Mobile Music Production: Creativity in a Dichotomous Interface Paradigm.


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Abstract

The most recent trend in music production is a move away from the work-orientated portable computer as a production tool to the tablet computer. Some have suggested that the emergence of the iPad tablet in the music technology landscape will democratise music making in the same way that the emergence of digital cameras made photography and filmmaking more available (Tough, 2009). This paper emerged from my own creative practice of music production on an iPad tablet whilst travelling, and at various international destinations. In an auto-ethnographic fashion, I felt that the quality of my creative outcomes was significantly enhanced by this mobile music production practice. What factors are at play? Tablets are relatively cheap compared to laptops; they are smaller and still viewed as a novelty. Further, notions of mobility and portability are more culturally attached to tablets than laptops (Goodwin, 2012). How then is the relatively new mobility of music production impacting creativity? This paper proposes there are two significant human interface paradigms at play that impact user creativity when producing music on a mobile tablet device. The first is the human-computer interface (HCI) of the music technology app itself. The culture of app development is moving the technology forward quickly, driving new approaches to interface design and creative engagement with new tablet music technology. Some work on tablet HCI and creativity has been done previously (Order, 2014). It is the second, and less obvious human-environmental interface (HEI), where little research on creativity has been done (Amabile, 1996) where this paper focuses its effort. Music production is now potentially a mobile practice, moving easily between geographic locations which yield a variety of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and olfactory environmental cues. Such cues can function as cognitive input stimuli. This echoes the seminal work on creativity by Mel Rhodes (Rhodes, 1961) who popularised the term press to describe the multi-factorial impact of environment on human creativity. This human interface with the environment also speaks to definitions of synaesthesia by Simon Baron-Cohen and John Harrison (Baron-Cohen and Harrison, 1997), where “the stimulation of one sensory modality automatically triggers a perception in a second modality” (1). The potential for creative outcomes or provoking creativity via synaesthesia are apparent (Order, 2000). This paper examines approaches to mobile music production from these and other associated fields. Specifically, this paper focuses on the human-environmental interface, arguing that increased connectivity via mobility is a significant contributor to expanded musical creativity.

Keywords: Mobile or locative media, creativity/creative industries, media arts, new media, acoustic ecology, synaesthesia, connectivity.
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Introduction

“Creativity can be counted among those very special ways that human beings can display optimal functioning” (Simonton, 2000). Creative practice is considered an important and valuable personal attribute. The goal of this paper is to propose one way to enhance creativity, in particular musical creativity, via the mobility of the practitioner and their associated technology. I have written previously about the swiftly developing human-computer interface (HCI) of mobile tablet-based music-technology apps and their contribution to musical creativity. This is the most immediate interface with technology for the mobile musician. The choice of app can be a barrier or a motivation for creativity (2014). From the conclusions of my auto-ethnographic research around my creative practice, I believe that this particular HCI is one side of a two part dichotomous human interface paradigm that contributes significantly to musical creativity. The HCI is well studied but the human-environmental interface (HEI), i.e., with the external world, at least in this context, has been largely overlooked. Little has been written specifically about this mode of mobile tablet-based musical creative practice and unsurprisingly since the iPad was released relatively recently in April 2010 (Nations, 2013). Hailed by some, such as Grogan, as the “next generation of electronic music production” (Grogan, 2011: 35), this might be an epochal claim in light of other significant changes in technology towards portability. For example, the book by Du Gay et al (1997), Doing Cultural Studies: the Story of the Sony Walkman, talks about soundscapes and portability. There are certainly echoes of those thoughts in this paper. It is only my own recent work on the usability of music production tablet applications and creativity that hints at an enhanced technological determinism for the tablet computing device (Order, 2014).
This paper, however, brings together relevant threads of discussion from associated areas on environment and sound interaction to initiate a more focused study on the HEI, arguing that mobility is a significant contributor to enhancing creativity.

Mobility, however, is just one aspect of a larger supporting theoretical field which sees creativity as a multi-factorial practice. It is worth setting this tone here in the introduction to emphasise that mobility as one factor is supported by the associated arguments. One of the earliest writers on creativity (Rhodes, 1961) suggests the term *press* to describe the relationship between human beings and their environment. Creative outcomes are affected and modified by the *press* of the environment. Rhodes uses the term *environment* in a non-specific way to include a multitude of factors. As an example, he talks about the temperature of a climate of a particular environment and how that affects the individual’s creativity. The use of the word *temperature* is not confined to the meteorological sense but could also refer to a social or technological climate which presses on the individual engaged in creative practice. In the same vein, he states that inventions and great discoveries are seldom the work of just one great mind. It is more the case that existing culture and technology create an “aggregate of minor inventions” often allowing one individual to add the final step of great invention. It is the *press* of the world external to the individual that is significant. This multi-factorial view of creativity is shared by others.

