flow, and there are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it is to avoid confusion with Richard Bramwell and James Butterworth's 2019 investigation into 'translocality' in British rap performance. Bramwell and Butterworth's study looks to affiliation *within* national boundaries, between rap practice in London and Bristol, whereas this article is more global in its outlook. Despite this distinction, however, they locate an important tension which resonates with this article: studies of global hip hop have typically 'charted the relationship between hip hop in the USA and hip hop in specific "elsewheres"' (Bramwell and Butterworth 2019: 2510). This tendency denies and underplays both the autonomy of UK practice, and discredits local innovations in these 'elsewheres'. Catherine Appert has expressed deep ambivalence towards the United States' position as a hegemonic centre for rap, instead signalling the importance of a 'locally grounded', yet 'globally articulating' scene in Senegal (2016: 294), while Ben Gidley makes the case for grime as a distinctively UK form that is 'promiscious[ly] hybrid', taking influence from 'r&b, jungle, hip hop and ragga' (Gidley 2007: 151).[3]

Positioning East Australian grime practice within a glocalization framework helps ameliorate these concerns. It not only resists the 'culturally homogenising' gaze of globalization through not relating grime practice to the United States as a central fulcrum, but it also allows exchange *within and across* national boundaries (Robertson 2012: 192). Instead of 'overrid[ing] locality' a glocal approach to grime practice affords room for the nuances and complexity of creative interaction between artists located in both hemispheres (Robertson 2012: 192).

In order to fully address the nature of these performance flows, and their impact on practice, the article's investigation is split into three sections. Section I opens with a brief introduction to grime music, before offering a historical overview of hip hop practice in eastern Australia, and how its development compares with musical happenings in the United Kingdom at a similar time. This is aligned with historical context. Through attending to the social policy of Liberal Prime Minister John Howard, who held office from 1996 to 2007, it will show how these policies affected youth provisions, education and employment; consequently impacting the musical production and lyrical content of later manifestations of Australian hip hop within its eastern inner cities – such as 'lad' or 'gutter' rap – and eventually grime artists in these locales. This article pays particular attention to these arenas, both for the prevalence of practice in these locations, but also their relationship to Howard's policies. Although domestic policy impacted working-class populations across Australia, its effects were particularly acute in its big cities on the East Coast, where the casualization of employment and a growing wealth gap impacted its low-skilled workforces at the expense of 'middle Australia' (Ryan 2005: 455).

Section II looks at mediation. It is concerned with the ways in which grime reached Australia. While artists such as Fraksha and Scotty Hinds brought over ideas and a wide contextual understanding of UK dance music history, much of the interaction between Australian musicians and the UK scene was through minority channels, such as freestyle series, out-of-print DVDs and YouTube

2. See interview with Hazrd on p. 10.

3. These aspects are explored in more depth in Section II.

4. Grime performances are often referred to as 'sets', and are referred to as such throughout this article.

5. Lyric taken from a live performance by West London MC Reaps.

channels that hosted pirate radio recordings. For Matthew Fuller, a 'multiply interlaced minoritarian use of media systems' offers scope for new forms of practice, and these entities have certainly stimulated practice in Australia (Fuller 2005: 7). However, the availability of these resources has resulted in a quasi-canon of musical moments that have served to inform creative practice. At times, this canon has provided an expectation of what authentic grime performance should be for eastern Australian artists. In others, it acts as a starting point for localized reworkings. An engagement with Georgina Born and Christopher Haworth's work on Internet mediation, Antoine Hennion's sociology of mediation, and Monique Charles' work on grime and the online sphere will strengthen this discussion (Born and Haworth 2017; Hennion 2003; Charles 2016).

Section III offers a case study of glocalized grime practice. Two performances are examined: the aforementioned Triple J 'set'[4] recorded in November 2018, and a radio set pre-recorded in Sydney for London DJ Marcus Nasty's residency on Rinse FM from January 2019. Unlike many studies of hip hop and grime practice, this section does not just look at lyrical contributions, although these are important. It examines the performance protocol and ethical structure of Australian grime performance, and the musical tropes and techniques employed by the artists. While lyrical adages are present and will be attended to, the co-option – and creative repurposing – of flows, the use of cadences, and ultimately a tacit understanding of the 'right way' to perform, offers further insight into the musical flows and exchange between British and Australian counterparts. This musical analysis is supported by interviews with practitioners based in eastern Australia, all of which were conducted in the Autumn of 2019. These are interspersed with contributions from UK grime artists, collected between May 2017 and February 2019.

Through the aid of international interlocutors such as Fraksha and Scotty Hinds, the various local and transnational networks that regularly engage in dynamic exchange, and through Internet-facilitated mediation, Australian grime music – and its resultant performance practice – reflects both the grounded, and global, particularities of a scene rendered on the streets of London, but fully realized down under.

I: 'CALM BEFORE THE STORM': THE BIRTH OF GRIME MUSIC, AUSTRALIAN HIP HOP, AND HOWARD'S (IL)LIBERAL AGENDA

'140 BPM, that's the pace my heart pumps at': Grime music's origins, influences and characteristics[5]

Grime music is a black British musical form that emerged in the early 2000s. Its point of origin is widely considered to be East London, although many actors across London – and the United Kingdom – were actively engaged with the music from its outset. The form is MC and DJ led, and is influenced by a number of black Atlantic forms. Owing to the prominence of the MC, US hip hop – and hip hop more broadly – is an important predecessor to grime, while much of its performance framework is taken from reggae and dancehall sound system culture. It also has a particular, and locally immediate history. During the 1980s and 1990s, UK electronic dance music underwent a number of rapid developments. Following 1988's second summer of love and the emergence of acid house, the 1990s gave birth to happy hardcore, drum 'n' bass and jungle, and garage. These developments were most recognizably quantified as part

of music journalist Simon Reynolds' so-called 'hardcore continuum', that was built around a clearly grounded network of radio stations, record shops and raves (Reynolds 2013). Grime is readily located within this socio-economic infrastructure, and its own emergence was widely reported as a move away from UK garage's marked opulence, towards a more stripped-back and direct style, sonically articulated through eight-bar structures, square wave 'shell downs' and 'intensive snares' (Boakye 2017: 50; Mumdance and Rabit 2014; Plastician 2008).

Fundamentally, grime is about 'beats and bars' (Kano 2005). The combination of 'fast-chat' MCing from dancehall and jungle, and instrumental productions that typically oscillate between 135 and 145 beats per minute, sees grime operate at a heightened pace. MCs quickly pass the microphone back and forth, while the DJ(s) line-up new instrumental productions that keep the momentum moving forward (Hebdige 1987: 141). According to West London's DJ Eastwood,

> I DJ quite quick, so they [the tracks] are ready to play. Especially with MCs you need that element of surprise and keep that level of energy when you're DJing as well. So I used to put 'em [the vinyl] under the deck. I could just literally flip it [on to the turntable straight away] and it maintains the energy of the set.
>
> (Eastwood 2017: n.pag.)

