Editorial
Lee Higgins, David J. Elliott, and Kari Veblen with guest editors Susan Avery and Chelcy Bowles

Articles
143–158 Practice, ritual and community music: doing as identity
Helen Phelan
159–168 PickleHerring and Marlite projects: an interdisciplinary approach to junk music-making
Matt Smith
169–188 Music transmission in an Auckland Tongan community youth band
David G. Hebert
189–201 The musical culture of an ‘inuk’ teenager
Mary F. Pierrey
203–216 Questions arising from the views of some members of four amateur classical music organizations
Roger Palmer
217–227 Closing the gap: does music-making have to stop upon graduation?
Roger Mantie and Lynn Tucker
229–241 Toward a definition of a community choir
Cindy L. Bell
243–252 Lifelong learners in music; research into musicians’ biographical learning
Rineke Smilde
253–266 Intergenerational learning in a high school environment
Christopher J. Alfano
267–286 Identity formation through participation in the Rochester New Horizons Band programme
William M. Dabback
287–291 New Initiatives
The scope of the International Journal of Community Music (IJCM)
The International Journal of Community Music is a refereed journal that
publishes research articles, practitioners’ reports, and book reviews
concerning all dimensions of community music.

The editorial board includes leading international scholars and
practitioners with broad experiences, and specialties, in different aspects
of community music. Taken together, their expertise represents the wide
scope of this field.

Understandably, the most frequent question is: What is ‘community
music’? The IJCM holds an open concept of community music. That is, we
suggest that community music may be thought of in a variety of ways,
including (but not limited to): music teaching-learning interactions
(for all people of all ages, ability levels, and interests) outside ‘formal’
music institutions (e.g., public schools, university music departments,
conservatories, symphony orchestras), and/or partnerships between
formal institutions and community music programs.

The aim of the IJCM is to provide an international forum for scholars
and practitioners to (among many other possibilities):
• Document past and present community music programs
• Develop theoretical foundations for various kinds/dimensions of
  community music
• Examine and report local, regional, and international community
  music partnerships
• Formulate and/or report new concepts of and/or strategies for
  specific kinds of community music

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Further information on the journal is available from the editors.
Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of the *International Journal of Community Music* (*IJCM*). This issue has been produced in collaboration with our two guest editors, Chelcy Bowles and Susan Avery. It has been a pleasure working alongside them.

Issue 2 has three distinctive sections: (1) five articles from five different countries reinforcing the breadth of community music; (2) five articles developed from the ‘Music and Lifelong Learning Symposium’ that took place on 27–29 September 2007, on the campus of Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York; (3) three new initiatives for community music.

To begin this issue, Helen Phelan (Ireland) approaches community music as a specialist in ritual theory and performance. She uses the ritual scholar Catherine Bell as a point of departure to explore issues of identity and practice. Drawing on a postmodern interpretation of practice theory, she explores four ways in which practices generate meaning: through strategic behaviour, situationality, the necessary ‘misrecognition’ of its own enterprise and its potential for ‘redemptive hegemony’ in its discourse with power. Helen’s article concludes with a practical example from her work with the refugee and asylum-seeking community in Ireland.

Through a personal account of his practice, Matt Smith (United Kingdom) introduces us to the ‘junk music’ aesthetic of PickleHerring Theatre. Matt puts an emphasis on the experience of the group, the participant creativity and their play. In conclusion, a case is presented for the efficacy of junk music-making as a dynamic form of community music.

The article by David Hebert (United States of America) presents findings from an ethnographic study of a Tongan community youth band in Auckland, New Zealand. We are introduced to the Auckland Tongan Youth Brass through descriptions of the band’s repertoire, rehearsal strategies, instrumentation and uniforms, notational practices and institutional context. Through an examination of the band’s significance in terms of musical identity and its socio-economic context, David’s findings suggest that community ensembles rooted in musical hybridity may generate innovative models of music learning and play a unique role in cultural preservation.

In ‘The musical culture of an “Inuk” teenager’, Mary Piercey (Canada) analyses her informants’ song repertoire in order to reveal some of the functions and meanings that song choices have for in the Inuit culture of Arviat, Nunavut. Mary considers four informally learned songs, exploring issues about musical aesthetics and values in relation to physical and social environments.

Through qualitative research methods, Roger Palmer (New Zealand) presents some insightful remarks regarding the amateur classical musician. Through an investigation of four amateur classical music organizations in Wellington, New Zealand, Roger questions participants on their musical life, the values they ascribe to their music-making and their organizations.
The second section of this issue reflects some of the thinking presented at the Music and Lifelong Learning (MLL) Symposium. As with past MLL symposia held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005 and at the University of Western Ontario in 2003, the purpose of the Ithaca College symposium was to disseminate research among researchers, educators, community practitioners and music administrators interested in any and all aspects of lifelong and community music participation. Research presentations were interspersed with interactive sessions and case studies.

Members of the National Association for Music Education’s (MENC) Adult and Community Music Education Special Research Interest Group’ (ACME SRIG) served as the presentation selection panel. The call for papers and subsequent selections resulted in 23 plenary sessions by presenters from Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States. A summary of the symposium and the abstracts for all sessions, including the keynote address by Dr Judith Jellison, may be found on the ACME SRIG website: http://www.acmesrig.org/.

Following the symposium, presenters were invited to submit their papers for publication consideration in the *International Journal of Community Music*. In the current issue are five papers presented at the MLL Symposium 2007, with more to follow in subsequent issues.

In ‘Closing the gap: does music-making have to stop upon graduation?’, Roger Mantie and Lynn Tucker (Canada) present findings of research that examines the perceptions of people who continue to be musically active beyond their formal schooling years. Through interviews and focus groups with members of four community ensembles, the researchers sought a better understanding of how avocational musicians viewed their own reasons for participating in music-making and what, if any, connection they perceived between their school music experience and their present experience.

Cindy Bell (United States of America) examines issues facing community choirs in ‘Toward a definition of a community choir’. Cindy contends that many community choirs are either facing a declining membership and ageing singers, or have evolved into semi-elite performance machines that are no longer characteristic of the community and may actually marginalize adult amateur singers. She discusses the concepts of democracy, volunteerism and community and compares early twentieth-century philosophical and social arguments on community music with current issues confronting community choral organizations.

‘Musicians as lifelong learners’ by Rineke Smilde (the Netherlands) examines learning biographies of professional musicians with ‘portfolio careers’ – careers comprising simultaneous or successive, brief and/or part-time periods of employment reflecting different areas of the music profession. The portraits emerged from semi-structured interviews with musicians in four age categories focusing on the relationship between their lives, education and work profile. The findings from these learning biographies are analysed in the light of a theoretical/conceptual framework of lifelong learning in music.

Christopher J. Alfano (Canada) discusses ‘Seniors’ participation in an intergenerational instrumental music programme’ at the LaSalle Secondary School in Kingston, Ontario. He cites theoretical structures of intergenerational learning and describes how the LaSalle music-learning programme...
is a place where these intergenerational theories are exemplified and practised.

In a qualitative investigation of social interaction and music learning among seniors, William Dabback (United States of America) explores adult band membership as it relates to identity construction and revision in later life. Results presented in ‘Identity formation through participation in the Rochester New Horizons band programme’ indicate that many participants attest to identity loss and distress that can accompany the retirement process, and that identities emerge from and are shaped by the social interactions among members in the ensemble setting.

Finally, at http://www.intijcm.com you will see a newly designed version of our website. This website will continue to operate permanently as a source of information on important details about the IJCM. Also, please note that all PDF articles from our previous online issues are still available in the Article Archive section of the site.

Lee Higgins, David J. Elliott, and Kari Veblen with guest editors Susan Avery and Chelcy Bowles.
Practice, ritual and community music: doing as identity

Helen Phelan University of Limerick

Abstract
As a specialist in ritual theory and performance, with some professional experience of community music, I have always been struck by the robust resistance to clear-cut definitions or identities, by both ‘ritual’ and ‘community music’. This article takes as its point of departure the proposal of ritual scholar Catherine Bell, that we abandon the quest for conceptual identity and more fruitfully turn our attention to the potential of practice to generate its own identity. Drawing on a post-modern interpretation of practice theory, she explores four ways in which practices generate meaning: through strategic behaviour, situationality, the necessary ‘misrecognition’ of its own enterprise, and its potential for ‘redemptive hegemony’ in its discourse with power. The paper concludes with an example from my own work with the refugee and asylum seeking community in Limerick, and an interrogation of Bell’s proposal, with reference to this experience of music-making.

Introduction: the way in
I have always described myself as coming to community music through the side door. Two aspects of my professional life brought me into accidental contact with it and influenced my subsequent interest in the field. In 1994, Irish composer, pianist and scholar, Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, accepted the position of the first Chair of Music at the University of Limerick, Ireland, and established the Irish World Music Centre.1 As a doctoral researcher at the young centre, I was asked to act as Academic Coordinator for its first five year plan of programme development, during which time nine taught postgraduate programmes were introduced. From 1996–97, Professor David Elliott and Dr Kari Veblen formed part of the core team for programme development and their contribution was central to the introduction of the first MA programme in Community Music in Ireland.2 As a member of this team, I was responsible for organizing workshops, seminars and symposia on community music and had the privilege of meeting many members of the international community of musicians and scholars who were passionate about this burgeoning approach to music-making.3

My second ‘way in’ to community music has been through a project called ‘Sanctuary’ which I have coordinated for seven years. Sanctuary is funded by the Higher Education Authority of Ireland and seeks to increase access to higher education for asylum seekers and refugees, through the development of cultural initiatives. This cultural bridge between the university

Keywords
community music ritual practice theory redemptive hegemony asylum seekers

1. The Irish World Music Centre (IWMC) was re-named the ‘Irish World Academy of Music and Dance’ in 2004.
2. Elliott’s report, ‘Artful Knowing’ (September 1997), commissioned by the IWMC is a seminal document in terms of the articulation of the vision and ethos of the centre.
3. Key events include a series of four seminars between fall 1997 and spring 1998 on ‘Community Music in Ireland’, coordinated by Phil Mullen, Keavy O’Shea, Georgette Mulheir, David Elliott and Kari Veblen in Limerick, Dublin and Antrim, facilitated by the IWMC and
and new migrant communities in Ireland has included numerous community music projects, coordinated and facilitated by Sanctuary.

In one other significant way, I like to think that I have been a community musician for most of my life. Since I was a small child growing up with my four sisters in an Irish-American neighbourhood in the Bronx, the rituals of the Catholic community to which we belonged formed the primary site of my music-making experiences. My academic and musical career has been seminally influenced by this early experience, which has developed into a specialist interest in ritual theory and ritual performance.

Ritual studies may be described as an interdisciplinary site, with little or no consensus as to the meaning of the activity it studies. Ritual scholar, Ronald Grimes writes that the field has been:

… repeatedly plagued by the definition question. Some assumed narrow definitions of ritual, some preferred broad ones. The narrower definitions are easier to put into action … [T]he broader definitions, on the other hand, are harder to put into operation, resist concise summary, and risk diffusing energies into a kind of fuzzy excitement. This difference in definitional strategy will probably continue to be debated as long as there is such a thing as ritual studies … Most generative ideas resist consensual definitions.

(Grimes 1995: xx–xxi)

Similarly, it would seem that community music shares a tradition of robust resistance to categorization or simplistic definition. In her article on the Community Music Activity Commission of the International Society for Music Education, one of the most influential energies in the development of community music over the last two decades, Marie McCarthy notes the extent to which issues of definition informed many of the commission’s seminars. Speaking of the 1996 seminar in Liverpool, she notes that:

The issue of self-definition, which was an integral part of discussions in the early seminars, continued to be part of the discourse at seminar meetings. Chair David Price (1994–96) concluded that CMA was still in its infancy and ‘has not the luxury of self-definition which is evident in other spheres of ISME interests.’ Price (1996) argued that commissioners had spent the previous decade trying to identity the distinctive, yet common, features of community music activity across the globe.

(McCarthy 2008: 48)

If McCarthy’s article charts the historical ambiguity around the question of self-definition, it is equally striking that the very first sentence in the first article, in the most recent journal dedicated to community music is: ‘What is community music (or CM for short)?’

(Veblen 2008: 5)

Ritual scholar, Catherine Bell, who will act as a touchstone throughout much of this paper, suggests that there may be good reason for this apparent resistance to the definitional impulse. Most attempts at definition, ‘proceed by formulating the universal qualities of an autonomous phenomenon’ (Bell 1992: 69), maintaining that there is something which
can generally be described as, for example, ‘ritual’ or ‘community music’, and which has certain distinctive features through which it can be recognized as such. The problem with such definitions, and perhaps the reason why community musicians and ritual practitioners alike have an intuitive suspicion of this exercise, is that definitions usually become a set of criteria for judging whether an activity is ‘in’ or ‘out’, based on its ability to conform to these characteristics. If we lean towards definition, it is because a single, general construct can seem useful as an organizing principle but this very usefulness may be undermined by the problems it creates. One of the most compelling problems suggested by Bell is that the sheer weight of the criteria established by the definition may, ‘override and undermine the significance of indigenous distinctions among ways of acting’ (1992: 70).

In other words, what if activities recognized by a group of musicians as ‘community music’ do not fit into the criteria set forth? Conversely, what if community musicians cannot recognize themselves or their activities in what is described or defined? What if they cannot find a way into the discourse created by the definition?

A second compelling problem with definitions is that they must, by their nature, deal with abstractions and generalizations. This can be particularly problematic for performance-based activities, because the nature of performance is that it exists in particular manifestations, and ‘the universal always impoverishes the particular’ (Bell 1992: 70). The danger of definition is that it diminishes the particularity of event-based activities, and strips them of the specificity of cultural, political or social context.

A final problematic of definitional approaches, is a tendency to move from one extreme of the discourse to another; to propose an understanding which emphasizes the complete uniqueness of a phenomenon on the one hand, or to see it as ubiquitous on the other. In other words, some approaches to defining community music may emphasize its uniqueness, and those characteristics which set it apart from other forms of music-making, while others may view all music-making as community music. These two extremes are noted by Lee Higgins in his doctoral study on community music. In the historical development of community music in the United Kingdom, he highlights the impulse of community music to distinguish itself from ‘music in the community’ or ‘communal music-making’ through a self-understanding as ‘a conscious phenomenon that promotes the creation of access’ (Higgins 2006: 57), thus emphasising its uniqueness as a phenomenon. On the other hand, Higgins himself proposes that, ‘community music is a pre-condition of any consideration of MUSIC’, more suggestive of its ubiquity than its uniqueness (Higgins 2006: 89).

It is this shared uneasiness with the conceptualization of identity which first made me consider a relationship between ritual theory and community music. In Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice (1992), a text widely recognized as one of the most influential contributions to contemporary discourse on ritual, Bell suggests that we consider changing the question. Is it possible, she asks, to dispense with the impulse to define altogether, and find other ways of creating a shared discourse around the concept of ‘ritual’? In teasing out the implications of this approach, I found myself wondering if the strategy would work equally well for community music? The following paper uses Bell’s approach to ritual as a point of departure,
suggesting ways in which a shared discourse might be created, not so much about community music, as through its practice.

The practice turn
Bell's approach encourages us to move from asking 'what is?' community music, to an investigation of strategically generated activities which self-identify through their practice as community music. In other words, it is not a question of imposing categories or characteristics onto a practice but of exploring the circumstances and contexts which have generated the activity and the strategies of self-identity and power-negotiation implicit in the activity and its performed self-perception. Simply put, the question becomes less one of asking, for example, whether an Irish traditional music session should be described as 'community music', and more a question of investigating the strategies used by a Congolese choir in Limerick city, to articulate and perform their own sense of community through music.

In turning the question in the direction of particular performance communities or events, Bell situates herself firmly in the trajectory of practice theory, from which 'practice' has emerged as a 'key symbol' in an emergent theoretical orientation (Bell 1992: 74). If we are to fully engage in Bell's suggestion of understanding an activity like community music as a practice which generates its own meaning not primarily conceptually but through practice, it is necessary at this stage to delve a little deeper into the emergence of practice as a theoretical discourse in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Practice theory emerged in the 1970s and 80s within the context of a theoretical landscape, dominated by three major paradigms. Interpretive or symbolic anthropology associated with the work of Clifford Geertz generated widespread, interdisciplinary interest in constructs of 'culture'.4 Marxist theories of political economy5, as well as the French school of structuralism initiated by Lévi-Strauss and later embracing post-structuralism6, were both engaged in an examination of the underlying economic formations or 'structures' which informed social systems. In her examination of these paradigms, Sherry Ortner (2006) makes the point that, while these were often contradictory enterprises, all three had one thing in common in that they were essentially theories of constraint. Each investigated ways in which human behaviour was shaped and constrained by external cultural, economic and social systems and underlying structures. If great emphasis was placed on the external forces which shape human behaviour, it was felt by some that not enough attention was given to human agency and the way in which human processes and behaviours on the ground interacted with the systems within which they manifested. Theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Anthony Giddens (1979) and Marshall Sahlins (1981, 2000) tried to articulate the relationship between social practices and the actors who perpetrated them on the one hand, and the larger structures or schemas within which these actions took place. Practice theory argued for a dialectical rather than an oppositional relationship between agency and structure. In this way, the 'objectivist' approach of, for example, Marxist theory and the 'subjectivist' stance of interpretive anthropology, were not viewed as oppositional but rather as part of the relational discourse of social life. These earliest manifestations

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4. The Interpretation of Cultures (1973) was Geertz's most influential text in this regard.
5. Frederic Jameson's The Political Unconscious (1981) is an example of the Marxist legacy in cultural theory, arguing, 'the political perspective...as the absolute horizon of all reading and interpretation' (1).
6. See, for example, Lévi-Strauss (1963) and Barthes (1977).
of practice theory sought to restore the actor to the social process without
losing sight of the larger structures within which this action occurred.

Two additional considerations have influenced the development of
practice theory in contemporary scholarship and both are reflected in
Bell’s understanding of practice. The first is an engagement with power as
a key theoretical inflection. Largely influenced by the work of Foucault
(1972) and Gramsci (1957), feminists and post-colonial theorists in particu-
lar embraced the idea of practice as a site for negotiating power constructs.
The second important nuance to emerge in practice theory was a
re-engagement with the concept of culture. Early practice theory, having
rejected what it viewed as the essentialist nature of theories of culture,
came under the influence of cultural studies, media studies and newer
anthropological theories of culture which viewed culture, less as a static
frame constraining particular groups of people and more as a mobile
process enacted in practice.

Finally, the shift in emphasis from structures and systems, to activities
and social acts, was also a shift towards embodiment:

Practice theory’s embrace of embodied understanding is rooted in the reali-
sation that the body is the meeting point both of mind and activity and of the
individual activity and the social manifold.

(Schatzki 2001: 8)

Practice theory, therefore, emerged as a champion of embodied activity,
engaged in by social actors with the ability to influence the socio-cultural
contexts within which they negotiated power and identity. In the context of
this paper, it is also interesting to note the emergence of a parallel ‘practice’
turn in theoretical discourse around education and, in particular, music
education. Christine Pascal’s work in early childhood learning, for example,
draws on Bourdieu, (1990) and Freire (1972) in the generation of a new
methodological approach which attempts to ‘achieve a synthesis of theory
and practice within an act of practice theory’ (Pascal 2003: 7). Similarly,
David Elliott’s ground-breaking work, Music Matters: A New Philosophy of
Music Education, is rooted in a praxial understanding of music:

Without some form of intentional human activity, there can be neither musi-
cal sound nor works of musical sound. In short, what music is, at root, is a
human activity.

(Elliott 1995: 39)

Bell’s engagement with practice as a form of self-generating meaning and
identity stands in a line of direct theoretical inheritance within this tradition.
In arguing for the ability of practice to generate its own articulation of iden-
tity, she suggests four ways in which practice is particularly effective at doing
so. These include its ability to be (a) strategic, (b) situational, (c) embedded in
misrecognition of what it is actually doing and (d) engaged in what Bell
refers to as ‘redemptive hegemony’. The following sections will explore each
of these ‘abilities’, and play with the proposal that they may provide an effec-
tive way of understanding the potential of community music to generate its
own identity through its music-making practices.
Community music as strategic practice
In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu argues that practice is not a matter of following rules which can be easily articulated and conceptualized by theorists. The ‘logic’ of practice is not primarily intellectualist but, as a phenomenon which unfolds in real time, consists of a series of ‘moves’ which involve *ad hoc*, planned, improvised, conscious and unconscious decisions, choices and creative expressions, which articulate ‘plans’, which may be limited to a single action, or be part of a long-term programme. As such, these activities are strategic, not because they enact pre-conceptualized ideas but because the very *act of acting* involves decision-making towards a finite, expressed reality, what Bourdieu calls, ‘the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation … it is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know’ (1977: 79). Ortner (1984), in her classic article on *Theory in anthropology since the sixties*, argues that most actions are only intelligible when understood within the wider social programme, and that they both consciously and unconsciously enact the strategies of that programme.

In terms of community music, it is intriguing to think about how music-making can implicitly strategize behaviours such as inclusivity, accessibility or empowerment. Some forms of music-making may do this through repertoire, others through modes of performance (eg. improvisation), still others through participative choices related to gender, age, race or ability. The performative choices become strategies towards the realization of values, not primarily by embracing these values conceptually, but by embodying them musically. In her study of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in San Francisco, an African American Catholic parish with a strong tradition of gospel song, Mary McGann offers an interesting ethnographic account of how music-making allows a community to experience itself as a social body and to actualize the diverse and complex nature of interpersonal relationship within the community. The unison singing of the whole community, for example, in repeated choruses, was a feature of most ritual services, with repeated phrases (‘He is Lord! He is Lord!’; ‘Praise Jesus’; ‘Alleluia’) punctuating the ritual action and generating communal clapping, swaying, singing and stamping: an articulation of the community as harmonious whole. Conversely, many gospel songs in the ritual alternated in delivery between verses sung by a lead singer and chorused refrains, embodying personal, creative expressions, supported and surrounded – but also, at times, in creative tension with – communal, unified action. Finally, the climax of many pieces was expressed in the creative ‘breakdown’ of structure and role, with soloist and chorus ‘interrupting’ each other with increased abandon, and improvised phrases and movements shouted and sung in an ever-increasing polyphony of sound, embodying the diversity and uniqueness of every voice and every experience (McGann 2004). While it is not possible within the limits of this paper to fully articulate the thick description McGann employed in proposing this interpretation of musical practices, what is of interest is her contention that these musical experiences were not ‘enacting’ community values of harmony, personal creativity and respect for diversity, but rather that these values were *generated* through the ritual act of singing and embodied through practice. The strategic generation of the community’s values took place primarily
through the tacit knowledge of performance, rather than the conceptual knowledge of ideology.

**Community music as situational practice**

Practice theory and contemporary cultural theory argue strongly for the situational nature of knowledge. Reacting against universalist, atemporal and systemic understandings of knowledge, practice theory is girded in the specific, particular and contextual manifestation of experience. The situationality of language, for example, has been one of the primary concerns of recent literary criticism and in *The Pursuit of Signs*, Jonathan Culler makes one of the most influential claims for intertextuality in the understanding of language and literature:

In saying that my discourse is intelligible only in terms of a prior body of discourse – other projects or thoughts which it implicitly or explicitly takes up, prolongs, cites, refutes, transforms – I have posed the problem of intertextuality and asserted the intertextual nature of any verbal construct.

(Culler 2001: 112)

Similarly, practice theory argues that practice (in this case, music-making) can only be understood in the interpraxial web of social activity, which includes the wider surround of previous and other musical acts as well as other social behaviours related to music-making, all of which contribute to the understanding of a particular act. In other words, the enterprise involved in defining community music must, according to this understanding of practice, fail from the outset, in that music-making can only be understood in its specific relational situation and not as an isolated abstraction. It is possible, however, for specific musical practices to generate a sense of self as community music and to thus share aspects of this identity with other practices which self-identify in similar ways. It is interesting, for example, that in *The many ways of community music*, Veblen states from the outset that she ‘does not seek a definition of CM’ (Veblen 2008: 5) but rather, the article presents a number of specific perspectives on community music, rooted in particular cultural, institutional, formal and informal instances.

Again, an example might be of use here. The struggle for independence from England which marked the early part of the twentieth century in Ireland was both a political and religious affair. Nationalism and Catholicism became inextricably linked, to the extent that, in her account of the Ireland which emerged as an independent republic in 1949, Louise Fuller claims that, ‘[A]ll the evidence… points to the fact that Catholic culture was the popular culture in most of the Republic of Ireland in the 1950s’ (Fuller 2002: 14). Most Irish schools and hospitals were owned or managed by religious orders. The *Irish Independent*, the newspaper with the largest public circulation, advertised itself as a Catholic paper until the mid-50s. Radio Éireann, the national radio broadcasting service, instigated a practice in 1950 of broadcasting the ringing of the Angelus Bell each day, a practice which continues into the twenty-first century.

Musically speaking, one of the interesting manifestations of Irish Catholic culture was the plainchant festivals and competitions which,
though part of the nineteenth century legacy of the Cecilian movement, re-emerged in the early twentieth century as a popular movement under the patronage of the bishops. These festivals often featured massed choirs, consisting of thousands of children:

For example, at the 31st International Eucharist Congress held in Dublin in June, 1932, a children’s High Mass choir consisting of 2,700 boys and girls who sang not only the mass, Ecce Sacerdos, but also hymns in Irish. (McCarthy 1999: 121)

Again, practice theory argues that this musical practice – and the values it embodied – cannot be understood outside the context of its specific socio-political reality. The inclusion of Irish language hymns, alongside chant, played its part in creating a voice for the newly emergent Irish State at the beginning of the twentieth century, where Irish language song and Catholic church music formed the core canon of musical education, so that, ‘the musical traditions that were excluded from the official canon of the previous century found an honoured place in the schools of the young nation state’ (McCarthy 1999: 184). In terms of community music, this approach suggests that the ability of practice to generate a sense of identity resides both in its intrinsic capability for strategic behaviour as well as its situational ability to generate meaning within a social/cultural/political context.

**Practice as misrecognition**

One of the more intriguing dimensions of practice explored by Bell, is what she claims is its necessary misrecognition of its own action. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s notion of aporia, as well as the Marxist claim that society could not exist unless it deceived itself about the real nature of that existence, Bell claims that practice is most effective when it maintains the ability to transcend its articulated sense of its own agenda. Bell uses Bourdieu’s theory of gift exchange to exemplify this point. For Bourdieu, the apparent altruism of gift-giving conceals a complex reality of necessary reciprocity, power and obligation, and that the apparently clear-cut activity is full of ambiguities and equivocations. Bourdieu relates this to practice wherein, as quoted earlier, he claims that the lack of conscious knowledge renders the activity all the more meaningful. Put another way, activity which entirely knows its own mind is always in danger of dogmatism and ultimately at the mercy of conceptual persuasion. With regard to community music, this argument suggests that the practice must maintain the ability to ‘subvert’ its own goals, in order for the community to achieve its actual goal. One need only think of the ideological appropriation of music-making activities by ideologies as diverse as Nazism, communism or capitalism to understand that music called to completely embody a known, conceptual ideology, is necessarily constrained in its ability to generate meaning. Community musicians may embrace and articulate a coherent set of values around inclusivity, access and participation, but its musical practice may embody these – or contest them – in ways which may surpass the intentions of its participants.

An example from my own experience may help elucidate this point. ‘Comhcheol’ (the Irish language word for ‘harmony’) was a Sanctuary...
facilitated community music project, which emerged out of a recognition of the particular obstacles faced by female refugees and asylum seekers in accessing higher education.\(^7\) Childcare was one of the most significant. Few women were able to access other Sanctuary projects, which often occurred in the evening as it was not possible for them to source adequate childcare. Through another cultural initiative called Nomad\(^8\) a group of women from the traveller community were asked to form a community-based women’s choir with a group of women from the asylum seeking community.

The goals of the choir, from the outset, were explicit. These involved exposure to university life through participation in a cultural activity, embodied in the cultural exchange of repertoire from the travelling community and the cultures represented within the asylum seeking community, as well as the provision of a creative space for women to explore music-making. The choir facilitators – of which I was one – were anxious to support the transmission of traditional Yoruba, Igbo and traveller musical repertoires, being aware that there were important tradition-bearers within the choir. This process was also viewed as a means of opening each community to the music of the other, and promoting respect and integration.

Almost immediately, the choir began to subvert these goals through their musical choices and practices. Instead of singing songs which might be viewed as embodying their own identities, they chose instead to select repertoires which reflected their sense of the other community. The women from the traveller community kept asking the African women to sing ‘Sister Act’ songs, identifying these as ‘African’ songs. The African women, on the other hand, identified these as ‘American’ songs but, as all things American seemed to be popular in Ireland, they sang the songs, not because they felt them as their own, but because they sensed that the other women would like them. Similarly, after one of the rehearsals, the travelling women started singing a popular ballad from the 1970s called ‘Limerick you’re a lady’. The women from the asylum seeking community immediately suggested that this would be the song they would ‘learn’ from the others. Did this speak to their desire to be of Limerick or their sense that the other women were from Limerick? This criss-cross of communication did not seem to hinder the enthusiastic performance of the songs. In fact, at the end, it was not easy to decipher which songs ‘came from’ which community and both sang them with equal ownership. The point is that the musical practice did facilitate a kind of integration – perhaps at a much deeper level than initially envisaged – but not at all in the way that the group had originally planned or thought that it would.

**Community music as redemptive hegemony**

The final aspect of practice which Bell explores is what she calls ‘redemptive hegemony’. In this, she combines the notion of ‘hegemony’ as suggested by Antonio Gramsci (1957), with Kenneth Burridge’s postulation of the ‘redemptive process’ (1969). Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is a particular way of understanding power, which recognizes the existence of domination and subordination in the unconscious reality of ‘everyday’ life. In her notion of redemptive hegemony, Bell is interested in the way practices are enacted within the constraints of their social reality, but how they can also be instrumental in the re-ordering and re-distribution of power.

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7. For a more extensive description of this project, see Phelan (2007).

8. Nomad is a sister project to Sanctuary and is also funded by the Higher Education Authority and coordinated by the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, but with a remit to develop cultural initiatives with the traveller community in Ireland.
Bell’s engagement with this particular way of understanding power constructs has had a wide interdisciplinary influence, with writers seeing in it a potent tool for interrogating practices as diverse as Christianity in contemporary India (Raj 2002), popular culture in medieval Cairo (Shoshan 2002), Catholicism and the Mi’kmaq (Hornborg, 2004) and women and spirit possession (Keller 2005). It seems to me to be especially pertinent to those musical practices which self-identify as community music, in that the enterprise of community music would often appear to involve the use of music-making as a way of contesting and re-distributing power structures\(^9\).

**An ethnographic narrative of community music identity**

Bell’s exploration of strategies and approaches to practice, does not provide us with a definition of community music, but it does suggest a number of approaches through which we can interrogate particular musical practices, and ask questions about how they may or may not identify themselves with community music. I would like to conclude this paper with a description of one particular musical community and, with reference to the four approaches described above, interrogate this practice as community music. The brief description provided here is an encapsulation of an extended ethnographic study, which began with the formation of the group in 2003 and continued until 2005, when I ceased to be an active musical member. As with all ethnographic representations, I offer no ‘definitive’ analysis of this musical activity, but rather an interpretation based on extended and intensive observation, recording and participation. In the tradition of fieldwork, which has been a hallmark of my research approach, I offer an account:

...describing experiences and observations ... made while participating in an intense and involved manner. But writing descriptive accounts of experiences and observations is not as straightforward and transparent a process as it might initially appear. For writing description is not merely a matter of accurately capturing as close as possible observed reality, of ‘putting into words’ overheard talk and witnessed activities... in fact, there is no one 'natural’ or ‘correct’ way to write about what one observes... because descriptions involve issues of perception and interpretation.

(Emerson et al. 1995: 4–5)

This account, therefore, summarizes an interpretation of a musical activity which I propose can plausibly be offered as an example of music-making which self-identifies as community music through its practice.

The musical community I will describe is located in Limerick City, a port city at the head of the long estuary of the Shannon river in the south-west of Ireland. This community is part of the story of unprecedented migration into Ireland in the early 1990s, as a consequence of the economic prosperity often referred to as the ‘Celtic Tiger’. This new wave of immigration consisted primarily of migrant workers for the burgeoning economy and asylum seekers, hoping to be granted refugee status. While the refugee and asylum seeking community still only represents approximately 10 per cent of all immigration at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is the category which grew most dramatically in the shortest period of time
Throughout the 1990s most asylum seekers were centralized in Dublin, the capital city of the Republic. As the numbers continued to grow, this situation became increasingly untenable and in 2000, the government enacted a policy of dispersal, sending asylum seekers to live in other towns and cities around the country. The first cohort of asylum seekers arrived in Limerick in May, 2000. Since then, more than 1,000 asylum seekers have been accommodated in Limerick, with the majority coming from Africa (predominantly Nigeria) and eastern Europe. 260 people have received refugee status in Limerick, and about 120 have received leave to remain on humanitarian grounds. There have been about 40 family reunifications and an additional 150 now seeking residency on the basis of an Irish-born child (Phelan and Kuol 2005).

In June 2000, I became a member of Doras Luimní, the support group for refugees and asylum seekers in Limerick and in September 2001, formed a partnership between the Irish World Music Centre and Doras called Sanctuary. With significant funding from the Higher Education Authority, Sanctuary initiated a number of cultural projects across the city. One such project, called ‘Creative Listening’, involved the identification of public spaces, which encouraged the participation of asylum seekers in public life. Being heard and seen in the public sphere is one of the great challenges for the asylum seeking community. The legal structure surrounding the asylum seeking process provides little access to normal modes of social interaction. Most asylum seekers are catered for under a system called ‘direct provision’ whereby accommodation and food is directly supplied in hostels or processing centres. Asylum seekers often lack the normal opportunities to meet Irish people, whether shopping (because of direct provision), working (employment is prohibited during the asylum seeking process) or socializing (the grant of approximately twenty euros a week leaves little money for visiting pubs, attending sporting or musical events, or taking part in other Irish recreational activities).