Interestingly for this paper, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) believes the most useful question to ask is: “Where is creativity?” Rather than attempting to study the action of isolated individuals, he states that creativity occurs within a dynamic interplay between three main forces. First, the *domain*, so the language of the discipline (for example, mathematics consists of symbols); second, the *field*, the individuals who act as gatekeepers of the discipline, so teachers, critics etc; and third, the person whose creativity generates a new idea using the *domain* and is then recognised by the *field*. This is the systems view of creativity where each
force affects the others. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that these three forces “represent three moments of the same creative process” in “circular causality”. The where of creativity is an abstracted place that exists in the never-ending continuum of space and time. The labelling of the influences on creativity suggested by Csikszentmihalyi or Rhodes is less important for this paper; rather, they are both certain that studying individuals and their actions is only one aspect. The individual is subject to outside influences. Creativity as a practice exists in the individual’s connectivity to those outside influences.

In a more modern study, MacIntyre summarises current thinking, arguing that art is a collective product made up of complex social, ideological and economic factors impacting on the practice of an individual(s). The artist or creative is actually a team player synthesising or even channelling these complex factors (MacIntyre, 2012). Our perceptual input from the outside world significantly impacts our creative outcomes. This is the presumption at the beginning of this paper. This paper, however, seeks to be more specific, and argues that physical location or travelling itself can enhance creative outcomes. Mobility has the potential to increase our connectivity with potential sensory inputs.

Approaching Mobile Music Production

Connecting is creating

David Gauntlett (2011) sees connecting as an act of creativity. He states that connecting ideas, media, materials and people are all acts of making and thus creativity. It is not only connecting the materials or media in a traditional craft sense of making but also the creativity of connecting in a social sense. Taking this further, he also believes that sharing those acts of making in the world increases our engagement with our social and physical environments (Gauntlett, 2011). This paper suggests that connecting with place is a short step to make and significantly impacts creativity.
Interestingly, the practice of the music producer has only really become a reality for
the wider community in the years since the development of easily available digital
technology. Previously, music production has been the remit of static professional studios
and trained personal. The musician would necessarily have to travel to the studio place to
connect with that place and its staff. Music producers and studio staff would mostly be
cconducting their acts of creativity within the walls of the studio. Music production may be
just as well or better served creatively by connecting with places outside those walls.

The other facet to these technological advances has been access to expanded
audiences via the World Wide Web. The ability to share and connect with acts of musical
making on a global scale has meant participation in producing music as an activity is far more
attractive. Making and connecting have become inextricably linked (Gauntlett, 2011). Using
the logic of Gauntlet, can this idea of connection with people and materials be extended to
place? Connecting with our location or the act of travelling is experiencing another set of
human perceptual inputs. The notion of place includes the human inputs of vision, audio,
smell and touch. Surely, these experiential perceptions must impact our creativity. Respected
psychologist Dean Keith Simonton (Simonton, 2000, 1997) would appear to agree, at least on
the visual. He points to experimental studies that show how visual stimulation can function in
the development of creative ideas (Simonton, 2000; citing Finke et al., 1992). The mobility of
music production has the potential for ever-changing visual stimulation for the practitioner
and by association enhanced creativity. What is not clear is how this stimulation of one sense
can produce ideas that may apply to different senses. What is the neuronal connection?

Corresponding is creating
The metaphor of synaesthesia has long been adopted by creative practitioners as a way to
potentially enhance creative practice. This paper proposes that this metaphor can be exploited
further by those practitioners who venture into more diverse spaces for their creativity.
If we examine the field of synaesthesia, there is significant evidence that for some individuals, one mode of perception has the ability to directly trigger another (Baron-Cohen and Harrison, 1997). There is a connection between one sense and a second. This is a medical condition that affects a small minority of the population (Gross, 2014). Baron-Cohen and Harrison have termed this *developmental* or *genuine* synaesthesia and refer to a well-documented involuntary medical condition where the extra mode(s) of perception are triggered without external prompting (Order, 2000). Among genuine synaesthetes (those diagnosed the medical condition) (Gross, 2014), colour-hearing is the most common cross-sensory correspondence, where an audio stimulus produces a second visual perception. A simple example would be that on hearing the note C, a blob of red colour appears in the vision of those affected by the condition. In addition to being involuntary the synaesthete regards the additional perception as real, often outside the body, instead of imagined in the mind’s eye. It is the vividness and violation of normal perception that separate the condition from artistic fancy or purple prose (Cytowic, 1989).

