THE SOURCE

ISSUE 4
On and On, 2013

Cory Arcangel

☯ 💻 ;-)

2013

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46
    On and On

    Cory Arcangel, 2013

51  http://www.coryarcangel.com

    Requirements: Applescript, Facebook, and Spotify.

    An Applescript bot which will broadcast to Facebook (through Spotify) that the user
    listens to Far East Movement’s "Like a G6" on repeat, every night from 7pm — 5am.
56
    "TBD" — TBD
```

```applescript
    repeat

3     set myhour to get the (hours of (current date))

      —— play between 9pm and 5am every day

      delay 1

8
      —— delay so we dont burn up the processor

    if myhour >= 21 or myhour < 5 then

13    tell application "Spotify"

        activate

        set repeating to true

18
        —— "Like a G6" by Far East Movement.[1]

        play track "spotify:track:4DvhkX2ic4zWkQeWMwQ2qf" in context "spotify:album:1
        TuKgkCGIxiIns9Bc5XKRC"

23      set x to 214

        —— Almost the duration of Like A G6. We don't wanna get to the end cause Spotify
        might throw a "commercial" which throws Applescript into a tailspin. This could be
         overcome with some tricky code, aka nested "trys", but I found a hack which is to
         just quit Spotify and restart, as Spotify doesn't seem to throw commercials the
        first thing out of the gate. It's a bit unglamorous, though makes for a pretty
        small script. :/

        delay x

28
        quit

      end tell

33  end if

    end repeat

    —— don't manually change, play, pause, it will mess this all up. ;(
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[1] Listening to Britney Spears's recent single "Hold It Against Me"-which launched this past January at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart-one can't help but think that aspects of its production and structural composition betray the year of its release. The song is essentially one long crescendo, overlaid on a classic verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus format. The chorus builds in each iteration until finally it re-appears, accompanied by a beat, with only about thirty seconds left in a song a little shy of four minutes. The entire song is constructed around this moment, and the effect of the rhythm entering is exacerbated by the production techniques-synth washes, digital piano, and thirty-second-note drum rolls familiar from the legendary Roland TR-909 drum machine-that have been used to tease us repeatedly about the climax's impending entrance by continually building to nonevents. Although it's frustrating and maddening, this withholding of gratification, which the song presents over and over, is what ultimately keeps us listening. And these elaborate endurance-taxing crescendos, as well as the technical means used to amplify their tension, are all in fact taken from a single vernacular, one that is hardly contemporary: 1990s Euro-trance. Along with several other artists-including Kelly Rowland, Taio Cruz, Flo Rida, and Lady Gaga-Spears is appropriating this specific musical style. The former Mouseketeer and early tabloid flameout is, moreover, bringing its hallmarks to the US charts. Why? More important, why now?

Euro-trance is a US term for a style of house music that originated in the early '90s in Europe. Like a lot of dance music, the genre is split into infinite slightly ill-fitting subcategories such as vocal trance and progressive trance. The music shares with house a bass drum on every beat, aka "four to the floor," but it's further from disco and soul than house is. Instead, the music is infused with a kind of sped-up New Age sensibility: Like New Age music, it embraces the more enthusiastic end of electronic music production. In other words, it is a bit overblown, dramatic, and tacky-and I mean this in a positive sense. Crucially, what we hear in many recent US singles is not an exact copy of Euro-trance but rather a distorted or Photoshopped 2011 version of what we remember Euro-trance to have been. History is not really advancing: It's the act of upgrading from an iPhone 3G to 4G that gives us pleasure, not our having arrived anywhere useful. When we hear Britney making Euro-trance we are hearing the illusion of progress.

In 2002, Eminem rapped, "Nobody listens to techno," yet it was in fact hip-hop where Euro-trance influences first started to appear in US pop. The "crunk" that typifies Lil Jon's production style is bathed in elements of Euro-trance, a style he says he grew familiar with in Atlanta strip clubs. The 2004 Usher song "Yeah!," for example-produced by Lil Jon (and featuring him and Ludacris)-is anchored by three notes played through a buzz-saw synth keyboard patch: a sound that had not yet been heard in hip-hop but which was all too common in Euro-trance. Hip-hop is still a place for such sounds. During the summer of 2010 in New York, it was hard to not hear the single "Salute," by Harlem-based group the Diplomats, blaring out of car windows. Similar to "Yeah!," it features a short trance-style keyboard sample laid over a more traditional hip-hop beat.