The churches were among the first bodies to offer a public platform for asylum seekers in Limerick. The Augustinian Church, in Limerick, for example, offered the first invitation to members of the refugee and asylum seeking community to sing at a public event. While most support groups around the country are non-denominational, a significant number of these groups benefit from the support of religious organizations. In the case of Doras, the main office, classroom and meeting rooms, as well as the provision of space for meetings with legal aid representatives are supplied by the Redemptorist community. Art and language classes and choir rehearsals take place in the Augustinian church. The United Methodist and Presbyterian Church hosted the initial mothers and babies group and currently hosts a Pentecostal community in its church hall. In two significant ways, neither directly related to any explicit evangelical or theological agenda, the Irish Churches have played a formative role in the process of seeking asylum in Limerick: firstly, through the provision of physical structures to support a voluntary network and, secondly, through the opening of their ritual spaces to these new communities.

The Augustinian church in Limerick is located in the heart of O’Connell Street, the main shopping and business street in the city. Because of its location and its tradition of hospitality, it quickly became a major point of contact for asylum seekers and other refugees.
12. In the interests of anonymity, no names will be used in this description. In the course of my fieldwork with this community, I also encountered reluctance in terms of the use of recorded interviews and will therefore offer my descriptions on the basis of field-notes. While many people were reluctant to give face to face interviews, there was no objection to recording ritual performances. In terms of methodology, this is itself an interesting example of practice being asked to speak for itself.

The primary church for Catholics from the new migrant communities, particularly those from Africa. As part of the Creative Listening project, the desire for a choir or musical group which would incorporate songs and worship styles, more familiar to African Catholics, was identified. While there were many singers in the African (primarily Nigerian) Augustinian community, none felt capable of leading such a group. The response of Sanctuary was to ask the Nigerian community to assist in the identification of a Nigerian musician, who would be willing to come to Ireland to study with financial support from Sanctuary and, while completing his Masters at the University of Limerick, would initiate and direct a musical group for the Augustinian liturgies.12

The young musician and liturgist exceeded all expectations in the short time that he was in Limerick. Over the course of a year, he developed a musical group who sang regularly at the Augustinian church and who began to attract people interested in experiencing an African, Catholic ritual. By the conclusion of the first year, the choir consisted of a mixed group of Nigerian men and women who sang in three or four part harmony, according to tonic-solfa notation supplied by the director. The repertoire consisted mainly of newly composed, Nigerian (Yoruba, Igbo and English language) hymns, psalms and parts of the Mass (Kyrie, Alleluia, Sanctus, Agnus Dei), appropriate to the celebration of the Roman Catholic liturgy. The choir dressed in black and white formal clothing, and was accompanied at the keyboard by their director. At the conclusion of the year, one of the women from the choir stepped forward to take over as leader, at the departure of the initial director.

It is this second phase of the choir’s development which is of particular interest to this paper. The new choir director was from Cameroon and almost immediately, choir membership became ethnically more diverse and the repertoire expanded to include French-language songs. Slowly but steadily, the men began to drop away from the group. Some of the women explained this in terms of the gender of the leader. The group was also meeting against the backdrop of a heated referendum campaign in Ireland, concerning the right to citizenship of children born in Ireland. Since the Good Friday Agreement (10 April 1998) every child born on the island of Ireland had had an automatic right to Irish citizenship. Media reports, fuelling rumours that Ireland was being overrun with pregnant women coming to Ireland (primarily from Africa), as well as growing pressure from other European countries, led to the citizenship referendum and on 11 June 2004, the automatic right to citizenship on the basis of birth in Ireland was reversed.

The majority of women remaining in the choir were mothers of an Irish-born child (and many had left other children and spouses at home in Africa) and were now existing in a legal limbo as they waited for their fate and the fate of their children to be decided. Increasingly, mothers brought their babies to choir rehearsal and to sing with them on Sundays. Slowly, the group's dress became less and less uniform, and often the group decided to sing in ‘traditional’ dress. At this time, a number of new African Pentecostal churches were also founded in Limerick, and some of the choir members began to attend both the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal services.
Pentecostal-style songs began to appear in the choir’s repertoire, as well as the bodily gestures of clapping, swaying and dancing.

By the end of the second year, the choir had been almost completely transformed, from a formal, mixed-gender, notation-based, Roman Catholic, Nigerian choir, to a musical group which included women and children from many African countries, as well as some from Ireland, singing in a variety of languages, incorporating a variety of denominational repertoires, often performing in traditional African dress and incorporating movement reminiscent of African ritual styles. The style of leadership had also changed. From a ‘conducting’ style, led from the keyboard, the leader was increasingly identified as the ‘lead singer’, with repertoire suggestions and arrangements coming from the whole group. Rehearsal styles were less structured around ‘learning lines’, and more often took the form of improvised experiments around different harmonies and arrangements. While keyboard accompaniment was still included (I played with the choir for most of the second year), it was no longer in a leadership role. Tambourines were also introduced and, occasionally, drums were used.

What is of interest here, in terms of interrogating this musical practice, is that the ‘intent’ expressed by the community at the beginning of the exercise (to incorporate songs and worship styles from African Catholicism) was partially embodied in the practices of the musical group, but was completely transformed and subverted in the process. Instead of embodying Catholic values, the music increasingly embodied the wider voice of global Christian practices. Instead of replicating a ‘Nigerian’ experience of a Catholic Mass, the group ‘invented’ a new, pan-African sound, inflected with an ‘Irish’ accent. Instead of primarily empowering African Catholicism, it empowered lone mothers, moving the discourse from ethnicity to gender. And, in keeping with the point being made throughout this paper, these negotiations were primarily played out in the domain of practice, with little or no conceptual articulation of these shifts and negotiations.

Finally, it can also be suggested that the shift in musical practice, was a shift towards self-identification with community music. The leadership style changed from teacher to facilitator; the musical style changed from acquired repertoire to communal improvisation. Rehearsals became sites of solidarity, with women chatting about their worries for the future of their children and seamlessly transitioning into prayer and song in this context. The group changed its identity from an African choir to a women’s community choir.

According to Bell’s discourse, one might conclude that this musical group became exactly what it needed to be at that time in that place and, through music, negotiated the most pressing needs of the community, even while these needs were differently named. In doing so, it generated an identity, which might reasonably be called community music.

**Conclusion**

I find myself drawn to Bell’s particular exposition of practice and practice theory for a number of reasons. Firstly, and most obviously, it situates the *activity* of music-making at the heart of our enterprise, rather than
abstracted discourses about music. Such discourse is of course important, but perhaps less valuable than we think in its ability to conserve, contest or influence human society, which, Bell contends with Bourdieu, Giddens et al., takes place primarily through embodied behaviour, not conceptualized thought. Secondly, in its engagement with constructs of power and hegemony, it takes its place among those postmodern disciplines (feminism, post-colonial studies, gender studies) birthed through a critique of our inherited, biased constructs of knowledge. As such, practice theory suggests that practice is immensely political and has within its expressive form, the ability to influence and contest socio-cultural realities. From my own perspective of the immense sacrality of life and the subsequent need to embrace a world-view that is inclusive of constructs of justice, I find this understanding of music to be both empowering and liberating. This is not a question of getting music to be what we think we want it to be, but rather, of making music in the hope that its embodiment of our desires and needs will inscribe them convincingly and effectively on ourselves, as individuals and societies.

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**Suggested citation**

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PickleHerring and Marlsite projects: an interdisciplinary approach to junk music-making

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Abstract
This project report describes the way PickleHerring Theatre approaches community music-making with ‘junk’ materials. The report has an emphasis on the group experience, the participants’ creativity, and their play. In conclusion a case is presented for the efficacy of junk music-making as a dynamic form of community music.

A young girl picks up an off-cut from a broom handle and hits a plastic container. The rhythm is basic and the bass sound has no tangible pitch. The child hits the ‘drum’ as hard as she can. She is not worried that she will break the ‘instrument’. The junk instrument is worthless, in terms of money, but the experience of the child is full of value. After a period, more children join the ‘drop-in’ workshop and the rhythm is facilitated by two performers/workshoppers. At times, the noise is organized but often it is chaotic. The performance/workshop attracts a crowd and the activity develops a temporary sense of community spirit among the participants. The location is a municipal park. The noise of the activity and its presence in the space draws the crowd’s attention because of its volume and spectacle. The noises and actions seem both celebratory and aggressive and the play of the visual and aural elements creates a strong sense of drama. Even though the child is only three years old, the action is loud and defiant. The child has created a strong dramatic moment in the park using junk music.

This scene paints an image of what often happens during the community music activity of PickleHerring Theatre. The experiences of the participants and audiences are complex and it is this report’s aim to explore the approach of PickleHerring through the projects and workshops it has been organizing and running for the last eight years.

When music is allied to drama, as text, verses, images or any other non-musical stimulus, the experience of the audience is complex and profound. Yet still intuitive. One doesn’t need to understand music to hear what it is saying.

(Brand 1998: 3)

The junk music of PickleHerring is always to some degree ‘allied’ to drama and involves an ‘intuitive’ response from participants. In this context junk refers to waste materials found in domestic and industrial locations. The
use of drama in community music activity is one of the reasons for the efficacy of the PickleHerring approach. My own background is rooted within drama and so the relation between drama and music is part of my thinking and approach to community music activity. I therefore argue that the role of drama in community music can be significant, enhancing the participatory experience.

The project I intend to consider is the ‘Marlsite’ project, and in particular how the practice of musicking in this project, both in its performances and workshops, has developed over the years. The style of Marlsite projects in both methods and products is a ‘bricolage’ of elements that includes puppets, masks, poetry, junk music, site-specific installations/interventions and participatory performance. Marlsite is an interdisciplinary approach to community arts but the elements of the project that relate to the field of community music will be the focus of this project report.

Background
PickleHerring began as a theatre company in 1994 making small-scale puppet shows. These early shows were accompanied by live music sometimes played on unusual sculptural instruments. In subsequent performances, composers were commissioned to write new scores for shows. This working method is reflective of other contemporary United Kingdom puppet companies such as Doo Cot and Faulty Optic. In 2000, PickleHerring shifted its approach to working in site-specific locations and
as a consequence began using waste materials for both its puppets and its musical instruments.

Marlsite projects developed out of research into site-specific puppetry and the use of music was a key element of this interdisciplinary practice. At first the music was produced on conventional instruments like acoustic guitar, but as the working methods developed the music transformed. This transformation from using conventional instruments to junk instruments was in relation and reaction to the style of junk puppets constructed in the residencies. It made sense to produce the sounds from similar materials found in the puppets, namely junk and rubbish that was sourced from around the site. The junk music developed with and worked holistically with the other elements in the performances and installations.

Soon junk music-making became part of the repertoire of PickleHerring workshop activities. Our work was mainly orientated toward young people as part of an artistic residency, one-day workshop events, drop-in sessions, festivals or as part of informal teaching in schools or colleges. The young people seemed to find the junk music liberating and exciting. ‘I didn’t realize you could make sound from something that basic’, was the type of response I would hear from participants and spectators. Basic techniques were used to develop the community group’s ability to play together and compose new material. This new material often came from words and phrases taken from stories generated out of the site. The music produced in workshops always had close links to the drama of the final performances.

Figure 2: A hacksaw thumb piano. Jonathon Purcell
In this style of junk music-making, rhythm was created using plastic barrels and bins. Melody was found in rough vibraphones made from discarded pipes and other resonant waste materials. With the development of the home-made electronic pick up, assembled from cheap materials\(^2\) and fixed onto the junk instruments, the sounds we were making were amplified through battery operated guitar amps. This increased our potential for new sounds. Our junk instruments, such as the thumb pianos, bass stringed primitive guitars, cellos and tennis racket harps were now able to be amplified through small portable guitar amps. Audiences, participants and performers were all engaged in the unusual sounds emulating from these rudimentary sonic assemblages.

**Junk instruments**

In workshops and performances, junk instruments opened up new possibilities of engagement because they could be played in any way the performer felt appropriate. The instruments’ random tuning and visual aesthetic created a sense of freedom. There were no right or wrong ways of producing sounds from these instruments. The lack of monetary value and robust quality of this type of junk instrument meant that they were open and accessible to anyone who wanted to make sounds and this lead to members of the public often freely picking up these instruments to have a go.

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\(^2\) We use ceramic piezo transducers, two core cable and one ½ inch jack plug.
These junk instruments could be used as tools in community music projects for anyone without much experience or technique. There was something very democratic about their design and use. Either no technique was necessary or the player could develop his own technique, brought about by the nature of the instrument. Nothing needed to be learnt to play the junk instruments, they were inherently intuitive, free of technique and full of surprises. This immediacy and openness in the junk instruments became a compelling feature of the PickleHerring style of community music.

The aesthetic of the instruments makes apparent the materials and construction; everything is lashed together with cable ties, sticky tape and wire and so the dynamic quality of the instrument is made more apparent for the listener/viewer. This way of working is influenced by and has similarities to how surrealists ‘turned’ objects from their everyday use into double entendre; for example Salvador Dali’s lobster telephone, Meret Oppenheim’s fur teacup and Marcel Duchamp’s irons with nails. PickleHerring’s use of junk objects to produce sounds rejoices in the transformation of an object’s original use and meaning into a new strange meaning. Examples of this include: a drainpipe played as a bass instrument; tin hats hit with sticks as drums and even a footbridge as a vibraphone.
The efficacy of junk music in practice: two examples

Example 1

During one of our one-day events a situation arose that raised issues over whether the teaching and practice of PickleHerring could be considered music. The validity of our approach to music-making was challenged by a parent of one of the young participants in a junk music workshop. The mother criticized and then removed her son from the workshop because she insisted that the sound produced was not music but noise. The workshop was advertised as junk music, but the chaotic sounds offended her. The parent had come into the workshop while her son was freely playing and experimenting with the junk instruments. She eventually removed her son from the workshop, even though he seemed to be enjoying the new experience. The parent may well have been offended by the dissonant abuse of what she considered music, even though her son was excited by the strange sounds and activity. This event is the only time such a strong reaction has occurred, but possibly shows how this practice can offend and is not part of traditions of tuneful music-making.

Later in this workshop, the young participants took to the streets and played their ‘noise’ as part of a folk and roots festival. Although slightly out of context with the festival, the young sound-artist’s aggressive rhythms and weird scrapings were well received by the folk music audience. What these young people lacked in technique they made up for in the
energy and drama of their playing. The unusual spectacle of the young people playing rubbish was as compelling and provoking as the sounds produced. In addition, the junk music seemed at odds with the traditional instruments that were a feature of the folk festival and PickleHerring has often clashed with folk musicians as part of festivals, because of the raw aggression and lack of harmony found in our playing. Junk music sits well on the borders of what is considered traditional, folk or even popular music.4

Example 2
In 2005, PickleHerring’s style of junk music as street theatre was performed in the context of a performance in Liverpool city centre when a group of students from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts were invited to perform and raise funds for victims of the tsunami disaster. We were programmed to perform alongside a local Liverpool group playing African drums. The students I worked with unashamedly used the drama of the junk music by dancing and performing with their instruments to the extent that their aggressive moves and playing destroyed many of the junk instruments. This exciting spectacle drew a great deal of interest from the public. In contrast, the other group sat as they performed allowing only the motion of their arms in the act of drumming as the movement. The sound of the djembe drums was warm and tuneful and the drummers’ playing was of a good quality. Even so, the interest, and crowd-pulling potential, of this group was significantly less than the junk-bashing students. The one element that seems to have produced this difference in efficacy in this context is the heightened dramatic nature of the junk band. The musical quality of the two bands was incommensurable but the drama of the junk music produced through the way the instruments were played had a greater effect on the crowd.

Styles of practice, workshops and learning
PickleHerring exploits certain conventions of music in its practice including: African, rock, blues, samba, folk and Taiko as well as experimental rhythms and melodies. Something of the punk ‘do it yourself’ style has influenced the sound and attitude of PickleHerring.5 Also we adopt cut and paste methods in relation to an eclectic mix of musical styles and compositional processes. From an artistic perspective you might call our work postmodern. Within this style of junk music, irreverence is justified in relation to any codes, conventions or rules of traditional and popular music. In fact, there truly are no rules in this type of junk music. One thing that does remain present in all this work though is the importance of performing, playing and the dramatic spectacle.

In PickleHerring workshops, the participant becomes the conductor of the junk band, taking control of the sound produced through simple gestures and commands. This role is open to anyone who wants to have a go. In this form of workshop the sounds are unconventional and the roles interchangeable. This transgression of roles, conventions and practice makes it difficult to understand the activity within traditional or established disciplines or genres such as orchestras, musical theatre, bands or choirs. This type of practice does not necessitate the need for actors/musicians or

4. Our recordings of junk music have been collected together as a document of our practice – PickleHerring (2006), Rubbish Music, CD.
5. This has a synergy with the development of community music in the United Kingdom. (See Higgins 2008: 30–31.)
any of their training and the roles of professional and participant are expected to blur. In the workshops, the skilled musician is welcomed as much as the novice and both play on an equal level. In workshops we attempt to create an ideal space that is filled with a democratic creativity, but the workshop space is ephemeral and temporary, because of the short timescale of the projects. Even so there is a strong sense of creative collaboration in this approach and much is learnt.

What can be learnt from this way of approaching community music? In the workshop situation for PickleHerring there is a free flow between participant/performer/leader/learner and this can mean that many of the teaching dichotomies are subverted and often inverted. The working methods in workshops are developed and learnt from within the group and teaching is embodied through the act of doing. The group communicate through noise and chaos with limited technique, creating a new language and discourse of music-making. The group is involved in every aspect and is not fed musical ideas, they are given freedom to invent their own conventions and subvert traditions.

The pedagogical approach is radical and in a short time frame, much is learnt about collaboration, listening and participating. The junk instruments are tools in this process and are a great leveller. There is no right way or wrong way to play rubbish. Everyone can find his or her own style of playing rubbish, and so everyone can be a junk musician. One of the additional lessons in this situation is how to think differently.
about our throw-away culture and the environment. This lesson is delivered implicitly through the strange variety of rubbish used as instruments and not explicitly through didactic teaching or information giving. The participant/audience is given freedom to explore an alternative way of using and not abusing the world. The interconnectivity of art-making found in Suzi Gablik’s thinking about culture is very influential in the work of PickleHerring and relates to the issues around ecology and communities that the company tackles in its practice. Gablik (1993) has shown there is a chance in our postmodern malaise to ‘Make Art as if the World Really Mattered’ (113–4) and this sentiment is echoed in the Marlsite projects.

Community music and drama, a summary

Dramatic, is in the sense of an action or situation having the qualities of spectacle and surprise comparable to those of written or acted drama, dates mainly from C18.

(Williams 1985: 109)

The community music practice of PickleHerring exemplifies the ‘qualities of spectacle and surprise’, in the look of the junk drums, xylophones, single string bass guitars, mastic tube percussion plops, scrap metal chimes and the strange, unexpected random sounds they produce and so relates to the definition of dramatic from Raymond Williams given above. It could be argued that all live performed music involves these qualities of the dramatic, but for PickleHerring the dramatic always has the focus. The practice of PickleHerring uses a great deal of dramatic techniques to achieve its aims in performance and workshops.

To summarize, PickleHerring’s artists and participants, through their use of junk music, have learnt that drama enhances and amplifies the effect of community music. In our experience, drama is integral to making music in the community if it is to communicate to its audience within culturally diverse settings. Junk music is not part of the dominant forms of popular and traditional music, but has a future in the community music setting. This is because of its complex dramatic and musical potential. Junk music is often experimental, but it can be also a popular and accessible form and in this sense offers much to developments in community music. Participation, inclusion, group work, playing and democracy are key concerns of this practice and because of this PickleHerring’s workshops and performances share principles of community music in the United Kingdom as outlined by Lee Higgins (2008). Even though PickleHerring do not make ongoing sustained community music projects per se, the company has added to the range of music-making that can be understood as part of the wide scope of community music. Referring back to the first example of the project report, I am always delighted with the sound and spectacle of the child who takes a stick to one of PickleHerring’s instruments and plays with abandon. The immediacy and primacy of that experience has been one of the most fulfilling moments in my career and engagement with community music in practice.
References

Suggested citation

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Music transmission in an Auckland Tongan community youth band

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Abstract

This article reports on findings from a 2006 ethnographic study of a Tongan community youth band in Auckland, New Zealand. To begin, the study’s rationale is discussed in relation to previous research, followed by a description of the band’s repertoire and rehearsal strategies, instrumentation and uniforms, notational practices and institutional context. The youth band’s role in the Tongan community of Auckland is then considered in relation to previous descriptions of ‘community music’. The band’s significance in terms of musical identity and its socio-economic context are also examined, followed by a discussion of this study’s implications for community music workers in other settings. The findings suggest that community ensembles rooted in musical hybridity may generate innovative models of music learning and play a unique role in cultural preservation.

Introduction

Tingling, a numbing sensation lingered, spreading slowly from the tip of my tongue, across the palate and into my throat.1 An almost peppery or gingery taste, and a bamboo-like odour, as we drank the kava2 from halved coconut shells. ‘Brother Dave, more kava… drink’ and the large, half-naked Tongan man beside me kindly refilled my ipu shell from the communal bowl. I was sitting on a large woven mat alongside eight Tongan men around the kumete, a wooden bowl used for the faikava drinking ritual. ‘Ah, good on you’ they approved, as I sipped a bit more kava. Most of the men wore lavalava robes and all were barefoot or in sandals. We were inside a simple, windowless wooden building that only contained a few benches constructed from large slabs of wood. After drinking a few cups of the pungent kava, their talking grew slower, and finally the men began to sing. They had rich and deep, impossibly relaxed voices, and sang in improvised harmony their slow and hauntingly beautiful hiva kakala songs with guitar accompaniment.

I asked the elderly man beside me what tonight’s songs were about, and his eyes brightened as he described a boy who would swim each evening to a distant island to meet the most beautiful girl, to whom he would give coconuts, fresh flowers and fish he had caught along the way. Soon the women from this Tongan community entered the kava circle to serve us enormous helpings of roasted pork, green-lipped mussels, kumara and taro.3 This was just another weekend gathering in the largest Tongan community outside of Tonga.4 Only a few miles away, the tallest tower in the southern hemisphere graced the Auckland city skyline, where the

1. Much of this research was presented at the 2006 conferences of IGEB and the Society for Ethnomusicology. For their insightful comments and suggestions, the author thanks Jane Moulin, Adrienne Kaeppler and Richard Moyle.

2. Kava is a ritualistic drink made from the kava plant (Piper methysticum) that is popular in many South Pacific cultures.

3. This cuisine is quite similar to Maori kai, as described in The Ethnomusicologist’s Cookbook (Hebert 2006).

4. This data is from field notes from 16 April 2006. Accurate information regarding current conditions in
Tonga may be freely obtained online from the CIA’s publication World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

5. Pseudonyms have been used in this article for the names of the band and its director.

6. Diaspora refers to a group of people who are dispersed from their original homeland. The maintenance of cultural identity within diasporic communities has become a topic of great interest among social scientists in recent decades (Bohlman 2007).

downtown streets more closely resemble Hong Kong than a Polynesian village. Hours before the kava ritual, I had arrived at this Tongan church for more data collection as part of my ongoing research and was astonished by the spectacle there. The region’s leading Tongan brass band was intensely rehearsing a unique arrangement of Handel’s ‘Coronation Anthem’ with a large choir singing full-voice in the Tongan language, in earnest preparation for the Tongan king’s arrival in Auckland. Little did they know, this would be their final chance to perform a ceremony for King Taufa’ahau Tupou IV (1918–2006).

A few months later, on 10 September 2006 the Tongan king passed away, ending his 40-year reign as one of the longest serving sovereigns in the world. Since Tongan brass bands had been enthusiastically patronized by the king, his death marked a possible turning point for these bands – both in Tonga and abroad – and it remains to be seen how these popular community ensembles will adapt to new conditions.

Rationale and related research

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in 2006, this study examines a Tongan community youth band in Auckland, New Zealand, with particular attention to its role in the transmission of cultural heritage. I will describe various aspects of Auckland Tongan Youth Brass, including its position in terms of the five components of community music outlined by Veblen (2008), then examine issues raised by this case that challenge current conceptions of diasporic identity in music (including models of musical hybridity and transculturation), and finally discuss conclusions and implications this case may have for community music practitioners working in vastly different contexts.

Why study a Tongan community band in Auckland?

Some readers may initially question the global relevance of this study. Its rationale is based on five points, each of which will be explained in detail: (1) Auckland, New Zealand is home to the largest urban enclave of Tongan migrants; (2) brass bands occupy a position of great political and religious importance in Tongan society; (3) bands among the Tongan community of New Zealand have remained unstudied; (4) little has been published regarding the practices of these bands even within their homeland of Tonga; and (5) community bands are an area of great interest within the rapidly developing field of community music, and much has remained unknown regarding how such bands naturally operate among the minority populations that many community music ‘workers’ strive to better serve (Veblen and Olsson 2002).

David Hargreaves and Adrian North (2001: xii) observed that, ‘If we broaden the scope of “music education” to take into account those activities and experiences which take place outside the classroom, then it becomes even more important to consider the influence of different cultural traditions and environments on musical development, as well as those of peers, parents, local organizations and other external influences’. The position that Hargreaves and North articulate here has resonated with many music education scholars, some of whom have entered the field of community music with an interest in learning both how to better support existing traditions and better adapt effective aspects of informal practices within school settings.
Relevant research

Community music research is arguably still in its infancy in Australasia, but it is useful here to briefly discuss relevant publications that provide a scholarly foundation for this inquiry. Previous community music studies have examined choral ensembles in New Zealand (Tipping 2005), and community bands in Australia (Coffman 2006), but further research is especially needed into musical activities among various ethnic-minority and diaspora populations. Auckland is one of the major cities of this region, regarded as ‘the Polynesian capital’ because its Pacific Islander population is the largest of any metropolitan area in the world, comprising thriving communities of Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, Niueans, Tahitians, Tuvaluans, Tokelauans and various others. Among some cultural groups, such as the Niueans, the adult population in Auckland is actually larger than back home. Auckland is currently home to nearly one-fourth of the world’s population of Tongans.7

Despite the importance of Auckland’s unique urban enclave of Pacific Islanders, and the significance of its musical practices for maintaining cultural heritage, ensembles within this community have received little attention from scholars. Rob Flaes (2000) in the only global survey of brass band traditions, observed that ‘there is little written information about these bands’ in Oceania (148). There appears to have been only one published study from fieldwork among Polynesian brass bands in New Zealand (Hebert, in press), but that was among Maori, who are regarded as quite distinct from Pacific Islanders within the New Zealand context. Thus, this study of a Tongan band in Auckland attempts to break some new ground in terms of community music research but, at the same time, also makes a modest attempt to attain some more general insights regarding contemporary Tongan music.

Although the traditional music of Tonga has been studied by ethnomusicologists, Tongan brass bands have received minimal attention, a fact that is surprising considering their prominent role in religious and political rituals. Renowned ethnomusicologist Richard Moyle has thoroughly studied Tongan traditional music, and written prolifically about it, but European-derived genres such as brass bands have mostly fallen outside the scope of his primary research interests (Moyle 1987). Mervyn McLean’s book Weavers of Song: Polynesian Music and Dance provides a few pages on Tongan brass bands, noting their importance within the monarchy (McLean 1999). Tongan bands are also briefly mentioned in the ‘Australia and the Pacific Islands’ volume of the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music (Kaepppler and Love 1998). Updated information regarding most ongoing research studies in Tonga may be obtained from the Tonga Research Association, currently based in Australia.8

Probably the most useful information regarding Tongan brass bands may be gleaned from two publications, neither of which is easily acquired in the Northern hemisphere. The first of these is a book published in Tonga by Ad Linkels that covers a broad spectrum of themes, including Tongan traditional arts, culture and politics (Linkels 1992). The second useful resource is the first six pages of text in a book chapter by anthropologist Adrienne Kaepppler (1998), who rivals Moyle as a leading scholarly expert on Tongan traditional music. Graduate student researchers are also making particularly important contributions in this area. A doctoral student affiliated with the University of Hawaii is currently writing a dissertation...
on brass bands in Tonga, according to University of Hawaii Professor Jane Moulin, and an unpublished Master’s thesis has also examined aspects of the brass band tradition in Tonga (Aldred 1997).

What makes the present study unique is that it is based on fieldwork with a specific Tongan youth band in New Zealand, and its findings are considered within the conceptual framework of ‘community music’ studies. Comparison of previous (and future) publications with findings from the present study may also enable some tentative conclusions to be drawn regarding differences between brass bands among the diaspora community in New Zealand versus those back home in Tonga. The findings may also provide useful insights for those involved in community music in other settings who may be grappling with how best to support young fusion genres and migrant traditions.

The Auckland Tongan Youth Brass

Overview
The Auckland Tongan Youth Brass (ATYB) emerged in the late 1990s, and was officially established as a community organization in 2000. It has around 20 members, all of whom are of Tongan ethnicity, living mostly in the Panmure area of East Auckland, although a few live across town in Otara and Mangere. According to the bandleader, it is one of seven Tongan bands in the greater Auckland area, the only one not directly affiliated with a specific Tongan church. The bandleader describes ATYB as ‘the first Tongan youth brass band raised in New Zealand. The other ones were for adults. With this group, some began in primary school, some in intermediate, ten years old and up. One kid started at eight years old.’ Its performances, he explains, consist of ‘funerals, birthdays, Christmas carols, Christmas parades, community events, different occasions like shopping malls, factory parties and to open a new business.’

The text box below consists of a direct quotation from the band’s promotional materials that indicates how the ensemble describes itself to outsiders:

Auckland Tongan Youth Brass is a non-profit group of young boys and girls, young women and men between the ages of 8 to 20 years old. The group was originally founded as the East Auckland Brass on 12 January 2000.

Auckland Tongan Youth Brass has the following aims:

• To promote cultural maintenance
• To foster positive youth programs aimed at combating and avoiding young people from getting into gang-related activities
• Initiate some positive attitudes into these youths by running brass evening practices, po ako or home work evenings for its members
• To nurture a closer relationship between these children and their families, the church, their schools and their communities
• Encourage participation in community activities
• And to encourage involvement in other charitable activities

The goals of the group are:

• To participate in charitable activities around the Auckland area
• To participate in community activities such as Santa Parades
• To participate in school activities
Many interesting details may be gleaned from the above description that may appear rather unusual from an international perspective: (1) Tongan cultural maintenance is an explicit objective of this brass band; (2) the band is presented as an alternative to participation in youth gangs; (3) tutoring of homework – explained in Tongan terminology – is mentioned as one of band’s aims; and (4) both church and school activities are mentioned.

Consistent with the ‘Ensemble Ethos Model’ for conceptualization of music ensemble subcultures (Hebert 2005; Hebert, forthcoming), this study explored the nature of relationships between the ATYB bandleader and the aspiring musicians in the ensemble, as well as between musician tutors and tutees, and finally, the role of the ensemble within its institutional and community contexts. Based upon this backdrop of investigating such broader features, the following sections will focus the narrative on a description of the band’s repertoire and rehearsal strategies, instrumentation and uniforms, notational practices and institutional context.

Repertoire and rehearsal strategies
The Auckland Tongan Youth Brass (ATYB) rehearses each Saturday in a community hall in East Auckland within a large rugby field that is maintained by the city department of parks and recreation. On warm days, the sound of their music can be heard through the hall’s open doors and windows, and far across the field, inspiring some park visitors and rugby fans to stop by and briefly observe their rehearsals. Upon first attending one of the band’s rehearsals on 25 February 2006, I was struck by the sheer breadth and diversity of their repertoire, ranging from complex arrangements of traditional Tongan songs, marches, hymns and classical anthems to international hit songs such as ‘Time to Say Goodbye’ (popularized by Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli) and even an amusing version of ‘Touch Me Baby One More Time’ (popularized by American pop idol Britney Spears). Nine band members were present at this rehearsal, ranging from approximately 15 to 25 years of age, a bit older than I had expected. This included two euphonium players (one of whom led the ensemble), one tubist, three cornetists and three tenor horn players. The ensemble leader, its assistant director, was a young man with excellent tone and technique on the euphonium, and who I later learned did much of the arranging for the ensemble and studied music at the local university. All three cornet players were women, as was the other euphonium player. Most had a high level of performance skills, although the youngest boys on tenor horns occasionally struggled with their parts.

Rehearsal strategies of ATYB were rather unlike most wind bands and brass bands I have observed in other settings, more closely resembling approaches commonly encountered in the Afro-American hybrid tradition of jazz. The band rehearses for a few hours in the late morning on Saturdays, followed by a break for lunch and then a further rehearsal in the afternoon. The bandleader, a middle-aged man, essentially serves in a managerial role but conducts during actual performances, while a young man in his twenties (whom I will refer to as its ‘assistant director’) leads much of the rehearsals. The assistant director conducts without a
baton, indicating the beat by snapping his fingers and stamping his foot
on the floor while playing along with the ensemble on his euphonium.
He often models his interpretation of various parts by singing them for
the other players and especially emphasizes accents, style and correct
notes and rhythms. All of his instruction is in the Tongan language,
although some of the questions from players consist of brief bits of
English mixed with Tongan. Sheet music manuscripts consisting of
European music notation are used for some international pieces, but tra-
ditional Tongan notation (which I shall describe later) is used for the
Tongan pieces.

This description of rehearsal strategies may strike some readers as
unusual, inspiring curiosity regarding where this kind of band comes
from and what historical influences serve as the basis for its tradition.
Brass bands have been associated with Tongan schools since 1885,
when they were first established at both the Tonga Government College
and Tupou College (McLean 1999: 446). The Tongan band style devel-
oped across the next century of contact with Europeans, but especially
thrived under the 40-year reign of King Taufa‘ahau Tupou IV (1966–2006),
who indicated a strong preference for brass bands in his formal cere-
monies. This tradition was brought to New Zealand in recent years
along with Tongan migrants, where it coexists alongside New Zealand’s
own firmly established brass band tradition (Bythell 2000; Newsome
1988). Ironically, it is possible that some of the original influences for
Tongan brass bands may be traceable to New Zealand. As Adrienne
Kaeppler observed, ‘During the mid-19th century, military and civilian
brass bands were highly popular in Britain and if not imported into
Tonga directly, may have come by way of New Zealand where brass
band competitions have been held since the 1880s (but were more asso-
ciated with expatriates than with Maoris)’ (Kaeppler 1998: 40). As dis-
cussed elsewhere, the native Maori of New Zealand developed a separate
brass band tradition that has also been maintained through the present
(Hebert, in press), but there is little evidence of interaction between
Maori and Tongan brass bands. The extent to which Tongan bands may
have interacted with Samoan, Hawaiian (Hennessey 2001), and other
Polynesian bands is a topic that calls for further research that is outside
the scope of this study.