Interestingly, prior to 1883, medical evidence of the phenomena was only available by word of mouth (Galton, 1883). For the historian of synaesthesia (Order, 2000) it makes for a challenging project. Anybody could claim to experience these perceptual correspondences and history is littered with circumstantial evidence of artists and musicians who have experimented with synaesthesia as an approach to creativity. Philosophical speculation concerning human sensory experience and possible connections between colour and sound has been perceived by historians as evidence of the study of synaesthesia. This romantic interpretation of synaesthesia in history most notably includes: the poetry of Basho (Odin, 1986), Charles Baudelaire (Baudelaire, 1978), Arthur Rimbaud (Cytowic, 1989) the writings of Issac Newton (Dann, 1998), John Locke (Locke, (1690) 1961), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Goethe, 1970), Sir Francis Galton (Galton, 1883), the music of Alexander Scriabin.
(Matlaw, 1979), and the paintings of Wassily Kandinsky (Kandinsky, (1914) 1974). With this kind of artistic legacy, modern scholars and creative practitioners, those outside the medical field, have come to regard synaesthesia as a romantic notion which offers a pathway in the “search for unity and universal language” (Dann, 1998). Synaesthesia is a powerful notion for enhancing creativity, whether consciously experienced or merely used as a process-driven tool.

Synaesthesia is a short-cut way of calculating realities, of attaching significance to things. But it could well be called a common sense, that peculiar human power of translating one kind of experience of one sense into all other senses, presenting that result as a unified image of the mind. (Cytowic, 1989)

For the purposes of this paper, it is this field of romantic synaesthesia that is of relevance; that simply described as “cross-sensory metaphor” (Order, 2000). Some have suggested we are all synaesthetic to some degree because “intersense transfer” (Meriam 1964) has also been found in healthy test subjects. Baron- Cohen et al. (1997) describe this perceptual association as “pseudo synaesthesia” and for the purposes of creative practice it matters little whether we are medically diagnosed with the condition or not.

We are not immune to the rose-tinted view of the world when the sun is out metaphorically speaking. It is a small leap to suppose, for example, that a sun-tinted psyche impacts our creativity at that moment. Whether we are on a sun-kissed beach, a busy commuter train, in the doctor’s waiting room or at an airport, the environment impacts our perceptions. The field of synaesthesia suggests those environmental perceptions are translated to some degree into other perceptions which can be channelled to creative outputs. This paper suggests musical creativity is enhanced by the mobility of the music producer and the production technology. The walls of the traditional recording studio or rehearsal room have been demolished by portable production technologies. The world can potentially enter our creative musical practice, wherever we are, wherever we wander; mobile technology allows
us to experience an ever-transient flow of perceptual input. The metaphor of synaesthesia has the potential to be far more active for creative practitioners who embrace mobility in their practice.

**Location is creating**

Place and sound have been studied by acoustic ecologists. The World Soundscape Project, initiated by R. Murray Schafer in the late 1960s, at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, was a study of acoustic ecology that sought to heighten awareness of the relationship between the human community and the sonic environment (Schafer, 1977; Schafer, 1999; Truax, 1999). Schafer believed that we, as human beings, are responsible for the composition of our sonic environment, the health of that environment and ultimately its effect on the human community. The wider community soundscape is a sensory input to our audio perception. It follows that mobile musical creative practice/production situated in the wider soundscape would be significantly impacted by the existing sonic environment and vice versa. Composer Hildegard Westerkamp, also based at Simon Fraser University, has facilitated and produced significant academic/musical work in this field of environmental and musical interaction. She states that her initial concerns for noise and the health of the soundscape impacted her approaches to music and sound-making. Most of her compositions feature or deal with the acoustic environment from many different parts of the world; “urban, rural or wilderness soundscapes, with the voices of children, men and women, with noise or silence, music and media sounds, or with the sounds of different cultures, and so on” (Westerkamp, 2014). Westerkamp’s work is by no means isolated in the field. In 1993, the *World Forum for Acoustic Ecology* brought together a collective of like-minded organisations to share in their study of the soundscape (WFAE, 2014). The work of soundscape artists and composers demonstrates recognition of the sonic environment as the primary influence in their creative
outcomes. It supports this paper’s argument that mobility can significantly influence musical creativity.