The speed with which grime DJs and MCs manoeuvre and interchange is reflective of the music's immediate heritage. While hip hop and sound system culture are almost universally recognized and influential, the local and grounded particularities of jungle, hardcore and garage that deeply inform grime music, have taken more time to spread across the globe.

'Hip hop Down Under Comin' Upper': The rise of boom-bap and aboriginal interpolation

For Australians interested in grime music, their most readily available comparative is the country's own hip hop scene.[6] As with many popular musical histories, a point of origin is not immediately available. According to Ian Maxwell, in his extensive study *Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes*, mythologizing and assertions of originality abound. However, it is generally understood that hip hop took hold in the late 1980s, after satellite distribution of canonical hip hop movie *Wild Style* and Malcolm McLaren's music video for 'Buffalo Gals' (Maxwell 2003: 49). This readily aligns with Bramwell and Butterworth's observation above that hip hop's influence is widely regarded as one-way traffic from the United States to its 'elsewheres'. Two of the most prominent collectives were Def Wish Cast and Sound Unlimited, both from Sydney. Sound Unlimited were signed to Sony BMG and achieved a Top 20 chart position with their 1992 single 'Kickin' To The Undersound' (Australian Charts 2019). And Def Wish Cast, who were cited by all of my interviewees as foundational, released their debut album *Knights of the Underground Table* in 1993. The crew, consisting of members DJ Vame, Ser Rock, Defwish and Die C, also put out a single that year. Entitled 'A.U.S.T.', it powerfully declared that 'A.U.S.T. down under [was] comin' up' (Maxwell 2003: 148). In order to assert allegiance with the US scene, most groups – and Sound Unlimited and Def Wish Cast were no exception – adopted the four pillars of hip hop and practiced MCing, DJing,

6. While sound system culture exists, I have not found it to be as pervasive as hip hop for youth cultural formations. It was not referenced by any of my interviewees. Sound systems are of course located across Australia, with entities in Perth (K.B.I. Soundsystem), Adelaide (Earthshaker Soundsystem) and Melbourne (Heartical Hi Powa). Luckman locates its movement to Australia in the second summer of love (2003: 316), while reggae practice takes place often in the Northern Territories and 'desert communities' amongst Aboriginal groups (Ottosson 2010: 278).

breakdancing and graffiti (Chang 2006: 90). This was combined with performances in Australian accents, that – in a similar manner to London Posse – attracted acclaim, and asserted a level of local identity alongside their wider commitment to hip hop's core principles (Wood 2009: 176). This commitment was necessary for these artists, many of whom were white, to feel connected to a 'transnational hip hop nation', despite their ethnicity and dislocation (Maxwell 2003: 20).

Alongside these developments, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders also engaged in hip hop practice. Whereas Sound Unlimited and Def Wish Cast's geographic and racial dislocation was unlike many global hip hop movements that acted as a diasporic re-articulation, or a clarion call for solidarity against political and racial oppression, a large proportion of Indigenous material attends directly to anti-establishment and anti-colonial sentiment (Pardue 2004; Perullo 2005). According to J. Griffith Rollefson, the ease with which many diverse groups adopt hip hop is owing to its political impetus and means of communication 'always already [being a] constituent part of local knowledge and practice' (2018). An autochthonous interpolation by aboriginal artists is therefore to be understood through historic storytelling traditions, and the continued fight against the marginalization of, and violence towards, aboriginal people by successive governments in Australia. Mitchell (2001), Pennycook and Mitchell (2009) and Warren and Evitt (2010) have all pointed to hip hop both functioning in the face of oppression, and complementing an a priori embedded disposition towards oral transmission. Meanwhile, Hutchings and Roger's examination of duo A.B. Original examines their positioning of Indigenous voices against 'overarching colonial domination' (2018: 85). The group's track 'January 26', off the album *Reclaim Australia*, sardonically pulls apart Australia Day and positions sentiment surrounding the day as a 'flag waving, land taking attitude'. This explicit counter-hegemonic and anti-racist stance espoused by A.B. Original and their contemporaries therefore offers clear contextual association between hip hop as resistance, and the decolonial project.

'You try so hard but you're still fucking whack': Dejected suburbia, the Sydney Serchaz and social subordination

For a number of the Sydney and Melbourne-based grime artists I interviewed, however, it was neither Sound Unlimited's boom-bap, nor A.B. Original's 'dusty foot philosophy' that offered the foundation for their practice (Pennycook and Mitchell 2009: 26). Instead, many sought influence from Sydney's 'lad' or 'gutter' rap scene. This movement, that grew in stature during the early 2000s, was aggressive and confrontational. Rather than possessing an explicit political agenda or openly aligning with the 'hip hop nation' through an adoption of the four pillars, it instead evoked the everyday situations of working-class youth. Sonically, it is close to Southern rap – albeit a lo-fi version – with heavy bass, synth stabs redolent of Lil Jon or Zaytoven's work, and assertive lyrical content that would not sound out of place on a Three 6 Mafia record (Burton 2017: 83, 106). While differing from grime in its speed and MC delivery – it sits closer to 85 beats per minute and MCs rarely engage in double time flows – it is within this lo-fi and direct aesthetic that similarities with grime arise, both thematically, and with respect to a DIY attitude and entrepreneurial spirit. A

great deal of material was put out on mixtapes, rather than produced in high-quality studios with industry backing (White 2017: 6). It was also developing concomitantly to grime music, over 10,000 miles away.

The rise of lad rap is best framed within the sociohistorical state of play in Sydney at the turn of the millennium. While it received scathing reports in the media, and was later dismissed by *Vice* in 2014 who asserted that 'most of it isn't even very good', lad rap captured the lived experiences of suburban youth, particularly in Sydney (Barker 2014). This form's emergence coincided with Liberal Prime Minister John Howard's eleven years in government. Howard's continued success, according to Neal Ryan, was owing to his 'government's capacity to focus on the aspirations of "middle Australia"' (2005: 452). Yet this came at a cost. In 2018, *The Guardian* published a retrospective of Howard's time in office, and pointed to his highly conservative, rather than liberal, agenda. Spending reductions were directed towards education and youth services, attracting criticism from the then-Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Amanda Vanstone (Davies 2018). Ryan's report for *Policy and Politics* also located an interaction between social and economic policy, with a 'deregulation of [the] labour market' resulting in a casualized work force, and 'poor working conditions' (Ryan 2005: 455). This neoliberal agenda focused on privatization, and a dismantling of social provisions that impacted low-income Australia.

Western Sydney, where many lad rap artists lived, was particularly hard hit, and these policies had continuing ramifications for the decade following Howard's administration. A public health survey of South-West Sydney from 2012 cited 'low income levels, single parent households, high levels of graffiti, vandalism and crime', and a news report from the *Sydney Herald* in 2015 warned of Sydney's western suburbs risking 'ghettoisation' (Jalaludin et al. 2012: 2; Irvine 2015). In 2019, significant levels of disparity between Australian suburbs and city centres were shown to still exist, with New South Wales 'home to the nation's lowest-earning area' (Khadem 2019).