The cultural phenomenon that is Lady Gaga is easily decoded when explained by her emergence in tandem with the US market's embrace of Euro-trance-which, to my mind, has come about for several reasons. Such music had little presence in the US mainstream for some twenty years (with the brief exception of Cher's 1998 single "Believe") and so sounds new to a large audience. High-octane producers-in Gaga's case RedOne, who started working in Sweden in the 1990s-have begun to collaborate with homegrown artists and to make use of classic songwriting forms. What's more, the genre is returning with all the wrong turns and embarrassing offshoots of the past twenty years (hip house!) edited out; and it is being married with contemporary production techniques-including Auto-Tune, heavily "side-chained" compression, and new waveform editing software enabling thicker percussion sounds-that give the music a fresh feeling. Gaga's success is partly due to her appearing at the right time to take advantage of these factors. After all, she was the first US artist to drop several massive Euro-trance-style dance hits, seemingly all at once, and all deadly catchy.

The most frequent criticism of Gaga is that her music sounds like everything else-often extraordinarily or eerily so. I would argue that this is exactly the point. We live in an age of quotation, appropriation, recycling, and repetition. Gaga's music does sound like Ace of Base, Alice Deejay (whose "Better Off Alone" is in my opinion the high point of classic Euro-trance), Madonna, and countless others. After all, there is no reason pop music needs four beats to a measure, a verse and chorus, or any of the structures we associate with it: Taste is all that-however directionlessly-guides the eternal development of such structures, so each slight variation or recontextualization has the potential to be met with mass acclaim. If only everything could be, as Britney puts it in her newest single "Till the World Ends," "sicker than the remix."

Cory Arcangel is a New York-based artist. (See Contributors.)

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THE SOURCE
Issue 4: On and On, 2013

Creative Capital

2 Chainz, Adam Lambert, Alan Jackson, Alice In Chains, Alicia Keys, All-American Rejects, American Idiot, American Idol, Avenged Sevenfold, AxeWound, Axwell, Backstreet Boys, Bad Meets Evil, Beach Boys, Big Sean, Black Sabbath, Bleed From Within, Bob Marley, Boyzone, Brandon Flowers, Bring Me the Horizon, Buckcherry, Bullet For My Valentine, Cage the Elephant, Capital Cities, Carly Rae Jepsen, Cassadee Pope, Chas and Dave, Cher Lloyd, Children of Bodom, Coco Jones, Conan O'Brien, Cory Arcangel, Crossfaith, Cypress Hill, Dangerkids, David Foster, David Nail, Dawes, Deftones, Device, Demi Lovato, Dimebag Darrell, Disturbed, Drake, Drake White, Eminem, Escape the Fate, Far East Movement, Five Finger Death Punch, Florence and The Machine, Freddie Mercury, Fresh Beat Band, Gallows, Genesis, Goo Goo Dolls, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals, Green Day, Greg Bates, Greyson Chance, Guns N Roses, Hot Chelle Rae, Il Volo, Imagine Dragons, Incubus, Jackie Evancho, Jake Bugg, Janis Joplin, Jessie J, Job for a Cowboy, Justin Bieber, Kacey Musgraves, Kasabian, Katy Perry, Kelly Clarkson, Kid Cudi, Killers, KoRn, Lady Gaga, Lana Del Rey, Lifehouse, Lil Wayne, Linkin Park, Lionel Richie, Little Big Town, Machine Gun Kelly, Mariah Carey, Marilyn Manson, Mika, Mindless Behavior, Miss May I, Modestep, Motown The Musical, Murderdolls, N*E*R*D, Nas, New Kids on the Block, Ne-Yo, Nicki Minaj, Of Mice and Men, OMG Girlz, Orianthi, P!nk, Pantera, Paul Weller, Peter Tosh, Phillip Phillips, The Pierces, Pixie Lott, PSY, Queen, Queen Extravaganza, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rick James, Rolling Stones, Ronnie Wood, Sade, SafetySuit, The Saturdays, Shania Twain, Silversun Pickups, Skylar Grey, Slaughterhouse, Slipknot, Soundgarden[1]

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[1]http://www.shop.bravadousa.com/

[2]Issue 1, Desktop Wireform; Issue 2, Pizza Party; Issue 3; I Shot Andy Warhol, Issue 4, On and On, Issue 5, ???.

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