Lewis Kaye (2013) has taken soundscape compositional notions a stage further and nudges a little closer to my own creative practice. His arguments centre on the use of mobile personal sound media (MPSM) such as Walkmans and iPods as part of a mobile lifestyle. He believes that for many users, “we must consider headphones themselves as permeable membranes”. Headphones are not necessarily a solid barrier between the personal soundscape of the MPSM and the broader external community soundscape. The personal soundtrack exists within, and is “conditioned” by the broader soundscape. The broader soundscape is a social space that we live within and we are unable to completely extricate ourselves via MPSM technology (Berland, 2011). Kaye believes this paradigm offers creative opportunities. His experiential soundscape compositions involve listening to pre-recorded soundscape compositions as aural introductions to existing soundscape events while in those same soundscapes. In his own words: “Each composition thus become part of a real time soundtrack for a specific location and installation: temporally displaced and diaphanous acoustic layers born of, and sympathetic with, the living sound that surrounded the listeners” (Kaye, 2013). In conclusion, there is much value to be had creatively from engaging with the soundscape outside of our headphones. Personal audio has the capacity to be social and encourage connection with location rather than being isolationist. Kaye’s paper offers support to the notion of the enhanced creativity of the mobile musician.

**Data mobility is creating**

Mobile music as a term covers any musical activity using portable devices that are not tethered to a specific stationary locale; in particular those where the activity
dynamically follows users and takes advantage of the mobile setting, thereby leveraging novel forms of musical experience (Gaye et al., 2006).

Probably the earliest group to address the modern practice and concept of mobile music production were the group responsible for the 2006 conference on *New Interfaces for Musical Expression* (NIME) in Paris (Gaye et al., 2006). Their paper states that some of the conference projects explored a musician’s ability to interact with environmental factors. In particular importance to this paper and what piqued my interest was their description of mobile music production, as a “tension between music and place … as new relationships between musician, listener and music” (Gaye et al., 2006). Mobile music is more than simply transplanting music production to another place; but rather, asks us to reconsider fundamental notions central to musical practice. Whether we are outside or physically travelling, “space and place become tangible stimulus parameters”.

The NIME group have specialised in experimental interfaces for musical creativity. In historical terms laptops and tablets are relatively experimental musical interfaces when considered within the mobility paradigm. This is especially the case when considered in the frame of this paper; that of creativity in a dichotomous interface paradigm. The creativity of the mobile tablet-based musician is impacted by two dichotomous interfaces; a developing technological device HCI (Order, 2014) and a human-environmental interface (HEI). However, there has been some work done in this modern area around the mobility of music data.

Slater and Martin (Slater and Martin, 2012) state that there are increasing numbers of producers using mobile and miniaturised music technologies to create music. Producers are equally able to edit a studio demo on their tablet on the train, as record a hip hop track, using their phone, on a sun-kissed beach. “The possible location of creativity is now significantly
expanded.” These changes in music technology and its locational practices significantly impact the creative process. Slater and Martin talk about this is in terms of the temporal and spatial dispersal of creativity. Temporal dispersal via modern technologies allows producers to move recording projects from one studio to another, retain the technological work done previously and build on further enhancements. This offers the creative process the presence of more social actors, increasing the potential number of artists involved in a given project. This new mobility of data has also offered an added longevity to projects offering chances for revisiting/editing a recording or even remixing (Slater and Martin, 2012).

