

Jacques Greene's Aging Temporalities

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Abstract

By way of a close reading of Québec electronic dance music producer and DJ, Jacques Greene (né Philippe Aubin-Dionne), this article offers ways to think through, and with aging studies, popular music studies and the notion of the career—which remains largely missing in studies of music scenes. Particular attention is devoted to Greene's musical releases (two LPs, many EPs, singles, and remixes), as well as his performance practice as a DJ and solo artist. To cut against dominant understandings of a career as a linear trajectory, developed in iterative stages of progress and decline, I consider the varied temporalities Greene experiences simultaneously and how his position in dance music scenes changes in relation to the contingencies of time. I argue that this temporal mode of analysis provides a generative theoretical tool kit for connecting studies of popular music with studies of aging.

KEYWORDS: electronic dance music, career, Jacques Greene, aging

Introduction

At the bottom of a steep hill in the Saint-Henri neighborhood of Montreal, QC in the borough of *Le Sud-Ouest*, Greene Avenue—or, *avenue Greene* as it is officially called in French—runs directly into *rue Saint-Jacques*. It's an important intersection within the city, both literally and metaphorically, publicly marking Montreal's long standing contested language politics as one of the few remaining crossroads linking an anglicized street name with a *Québécois* one. It cuts into equally long-running class distinctions within the city as well, as Greene Avenue, a north-south street, begins in Montreal's most affluent area, the predominantly anglophone enclave of Westmount, and moves into Saint-Henri to the south—a historically French-Canadian, Black, and Irish working-class neighborhood (although it has undergone significant gentrification in the last twenty-five years or

so). Like many cities in North America, the dividing line between the two neighborhoods is a highway, in this case the Ville-Marie Expressway, which passes right through the historically Black and/or working-class area (1).

The intersection also forms the basis for the origin story of one of Québec's most well-known musical artists—producer and DJ Jacques Greene (né Philippe Aubin-Dionne). A self-described “French-Canadian boy”, Greene took on the moniker while working nearby well over fifteen years ago, at the age of 17, as a way to send original music to friends and “get honest feedback” (2017). The person and the name, forever tethered to said place and time, have since moved through global dance music and fashion scenes, the artworld, and indie music circuits largely by way of his intertwined success as both a DJ and music producer; initially stemming from the 2011 released single “Another Girl” (LuckyMe), which the music publication *Pitchfork* (2014) heralded through its list, “The 200 Best Tracks of the Decade So Far (2010-2014)”. Taken as a whole, career highlights to date include a collaborative audio-visual performance in The Tanks at Tate Modern in London, remixing Radiohead's track “Lotus Flower” (XL Recordings 2011b), countless performances, releasing two LPs on the United Kingdom-based record label and design studio LuckyMe, and of course, the just mentioned “Another Girl”. Greene is nearing completion on his third LP, the last one owed to LuckyMe on his current record deal, and now at 34, is already 17 years into an electronic dance music (EDM) career—a rarity in many areas of cultural production, but especially within a field that is regularly defined through its overdetermined connections to youth, and, to say the least, now seems painfully more precarious than ever before.

At the same time, developing and sustaining a professional career within EDM scenes has always been marked as a survival story of sorts: as scholars of dance music note, they are typically built through the heroics of the hustle and work (Fikentscher 2000: 51), which includes navigating club culture's hyper competitiveness both in terms of access to resources and getting gigs (Farrugia 2012: 115–40; Reitsamer 2011: 34–5), and very rarely lead to long-term livable wages (Madden 2016: 39–42). Beyond such scene dynamics and power relations, though, what else goes into a popular music career? How might a career be thought of beyond merely a linear narrative of progress and overcoming? To answer such questions, I offer a close reading of the musical career of Jacques Greene through an engagement with the emerging field of aging studies and music. Curiously, the notion of the career is largely absent within popular music discourses, and broadly speaking, anything dealing with how scene actors' positions change with and through the contingencies of time has been left under researched. A career, as I've previously written, is not the same as aging; but that said, they both involve trajectories while experiencing different temporalities at the same time (Madden 2020: 142). Particular attention is devoted to Greene's musical releases as well as his production and performance practice as a DJ. To cut against dominant understandings of the career as a linear trajectory in time, developed in stages of progress and decline, I consider the varied temporalities Greene experiences and produces simultaneously and how his positionality within dance music scenes changes in relation to EDM's experiences of time and age.

