

# Authenticity:

## «Which is the more authentic?»

- One recurring problem of pop history exposes postmodern interpretations of authenticity as inadequate: It is the persistent failure of all those acts who are marketed as a self-conscious hype.

(Goodwin 1988: 43)

- Always the voice functions as the prime carrier of a specific attitude, relaying to the listener what the singer is all about. And, although the singer might assume a range of positions in his texts, it is the consistency in his characterisation through the codes of vocal production that arguably mark out his 'authenticity'.

- [Pop] artists are aware of their dependency on audiences and accordingly measure their voices through the complex channels of communication.

(Hawkins 2002: 87–88)

# Allan F. Moore (2002/2012): Tripartition of authenticities

## **1. First person authenticity: *Authenticity of expression***

[This] arises when an originator (composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience.

(“This is what it is like to be me”)

## **2. Second person authenticity: *Authenticity of experience***

[‘Second] person’ authenticity ... occurs when a performance succeeds in conveying the impression to a listener that that listener’s experience of life is being validated, that the music is ‘telling it like it is’ for them.

(“This is what it is like to be you”)

## **3. Third person authenticity: *Authenticity of execution***

This arises when a performer succeeds in conveying the impression of accurately representing the ideas of another, embedded within a tradition of performance.

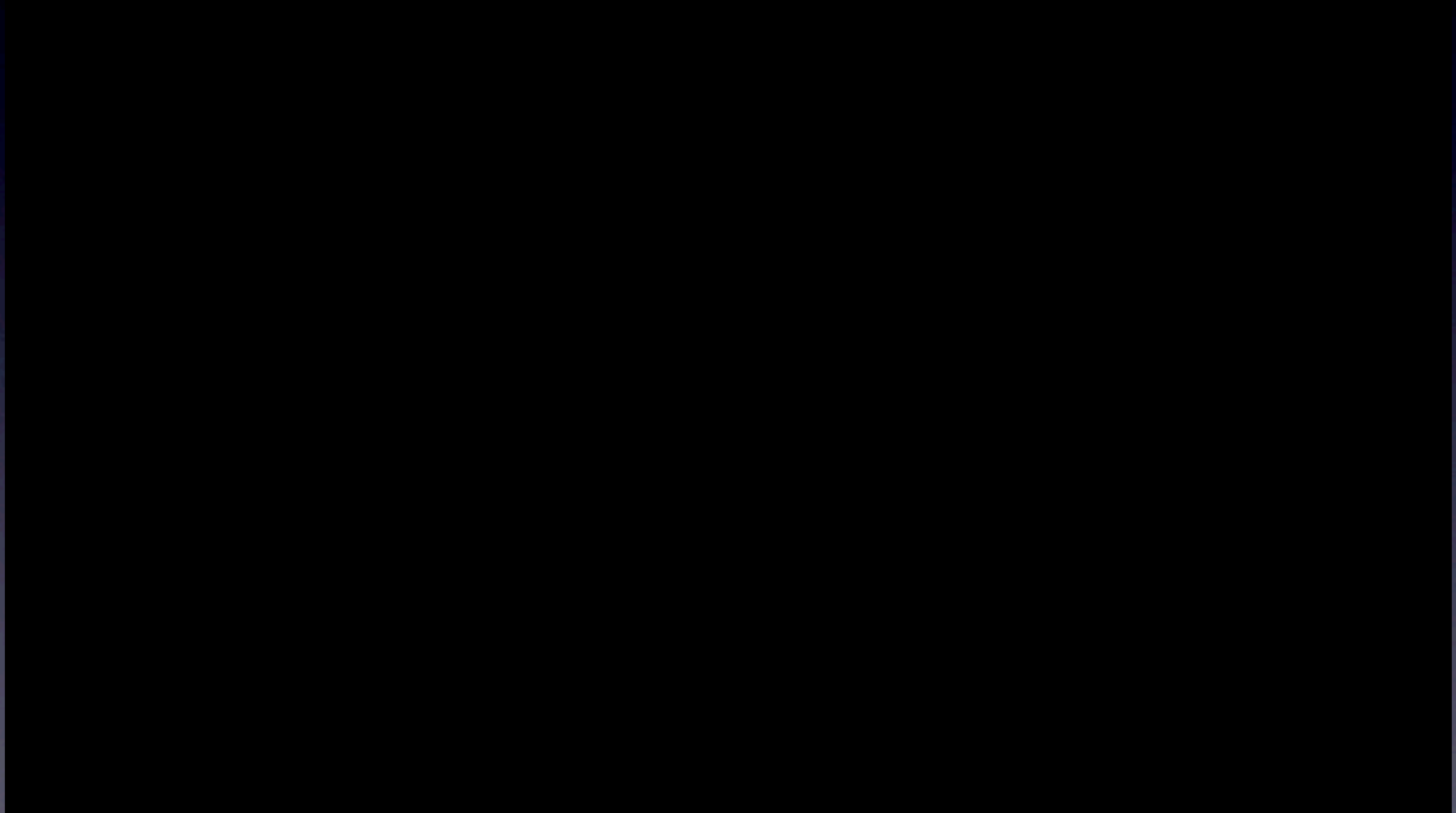
(“This is what it is supposed to sound like”)