While Tongan bands play some European music – such as Salvation
Army hymn tunes or military marches – they also have unique arrange-
ments based on local songs. Tongan bands perform marches and genres
called *anitemi* and *himi* – for the English terms ‘anthem’ and ‘hymn’ –
and arrangements of traditional Tongan songs such as the kava ritual
music described at the start of this article. As the ATYB bandleader put
it, ‘We still like our Tongan style, and we don’t want to lose out on our
style of music.’ He often hears Tongan brass band pieces that he likes on
the radio and then places an order to have them sent in the mail from
Tonga. Arrangers will typically send arrangements for free, but some-
times they require *mea ofa* (a donation). Some of the great composers
and arrangers in the Tongan brass band tradition include Koloa
Pakileata (a former bandmaster of Tupou College), Moses Toafa and
Malekamu Manu Jr.
Unlike brass fusion genres in most other parts of the world, improvisation plays a rather minimal role in these ensembles. According to the Auckland Tongan bandleader,

When they play in the band and have the experience of playing for say, three years, then they start to make up their own notes. At the church, they can’t. But when they play in the concert they can. The conductor says the key and the name of the tune, then everybody has to find their own note.

Within ATYB, the assistant bandleader and one of the most advanced cornetists tend to improvise sections of some pieces, while other players tend to stick almost entirely to playing the written parts.

**Instrumentation and uniforms**

Instrumentation is one important component of instrumental ensemble traditions that provides important insights into broader issues, including the approach to leadership within the ensemble context. As mentioned earlier, the assistant director of ATYB plays the euphonium. In these kinds of ensembles, the euphonium typically plays important melody lines, consistent with the tradition of Tongan church hymns. Many traditional Tongan songs make use of four parts or voices: *fasi* (falsetto/soprano), *kanokano* (alto), *tenoa* (tenor) and *laulalo* (bass). The most important among these are the *fasi* and *laulalo*, the latter of which is often considered to be at the ‘heart’ of the ensemble. In a Tongan brass context, the euphonium will sometimes play the *laulalo* part (typically doubled an octave lower in a somewhat simplified version on tuba), but will sometimes switch to the *fasi* part. Tenor horns usually cover the middle-range parts, such as *tenoa*.

Kaeppler proposed a thought-provoking interpretation regarding this choice of instrumentation in Tongan brass bands:

Influenced, I believe, by the mellow sound of a nose flute, their brass bands did not include mouth flutes, piccolos, or French horns, which were included in other Pacific brass bands. Instead, Tongans emphasized tubas, euphoniums, and baritones that echoed the importance of the laulalo or bass part in Tongan choral music.

(Kaeppler 1998: 42)

While Kaeppler’s comment regarding the nose flute seems speculative, her point about the overall aesthetic sensibility of this music, and the role of the nose flute within Tongan music generally, is well taken.

Many Tongan brass band pieces also feature a brief section in the middle where the players loudly sing their parts while only a few musicians (often the tuba player) continue playing their instruments. Compared with other global brass band traditions, the prominent role of singing in these ensembles seems unusual. I asked the ATYB bandleader why they play brass instruments that are originally from Europe instead of their own Tongan instruments. He explained this as follows:

Tongan people are a people who love music, it doesn’t matter what music, but they love music, that’s their style, that’s their life. The brass instruments
come from overseas, but remember before in Tonga they had their flute and drum. When glass bottles (for wine) first came to the island they used them for an instrument. They called it a kofe and the put a hole on both ends and used it to play music. It sounds funny, but that’s how they make their instruments. Bamboo too: between the joints it is closed, and they make a hole in the side and use their nose to play, the sound comes out, like a flute. They used that flute and they used, you know, oil drums, they cut those in half and opened the other end, and got some cow skins, dried it up and tied on both ends and used it for their drum. They sang with it and that was very, very nice. That’s the old days.

(Interview with ATYB Bandleader, 15 April 2006)
Clothing, hairstyle and accessories are also fundamentally important markers of cultural identity, particularly among the youth of any nation. In its rehearsals, the Tongan band members dressed in very casual clothing. All members, including girls, wore T-shirts and pants of varying lengths. Their T-shirts often featured island designs with waves, surfers, floral prints and even the phrase ‘Tongan Power’. Almost all band members wore sandals or went barefoot, although a few wore light athletic shoes. Typically about one-third of the band members wore sunglasses and about the same ratio wore baseball-style caps throughout the rehearsal. The girls had long hair and wore almost no jewellery or makeup. The hairstyle of boys ranged widely from military-style crew cuts to shoulder-length, and all were fairly clean-shaven with no noticeable body piercings or tattoos.

While rehearsal settings are rather casual, performances are occasions for formal clothing. The band makes use of at least four different kinds of uniform for different performance occasions, entailing a unique fusion of European marching band uniforms with traditional Polynesian attire: floral shirts for ‘island concerts’, black shirts with traditional woven skirts for women during funerals, and then two kinds of formal wear with tuxedoes: red bow-ties for one and red neck-ties for the other, complete with a military-style jacket and lavalava kilts (see Figures 1 and 2).

**Notational practices**

The use of notation provides a particularly interesting example of how musicians mentor each other and adapt to the requirements of a tradition. One of the more interesting features of transmission in Polynesian
brass bands is the use of unique forms of notation for learning song repertoire. The notation system is essentially a form of movable-do solfege, encoded in Tongan numbers: ‘Do, fa, ni, oh, tu, va, hi, do.’ However, these are not the numbers that readers would probably expect. They are in English, ‘three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and three.’

Why no one or two? As the ATYB assistant director explained to me, in the Tongan language the numbers ‘one’ and ‘two’ are problematic since they produce phrases that resemble profanity when spoken in combination with other numbers. The ATYB bandleader explained to me that this system was invented and popularized in the 1860s by Dr James Moulton, principal of Tupou College, which corroborates previous findings by Moyle (1987: 25).

The chart below explains the use of pitches in the Tongan notation system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western scale degree</th>
<th>Equivalent in key of ‘C’</th>
<th>Pitch name in Tongan</th>
<th>Translation of Tongan term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st (tonic)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Do’</td>
<td>Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>‘Fa’</td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>‘Ni’</td>
<td>(abbr. ‘nima’): Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>‘Oh’</td>
<td>(abbr. ‘ono’): Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>‘Tu’</td>
<td>(abbr. ‘fiti’): Seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>‘Va’</td>
<td>(abbr. ‘valu’): Eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>‘Hi’</td>
<td>(abbr. ‘hiva’): Nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th (octave)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Do’</td>
<td>Three</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Tongan system of music notation, the names used for pitches are particular Tongan numbers or abbreviated versions of numbers in the Tongan language. It is essentially the equivalent of a solfege system. A line struck through a number indicates that it is to be played as a sharp. In other words, in the key of C, a 4 with a line through it equates to an F#, while in the key of G, a 2 with a line through it becomes the equivalent of an A# or Bb.

It seems useful here to demonstrate this system in the context of a familiar song. Below is how the first four measures of the famous melody ‘Ode to Joy’ would look in traditional Tongan notation. The first phrase of the song begins on the third degree of whatever key is chosen (C is used for illustration here, clearly indicated in the upper left). The third degree is represented with a 5 in Tongan music, since the tonic is the number 3:

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C
|| 5 5 / 6 7 | 7 6 / 5 4 | 3 3 / 4 5 | 5: -4 / 4: - |
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The following are some of the most basic rules for rhythm and metre within this notational system:

- Vertical lines represent divisions between measures: |
- Double vertical lines represent the beginnings/endings of melodies: ||
• The mid-point of each measure is represented with a slash: /
• Colons and dashes mean that a note is held longer: :-
• The key of all Tongan notation is moveable, which means that if a C is written on the top left at the start of this notation, the melody for Ode to Joy will begin on an E, while if an F is written the melody will begin with an A, etc.

According to ATYB band members, this notational system is learned in the Tongan churches, both in New Zealand and Tonga, and is also taught in Tongan schools. The assistant director, who studies composition at the local university, has found the Tongan system to be more intuitive and efficient than European notation, and much easier to teach to students.

Institutional context
Liora Bresler writes of how improvisation often becomes a necessary component of qualitative research in music (Bresler, in press). While this research began with the understanding that ATYB is not a church-affiliated ensemble, the band’s schedule unexpectedly led me to visit various Tongan churches where I was able to observe the context of performances. Many performances take place in churches because these sites serve as Tongan cultural centres, the importance of which takes on far greater prominence in the diasporic context of New Zealand. The following field notes are from a performance of ATYB on 12 August 2006:

Today’s performance is at the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, in Favona, South Auckland. The church is a large, white wooden structure surrounded by a parking lot filled with cars. Inside are dozens of simple wooden pews and a congregation of about 700 people, all of whom appear to be of Tongan ethnicity. All men in the church are wearing neckties, and many also wear lavalavas (Polynesian kilts) and sandals. Most of the women have long hair that is tied back, dresses with floral patterns and many accessories, including multiple necklaces and bracelets mostly made of seashells. Many mothers have taken young children and babies who often cry throughout the service. A teenage girl beside me appears to be bored, and sends ‘text’ messages throughout most of the service on her mobile phone. A new pastor has just arrived from Tonga today to give his first sermon. The entire service is in Tongan language, as are the pamphlets and hymnals provided. The elderly pastor makes enormous gestures with his hands as he speaks passionately to his audience. His podium is surrounded by six bouquets of flowers; and Tongan flags and church symbols are posted on each end of the stage. No piano or organ can be found in the church, but its pews are filled with at least six different choirs, each with its own colourful uniform. Conductors – all of whom are men – direct their choirs with long batons, briefly pausing between pieces to provide a pitch with a pitch pipe. The choirs sing in harmony at full volume, reading their parts from traditional Tongan notation. The brass band has come to accompany one of these choirs whose membership includes friends and family of the band members.

Consideration of this kind of religious context is critical when examining the role of music in any community (see Figures 3 and 4). As Cox has
observed, we must ‘discern the links for musical learners and musical participants between religious and musical experience, both involving a combination of intellectual and emotional engagement, hard to translate into words’ (Cox 2007: 72). While the ATYB bandleader describes his band as ‘not officially affiliated with a church’, many of its performances are in churches, accompanying choirs on Tongan hymns, evidently serving a religious function. This raises the question of whether this ensemble should even be considered ‘community music’ rather than church music, an issue that requires thorough consideration.

Discussion

The Auckland Tongan band as community music

Community music (CM) is a rapidly developing field of study that appears to still be grappling to fully define itself and delineate its scope. In a recent examination of the field, Koopman (2007) notes this issue, but identifies agreement among scholars regarding three main characteristics of community music: ‘collaborative music-making, community development and personal growth’ (Koopman 2007: 153).

In the inaugural issue of *International Journal of Community Music*, Kari Veblen (2008) discusses various definitions of the field and
identifies five themes that are often associated with CM ensembles and programmes:

1. The kinds of music and music-making involved
2. The intentions of the leaders or participants
3. The characteristics of the participants
4. The interactions among teaching/learning aims, knowledge and strategies
5. Interplays between informal and formal social/educational/cultural contexts

How does the case of the Auckland Tongan Youth Brass (ATYB) look in terms of Veblen’s description?

1. Kinds of music and music-making involved
The performance schedule of ATYB provides live brass band music for Tongan weddings, funerals, parades and various cultural events in the Auckland area. This clearly fits other CM cases, in which the music is socially contextualized as ‘part of cultural and arts events, linked with celebrations, ceremonies, rituals, play, education, social uplift or life passages’ (Veblen 2008).
2. Intentions of the leaders or participants
According to Veblen (2008), one objective often seen in CM programmes is to ‘nurture both individual and collective identity’. Strengthening of Tongan identification is one outcome of the use of the Tongan language in all ATYB rehearsals, along with the use of traditional songs from the homeland, uniforms based on Tongan patterns and performances in Tongan ritual contexts. Reinforcement of cultural identity is clearly among the ensemble’s primary objectives.

3. Characteristics of the participants
Veblen (2008) notes that some CM programmes ‘exist to bring music to “disadvantaged” or “marginalized” people; others aim to comfort immigrants as they enter a new, “host” culture’. Indeed, ATYB certainly appears to embody these characteristics as well, serving an economically disadvantaged cultural group that has emigrated to a more financially prosperous nation. Within its promotional materials, the band explicitly describes itself as serving ‘at risk’ youth, and all of its members are from the local Pacific Islander community.

4. Interactions among teaching/learning aims, knowledge and strategies
Among many CM programmes, Veblen (2008) identifies a ‘fluidity of knowledge, expertise and roles, with individuals participating in various ways from observer, to participant, to creator, to leader’. This characteristic is also evident in ATYB, within the interactions between the ensemble’s director, assistant director and other student leaders. Although the ensemble director is ultimately responsible for the band’s schedule of activities, the assistant director plays an important role in arranging band music and conducting rehearsals, and the more advanced players on each instrument actively mentor their younger peers.

5. Interplays between informal and formal social/educational/cultural contexts
Veblen (2008) suggests that scholars in CM studies consider how various ‘musical cultures embody (mirror, reflect and shape) social cultures and vice-versa’. This final component of Veblen’s description seems less explicitly defined, but seems to encompass notions of identity, social structure and agency, or how participants in musical activities develop self-understanding while also contributing broadly to the reification and deconstruction of both standardized behavioural expectations and interpretations of experience. In other words, the process by which culture is constructed via musical participation calls for greater attention in CM studies, a point also advocated by various scholars who have suggested that the traditional emphases of musicology require rethinking (Clarke and Cook 2004; Clayton, Herbert and Middleton 2003). According to my reading, our task then is to examine the role of CM ensembles within a broader social context, an objective that will serve as the overarching theme for the remainder of this article.

Diasporic musical identity
Sociologist Peter J. Martin has observed that people ‘actively use music in the process of establishing and maintaining a distinct sense of self, an identity that, though constantly evolving, provides both psychological
security and a sense of belonging to a wider community’ (Martin 2005: 70). Martin’s point is well taken, and in the case of CM ensembles one must consider not only the evolution of individual identities, but also that of the ‘wider community’ as a definable entity, and even of the musical sound when situated in contexts that engender musical hybridity and transculturation. Defining a community on the basis of its musical practices can be a complicated matter when it comes to minority populations within modern industrialized nations. Indeed, ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino has noted that ‘diasporic formations are not objective entities but are constructed identity units, based on signs and discourses of similarity and unity’ (Turino 2004: 5). Among minority youth the implications of this construction are quite apparent, but even more so in cases of music students who are descendants of refugees, for example, or whose parents are from two different cultures. In diasporic contexts, the minority group’s efforts to maintain its heritage are often amplified out of concern for the fragility of cultural identity against homogenizing forces sustained from the majority population.

The concept of ‘intercultural music transmission’ has been introduced elsewhere (Hebert 2001) and is another factor that must be taken into account in such cases, as individual agency on the part of charismatic musical leaders typically contributes to identity within any musical diaspora. In the Tongan case, some individual bandleaders have reportedly returned to Tonga following musical studies at conservatories in Europe or North America with altered opinions of how Tongan bands should sound. Some then encourage their bands to play with a more smooth and refined sound, ‘according to Western standards of how brassband music should sound’; however, ‘Not everybody is happy with this as it is not considered to be Tongan style’ (Linkels 1992: 98). Such approaches may conflict with the traditional Tongan brass band style, which is relatively rugged and consistently loud, even ‘with each member playing as if his life depended on it’ (Linkels 1992: 98).

But this begs the question of whether there can be a truly ‘Tongan’ music if it is continuously evolving and fusing with European influences both ‘back home’ and within the diasporic context of New Zealand. What implications does this situation have for the notion of musical authenticity, and for music instruction in particular, or does that issue no longer matter for musicians, scholars and educators?

Stephen Davies has noted that ‘more interest was shown by the close of the twentieth century by ethnomusicologists in hybrid and acculturated musical types. Nevertheless, their tendency to abandon all talk of authenticity is deeply misguided’ (Davies 2001: 293). Indeed, in the case of any fully developed tradition, the judgments of local cultural authorities will tend to be based on precise characteristics that are emblematic of how authenticity is perceived, even if initially incomprehensible to the outsider. To the insider, Tongan brass bands are certainly Tongan music. The late king was ‘a great fan of brassbands and stimulate[d] the use of them, especially in churches’ (Linkels 1992: 98). This is partly due to the fact that the king was himself an ordained minister who recognized the fundamentally important role of music within churches. As the ATYB bandleader explained, ‘We still keep our Tongan style of music separate from the European style
Richard Moyle has acknowledged that ‘the strength of the Tongan musical heritage is such that foreign styles have not obliterated existing characteristics: rather, individual European elements have been incorporated to produce a distinctive “Tongan” sound which retains links with the past while serving present ends’ (Moyle 1987: 239). Perhaps, in time, Tongan brass bands may even come to be regarded as the most Tongan of Tongan musics, just as gagaku court music (originally imported to Japan from China and Korea) is often considered to represent the heart of Japanese musical tradition (Wade 2005). While Tongan bands clearly represent a fusion tradition that on the surface may appear more European than Polynesian in origin, they have developed deep metaphorical roots within Tongan social life in which their sounds resonate with profound meanings.

Socio-economic context
According to the ATYB bandleader, various philanthropic organizations and community trusts provide support for the ensemble’s expenses, including musical instruments, uniforms and transportation. In fact, a co-authored grant application was the means by which I was able to obtain access to the band for the purpose of this study. Various organizations provide support to ATYB in recognition that it effectively serves a population that is typically under-funded. Here it is important to consider the role of socio-economic status for this ensemble.

Unlike many diasporic communities, Tongans voluntarily migrate to Auckland for work opportunities, since it is the closest major city. Compared with other developed nations, New Zealand is relatively hospitable toward migrants in terms of public health care, social services and education, and many Pacific Islanders find the opportunities afforded them as residents of Auckland are far greater than back home. Still, some face various difficulties, including prejudice. In Anthropological Quarterly, Niko Besnier describes the speech style of a successful Tongan merchant as follows: ‘She’ ‘distances herself from Tongan-accented English […] and all that it represents in the New Zealand context, including the stigma of being an underclass “Islander”’ (Besnier 2004: 32). It is useful to note that the per capita Gross Domestic Product of Tonga is $2,200 (or about 5 per cent that of the United States), less than the typical wages in Ghana, Bolivia or Sri Lanka, for comparison.9

As the ATYB bandleader explained, ‘The economy in Tonga is slow because parents’ first priority is their kids. If a kid gets sick the parent takes time off work. Money comes second, kids come first. You don’t need a lot of money in Tonga.’ However, other Tongans take a less optimistic view regarding the disparity of wealth in Tonga, and have pressed for democratic reforms, and in some cases even violently protested in recent years. In July 2006, anti-monarchist Tongan Alani Taione allegedly set fire to the Tongan king’s Auckland residence in protest. I had visited this home a few months earlier as part of my fieldwork with the band during a welcome ceremony for the king, so this event came as quite a shock. It is quite clear from the context of its performance, that in New Zealand, Tongan band music is used not only to represent Tongan culture generally, but may also indicate de facto support for the monarchy and its religious affiliations.

Religious organizations also play an important role in terms of cultural maintenance among socially disadvantaged migrant communities. Particularly for new migrants, the social support network provided by a church can be of tremendous importance, especially when the church doubles as a cultural centre in which one may speak one’s mother tongue and enjoy familiar cultural practices, cuisine and various other traditions. By joining together in religious communities, migrants are able to collaboratively face difficult financial obstacles, and eventually forge new opportunities for themselves and their children in a new land. Music can be an important means of maintaining culture in spite of difficult circumstances.

Conclusions and implications for community music workers

The findings from this study suggest that community ensembles rooted in musical hybridity may generate innovative models of music learning and play a unique role in cultural preservation. What implications does this have for the fields of community music and music education? In many parts of the world, music educators are increasingly seeking effective ways of accommodating cultural diversity in their music lessons (Campbell et al. 2005). However, as multicultural music education is popularized, there is increasing concern for ‘authenticity’ in music instruction (Reimer 2002). Despite great interest in promoting established musical traditions from various parts of the world, many music teachers are reluctant to embrace westernized hybrid genres that have a relatively short history for fear that in doing so they may dilute authentic traditions. Such concerns are admirable and there is certainly a need for greater introspection regarding ethical issues within our field. However, it may be that an extremist approach to musical authenticity is nearly as problematic as complete ignorance regarding the issue. Contact between musical cultures, even if it leads to development of a fusion genre, may not necessarily be harmful toward existing traditions. To the contrary, increased cross-cultural contact through music may lead to not only a greater appreciation for other cultures, but a renewed sense of the global value of local traditions. Indeed, the efficacy of intercultural exchange among music ensembles from diverse communities has already been demonstrated in New Zealand (Phoasavadi and Hebert 2006), as has the cultural value of recent musical fusions (Taiepa 2006).

In its ‘natural’ community context, the ATYB performs a diverse range of musical styles, but perhaps if forced into an educational setting such bands would be expected to limit themselves to music that seems most explicitly ‘Tongan’ in origin. Ironically, such endorsement of ‘authenticity’ might actually produce outcomes that are more unnatural than natural. Perhaps the focus of such educational concerns should shift to the natural relationship between the kind of music played and the natural context of its performance. Such approaches have long been advocated by music scholars such as Charles Keil and Reebee Garofalo in their multicultural community brass band endeavours. Clearly, a band such as Auckland Tongan Youth Brass may perform ‘Touch Me Baby One More Time’ at a parade or picnic, but it never would do so for a Tongan funeral. Such is the true state of genuine musical authenticity, in its natural community music context. Music educators may still have much to learn from careful study of community music ensembles, and so much more remains to be done in order to offer...
such ensembles the support they deserve. Community music ensembles are also likely to provide many important insights into how school music education may be made more culturally relevant in the future.

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The musical culture of an ‘Inuk’ teenager

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Abstract
This article uses music as a point of entry into the understanding of Inuit culture. I demonstrate how the analysis of the song repertoire of an Inuit teenager reveals some functions and meanings that her song choices have for her in the particular Inuit culture of Arviat, Nunavut. I present four informally learned songs from my informant Gara Mamgark and explore issues about her musical aesthetics and values in relation to her physical and social environment.

I sat with Gara Mamgark (Figure 1) and her family in their living room after playing bingo on Saturday evening, 18 February 2006. Radio bingo with the Mamgark family (Figure 2) on Saturday evenings had become a ritual we all enjoyed not only because we had the chance to win the $2,500 jackpot but because after the game we all knew there would be musical entertainment and I especially looked forward to this part of the evening every week. Sitting to my left on the navy sofa was Gara and her mother, Rosie; sitting across from us on the matching loveseat was Gara’s father Simeonie and her cousin Celina who was carrying her newborn sleeping baby in the hood of her amoutik.1

Gara’s two little naked brothers, Sergei and Lou were playing floor hockey with an old rolled up sock while their father was watching a hockey game on his 52-inch TV screen. When the hockey game was over, Simeonie made a move to the computer desk to play poker on the Internet and said that he would like to hear some music while he played cards. So Rosie got the keyboard from the room, Gara retrieved the guitar from her bedroom and we played and sang for hours. The small children sat on the floor of the living room playing with their toys while Gara and her mother sang their favourite songs and answered my many questions. At midnight I went home feeling intimately connected with Gara and her family and privileged to be a welcome part of their family’s music-making experience.

William R. Bascom (1954) argues that there are four functions of folklore: amusement/entertainment, validation of culture, education and maintaining conformity. Allan Merriam (1964) suggests that there are four additional functions: economic, magico-religious, emotional expression and physical response. In this article, music, one aspect of folklore, is used as a point of entry into the understanding of Inuit culture. I demonstrate how the analysis of the song repertoire of an Inuit teenager reveals some functions and meanings that her song choices have for her in the particular Inuit culture of Arviat, Nunavut. I will present three informally learned songs from my informant Gara Mamgark and explore issues about her musical aesthetics and values in relation to her physical and social environment.

Keywords
Inuit youth
Arctic
Nunavut
aboriginal
traditional indigenous
knowledge
music

1. Amoutiks are women’s coats modelled after traditional Inuit parkas. The woman’s traditional caribou-skin parka differed from the man’s in certain design elements, reflecting her maternal role in Inuit society. Infants were carried for the first two to three years of their lives in the roomy back pouch. The large hood allowed air to circulate to the child and the wide shoulders permitted it to be moved to the front for breast feeding without leaving the parka’s warmth and protection. Amoutiks are also worn by Inuit women in public musical performances as a means of promoting traditional Inuit culture and pride.
Figure 1: Gara and Lou Mamgark.

2. The Arviat District Education Authority is an elected committee of seven community members that deals with the education of all students within the boundaries of the hamlet of Arviat. The committee is mainly concerned with the delivery of the Inuit traditional knowledge curriculum.

3. Písíit are traditional Inuit a-ya-ya songs and drum dancing. These were historically passed on orally, and played a part in almost every gathering, whether it was a celebration of birth, a marriage, the changing of the seasons, a successful hunt, a first kill, a greeting for visitors, or to settle a dispute.

Drawing on Judith Vander’s book (1996) *Songprints*, which argues that the musical experience of five Wind River Shoshone women provides historical perspective on many aspects of twentieth-century Wind River Shoshone life, I focus on the particularity of one teenager’s musical experiences for the purposes of exploring the specific ideas she has about her songs: issues of meaning, musical process and musical perception. Discussion of individual, cultural and historical contexts, along with genre analyses, help shed light on the songs and provide insight into twenty-first-century Inuit life.

The idea for this article stems from the extraordinary opportunity from 2001 to 2004 to gather material and information about Inuit music among the Caribou Inuit of Arviat, Nunavut. During my time as music teacher at Qitiqliq High School in Arviat, mandated by the Arviat District Education Authority, I was gathering information about Inuit traditional music for the purposes of teaching. Although most of my interviews were with elders who drum dance and sing traditional Inuit Písíit, I was curious to learn what the youth of Arviat were singing. I knew from readings that youth no longer sang traditional drum dance songs (Pelinski 1981) and I knew from the Arviat District Education Authority about the concern for the loss of traditional songs among young people. Thus, a seed was planted. If young Inuit were not singing traditional songs, what sort of involvement did Inuit youth have in music-making in the community of Arviat? Drawing on Abu-Lughod’s theory (1993) of ‘writing against culture’, which argues that stressing particular life experiences works against making
generalizations about communities, I focus on the particularity of one teenager’s musical experiences for the purposes of exploring her specific musical choices and values. By building a picture of her musical aesthetics and repertoire choices from discussions, recollections and musical actions, I make tangible some of the functions and meanings that her song choices have for her; more specifically I compose short narratives of her stories of three musical selections illuminating themes about music transmission and function, relationships with other Inuit, and concerns of Inuit youth.

Arviat (Figure 3) is an Inuit community located in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut on the south-western part of the Hudson Bay. The 2,500 Caribou Inuit living there are an Inuktitut-speaking group who are negotiating social diversity within the community in response to massive sociocultural changes since the federal government enforced relocation there in 1958. These changes include the loss of their semi-nomadic lifestyle, the enhanced role of colonial institutions in their lives and political reorganization including the establishment of Nunavut as Canada’s newest territory in 1999. While the three groups of Inuit still protect customs and practices deeply rooted in their respective cultures, they struggle with concerns about cultural erosion and practical issues related to drug abuse, youth support, employment, education and community cohesion. Today, Inuit children speak English at school, spend limited time on the land, consume TV shows and movies, and create popular music. It is from this context that I chose 19-year-old Gara Mamgark as my informant for this research article. My main goal will be to stress the various functions and meanings her song repertoire choices have for her in this particular Inuit culture of Arviat, Nunavut.

My approach to writing this article closely parallels and reflects my method of conducting research. On social occasions with Gara and her family, whether the purpose was for an outing on the land, dinner, bingo or for coffee, musical entertainment was usually the end product. The performance of songs then became a springboard for a great variety of questions: Why did you choose this song? How did you learn it? Where? Why do you like it? What makes it a good song? My questions ranged from the particularities of a song and its performance to discussions of genre and to broader questions about the particular occasion for which the song is performed. Although I am the sole author of this article, it has been a collaborative effort. As much as possible I allow Gara to speak for herself with the hope of preserving her distinct voice.
**Gara’s song repertoire**

When asked to choose three of her favourite songs to perform, Gara chose ‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’, ‘Kajusita’ and traditional Inuit throat singing.

‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’ (‘God walk with me’) is what Gara calls a gospel song: a song that she defines as being learned and sung at
church for the purpose of praising God. She learned this song at the Roman Catholic church in Arviat where she and her family attend Mass every Sunday. Gara is also a member of the youth group at the Mikilauq Centre, a Catholic group that provides social activities, such as singing and playing guitars, where she and her friends sing ‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’ often because it is one of the youth group’s favourite gospel songs and (in Gara’s words) ‘it is easy to play on the guitar; only three chords G, C and D’.

I found the lyrics to this song in a Catholic songbook entitled Naalagak Nirtuqlavut published by the Churchill-Hudson Bay Diocese. Song number 361 is absent of any musical notation or any indication of tune and I became curious to find out how Gara and her friends came to know the melody. When asked where she learned the song, Gara stated bluntly, as if my question was a silly one, ‘At church!’ She does not know who at the church taught it to her because, as she stated as a matter of factly, ‘Everyone knows this song.’

Gara learned ‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’ at her church through the process of oral transmission. She learned it by hearing it sung many times by the community around her; it is one of the congregation’s favourite hymns and is sung regularly during Mass and at the youth group. She cannot remember when exactly she came to know the song (because in her words) she has ‘always known it’.

Gara has publicly performed ‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’ several times in the community of Arviat. The first performance was during the Thanksgiving Musical in 2004 where she was accompanied by the Qitiqliq High School Choir, the school band (electronic piano, twelve acoustic guitars and two electric acoustic guitars) and another soloist, Oopik Aglukark. When asked how it made her feel to sing this particular song before a large audience she replied,

I love to sing. You don’t sing for the audience, or for yourself, or for anyone else; you sing for God. He is the one who gives you the voice and the songs. We need to praise him. I love to sing for God at church or anywhere. I love to share his love with Inuit or anybody at any time.

The second time she sang ‘Guti Pisuqatigilaunga’ was for her neighbour’s wedding at the Catholic church in Arviat. This time she was accompanied by organ, acoustic guitar, drums and electric bass. I asked her if she felt special or nervous singing by herself in front of the people at the church and she said, ‘I didn’t even know they were there. I closed my eyes and sang to God. While I was singing I was praying that they would have a good marriage and that God would take care of them and their kids.’

‘Kajusita’, a ballad sung by the Inuit singing duo Tudjaat, is Gara’s favourite song to listen to and to sing while she accompanies herself on the guitar. She says, ‘It’s a very sad story, very painful thing for my ancestors. I’m sorry they had to go through that.’ She continues, ‘With this song I want to take this pain and change it to strength and walk forward.’

Gara learned about High Arctic exiles in her Northern Studies course in Grade 10. She recollects that her social studies teacher at the time,
Charlene Sutton, used ‘Kajusita’ as a springboard for discussion in her class about the federal government’s relocation plan and Gara immediately added the song to her large repertoire because she identified with the pain of the High Arctic exiles and genuinely wished for that pain to go away. I asked Gara to share her knowledge of the relocation programme that is depicted in the song and she did so with surprising clarity and precision for a teenager. She states,

In 1953 fifty Inuit were moved 2,000 kilometres on icebreakers, those big ships, from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay. It was awful what they did to those people. The families were split up. They had no clothes. They had no food. They didn’t know where the caribou were and they didn’t know the land. The Inuit wanted to go home but the government wouldn’t let them. A lot of Inuit died. One of the girls in Tudjaat has a grandmother that survived. That is why she wrote the song. It is about her grandmother.

Gara states that Tudjaat are ‘real Inuit who are sharing Inuit traditions with others’. She says that the duo has influenced her musically ‘because they use things like Inuit throat singing and real stories in their music’ and emotionally because ‘they sing about their own experiences of what it’s like to be Inuit’. She believes ‘Kajusita’ is an important song for Inuit and for people everywhere because ‘it teaches you that bad things can happen, but you must learn to forgive and just get on with your life. The words of the song are so important. They tell you that you must go on in life no matter what happens’ and she quotes the final verse to emphasize her argument, ‘What’s done is done, what’s gone is gone; We must put the past behind; And set a course for better times; When freedom’s lost nobody ever wins; I can’t wait until my ship comes in.’

Throat Singing: Gara began learning to throat sing six years ago at a drumming circle programme organized by the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. She said that two young women, Walla Kuksuk and Jackie Evaluajuaq were her first teachers. There were elders involved in this programme: they taught the ‘A-ya-ya songs’ and the drum dancing and some of the throat singing. This initiation to throat singing invoked a lot of interest in this style of singing and Gara practised every day, (she says) ‘I used to practise with my little sisters at home when I was babysitting them. I also tried throat singing with my friends Joy and Frieda Nibgoarsi. We would try it when we were getting ready to go to the teen dances.’ Later Gara received semi-formal training in throat singing from Karen Panigoniak. Karen was hired by the community choir, Arviat Imingtingit (Arviat Singers) to teach throat singing to all the female members of the choir. The group met once a week for two years and this is where Gara fine-tuned her throat-singing technique. Gara states, ‘You start with certain little sounds, simple sounds, to get your throat to start exercising. And you just keep doing that for a few years until you’re ready to make new and more different sounds.’ She continues, ‘At first when I did it, I thought it’s too hard, it sounds funny, I’m going to be embarrassed.’
Gara learned the history of the throat-singing tradition from her cultural classes with elders at Qitiqliq High School. She states:

Years ago, when Inuit lived on the land, they did not have things like televisions, radios or even houses. In the summer, Inuit used to live in caribou skin tents. They lived in snow houses called igloos during the long, cold winters. Because the Inuit followed the caribou and fish they had to move around a lot. This made it hard for them to have large musical instruments.

Inuit created a musical instrument they could carry with them everywhere – vocal cords. The only thing they needed to play this instrument was their bodies. The human voice was the main musical instrument of the Inuit so they had many ways of singing. One of the most unique ways was throat singing. Inuit women throat sing by breathing in rhythms. They can make sounds like the wind, birds, animal calls and things like that.