For NTER, a leading artist within this movement, and a co-founder of Sydney Serchaz, his time in the suburb of Hurstville affected his musical production: '[Hurstville] isn't so much a ghetto but a really rough and bad neighbourhood. It was the environment we grew up in. The situations we faced as kids and the things we went through […] it's important to tell that story. You can't make this sort of shit up. People just need to keep it real' (Aussie Hip Hop 2019). While NTER eagerly articulates hackneyed 'support claims' of authenticity that are present within most artist testimonials in hip hop, this clear conviction is present across the group's recorded output (McLeod 2012: 169). Single 'Like My Brother' is full of braggadocio assertions that relate to both the lived experience of the crew, while simultaneously defaming rivals: 'you try so hard but you're still fucking whack, fucking oath and if you cunts wanna play, then the streets is my court and the pull up is the game' (n.d.).

This candid reportage, and assertive location of musical prowess within street authenticity, struck a chord with many of Australian grime's soon-to-be key players. Mr Wrighty, a grime artist who moved to Sydney from North Queensland in the late 2000s, clearly located the Serchaz' work within an environment that he also experienced:

In Sydney, there's six or seven million people, and three or four million of those are in Western Sydney. People sail into Sydney Harbour, which is on the East. All the poor people, they move further west. It's an

impoverished area, [but] a huge part of [that] is having a distinct sound. [Sydney Serchaz] were the first ones to do the street and crime element.

(Mr Wrighty 2019)

Unlike the Sydney hip hop scene pioneered by Def Wish Cast and Sound Unlimited, which both Wrighty and Fraksha describe as being 'fairly street and graffiti based' without being explicitly street in the music itself, lad rap was direct and conveyed the situations at hand.

Both lad rap artists themselves, and grime artists who respected their work, found resonances through a shared sense of social struggle. These findings align with Todd Dedman's work on local grime practice across the United Kingdom. He found that 'research subjects did not see grime music as an aspect of black culture, instead they referred to it as a culture belonging to a particular social class' (2011: 519). Richard Bramwell similarly found that artists often foreground a sense of 'local particularity' and class solidarity through evoking their lived experiences (2015: 280). His book *UK Hip hop, Grime and the City* spent time examining the work of Devlin, arguably grime's most famous white MC. Devlin is from Dagenham in Essex, an industrial town known for its former glories in the automotive sector. Devlin's single 'Community Outcast' from 2006 vividly highlights the plight of marginalized working-class communities living in council flats with meagre means. Its music video sees Devlin walking through his locale in greyscale with destitute and desperately struggling families surrounding him, and lyrically it reflects this battle: 'that's just the way it is, she counts fifteen needles pushing her pram on the way to the lift, and this is where [Gordon] Brown says it's safe to raise kids'.

For Bramwell, there is a unity in socio-economic subordination that ties Devlin's work to other grime artists – this is also at play in lad rap. While both are geographically – and racially – dislocated from grime and hip hop's respective points of origin, their representations of life in Sydney and Dagenham offer a localized 'code of the streets' and an indictment of social policy – be it John Howard's Liberal tenure, or the dying days of New Labour in Britain – and its impact on the working-class (Anderson 2000: 142; Gangstarr 1994).

II: RISKY ROADZ: THE MEDIATION AND TRANSMISSION OF GRIME IN LONDON AND EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Having established the ways in which local and global forms have coloured Australia's musical landscape, it is now important to closely examine grime music's introduction to the Australian East Coast, and the means by which it was introduced. The article opened with statements from Fraksha and Scotty Hinds of Smash Brothers, who spoke on how grime had yet to fully infiltrate their Melbourne locale upon permanent arrival in 2006. For Antoine Hennion, mediation is a complex and distributed process 'rang[ing] from systems or devices of the most physical and local nature, to institutional arrangements and collective frames of appreciation' (2003: 80, 87). As such, this section looks at grime's emergence in London, before attending to three key ways in which grime has been mediated in Melbourne in Sydney: active mediation through Fraksha and Hinds; grounded networks of community exchange; and Internet mediation, principally through YouTube and forums.

Georgina Born and Christopher Haworth's study of Internet-mediated musics accounts for both the particularity of the Internet, and the varied intensity with which musical scenes utilize its resources. It is useful to consider here. Whereas Vaporwave, a genre that developed in the early 2010s, is almost exclusively an online phenomenon, genres such as Microsound – which existed as a pre-Internet era form – rapidly gestated and became codified through a mailing list that started in 1999. For Born and Haworth, Microsound is therefore a 'hybrid online-offline form' (Born and Haworth 2017: 604). This definition begins to capture the nature of Australian grime practice, since there is an active dialogue between online spaces and offline performance communities.

Grime music's initial emergence in the United Kingdom, however, was particularly grounded. This was owing to the aforementioned socio-economic infrastructure that grime music relied upon, and artists' entrepreneurial impetus. A distinct lack of movement was imposed upon this principally black working-class movement of performers. According to Joy White, 'postcodes and poverty corrall[ed] young black lives into ever smaller spaces' (2017: 259). Thus, the local radio stations, record shops and raves – also the means by which artists could accrue revenue – possessed huge importance.[7] Artists would regularly congregate at makeshift pirate radio stations to disseminate their ideas to an audience of avid listeners. These listeners were within a particular radius, and this was often contingent on the strength of radio aerials.[8] Record shops, such as East London's Rhythm Division and South London's Mixing Records, were hubs of creativity. 'The Internet wasn't really a thing at that point', says Dan Hancox, author of *Inner City Pressure: The Story of Grime*. 'If you grew up in Lewisham the sounds of East London would feel like a world away. What broke those [barriers] down? […] People started meeting at record shops' (Hancox 2017).

Outside of these grounded networks, the principal ways in which listeners displaced from the capital could access material was through the distribution of tape packs and cassettes. There were two types of distribution. The first was more informal, and involved peers swapping and exchanging tapes from different radio stations across London (and the rest of the United Kingdom) that they had personally recorded. Archivist Michael Finch's extensive collection, for example, was documented on *Tape Crackers* (Jackson 2011). Large-scale raves, such as Club Sidewinder, released more formal packages that included recordings from each rave alongside specially pre-recorded mixes and flyers for future events (see Figure 1). The club's founder, Paul Spruce, spoke to *Complex Magazine* about the tape packs and referred to their 'legendary' status: 'I don't know exactly how much copies we sold, but I know it was a lot. This was before the Internet/MP3 era, so there was always a demand. If you look at some of the *Sidewinder: Raw* packs that we did, everybody knows certain sets in them word-for-word' (Patterson 2017).