# Tove Lo (b. 1988)



# «Habits (Stay High)» (2013/2014)

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## BBC interview with Tove Lo, 11 April 2014:

- [“Out Of Mind” is] pained and bruised and thrilling and glorious. **A moment where meaning and musical intent align perfectly.**
- Her *Truth Serum* EP is **an unflinching document** of a failed relationship.
- **“I can't lie,” Tove says. “What I'm singing about is my life. It's the truth. [...] I could filter it or find another metaphor for it – but it doesn't feel right to me.”**
- Despite her no-nonsense approach, Tove balances melodrama and melancholy with **a twisted, and distinctly Scandinavian, sense of humour.**
- She might sound like a handful, but in person Tove Lo is **likeable and slightly shy – fiddling with her hair and book-ending answers with a soft giggle.**
- But the singer insists **she never intended to become famous.** “If I wanted that, then I would have gone on Idol (Sweden's Pop Idol) – and **I got the offer so many times,**” she says.

# Marit Larsen (b. 1983)



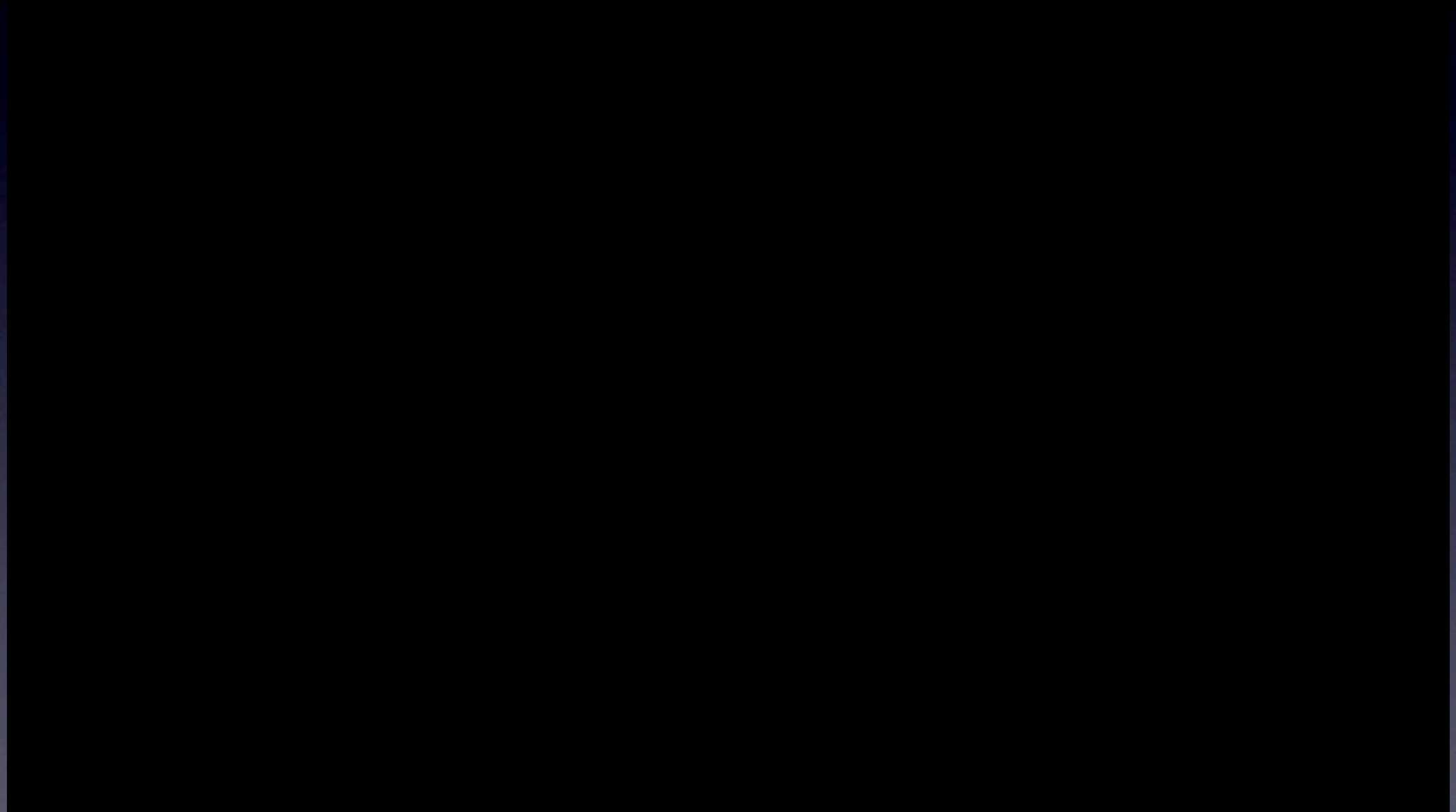
# Jacqueline Warwick (2012):