Inuit women throat sing by breathing in rhythms. They breathe through their mouths and tighten their throat muscles. It is difficult to learn how to throat sing. It depends on your throat and how well you listen to the elders. Young Inuit women learn how to throat sing by watching and listening to elders sing. They also must spend time practising with elders.

Gara mentioned several times that she particularly enjoyed the social aspect of throat singing with female members of Arviat Imngitingit. It was a time of female bonding and camaraderie with a little teasing from the boys. In her words,

There were no boys. Only girls are allowed to throat sing so we didn’t let the boys come. I think that they were jealous that we had this little group all to ourselves. So our music teacher set up a drum-dancing group with Silas Illungiayok, an Inuit elder, for the boys. After that, they didn’t seem jealous of us. But they would come to the music room on their break from drumming and try to throat sing with us. It was really funny. The best part was being in the room with twenty girls or so with one part sitting on one side and the other part on the other and hearing all those people throat sing at the same time. Wow! That’s how we learned, see, we would all throat sing together with Karen as our leader. I really loved that. Then I would go home and practise my new throat songs with my little sisters. They always looked forward to learning the new throat songs too.

Gara (Figure 4) has publicly throat sang at the Community Hall in Arviat, Qitiqliq High School in Arviat, St Mary’s Church in St John’s, the arena in Brandon and at the Conference Centre in Ottawa. She says that she feels ‘thrilled’ to throat sing for a large audience especially if the audience is ‘qablunaq’ (white or non-Inuit) and she says, ‘I love sharing my heritage and culture with others. I think that it is important to know where you come from and to be proud to be Inuit. I want everyone to know that I am Inuit and that I can throat sing.’

While Gara is not paid monetarily to throat sing at musical functions, her ability to throat sing well provides her with opportunities to travel nationally and internationally; opportunities that would be unavailable to
her if she were not an expert throat singer. For example, last year alone she went to Alaska, the Yukon, Newfoundland and New Mexico to promote Inuit culture through throat singing.

Merriam (1964) argues that one function of folklore is the economic function; some individuals perform, write, promote and/or create culture for money. Gara enjoys traveling and sharing her Inuit traditions with others. She practices daily so that when traveling opportunities arise, she will be ‘one of the lucky ones chosen to go, out of many who try-out’. It can be argued that these traveling opportunities represent Merriam’s economic function of folklore.

Bascom’s four functions of folklore (1954) and Merriam’s additional four (1964) were all present in the analysis of Gara Mamgark’s song repertoire.

1. **Amusement/entertainment function**: Gara makes music because she enjoys throat singing with her friends; she plays the guitar at the Mikilauq Centre because getting together with her friends on a Friday night to make music is a part of her social life in Arviat; Gara states that making music is ‘something to do when you are bored’.
2. **Education function**: Gara learned traditional Inuit throat singing from her elders. Inuit traditional knowledge is still being passed on orally.

Figure 4: Gara throat singing with Sheena Aulatjut at the Mark Kalluak Hall.
from one generation to the next. Gara also educates others by sharing Inuit culture – she sings contemporary and traditional Inuit songs publicly and feels ‘proud’ to share her heritage with others.

3. Maintaining conformity function: The fact that elders taught Gara to value Inuit music and then her initiative to pass on her knowledge of music to her younger siblings and to her audiences helps to maintain Inuit values.

4. Economic function: This function is evident in the form of travel – her singing ability, especially the ability to throat sing, provides Gara with opportunities to visit other parts of Canada and the world to promote Inuit culture.

5. Physical/emotional response function: Making music is therapy for herself and her listeners – Gara states that by singing the song ‘Kajusita’, she is ‘wishing away their [her elders] pain’; also singing boosts her pride and self-esteem – Gara feels good about herself when she sings and plays her guitar.


7. Validation of culture function: Music-making aids in the validation of Gara’s Inuit identity and culture. Gara chose all Inuit songs to represent her musical culture even though she knows many more.

Vander (1996) argues that the musical songs and experiences of five specific women provide insight on many aspects of twentieth-century Wind River Shoshone life. While Gara’s compact disc collection contains titles such as 50-Cent, Simple Plan and Avril Lavigne and she can sing a multitude of English songs, it is the Inuit repertoire she chooses to perform for me; it is the Inuit content that Gara values the most; it is the preservation and ‘promotion’ of Inuit culture that lies at the forefront of this Inuk teenager’s life in the twenty-first century. With her music, Gara wants to be ‘positive’ and ‘promote Inuit culture’. In Gara’s words, ‘I prefer to wear an amautik because it shows people that we are Inuit, not just through our music. It adds more to our music. Just to look at us, you can see we’re Inuit and our music just adds to that. They’re beautiful, too, what our ancestors wore!’ (Figure 5)

Gara’s passionate words address the power of music to promote and enhance the strength of identity. Rapid political and social change in Arviat since the turn of the twentieth century has been a catalyst for the assertion of Inuit identity. In this context, Gara’s exclusive choice of Inuit music can be considered a defence strategy; a means to protect and promote Inuit customs, traditions and language in a time of drastic change. Gara is an Inuit youth whose oral narratives and performance practices emphasize the manner in which the choice of Inuit repertoire for this case study is an important element in the maintenance and communication of Inuit identity, culture and pride. Gara seeks to assert her indigeneity to her qabluunak researcher whom, she recognizes, will share these choices with other qabluunak outside of Nunavut.

Gara’s desire to promote her Inuit culture needs to be appreciated in the historical context of colonialism and, more recently, Inuit land claims struggles. As early as the 1850s, Scottish and American whalers reached areas in the Kivalliq bringing American square dances and
Scottish reels to the Inuit throughout the region. In 1913–14, when trading posts were established at Baker Lake and the Kazan River, Inuit began participating in the fur trade and in cultural exchange with European traders. After the 1920s this exchange expanded to include Catholic and Anglican missionaries, government agents and Hudson’s Bay Company employees.

The Roman Catholic mission and the Anglican Church mission were established in Arviat (Eskimo Point) in 1924 and 1926 respectively. Missionaries from both denominations travelled to Inuit hunting camps.

Figure 5: Gara wearing her amoutik.
to educate children and adults. Classes were also taught in the community of Arviat when Inuit were there. Throughout the 1940s, Royal Canadian Mounted Police planes flew to Inuit camps surrounding Arviat to collect children to attend a residential school in Chesterfield Inlet. Unfortunately, the experience of being away from families and witnessing or enduring physical and sexual assault while attending this school left deep emotional scars. In 1959 the Community Federal Day School, offering an English curriculum from kindergarten to Grade 8, opened in Arviat. If students wanted to further their education they went to Sir John Franklin Territorial High School in Yellowknife and lived at Akaitcho Hall.

In Arviat today many institutions are organized in ‘the southern way’ and western influences are strong. Presently, with the exception of the newly incorporated Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit® schools remain to be modelled after Alberta schools: teachers speak English, curricula are written in English. Stores and municipal governments are largely managed by white people with western ideas. Due to this infiltration of western culture, the people of Arviat express the importance of identifying and promoting those significant objects and ideas that strengthen Inuit identity and ensure that traditional indigenous knowledge and language is passed on to future generations.

In the 1970s political leaders of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada entered discussions with the federal government of Canada about dividing the Northwest Territories into two separate territories. Discussions and plans continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1993 the Nunavut Tunngavik Corporation® was established to ensure implementation of the 1993 Nunavut Lands Claim Agreement in accordance with the terms of the Agreement. Finally, in 1999 Nunavut became a reality and Inuit were well under way in defining what it means to be Inuit in a place that belonged to them (Nunavut means ‘our land’ in Inuktitut). Thus recently, in contrast to the existing western-style institutions, Inuit institutions in Arviat have been organized in accordance with Inuit ideologies and perspective. Arviat’s superstructure is unlike most in Canada. The schools, municipal government and stores are all organized similar to southern Canadian institutions because they are managed by white people originating from the south of Canada but Inuit institutions, however, are designed from an Inuit perspective and promote Inuit traditional knowledge. For example, the Inuit Elders’ Society has an important voice in decision-making for the community, the Inuit Community Justice Committee makes legal decisions regarding first-time offenders of the law, and Arviat Pilirigatigit designs programmes that teach traditional cultural knowledge to youth. These institutions are organized and designed with Inuit beliefs and values at the forefront: traditional cultural knowledge, respect for elders and their teachings, vitality of youth, apprenticeship-style education and community sharing.

While Gara is too young to be a participant in residential schooling, its long-lasting effects are still present in the oral narratives she hears from elders today. As a result of her own schooling, her Inuktitut reading and writing skills are limited and her spoken vocabulary and grammar are inferior to her parents. She speaks largely English at the Co-op store

6. The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Curriculum Framework Document (2005) provides the philosophy and cultural components of an education system embedded in traditional Inuit knowledge. It puts into action the priorities and principles set out in the government’s mandate, Pinassagavut. It also makes the links to the Inuagiyiq curriculum and other key foundation documents for education in Nunavut such as Iluarmikulirinnguk, Inukjigaqitig: Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools, Inuagiyiq: Language of Instruction Report.

7. The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada represents Canada’s Inuit on matters of national concern. There are approximately 41,000 Inuit living in 53 communities. ITC is the national voice of the Inuit of Canada and addresses issues of vital importance to the preservation of Inuit identity, culture and way of life. One of the most important responsibilities of ITC is to protect Inuit rights and to ensure that Inuit are properly informed about issues and events that affect their lives, and that processes purporting to address Inuit interests are properly informed by Inuit knowledge, perspectives and vision.
where she is employed as a cashier. Born in 1987, Gara cannot recall the preliminary work of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada in the discussions concerning the creation of Nunavut, but she can remember talks about the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in the 1990s. Furthermore, she remembers the excitement and joy she felt on 1 April 1999 when Nunavut was created.

Arviat has undergone rapid change since the turn of the twentieth century; more importantly there has been considerable political and social change in the community during Gara’s own lifetime. In times of change, times of confrontation at the levels of politics and religion – times of extremely uneven economic development – cultural transformation and exchange arise. In response to the changes taking place, Gara has taken her repertoire choices and have made them a site central to the process of an Inuit reconstruction of postcolonial space. Her assertion to promote Inuit culture is her attempt to reclaim and reinscribe Inuit identity after colonial experiences and points to the importance of musical expression as an accessible tool of communication and identity construction.

References


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Questions arising from the views of some members of four amateur classical music organizations

Roger Palmer Whitireia Community Polytechnic

Abstract
This article describes some features and questions raised by my study of four amateur classical music groups – two choirs, an orchestra and an instrument-oriented organization – in Wellington, New Zealand. The study paid particular attention to the musicians, our discussions of their musical life, the values they ascribe to their music-making and their organizations. In the small body of scholarly literature regarding amateur musicians few studies have been concerned with the singers’ and instrumentalists’ perspectives. This exploratory study used qualitative methods, including focus groups, and found that the participants join music organizations primarily for the satisfaction of making music that they value. Concerts provide a raison d’être for the organizations and a motivating factor for their members to work to their highest attainable standards. The participants indicated that they generally regard the social significance of belonging to a music organization as less important than their music-making. Although the four organizations do not perform classical music exclusively, the study’s participants base their aesthetics and the negotiation of their relationships in their music organizations on the conventions of the classical music practices they learned initially in their youth.

Introduction
This article describes some features of a study that I carried out in Wellington, New Zealand in 2004 (Palmer 2006). As a leader of a society largely comprised of amateur musicians, I was interested in questions such as (1) what is the cultural significance our music-making; (2) how (if at all) did it contribute to classical music in Wellington; and (3) why did we choose classical music.1

How I could define amateur musicians became an important question in the course of my study. My observations and the views and stories I obtained from the amateur musicians led to questions about the importance of concert performances for the musicians and how their individual needs and desires are shaped (or compromised) by classical music organizations in which they sing or play.

My study was exploratory and qualitative, and influenced by postmodernism. I limited it to four amateur music organizations, including the one I lead, The Recorders and Early Music Union (REMU). My sources of data were the organizations’ documents and records, interviews with leaders, observations of rehearsals and concerts, and three focus groups comprised of 20 participants in each.

1. I use ‘classical music’ in this article, like colloquial usage, to very broadly refer to the grand tradition of Western art music in general. Although the term lacks precision, Tia DeNora (2000: 2) describes the grand tradition as having a trajectory beginning in medieval Europe, passing through Beethoven and other great composers and being maintained in various forms today.
of members of the four organizations. These focus groups discussed a wide range of experiences, feelings, opinions and facts arising from the question, ‘What did their orchestra, choir or music organization contribute to Wellington’s culture?’ This question stimulated a broad-ranging discussion.

In general, the four organizations orient their activities to concerts for public audiences. The concerts are performed by musicians who are not paid except for soloists taking major parts and the conductors who are very often also the musical directors of the organizations.²

Cantoris, a choir of approximately 25 singers, presents three annual concerts in central city venues and has a 30-year heritage of early music concerts, many accompanied by period instruments. However, this choir sings music from all parts of the choral repertoire. The Northern Chorale is a community choir, at least in its identification with a geographic part of the city.³ For much of its history it has annually presented one major concert, contributed to church services and given a concert of carols for a local festival that included other arts presentations and Christmas celebrations. The Capital Performing Arts Orchestra (CPA Orchestra) is part of the Capital Performing Arts Incorporated, a society that produces an evening of art and entertainment, once a month.⁴ The evening involves dinner, musical and other entertainments, and participatory ballroom-style dancing. The majority of the audience are retired people, and described by the Orchestra conductor as loyal to the CPA organization. The Orchestra has about 30 members (strings, woodwind and brass) and plays every second month at the CPA concert. About half of its repertoire is classical music. The remainder includes a wide variety of styles and pieces such as arrangements of popular music, and pieces from musicals and movies. The Recorders and Early Music Union (REMU) encourages its members to make music in recorder consorts or its Renaissance Band. Three times a year REMU provides opportunities for the consorts and Band to perform for small audiences (very largely other players). REMU also organizes practical workshops and an annual public concert featuring expert players.⁵

Qualitative study

Along with these ethnographic and other works, my study is influenced by aspects of postmodern discourse. I did not claim that it was objective or that points I make could be applied to a wide range of people or music activities. Kramer (1995) (among others) has criticized the modernist
intent 'to frame comprehensive systems of general truths' and modernists' dependence on the location of ideals of form and reason within the human subject conscious and certain of itself (8). An alternative offered by postmodernists is a view of reality as consisting of an 'infinity of heterogeneous finalities' and politics and epistemologies of knowledge that depend on their location in geographic and socio-political space (9). Postmodernism, then, places emphasis on lived experience, people's narratives and voices, and discourses that are taken as negotiating and constructing epistemologies, political and social relationships, organization and culture.

Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba (2005: 209) believe that: ‘Today voice can mean, especially in more participatory forms of research, not only having a real researcher – and a researcher’s voice – in the text, but also letting research participants speak for themselves’. In my study I attempt to represent the participants’ statements accurately but nonetheless recognize that I use their views to make statements, and to add weight to my statements about classical music practices.

Postmodernism often emphasizes the political nature of social life and Bohlman is one writer concerned with this aspect of music scholarship. In 1993 he challenged musicologists to think about the political implications of their work and presented his view that ‘essentializing music, the very attempt of depoliticize it, has become the most hegemonic form of politicising music’ (Bohlman 1993: 419). My study did not directly investigate the politics of classical music practices but included some consideration of the power, authority and decision-making processes I observed in the four organizations.

Who are the ‘amateur musicians’?
Some scholars have defined the term ‘amateur musician’ but after considering many of them I decided to use only a restrictive working definition that ensured that the focus group participants were unlikely to be considered by any observers to be professional musicians.6 I found that there were musicians who accepted the ‘amateur’ qualification for their work and that it is a term embedded in the social and political structures of classical music in Wellington.

Stebbins (1993: 23) defines ‘amateur’ as ‘macrosociologically as a member of a professional-amateur-public system of functionally interdependent relationships’. In his model, amateurs are similar to professionals in creating non-standard products, having a sense of identity with other practitioners and engaging with institutions (26). Stebbins offers a second definition of amateur in terms of five social-psychological attitudes: ‘confidence, perseverance, continuance commitment, preparedness and self-conception’ (23). Although he describes how the first four of these are significantly greater in professionals, he also states that a musician identifying him or herself as an amateur is the most reliable indicator of status. The socio-psychological definitions did not lend themselves to making clear distinctions that I could employ in my research. For example, one choir member earns an important part of her income from teaching piano and is regularly paid to conduct another choir but pays a membership fee to sing with the choir I studied.

6. My working definition aimed to ensure that volunteers who were music graduates or who had passed examinations above grade eight, and those whose occupation (at the time or prior to retirement) depended on their music skills, were not included. When requesting an organization’s participation in my research they agreed that ‘amateur’ and ‘classical music organization’ were appropriate terms for their description.
In the first situation this person may be seen as a professional musician but as an amateur in the second. Neither did the macrosociological definition lend itself to distinguishing professionals from amateurs from the public. Furthermore, it is predicated on assumptions about professional-amateur-public relationships, relationships that I questioned in my study.

Finnegan (1989) did not work from a definition of ‘amateur’, but approached her research from an exploratory position: ‘to uncover the structure of the often-unrecognized practices of local music-making’ (ix).7 Her study was very largely concerned with musicians who could be described as amateurs but she avoided identifying them as such.

John Drummond (1989: 6–11) compared amateur and professional musicians by reviewing four characteristics: (1) amateurs’ love of music-making and professionals following a vocation (but not denying a professional’s love of their art); (2) professionals are seen as having complete dedication while amateurs are partially dedicated and occasionally committed; (3) amateur standards are characterized as relatively low and professionals as relatively high; and (4) the rewards for amateurs are ‘pastime/recreation for its own reward (hobby)’ as distinct from professionals who work for gain and their livelihood. Furthermore, Drummond characterizes amateur status as low (dilettante) and professional as high. I argued that these, along with Stebbins’s social-psychological criteria, are normative statements, in some respects descriptive but also statement of ideals.8 I believe exceptions to Drummond’s characteristics are common. For example, the professional musician who is unenthusiastic and lacks dedication but is unable to bring himself to change careers because retirement is in sight, and the amateur who could succeed in a professional career but chooses another.

Pitts (2005) found that distinctions in the standards and approaches were most striking where the separation of amateurs and professionals was built into an organization’s programme. She also noted that ‘there appeared to be a healthy appreciation among the audience, with professional shows accorded more automatic respect…’ and ‘the point to be made here is that amateur performance is perceived by audience and performers alike to be a different type of experience from that of professionals, who are set apart by their greater confidence, whether imagined or assumed’ (25).

Pitts does not provide a definition of amateur (or amateur musician) but states: ‘“amateurs” are set alongside “professionals” to draw distinctions of attitude, extent of activity, and sometimes quality’ (24).

Some social scientists have reflected on their relationships with the people they study and have explored their power and authority as researchers and scholars. Taking aspects of Michel Foucault’s work (e.g. 1972: 40ff) as an inspiration, they have considered the political implications of defining social terms and how definitions of the subjects of their research are inseparable from the social and political nature of both their research institutions and the institutional context of the subject being studied. Furthermore, subjects of research are of

7. Finnegan briefly describes the local ‘professional’ chamber orchestra but concentrates on the breadth of music-making: brass bands, folk music, musical theatre, jazz, country and western, and rock and pop.

8. In Foucault’s terms these are discursive norms (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 2000: 124).
necessity other and different from the researcher, at least as a necessity of the roles involved. Michelle Fine states that:

Much qualitative research has reproduced, if contradiction filled, a colonizing discourse of the ‘Other’. [...] Self and Other are knottily entangled. This relationship as lived between researcher and informants, is typically obscured in social science text, privilege, securing distance, and laminating the contradictions.

(Fine 1989: 130)

Having come to recognize that multiple layers of authority, power and politics impinge on the relationships between researchers and their subjects and the progress of research, I aimed to write my thesis with some awareness of these problems and to maintain my valuing of a wide variety of musical endeavours.

My argument is that it is the discourse of classical music that has classified and at least implicitly defined a category of amateur musicians (along with other categories such as audience) by processes similar to those Foucault described in various other contexts (e.g. mental illness (1975) and criminology (1982)).

Before leaving the problems of definitions, note that although the participants and leaders of the organizations included in my study agreed that individually and organizationally amateur was an appropriate categorization of their music-making, they used the word only rarely in the focus groups and other discussions I observed.

Findings
The focus group participants were predominantly upper-middle class and approximately two-thirds of them were over 50 years old. Our discussions showed that they felt music-making was a very important part of their lives. For the majority of participants, concerts did not have primacy among the various parts of their music-making (e.g. alongside ensemble rehearsals and individual practice). They belonged to organizations because they sought opportunities to make music that they valued. Another key theme emphasized that attending rehearsals often has positive mood- and energy-changing effects on the musicians.

How important is music-making?
At least some of the dedication to classical music that was apparent in the focus groups may be explained by the fact that participants volunteered to participate in my research and would not have done so if they were less enthusiastic about their music-making. Their dedication often showed commitments that exceeded those required by their organizations. The work and responsibilities of organizing concerts, rehearsals, workshops and other activities, including meeting legal and other regulatory requirements, financial management, maintaining records (such as meeting minutes) and publicizing concerts, carried out by ordinary members and noted by Finnegan (1989: 3) in her research in Milton Keynes, were evident in my study.

Questions arising from the views of some members of four amateur...
In the focus groups, the participants made many comments that put music-making at the centre of their lives and they often implied that other benefits of belonging to an organization were less important than the music-making *per se*. Some of those comments are:

‘I think music is a very BIG part of my life. I’ve always loved music, and various different types of music, and I think, singing is something I have been doing from a very early age.’

‘I can come up with the goods and so, therefore, really, speaking, I think I have created a life of music.’

‘Nobody’s every going to stop me doing music, anybody I meet or anything would have to cut my LEG off, it’s just so, so important to me to do music.’

I coined the phrase ‘aesthetic satisfaction’ to encapsulate some of the participants’ desires to make music. It includes a wide variety of experiences, as can be seen in the following parts of my transcription of the groups’ discussions:

‘when we have been doing some, basic rehearsals and the things been sounding like a complete nightmare and all of a sudden…something comes together and that’s actually I guess the real emotional life for me, is when actually the whole has got the first WOW; its, its come together…’

‘I mean it’s one of the reasons I chose it [the choir], not because I’m particularly religious myself. Because I think it’s some to the most beautiful music that’s ever been written, and I didn’t want, not to be able to sing it just because I wasn’t going to church.’

‘…it was wonderful to HEAR the [Nelson] mass. To SING it. I mean there’s not only the CHOIR – the sound! There’s wonderful things coming from the orchestra. That is just really sensational to be part of that…’

**What is the significance of concerts?**

Although the participants said that they valued music-making most, concerts were nonetheless important, as the following transcriptions illustrate:

‘Occasionally we put on a concert because it gives us a little bit of focus, a little bit of drive, a bit of motivation. But whether the performance is a great success or not is not important; although it’s very nice when it is.’

‘The primary purpose for the people in the choir isn’t really the performance. I don’t actually think that most people in the choir see the performance as the purpose of being there; the purpose of us being there is really to sing music together.’

‘The performance is just the kick in the butt you need to get to get the thing up to scratch.’

‘I’m more keen on all playing as a group rather than having wonderful performance.’

‘I would be quite happy most of the time not to perform. I want to make sure that we get the work to a stage where we know it and can play it confidently and musically.’
However, one participant disagreed and felt strongly that what she does for audiences is important:

’Well I’m not just making music for myself. I’ve got a strong thing that, we are making music for other people who can’t make music. All right we mightn’t get that many people but there are people out there who say to us, “Aren’t you lucky. You can sing, play the violin, whatever, I wish I could”. So they come and they listen, and they’re our audience. So to me this is something that I am giving back, to give pleasure to others.’

This recognition that concerts are not the raison d’être for many individuals participating in music-making does not mean that the participants had indifferent attitudes to the concerts. Concerts provided the impetus to work towards the best possible performances. The participants’ desire to make music involves personal evaluations of the quality of their work and their recognition that they achieved some success, as can be seen in some of the quotations above and from the following transcription:

’I do always find after a performance I feel either satisfied or gutted, depending on the nature of the performance we have actually delivered.’

Many of the participants’ introductions of themselves included descriptions of belonging to secondary-school choirs, orchestras and bands and how these were important for their classical music careers. The word ‘career’ is appropriate here because, although no income is involved, music was important in these musicians’ lives and there was often continuity in their music activities. The participants’ discussion of their secondary-school music activities shows that it was a time when they learned the essential nature of the aesthetics, roles, relationships and practices required for the performance (and appreciation) of classical music. For example:

’I was also part of a joint school choir that sang at every Sunday in term time at St Mary’s Church, in Amberley. Our choirmaster was a mister Palmer. I don’t know if he’s any relation. I was so frightened of him but he gave the most WONDERFUL singing education. He was very fierce but I think he was very good.’

**To what extent is it a social activity?**

The importance of belonging to a choir, orchestra or consort for social reasons was discussed in all three focus groups. The focus group participants made it clear that sharing with friends and meeting like-minded people in their organizations were important but secondary to music-making. Some of the organizations included specific activities to meet the social needs of their members. A choir, for example, was described as having discussions from time to time about how they ‘needed more social activities’. However, a participant pointed out that there was little time for socializing at this choir’s rehearsals. The orchestra included in this study decided to have a tea break in their rehearsals to make time for members to chat and get to know one another.
Two focus group participants described how they chose to limit their social relationships with members of their organization. One who belonged to two music groups chose to socialize with the group that was not concerned with classical music, but said that being friends with classical musicians may be more important in the future. The other said:

‘I was in some of the groups that I played with in South Africa partly because of the music, but very much because of the social side, and I would hang out with a lot of the people I was playing with at other times during the week. not just at rehearsal. These days I’ve got a busier social life outside that is not with orchestra people. For me orchestra is now about the music much more than about the people and not the social side of it. There is an opportunity for it and I often choose not to get particularly involved.’

One participant appeared to value the social life associated with music-making more highly than others and, when first asked about the cultural significance of amateur music activities, said:

‘Well it’s the social side, I think. Meeting new people and meeting people from other walks of life, and all enjoying the same thing. New Zealand being so small, you meet the same people nearly all over.’

Focus group participants agreed that there is much more to the social dimension of music organizations than establishing and maintaining friendships. Music-making is a social activity in itself. It requires listening and responding to details of the sounds the other musicians are making as well as following the directions of the conductor. There are also the practical matters of where to sit or stand and how to work with others. The administration of the organization and concerts also depends on a variety of relationships and social skills.

**How is classical music-making recreational?**

In all three focus groups, participants described how their choir, orchestra or consort rehearsals changed their moods and energy. A common description began with how a musician felt ambivalent about going to rehearsal because she was tired at the end of the day, but after the rehearsal she felt more energetic and in a better mood. One participant described the effect in terms of energy and feelings:

‘You turn up for practice and you’ve had a really tiring day or a trying week and everything’s wrong and you don’t want to be there. The last thing you want to do is go out at night. But you go and at the end of two hours you’re feeling wonderful.’

Another participant emphasized the different types of mental activity:

‘I find for me music puts me in a different space. A lot my life and work is very much head stuff, mental processing, pushing paper. Music-making is something that takes me into a different dimension. It’s a way to switch off. You’re
focused and concentrating on something which is completely removed from other things that you are doing during the day and I find that very refreshing.'

In another group a participant said:

'I’m really on a high at ten o’clock when I get home and yet at quarter past seven when I trundle my little old car down the drive to start picking up the people who live near me to take them to practice, I’m thinking how I’d love to go to bed with a good book.'

Note that the participants described these rejuvenating and recreational benefits of their music-making in terms of experience. Also note that none said that they actively sought them or joined a music organization for relaxation or for similar reasons, they were unanticipated side effects.

I have no simple explanation for the changes that music-making brought about in the participants. Singing and playing music in a group was not a full-time occupation so its recreational benefits may be attributable to the participants taking time out for an essentially enjoyable and fun activity. The effect may also be attributed to the brain or thought processes involved in music-making, or to the emotionally expressive nature of music. The psychodynamic view that compares music-making to children’s play, and involving emotional processes, maintains that it is psychologically satisfying and further extrinsic rewards are not necessary (Cottrell 2004: 199). The participants discussed how the physical requirements, particularly the breath control needed for singing and playing wind instruments, contributes to their changes in energy and subsequently to their moods. This explanation is supported by Elizabeth Valentine and Claire Evans (2001) who, using an experimental paradigm, found that singing improved mood and reduced tension. From their comparison of choral singing, solo singing and swimming they concluded that physiological factors contribute to the recreational effect of singing, but their results did not support any conclusion about the significance of social factors.

**Why make classical music?**

The participants’ emphasis on making music to fulfil their desires to create artistic works is consistent with some scholars’ views of motivation of amateur musicians. However, other scholars’ work emphasize reasons such as meeting friends and socializing (Christoff 1978; Spencer 1996). The participants in this study had varying views of the social nature of their belonging to music organizations and any generalization made from their views would have to assert that the participants’ first priority is music-making.

Finnegan (1989: 41) found that amateur musicians were motivated to perform classical music by deeply symbolic and spiritual meanings they found in the music they performed. Comparably, focus group participants’ descriptions of the emotional significance of their music-making involved concepts such as engaging deep aspects of their psyches and spirit. For example:

‘I mean, I think for me [approx. two-second pause] the important thing about music in a way: I think it actually sort of almost sort of speaks to
the soul. It sort of cuts through to emotions in a way that other things
don’t and I know, I know that myself sometimes music; you can use
music to ah to express sort of things; or it draws things out of you; that
are there.’

When asked about performances that the participants felt were especially
good, three focus group participants described experiences that fit the
notion of *communitas*, a brief ecstatic and emotional state involving a
sense union with everyone present and physiological responses such as
‘shivers down the back’ (Cottrell 2004: 156). For example:

‘when we sang the ‘Dies Irae’ I can STILL remember this, this feeling at
the back of my neck; it was so thrilling being in this big group of people
and singing that AMAZING music was, was quite a fantastic effect,
feeling.’

Such descriptions of instances of communitas contradict Ellis’s assertion
(1986: 8) that only experienced professional musicians can create ecstatic
states.

The focus group participants’ descriptions of their music-making and
my observations in this study did not find notable egotistical motivation.
The nature of the four organizations discourages egotistic behaviours, in
that much of the music performed requires high levels of cooperation
and sensitivity to fellow musicians. Comments in the focus groups and
my observations indicated that the musicians rarely sought the existing
opportunities for soloists. One conductor described how difficult it was
persuading singers to take solo parts. Pitts (2004: 155), found some
members of the Gilbert and Sullivan society worked hard to get solo
parts and to have the opportunity to been seen on stage. A possible
explanation is that musicians with more egotistic needs will join operatic
or similar organizations, types of organizations that I did not include in
my study.

Further rewards the participants obtain from music-making may be
found in the *musical* or *cultural capital* that they attribute to their activ-
ities and organizations. The focus group participants showed that they
value the music they perform for reasons of personal aesthetics, coop-
eratively creating works of art, overcoming technical challenges and
extending their skills. ‘Musical capital’ is the term Cottrell coined to
refer to the value a musician attributes to a piece of work. Musical cap-
ital includes evaluations of: ‘the desirability, from the musician’s point
of view of their participation in the event, as well as its value to them
as they seek to establish a reputation and a profile for undertaking par-
ticular types of work’ (Cottrell 2004: 65). However, it is largely per-
sonal preferences rather than reputation, employment or performance
opportunities that gave concerts and music value for the participants in
my study.

In coining the term ‘musical capital’ Cottrell is drawing on Pierre
Bourdieu’s notions of ‘cultural capital’, which is acquired through social-
ization within the family and scholastic learning, and ‘symbolic capital’,
representing prestige, reputation and fame. Participation in the concerts

17. ‘Cultural capital
describes the unequal
distribution of
cultural practices,
values and
competencies,
characteristic of
capitalist societies’
(O’Sullivan, Hartley
et al.: 1994).
of the four organizations I studied could be seen as supporting and contributing to their cultural capital. The marginal nature of their work and the audience sizes, however, suggest that it is small capital for the individual musician.\(^{18}\) For many of the participants, their cultural capital depends on their occupation, family and community networks, of which music activities form just a part. There may also be some symbolic capital to be gained by musicians from classical music as a style of music generally associated with high social status.

**Politics, power and authority**

Although I did not set out to focus on politics, I concluded that the authority structure used by the organizations had some features that were consistent with scholarly observations of classical music practices in other contexts. Generally the organizations invested authority for making musical decisions in their musical directors, as predicted by Small (1998: 68) and Nettl’s theories (1995: 180). The organizations’ musical directors determined what music would be performed and rehearsed, and directed the choir or orchestra’s interpretation of the works. REMU members were observed to look to workshop tutors to determine what works would be studied and the expert musicians employed for REMU concerts determined the programmes’ contents. I observed very little questioning of the musical directors’ and tutors’ authority and only rarely heard them seek members’ opinions about musical or interpretative issues. Discussions of these kinds were discouraged during rehearsals because the musical directors rarely had all the time they desired for the work they planned to complete in rehearsals or to achieve the qualities of performance they envisaged.\(^{19}\)

The musical directors were engaged for their classical music expertise and to authoritatively guide the choirs, orchestra and workshops in classical music performance. This investment of authority in especially employed experts provides a simple procedure for making many decisions. (Small 1998: 68). It also supports the notion of the universality of classical music by removing the opportunity for expressing personal opinions. A possible rationalization concerns a requirement that the value of the music is objectively determined and consequently decisions about such matters require specially trained experts.

Giving musical directors authority to control many aspects of the ensembles’ music-making creates opportunities for their abuse of power.\(^{20}\) The power of the musical directors of the organizations in my study was balanced and potentially moderated by the elected committees and officers, and by the voluntary nature of membership of the organizations. In a focus group it was noted that some musicians left organizations if they disliked the musical director’s decisions, sometimes only temporarily.\(^{21}\)

‘The ensemble changes from term to term; because now they are getting more selective and they’ll say “What’s the programme for next term?” and if they don’t like the work they MAY not; or if they don’t particularly like the conductor; not particularly like them, but think “I’ll have a rest, I’ll have a term off that term”. They are getting much more selective.’