This quasi-canonical importance of tape packs for the wider populace is an example of how an understanding of a musical form, while grounded, is often mediated by artefacts. Many artefacts disappear, particularly within genres performed by working-class groups who lack access to archiving resources. Those that survive are then seen as the benchmark for future practice. According to West London MC Hitman Tiga, whose crew Dynasty regularly performed at Sidewinder, 'it's a lot to do with documentation. What you've got to remember is we started doing this before YouTube' (Tiga 2017). The question therefore, is how a musical form that initially functioned within a grounded network of pirate radio stations, record shops and raves in the United Kingdom, made

7. DJ Eastwood spoke extensively with me about the vinyl economy, and the potential to make a good profit through sales.

8. For East London, Deja Vu FM and Rinse FM were two of the main stations; South London housed OnTop FM and Flex FM; West London was the home of Freeze FM; while Heat FM and Axe FM were important sites in North.

Figure 1: Sidewinder Tape Packs, 2004–05. Photograph taken by author.

its way to Australia. Furthermore, it is of importance to consider what aspects were disseminated, and for what reasons they resonated, in order to understand how they might have impacted Australian grime practice.

Smash Brothers was founded out of a shared interest and appreciation of UK music. According to Fraksha, he first made conversation with MCing partner Murky since he saw him in a bar wearing an Avirex jacket, a pertinent subcultural signifier for the UK garage and grime scenes (see South London MC Fekky's nostalgic single 'Avirex' from 2017). 'That's what drew us together, because they were into it', says Fraksha. 'I was in this place the other side of the world, 24 hours away from home, listening to music that no-one else knew apart from these dudes. So we'd chill out, listen to music and spit bars together' (Fraksha 2019). And while Fraksha was from the United Kingdom, the main route by which the collective accessed music – either new or old – was through YouTube:

> YouTube was a saviour. It informed everything. All the *Risky Roadz* stuff, all the Logan Sama videos, all the Kiss FM videos, all the *Fuck Radio* stuff. A lot of grime exists only on sets or mixes, or one-off vocals of tunes, so you can't listen to that. It's all gone.
>
> (Fraksha 2019)

Here, Fraksha points to three key resources that the artists accessed. Risky Roadz is a videographer from East London, and his self-titled series featured a number of canonical moments within grime music (see Figure 2). This DVD series, later uploaded to YouTube, predominantly featured freestyles either on the corner, or at radio sets. Later in our interview, Fraksha also referred to *Practice Hours*, a documentary put together by Troy 'A Plus' Miller (2004), that worked with a similar format. Logan Sama's Kiss FM show and Ghetts's *Fuck Radio* platform are also notable for their presence. Brentwood DJ Logan Sama hosted a weekly grime show on London's Kiss FM between 2005 and 2014. For the first three years, these shows were only available on the radio, but from 2008, the live MC sets were uploaded to Sama's own visual channel called *KeepinItGrimy*. Fuck Radio was founded in 2004 by East London MC Ghetts and DJ Unique, who decided to set up their own space to record sets, outside of the standard radio network: '[w]e started doing bedroom sets […] [then we went to] Danny C's studio. We were just doing *Fuck Radio* and it was licking down the internet world' (F**k Radio 2008). This heightened visibility on the Internet, through Fuck Radio, Logan Sama's YouTube Channel, and ripped uploads of *Risky Roadz*, enabled Fraksha and other MCs access to material that was otherwise unavailable.

Fraksha also highlights the very impermanence of grime recordings, and a lack of access to the British scene, as a reason behind focusing on the visual. Although one friend had a large collection of white label records and DVDs, this was uncharacteristic. Fraksha found it 'impossible' to get hold of instrumentals to vocal, and resorted to using 'jacked (stolen) beats'. YouTube sets, however, were accessible, unlike localized radio shows and vinyl, which were costly to import from the United Kingdom. YouTube shows therefore offered repeated listens, and became formative for the East Australian scene. Fraksha, Scotty Hinds and Mr Wrighty have all referred to these shows and their importance (Filter Zine 2019; Mr Wrighty 2019). There is a particularity to YouTube, achieved through its relative stability and democratized access. Born and Haworth wrote that 'archiving practices [are] afforded to platforms such as YouTube', and these sets – in effect – acted as a yardstick for new performance communities geographically displaced from the genre's point of origin (2017: 603).

Monique Charles's work on UK grime adds another interesting complication to this scenario. She has written on how this democratization of technology resulted in a breakdown of the grime community in London's 'Black Public Sphere'. The movement of grime practice onto the Internet, which in part enabled new communities to form in the southern hemisphere, paradoxically dislocated its prior grounded channels in the United Kingdom through 'free access' to music that undercut its grounded, socio-economic infrastructure (Charles 2016: 197). British artists and consumers could feel part of the scene without attending local events, or going to radio. As a result, there became a need to 'distinguish between who was original Grime or "on road" authentic, and those who arrived later who had little or no connection to the embedded materiality of the scene' (Charles 2016: 198).

For artists in Australia, however, their access to these videos enabled an insight into grime's 'authentic' performance avenues. The format and style of the performances hosted on YouTube is important to consider in this instance. Since *KeepinItGrimy*, *Fuck Radio*, *Practice Hours* and *RiskyRoadz* all foregrounded street freestyles and radio sets – rather than songs – these modes of production are seen as the proper way in which to perform and create
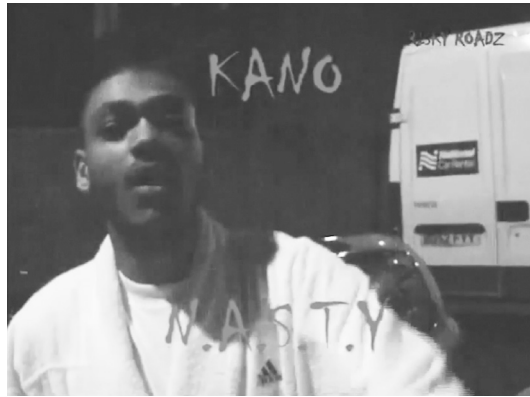
Figure 2: Still image of East London MC Kano. Taken from Risky Roadz.

within the genre. 'That's my favourite part of grime, [the] radio sets for sure', says Mr Wrighty. 'That's the true art of grime' (Mr Wrighty 2019). Hennion has written on how jazz is a genre 'written by recordings' while rap is predicated on the 'here [and] now' (2003: 85). For grime artists based in Melbourne and Sydney, though, their understanding of grime is more complex, and fashioned through digitally mediated renditions of live practice. While Gidley has pointed to an ambivalence in British hip hop practice towards 'corporate channels' in favour of 'underground DIY' routes such as 'pirate radio [and] home made mixtapes', these Australian artists have been afforded an insight in to 'authentic' practice through the very means to which Charles attributes its decline (Gidley 2007: 149).