Aging Careers and Popular Music

Scholars working at the intersection of aging studies and popular music are putting forth culturally specific understandings of the relational processes of aging, lived and performed differently according to a variety of factors—sexuality, gender, physical capability, race, and ethnicity and so on. In part, such theorizations have been deployed as a way to counter dominant western and homogeneous understandings of aging, whereby “aging means ‘old age’ and is a universal condition of decline resulting from our biology” as Margaret Morganroth Gullette argues. Gullette continues, using decline to name “the entire system that worsens the experience of aging-past-youth. (...) Historical forces produce waves of decline. We have been enduring a tidal wave” (2011: 4–5). Understood in this way, aging becomes a mere unbroken chronology, and over time inevitably becoming a problem, a health issue to be managed individually.

Murray Forman (2014), in particular, has delved into the prominence of hip-hop’s aging heroes, or OGs (Original Gangsta), and the radical variations and positionalities they inhabit depending on experience and longevity within hip-hop culture. Again, drawing from Gullette, such a perspective foregrounds culture as a way to think with aging; “humans”, she writes, “are aged by culture” (Gullette 2004: 11). Here, Forman deemphasizes hip-hop’s well documented spatial logics to consider how Ice-T (born February 16, 1958) negotiates his position as an “elder”, and whose persona “relies substantially on the projection of learned skills and knowingness, the street savvy of the established urban hustler: an OG” (2014: 23). Ice-T, already considered a veteran at the time of writing due to his enduring stature, ages with hip-hop through a constant negotiation of expectations and norms in an age-based corporate milieu, marked by a flourishing generational dissonance. Such OG and veteran status, distinct from hip-hop’s other time-bound terminology of “pioneer” and “founding father”, comes in part by way of Ice-T’s already over quarter century career in the hip-hop scene (Forman 2014: 20).

Similarly, with twenty years of experience within various EDM scenes now in his sights, Greene, although only 34, is approaching a similar juncture in his career: he is now firmly considered a veteran by critics and audiences alike and works in a milieu, like hip-hop, “largely devoid of models for successful or graceful aging” (Forman 2014: 36). In fact, the music publication *Spin* referred to him as a “deep house veteran” as early as 2017, in the lead up to the release of his debut LP, *Feel Infinite* (Arcand 2017). More recently, reviews of his 2022 pandemic-influenced EP, *Fantasy* (LuckyMe 2022), by *Pitchfork* and *Resident Advisor* used the same time-bound term, borrowing Forman’s language, as a rhetorical framing device for their reviews and as ways of mediating expectations of the music: with the former suggesting, the “five tracks aren’t all that different from what we’re used to from the veteran bass musician” (Sherburne 2022); and with the latter noting, “he’s been applying his veteran skillset to countless ventures” (Okonkwo 2022). Such reviews could operate to place Greene at an impasse moving forward with his career and future works given that important music publications are already suggesting a certain fatigue towards his enduring status as a producer. Here, like the hip-hop scene detailed by Forman, Greene works within an age-based business whereby each phase of the life course and

musical career enables relationships between distinct sets of expectations and norms. While it's not hard to imagine other areas of cultural production where reaching veteran status might entail a heightened level of cultural capital, here it comes hand-in-hand with ambivalence; an ambivalence that associates sustained creativity and skills acquisition with stagnation and old age.

In the specific case of dance music scenes, age-based norms and expectations are almost entirely framed through long-held and seemingly rigid associations with youth and youth culture. In part, this is tied to the mythology surrounding the golden age of raves (1988–90), where attendees often dressed as candy ravers by adopting a variety of childish symbols including soothers and bright baggy clothing, and where entry might be open to people as young as fourteen years old and even younger. These parties were also usually organized around vaguely legal spaces that were not beholden to alcohol licenses and their age restrictions in terms of consumption and entry. Scholars too were quick to jump on this burgeoning rave moment by producing work primarily stemming from such sites of consumption—particularly raves and clubs—which detrimentally skewed dance music demographics and politics. David Hesmondhalgh, as one example from around this time, noted that “in 1990s Britain, dance music is at the very centre of contemporary youth culture” (1997: 167); Sarah Thornton (1995), in another foundational text, seemingly places youth as the most important factor in determining participation in dance music scenes and club culture. Most certainly this would have been the case if one were to only seek out and locate dance music in these specific spaces.