\(^{18}\) Except some CPA at the Pines evenings and performances of Handel’s Messiah, concerts very rarely attract audiences of over 200 people. The marginality of amateur music-making is a theme developed by Finnegan (1989: 320) and Stebbins (1992: 264).

\(^{19}\) I surmised the nature of these concerns from more general comments about rehearsals and their progress.

\(^{20}\) Vredenburgh and Brender (1998) define power as ‘the ability to get things done the way one wants them to be done’ and state that abuse of power diminishes others’ feelings of dignity and self-respect, and/or diminishes subordinates’ work performance and/or satisfaction.

\(^{21}\) It was clear that there is also a significant proportion of members of the organizations who are very loyal and will often put their personal preferences aside to work for concerts they favour less than others.
[another participant following on] ‘We’re having that too with the choir, that people don’t like the repertoire for that particular term they, they may very well bow out for that term.’

Ordinary members’ opinions of the repertoire, programming and other musical matters were mediated by the musical director and had only indirect influence on the ensemble’s music-making. My study did not specifically collect data about the styles of leadership of the organizations, but I observed decision-making that included sensitivity to members’ needs and feelings, as well as concern for the success of the concert performances.22

I perceived that there is a conflict between the participants’ descriptions of their desire to make aesthetically satisfying music and the limited powers they allow themselves to influence the music they play and sing. The only solution that I observed for this conflict is an all-or-nothing approach; if the musicians perceive that they will not get adequate aesthetic satisfaction then they will leave or take a holiday from the choir, orchestra or organization.

Conclusions
My study of four organizations and ten of their members’ discussions has emphasized views from the musician’s perspective, implicitly questioning the relationship between the individual and the social activity that is classical music performance. The relationship between individual musicians, their musical needs and desires, and their organizations is complex and negotiated, involving both the musicians’ aesthetics and related values, and the classical music institutions’ conventions and politics as mediated by their musical directors. However, I noted that the focus group participants’ descriptions of their musical careers suggested that their secondary-school years were the time when they developed their appreciation and subscription to classical music, including the social relationships upon which it depends. The participants in my study did not especially think of themselves as amateur musicians (regardless of how well the term fitted), possibly because their school education rarely featured amateur roles.

Music-making per se is most important to the musicians I studied. The literally recreational benefits, the occasional experience of communitas, and the aesthetic satisfaction of working with others to create works of art are some phenomena that motivate the participants. This gives rise to questions about their experience and perception of aesthetics and meanings that they attribute to the music they make. Consideration of how relevant discourses attribute classical music with meanings that are not readily discernable, are spiritual or mystical and cannot be expressed with words is relevant to these questions.

The term ‘amateur musician’, however imprecise and dependent on context, has some importance in the institutions and discourse of classical music because it is frequently used to provide rationalizations for distribution of resources and differential values. My study shows that the music performed by groups such as Cantoris, the Northern Chorale, the CPA Orchestra and REMU is valued by the participants and I contend that is reason enough for others to take note.

22. Further study of leadership in music organizations could compare the effectiveness of various leadership styles. John Nirenberg (2001) provides two models when he discusses the leader as a heroic individual at the top of a hierarchical structure and a view of leadership as a specific social phenomenon between people for the purpose of achieving mutual objectives that are intended to result in collective effectiveness and personal enrichment over time. Peter Wiegold (2001) describes working with a very different approach to leading an orchestra in music-making.

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Questions arising from the views of some members of four amateur … 215


**Suggested citation**


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Closing the gap: does music-making have to stop upon graduation?

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Abstract
This paper discusses research examining the perceptions of people who continue to be musically active beyond their formal schooling years. These are individuals who are neither professional musicians nor university music majors; all pursue music avocationally. Through interviews and focus groups with members of three community ensembles (directed by the researchers), we sought to better understand how these avocational musicians viewed their own reasons for participating in music-making, and what, if any, connection they perceived between their school music experience and their present experience.

Keywords
situated learning
school music
lifelong music-making
music education

David Myers keynote address at the 2005 ‘Music and Lifelong Learning Symposium’ sounded an alarm regarding the growing irrelevancy of formal music education processes to informal music-making as lifelong participatory engagement.\(^1\) Links between community and school music were once stronger than they are now, as the shift in focus within the music education profession has moved toward maintaining the status quo and surviving within schools. Despite the disappearance of programmes through the 1970s, the music education community did not change (Myers 2005: 6). Even today, it appears current practices in music education often exhibit a particular kind of instrumentalism that regards music teaching as a means toward short term goals that end upon secondary school graduation. Melissa Arasi’s (2006) examination of the high school choir experience concluded there was little lasting impact of school music on lifelong music-making. The self-perceived outcomes of the music programme, such as critical thinking and self-confidence were found to be influential in the development of lifelong learning skills, but traditional performing ensembles in secondary schools were not found to encourage lifelong involvement in music. Additionally, the extra-musical benefits of the programme outweighed influences on music-making activities in adulthood. Although research on the issues of student participation, retention and attrition in music education exists, much of it focuses on programme or ensemble participation within formal (usually educational) contexts (Abeles 2004; Corenblum and Marshall 1998; Papinchak 1992; Rogers 1989; Sandene 1994; Schmidt 2005). Little research was found that examines the connection between school

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\(^1\) Myers is not the first to alert the profession to this concern. He cites multiple authors, extending over a 70 year period, who make similar assertions regarding the potential irrelevancy of formal music education.
music-making and music-making later in life (but see Busch 2005; Stewart 2007).

Our research interest concerns the gap existing between school music teaching and learning practices, and lifelong engagement with active music-making. Our experience as former school band directors who now conduct community music ensembles has heightened our awareness of this gap. This paper focuses primarily on the teaching and learning of music in schools. It is our contention that the profession’s conceptualization of music teaching, at least concerning ‘school music’, militates against lifelong participation and engagement with music. Our discussion includes interview data we have collected from three of the five community music ensembles we direct, as viewed through the theoretical lens of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) theory of situated learning.

Lifelong participation
We wish to clarify a couple of propositional points at the outset. First, we do believe there is a distinction to be made between lifelong learning and lifelong participation or ‘life-term engagement’ (Busch 2005). While we will not spend a great deal of time explicating this distinction, we think it must be stipulated, since it speaks to the issue of instrumentalism that we believe is one of the foundations of Lave and Wenger’s theory. Simply put, we subscribe to the view that humans learn in order to participate. This is not to discount learning ‘for its own sake’, but to stress our contention that learning is motivated primarily by social factors. Our second propositional point is that music should be taught for the purpose of lifelong participation or life-term engagement. We recognize there are some who believe differently. Based on what we heard from our research participants, it would seem music teaching, as it presently occurs in many schools, is premised on the belief that the goal of the activity is to ‘make it’ to grade twelve, after which point one can safely pack the instrument away in a closet until it is time for one’s own children to play an instrument in the school’s band.

We are both instrumentalists, and our focus is on instrumental music programmes. Despite the potential differences between the teaching and learning of choral and instrumental music, we maintain in this article that the point of music teaching and learning in schools should be to enable and encourage a lifetime’s involvement with music. As a caveat, we will add that we are not suggesting ‘involvement’ with music over the lifespan be defined simply in terms of playing or singing in a community band, orchestra, or choir. This involvement may take many different forms, but we stand by our assertion that at present, far too few graduates of school music programmes continue to actively participate in music-making (Regelski 1998), however one wishes to define this.

Situated learning
Lave and Wenger’s theory of situated learning is directed at explaining the sociocultural nature of learning. ‘Painting a picture of the person as a primarily “cognitive” entity,’ they insist, ‘tends to promote a non-personal view of knowledge, skills, tasks, activities, and learning. As a consequence, both theoretical analyses and instructional prescriptions tend to be driven by reference to reified “knowledge domains”’ (1991: 52). This
leads to views of learning as internalization, ‘an unproblematic process of absorbing the given, as a matter of transmission and assimilation’ (47). In contrast, they propose the concept of ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (LPP) whereby ‘learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community’ (29). Becoming a participant in any given community of practice involves learning to engage in actual, in-the-world social practices, and subsumes, as a result, the learning of such things as ‘knowledgeable skills’ (29). Lave and Wenger caution that situated learning is not simply apprenticeship or ‘learning by doing’ (31). Their concept of LPP is rather nuanced. There is, for example, no core or centre. There is no ‘central participation’ and no designated periphery (35). They write: ‘In our usage, peripherality is … a positive term, whose most salient conceptual antonyms are unrelatedness or irrelevance to ongoing activity… In this sense, peripherality, when it is enabled, suggests an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement’ (37).

As described by Steven Morrison (2001), the types of learning taking place in school music programmes would appear to support an LPP model – albeit one very different from what we believe Lave and Wenger have in mind. For Morrison, established music cultures (in school contexts) are strong and can have a positive impact on student membership within programmes. Students may identify with and engage in particular ensembles, which may serve as a tremendous asset for music programmes during school years. However, it seems many of these programmes are relatively self-contained with a sense of finality upon reaching the end of grade twelve.2 Morrison suggests that most students discontinue their music participation beyond the school years not because of any lack of effort or passion by music teachers, but because of the shift away from the familiar environment with which students have strongly identified (28). In other words, they do not see their high school music practice as leading to music participation within the community – something central to LPP in the sense Lave and Wenger articulate.

Courtney, a first-year Life Science major, exemplifies the kind of situation Morrison describes. She was part of a music programme that felt like family to her. Courtney had felt closeness throughout the music department, from both students and teachers. Students were, in this case, encouraged to continue playing beyond high school. It appears, however, that this discussion only took place during their graduating year and not as an ongoing part of the process of music learning and engagement.

From grade five to grade twelve you’ve been involved in these music programmes, and this strong sense of family and closeness and these communities. You’ve made friends and great relationships with your conductors and all that sort of stuff. The end of grade twelve comes and then what?

I was like, OH NO! MUSIC IS GOING TO END! I was like, NO!!! And so, I just had to figure out…I had to be part of some band, choir – like continuing on through university. So I asked [the teacher], what do I do…I was like,
are there any community bands here or something like that. And [the teacher] was like, yeah, I’ll help you search for some. And I’m pretty sure… I heard that [the university] has a music programme. I was like, really? That’s awesome…

So you went and spoke with [the teacher] about this. Did [the teacher] ever talk about continuing on with music in class?

He encouraged us, most of the graduates, to continue… [F]ind a community band, make a band, something. He told us we’ve been playing music for so long, you’ve been playing this instrument, you’ve been singing for so long. Do you want this to stop?

Although some discussion of music participation beyond formal school years had taken place in this interview, this form of dialogue was the exception. The following example was more the norm in our findings:

So, I asked you earlier about when you got to OAC [grade thirteen] all of a sudden it was the end of school – what do I do now? Well, you’re getting to the end of your undergraduate programme.

Yeah, yeah.

What now? What next? Have you thought about that?

In terms of music?

Yeah.

Yeah, I guess you’re right. It’s kind of the same situation (laughs). It really does suck.

It’s getting to the end here. Does that mean it has to be an end?

No, no. Umm, I’d say like, I’m always trying to look out for opportunities to do something fun and like, you know, contribute, like whatever skill sets I have. Um, I don’t know, like right now, there’s nothing in sight that I could see that I could continue my music. But, I’m pretty sure like I don’t want to close myself to any options in the future.

Steven, a fourth-year chemistry/neuroscience double major, carried on with music during his undergraduate years in the formal context of a university setting and was coming up to graduation. However, even after being heavily engaged in performing ensembles during that time, Steven still does not make the connection between the formal and informal music making contexts. What is most striking is the statement that he simply does not see opportunities for participation in music beyond the present. Steven’s perspective regarding his participation in music beyond the confines of a formal music education setting is telling and leads us directly to our first problem.

Problem number one: students do not view their learning as co-participating in a real, ‘in-the-world’ social practice

Legitimate peripheral participation requires the existence of a mature field for what is being learned (Lave and Wenger 1991: 110). In cases
where a mature field does not exist (and occasionally even when it does), a division arises between a ‘learning curriculum’ and a ‘teaching curriculum’. When learners are not motivated by participating in ‘real’ practices, but instead by “didactic caretakers,” ...the focus of attention shifts from co-participating in practice to acting upon the person-to-be-changed’ (112). This frequently happens in schools, where ‘pedagogically structured content organizes learning activities’ (112).

There are at least two consequences here:

First, the identity of learners becomes an explicit object of change. When central participation is the subjective intention motivating learning, changes in cultural identity and social relations are inevitably part of the process, but learning does not have to be mediated – and distorted – through a learner’s view of ‘self’ as object. Second, where there is no cultural identity encompassing the activity in which newcomers participate and no field of mature practice for what is being learned, exchange value replaces the use value of increasing participation (112).

This is to say, changes in identity are inevitably part of the learning process. All learning results in some sort of change in who and what we are. As Lave and Wenger have pointed out, however, there are two fundamental differences at play when students do not view themselves as co-participants. Based on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Lave and Wenger write:

When directive teaching in the form of prescriptions about proper practice generates one circumscribed form of participation (in school), pre-empting participation in ongoing practice as the legitimate source of learning opportunities, the goal of complying with the requirements specified by teaching engenders a practice different from that intended (96–97).

When students do not see themselves as co-participants, the motivation for learning is distorted. Students turn their attention to such things as test marks, grades, or the next festival or performance. They simply do not envision what they do as leading towards an in-the-world social practice.

The following example speaks to this point directly. Doug, a law enforcement student at a local community college, reflects on his reasons for sustaining his involvement with music at school despite the fact so many of his peers had dropped out.

I know a lot of other students who’ve been in similar situations and they just, they just quit and say this is going nowhere. What made you stick it out?

The marks. I constantly I got 98, 99, and that’s what kept my average above 80, so that’s why.

Okay, so there was something in it for you besides just making music. When grade twelve rolled around. Oh, you did grade thirteen?

Yes I did.
Okay when that rolled around, um, what did you think at that point? I mean you’d been playing music for all these years and school was all of a sudden, ending.

I was like, ‘Oh Man. School is ending. No more band.’ That was one of the first thoughts I had ‘cause one of the things I always looked forward to, was especially the semesters that I had band, was that just seeing my friends I had that I made in band and I just performed again and it was like, it pretty much got me through the day and what I looked forward going to school for, pretty much.

Although dedicated to development and progress as a trumpet player, Doug followed through the formal music education system for reasons unrelated to participation beyond in-school education.

In the next example, Steven reflects on his music experience toward the end of secondary school and the decisions he would have to make regarding music-making. Of particular interest here are his comments concerning the type of people who would be eligible to carry on at the post-secondary level, his musical options as a science student, his perceptions regarding what it takes to participate and his feelings surrounding his membership in a local Filipino community band with a close friend.

So when you were in high school and grade twelve came along, [grade thirteen] came along, like the end of school, what did you think about what was going to happen with your music then?

Um, oh yeah. Actually, okay, to be honest, I didn’t think I was going to continue music besides from the piano. For the saxophone, I was kind of like, it was a very good experience. It’s probably going to end here. Ah, going to university, I know everything, a step way up from high school and I wasn’t going to a music programme at all. I was going to the science programme, and at least from my point of view at that time, was that I’m probably going to have to spend all of my time like just studying, and there wouldn’t be any time for music. And if there was a music programme, it’d be probably for like the elites and for students who are studying music. So, I thought the saxophone was most likely over. Except the sax for Doug’s band [the Filipino band], which is like I viewed more as extra-curricular on the side thing.

And were there, did any of the teachers ever talk about music after grade thirteen for you? I don’t mean necessarily as a career, but I mean participating. Do you remember them talking about that at all?

Yeah, I remember talking about a career, like for music. They just mentioned it on the side.

But even just participating for fun.

For fun, besides the jazz band, which I stayed in for the whole year of grade thirteen, no.

This leads to our second problem.
Problem number two: teachers do not view their teaching as leading toward the goal of lifelong participation

To account for the complexity of participation in social practice, it is essential to give learning and teaching independent status as analytic concepts. Primary reliance on the concept of pedagogical structuring in learning research may well prevent speculation about what teaching consists of, how it is perceived, and how – as perceived – it affects learning. Most analyses of schooling assume, whether intentionally or not, the uniform motivation of teacher and pupils, because they assume, sometimes quite explicitly, that teacher and pupil share the goal of the main activity.

(Lave and Wenger 1991: 113)

We asked recent high school graduates to describe both their time leading up to graduation and their thoughts and goals for future involvement with music. Jack, a first-year undergraduate life science major, had a fairly typical response.

When you got to grade twelve and it was your last year of high school, what did you think was going to happen the year after with your music?

It’d be gone. Like, I thought I’d be, it was my last year doing anything musical.

But was it ever talked about in school, about carrying on?

Um, talked about?

Do you remember? Like continuing to play after high school?

Not really. It was more like being like, I’m going to miss this a lot and everything.

So there was definitely this feeling of ending?

Yeah

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What types of opportunities do you think are available to you out there [after graduating university], to continue playing?

Mm, just like for fun? I know a few people who are actually in music, so it’s like, I don’t know, maybe, or maybe teaching my brother how to play. I don’t think I’d be. If I didn’t get into the music programme, I don’t think I’d have any, have the skill level to go in for like, any symphonies or anything. But if I did like develop amazing skill on my trombone, I guess I’d try out for those bands and those orchestras.

Jack sensed finality as he approached the end of secondary school. He felt that music-making, particularly playing in a band, was over. It appears little communication had taken place about the opportunities available to him beyond his formal school years. Furthermore, Jack concluded that a certain skill level was required in order to be accepted into a musical ensemble or musical community.
A teacher in our next example recognized the potential for Doug to carry on with music as a career. However, once the student made it clear that music was not part of his career plan, the conversation regarding continuing music in another form did not take place.

Do you remember in grade twelve, your teachers ever talking about continuing on with music beyond grade twelve?

(laughs) Yeah, my teacher, he really tried to push me into getting into a music programme after, post-secondary. But, yeah, I really didn’t have any interest in that at all.

What about more generally speaking with, you know, with students in the whole group. Not necessarily pursuing it as a career, but just continuing to participate.

Um, we didn’t really talk about it in class. It was always, either out of class or during summer break, but we wanted to like hang on close to music. But, it was usually me.

The teacher and student did not view his participation in music through the same lens; unfortunately this did not reach beyond the narrow vision of music as a career.

The issues raised by Lave and Wenger go beyond the confines of the present discussion. Suffice it to say – and we admit this is speculative and argumentative – music teaching has been conceived primarily in terms of subject matter. Both Bennett Reimer (2003) and David Elliott (1995) write that the philosophy of music education should be predicated on the nature and value of music. This, we submit, places the emphasis on the product of music rather than the process. As Lave and Wenger (1991) point out, this leads to a very different understanding of the meaning of the social practice in question:

There are vast differences between the ways high school physics [or, obviously, music] students participate in and give meaning to their activity and the way professional physicists [musicians] do. The actual reproducing community of practice, within which schoolchildren learn about physics [music], is not the community of physicists [musicians] but the community of schooled adults. Children are introduced into the latter community (and its humble relation with the former community) during their school years.

(99–100)

Learning how to ‘do’ school, they point out, may be what school really teaches (107). If this is true, then perhaps Morrison’s view is all that can be hoped for. Perhaps there is simply no way to connect school with life outside of school. But while this view may attract some support, especially for subjects like, say, chemistry or physics, one would hope music offers some possibilities for transcending this unfortunate state of affairs. Surely music entertains some belief that what is learned in school might be part of an induction – what Lave and Wenger call LPP – into a rewarding activity that, barring some physical incapacitation, can provide a lifetime’s worth of enjoyment.
Conclusion

We are left, then, with two overarching questions regarding traditional school music instruction:

1. Why do students not view community bands, orchestras or choirs as the object of their learning?
2. Why do teachers not view community bands, orchestras or choirs as the object of their teaching?

These are somewhat rhetorical questions, but ones we find troubling nonetheless. Is large ensemble music-making an anachronism in an era of hip-hop and electronic instruments? Are live bands, choirs and orchestras of no value to a society with ready access to canned and downloadable music? Is social music-making irrelevant in an era of iPods, YouTube, and MySpace? And are the educative benefits of music considered sufficient even if students never participate in music beyond their school years? The answers to these questions might indeed confirm that traditional performance programmes do not belong in the school curriculum. On the other hand, perhaps if music learning were conceptualized more along the lines of LPP – assuming, of course, that this is possible – then the connections between life in and out of school would be more obvious. Our data was collected from people who have made the volitional choice to continue participating with their instruments past grade twelve. They represent, to the best of our knowledge, a very small minority of instrumental music graduates. We can only speculate on how many instruments are currently sitting in closets collecting dust.

We leave you with Jennifer, a 33 year old engineer, who responds to a question about why she continues to play her trumpet. Note how her motivation, ironically, came not from her school experience or her perception of music-making as an in-the-world social practice, but from her recognition, courtesy of her parents’ friends’ experience, that music-making can be a lifelong enjoyable activity.

There are a lot of things you could be doing. Why do this?

When I was twelve or thirteen years old, a billion years ago, my parents used to sing in a choir, and this choir along with doing ordinary concerts, once a year they did a cabaret-style concert. And one year they were going to do something that the accompaniment for it was this oom-pah band kind of thing. And they were all sitting around talking and one person said ‘I played tuba in high school’ and, ‘I played clarinet in high school’ and, ‘I know how to play the accordion’. So they actually put together an oom-pah band of mostly people who hadn’t played since high school. You know, these were thirty-somethings, who hadn’t played since high school. And I had an almost instantaneous double reaction to this. One was, cool, they can pull this together. And the other was, how pathetic that they like doing this and hadn’t done it in fifteen years. And I pretty much decided right then and there that I wasn’t going to stop. I wasn’t going to, when I was thirty years old say, I used to be pretty good at the trumpet and I wish I could do that again and then try to do it after fifteen years. And I just decided I wasn’t going to stop. And I didn’t.
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Suggested citation

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Lynn Tucker and Roger Mantie are Ph.D. candidates in Music Education at the University of Toronto. Lynn and Roger have both taught instrumental music in schools at grades six to twelve. Their research interests, while not identical, intersect at the point where school and society meet.

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Toward a definition of a community choir

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Abstract
Community choirs in America furnish the primary musical setting for adult amateur singers wishing to continue their choral experiences after formal public schooling or college. Nearly 1400 community choral organizations – or those meeting the established parameters – were catalogued by ACDA for its 2007 ‘National Registry of Community Choirs’. A 2003 Chorus America report stated that one in ten Americans sing weekly in a community-based choir. But what is a community choir in 2007? What factors determine that a choir is representative of its immediate community? Are community choirs in the twenty-first century providing for the musical needs of the adult amateur singer?

This paper will contend that many community choirs are either facing a declining membership and ageing singers, or have evolved into semi-elite performance machines that are no longer characteristic of the community. It will discuss the concepts of democracy, volunteerism and community, and compare early twentieth century philosophical and social arguments on community music with current issues confronting community choral organizations. Part research, part philosophical, and part the author’s personal observations of community choirs, it will contend that, in their quest for choral performance perfection, some choirs actually marginalize adult amateur singers. Furthermore, it will discuss the pivotal role of the choral conductor who, in establishing a democratic tone for the group, can embrace and develop the true spirit of amateur singing, and provide an opportunity for lifelong musical learning and participation.

Even as we discuss ideas and share current research on adult and community music education, frequently our agenda for increased lifelong musical participation takes a backseat to the continued focus on studies of K-12 (kindergartern to twelfth grade; ages 5–18 years) and higher education music. Meanwhile, our public schools generate scores of teenagers who enjoy a healthy musical experience during the formative years. After finishing public school or college, what do these young people do for ongoing musical participation?

Keywords
community choir
amateur singer
choral conductor
adult learning
music education

This renaissance of the amateur spirit in music is an expression of democracy. It affords the opportunity and encouragement of each person old and young to use the music that is in him in co-operation with others. Music, like all the fine arts has its aristocracies, but in its community expression it is increasingly democratic.

(Birge 1939: 226)
The specific line of interest presented here concerns the adult-age amateur choral singer who desires to continue a personal choral experience by making meaningful music with other singers in some type of organized ensemble. In such a case, a community-based chorus will furnish the primary musical setting for this person. What is available for the adult choral singers?

Recent reports on choral singing are positive. First, nearly 1400 community choral organizations were catalogued by the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) for its 2007 National Registry of Community Choirs (ACDA 2007). Second, a 2003 Chorus America survey discovered that one in ten Americans (or 23.5 million adults) sing weekly in a community-based choir (Chorus America 2003).

But what is a community choir in 2007? What factors determine that a choir is representative of its immediate community? Are community choirs in the twenty-first century providing for the musical needs of the adult amateur singer who is a product of our music education system? This paper examines these and other questions in the hope that community choirs will continue to serve a vital population of adult amateur singers. It fuses recent choral research with several philosophical perspectives, and its key points are reinforced by my personal observations of community choirs and singers, presented in vignette. In short, I wish to explore the definition of a community choir.

Do we need a definition?

But do we really need to have a definition of ‘community choir’? Definitions can be confining and limiting; they can also provide clarity and a universal meaning. First, consider how different national organizations use the term ‘community choir’ to discuss the types of choral organizations.

The ACDA, a professional organization of 18,000 choral directors from public schools, colleges, community choirs and other choral organizations, has distinct categories for the diverse choirs that compose its membership. Separate committees coordinate children’s choirs, boy choirs, church choirs, men’s and women’s choirs. Under the umbrella term ‘community choir’ fall ‘all other adult choruses, apart from those in colleges and universities, regardless of size, support mechanism, having paid members or not, or affiliation with or without a functioning institution’ (Diekhoff 1991: 43). Further clarification of this term suggests this range of attributes for a community choir:

- Small ensembles of very skilled performers who, although not making their living through the group are truly ‘professional,’ in every sense of the word
- Choruses of various sizes whose membership may include just-graduated high school seniors up to and including true ‘senior citizens’
- Large, institutionally sponsored or supported choirs
- Small, non-auditioned groups which meet more or less regularly and perform as the need arises (43)

Another national organization founded in 1977 is Chorus America, which is comprised primarily of independent choruses, or ‘those that rely on
successful non-profit organizational infrastructures for their success and are not affiliated with a parent institution such as a school or church that provides financial support’ (Chorus America 2003: 19).

Chorus America proposes four categories of choral groups: professional choruses; volunteer choruses; children/youth choruses; and symphony/opera choruses. Some of these choruses ‘employ professional singers with significant musical backgrounds and training,’ some combine a ‘core of paid professional singers with volunteers,’ while others are ‘rooted in volunteerism, and their mission is to involve singers from the community who share a love of singing’ (19).

Dissertation research is one primary resource providing vast information about community choirs and adult singers. One proposed definition of community chorus suggests ‘an auditioned or non-auditioned group of seventeen or more volunteer singers that regularly rehearses for at least two hours twice each month and presents public concerts’ (Spell 1989: 6); this definition excludes church choirs. Another study accepts the above definition, but does not include ‘church choirs, senior citizen’s choir, barbershop groups, men or women’s choruses, and children’s choruses’ (Vincent 1997: 5). And a third definition calls for ‘any auditioned or non-auditioned group whose membership consists of adults age 18 or over, whose membership is not part of a larger organization, and who rehearse weekly for the purpose of performance not related to worship services’ (Bell 2000: 11).

It is apparent from this information that there is no consensus on what, exactly, is meant by a community chorus. Ahlquist (2006) suggested in her recent book *Chorus and Community* that the word ‘community’ is more complex than ‘chorus.’ But based on the narratives of thirteen different contributing authors and their community choral experiences, Ahlquist (2006) offered some common characteristics of the choruses:

All of them have a more or less fixed membership. They all rehearse and perform, distinguishing between preparation and a culminating musical event given for listeners. They all have chosen repertoire. They all have acknowledged musical leaders…sounds are produced by an aggregate of voices, either in sections or by the chorus as a whole…However, the choruses do not necessarily read from musical scores, or sing “classical” music. And few of these community-based groups earn income for their members as individuals.

Clearly, many different issues may play a role in characterizing what we mean by a community chorus in America: non-profit status, affiliation with a school, church, or national organization, professional versus volunteer singers, size of chorus, trained singers or untrained, auditioned or non-auditioned singers. While all of these matters are worthy of investigation, here three threads of thought are explored under the general premise that these community choirs are (a) in the United States, and (b) spring from the Western choral tradition of performing a concert after a series of rehearsals. The first thread presents a collective picture of the individual singers in these choirs, based on research. What do we know about these adult singers, and who are they? The second thread
examines the issue of performance auditions and the effect on choir membership. Finally, a third thread frames the audition concept in a context considering the meaning and use of the word ‘community’ to define a choir.

**Collective description of community choir singers**

Most of our demographic information about the individual adult singer in the community choir emerges in dissertation studies and national surveys by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Chorus America. Several years ago, I conducted my own review of these results (Bell 2004) after reading reports stating that one in every ten American adults sing weekly in a community-based choir (Chorus America 2003). Based on current research, there is, across the board, a consistent demographic and musical profile of the singer in a community choir (Bell 2004). First of all, women outnumber men by a 2:1 ratio. Second, the majority of singers are over 40 years old, and in some cases, two-thirds of singers are over 40. Third, community chorus participants are well-educated adults. Chorus America (2003) reported 85 per cent with college degrees. And the few studies which investigate race or ethnicity report that minorities are astonishingly under-represented in community singing (Bell 2004: 43). There is little ethnic diversity in the make-up of American choirs, despite the diversity found in many areas of the country.

There are two matters of concern for community choirs. First, there is a general shift in the age of singers from 1962 to 2000 from under 40 years old to over 40 years (Bell 2004); singers in the sections are getting older, and not necessarily being replaced by younger singers. This is further verified by conversations I have had with community choir directors who impart that the main core of their choir is ageing, and in some cases, dying out. This leads directly to a secondary concern which, while not necessarily evident in this set of data, is observed in rehearsals and reported by choral conductors: community choirs are dealing with declining memberships. The singers are getting older, and the membership numbers are dropping. Is this an issue of recruitment, leadership, or a lack of interest and support for lifelong singing? This question will be revisited in a moment.

Interestingly enough, even as these data are confirmed in dialogues at national choral conventions, other exchanges with community choral directors reveal much different scenarios. In a discussion with an active ACDA state president, she informed me that these statistics did not actually represent her present community choir. Her choir was young and vibrant, active and diverse, and operating with a respectable number of participants. What became apparent during our conversation was the indefinite and random use of the term ‘community choir’, as we were evidently discussing two different animals. I was investigating long-standing community choral organizations that were non-select and possibly socially-constructed in their foundation and purpose. She was talking about newer choirs that targeted singers with experience and training, essentially choral organizations that are more select and require audition for membership.

This introduces an interesting issue in the present discussion of community choirs: if a community choir requires some sort of audition
for participation, what effect does that have on the potential membership? By having selective auditions, can a choir be truly representative of the local community? Is this perhaps a bold dividing line for community-based choirs, or just two different paths toward an end goal of community choral participation and performance?

To audition or not

With the purpose of exploring audition requirements for choirs, I accessed the Vocal Area Network (VAN) website for choirs and vocal ensembles operating in the various communities of the greater New York City area. Over 300 choral groups are listed on this website, where browsers can view concert dates and programme information on joining choirs, rehearsal nights, etc. Each choir provides a brief description of their ensemble, the type of repertoire they perform, audition requirements and links to their home page.

Reading through the choirs’ advertisements uncovers a range of terminology used in describing the various choral groups. Some choirs call themselves ‘semi-professional’, ‘professional chamber group’, and ‘skilled musicians and trained singers’, while others claim anything from ‘elite amateur singers’ and ‘select ensemble’ to ‘auditioned voluntary choir’ or ‘talented group of experienced volunteers’.

Nearly all of the 300 choirs seeking new members require some type of audition, which ranges from vocalizing to sight-reading. Some descriptors of the necessary skills and experience for an auditioning singer include ‘good’ to ‘exceptional sight-reading skills’, ‘excellent tone quality’ and ‘ability (and desire) to blend with other singers’. Still other choirs seek ‘adventurous singers’ with ‘confident vocalism’. Some choirs (under twenty) approach the audition process with caution, as if not to discourage potential singers. Auditions are described as ‘informal’ or ‘friendly and not strenuous’, and ‘a love of choral singing and some prior choral singing experience’ is desired. Singers may be ‘tested for their vocal range’ or asked to ‘match a few pitches or sing a simple tune such as “My country ’tis of thee”’. ‘You do not need to read music or even be a good sight-reader,’ declares one description, continuing, ‘you do need an ability to carry a tune, a love of singing, and a willingness to blend your voice with others.’

There are hardly any community choirs listed on the VAN website that do not require auditions. Obviously, a non-auditioned choir is open to anyone who can attend the rehearsal. Sometimes referred to as the ‘come y’all choir’, non-auditioned choral groups are prevalent in many churches, but only occasionally found in the community and in colleges. One chorus not requiring auditions states, ‘No dues, no auditions – just a love of great music is required’, while another says, ‘We have a NO AUDITION policy (we think YOU should audition US!)’ One other choir claims:

No audition! Everyone welcome! All ages! ‘Non-singers’ too… We are a non-sectarian chorus open to anyone who wants to sing. We believe that everyone ought to have a place to sing, and that singing strengthens the community by drawing its members together in mutual respect and enjoyment of the many styles of music that represent their varied backgrounds.
We sing everything from Mozart to Motown and we perform two concerts a year to standing room only crowds.

(all quotations VAN 2007)

The investigation of the VAN website demonstrates that there are only a handful of choirs listed that do not require an audition. Are there other choirs like these, without a web listing, that operate ‘under the radar’? What kind of choirs are they? Who directs them, and what is their repertoire? More importantly, how does a non-auditioned community choir sound? Several answers are provided in choral vignette #1: a community choir with no audition requirements.

Choral vignette #1: ‘East End Community Chorus’

Over a twenty year period, Bruce directed the East End Community Chorus. Bruce was a music faculty member in the local public schools, and founded the chorus via the sponsorship of the school district’s community education programme. This connection proved useful in utilizing the middle school auditorium for rehearsal and performance. Furthermore, Bruce’s access to talented secondary school students allowed him to pull together small orchestras to accompany the Chorus in performances of shorter major works, such as the Vivaldi and Rutter Gloria.