The most exciting development around data mobility is the website WholeWorldBand (Godley, 2014). This is the brainchild of Kevin Godley, the well-known video director, song smith and member of the band 10cc (Sinclair, 2014). Godley likens the web portal to a musical chain letter, where the musical composition process is not set in stone, but allows multiple musicians in multiple locations to contribute to one composition. He has set up the website with some music industry heavyweight backing; including Ronnie Wood (The Rolling Stones) and Stuart Copeland (The Police). Both these two musicians have contributed backing tracks (seed tracks) to the portal. Anybody, for a small fee, can make a contribution to these seed tracks or any others. Users can also upload their own seed tracks. Video functionality is also available. As Stuart Copeland puts it, “it’s reviving the power of campfire music – that moment when musicians of different abilities join in rather than sit passively ... you open the floodgates ... everybody’s got a chance to share that cool idea” (Sinclair, 2014). The portal is at an early stage of development but essentially, the creative possibilities for any given project are multiplied by the mobility of data in time and place. The opportunities afforded by data mobility position music “liquid as code” (Born, 2005), flowing easily along the global information highways.
Spatial dispersion nullifies the important of place as a prerequisite for musical creativity altogether. In a historical sense, musical creativity, once the domain of professional studios, has given way to a proliferation of home studios. Creativity has certainly not suddenly disappeared from professional studios but technology has democratised and liberated the act of musical creativity (Slater and Martin, 2012). The potential context of creativity has shifted, along with the social accompaniments. The locational background of music making has a significant influence on the process and the outcome of the creativity act. This change in the possible context of creativity throws the emphasis away from professional studios and their music technologies to social actors in many variants of locations of creativity (Gibson, 2005). Creativity can be considered a contributory object, “embodying social relations … by spinning forms of connectedness across time and space (Born, 2005).

**Musician mobility is creating**
However, the hermitage of the static recording studio, either a home studio or a professional studio, has persisted until recently. Laptops have encouraged a certain amount of mobility among music producers, most notably the co-founder of SoundCloud, Eric Wahlforss, whose 2003 album, *Soulhack* was a strong statement of intentional mobility and associated creativity. “His album ‘Soulhack’ is the soundtrack to a very special journey. An odyssey which started off with a counterfeit inter-rail ticket thru Europe. The only luggage being a laptop and a whole lot of songs. Songs that just needed a final finish” (Sonarkollektiv, 2003). There existed a unique relationship between Wahlforss and his laptop; “an extension of his own self, a unique unification that results in the establishment of something you could call digital soul”. The relationship between self, technologies, place and mobility impact considerably on the act of creation. It the very movement through time and space which define the outcome of creativity.
In the realm of creativity, however, laptops have tended to retain the symbolism of our work life. My own previous work suggests that tablets may have more creative potential as immersive mobile music production devices (Order, 2014). Preliminary research points towards the notion of personal “embededness” rather than “work-a-day laptops” where the tablet device becomes a part of the student’s internal daily cerebral processes as a tool to resolve problems and socialise with the world (Puentedura, 2011). Early thoughts also cite the iPad as a “curiosity amplifier” (Brown, 2010). These factors may motivate creative learning via music technology on the iPad and there is support for this belief. As Goodwin has observed:

Teachers believed that optimal use of iPads was attained when students used content-creation ‘productivity’ apps as this developed higher order thinking skills and provided creative and individualised opportunities to express their understanding. (Goodwin, 2012)

Tablets also have the distinct aura of the “plaything”; a device that is socioculturally associated with novelty, portability and a sense of ownership/intimacy of the device (Goodwin, 2012). Amabile has also suggested that high levels of creativity are often found where individuals are immersively engaged with a task, often in an intellectually playful way. She cites several studies which correlate playfulness as a character trait with creativity (Amabile, 1996) and is supported by Simonton. “Creativity usually appears more favoured when individuals perform a task for inherent enjoyment rather than for some external reason that has little to do with the task itself” (Simonton, 2000).

There are also some distinct advantages to tablet devices. Tablets are relatively cheap compared to laptops, they are smaller, more portable, software updates are usually free and touch screen interfaces are simple to use (Order, 2014). The culture of app development is also moving the technology forward quickly and there is still a lot of novelty attached to tablets. My previous research on app development and usability focused on loop-based
composition software. Loop-based composition apps come in a variety of guises; some are designed with a more traditional digital audio workstation (DAW) recording interface and functionality, others are developed by and probably for electronic dance music (EDM) DJs, those emulating analogue technologies, and also there are those that have embraced innovative graphical user interfaces (GUI) (Order, 2014). These app types cater to a wide variety of user preferences. In conclusion, there are strong reasons why music creators, especially students, may find engaging with tablets a fun and creative experience (Dorfman, 2013). But, this emerging trend is not confined the amateur market.