By tilting the lens ever so slightly and moving outward to spaces operating through different relationships to time, though, the picture changes drastically. Additionally, now that some of dance music's most potent origin stories are well over forty years old (detailed below), the subcultural heroism of youth style and politics is giving way to multi-generational stories of participation and aging audiences. Again, a host of astute scholars working at the intersection of popular music and aging studies have laid the path for expanding our understandings of age-based popular music dynamics and practices. Through centering a queer dance music scene, for instance, Andy Bennett and Jodie Taylor demonstrate the lasting force popular music plays throughout the life course, thereby countering deeply rooted beliefs that musical tastes narrow over time, moving away from investments in popular music practices. They write: “these individuals have reinterpreted dance club conventions so as to accommodate queer-specific post-youth identities, sensibilities, and cultural practices. Dance music is thus central to their queer lifestyle project and functions centrally in the maintenance of a queer middle-aged aesthetic” (Bennett and Taylor 2012: 238). Not only does such a perspective reveal the life-long commitments to popular music aesthetics in shaping identity, much of the political potential here comes from an undoing, or in this instance, a queering, of normative chronologies of age-appropriate behaviors and trajectories. Bennett and Taylor continue, contending that scene participation “mobilises collective physical embodiment of their queer identity and gives participants a context and structure for continued performances of both their sexual and musical identities as they age” (2012: 235). Here too, though, the focal points are sites of consumption and audience participation, thereby leaving

ample venue to consider age-related queries of producers, DJs and other scene actors not included in their study.

The following section is guided by a question posed at the opening: how might a popular music career be thought of beyond merely a linear narrative of progress and overcoming? To answer, I turn to an emphasis on the varied temporalities—understood here as “time as it is lived”, writes Cressida J. Heyes (2020: 21)—in order to add a thicker and more complex understanding of the popular music career, and one that also troubles dominant pathways for considering aging, popular music participation and the life course. Jacques Greene provides an inviting entry point: namely, because of his already established longevity within dance music scenes as a producer and DJ; and because of the rich textures of time, and the experience thereof, afforded through dance music scenes—from the mythological American origin stories and the hyper accelerated cyclical change of musical styles (Straw 1991), to the scenes built up through subtle variations of BPM (beats per minute) and so on.

The traditional progress narrative associated with a career is perhaps best summed up through the following definition from Merriam-Webster: first, “a profession for which one trains, and which is undertaken as a permanent calling”; and second, “a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life” (n.d.). In studies of popular music, conceptions of the career generally deal with the challenges—economic, institutional, structural—of making ends meet by way of one’s musical pursuits; or put differently, how to make a sustainable living through music and music-related activities as a permanent calling, especially as such challenges have amplified for many musicians in the streaming era (deWaard et al. 2021). Much of this work circles around the intensifying growth of DIY (do-it-yourself) and independent music-making ever since the former first gained traction through the initial punk scene of the 1970s, before moving on to rap, indie and dance music (Bennett 2018: 134). More recently, the initial anti-corporate heroism and promise of DIY has given way to broader understandings of music scenes largely in the face of neoliberal capitalism; a situation whereby musicians have been increasingly pushed to embrace flexibility and innovation in building and maintaining careers through various practices of self-entrepreneurship (Madden 2021).

That being said, such perspectives are often limited in their primary focus on youth, and consequently, unduly associate independent music-making with youth subcultures and scenes. As Bennett emphasizes, for example, “as part of the strong DIY resonance that has accompanied the development of punk and post-punk music and style in a global context, an understanding of the career potential embedded in the DIY aesthetic has emerged, particularly among youth” (2018: 134). This provides an enticing opening: where does this leave aging dance music producers and DJs, for instance? How do producers and DJs negotiate transitions from “short-termism”, as Bennett writes (2018: 134), to more long-term trajectories? Whereas rock, pop, and jazz all seem to have steady streams of enduring and even lucrative careers (Forman 2014: 36), EDM remains lacking in this specific area.