This is demonstrated well in Hazrd's engagement with grime music, a young artist from Sydney who has been based in Melbourne since the winter of 2019. Hazrd's first introduction to grime was through the work of Midlands artists.[9] Unlike the London-centric *Fuck Radio*, and *Risky Roadz*, YouTube channels such as JDZ media were promoting regional practice at the time when Hazrd was becoming acquainted with the music: '[It was] through YouTube. I just stumbled across a group called FullForceEnt. Sox and Webster and these other guys they had a crew […] and I was like yeah that's it' (Hazrd 2019). Nonetheless, the prevailing aspects of practice promoted were still radio sets and live cyphers. As a result, Hazrd shares a similar understanding of grime practice with Fraksha and Wrighty:

> Hazrd: That is grime to me, live sets or radio. It's not so much about tracks. If you can't come correct on a set whether it's a rave or on the radio, then find something else to do. I think that's the main thing to me. That's what I love about grime. It's that sort of environment.
>
> (Hazrd 2019)

This generational element, however, should be acknowledged. While Hazrd mentioned that he has been a fan of grime music since the Midlands revival, which took place in the early 2010s, many younger Australian grime artists have been impacted by what Wrighty and Fraksha determine to be the 'post-Shutdown era'. Whereas artists actively engaged in Australia's embryonic grime scene accessed YouTube and other mediated platforms to hear about

the music, the rise of both Skepta and Stormzy – two male grime MCs from London – had a far-reaching global impact. Skepta's track 'Shutdown' was released in September 2015 and featured on his Mercury award-winning album *Konnichiwa*. It was voted the best song of 2015 by *The Guardian*, and Skepta was booked for a sold-out tour in Australia the year following, only for it to be cancelled because of visa complications (Beaumont-Thomas 2015; Mack 2016; Hennessy 2018). South London's Stormzy reached Number 11 in the ARIA (Australian Charts) with his debut album *Gang Signs & Prayer.* This was followed by a headline tour of Australia in July 2017.

The shift from creating grime while displaced from its origins, to grime music's pervasiveness within global and Australian popular culture is captured by Fraksha: 'There's a younger generation coming through who have grown up hearing grime. It's not alien to them. For a long time we were battling against a hip hop scene that didn't understand it.'[These] kids coming up now who have been exposed to it from the off, they know who Stormzy is. So they know what grime is'. But while Stormzy and Skepta's popularity meant that people were aware of grime music, it was a particular type of grime that these new artists understood. 'There was a lot of grime events in our city, but it didn't represent what grime was properly', Fraksha continues. 'It was just like grime for the sake of it. It was big, so [they would] just play Skepta all night. There was no room for MCs and there definitely wasn't room for local MCs' (Fraksha 2019).[10]

While this 'post-Shutdown' factor adds further complication to our understanding of grime on Australia's East Coast, it clearly demonstrates distinctions and regimes of value within the scene (Appadurai 1986: 4). Charles's assertion that UK grime artists were trying to demonstrate their 'on-road' credentials is rearticulated by Melbourne and Sydney artists who act as moral arbiters of creative practice. Fraksha was keen to stress the importance of 'local MCs' and their representation at his Melbourne-based grime event '50/50'. It was founded as a means to counter inauthentic imitations, so that 'we could do it properly'. This demonstrates both a commitment to performance ethics, and the value imbued upon the 'authentic' live experience.

Since these artists firmly locate grime's performative essence within the live show and radio set, this article's final section looks to examples of East Australian creative practice in situ. It analyses two grime performances that were recorded live for radio broadcast, and pays close attention to localized tropes and influences from British practice. It will therefore offer a clear understanding of how these complex glocal flows and regimes of value – presented above by Fraksha, Wrighty and Hazrd – are actually manifest in the performative sphere.

III: 'YOU'LL GET BOXED LIKE AN HSP': GLOBALLY GROUNDED CREATIVE PRACTICE

Through an engagement with the musical lineage of both grime music, and Australian hip hop, this article so far has demonstrated how these fields differ both in execution, and in influence, while also sharing fundamental tenets. In both forms, MCs improvise over instrumentals – or beats – selected by the DJ. The lyrical content and social narratives espoused in lad rap resonate strongly with grime practice, while the sonority of grime music – its pace, and indebtedness to UK garage and jungle – is markedly different to a boom-bap aesthetic. It is unapologetically fast, with abrasive basslines, and rapid

10. Hazrd also corroborates Fraksha's point in interview, making almost exactly the same observation: 'for years it was just grime events with DJs spinning Skepta tracks and that's it'.

interchange between MCs. This section takes two radio performances as its focus, demonstrating how these eastern Australian artists articulate an allegiance to UK grime, a wider Australian sociomusical tradition and their own particular locales (Melbourne, Sydney). As mentioned in the article's introduction, this section looks at both lyrical *and* musical aspects of performance. While the significance of language is not understated – theorizing on the role of the linguistic is extensively covered in Alim et al.'s *Global Linguistic Flows* – this holistic approach argues that rhythmic tropes, gesture and performance etiquette are equally pertinent signifiers (Alim 2009).

Kirstie Dorr has written on performance geographies in Latinx America, remarking that 'musical transit registers how [spatialised claims to relative and relational modes of creative production] are negotiated in and articulated through the dynamic interaction of performance practice, circulation process and the geohistorical context' (Dorr 2018: 3). So far, this article has assessed the circulation of material through mediation and grounded networks, and the (arguably more socio- than geo-) historical context of grime production. What remains, therefore is a considered engagement with performance practice, and how these other two elements 'interact' or intersect, in the live domain.

The two radio sets examined took place on Triple J and Rinse FM, based in Sydney and London respectively. Triple J is one of Australia's largest platforms, is government-funded and principally appeals to 'young Australians' (Triple J 2017). In 16 November 2018, Triple J invited twelve Australian grime MCs and DJ Alaska to perform on Hau Latukefu's weekly hip hop show (Triple J 2018). The line-up included Melbourne-based artists Fraksha, Alex Jones, Scotty Hinds and Sydney's Mr Wrighty, Hazrd and Mitchos.[11] The Rinse FM show was part of a global showcase, organized by East London's Marcus Nasty. Rinse, mentioned above, was a pioneering station for grime music in its early period. It received its FM license in February 2011, and broadcasts from Dalston, in East London. The first 30 minutes of the show is dedicated to Australian grime, and features a set recorded in Sydney by DJ Mincy alongside Hazrd, Mr Wrighty, Juzlo and Bigredcap (see Figure 3). The following analysis focuses on three aspects that are present in both performances: firstly, the demonstration of key performative tenets that are seen as fundamental to grime music; secondly, articulations of lived experience that situate this practice within a (sub)urban Australian context; thirdly, glocal articulations that demonstrate homage – and allegiance – to the UK grime scene from a point of geographic dislocation.