- Rock ideology attaches importance to *authenticity*, insisting that a song be sincere, unmediated, and interpreted by the person who wrote it. (2012: 241–42)
- Rockism is wary of commercial success and disdains artists who demonstrate too keen an interest in the business of music and entertainment. (2012: 242)
- If rock ideology values authenticity, unmediated sincerity of expression, and instrumental proficiency, what are we to make of a grinning child who mimes adult emotions while performing choreographed dance routines and professionally written songs? (2012: 242)
- [...] the child star must be simultaneously innocent in looks and knowing in manner ... the appeal of a childish body presenting itself like an adult one. (2012: 244)



# «If A Song Could Get Me You» (2008/2009)

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[In Marit Larsen's appearance on TV talk show Først & Sist in the spring of 2006] she told the audience that she finds it hard to cope with the fact that her boyfriend has experiences with with other women. She also said that she would duck and cover if they would meet one of his ex-girlfriends. After this, she started getting phone calls from therapists who offered to cure her jealousy.

– But for every naturopath who offered his services, I had 20 perfectly ordinary people who thanked me for articulating what they themselves had been struggling to say. I am jealous, I really am, , but so are many others as well.

(Dagbladet 22 July 2006)

– *You do not disclose much about your private life?*

– No, I would rather maintain the mystery and not rob the listeners of their joy of making up their own stories when they hear my songs.

(Telemarksavisa 9 February 2012)

# Stein Torleif Bjella (b. 1968)



# «Heidersmenn» (2009)

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# Authenticity and notions of difference (Weisethaunet & Lindberg):

- [Truth] is conceived in terms of the degree to which a representation is taken to offer access to the inner world of an exceptional subject. (2010: 471)
- A likely reason for linking idiosyncratic qualities to artistic personalities is that a truthfulness which interacts with the social and cultural context is ascribed to their performances. (2010: 472)
- [The] conflict between the 'authentic' and the 'artificial' seems based on an essentialist position (a belief in the possibility of unmediated access to human nature) that is incompatible with the notions inherent in 'performance'. (2010: 473)
- In rock criticism, the 'commercial' pole is regarded both as a threat and a necessary condition for what is produced at the 'autonomous' pole: 'Within rock culture, a fantasy of intrinsic authenticity requires that the commercial be kept alive as rock culture's "foreign body"'. (2010: 474)
- '[A] primary condition for a listening experience to be perceived as 'authentic' is that the recipient decides that there is an Other present who means what he/she says. This Other may use indirectness as an aesthetic device, but, as long as the listener manages to reconstruct its intentions as sincere, any kind of performance can be found 'authentic'. (2010: 477)

# References:

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