Jacques Greene

Philippe Aubin-Dionne began making electronic music after one of his high school teachers played him music by the well-known producer and performer, Aphex Twin. This was in the mid-aughts, and at the time, crucially, Greene realized by way of this experience that “music doesn’t have to be angry white men over a guitar” (Dorn 2017). From there he eventually took on the Jacques Greene moniker and started sending his music around by asking: “there’s this kid from the West part of Montreal named Jacques Greene and I think he’s kind of cool, what do you think?” (Dorn 2017). In time, his current label, LuckyMe, inquired about releasing a Jacques Greene EP, leading to the 2010 debut, *The Look*, at the age of 21. Self-described as “deep rnb-inflected house”, the four tracks come in at a little over twenty minutes, setting the signature tone, aesthetic, and identity for future releases as Jacques Greene. In particular, the tracks are propelled by minor key modal synth progressions, a predominant feature of Greene’s entire catalog as an artist. Here too, the movement from 130 BPM in the opening title track, “The Look”, to the slower, “Tell Me”, at 120 BPM, strategically situate Greene within the carefully regulated time boundaries of both house music and techno.

In the case of house and techno, BPM is a key determinant in distinguishing the genres, like much of EDM. At the high end, this might entail speeds of 190 BPM for happy hard core and 180 BPM for drum and bass; all the way down to the slower manifestations of house music between 110 BPM and 120 BPM. Going further, these subtle BPM shifts in EDM contribute to the many ways in which entire scenes take shape, something Steve Goodman (2004) has convincingly referred to as “Speed Tribes”, while setting expectations for the particular kinds of movement and social dancing taking place on dance floors. They also go a long way in terms of forming audience distinctions for producers and DJs as they build and sustain a career, especially as dance music styles shift over time. As previously mentioned, EDM is marked by many different overlapping genre combinations and rapidly shifting styles, involving concurrent changes to BPM. For many producers and DJs, this form of periodic aesthetic reordering and time-stretching can bring forth crucial junctures for one’s career. Deciding whether or not to follow such transformations can lead to receiving more or less gigs, and thereby resulting in drastic consequences vis-à-vis maintaining a steady career. To move in time with the changes might come with a perceived stylistic opportunism and ambiguity within a scene; whereas holding steady with a particular sound over time risks remaining out of time with the shifting cycles of global dance music.

With respect to Greene, the initial success garnered from his first EP and the aforementioned “Another Girl” (LuckyMe 2011a), as well as remixing Radiohead’s “Lotus Flower” (XL Recordings 2011b) shortly thereafter, solidified the limits of time for his career moving forward both as a producer and DJ—again, at the intersection of house and techno, with r’n’b adornments and influences. This is a common trajectory for many within EDM scenes: once an artist reaches a certain level of commercial success, they tend to remain anchored to these aesthetic and time-bound frameworks. In fact, producers very regularly create

different artist names when releasing music that departs even slightly from their signature sound and time, whether techno, house and beyond. For example, the above-mentioned Aphex Twin has released music using at least fourteen different aliases, including AFX, Polygon Window, Phonic Boy on Dope, and user18081971. Although he has held onto the Jacques Greene moniker for his entire career, perhaps the producer/DJ would have altered his musical direction and specific stylizations had he not received so much commercial success so early in his career. By early, I mean within the first year of releasing a record, and within a few years of first making electronic music. However, such early success and at such a young age (21), followed by working within such tight musical boundaries, goes a long way in accounting for the ambivalence coming from some critics as noted above vis-a-vis Greene's more recent releases.