'It's that big boy wheel': Core aspects of grime practice in the live domain

Within grime performance, there are key tenets that underpin its performance. While it is outside this article's remit to detail all of these intricate aspects – and these are covered elsewhere – there are a number of simple elements that artists typically adhere to (Charles 2016: 125, 185; de Lacey 2020: 110–47; Hancox 2018: 64). Microphone rotation is expected, and disputes can arise from the 'way [artists] hog the mic' (de Lacey 2020: 121). DJs are similarly expected to keep the momentum going, while also accommodating for artists' particular styles or flows. Abrasive instrumentals, for example, might not work with an intricate flow pattern. This accommodation was termed 'complementation' by Benjamin Brinner, with respect to gamelan performance, and it has since been used to conceptualize affordance in interaction between grime artists (Brinner 1995: 193; de Lacey 2020: 299).

rinse
106.8FM(London)
rinse.fm/player

Marcus Nasty Presents Global Grime
with MC Jumanji, Gi Major, Timbo Slice, Bookz, 3rdi, Korin Complex (USA)
Mincy, Mr Wrighty, HAZRD, Juzlo, Bigredcap (AUS)
Sakur, Ralph & Onjuicy (JPN)
Wednesday 23rd January
1900—2100

Figure 3: Flyer for Marcus Nasty's Global Grime show on Rinse FM.

The MCs and DJs engaged in the performance for Marcus Nasty's show fulfilled both of these requirements. This is evidenced early in the set, with DJ Mincy introducing new instrumentals almost regimentally after 32 bars have passed. This is matched by the MCs. Mr Wrighty opens with a sixteen-bar introduction, before Hazrd follows with a sixteen-bar section. Sydney-based producer and MC Juzlo then takes a 32-bar passage. The swiftness with which they interchange allows for the unfolding performance to maintain a forward trajectory. Fraksha emphasizes this importance: 'I've always been a fan of quick mixes and making stuff happen quickly. Some people go on for way too long. My favourite sets are when it's quick, interchanging [and] switching' (Fraksha 2019).

Mr Wrighty and Hazrd also demonstrate 'monitoring' capabilities, where they sense that a new instrumental is about to be introduced, and consequently adapt into repeated four-bar phrases, that allow the DJ to transition into a new phase (Henriques 2011: 158). Just under five minutes into the performance, Hazrd enters while Mincy is in the middle of a mix. Instead of proceeding into an intricate passage, he utilizes a four-bar phrase to effectively ride the transition she is working on (see Figure 4). Notice, too, that this passage also asserts Hazrd's affiliation to both DTC (Death Toll Crew) and western Sydney.

This improvisatory capability is referenced in conversation by Wrighty when discussing the 'art' of grime, as understood through his exposure to the
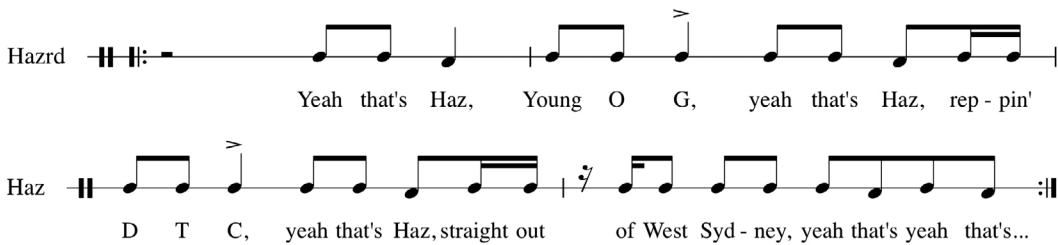
Figure 4: Transcription of Hazrd's four-bar refrain on Marcus Nasty's show.

form: 'It's that art of knowing your bars [...] listening to what the DJ's doing and judging whether it is time to drop a 16 or 32 [bar passage], or run a chorus and wait for something heavy to hit and then fucking drop in hard on a 32' (Mr Wrighty 2019). Figure 4 clearly shows the transition or 'chorus' that Hazrd uses, before then 'dropping in hard' on a more elaborate 32-bar passage. This instance, therefore, clearly shows how expectations with regard to performance etiquette have been incorporated into Australian grime performance.

The second consideration, with respect to practice, is the importance attributed to the 'reload', another foundational performance convention within grime music. Inherited from sound system culture (and prevalent in jungle and garage), the reload or 'pull-up' is an act performed by the DJ, whereby they pull back the instrumental and start it from the top (Henriques 2011: 197). This is typically due to a positive audience response to an instrumental, an MC's performance, or a mixture of the two (Hancox 2018: 64). In a radio setting, where a paying audience is not present, a reload is typically enacted owing to the 'vibe' in the room meaning that the performance cannot continue without acknowledging what just occurred (Eastwood 2017). It is a critical facet of grime's performance, and this is evidenced in the myriad names for the phenomenon: 'rewind', 'edge', 'wheel up' or 'jackum' are all in regular circulation. Its prevalence within performance, and artist testimonials reaffirm this centrality: '[some MCs] will spray (perform lyrics) for a reload and not get it. And when they don't get it, it destroys their whole being' (Tiga 2017).

During the Triple J performance, Mr Wrighty gets three reloads. The first of these happens seven minutes into the set. Entering after a multisyllabic contribution from Brisbane-based MC Nerve, Wrighty offers a direct passage, laden with bravado: 'O-Z G-R-I-M-E, must put me in your top three. Question who's that other two? Cause it's sure as fuck not you'. This formulation from Wrighty is clear and quaver-based, and its juxtaposition with a more technical offering from Nerve is striking. DJ Alaska pulls back the track in appreciation. Within the room, there is clapping and audible shouts of approval from other MCs.

Wrighty's second reload occurs shortly afterwards. After a recapitulation of his prior passage, Wrighty then switches up into a more syncopated flow pattern, which clearly cadences on the fourth beat of each bar (see Figure 5).[12] While this passage is multisyllabic and skippy – offering a marked diversion from Wrighty's initial rhythmic pattern – the regimented cadences and rhetorical questioning helps maintain a coherent quality. Further to this, his combination of self-effacing humour – Wrighty is not the slimmest of individuals – with prior assertions of pre-eminence, is both comedic and hard hitting. The room explodes in laughter, and the presenter acknowledges that something
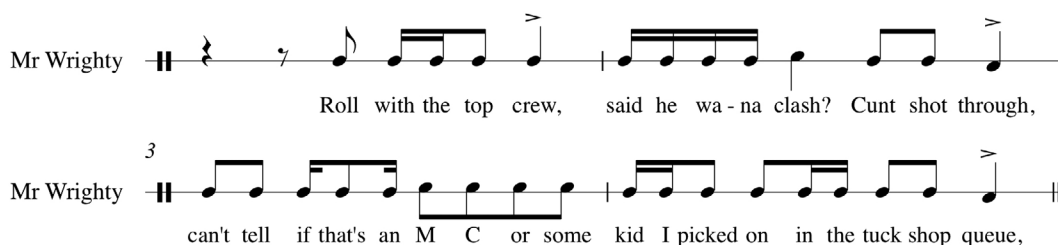
Figure 5: Transcription of Mr Wrighty's reload bar on the Triple J hip hop show.

significant has occurred: 'Ay ay ay, Triple J hip hop show, riding dirty on the two wheels. Double wheel up' (Triple J 2017).