I attended several concerts of the East End Community Chorus, because I had former church choir members singing with the group. Almost seventy-five singers squeezed onto the stage. The auditorium was filled with lively family members and friends, anxiously awaiting the concert. I was impressed at the energy and enthusiasm that flowed from the Chorus, and could tell that Bruce possessed a good handle on working with the non-auditioned adult singer. I thought their performances were respectable, as well as spirited. This was obviously a happy community of singers; my friends thoroughly enjoyed singing with Bruce.

After twenty years, Bruce felt it was time for a change, and stepped down from the podium. The search for a new leadership yielded two different directors over the next few years. Changes were attempted, to make the chorus more uniform, and auditions were instituted. Unhappy singers exited the door, the membership tumbled, and within four years, the East End Community Chorus folded.

This story is shared because it demonstrates how easy it is to topple an established and vital community music organization, because of pointless changes, poor leadership and lack of vision. An important aspect to this particular vignette is to ponder this question: how many adult singers cease to sing because a community choir suddenly requires auditions? Taking this thought to a different level, by requiring auditions, are we actually denying adult singers a place to sing?

Consider these comments from adult singers who participated in a recent study of an amateur symphonic choir in Australia. Here is a choir observed in transition, as the group struggles with the balance of being a long-standing community organization that hired a new director with
'greater' ambitions. Upon being cut from the group, former members made comments:

I was devastated really. For a long time afterwards I was quite sad about it. I miss the music. I miss being associated with a group of people all working towards the one thing.

(Smith 2006: 303)

The letter came on Tuesday: don’t come back tomorrow... Fourteen years, and you’re dismissed in three days. I’ve paid to be a member until the end of the year. This was sort of an instant dismissal, as though you have done something bad.

(Smith 2006: 304)

Suppose one considers this choral audition/non-audition dilemma in the framework of the music educator’s favorite nemesis: the organized sports programme. Can one form a community sports team that does not require tryouts? Could a group of people – say twelve to fifteen – just ‘show’ at some local sports field on a Friday afternoon, wander onto a field and construct a coherent team to play a game of ball? The answer, of course, is yes. This occurs daily on grassy fields and blacktop lots. It is the framework of an elementary school gym class or recess hour, or a pick up game of basketball or beach volleyball: find a group of youngsters, divide into teams, locate a ball, make up some rules, play the game. It is only when we improve our game that we have try-outs or auditions for the team: the uncoordinated contender is cut, the average athlete sits on the B-team or warms the bench, and the best competitor plays the game. This ranking of athletic ability begins in junior high, as the sports coach, who is paid for his leadership and knowledge, requires that players wishing to join the team participate in try-outs, so he can assess and select team members by their natural athletic ability and performance potential. But where do you go if you do not ‘make the cut’ for a sports activity? Who is the coach, and what is his attitude toward these ‘leftover’ players? Choral vignette #2 provides us with insight on these questions.

**Choral vignette #2: a local choral society**

Jonathan had finished his degree in Music Education, and had all the makings of an up and coming choral conductor. Right out of college, this personable and musical young man secured a job as conductor of a local choral society. Over the years, the choral society had attracted many accomplished adult singers and even a well-known area conductor, who stayed with the group for 50 years. Performances of major works with an orchestra were common as the ranks swelled to over a hundred singers at one point. But now, in 2002, the situation was at a low point.

Long-time singers retired, some dedicated seniors hung on as board members, and a smattering of new community members were joining. The choral society had levelled off at about thirty non-auditioned people, many in their late seventies and early eighties. Of late, the group attracted new
members with diminished mental capacities, and, since no audition was required, little or no musical reading skills. However, they loved to sing. But the Mozart Requiem, which is what the Board suggested, was clearly out of their reach.

After some thought, Jonathan wisely selected one of Mozart’s Missa brevis. To support him, I attended several rehearsals during the fall. It was distressing. While Jonathan was an excellent musician with vision and drive, I realized that our conservatory-type music programme had failed to prepare him to work with the average adult learner. These singers were not former music majors from college, or even college graduates. Rehearsals which initially were fast-paced thrillers eventually slowed down to repetitive tedium, as a frustrated Jonathan ‘pounded notes’ for singers. Issues such as latecomers, casual chit-chat, poor lighting, missing accompanists and out-of-tune pianos all added up to a long Tuesday night in a dark and cold elementary school auditorium. Jonathan wisely filled out the voice sections with ‘ringers’, and while the performance was passable, the experience was extremely challenging for him as a young conductor. Jonathan continued the job for another year, and then resigned to focus his energy on his public school position.

In sharing this story with you, I wish to express two points. First, this choral society epitomizes the demographic concerns presented earlier: as the core singers aged, there was gradual erosion of a once glistening choral society to a barely functioning non-select group of singers. Then, in its struggle for survival, the choral society allowed anybody to join rehearsals, without adjusting the performance expectations. A choral group of thirty non-auditioned singers cannot sustain a Mozart Requiem. Would requiring vocal auditions have helped attract new and trained singers from the community? It is difficult to speculate. Second, consideration must be given to the preparation provided in educating choral conductors to work effectively with varied levels of adult learners often mixed within one chorus.

The community music tradition: Dykema and Dewey revisited

It is helpful in this discussion to revisit the philosophical and social viewpoints of community music as expressed by past thinkers in education, particularly as, of late, there has been a resurgence of consideration focusing on earlier themes of democracy and music education, issues of social justice and equality, and the idea of music education as community. How do these viewpoints augment the present discussion and definition of a community choir?

Former Music Educators National Conference MENC National President Peter Dykema was stalwart in directing the promotion of community music in the early 1900s. Informal or community singing, Dykema (1916) claimed, is probably most characteristic of the democratic movement. Early twentieth century community singing was ‘not a movement primarily for the study of music, or the mastering of technique,’ but ‘rather the using of that natural love and command of music which everyone possesses and which, when rendered collectively by a large group, is surprisingly efficient, even with comparatively difficult music’ (Dykema 1916: 222). In an encouraging plug for democratic
purposes of music-making. Dykema declared that community music gives ‘the opportunity to every man and woman for free and frequent participation in music, especially in choral singing with great groups of people’ (1916: 223).

Nevertheless, the legitimate music educator surfaces, and Dykema advocated that ‘the community music movement…is stressing the necessity of serious choral study’ (223). Dykema unwittingly fashioned a dual value set for community choirs and their singers: those that have the ‘natural love and command of music’ (222), and those that ‘necessitate serious choral study’ (223). Can it be that after a hundred years of co-existing, community choirs founded under the premise of ‘free and frequent participation in music’ have disappeared from view, having surrendered the choral performance realm to those organizations with demanding audition requirements?

Consider for a moment the opinions of education philosopher John Dewey, ideas that inform and shape our core values in American education. P.G. Woodford reminded us that Dewey ‘envisioned a community of cooperative inquirers where each individual is empowered to contribute according to his or her own abilities in a spirit of service to others’ (2005: 3). Does this not describe a chorus operating under the label of community, where each singer offers what she or he is able, with the primary benefit being for all members to share in the making of music in the community?

But it appears that many community choirs have abandoned this Deweyian objective, by the mere act of having selective or even competitive auditions. Dewey did not imagine any kind of educational community where only the best and most talented were selected for inclusion. Viewed from Dewey’s educational perspective, when an adult singer volunteers to be in a chorus, and is declined membership based on an audition, there is a breach of a fundamental democratic right. So in the quest for choral performance perfection, are not some community choirs actually marginalizing adult amateur singers by requiring auditions that are designed to attract just the talented, such as post-collegiate music majors?

My inquiry leads me to believe that many community-based choirs evolve into mini musical cultures that are exclusive, and far removed from the original twentieth century vision of community music organizations. The exclusiveness is evident in the descriptors offered by current community choral groups: semi-professional; qualified singers who sight-read; outstanding vocalists; elite amateur singers.

This is not to say that choirs should never have auditions, or a mission statement that suggests pursuance of high quality choral performance. As a singer, I have auditioned for choirs; as a choral director, I have conducted auditions. Most choral directors worth their salt believe in excellence in choral performance, and strive for that goal with their membership. But even excellence is a continuum. I believe there need to be more open-ended community choral ensembles that welcome all voices to partake in the joy of singing. In examining the VAN website, it is evident that there are too few community choirs available to the general public of singers, and these types of ensembles (‘come y’all choir’) are disappearing from our communities.
Music education as community: choir as community
Estelle Jorgensen, a current voice in American music education philosophy, authored a very provocative article entitled *Music Education as Community* (1995). In sketching her music education model, Jorgensen examined the idea of community as place, viewed psychologically, socially, and conceptually:

Community as place provides a sense of interconnectedness with others, their ideas and practices. The belief that one is part of a large group of persons, that one has something to offer and something to take from others, that one is interdependent with others for comfort, personal affirmation, intellectual stimulation, a livelihood, goods and services, friendships and love, among a host of things contributes to one’s sense of personal identify and corporate cohesion.

(74)

Jorgensen goes on to state that community as place can provide a sense of empowerment. ‘Communities are dynamic, in the process of becoming alive, responding to and changing the world of which they are a part.’ Jorgensen said, adding: ‘That they can undertake corporate actions in a unified way empowers individual participants to accomplish more than they might otherwise be capable of alone’ (75).

The objective here is quite noble: a true democratic choral society, where each choir member is nourished in pursuit of his or her full musical potential. Should choruses marginalize the average adult amateur singer from a universal experience of singing within a community, by raising the audition bar so high as to eliminate all but the musically elite? The answer, in my opinion, is no.

British music educator Colin Durrant has researched diverse aspects of the choral phenomenon, and cast a Darwinian comparison in a manner that was quite dispiriting to choral conductors. In reflecting on reports and anecdotal conversations in the United Kingdom, he warned us that ‘there is an argument that choral singing in the essentially Western (and largely classical) style and genre is a pedagogical dinosaur’ (2000: 40). Durrant’s comment certainly merits further investigation by those community choirs that are established in this vein. What is their foreseeable future? How will we continue to provide meaningful and quality singing experiences for adults, either in the Western classical style or some other variation of a choral model?

In following this stream of thought on its course from Dewey to Durrant, one arrives at a not-so-unexpected place: the door of higher education, which is responsible for stirring up the next generation of music teachers and choral conductors. What kind of example is provided for our student conductors? What is their mindset when they create their own rehearsal room and build choral communities? Are they prepared to respect the amateur musical experience, to crave and successfully direct such an experience? In an already overloaded baccalaureate degree, can higher education music faculty make it a goal to train new teachers to direct lifelong learning? Choral music educators are so busy preparing our future teachers for K-12
choral curricula that we practically ignore this artistic market of millions of graduates from our public schools who should continue singing in adult choirs. Given the increase in our expected lifespan and the growing population of retired people, I should think working with adults would be a core component of our education training programs. Choral vignette #3 – the story of a lifelong singer – underscores this point.

Choral vignette #3: the story of a lifelong singer

Joan has sung in choirs for 65 of her 75 years. The foundation of that lifelong singing stems from an exceptional experience in the treble singers at the local church. Six decades later, Joan enjoys telling the tales and stories of the youth choir, their trips to see the opera, the repertoire they sang, the pride they felt, the lifelong friendships that last to this day. Several deep roots grew from this elementary-level choral experience in the early 1940s. Joan had four children, and in her house, music was not an option, but an expectation. ‘You’ll like singing in the choir,’ she told her children, as they signed in at the first rehearsal.

Over the years, Joan’s participation in choirs in the community – mainly church-related, but also in the secular realm – is a résumé of respectable performance for a good amateur singer, a lifelong musical learner. There was singing of the great masterworks – Messiah, Elijah, Creation, Vivaldi’s Gloria – numerous Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and infinite special performances of both sacred and secular standards, including hymn-sings, patriotic services and popular music programmes. When not holding her folder in the alto section, Joan’s non-musical duties represent the epitome of the volunteer work ethic in a community choir: secretary of the choir, planner of dinners and parties, maker of coffee, marcher in parades, coordinator of choir festivals, arranger of carolling, sorter of music, cleaner of closets – endless, and sometimes thankless, administrative duties that keep volunteer choirs going. She is an amateur choir director’s dream alto: experienced singer, reads music, carries a tune, blends with other altos, no big vibrato or ego, arrives early, stays late, marks her music, laughs at the jokes, reserves comments for private – a sensitive singer who brings both life and organization to a choir.

But Joan has never auditioned for a choir. If she had to audition for membership in a choir, she would not do it. She may love to sing, but she lacks that personal self-confidence to sing alone. In nearly seven decades of amateur choral singing, she has never performed an audition. I confirmed again from her: ‘If you had to audition to be in a choir, would you do it?’ And she said: ‘No, I would quit. I am not that good a singer.’

While I feel her perception of her musical abilities is skewed and should have been altered by some caring choir director along the way, I tell this story to stress my point: if non-auditioned community-based choirs had not been available to Joan, she would not have this rich, lifelong experience of choral singing.

When community choral directors allow all comers to participate in a cooperative group effort (a choir) that results in serving the larger community (in a broad sense) then we are practising the most basic and fundamental democratic principles. This idea of service is two-pronged: it is, first of all, service to the choir, through volunteerism; but
also service to the entire community via performance. It allows people not only to receive individually the art of music but to share the art with others: the true democratic spirit. When choral conductors establish a democratic tone for their groups, they demonstrate how to mould assorted voices and abilities into a coherent body of singers, a cohesive assembly that embraces and extends the dynamic power of amateur singing into a community setting.

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Lifelong learners in music; research into musicians’ biographical learning

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Abstract

This article considers four learning biographies from professional musicians. Each musician holds a different portfolio career and is from a different age category. The key questions I ask are: 'How does one learn as a musician?', 'What knowledge, attitudes, values and artistic skills are necessary to function effectively and creatively as a contemporary musician?', and 'What is the necessary framework of lifelong learning in music education?' My findings are analysed in the light of lifelong learning for musicians with a focus toward teaching and learning.

I Background

Lifelong learning may be defined as a concept spanning an entire lifetime in a process of 'transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and the senses' (Jarvis 2002: 60). The lifelong learning concept goes further than 'continuing education': it is an important conceptual framework for the improvement of people's employability and adaptability.

The participants in this study were chosen based on the premise that people are rarely employed in one job for life. Today's musician is increasingly an entrepreneur having a 'portfolio career', comprising simultaneous or successive, brief and/or part-time periods of employment in different areas of the music profession. Musicians having portfolio careers combine different professional roles. The most common combination in a portfolio career is that of a performer and a teacher.

In this paper I will focus on four musicians with portfolio careers from different age categories and address their teaching and learning. Before exploring their learning biographies, some critical issues of biographical learning which need to be taken into account in the analysis will be defined. After that, outcomes of the biographical research will be examined in relation to the concept of lifelong learning.

Learning underpinned by biography

A 'biographical' approach to learning can be of great benefit when researching learning styles, including those in music. Biographical learning can be described as learning about the (trans)formations of experiences, knowledge and one's actions in life-wide connections (Alheit and Dausien 2002).
Autobiographical awareness, meaning a person’s idea of his or her identity, is of central importance (Antikainen et al 1996). Significant parts of a life story actually form a musician’s identity (including the professional identity); within the concept of lifelong learning, personal and professional development is closely interconnected. It is of importance to look at the interviewees’ assessment of their education: the question of whether they have acquired skills and attitudes that they consider to be part of their self-concept needs to be addressed (ibid).

**Significant learning**
Carl Rogers (1969: 280) describes significant learning as ‘pervasive learning which is not just an accretion of knowledge, but which interpenetrates with every portion of his existence’. It is learning making a difference in terms of actions chosen, attitudes and personality. Significant learning experiences can be seen as pivotal moments in the biography. Arie Antikainen (1998: 218) describes them as ‘those which appeared to guide the interviewee’s life-course, or to have changed or strengthened his or her identity’. A significant learning experience is always a change event and the situations from which the learning experiences originate are important. They can take place in informal, non-formal and formal learning situations. It means that the context where the experience took place needs to be taken into account (Jarvis 2002).

Significant others of learning (Antikainen et al 1996) play a role in this context, referring to supportive personal, professional and social relations with people. In relation to significant learning experiences and significant others in learning the concept of empowerment emerges, referring to ‘an experience that changes an individual’s understanding of him or herself and/or the world’ (ibid: 91).

**Critical incidents and reflection**
Critical incidents and educational interventions can be of great importance to a learning biography. Critical incidents can be described as often special and demanding events in the life, education or career span that can lead to deep transformative learning processes and to changes in the identity of the learner. Anthony Giddens (1991: 143) speaks of ‘fateful moments’, defining them as transition points which in the end have major implications for a person’s self-identity.

Reflexivity and the degree of critical reflection are of importance in the learning biography. Reflexivity is closely related to learning and the development of the self-identity as described by Giddens: ‘the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography’ (53). Reflexivity entails an instinctual response and awareness. In his seminal work, Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Donald Schön (1987) makes a distinction by connecting reflexivity to ‘reflection-in-action’ and critical reflection to ‘reflection-on-action’. We reflect-in-action, according to Schön, when we can still make a difference to the situation at hand, reshaping by means of our thinking what we are doing while we are doing it. Reflection-in-action is a process we can deliver without being able to say what we are doing. Reflection means gaining knowledge about oneself while looking back on experiences so as to learn from them. Critical reflection takes a further step:
it analyses, reconsiders, monitors and questions such experiences in a
broad range of contexts.

Communities of practice
In his book, Communities of Practice, Learning, Meaning and Identity,
Etienne Wenger (1998) focuses on learning as social participation,
where participants construct their identities in relation to communities
of practice. Wenger distinguishes four interconnected components, 'meaning'
(learning as experience), 'practice' (learning as doing), 'community'
(learning as belonging) and 'identity' (learning as becoming). A commu-
nity of practice integrates these components. The concept of 'legitimate
peripheral participation' is pivotal in this theory, being linked to the kind
of practice learning that is comparable to an apprentice relationship.
Within legitimate peripheral participation the learner learns through
participation in a community of practice, starting in a peripheral posi-
tion and gradually participating in the community’s activities, learning
cognitively, emotionally and socially and slowly reaching a more central
position, finally achieving full membership in the community. Wenger
points out that learning transforms who we are and what we do and
speaks in this context about a 'transformative practice of a learning
community' (215) as one which offers an ideal context for developing
new understandings.

II  The biographies – four musicians as lifelong learners
Outcomes of the biographies are explored below. First, concepts of learning
are addressed, followed by concepts of teaching, and finally, other bio-
ographical issues which influenced the musicians' teaching and learning
are explored.

The four musicians were:

• Arne (1973), violist, improvising musician, composer, entrepreneur and
  member of a cross-genre string quartet
• Diana (1966), jazz singer and pianist, and vocal teacher in a few music
  colleges
• Jesse (1958), principal French horn player in a world famous orchestra
  and principal study teacher at a music college
• Joe (1936), former principal cellist in an orchestra and until recently
  teacher in the junior department of a music college.

Informal learning
Informal learning played a significant role in the case of three of the four
musicians. Influences came from folk music, pop bands and the church
but not so much through classical music. Arne and Diana were improvis-
ing from early childhood onwards. Joe only discovered the relevance of
improvising at a later age. Jesse also learned aurally when he started to
play in a wind band. As a teenager Diana started playing in a 'wedding
band' of 13 year-old kids. She tells: ‘We played the music of the day. Our
band consisted of a trumpet player (also playing the guitar), a drummer
and a musician that could actually take up any instrument. I had a chord
synthesizer, which I put on top of the organ that also had bass pedals.
We learned music from the radio or tape, or from sheet music. If music was not available in print yet, we listened and copied it ourselves.

Experiences in formal education

The experiences of the interviewees’ formal studies at the music college differed: the youngest musician, Arne, went to a college offering various disciplines, where he took up the jazz violin. He was pleased with the opportunities for ‘shopping’ in order to learn in a differentiated way: ‘I played with different people, and that was interesting. Actually I think I enlarged my toolbox: in counterpoint, by playing the violin, in ensembles, in groups, in improvisation. I integrated everything I learned into my composing. I felt challenged and there was space to be challenged.’ Diana studied classical piano at the music college for three and a half years but she did not graduate, because she basically could not find what she was looking for, which was playing jazz. In the end she worked things out on her own.

Jesse felt enriched by his study at the music college mainly because there were many possibilities to learn on the job, e.g. each year he had the opportunity to play as a soloist with the provincial orchestra. On the other hand he also felt that there were many skills he did not learn during his studies, and which he badly needed once he was in the midst of the profession (for example coping with stage fright). Joe had mixed feelings: he was trained in the former Czechoslovakia, in a prescriptive and tough system. The school was enormously demanding and not enough attention was paid to acquiring the fundamentals. The fact that Joe had just begun to play the cello (at the age of fifteen) was never taken into account and this would eventually lead to serious physical problems with his left hand, which would remain an obstacle throughout his life.

Learning by doing

All four musicians felt they were learning by doing throughout their lives. Specifically in this area, significant learning experiences took place. Arne began, after graduation, to play as a sideman in several groups of jazz and improvised music. He learned a great deal, especially in this role. Examples were conceptual contemporary jazz, Indian music and playing with African musicians. He found his true pathway in the ‘Zapp String Quartet’, which specialized in playing improvised music, jazz, rock, ethnic music, contemporary music and all kinds of combinations of these styles, with the classical string quartet tradition organically interwoven in it. All the members had a background in improvisation. Jesse took up conducting and contacted his old teacher. ‘He taught ten amateur conductors, all of whom had their own orchestras. Each week a different orchestra would show up, and when it was your turn you would conduct your own orchestra in front of the teacher and the other students. After the rehearsal a bottle of jenever was put on the table and we had our evaluations till midnight.’

In these biographies there are an abundance of examples of the musicians just ‘jumping in’ and learning from their experience. As we saw, Wenger uses the term legitimate peripheral participation in order to clarify the changing connotation of the concept of apprenticeship to one of learning through participation in a community of practice. John Sloboda (1999)
makes some crucial observations in this field. He mentions that ‘highly valued experiences’ hardly ever occur during music lessons or in the presence of a teacher, but in ‘time off tasks’ (451).

**Artistic learning**

It is interesting to observe how the artistic learning of the musicians is often connected to values concerning the relationship they have had with other musicians. Most of the musicians first and foremost learned artistically from peers. The musicians Arne wrote for were important for him, as knowing who they were helped to give a sense of direction to his composing. ‘I am not the kind of composer who writes not bothering who will be playing it. The performers are important, critical even. The better musicians improvise, the less I write down. For me it is of great importance to have a good relationship with and a feel for the musicians I write for.’

Schön’s reflection-in-action is relevant in the case of Arne’s improvising string quartet. Schön gives the example of improvising jazz musicians. They reflect not in words, but ‘through a feel for music’ (1983: 56). In such processes reflection tends to focus interactively on the outcomes of the action, the action itself, and the intuitive knowing implicit in the action. Schön’s concept of artistry, which he defines as ‘the competence by which practitioners actually handle indeterminate zones of practice’ (1987: 13), is related to tacit knowledge as displayed by all four musicians. When a practitioner displays artistry, according to Schön, his intuitive knowing is always richer in understanding, awareness and insight than any description of it. It is *caught* and not *taught*.

A strong example of artistry and tacit knowledge is Jesse’s description of his cooperation with the chief conductor: ‘I sensed that he understood what I felt like inside. I knew it by the way I saw him reacting when I played my very first note during the audition. When he makes an ever so small gesture with his little finger I know exactly what he means. And I react in such a way that he will know: “that is exactly what I had in mind”. No words need to be spoken.’

**Communities of practice**

The environments as described by Arne, and also by Jesse in the description of his orchestra, resemble a true artistic laboratory. They fit the description of Wenger’s (1998) ‘communities of practice’. Arne relates: ‘It is a kind of interesting exchange: other musicians come with compositions, material, which we play and consider, analyse and discuss. Playing together and listening to each other is for me a wonderful way to learn. That generates a constant exchange of information and energy with your fellow musicians.’

…and to Jesse’s description of working in his orchestra: ‘You learn to develop antennae that receive everything and transmit this to you so that you can respond. All these antennae in our orchestra are directed towards each other. The better this works, the better the orchestra is. We have a tremendous feeling of musical empathy. Everyone recognizes each other’s colour and sound; everyone listens to each other’s sound. That is the secret of everything. You catch someone’s sound and the sound catches you.’
Musicians’ views of their teachers
Three of the four musicians are also well-known pedagogues. How did the musicians perceive their teachers and how does their own practice inform their teaching? What is of importance for them in their teaching? As one-to-one teaching is common practice in music, the relationship with the teacher is critical and pivotal. The experiences of the musicians differed greatly. Arne was very pleased with his principal study teacher: ‘He was a fine pedagogue, also someone who felt the psychological side of things really well; he kept motivating me.’

Diana described the role of her teachers in college, saying: ‘One teacher listened well to the questions you had, and would show you things; the other one behaved like a star – he could scream and yell if he heard things he did not like. It gave me the same feeling of failing as in maths.’

Jesse was full of gratitude about his teacher. But he also related: ‘I remember when I was still quite young I once had a lesson where he found out that I had not practised a transposition of a certain study. My teacher walked into the canteen and made sure the students could hear the dressing-down he gave me, asking me if I realized that I cost my parents a lot of money, so next time I would know better. I am a teacher myself now and I have to say that if I worked nowadays in the same way as he did, I am afraid I would not keep my job.’

Joe told how he was scared of his teacher and loved him at the same time, because he felt really cared for. Nevertheless this teacher went quite far in intervening in the private lives of his students. Joe related: ‘He was the “strict father” type. His students did not dare have a relationship with a girl. He immediately knew when you had a date!’ The teacher even tried to influence his students’ choices of spouse, as he had strong ideas about the kind of wife a talented musician needed.

Helena Gaunt (2005) performed a case study on one-to-one teaching. The intensity of the relationship between teacher and student often broke down elements of formality and lasting friendships emerged. At its best it was fulfilling, creative and inspiring, but it could also be volatile and damaging. Gaunt noticed that teaching styles can work well for one student and have a negative impact, creating a low self-esteem and a sense of failure, for the other. The degree of distance between teacher and student seemed to be in the control of the teacher.

The musicians’ views on their own teaching
The main thing Diana learned from teaching was: ‘How to relate to people. I learned from teaching how to practice. I learned about myself while teaching. It makes me reflective.’ And Jesse: ‘I want to learn from my students. I want to help them to develop into the musicians that they really are. I tell them not to focus only on orchestras, but to have many strings to their bow.’ Joe’s students are a strong incentive for him to continue learning: ‘I have taught remarkable talents during my career. Teaching a very talented person is quite difficult. They are mostly not easy or disciplined. You often see that they have problems functioning as artists, but I am able to let go when the time has come.’
Other biographical issues which informed musicians’ teaching and learning

Significant others exist for all of the musicians interviewed and often consist of other musicians. For Jesse they consisted of the musician who taught him to conduct and the conductor of his orchestra. For Arne they are the musicians he works with closely. Diana met a few people in her life that enabled her to develop along her pathway of informal learning. In a few cases significant others were the musicians’ own teachers.

Significant parental support was there for all of them. None of the musicians’ parents were professional musicians.

Critical incidents and educational interventions

Three of the four musicians had serious profession-related health problems. It is interesting to examine their coping strategies, the interventions they undertook and the successive empowerment that took place, giving them a strong incentive for strengthening their professional identity. Diana suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome. It was a nightmare for her as two operations were needed before she could slowly start to play the piano again. Meanwhile, being convinced that she would never be able to play again, she sank into depression, which disappeared once she discovered that she could actually sing. Nowadays she is both a professional jazz singer and a pianist. Her empowerment took place through the recognition of her own professional identity. She said: ‘People often assume I am (teaching) on a piano faculty. In all colleges I am on the voice faculty, and with each singer I work on piano as well. I have often wondered why I am nowhere (at a college) as a pianist and why I teach the voice everywhere. I realize now, after years of this, that there is a reason: I teach at the voice faculty not because I sing, but because I play piano! It took me a while to realize this.’

Joe had severe problems with his hand, due to a neglected technique. After an operation his left hand remained paralysed for a whole year. He did extensive therapy. The doctor treating him advised him to give up his performing career, which was tough for Joe: his ambition to be a soloist had been very clear. But Joe’s motivation to become a teacher then developed as a deeper, intrinsic one: ‘If I had not had these huge physical problems I would not have become such a good teacher. I was forced to reflect on all aspects of cello technique due to my own physical problems.’ It led to a strong empowerment: ‘...It was as if I’d been born again when I let go of my ambitions to be a soloist and became a teacher. It is so gratifying. It took me a long time to realize that this was what I wanted to do.’

A striking example came from Jesse. He had to cope with severe stage fright. His story describes powerful coping strategies within a community of practice. After more than twenty years of excellent playing in the orchestra he had a severe break down: he could not cope anymore with his stage fright and his feeling that he was perceived by his colleagues as a rock who could not fail. He solved his problems by addressing the taboo. ‘When this happened I contacted the orchestra immediately and asked for help. I was completely open with them. I asked them to put me on the track of colleagues who suffer from the same problems. The management reacted very well. I now talk with both colleagues and a professional...
therapist. I am still in the process of recovery. It takes its time, but talking helps. I should have started this years before … You never hear anything about this in the music college. They will talk about posture and muscles, about all the physical stuff. But the fact that one can feel half sick because one has to go on stage is never an issue. I talk openly with my students about that kind of fear, it is extremely important.’

**Critical reflection**

All the musicians were reflective, and were able to make sense of the relationship between their personal and artistic development. Arne felt that he was where he was because he had always been cocky enough to follow his intuition and pursue his pathway with an independent mind. ‘Sometimes I feel that the fact I like to do so many different things might be my weak point, but then I realize that I find it more important to experience depth.’ And Diana said: ‘One day I wanted to be a big star, now I understand that it is more about a long road of growth. That in itself is an important learning process for me.’

### III Conclusions and recommendations

Some conclusions can be drawn from this research relating to educational approaches and adaptive learning environments in music colleges that encompass lifelong learning in music.

First of all, maintaining a strong relationship with the professional field and an effective network of relevant partners is fundamental, and the development of educational practice in the conceptual framework of lifelong learning should take place in association with such professional organizations. Moreover this educational practice should be relevant to the current and changing cultural landscape, exploring different contexts, being intervention-oriented, leading to relevant learning experiences, and illuminating attitudes and values.

Then there are implications for the curricula. A curriculum emerging from the conceptual framework of lifelong learning is based on acquiring competences, requires team-teaching and receives feedback from external partners. It values both tradition and change. It is reflective of the outside world and it re-evaluates existing knowledge.

Teachers are pivotal within transformative processes and thus to implementing the concept of lifelong learning: success of change is highly dependent on teachers’ competences. Teachers are powerful role models for students; they model the musician’s future career by demonstrating a capacity to adapt to change and put this into practice as a professional. Without this example students are not likely to be motivated to become lifelong learners.

For students a personal development plan should be central, leading to a relevant development of their portfolio and guided by teachers whose roles are as mentors. Self-management should be encouraged by asking basic questions such as: ‘What do I want to contribute as a musician to the society?’, and ‘Where do my strengths lie?’. In short, questions of identity should be facilitated. By providing a challenging learning environment that reflects the realities of the workplace, encompassing informal learning in non-formal learning contexts and connecting to strategic partnerships,
the music college can provide a living, experimental and experiential experience for its students.

**Challenges for the Future**

New educational approaches within the context of lifelong learning should thus include collaboration with shared responsibility: cross-over within music disciplines using adaptive attitudes and communication skills; exploring and risk-taking in a safe environment; considering the music college as an artistic laboratory; entrepreneurship as essential to musicians and personal development emerging from an awareness of one’s identity as a musician.

Lifelong learning enables musicians to develop personal pathways that respect their individual identities while fostering self-exploration and reflection. When changes in society and musical life are regarded as challenges that can be addressed in a new way by using a new approach to learning, informed musicians can emerge, who can interact in different professional contexts, whose attitudes are open-minded and sensitive, who can listen and respond, who can be flexible and adapt, and for whom a culture of continuing professional development is a certainty.

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Suggested citation

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Intergenerational learning in a high school environment

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Abstract
Active living and continuing learning are important to the well-being of seniors. As the generation of so-called baby boomers approach retirement, the same public schools built to accommodate their compulsory schooling are now being considered as sites for intergenerational learning. This article explores one such project where seniors learning alongside adolescents work together in music performance, creating new types of relationships and learning practices.

Introduction
Intergenerational education programmes that bring young people together with older adults have been receiving greater attention in recent years yet limited systematic information is available on the experiences of participants and the potential benefits these programmes might provide (Dupuis 2002). Learning about oneself and about the conditions of life of an older or younger person are possible by-products of programmes that bring generations together. Additionally, these programmes seek to promote and enhance the learning of skills and the development of a body of knowledge by drawing on the fellowship fostered between younger and older persons to illuminate a particular subject matter (Manheimer 1997).

In January 1994, I initiated a music instruction programme for seniors (retired men and women) and middle-aged adults, teaching them to perform on woodwind, brass and percussion instruments in a concert band setting. The programme is housed at LaSalle Secondary School in Kingston, Ontario. The course runs for two hours each morning, five days a week for the entire school year and has been in continuous operation since its inception. There are over 70 adult students enrolled, most of whom are between the ages of 65 and 85. It is a fully funded programme sponsored by Ontario Ministry of Education through the local school board. The adults are registered as daytime high school students in the same manner as adolescent students. The curriculum of study is based on the same Ministry of Education guidelines that are in place for the delivery of performance based instrumental music courses at the high school level. Many of the adult learners start ‘from scratch’. That is, they have never played the instrument that they are learning and/or they have never played any musical instrument. Those on the programme learn to read and apply music notation as well as develop competent practical skills on a wind instrument in the same manner as any adolescent would when enrolled on an instrumental music course. In addition to receiving

Keywords
intergenerational lifelong learning social identity community of practice age stereotyping
instruction, the class functions as a concert band which performs many concerts during the academic year. Many of the musicians continue to perform in this band during the summer months by meeting at another location outside of LaSalle School, and hiring a conductor to lead their rehearsals and summer concerts. The Adult Band (as it is known in the secondary school) frequently performs with the adolescent band in class and concert settings.