It is important to note that Greene's musical interests and performances as a DJ extended well beyond house and techno in the lead up to this pivotal moment. From 2008–11, Greene and a group of friends organized the Montreal club night Turbo Crunk at the Coda Club, playing everything from southern hip-hop and club music to live PA synth-driven performances. Much of this has been written about by way of an oral history produced by *Red Bull Music Academy* (MacDonald 2016), but the details are worth offering here given their importance in terms of Greene's career, and due to the Turbo Crunk crew's intergenerational sociality and dynamics. Notable members included Hadji Baraka (formerly of the indie rock band Wolf Parade), DJ and EDM producer Lunice, former Ninja Tune recording artist Sixtoo (aka Robert Squire), and of course, Greene—who was then known as Hovatron.

At the time, Greene was forging his sound as an emerging producer and DJ, whereas Squire was the well-established musician of the crew, with already eleven or so years of experience as an underground hip-hop DJ, producer and rapper. He was also well over fifteen years older than Greene, thereby placing him in the position of veteran and elder within the age-based hierarchies of the scene. For Greene, since he was still up and coming and only seventeen or eighteen, he needed to establish enough scene/cultural capital in order to gain Squire's attention and respect; not only as a collaborator but also in order to secure a booking with the elder.

These age-based hierarchies and restrictions unfolded in the way that Squire initially would not work with Greene, who was trying to get the former to play at one of his parties at the Montreal club Zoobizarre. In Greene's own words:

We asked Rob if they would play our party once and it didn't really go well. He was just like, 'You guys are a bunch of bratty kids,' and 'Hell no.' It wasn't even mean. It was just dismissive. Just like, 'I'm an adult Ninja Tune artist and you guys are snotty 18 year olds. What are you saying?' (Red Bull 2016).

Squire conceded as Greene moved up in the scene through demonstrating his commitment to music-making and contributing to the scene as a party organizer. As the former emphasizes:

Eventually, I would go to their party and be like, 'Oh shit, these kids have work ethic and make their own flyers and book a headliner and are playing shit that no one else is playing.' That in itself is enough. You're not going to just discount somebody who has that work ethic at seventeen. (Red Bull 2016).

This homosocial intergenerational interplay of dissonance and harmony is similar to the scene dynamics described by Forman (2014). As the author details, young emerging MCs or DJs in their teens cannot participate in hip-hop culture in the same way as older hip-hop "heads", and vice versa, due to a variety of age restrictions (Forman 2014: 20). With Greene, scene credibility is gained, and as a result, acknowledged through demonstrating hustle as well as the accumulation of experience and knowledge to an elder over time. In other words, such scene credibility cannot be obtained in an instant, or overnight, through the success of one or two shows; additionally, Greene's commitment to the simultaneous varied temporalities of multitasking, from making flyers to booking headliners and beyond, offered added cachet in the younger artist's trajectory to reach a certain level of status.

Going further, the intergenerational relationship forged by Greene, Squire and the rest of the crew is afforded by much broader temporalities of dance music scenes. Again, by focusing on the significance of music scene participation for middle-aged queers, Jodie Taylor (2010) demonstrates how engagement in scene culture challenges age-appropriate behavior and heteronormative conventions of aging, which presume that a life course should proceed in a linear and sequential fashion, from birth to death. Crucially, for Taylor, queering is not simply constrained by sexuality and gender; but rather, also involves living time differently. Through different experiences of multiple life courses and through different valuations and uses of time such as "coming out", "cruising time", "ecstasy time", or "speed time", writes Taylor, queer people problematize "normative progressions into adulthood and maturity", thereby "placing queers outside many categories of age-appropriate behaviour" (2010: 894–895). She emphasizes: "Queer lives often skip over some of the steps of the heteronormative timeline and thus they skew the responsible progression towards maturity by favouring—often through extended involvement in queer scene activities—a prolonged youthfulness and a lingering within early adulthood" (Taylor 2010: 894).