There are two elements that can be taken from this particular incident. Firstly, it demonstrates that the significance attributed to the reload in grime music is just as potent within Australia-wide practice.[13] In September 2019, ten months after the set, Mr Wrighty released a freestyle video entitled 'Big Boy Wheel'. This video, shot on location in Sydney, directly referred to Wrighty's prowess, which was validated by the number of reloads he received on the Triple J set. Secondly, the reload from Figure 5 also demonstrates an attenuated ear to practice from the United Kingdom. Wrighty's cadences align with UK practice, and is similar to Skepta's use of cadence on 2006's 'Autopsy Freestyle' (see discography), but are also distinctive and his own.[14] Local slang is combined with an idiosyncratic performance style that is both in keeping with the grime tradition, while also reflecting his own experiences. This section's second part is concerned with even more explicit articulations of locality, from both Hazrd and Juzlo, before turning its focus towards Hazrd's musical alignment with UK practice.

'Young OG from the S-Y-D': Articulations of (g)locality and authenticity in live radio performance

Hazrd and Juzlo are both from Sydney. Their lived experiences align with the 2012 report by Jalaludin et al., and some of their lyrical content speaks to issues of 'structural subordination', particularly in its suburban districts, which have a substantial wealth disparity with Sydney's opulent East Side (Bramwell 2015: 115). On Marcus Nasty's show, the two MCs follow on from each other with passages that are grounded and assertive, using their time living in these areas as a testament to their legitimacy as artists.

> Juzlo: Manna inna Sydney, I'm a urban guru, manna can't step into my shoes do, make big beats and I lyrically merk cunts, took out the scene like the crowd got voodoos, something like Syria […] yeah I got the sauce, I'm dripping in vindaloo, see me in a hoody and I'm puffing on a draw, hanging with the breddas who spray their names on the trains and walls and the trains and walls.

This passage is characteristic of Juzlo's assertions throughout this set. Here, Juzlo compares western Sydney to Syria, and captures an archetypal image of a problematic youth, through being in a hoody, smoking a spliff and hanging out with graffiti artists (de Casanova and Webb 2017: 118).

13. I use 'Australia-wide' here, since as mentioned in endnote 10, MCs from Perth, Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne and Sydney all featured on this set.

14. It is important to stress that the likeness with Skepta's flow here is demonstrative and does not imply that Wrighty copied Skepta's flow. Rather, it demonstrates a familiarity with UK flow patterns and cadential figures, and how to incorporate these into one's own performances. Crucially, this recording from Skepta is from 2006, and is nine years prior to the so-called 'Post-Shutdown' moment.

It also incorporates British-Jamaican slang, such as 'merk' – which means to kill someone, and is a shortened form of 'mercenary' – alongside the use of markedly Australian defamatory terminology, such as the 'C' word, which is emblematic of embedded 'cis-hetero-misogyny' (Fox et al. 2011: 21; Richardson-Self 2019: 578).

Hazrd also features heavily. His first appearance functions similarly, however his use of vivid imagery and pig-latin, a characteristic of lad rap, more resolutely situates his practice within Sydney, and its musical lineage.

> Hazrd: Yeah, Grime down under, can't say that without H-A-Z, made mad cash from the cunts in the trap but never get that off the MP3. Young OG from the S-Y-D, still saying eshay still up in the street, you're not about that, send an MC to the outback, if you want try test me.

This usage of 'eshay' is a pertinent signifier for Sydney-based rap practice. 'Eshay' comes from 'Sesh' in Pig Latin and refers to someone who is known for being a delinquent (Foster 2019). Rather than hide from the term, many rappers chose to embrace it, as it was used to discriminate towards people from a certain background. For example, Sydney Serchaz' label was called eshrecords. Wrighty also spoke on its importance: '[It's] Pig Latin, street code, street slang. Sydney Serchaz really got that popping […] 'Eshaay bruv, I'll cut you up bruv, I'll fucking stab ya'. That's really what led to a lot of that music you hear now. It's got that street element, that Aussie slang' (2019). Through Hazrd asserting that he's *still* saying eshay', this demonstrates that this aspect of Sydney rap practice is still important to him, even though he's now a grime rapper with significant notoriety.

However, this is not just a simple articulation of authenticity. For Malcolm James, who worked extensively with outer-East London youth in the 2010s, there is a 'nihilism' at play in communities that are faced with social destitution. This is often 'enthusiastically received', such as a theatrical viewing of grime music video 'Kill All A Dem' at Leyham Youth Club (2015: 707). Hazrd makes quite striking assertions as part of this performance that capture his lived experiences:

> Hazrd: When feds come around me you're snitching, that ain't no surprise don't advise that you're listening cause anything might happen, streets round here got more knives than the kitchen, this is Sydney, ain't Manhattan, can't be soft like sadden? Bare man pull out the blade like Aladdin, these days everybody wanna try and start trapping.

And in conversation, he spoke to the importance of this type of reportage:

> Hazrd: I've always written about my surroundings, since I was a fucking kid. Sydney is a really big place. Every area is different from one another. You can go to one area and it's all white people living in two story houses on the beach, and you can go somewhere else and it's super multicultural and shit goes down, it just depends where you are. I just rapped about where I'm from, what it's like where I live, and where I live there was always shit going down.

<div align="right">(Hazrd 2019)</div>

While an acceptance of artists' testimonials without criticality would be ill-advised, there is a particular emphasis upon presenting their surroundings (Bramwell 2015: 136). Although James writes of 'enthusiasm', it is not celebratory (James 2015: 707). Rather, predilection for these narratives is owing to their relation to – and capture of – quotidian experiences, which are otherwise negated in dominant society. James locates artists' nihilism in 'the destructive conditions of neoliberal marginalisation', and the impact of Howard's policies upon youth in western Sydney is a correlate manifestation of this down under. As such, Hazrd and Juzlo present their impact front and centre, along with performative allegiances to lad rap, as part of their creative practice (Maxwell 2003: 53).

In addition to these articulations of locality and evocations of hardship, these sets feature more dynamic interactions between the United Kingdom and Australia. These can be inferred from lyrical and musical content, and are present in Hazrd's performances on both Triple J and Rinse FM. Hazrd's flow patterns and lyrical content often intersperse homages to UK artists with both his own interpretations, and references that ground his practice within Sydney. For example, Figure 6 shows Hazrd's repurposing of East London MCs D Double E and Footsie – collectively known as the Newham Generals – famous rave bar 'War Wid'. The two MCs engage in antiphonal praxis, with D Double responding 'who who' and 'mwee mwee' after Footsie's initial line. Hazrd utilizes this flow, but instead of repeating it word-for-word, he inserts locally specific content with a slightly different flow pattern.