Throughout the history of the band it has included adolescent students both of LaSalle Secondary School and, on occasion, of other schools as part of the class. They play alongside their much older peers exchanging comments about fingerings and music as well as about clothing and even the occasional joke. Although the band runs from 9:45 to 11:45 each day, the high school students arrive and leave according to their class schedule, fitting naturally into the group. High school students may use the class for ‘peer tutoring’ credit or as a registered music student on the course. By their very presence as equal-valued group members, perhaps these adolescents no longer consider themselves ‘outsiders’ in a group of seniors and, in the same vein, the seniors no longer consider themselves outsiders in a high school of teens.

In this paper I will explore the literature relating to current intergenerational programmes and theories describing how the LaSalle programme relates to those theories and epitomizes in practice true intergenerational interaction.

**Literature review and the LaSalle model**

Jerry Loewen (1996) gave five examples of intergenerational programmes. Each type encompasses different intergenerational interactions. These are: curriculum-based; relationship-based; reciprocal relations; community-based and authentic work. He suggested that the more of these characteristics that are prominent in a particular intergenerational programme, the more successful and enriching the programme will be for its participants.

**Curriculum-based interaction**

Loewen explained that a key component of an intergenerational association in a classroom is the notion that a learning activity has value because it is recognized as a course. There is a perception that organized learning material delivered by a teacher gives greater value to the activities than if it were a group organized in a non-school- based programme. ‘For better or for worse, the institutional value of student assessment is stamped in this project, thus legitimizing it in the same way as a unit in history, French or math’ (Loewen 1996: 26). Whether the programme is interest-based, credit-based or non-credit-granting or even if a person is only auditing a programme, the structuring of the learning environment as a course gives an impression of importance and/or legitimacy.

As described in the introduction, the seniors are registered as students in the same manner as adolescents according to Ministry of Education guidelines. There are, however, not the same stringent academic requirements for the seniors because the courses are not used as a means for the attainment of a secondary school diploma. As with those seniors who audit courses in colleges or universities, it is the delivery of a course, in
an organized manner by a qualified/licensed teacher, having in attendance those students (adolescents/young adults) who are being granted credits for matriculation, which provides a legitimacy that otherwise would not be present, as in a community band for example. The interaction of the seniors as learners alongside adolescents as co-learners but with the added concern of credit and marks attainment, creates a classroom setting which is energetic, focused, and vibrant for both age cohorts.

**Relationship-based interaction**

Loewen described all learning as a relational endeavour between teacher/student and student/student.

The relationship with the teacher, mentor or fellow student may have far greater impact on one’s motivation to learn. Therefore, intergenerational learning programs need to cultivate this necessity and take advantage of its growth. Caring relationships which can motivate learning by merely placing ‘nice’ adults and adolescents in the same room are unlikely to blossom without a structure and means to foster this goal.

What Loewen is arguing here is the notion that learning programmes need to be designed to encompass the interaction and association of multi-age groups which have all members as equals in a learning activity. In this way, more ‘caring relationships’ will be fostered, not only by the sharing of ideas through learning, but also socially through an increase in social contact of different-aged students.

In the intergenerational band class at LaSalle, students and seniors are involved in a collaborative music learning environment. The act of ensemble playing is the activity in which musicians strive collectively to ensure that the execution of a musical phrase or passage is done in conjunction with an awareness of the other musical parts being played by other musicians in the ensemble. This collaboration requires verbal interaction before, after and sometimes during the rehearsing of a certain passage. Sharing of ideas and thoughts through dialogue, about how a passage is to be played, and helping one another achieve the intended musical sound or phrase can only be done through intense collaborative relationships. Nel Noddings (1992) explained the necessity of dialogue in caring relationships in learning environments in this following passage:

> Dialogue permits us to talk about what we try to show. It gives learners opportunities to question ‘why,’ and helps both parties arrive at well-informed decisions. …It connects us to each other and helps to maintain caring relations. It also provides us with the knowledge of each other that forms a foundation for response in caring (23).

The intensity of this activity is marked by a sense of care: care about how one performs a passage and care about how one’s performance fits into the ensemble. This caring relationship is fostered by the interactions of the musicians in dialogues with one another.
These dialogues can be musical, verbal and/or physical. The interaction of musician and conductor is an example of a physical dialogue. Eye contact and body gestures of both musician and conductor are needed for the interpretation of what should happen musically. These dialogues are also social interactions, which are initiated and supported by the curriculum-based design of a credit-oriented classroom music learning course.

**Reciprocal relations interaction**

Loewen made a clear distinction between community-based programmes and/or service learning programmes and intergenerational learning programmes. He suggested that community service and service learning programmes that featured intergenerational interaction were very often lacking in reciprocity. Loewen meant that the focus on one group over another group is evident. He viewed this lack of reciprocal interaction as a common failing feature in many intergenerational settings.

Taking ten middle school students to the soup kitchen or nursing home provides a service for the patrons while the students may or may not take some intangible lesson from the activity. The activity is primarily a one way venture. Just as adolescents need to be valued and seen as helpful, so too do the older people in these programmes. In the best programmes the lines between those served and those serving are blurred to the point of irrelevance. To achieve the greatest learning possible, both adults and adolescents can offer expertise and the need to acquire knowledge. The learning process needs to be as dynamic as possible.

(Loewen 1996: 29)

The intergenerational music learning programme at LaSalle supports reciprocity between generations. Each student, regardless of age, can act as teacher or learner by either receiving or giving help in the forms of musical knowledge and personal support. Even among professional musicians it is common for them to seek constructive criticism and advice from their musical colleagues in terms of solving technical and musical problems and discussion of musical ideas. In the band class at LaSalle, the sharing of musical knowledge among the musicians is an ongoing, constant and reciprocal process. The act of good music-making requires all participants to be continuously listening, analysing, and critiquing what they are doing musically, as well as what others are doing. In this way, the best possible collaboration can take place. In the intergenerational programme at LaSalle, musical collaboration is achieved through reciprocal relationships between generations who share common objectives: to learn and perform music.

**Community-based interactions**

Loewen explained that intergenerational learning programmes support a better understanding of the participants’ community. When adolescents are involved with seniors in a learning activity, the classroom can be a forum for the sharing of the life experiences of the adults. ‘After all, the adults with the most to offer about the real world are not in the schools, but out in the community’ (1996: 30). For most adolescents, their involvement with adults in a school context is in the form of adults having
authoritative positions as teachers, disciplinarians, and role models. The interaction between adolescents and adults usually has the structure of adults having positions of authority and being focal points of knowledge, and the students receiving this knowledge. The exposure of adolescents in a public school system to an age group older than that of their teachers is very rare. In a non-school context the interactions of adolescents and seniors is also rare (Williams and Harwood 2004) which will be discussed later in this paper. Associations of multi-age cohorts in social and/or learning activities that do not have one group in an authoritative or leadership role over another group are not common.

The music programme at LaSalle that incorporates seniors and adolescents as equals in music learning activities seems to break down the student/teacher, adult/adolescent hierarchies that are common when interactions of multi-age cohorts occur, either inside or outside of school settings. At LaSalle, the involvement of seniors in a music classroom brings a view of the community that includes all ages. As an example, when the band prepares music for a Remembrance Day Ceremony (Canadian equivalent of Memorial Day), the elderly students are living witnesses to events that occurred in history. Even though the adult participants in the programme at LaSalle are learners on a school course with adolescents, the adults, by the very nature of their age and experience, bring into the classroom a broader range of life experiences.

This intergenerational learning programme can also be considered as a community of practice as described by Etienne Wenger. Wenger’s social theory of learning describes four components that ‘are necessary to characterize social participation as a process of learning and of knowing’ (1998: 4). These components are: meaning; practice; community; and identity. Joan Russell summarized these four components.

Meaning refers to our experience of life and the world, and practice refers to our shared historical and social resources. Community refers to the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing, and our participation is recognizable as competence. Identity has to do with the ways in which learning creates personal histories for us in our communities. ‘Practice’—characterized by mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire—is the source of coherence of community.

(Russell 2002: 3)

Wenger’s concept of a community of practice offers a suitable framework for interpreting community-based interaction. An intergenerational music learning programme can be recognized as having the necessary traits of Wenger’s community of practice which are, in this site, centered around a performing music ensemble and classroom. Wenger gave examples of how communities of practice are everywhere. ‘Communities of practice are an integral part of our daily lives. They are so informal and so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit focus, but for the same reasons, they are also quite familiar’ (1998: 7). Wenger’s notion of communities of practice comes from his research into interactions between people in work-related environments. He explained that ‘workers organize their lives with their immediate colleagues to get their jobs done. In doing so, they develop or
preserve a sense of themselves they can live with, have some fun, and fulfill the requirements of their employers and clients' (1998: 6). He made the point that it is the workers’ day-to-day associations with each other that form these communities of practice. Wenger described associations of people, either in families, clubs or schools, also as communities of practice. Russell adopted Wenger’s notion of communities of practice as a framework for interpreting singing expertise in the Fiji Islands as a social learning phenomenon. She explained that the widespread ability to sing in harmony can be attributed largely to the support provided by communities of musical practice. She described this support as ‘constellations of communities of musical practice’ (2002: 5). Essentially, wherever there are people, there is song. On boats, in church, houses, schools, buses. As members of families, workers, students, each aspect of community provides support for song and the performance of music.

The intergenerational music programme at LaSalle can be described as a community of musical practice. This programme is a multi-layered collaborative learning site that promotes three major areas of interest regarding community, music learning and intergenerational issues.

**Authentic work interaction**

Loewen explained that

> many intergenerational programs are content with bringing young and old together, hoping that a ‘nice’ relationship sprouts up and that both parties go away with a warm feeling in their hearts as the biggest thing to show for their efforts.

(1996: 32)

He did not negate the point that feeling good about an intergenerational association is important but he continued by saying that there has to be something that is directed toward a ‘final “product” pertinent and worthy of great mental and physical energy’ (1996: 32). He claimed that this authentic work is only achieved by the act of intergenerational interaction in a learning environment. Loewen cited ‘Interlink’ as an example of an intergenerational programme that he considered to achieve this level of authentic work. Interlink is a programme sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association which involves combining student and community choral groups together. In many cities in Canada, Interlink sponsors the intergenerational interactions of seniors and children by using choral music performance as the focal point of their associations. The choirs initially rehearse separately but each member is paired up with a person from the other choir and letter writing is encouraged as a form of introduction and a means of fostering familiarity among choir members.

Preparation and rehearsals take place separately at first with much written correspondence (in the form of pen-pal type letter writing) between the young and elderly choral members taking place. At the point at which joint rehearsals seem appropriate and productive, the groups come together. A public concert and a series of smaller performances are conducted by this combined group.

(1996: 27)
Loewen described this type of intergenerational activity as ‘authentic work’ by saying it is the act of performance which provides an added sense of connection and meaning in this intergenerational programme. The Interlink choir as a working model of Loewen’s concept of authentic work is an appropriate conceptual framework for intergenerational music learning at LaSalle.

The major positive difference between the Interlink and the LaSalle programmes is the increased frequency of communication between age groups, rehearsing of the ensembles, and a larger number of performances. The LaSalle programme offers multi-aged cohorts the chance to collaborate as learners and socialize on a daily basis. The ultimate goal of all the efforts of musicians and music learning groups is to perform. We learn, practise what we have learned, rehearse as an ensemble what we have learned, and then we perform in concert what we have learned. Then the process starts again. We learn from our performance, share our learned experiences, practise what we learned, and then perform another concert. The necessity for an ensemble to perform for an audience is a very important part of how we learn the art of music, and performance is the reason we rehearse as a group and practise as individuals.

Studies of intergenerational interaction, association and communication

A relatively new area of interest in developing an understanding of age, ageism and age stereotyping is that of intergenerational association. Williams and Jake Harwood (2004), suggested that intergenerational contact on a regular basis appears to be relatively rare. They and other researchers have been compelled to create situations and administer questionnaires generating information about age stereotypes and social interaction. They have attempted to discover variations in the ways that young and old people talk and act with each other. The authors used the term ‘accommodation’ as a way of describing whether or not each age cohort alters their choice of words, volume and inflection when speaking with a person of a different age group. Williams and Harwood explained that because there are so few natural areas that have persons of vast age differences conversing and interacting with each other outside of family relationships, little research has been carried out to investigate how different age groups communicate with each other. ‘Communication Accommodation Theory’ (CAT) (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991) explored how different age groups adapt their use of language between different age groups in family and non-family multi-generational settings. CAT stated that individuals use language in different ways, depending upon the age group of the persons with whom they are conversing. Adolescents, for example, tend to alter their language as a way of being more polite to seniors by actively trying to use fewer colloquialisms, speaking more slowly, or speaking louder. The challenge that researchers face is finding a naturalistic setting where a combination of the old and young age groups (seniors and teens) interact on a more or less equal footing in terms of an activity so that their interactions can be observed in a natural setting with neither group considered to be dominant. Williams and Jon F Nussbaum (2001) stated

Intergenerational learning in a high school environment
that because familial and institutional contact between generations are the most common sites of interactions they are also the most often used for researching intergenerational behaviours, attitudes, and trends. One feature of familial and institutional settings is that one group is in a dominant role. In most families, for example, seniors (generally grandparents) are in an authoritative position relative to the position of the younger family members. In an old age home, the teens are most often present in a caring, volunteering role and are seen as supporters of seniors, both physically and socially. In this circumstance, the teens are in a dominant position as members of the home’s support staff. These sites are unlikely to foster a truly intergenerational collaboration as they do not naturally allow each group to act as equals, socially in a naturalistic setting.

Although ‘the degree and nature of community-based non-familial contact between other age groups and seniors has not been systematically studied’ (Williams and Nussbaum 2001: 39) some studies that encourage the association of young people and seniors have been undertaken for research purposes. One such study (Williams 1992) involved a group of college students on a California campus. The students engaged in conversations and activities with elderly people (approximately age 70) who were not related to the students. The students were asked to report on the frequency of contact, the location, and the topic(s) of the conversation. The results of the quantitative study showed that on average, these college students spent less than 4.5% of their time interacting with people over 65 years of age and their level of personal knowledge of the seniors with whom they had contact was very superficial. Would the uniting of students and seniors in a learning environment, where all participants had shared goals, increase the frequency of their interactions and foster greater communication and a better understanding between the two age groups?

At LaSalle, both age groups are involved in learning something new together. Their commonality is their inexperience as performing musicians. In the LaSalle context, intergenerational learning occurs in an environment that supports the development of communication and social interaction between two distinctly different age groups through the common objectives of learning to play an instrument, to read music, to follow a conductor’s gestures and to perform in concerts.

Another important contextual factor in the support of a naturalistic study is frequency of contact. The ‘Intergenerational Solidarity Theory’ of Vern L. Bengtson, Edward B. Olander and Anees A. Haddad (1976), suggested that child/parent/grandparent relationships remain strong when they are in regular contact with one another. These relationships may be viewed more positively than those with elder strangers, but the relationships also require constant maintenance and management. Williams and Harwood also suggested that both young and old persons in families know what topics not to discuss with the different age group. Williams and Harwood surmised that:

in many cases that [grandchildren], adult children and elderly parents exercise a form of accommodative censorship that protects the solidarity of
the relationship. Each party knows what topics not to discuss in front of the other and in this way a protective veneer of consensus is created and sustained.

(2004: 128)

In order to understand the ways in which different age groups interact with each other, it is important to review literature that has addressed how one age group perceives another age group and also, how each group acts towards the other. If we socialize often with people of similar ages and less often with people of different generations, then what are the outcomes of this engagement in regard to our personal identity and social identity? John Turner (1999) posited a Social Identity Theory (SIT) that explains that an individual’s self-concept is made up of two parts: ‘personal identity’ and ‘social identity’ (see Tajfel and Turner 1986; Williams and Harwood 2004). Personal identity is that part of the self that includes personal characteristics, likes and dislikes, and idiosyncrasies. Social identity, however, is our identity as members of particular social groups. These social groups can also be age-categorized as well, so teens (grandchildren) are identified with each other and by those who are not teens by way of certain social characteristics, manners of dress, style, taste in music etc. Seniors (grandparents) are also identified by the sameness that they visibly show through manners of dress, style, language usage etc.

Williams and Harwood (2004) reviewed the evidence for considering ‘age groups’ as social categories as they investigated some of the challenges of having different age groups interact and communicate with each other with the ideas of ‘social identity’ of persons and their own age groups in mind. They examined how age is at the forefront of the ways in which a person is engaged by another person of the same age cohort or of a different age cohort. It seems that age, as an identifier (whether it comes with negative or positive stereotypes and attitudes), is the first level of interaction between people. While not all members of each age group dress distinctly or act with exactly pre-determined manners on the basis of their age, there is some notion that those of similar age groups can be clearly related to others of similar vintage. Age is also used as a way of self-categorization and provides us with a comfort zone of identity as to who we are through our inclusion in a larger group of people of similar visible traits as the primary identifier. If one is to enter an environment that is predominantly populated by people who are visibly identified by a biological age that is largely different from our age, we may first feel ‘out-of-place’. Being identified as ‘not one of the group’ simply because of our visible age may produce feelings of anxiety.

Observing seniors at the LaSalle Secondary School site as they negotiate the hallways before class provides an example of this. The halls are crowded, busy and loud with adolescent activities. Students are at their lockers getting books, talking and laughing with each other. ‘Young lovers’ are kissing each other like they are departing forever; locker doors are slamming, and students are whizzing past the slower, older persons who are trying to either get to the music room or to the washroom. Surely, this is a very exciting but also a very different, even frightening environment as compared to a seniors’ activity centre, for example. The school is
a site which is designed for and occupied by an adolescent age group. If an adult or senior is not accustomed to this setting, he/she can easily feel out of place and overly noticed by virtue of being so visibly different. Many examples of our own experiences in life of feeling uncomfortable or standing out can be analysed. However, if one has the opportunity to have repeated contact with a different age cohort, it may become less of an issue in terms of how we feel about age differences and/or how we are perceived by different age groups.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research
Clearly, the LaSalle model has all the ingredients of a successful and enriching intergenerational programme with a high degree of curriculum-based, relationship-based, reciprocal relations, community-based and authentic work interactions. The programme itself is recognized as a course in which the seniors are registered as students in the same manner as adolescents and the members of this multi-age group form a community of practice, learning collaboratively as equals. Their many performances provide an added measure of authentic work with a very real and pertinent goal while the daily nature of their interaction changes their entire concepts of personal and social identity. This programme is one step towards an intergenerational education paradigm shift that is beginning to happen.

Williams and Nussbaum describe how public education in Western societies has heretofore been an intergenerational endeavour. The older, more experienced people, were the ‘teachers’ and the younger-aged cohorts were the ‘learners’. ‘Intergenerational contact within education has traditionally been one way. Adults, historically, have taught children in order to provide society with a literate and skilled workforce’ (Williams and Nussbaum 2001: 211). By ‘one way’, Williams and Nussbaum mean that if we consider the ages of learners versus teachers, we find that for the most part in any given educational environment, the teachers are usually older than the learners. In this respect, the formal curriculum, as taught in classrooms, has usually been from an older person to a younger person. However, the role of education is changing. New learning programmes must be put in place to meet the demands of providing new skills to individuals changing careers during their lives. Adults are returning to schools for training and the attainment of new skills. If older people are involved in learning environments, there is a good chance that the people who are teaching them will be from a younger age cohort than their own. Education and learning have also become leisure activities for many retired persons (Stebbins 1998). Again this environment lacks reciprocal interactions. Robert Stebbins’ model of intergenerational interaction is similar to other models where children visit an old age home to offer services (Loewen 1996) placing an age group providing the services in a dominant role over the other. Williams and Nussbaum (2001) address two main questions facing educational establishments: ‘Is education and, therefore, learning, a lifelong phenomenon?’ and ‘Can education help to bridge the gap between generations?’ They answer the first question by stating that much literature exists that supports a ‘life-span view of learning’ (213). However, they make the point that public financing of
education is still primarily focused on skills and knowledge acquisition for employment rather than the benefits of learning as a lifelong social and intellectual pursuit/endeavour. Therefore, the answer to their second question may not be easily attained, or the benefits witnessed, unless education opens its doors to an older age cohort of learners who can sit side-by-side with adolescents and young adults. The following excerpt from Williams and Nussbaum summarizes their position and responds to their second question.

The potential within higher education to promote intergenerational communication rests with the expansion of the traditional classroom to include students beyond those in their teens and 20s. The changing economy, the fact that fewer young adults will be available to attend college, along with the fact that each individual will pursue many different jobs, if not careers, during his or her lifetime is forcing educational administrators to expand their vision of a traditional student. The opportunity for students to learn within an intergenerational classroom will increase for the foreseeable future. The success of these classrooms will be dependent on successful intergenerational communication. Both students and teachers must cope and adapt to a classroom full of stereotypes and myths of aging. The pitfalls of intergenerational communication ... will be part of any classroom with students of various ages. Neither instructional communication scholars nor interpersonal communication scholars have provided empirical evidence to inform us whether or not the intergenerational-communication difficulties found with interaction will adversely affect classroom learning.

The intergenerational classroom will, at the very least, provide the forum of individuals from various cohorts to interact and to observe one another. The mere fact that individuals with diverse life experiences are entering a learning environment for an extended period of time can itself be enlightening.

The intergenerational music classroom at LaSalle will ‘provide the forum of individuals from various cohorts to interact and to observe one another.’ Even though Williams and Nussbaum focus on college-level education as the site for intergenerational learning, interest-based courses at the high school level are also a viable forum for adolescent/adult/senior reciprocal interactions.

Were we using a different theoretical perspective we might say that the seniors are involved in ‘serious leisure’ (Stebbins 1992) while the adolescents are involved in traditional musical education. The interesting thing is that the ‘activity’ is the same but the benefits are different – at least at this stage in each of their lives. When the groups learn together, there is an interaction effect that may enhance the experience for both.

The capability of older persons to continue to learn new things and not have the decline of their mental learning abilities with increased age be viewed as inevitable has been supported in many recent studies (Schaie 1990). Also, as Frank Glendening (2004) points out ‘there is now general agreement that both physical and mental activities are essential ingredients for quality of life as we grow older’ (523). As many authors
argue, (see, for example, Belsky 1988, 1990; Dychtwald 1990; Evans, Goldacre, Hodkinson, Lamb, and Savory 1992; Groombridge 1989; Shaw 1991), the physical and intellectual active engagement of seniors is becoming generally recognized as worthwhile and beneficial.

The ‘communication that transpires between young and old within health care interactions and educational interactions has the potential to produce significant, life-maintaining, and enhancing outcomes’ (Williams and Nussbaum 2001: 201). Outcomes could include issues about how different generations work, learn and socialize with each other in order to develop better understandings of who we are as social beings by better knowing other age groups. Interactions between older patients and younger physicians as an example in the health care sector will be of great benefit to the development of greater knowledge of inter-generational contact and communication by the very nature of inter-generational association.

Finally, a learning environment in which seniors and adolescents learn music together on a daily basis could also be a site for the study of inter-generational interpersonal interaction and communication. If teens learn and associate with seniors on a daily basis in an environment in which all are learning together and have common goals, how will it influence their attitudes about ‘old people’? How does the interaction between old and young in a learning environment differ from that of familial associations of grandparents and grandchildren? By utilizing the concepts of curriculum, relationship, reciprocal relations, community and authentic work-based interactions, will it aid us in exploring the benefits of inter-generational learning and associations?

References


Suggested citation


Contributor details

Chris is an active musician in the idioms of both classical and jazz music. He plays clarinet, saxophone and flute. In 1994, as well as being a high school band teacher, he founded an instrumental music programme for senior citizens offered at LaSalle Secondary School, Kingston. This programme is fully funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education and runs daily and incorporates adolescent music learners into the seniors’ music classes for a unique intergenerational learning experience. He is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University, Montreal. His research studies focus on intergenerational learning and association. Chris was appointed to the rank of Major with
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Identity formation through participation in the Rochester New Horizons Band programme

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Abstract

Results of this qualitative study suggest that membership in the Rochester New Horizons Band programme provides an important vehicle for identity construction and revision in later life. Identities emerge from and are shaped by the social interactions among members in the ensemble setting. Players form new musical identities, reclaim identities that were important in their youth, or revise existing identities by taking up new, social instruments. These musical identities are distinguished not merely by the acquisition of musical skills, but also by the adoption of roles as valuable contributors to a larger musical ensemble. The approval and encouragement of significant others appears to confirm and reinforce musical identity, regardless of whether those others are themselves musicians. Members also use social interaction to negotiate identities as healthy, productive older people. Communal engagement provides structure for time and a new sense of purpose, and it contributes to physical, mental and spiritual health.

Our personal identities evolve over the course of our lives. While we maintain a continuous sense of ourselves, our social contexts, personal relationships and concomitant reflections shape and reshape those self-perceptions. We constantly interact with our environments and assimilate new events into existing identity schema or make accommodations by changing aspects of ourselves in response to experiences that do not fit our identity conceptions. As Whitbourne (2001: 102) states, ‘The individual maintains a sense of consistency over time but is able to change when there are large or continuous discrepancies between the self and experiences.’

Retirement signifies a time of change and potential loss. Individuals must address a number of variables, including the end of familiar work lives, changes in personal income, the aging process and accompanying health considerations, a rise in free time, different interpersonal relations and cultural perceptions of retirement. The negotiation of these variables can result in either fulfilment in meaningful avocational pursuits or demoralization in the loss of pre-retirement status and activity (Darnley 1975). The loss of a work-role status often leads to an identity crisis that includes a decrease in self-worth and a loss of growth and purpose (Taylor 1987; Coleman 2000). Self-esteem and social connectedness can deteriorate as we age, which can adversely affect our senses of agency, motivation and intimacy.
Despite its potential pitfalls, retirement also offers opportunities for personal redefinition. Research on adult development and processes of adjustment emphasize the value of goal modification in later life (Coleman 2000). Transitional identities and life patterns immediately following retirement may serve as ‘bridges between different periods in the transition or as the nucleus for replicating a future self and social life’ (Luborsky 1994: 412). People may embrace new roles and activities and find ways to re-engage with others in meaningful pursuits. As part of this process, membership in groups that emphasize continuity and belonging can help stave off feelings of alienation by offering a means to reconnect to society beyond career environments (Coleman 2000).

Artistic activity can provide meaning and identity during the crises that often mark retirement (Taylor 1987). Boswell (1992) states that adult learners express positive attitudes toward the arts and believe them to be integral to quality of life and personal development. Specifically, she promotes music as a medium that can fulfill the needs of identity, partnership and participation. Research supports the value of music in identity construction. According to Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald (2002: 5), the social functions of music are to (1) define and mediate interpersonal relationships; (2) regulate mood; and (3) establish and develop an individual’s sense of identity.

Method
I engaged members of the Rochester, New York New Horizons band programme in a qualitative study to investigate how they utilized social interactions and networks within the organization. Roy Ernst, Professor of Music Education at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, founded the programme in 1991 as an entry and re-entry point into group instrumental music-making for older adults. Unlike most community band approaches, the New Horizons programme sets no minimum musical or instrumental skill level for participation. Under the programme philosophy, all people have the potential to play music and perform in a group. Thus, anyone, regardless of background, may join. Beginning instruction and weekly large and small group rehearsals for all members characterize the organization and further distinguish it from other community band models (Ernst and Emmons 1992). The Rochester New Horizons organization currently comprises three bands, string ensembles and a choir; and the concept has evolved into an international movement of more than 100 member groups.

I drew primary data for this study from a series of five focus groups held between February and June 2005. The initial gathering of eight participants, selected by participants’ availability/convenience, served as a pilot study and informed further focus group participant selections. Analysis of that data suggested that New Horizons participants’ ages fell in a relatively narrow range of older adulthood; however, differences of perspective and opinion seemed to exist between those members who had been associated with the programme for several years and those whose association had begun more recently. Working under those assumptions, I formed two participant groups. One included people with less than five years of experience in the bands; the other consisted
of participants with five or more years of experience in the programme. Krueger (1994) suggests that focus groups should include six to nine participants; therefore, I recruited seven members for each group based on their years in the organization and their availability/convenience, as ‘random sampling is not important and is probably not possible when selecting respondents for group interviews’ (Schensul et al. 1999: 71). As a series of focus groups is necessary to detect patterns and trends across a target population (Krueger 1994), I held two meetings for each participant group. In total, the focus groups, including the pilot study, yielded 7.5 hours of audio and video recording. I transcribed and analysed the transcripts through data-coding procedures (Lofland and Lofland 1984; Merriam 1998; Bogdan and Biklen 1992) that resulted in an interpretive level of analysis (LeCompte and Schensul 1999) in which I introduced my own formative theories and pertinent theoretical literature.

I served as the moderator of each focus group. Following guidelines recommended by Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub (1996), I crafted a moderator’s guide that included introductory remarks and opening questions to warm up each group, clarify terms and establish the context for each meeting. These questions asked members about their instruments and their first contact with New Horizons. Participants then discussed key questions that sought information regarding their experiences and interactions within the bands. Finally, ending questions allowed me to clarify points, summarize ideas and ask for a member check regarding my understanding. The second meeting of each group followed a similar format; however, questions sought to fill in informational gaps left by the first meeting and follow up with new ideas that emerged through the process of analysis.

Secondary data sources for the study included dialogue journals and observations that I recorded following my interactions as an instructor of the groups. This data provided a check on the accuracy of focus group information, and served to saturate and clarify themes that emerged during the study. I selected three additional band members and asked them to reflect on their programme experiences through journals. I responded to each entry and prompted participants to expand on their ideas. This process resulted in twelve total entries over the course of two months of the study. I also gathered data through direct observation and casual conversations with members of the organization.

**Identity and older adulthood**

Results of the study suggest that membership provides an important vehicle for identity construction and revision in later life. Many New Horizons members attest to identity loss and distress that can accompany the retirement process. At the same time, the choice to join New Horizons represents a search for meaningful engagement in new activity as well as membership in a new group:

Ben: Second chance may be the wrong term. It’s a whole new ballgame. I would say it’s more a life-stage phenomenon because when one has retired and has an identity, whatever he or she was – it’s a big let-down to wake up in the morning and you don’t have to –
Michelle: Who am I?

Ben: Exactly! And now all of a sudden, I'm a tuba player!

(FG 6/3/05)

Study participants identify the camaraderie and communal nature of the ensembles as the most salient points of membership. Identities emerge from and are shaped by the social interactions among members in the ensemble settings. Membership in the programme offers social connections to like-minded peers. Communal music-making promotes new friendships and strengthens existing relationships. Mutual engagement, a supportive environment and conventions and rituals of ensemble performance appear to reinforce older adults’ identity constructions.

Individuals who join the Rochester New Horizons Bands claim significantly different career and life backgrounds, yet their shared interest in music brings them together to participate in the programme. Focus group members discussed the difficulties of the transition from career to retirement and the process of leaving relationships that defined them for significant periods of their lives. When those associations ended, individuals experienced identity loss:

I mean, you think of people who work as a chemist or an engineer or a teacher or whatever. And you say, ‘That’s what I am.’ And when you retire, you lose that. And you say, ‘I used to be –’.

(Penny, FG 5/20/05)

Erikson’s identity theory (1970) suggests that an identity crisis marks the entrance into older adulthood. He views crises as periods of reflection, analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at the self and are, therefore, turning points rather than personal catastrophes. Identity development, which Erikson describes as an epigenetic process, begins in infancy and proceeds through adolescence and adulthood; ascendancy of one stage of development depends upon successful completion of prior stages. Older adulthood exists as one stage among many. Although many psychologists now approach identity from a more pluralistic perspective and call for more complex and individuated models of identity development (Helson and Srivastava 2001), Erikson’s theory provides a useful point of departure for the discussion of identity in older adulthood.

Erikson (1970: 20) defines identity as ‘a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image’. Thus, identity exists in a psychosocial framework; relationships between the self and the external world are essential to identity formation. According to Erikson’s theory, tensions created by syntonic and dystonic tendencies emerge at various defined stages throughout life and precipitate identity crises (Erikson and Erikson 1997). In the infancy stage, for example, tension exists between basic trust and mistrust, while in the stage of young adulthood, intimacy and isolation are the tendencies. When an individual successfully negotiates an identity crisis, a strength or virtue emerges. Hope emerges when an infant successfully negotiates basic trust and basic
mistrust; similarly, a young adult’s successful negotiation of the tension between intimacy and isolation engenders the virtue of love.

Integrity and despair are the tensions of old age, Erikson’s eighth stage of identity development. ‘Life in the eighth stage includes a retrospective accounting of one’s life to date; how much one embraces life as having been well lived, as opposed to regretting missed opportunities, will contribute to the degree of disgust and despair one experiences’ (Erikson and Erikson 1997: 113). Much of the despair felt by individuals at this stage seems to result from feelings of stagnation or lack of vital involvement. Diane, a focus group participant from the present study, observes, ‘a lot of people that are retired […] they try and find things to fill their time, but that’s all it is. It’s not a passion for anything’ (FG 5/23/05). Erikson (1963: 269) reminds us that ‘despair expresses the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads’. New Horizons participants demonstrate awareness that time is a precious commodity. As peers pass away, they recognize the gift of living every day:

I think at this stage of my life, I just take each day as it comes – I hope that I [long pause] A lot of our friends are dying, of course, and so I figure that [pause] And Brian [a friend who had just passed away two weeks prior]. I mean, here he was telling me that – such an interesting person! A lot of vitality! He was telling me how he couldn’t play the trombone, but he was going to play the trumpet with his left hand. And to die the next day – it was really shocking. And I think, you’ve got to take each day and make the most of it. All of us when you really think about it. I mean, that could happen to anybody! And I always want to be a better trumpet player! [laughs]

(Jordan, I 10/22/03)

Membership in New Horizons, however, appears to be an avenue to new identity and purpose in older adulthood:

I think, for me, it gave a new purpose in life. It was starting something, a sense of achievement.