2010 saw the release of an album, Fall, produced by Daman Alban (Gorillaz), largely made on an iPad tablet while on tour. Hotel rooms and tour buses became his new mobile studio. The sleeve notes detail a journey across America as each track was recorded at separate locations, along with the specific apps that were employed for the production (Gorillaz, 2010). Daman Alban, not a fan of technology, likened the production process to his early days with a simple portable four track recorder and a guitar (Llewellyn Smith and Doward, 2010). Interestingly, this statement strikes a chord with the innate simplicity of some iPad apps and previous research on the HCI of tablets (Order, 2014). This miniaturisation of technology has forced interface designers to simplify app architecture, where the simplicity may well equate to Alban’s four track recorder. Usability studies of music technology apps on the iPad suggest that overly GUIs or software ported from the PC can suffer from poor usability. Simple GUIs and apps that have been designed with the touch screen in mind have been suggested to enhance creativity (Order, 2014). The production of Fall demonstrates the creativity of the mobile tablet-based musician impacted by two dichotomous interfaces; a developing technological device HCI and a human-environmental interface (HEI).
Psychological testing and creating
Of particular interest to this paper is some limited psychological research on the positive effects of mobility on creativity. Ernest Gurman reported on foreign travel as a way to stimulate creativity (Gurman, 1989). Gurman’s experiment consisted of two sets of American university psychology students studying the same course; one group in London, England, and one group in the US. Gurman employed a pre and post Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1980) on both sets. The group who had travelled abroad to London scored significantly higher. “It was concluded that foreign travel and the concomitant variety of novel experiences could stimulate creative responding” (Gurman, 1989). Gurman states in his conclusions that the effect of foreign trips could be applied to creative problem solving and other creative activities (Gurman, 1989). Simonton takes this a step further, stating that:

Creative potential seems to require a certain exposure to (a) diversifying experiences that help weaken the constraints imposed by conventional socialisation and (b) challenging experiences that help strengthen a person’s capacity to persevere in the face of obstacles. These developmental inputs may be especially important for artistic forms of creative behaviour. (Simonton, 2000)

In the same vein, there is also evidence that exposure to cultural diversity may enhance creativity. “Creative activity in a civilisation tends to increase after it has opened itself to extensive alien influences, whether through immigration, travel abroad, or studying under foreign teachers” (Simonton, 2000 citing 1997). Travelling by its very nature is often an enrichment of our cultural inputs; connectivity with the new and unfamiliar. This lends support to enhanced creativity for the mobile musician and helps explain my own convictions that travelling significantly enhanced the quality of my creative outcomes.
Conclusion

The commonality which accompanies all the above approaches to mobile music production in the human environmental interface is an increased human perceptual input via some method of connection to external stimulus.

Connecting via the virtual web and associated mobile 2.0 technologies nullifies place in some senses where information and creative outcomes are ultimately sharable. Audiences, feedback and interaction have the potential to be global. Actors in the web sphere can combine, interweave and interconnect in a rhizomatic fashion; the creative possibilities are endless. If we accept this underlying theory that connecting is one starting point for creating not just in the virtual sphere but elsewhere, the other approaches discussed in this paper contribute to a more unified theory of mobility and connectivity in the dichotomous interface paradigm experienced by mobile music producers.

The discussion around synaesthesia is more rooted in the experiences of the real world. Sensory stimulus into one sense may trigger corresponding creative stimulus in another. The physical synaesthetic process in our brains is mysterious but the act of internal connection is well documented. Many have sought to use this known phenomena of internal cerebral connection as a practical creative tool. Once the music producer leaves the confining walls of the traditional recording studio, synaesthetic processes may be initiated. Connection with new and diverse experiences has the ability to increase the likelihood of that internal synaesthetic connection and expanded creative outcomes for an individual.

As soundscape artists will testify, connection with location has the ability to significantly influence musical creativity. Study of the soundscape suggests a strong human environmental interaction. Mobile technology allows us to connect with an ever-transient flow of perceptual input from our mobile devices but also the real-time soundscape. The connectivity here is simultaneous and interlinked. A music producer engaged with production
is connected to their own internal device information flow but also the audio information from the soundscape bleeding in through the porous membrane of headphones. Connection with location also significantly includes the human inputs of vision, smell and touch. These experiential perceptions may impact our creativity via the previous corresponding connection of synaesthesia. Location it seems is a key to unlock multiple perceptual connections and thus expanded creativity.

Quite ironically, from the technological viewpoint, music data mobility on our mobile devices has also nullified the importance of location. We have no need of a physical music studio to store data, record performances and edit or mix our compositions. Connection with that traditional static place of creativity is becoming obsolete. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) believes the most useful question to ask is: “Where is creativity?” Creativity for the mobile musician is now where we choose it to be.

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