Specifically, Hazrd refers to an 'H-S-P' and an 'H-S-C'. The latter acronym stands for 'Higher School Certificate', a secondary education award in New South Wales. The 'H-S-P' is more politically contentious, and refers to a Halal Snack Pack: 'It's a thing you get in Sydney, kebab meat and chips with sauce' (Hazrd 2019). In 2016, this product became a source of outrage for anti-immigration MPs in Australia, such as Pauline Hanson, the founder of right-wing party One Nation. Hanson asserted that 'buying halal certified products means that you are financially supporting the Islamisation of Australia' (Jones 2017). This articulation of anti-Islamic rhetoric is playfully re-worked by Hazrd, who instead threatens to put someone in a box like chopped up bits of kebab meat. This moment was met warmly in the performance, and Hazrd acknowledged in interview that he wanted to honour important UK MCs, while offering his own perspective: 'That's basically what I was doing, shouts to D Double [E]. Sick MC. Remix the bars a little bit, and do it in my own way, pay[ing] homage you know what I mean? […] All the grime heads catch those ones, people from the UK would get that but people here not so much' (Hazrd 2019).

Hazrd's performances across these two sets raise three important issues. Firstly, Hazrd makes explicit reference to 'grime heads'. This adds another layer to his transnational affiliation with UK practice, since he makes a clear distinction between those in the United Kingdom who understand the art, and a generalized audience in Australia. Owing to his purportedly extensive understanding of the form, Hazrd is able to make references that signify with UK listeners. This tactic resonates with Def Wish Cast and Sound Unlimited's need to be recognized as part of a 'transnational hip hop nation' through adhering to key practices, and through possessing expert insider knowledge (Maxwell 2003: 20).

Figure 6: Transcription of Hazrd's performance on Triple J and the Newham Generals' live rendition of 'War Wid'.

Secondly, Hazrd demonstrates both his legitimacy with the UK scene and more translocal connections to artists in Melbourne, through spitting about times where they shared the stage together: 'shut down sets with Frakz and Diem, shut down sets with Eyez and (Big) Zuu, shut down sets with the D-E-velopment, who the fuck are you?'. Hazrd performed with Birmingham MC's Devilman (part of D-E-velopment), Eyez and West London's Big Zuu on their Australian tour in July 2018, while he regularly performs with Melbourne's Fraksha and Diem, at 50/50 and other events.[15]

Finally, the nature of Hazrd's homages offers insight into the way in which his understanding has been mediated by access to YouTube videos and canonical 'texts' from UK grime's performance history. D Double E and Footsie were members of East London's N.A.S.T.Y. crew in the early 2000s, and the 'War Wid' lyric – although released as a single in 2005 on Braindead Entertainment – was made famous through live and pirate radio performances, owing to the visual intrigue generated by the two MCs passing one microphone between each other. This particular routine was captured on *Risky Roadz 2* (Keefe 2005). Seventeen minutes into Marcus Nasty's set, Hazrd creatively references another artist's flow pattern, this time from North London MC Chipmunk. Chip featured prominently on *Fuck Radio*. Through referencing a short passage of Chipmunk's flow style in his own way, Hazrd infers to informed listeners, or 'grime heads', that he knows about Chip and his flow's provenance. Furthermore, both examples demonstrate Hazrd's commitment to live grime practice, with his choice of flows aligning with so-called 'on road' and 'authentic' practice from the United Kingdom (Charles 2016: 198).

CONCLUSION

In 1999, Ben Rampton remarked upon the notion that we now live in a world where 'roots have been replaced by aerials' (Rampton 1999: 436). This somewhat provocative assertion – initially put forward by Gilberto Gil – implies that

everything is now global (Hewitt 1995: 100). Work on global hip hop during the twenty-first century, however, has focused upon interaction between locality, Indigenous cultures, the Internet and an indebtedness to an international hip hop nation. Hip hop's vociferous spread is arguably owing to its always-already presence within societies for articulating resistance and foregrounding self-expression (Rollefson 2018). And, according to Alim, participation in hip hop practice maps out an intersection between 'local ideologies of language (and race, ethnicity and gender)' and a wider 'global cultural formation' (2009: 11).

This examination of grime practice in eastern Australia has considered transnational flows between the United Kingdom and Australia of a particularly glocal character. Unlike hip hop, grime is not a cultural monolith. *Risky Roadz* was not transmitted directly into the living room of every Australian household (Maxwell 2003: 51). Because of these differences, this study necessitated an investigation of both the grounded specificity of the UK grime scene, the recent musical (hip hop and electronic) history of Australia, and their interaction. It paid particular attention to lad rap and the shared sense of socio-economic subordination felt by young black artists in New Labour Britain and disenfranchised youth living under John Howard's tenure.

The very grounded-ness of the UK scene meant that artists based in Melbourne and Sydney had limited access to overseas resources. As a result, certain artefacts and certain sentiments about what constituted authentic grime practice took hold. Radio sets and live shows were the 'essence', whereas DJs playing singles were frowned upon. These convictions were further facilitated by international interlocutors such as Fraksha and Scotty Hinds. An ethical structure for performance in eastern Australia not only placed importance on the live, but readily adopted key performative tenets from UK grime practice. This was demonstrated in the article's final section, that examined complex articulations of glocal flows in creative practice.

Rather than a disinterested sense of cultural 'jamming', the importance of these performative protocols – such as the reload, microphone rotation, quick cuts from the DJ and the use of choruses within phases of transition – were present in Mincy's performance for Marcus Nasty, and Wrighty's now-infamous 'three reloads' (Dovchin et al. 2018: 166). Artists such as Hazrd demonstrated a dual affiliation to both western Sydney and the United Kingdom, through writing hyperlocalized lyrics about his lived realities and juxtaposing these with allusions to UK practice. His repurposing of flow patterns had a triple functionality, acting as homage to predecessors, 'signifying' with the form's point of origin and its 'grime heads', and asserting allegiance with its 'underground DiY' platforms (*Fuck Radio, Risky Roadz*) that prioritized liveness (Gates Jr. 1988: 51; Gidley 2007: 149).

This article has therefore put forward an intricate ethical framework for eastern Australian grime practice, that although aligning with wider support claims to authenticity – such as NTER's reference to 'keeping it real' – asserts authenticity through an intermeshing of local specificity, global signifying and adherence to core performance values (McLeod 2012: 169). This was achieved through a distinct ambition to move beyond one-dimensional examinations of linguistic flows. Its attention to all aspects of performance practice has shown how gesture, protocol, flow patterns *and* language are all in transit. As grime music continues to accrue popularity on the global stage, scope for examining 'on the ground realities' and their interaction with mediated content may

become more sparing (Alim 2009: 11). However, the particularity of grime practice in eastern Australia demonstrates how distinct performance cultures can coalesce and interact, with grounded and geographically specific realities interweaving dynamically in the live setting.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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