While not explicitly queer, the Turbo Crunk club nights and those involved live within such queer boundaries of time, with extended musical scene participation, and which also skew, in the words of Taylor, dominant pathways to heteronormative maturity and reproduction. The nights also involved extended and sustained time *in* the club and *beyond* for performers and participants, allowing for intensified investments in social relations, including building friendships, collaborations, and mentor/mentee possibilities, and with "speed" or "ecstasy" time enhancing and distorting the drawn-out temporal vortex. The opening DJ/performer, for instance, might begin playing sometime between 10.00 and 11.00 p.m., with the closing of the night coming sometime shortly after 3.00 a.m. as the city of Montreal prohibits selling alcohol beyond this point. From

there, though, the already stretched out nights often spilled into the developed sociality of semi-legal and private spaces scattered throughout the city, which may keep going until 6.00 or 7.00 a.m. and beyond. For many participants, time is lived outside the realm of regular nine to five working hours, and suspended, without much sense for the future or future-oriented responsibilities; however, for the performers and organizers, work and life collapse, mixing career trajectories and leisure time within these extended late nights and early mornings.

The time spent moving through the Montreal EDM scene during the Turbo Crunk years not only solidified a sound for his overlapping practice as a DJ and producer; it was also during this time that the Jacques Greene name first appeared, and thereby directly intervening into dance music's long-standing spatio-temporal politics. By announcing and celebrating an explicit homegrown connection to Montreal through an artist name and subsequent interviews, Greene placed himself as emerging from Québec, one of dance music's secondary centers, much like Italy and Spain. Although Québec, Italy and Spain very likely produced just as many disco records as Miami and New York, they are rarely thought of as central to histories of dance music, nor do they bring much in terms of cultural capital for producers and DJs. In fact, from the mid-1970s to the early-1980s when Montreal operated as one of the biggest international centers of production for 12-inch vinyl dance singles, particularly of the Eurodisco and Italo-disco variety, many producers and distributors attempted to disguise the origins of their assemblage, fearing that the records might be perceived as coming from the wrong place. As Will Straw writes, Québec disco labels and performers "cultivated a deliberate vagueness about their identities", which continued the tradition of Canadian and Quebec "cultural commodities to hide (or, at the very least, downplay) their origins, to look as if they came from more credible centres of cultural authority" (2008: 118–9).

At the same time, while cutting against this tendency by continuously affirming his connection to Montreal, Greene also put his career trajectory directly in the afterlife of dance music's structuring anglo origin stories by framing his musical lineage within the boundaries of house and techno. Chicago, known as the "birthplace" of house music, in reference to the music played at the club Warehouse in the city during the early 1980s; Detroit, known for its techno associations and the Belleville Three (Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson), whose techno dance music sounds launched in the UK on the 1988 Virgin Records compilation, *Techno: The Dance Sound of Detroit* (Thornton 1995: 74); and New York, where American disco first emerged from David Mancuso's *Love Saves the Day* party in 1970, the ensuing parties at the Loft in the NoHo district of Manhattan (Lawrence 2003), and nightclubs like the Sanctuary on West 43rd Street (Fickentscher 2000: 26). Taken as a whole, these mythological centers and narratives offer producers, DJs, and participants a ready-made musical heritage as well as a politics, whether real or imagined; but again, this politics is centered on the heroism of youth resistance and struggle.

These stories also serve to authenticate dance music participation for many scene actors and listeners near and far even though they are now all well over forty years old; and as Hesmondhalgh remarks, dance music scenes have been structured by a "very great degree of segregation between white dance music culture and black music institutions (sound systems, shabbeens and blues parties)"

(1997: 175–76). For Greene, this plays out in the way he broadly understands the role of club culture historically and in terms of how his music fits into dance floors. When announcing his debut LP *Feel Infinite* (LuckyMe 2017), for instance, he stated: “I really try to make music that connects people and speaks to the things that bring us together – true club culture was born out of oppression and worked hard to create spaces for its marginalized members” (Wilson 2017). Here, oppression is referencing the racialized and mostly queer scenes that were at the forefront of these early dance music manifestations. Going further, as a DJ Greene brings these worlds into contact by playing one of his tracks alongside a pioneering artist from one of these centers, or a track that is synonymous with either New York, Chicago, or Detroit. Again, this form of mixing affirms his musical lineage as emanating from particular times and places, while also offering the DJ a certain musical inheritance, even as it involves mapping these racialized histories onto the largely white circuits of indie dance music.