(Doug, FG 5/20/05)

Likewise, senior adult ensemble participants in Kruse’s study (2007) cited their engagement as integral to dynamic living and resistance to complacency. Members are in a hurry to explore new paths and achieve new goals:

I started with the band, and then I decided I wanted to take lessons. Because I wanted to improve faster! I was in a hurry! [laughs]

(Allison, FG 5/23/05)

For New Horizons players, life still holds promise and opportunity to explore new paths. Many acknowledge loss of identity in retirement, but despair seems relatively absent as focus group members share stories of how New Horizons restructures their time and becomes a focal point in their lives. Similarly, active participation in music gives members a sense of better health and well-being.
Structure
On a fundamental level, the routine of New Horizons rehearsals provides an awareness of time that participants appreciate:

Michelle: On a very simple level, I know what day it is.
Samantha: Yep.
Michelle: I mean, that really helps me out. [laughter]
Samantha: When band is over [for the summer] it’s hard to know what day it is!
Michelle: Tuesday’s band, Wednesday’s orchestra. No, it gives a structure, and I appreciate that a lot!
Ben: Yeah. My brother-in-law used to have an expression – ‘When you retire, everyday is Saturday.’ But now you’ve just redefined that whole deal, so you do know when Tuesdays and Thursdays come by.
Michelle: Yes. And look forward to them.

Members freely dedicate their time to the programme and their instruments and, in the process, strengthen their identification with the activity even as it provides structure in their lives. When asked how his participation in New Horizons fit with other parts of his life, Chris responded, ‘I think it’s more like how does the rest of your life fit in with New Horizons?’ (FG 2/18/05). Most people willingly curtail other activities to dedicate more time to the programme, as this conversation between Samantha and Penny attests:

Samantha: When I first started playing in the band, and C wasn’t in it, he said, ‘Well, I hope that you don’t let this interfere with the other things we like to do!’ Like hiking and our square dancing. And now he won’t let anything interfere with band!

Penny: As S said, it’s a limitation as well as a help in keeping us organized. When we need to make plans to visit family or travel, the calendar comes out. And it influences when we can go or even if we can’t.

Like Penny, several focus group members mentioned how activities with New Horizons take priority in their individual and family schedules. Bill explained how he and his wife set aside three days a week for music, and they avoid any conflicts:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays – it’s just set aside! We don’t have any appointments, we don’t do anything else except spend our time at the Unitarian Church [where the ensembles rehearse]! We work the rest of our lives around the music.

(Bill, FG 2/18/05)
Others attend to interests outside of New Horizons; however, the group provides an ‘anchor’ for their lives:

Gary: Music is the focus of my week. Tuesday and Thursday with the New Horizons, and Wednesday night is choir rehearsal, and of course singing on Sunday. But, the combination is the focus of the whole week. And then of course you have to rehearse during the week.

Nancy: It’s kind of the anchor to the week isn’t it? I mean, you do other things in between, but that’s the anchor.

Gary: Yeah. That’s a good word. That’s right. Everything else is secondary. [laughter]

(FG 5/23/05)

Health and well-being

Health is a significant factor in individuals’ perception of themselves as they age (Logan, Ward and Spitze 1992). Focus group members observed that there has been little attrition from the Rochester New Horizons programme since its inception. Social connection and a sense of purpose partially explain this continuity of participation; however, focus group volunteers also touted the spiritual, physical and mental health benefits they gain from participation. Ben (FG 6/3/05) cited such rewards as one reason he curtailed other activities:

As a result of New Horizons, I have diminished my activity [in a small business] and spent more time with music for two reasons: one, obviously the social aspect, and, two, to me at least, is the mental/spiritual/physical growth that comes with it. It engages me in a way that I feel is beneficial and helps me expand myself to be more … more healthy I guess is about the best I can express it.

(Ben, FG 6/3/05)

Gary discussed the mental stimulation that he derives from musical activity, a perception shared by many focus group members:

As we age, I know I’m supposed to be doing word games and crossword puzzles and all this stuff to keep the mind sharp. And I hate word games. I just don’t have any patience for them. But I know music is also stimulating. And as a health benefit, I figured, ‘Gee, that’s something I like doing anyways.’

(Gary, FG 5/23/05)

Similarly, focus group members spoke frequently about the sense of well-being, or ‘feeling really great’, which they associate with their active participation in New Horizons:

When I get up on Wednesday mornings, I think, ‘I’m tired this morning.’ And I have to go to band or whatever. But when I get there, and I get going and moving – when I leave, I feel so up, so good. You know? I just feel really great. I guess that’s what it does for me. It really just gets the inside of me going, and makes me feel wonderful.

(Nancy, FG 5/23/05)
Marcia’s identity theory may provide an explanation for members’ perceptions of health and well-being. Building on Erikson’s theory, Marcia (1966) defined four identity statuses: (1) *identity achievement* occurs when an individual has explored different identities and made a commitment to one; (2) *moratorium* refers to active engagement in identity exploration without a commitment to a particular identity; (3) *foreclosure* describes the status of someone who makes a commitment without attempting identity exploration; and (4) *identity diffusion* exists where an individual experiences neither an identity crisis nor has committed to one identity. Marcia’s research indicates that individuals in a state of identity diffusion tend to feel out of place in the world, while those who have made a strong commitment to an identity tend to be happier and healthier human beings (Marcia 1966). Such strong identity commitments may help explain this conversation about New Horizons as the ‘fountain of youth’:

Doug: You know, I don’t know what the statistics are, but we don’t have too many people expire, given the age group.
Michelle: No, I …
Ben: It’ll happen. [lots of laughter]
Doug: [laughing] I know it’s inevitable, but I think it …
Michelle: Maybe that’s the draw! We’ve discovered the fountain of youth!
Doug: [chuckling] I really believe it [New Horizons] helps people live longer.
Ben: I agree with that.

(MG, 5/20/05)

**Musical identity**

Membership in the Rochester New Horizons programme introduces recruits to a new social network that shapes identity as a productive older person and, more overtly, identity as a musician:

New Horizons has affected my image as a musician. I am more confident. I know I’m doing the best I can and the most important thing is to enjoy playing.

(Jordan, DJ 10/15/05)

Participants acknowledge that the programme provides a unique opportunity to define oneself as a musician for the first time in older adulthood:

It has provided a second chance for people who didn’t play and want to play. And you don’t have to be good. I shouldn’t say good. But you don’t have to be at a certain level. And you’re also getting instruction while you’re playing in a band. I mean it just rounds out everything.

(Diane, FG 6/10/05)

I don’t know any other opportunity that the novice has to have the joy of playing with other people. To start right out on day one.

(Don, FG 2/18/05)
Interestingly, Kruse (2007) found his adult study participants reluctant to identify themselves as musicians. Although the difference may lay more in semantics than in practice, his findings seem in contrast to how the Rochester members use their groups to construct, reclaim or revise their musical identities.

**Constructing a musical identity**

The New Horizons Band programme offers an entry point into instrumental music-making for senior adults. Beginning instruction as a curricular offering separates the organization from other adult music ensembles, which usually require a minimum level of proficiency for participation. A few focus group members had little formal background or experience in music prior to joining New Horizons. Gladys’s husband had played in a band when he was young, and her children participated in school music programmes, but Gladys had always been a spectator:

>This is one of these things that I just decided that when I grew up I’d like to join a band! [laughs] And I had never played an instrument before, at all. And when I heard about the New Horizons Band – ever since the beginning – I was interested.

*(FG 2/18/05)*

Samantha found her husband’s positive musical experiences inspirational. Although she was enthusiastic and motivated, her lack of proficiency prevented her from joining a band until an opportunity arose through New Horizons:

>I had married a musician. I always knew that one of the highlights of [my husband’s] life had been playing in a band. And I’d love to play in a band. And I could take up an instrument, but I’d never be good enough to play in a group, and what I wanted to do was play in a group. And then I saw the thing for New Horizons. It was before I retired. I was working part time at that time. But I was working Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the band met then, so I sort of put it out of my mind until I actually retired. And then I saw it again and said, ‘I’m going to go!’

*(Samantha, FG 5/20/05)*

**Reclaiming musical identity**

The majority of focus group participants had studied music privately and participated in school music programmes when they were younger. A few had played through college and into adulthood. All had positive memories of ensemble participation, and, for them, joining New Horizons was a way to actively reclaim a musical identity that had been set aside. The demands of business and family, for example, had taken a toll on Kirk’s musical activity:

>I played through high school, college. I played in community bands for a while, firemen’s drinking/marching society for a couple of years. Then with business, kids and everything else, it just got lost.

*(Kirk, FG 2/18/05)*
Similarly, Penny had put her instrument aside in order to raise a family, but she retained many of her music friends from her youth and remembered the joy of the ensemble experience:

I started violin as a fourth grader. And as I went through school, reflecting on it now, all of my long-term friends – when I went back to my fiftieth high school reunion – were music friends. [...] The violin stayed with me. I put it aside while raising a family. [...] [When I joined New Horizons] I decided on the flute, knowing how great the ensemble experience was.

(Penny, FG 5/20/05)

Some New Horizons members, like Ray, recalled having had a musical identity in their youth, but time had erased many details. Some faint memory drew him back, but he recollected little of what he had learned in music during childhood:

Ray: I look at it as a first chance for me to play an instrument that I wanted to play and be in a band in a setting that’s comfortable and enjoyable.

Will: Did you do music when you were younger?

Ray: I did in school.

Will: Saxophone?

Ray: Clarinet.

Will: So you see it as a first chance to try a different instrument?

Ray: Yeah. I don’t remember too much about playing the clarinet. That’s why I call it more of a first chance now to play and take lessons.

(FG 5/23/05)

People re-enter music-making activity with diverse perspectives gained from life experience. Their priorities may have shifted over the years, but they feel that they can now reclaim their musical identities on their own terms:

Now, I’m choosing again to play the trumpet, but it’s with a whole different perspective. I want to play it. And I want to practice. That’s the biggest difference [from childhood]. I’ve got the perspective of some life experiences and I’ve come to enjoy more music, so I’ve got more to draw on, from that perspective as opposed to as a kid.

(Gary, FG 6/10/05)

**Revising musical identity**

Several focus group members began their music learning on piano. Many had continued to play throughout their lives, but at some point they realized that they longed for communal music participation:

I’d always had a desire to join an ensemble group. I started playing the piano as a youngster, but the piano being a solo instrument, you don’t get that collective feeling and anticipation. I was never in the position to join a band. There was never a band available for me to do that until New Horizons came
along. And I’ve gotten out of it all and more than I anticipated as far as the collective participation and the ability to make music with other people. It’s very satisfying.

(Doug, FG 5/20/05)

When I was younger, I took years of piano. Well, that’s all solo. So I never really played in a band. So this gave me a whole different chance in life to actually learn to play a different kind of instrument and be part of a performing group. That, for me, was a whole different chance in my life.

(Nancy, FG 6/10/05)

Michelle became a musician at a young age, but she did not find solo performance on the piano satisfying:

I did piano. And was not happy as a solo performer. And I think I enjoyed accompanying people sometimes, but it wasn't terribly good. And I had never thought about the business about playing in a group [pause] And then of course I discovered [through New Horizons] that there's great joy in playing with other people and it ends up just growing and growing.

(Michelle, FG 5/20/05)

Desiree relates that, although she identified herself as a musician and had been involved in many school activities, she never had the opportunity to satisfy her curiosity regarding playing in an instrumental ensemble:

My instrument was piano, although I was also into singing and dancing. But I just envied the kids in the band so much. I would walk by the band room and think, 'Oh, that must be so much fun! I wish I could do that!' And so I became a majorette, and that was as close as I could get to the band.

(Desiree, FG 5/20/05)

Women revising musical identity

Desiree is representative of the women who, in their youth, participated in the varieties of musical activity traditionally associated with females. Upon joining New Horizons, however, many of these women take up instruments with stereotypically male associations (Baker 2002; Cramer, Million and Perreault 2002). Allison chose the saxophone as her instrument, and her story reveals a deliberate attempt to contest gender stereotypes:

I've always wanted to play alto sax, or some kind of saxophone. And that came back to high school when there was a dance band in the high school, and it was for boys only. But they played the most wonderful swing music, and I just absolutely loved it. And I always wanted to play sax. So I thought, 'Well, shall I pick up the flute again, and sit in that front row and play all those high notes and all this stuff? Or shall I just drop that and [...] so I took my flute in, and it was going to cost a couple hundred dollars to have it fixed up, and I said, 'You know what? I think I'll just rent a saxophone.'

(Allison, FG 5/23/05)
Other women offer similar stories: Nancy recalls that percussion instruments were reserved for boys when she was in school, yet New Horizons opened up the possibility of learning to play instruments that were once off-limits to her. Samantha first chose the tuba as her instrument due to her husband’s musical background and interests; his tuba was available for her to use. She now strongly identifies herself as a tuba player.

Why were these women unable to transcend gender stereotypes in their youth, yet seem enabled to do so in older adulthood through their membership in New Horizons? Josselson’s feminist identity theory (1996) builds on the work of Erikson and Marcia and offers an explanation of women’s maturation. Following women from college through mid life, Josselson makes these observations about revising identity:

The course of women’s lives is a dialectic between extremes, between risk and rigidity, adventure and security, coming to rest in a sense of balance. There is no single trajectory of women’s lives. Women rebalance and reshape themselves, striving for harmony of the parts, responding to the exigencies of living in society, and creating a whole where the pieces best fit.

(Josselson 1996: 238)

She further contends, ‘the most visible of the revisions that women make as they mature are shifts in their expression of competence and connection’ (Josselson 1996: 238). The women who use their membership in New Horizons as a means for identity revision may be encouraged by the philosophy of adult autonomy that underlies all aspects of the programme. Their choices of instruments, therefore, feel self-authored, which may, in turn, lead to a greater sense of competence in performance. Additionally, many of these women identified themselves as pianists in childhood and adolescence. In older adulthood, they find that connection with others in the supportive community of a musical ensemble is more satisfying than performing alone. This connection with like-minded others may also facilitate transcendence of gender stereotypes.

Women experience many roles in life that they may perceive as significant as their work life. This role flexibility may help ease their transition into retirement, when they have an opportunity to choose how to redefine themselves. Freed from their earlier familial and career obligations, ‘they feel they can be accepted for what they are’ (Kitchings Johnson and Price-Bonham 1980: 380).

**Identity and the social world**

Active involvement with career and family traditionally mark middle adulthood. In contrast, older adulthood usually begins with retirement from these activities. Adult children leave the family home; spouses or partners sometimes pass away. Although the confluence of such events might lead to isolation and despair, New Horizons participants embrace the new activity and social interaction of a musical organization. They use their membership to construct new identities as older adults and musicians. Josselson theorizes that ‘identity reflects the inner organization of the parts of the self, where unconscious yearnings are joined to conscious realization,’ but such integration cannot be maintained unless a person
‘can assume the authority of this self [...] in an interpersonal world that responds to her understanding of who she is by taking her to be that person she feels herself to be’ (Josselson 1996: 238–39). Thus, identity commitment depends on confirmation by others, who may be significant or more distant.

**Significant others**

According to Erikson, in the eighth stage ‘there emerges [...] a timeless love for those few “Others” who have become the main counterplayers in life’s most significant contexts’ (Erikson and Erikson 1997: 65). Not surprisingly, then, stories abound of one spouse following the other into the New Horizons programme. Diane sparked her husband’s interest in the trumpet. Carl got swept up in his wife’s enthusiasm for the band, and many other members joined as a result of the positive transformations they observed in their partners. Penny’s marriage actually resulted from a mutual interest in New Horizons:

> When I retired, I took a long trip out to Yellowstone and met D, and he’s full of enthusiasm for the New Horizons Band. And we continued dating when we got back from Yellowstone. And I decided the band would be fun.

(Penny, FG 5/20/05)

Spouses who do not participate in the New Horizons programme contribute to identity confirmation as well. Ben related that his wife has noticed positive changes in him since his musical activities began. She has conveyed to him her respect for his enthusiasm and new sense of purpose:

> She respects that I take the time to go up and practice, and do all these things that probably – not exactly that it gets me out of the house, but that defines a sense of regularity. [pause] Not so much an aimlessness that might come from being a retired person without having a kind of activity that was purposeful, or interesting, or let’s say rewarding for that person’s growth and happiness.

(Ben, FG 5/20/05)

Adult children also help to reinforce identity. Many New Horizons members joke that they make their children attend concerts as ‘payback’ for all the years of their attendance and support at school functions. Gladys thinks that her children don’t mind returning the favour:

> I said, ‘I went to all your concerts. You’d better come to mine!’
> But they do. Every year they come back and they go to the concerts. So I think they’re proud.

(Gladys, FG 2/18/05)

New Horizons members are aware that some of their programme peers remain active well into their 80s and 90s. This reference group serves as an inspiration and also as additional confirmation of identity:

> Nancy: So there’s a lot of people in our band who might be well up in years. And there might be other things in their lives that they’ve had to give up, but
they can continue doing music until they’re 90 or whatever. And sometimes as we get older, there are things that we can’t keep.

Gary: Well, I will second that. That’s an inspiration to see the fellow in the tuba section whose birthday is always on our concert night. I think he’s [in his early 90s]…

Nancy: So as your life is sometimes shrinking from the outer world, this is one aspect that can continue for as long as possible.

(FG 5/23/05)

As social networks develop and friendships form within the New Horizons ensembles, peers can become significant others. Kirk discusses how the relationships among New Horizons members take on the same importance as musical activity:

It’s very obvious […] that we had that chance to do it [make music together] with people who are there, and you can have a relationship with, and are caring, and for the most part are not critical. […] So it’s really a shared experience.

(Kirk, 2/18/05)

Doug attests to the closeness that he developed with New Horizons friends while they supported and encouraged him after the death of his wife (FG 6/3/05). Relationships formed through participation in the ensembles deepen as spouses pass away and grown children become less accessible. By spending so much time together in musical pursuits, members reinforce one another’s identities. They believe themselves to be healthy and productive older musicians because they are surrounded and supported by others who feel the same about themselves.

Conventions of performance

Like personnel in school and military bands across the country, New Horizons members gather on specified days and times, sit in sections in a typical concert band arrangement, follow the leadership of instructors and conductors, and rehearse music composed for a particular instrumentation. When New Horizons ensembles perform throughout the Rochester area, they normally do so in front of an audience. These conventions and rituals of band performance help reinforce members’ musical identities.

Interactions with instructors can also influence older adults’ understanding of themselves as musicians. When conductors and mentors demonstrate their faith in students’ abilities by encouraging them to take on new musical challenges, they confirm players’ musical potential.

Nancy: I was amazed that W tried improvisation with the Green Band!

Allison: I know!

Nancy: I thought, ‘Wow! He’s got a lot more faith than me!’ I mean, that was really new for people!

Allison: […] I’ve been working on it. And that’s a real challenge for me.
Nancy: But [he] had a lot of faith. He was really stretching us to try that. If he hadn’t really got behind us, we wouldn’t have tried that on our own.

(“FG 5/23/05”)

**Outside New Horizons – more distant others**

Kruse (2007) discusses how his participants engaged in service to their groups and placed importance on community outreach activities. He perceives these as potential bridges between formalized education and the larger community. New Horizons participants, even those with very little experience, are sometimes recruited to perform music in settings apart from those associated with the programme. Thomas related that his church organist once asked him to help with special music for a service:

He learned that I was in New Horizons, and studying percussion, and he says, ‘Hey! We’ll get you with the young kids, and you play the djembe!’ So I played the djembe with the kids singing and playing, and he’s playing the organ. […] So I’m just a young teenager. An OLD young teenager!

(Thomas, “FG 2/18/05”)

Focus group participants offered many similar tales. Diane’s (“FG 5/23/05”) co-workers insisted that she provide some entertainment for a Christmas party, while Michelle happily found herself performing with less experienced players at a public school function:

I ended up playing cymbals last night – badly! – with the eighth grade. It was a percussion group they had at the school. Their cymbal player was sick, and the music teacher handed me the music and said, ‘Will you play along with us?’ You never know what kinds of opportunities are going to come from this. And it’s a joyous experience!

(Michelle, “FG 5/20/05”)

The New Horizons Bands present concerts a few times each month in various venues around the Rochester area. They perform in shopping malls during the winter holiday season and in parks in nicer weather. More frequently, the full bands, chamber ensembles or a smaller, volunteer ‘Red Band’ present programmes to other older adults who live in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. In this way, New Horizons players extend the benefits they receive from music to others and provide a service to their community. For Gladys, such service aligns with her life’s purpose:

I guess I’m kind of like a service-type person. I wind up running the coffee, doing all those kind of things. That’s an important thing to me. I guess it’s just kind of giving back to the community.

(Gladys, “FG 2/18/05”)

Performances for those who might not otherwise be able to attend the formal concerts at Eastman are welcome entertainment and can have special significance for older listeners:

Just coming out of the concert the other day several older people who had been part of the population stopped me to say how much they enjoyed it.
That does make you feel good to help contribute to their enjoyment. The songs we play are from their time, and it kind of stimulates a lot of their memories and so forth.

(Ben, FG 6/3/05)

Although New Horizons members derive great pleasure from sharing their music with others, they inevitably draw comparisons when their community service brings them into contact with seniors who lack the vital capacities of their New Horizons counterparts. Identities are delimited against these interrelated others who are approximately the same age as New Horizons members, but whose physical autonomy or intellectual ability may be diminished and who may lack a sense of purpose or belonging to a dynamic community.

Summary
Identity exists as a dialectic between an individual and society: it emerges from a social context and is maintained and reshaped by social interaction (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Social identity may be understood ‘as that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group […] together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’ (Tajfel 1981: 255). Most New Horizons participants have retired from long careers, leaving contexts and relationships that defined them for many years. They find bonds of fellowship in the Rochester ensembles; participation provides structure for their time and direction for their energies. Membership in the Rochester New Horizons programme clearly provides a path to new identity and purpose in older adulthood.

Although individuals may experience profound identity loss after retirement, study members suggest that the choice to participate in New Horizons signifies exploration of a new path and new identity in older adulthood. Participation in band, chamber ensembles and private lessons constitutes a nearly full-time occupation for some members, while others maintain more varied interests. Nevertheless, New Horizons provides structure and purpose for participants’ lives. Focus group members also suggest that active engagement and communal music-making in the Rochester programme enhances physical, mental and spiritual health. According to identity theories, such strong senses of purpose and well-being are indications that individuals have made new identity commitments in later life.

Older adulthood can be a time when many individuals give in to despair, but those who join New Horizons use membership in the organization to transform themselves. Instrumental music helps define and mediate the relationships that exist between New Horizons participants. Not surprisingly, then, members claim musical identities. Membership in New Horizons facilitates the construction, reclamation and revision of musical identity. The programme functions as an entry point into communal music-making for some older adults, and a re-entry opportunity for others who may fondly recall the musical activity of their childhood. Many participants in the present study were experienced musicians prior to joining New Horizons. Some played in ensembles through college into early...
adulthood, and others started music instruction in the younger grades, but dropped out for various reasons. Still others began piano lessons when they were young and continued to play throughout their lives. New Horizons became a vehicle for these people to revise their musical identities while they learned to play wind or percussion instruments in an ensemble setting. Those few who had no musical background prior to joining New Horizons may have countered previous perceptions of themselves as non-musicians. Given Kruse’s questions (2007) of adults’ self-definations of themselves as ‘musicians’ compared to these findings, this question bears further investigation.

A significant number of female participants played a solitary instrument, such as piano, or an instrument with stereotypically feminine connotations, such as flute, in their youth. Because the principle of adult autonomy underlies the New Horizons programme, membership allows these women to choose paths different from those of their youth. Musical identities negotiated through membership in New Horizons are distinguished not merely by the acquisition of musical skills but also by the adoption of roles as valuable contributors to a larger musical ensemble. The social networks of the ensembles offer women support to contest gender stereotypes. The question of whether participation in the programme can serve a similar purpose for male members remains for future research to determine.

Although Erikson and Erikson (1997) define identity by way of a stage theory, they acknowledge that the subjective sense of self is relative to others in the social world. Josselson (1996) refers to this same phenomenon when she discusses women’s life contexts and the paths they follow as they revise their identities. Although identity feels self-authored, others must respond to and confirm this sense of self; significant and more distant others confirm identity. Spouses and grown children are normally the primary others who acknowledge and support older adults’ new identities and productivity. In the absence of these family members, however, New Horizons peers frequently become significant others who validate identity for one another. The rituals and conventions of ensemble performance also help to reinforce identities. More distant others strengthen members’ self-definations by inviting them to engage in musical activity outside the New Horizons ensembles in such venues as churches and schools. Community service delimits identity because, in these contexts, New Horizons members compare themselves to other older adults whose physical and intellectual capacities may be reduced. Such comparisons reinforce New Horizons members’ images of themselves as healthy, productive older adults who are passionately engaged in music-making.

References


**Suggested citation**

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New Initiatives

Regional Initiative 1: North American Coalition for Community Music

Chelcy Bowles University of Wisconsin-Madison

A think tank of seventeen music educators across the community music spectrum assembled January 18–20 2008, at Hewitt School in Manhattan to discuss the possible development of a continental organization focused entirely on community music practices. The intention of the gathering, called ‘The Hewitt Commission’, was to continue and focus the dialogues that launched the International Society of Music Education’s (ISME) Community Music Activities Commission’ and the The National Association for Music Education’s (MENC) ‘Lifelong Learning and Community Music Special Research Interest Group’. Kari Veblen (University of Western Ontario) organized the assembly, and posed this broad question for consideration: ‘How can we use our good ideas and energies to best effect the transformations necessary to make music education more relevant and accessible to all?’

The three days were primarily devoted to open discussions across a broad range of topics, including: ‘What is community music in its broadest sense?’, ‘Who are the people and groups most likely to effect a transformation to relevancy and accessibility and how could this organization support those individuals and groups?’, ‘Who would the organization benefit and represent?’, ‘What organizations supporting community music practices and research already exist, and how would this one differ?’ and ‘What are the ways in which the organization could develop?’ The discussions were moderated by Don Coffman (University of Iowa; chair-elect, ISME CMA) and Phil Mullen (United Kingdom; past chair, ISME CMA), and were interspersed with brief presentations, case studies, and music-making.

The Hewitt Commission determined that a continental organization dedicated to the development and support of community music projects that advance accessibility and relevancy across age, ethnic, social, geographical and political boundaries would be a worthy endeavour. The Commission also concluded that such an organization would provide a voice and network for the many diverse community music practices that currently do not have a forum for interaction and representation, and would provide opportunity for all community music practices, including school music, to inform, learn from and support each other.
The assembly decided to move forward in developing an organization tentatively called the 'North American Coalition for Community Music'. The Hewitt Commission will meet again in May 2008 to develop and refine its vision and mission, determine broad goals to support the mission, determine leadership for the Coalition, and develop a ten year strategy for the organization. A website for the Coalition is in progress, but communication related to the Coalition may be directed currently to nacm2008@gmail.com.

Members of The Hewitt Commission are deeply grateful to Kari Veblen for organizing a forum for sharing our dreams and ambitions for a transformative interpretation of music education across the continent, and to Casey Hayes and the Hewitt School for hosting this momentous gathering.

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Over forty community music workers from twelve countries gathered at Goldsmiths College, University of London in September 2007 for the second European Community Music Gathering. There was strong representation from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy with attendees from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Wales/Iran, Ghana and Canada. The two days of lively discussions, presentations, case studies and practical music-making workshops focused on community music in Europe with the intention of developing regional communications, flow of information and collaborations. Participants considered issues such as areas of training, how to make reciprocity work, technology, creation and delivery of projects. Questions that continued throughout were, do we wish to actively collaborate across borders? If so, in what areas? What are our common issues and goals?
Phil Mullen, past chair of the ISME (International Society for Music Education) Community Music Activity Commission, was inspired to convene this opportunity for networking regionally through his affiliations with ISME and his work as founder of SoundPeople and lecturer at Goldsmiths College. The event was organized and sponsored by Phil Mullen assisted by Lizzy Segal and Graham Dowdall of the SoundPeople team with financial help from Music Leader, London.

Speakers described new developments and continuing programmes from their countries. Kate Atkinson (Music.Leader.net) and Jean Downey (Limerick University, Ireland) each discussed training programmes at their institutions. Atkinson began pilots in five regions of the United Kingdom over the past two years to improve skills for both community music (CM) workers and music educators. She believes the new buzzwords in the field will be accountability, relevance, collaboration and convergence. Downey serves as liaison between graduate students and various tutors in the Irish master’s course, now in its tenth year. Kathryn Deane (Sound Sense, United Kingdom) shared insights into the evolving state of the art in the United Kingdom and of Sound Sense, the CM advocacy group serving the 1000–2000 CM workers in the United Kingdom. Deane is concerned with excellence and qualifications, but does not endorse outwardly imposed licensure. At the same time she and others note the variety in certification across Europe ranging from one-day, one-shot workshops to two-year sequenced and comprehensive programmes.

Cross-border programmes also featured in the discussions. Chrissie Tiller (National Theatre, United Kingdom) discussed European funding of collaborative arts projects. Marie Therese Rudolph (Austria) presented on KulturKontakt, an organization furthering intercultural dialogue through education, youth and cultural sectors. Noting that her group sponsors some 800 cultural education projects, Rudolph remarked that KulturKontakt stresses ‘process rather than finished project’. See the website at http://www.kulturkontakt.or.at for an outline of current school and arts programmes, competitions, events, panel discussions, book reviews and job notices.

Catherine Pestano (CRISP, United Kingdom) gave an inspiring PowerPoint presentation on the first phase of an innovative music education project in Serbia. The Croydon Intercultural Singing Project (CRISP)’s initiative, Torak International Music for Youth Project, brings the UK community music model of open access and creative participatory music to Serbian youth aged 5–25 years including minority, low-income youth with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. Recipient of the 2007 inaugural ISME-Gibson Community-Based Music Education Award, CRISP’s project seeks to advance community-building and self-esteem through the promotion of participation in music. Beneficiaries include what Pestano calls ‘a tapestry of microethnicities’.1 ‘It is our first international project’, said Pestano, director of CRISP, ‘and it allows us to fulfil our commitment to promoting community music and enabling children, young people and adults to experience the joy that creative and participatory music-making offers’. (For more information including photos, visit http://www.isme.org/en/isme-gibson-awards).

1. Participants include children who are Roma (Gypsy), Romanian, Kosovan, Serbian, Slovaks, Hungarians and others. The region has no ethnic majority but instead has 26 ethnic minorities plus one other group (Poles), with five official languages. They come from both urban and rural backgrounds.
Lee Higgins (Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, United Kingdom) as chair of the ISME CMA Commission invited participants to submit their work to the 2008 seminar, which will be held in Rome, Italy. He expanded upon the role of ISME in developing community music. Higgins also launched the brand new version of the *International Journal for Community Music* displaying the fresh first edition of the freshly formatted journal now published by Intellect Press as well as available online.

Research was another theme in the gathering. Sidsel Karlsen (Luleå University of Technology, Sweden) reported on her research into music festivals as arenas for learning. Her doctoral work investigates individual, collective and constructed identities in this fascinating case study. Kari Veblen (University of Western Ontario, Canada) gave a talk entitled ‘Who Do They Think They Are?: Musicianship, Skill-sets and Dispositions of Community Music Workers’. Her PowerPoint presentation drew upon her on-going international study of community music workers/musicians/educators.

During lunch there was a concert from children and tutors of the Piano Andante Forte Project in Italy. Showcasing their community music school, the musicians ranged from almost 2 to 20 years old. They sang, danced and played cello, piano and violin.

Practical workshops included sessions with Hungarian rhythms (Cecilia Patko, Hungary/United Kingdom), music of nature (Antonio Testa, Italy), approaches to music technology (Jon Halvor Bjornseth, Norway), urban music with hard-to-reach youth (Graham Dowdall, United Kingdom), creative ensemble work in the primary classroom (Jo White, United Kingdom), traditional song and dance in schools (Susana Beatriz Alvear, Italy), West African drumming (Tom Dadson, Ghana/United Kingdom), songwriting (Reinhold Seibert, Austria), music with children with autism (Tina Pinder, United Kingdom), as well as Irish traditional singing and song (Fintan Lucy, Ireland).

The scheduled portions of this gathering were rich and absorbing but proved to be a point of departure for even more intense breakout discussions and exchanges as the weekend progressed. Discussions facilitated by Phil Mullen included developing community music as a profession and future collaborations across Europe. This opportunity to share experiences across European contexts was invaluable; dialogue continued until the wee hours of the night(s). At the end, tired but enthusiastic participants clapped their unanimous appreciation of Phil Mullen and his colleagues for their hard work in organizing this worthwhile event. There are plans to hold another such gathering in the near future which will again be open and free for all who are interested.

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New Adult and Community Music Research Database

Jeffrey E. Bush  Arizona State University

Don Coffman (University of Iowa) and Laurie Bitters (Eastman Community Music School) have created a database including close to 600 entries related to adult and community music education. The database is displayed in the online programme ‘RefWorks’, a searchable application that allows users to print, export or generate their own list of references found on the site. A link to this resource can be found at the ‘Adult and Community Music Education’ (ACME) ‘Special Research Interest Group’ (SRIG) website: http://www.acmesrig.org/

Researchers Coffman and Bitters compiled this database for the ACME SRIG, a research group under the umbrella organization of ‘MENC: The National Association for Music Education’. The mission of the ACME SRIG is ‘…to promote research contributing to music education that fosters active involvement in the making, creating, and studying of music across the life span through the understanding of the unique learning characteristics of adults.’ First organized under the auspices of MENC in 1996, the ACME SRIG presents sessions at biennial MENC conferences and is one of the organizing partners for the Music and Lifelong Learning Symposium held on September 27–29 2007 in Ithaca College, New York. Further information about both the organization and the symposium can be found on the ACME SRIG website.

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139–141 Editorial
Lee Higgins, David J. Elliott, and Kari Veblen with guest editors Susan Avery and Chelcy Bowles

Articles
143–158 Practice, ritual and community music: doing as identity
Helen Phelan
159–168 PickleHerring and Marlsite projects: an interdisciplinary approach to junk music-making
Matt Smith
169–188 Music transmission in an Auckland Tongan community youth band
David G. Hebert
189–201 The musical culture of an ‘inuk’ teenager
Mary E. Pierrey
203–216 Questions arising from the views of some members of four amateur classical music organizations
Roger Palmer
217–227 Closing the gap: does music-making have to stop upon graduation?
Roger Mantie and Lynn Tucker
229–241 Toward a definition of a community choir
Cindy L. Bell
243–252 Lifelong learners in music; research into musicians’ biographical learning
Rineke Smilde
253–266 Intergenerational learning in a high school environment
Christopher J. Alfano
267–286 Identity formation through participation in the Rochester New Horizons Band programme
William M. Dabback

287–291 New Initiatives