The abovementioned *Feel Infinite* was released nearly seven years after his first EP (The Look) and followed at least another handful of EPs and many more singles as well as extensive touring. For rock and pop artists a full-length album coming so long after a successful debut release might be considered late; however, for EDM artists, typically, singles and EPs reign supreme and within much more intensified production and distribution cycles. For instance, from 2011–12 alone the artist produced three EPs, two singles, three mixes, as well as a mix for the French music magazine TSUGI; while at the same time, touring as both a DJ and solo artist performing original tracks. Conversely, it is not uncommon for rock and pop acts to release one full-length every three to four years, but with lengthier touring cycles, assuming the release turns out to be commercially successful enough to sustain a lengthy tour. As such, in order to produce and release the extended work of eleven tracks, it was also necessary for Greene to make adjustments to living time within different cycles of touring and production; one’s that allowed for more drawn-out and uninterrupted moments in the studio. In his own words: “Respect to any DJ who travels and does shows every Thursday to Sunday (...) But doing that lends itself to a creative process that’s more single driven, because you’ll be at your home only three days at a time” (Leijon 2017).

This temporal shift was also enabled by an acknowledged transition in his EDM life course, stemming from accumulated experience as a DJ and producer as well as chronological age. Now in his late twenties, the long moments in the studio without touring in between represent an earned break from the Thursday to Sunday gig cycle, after many years spent working it, and a necessary life-style adjustment as he begins to internalize the youth-focused scripts and ageism of dance music scenes. As Greene puts it, the world of dance music is “so youth-driven. By the time you’re 25, you’re one of the older dudes, and with that comes interesting perspectives. It’s kind of weird to feel like an ‘old head’ by the time you’re 27” (Mertens 2017) (2). On the one hand, the studio not only provides a reprieve from the perceived youth-driven atmosphere and social dynamics of dance music clubs; over time, it becomes a central place and space to age with, especially as studios are typically filled with the material traces of music-making, from old records and instruments to CDs and cassette players. Such material objects, writes Stephen Katz (2005), present a “living gateway to the dynamics

between material culture, the contingencies of time, and the spirit of renewal that confront the new paradoxes of cultural aging and its postmodern timelessness with an eternity of other possibilities" (234). In the studio context, Greene's career and life course are marked by the memory traces of a network of gear, connectors, and amplified sounds.

On the other hand, by tapping into different currents and cycles of time—in other words, from Thursday to Sunday gigs to longer stretches in the studio—Greene risks cutting himself off from the regular temporalities and expectations of EDM scenes. He stresses:

When you start off your career with online mixes and EPs, it's very easy to stay in that stream with the other fishes. There's a lot of instant gratification that comes with that because every time I drop a single online I get retweets and promoters get excited, and it's hard to justify falling off the map to make an album. (Leijon 2017).

Taking even two months off from the established EDM production and touring cycle, which was necessary in order to complete the first LP, comes with a degree of uncertainty and potential short- and long-term consequences in terms of sustaining a career as a DJ and producer.

To Greene, making a full-length album under these conditions meant slowing down which results in a slowing of the revenue stream and potential earnings. As he emphasizes: "I think it's that the pace is such that to slow down and actually create the body of work is more difficult now. To pay my rent I have to have a constant stream of releases and tour around them" (Mistry 2017). Given the current state of the music industry vis-à-vis sales of recordings, there remains no sense of projected future income coming directly from releases, thereby necessitating different terms for understanding success, and for justifying slowing down. Greene continues:

I'd go to the studio every day for a couple months. That was really fucking expensive. I've been, like, broke for the last 10 months because I had to take that time. And I'm probably not going to make any money off this record; it's really just a thing I want to do. (Mistry 2017).

Again, much like the previously discussed situation whereby by DJs and producers are faced with potentially altering their sound to maintain their currency, both economic and cultural, within the shifting styles of EDM scenes, career pressures are produced through the perception of either being in or out of time.

In this way, an EDM career for DJs and producers becomes a survival story shaped by the contours of overlapping micro and macro temporalities. Taken together, Greene's musical trajectory, "is governed by different and wider movements, tempos, environments, and cycles than the ones determining the span and development of our human lives", drawing from Katz (2005: 233). This includes everything from subtle shifts in BPM both in- and outside the club vis-à-vis the wider currents of EDM style cycles, to the changing shape of production and performance formats stemming from the built-in dynamics of planned

obsolescence of the commercial electronics industry. In terms of the latter, as a DJ, Greene's career encompasses interfacing between vinyl, CDs, and an array of digital music files played via an alternating signal path of shifting hardware and software relationships. As a producer, over time it comprises cabling and exchanging networks of vintage synthesizers and drum machines with various digital audio workstations (DAWs) and hardware recording devices and equipment.

Conclusion: "I don't want to be the 40-year-old DJ in the club"

The above pronouncement came from Greene in an interview following the release of his debut LP *Feel Infinite*, when he was just in his late twenties and already feeling like an "old head" in the scene (Mertens 2017). As previously mentioned, at this point in his career, he was widely considered a veteran by critics and by much of his audience, and was also beginning to internalize the age-related pressures and scripts of EDM scenes, and in particular, the club, as intensely youth-centred and ageist; even if his experience of queer time and living time differently within the club, especially during the Turbo Crunk years, belies this notion. As Greene moved through the EDM life course with its established touring and production cycles, from his first EP to the full-length album release, the studio developed into a space to spend more time working in, and as a space to age and grow old with. Since then, this pattern repeated itself as a way to write, produce and release his second LP, *Dawn Chorus* (LuckyMe 2019)—music created for a particular affect accompanying the moments experienced after the after party. As he puts it:

You've been out all night, the afterparty was incredible but now the sun's coming up, you can't find a taxi and you walk home. The dawn chorus is the soundtrack to the end of the night that turns into being trapped in the start of the next day. (Martin 2019).

Whereas the first LP was focussed more on moving within the club and moving bodies on dance floors through its muscularity and steady BPM parameters; the second LP soundtracks the in-between of a party night's end and the sun's rising. At this point in time, not everyone is in on the party, so to speak. Coming nearly ten years after his first EP release, with *Dawn Chorus*, Greene explicitly signals to the para-club space through concept and title and, as well musically, by integrating soundscape textures of rain midway through the album with the track, "Sel" (LuckyMe 2019). In short, there is a world outside the club that brings forth different musical cues, mixing, experiences and temporalities.

Perhaps the album with its dedication to another experience of time as it is lived, one beyond yet so near to the club, also announces his own projected post-club life as a musician as well as his in-betweenness. Not even thirty in terms of chronological age at the time; yet, somehow seemingly aged, and ambivalent in relation to spaces that earlier

brought such a sense of infinite promise enabled by prolonged lingering within early adulthood. Understood in this way, as Tia DeNora emphasizes, music “is formative of life (...) importing shape and texture to being, feeling, and doing (2000: 152). Now, in his mid-thirties, how will Greene approach the coming horizon of forty as a producer and DJ, and with nearly twenty-five years of public-facing professional experience? What other time time-bound terms will he carry with him as he ages with EDM, its participants, other producers, and DJs, as well as its material transformations? Perhaps he will, at some point, develop a late style all his own, which might entail working through another artist name? Future projecting aside, it is clear that for Jacques Greene, the producer and DJ, and Philippe Aubin-Dionne, music is not only something to do with, artistically and as a way to make a living; it is also constitutive of a life course identity project built through and with the contingencies of time, as it is lived and experienced.

Endnotes

1. In the specific case of the Saint-Henri neighborhood and the wider borough of *Le Sud-Ouest*, gentrification has led to the displacement of low-income households with longstanding connections to the area. In part, this stems from the historical deindustrialization of the area, which includes transforming large industrial spaces and factories into condominiums, as well as the largescale clean-up of the Lachine Canal, which repurposed the waterway into a recreation site. Additionally, the area now includes some of Montreal's most popular and high-end restaurants. See, for instance, Twigge-Molecey (2014).

2. In her study of the English duo Pet Shop Boys and the US group LCD Soundsystem, Wodtke (2019) similarly contends that at age 32, both vocalists/lyricists Neil Tennant and James Murphy are considered old within the youth-oriented popular music and EDM circuits

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