

What is Community Spirit? In context with Community Music

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Introduction

Music in the community is something that happens in everyday life. Many musicians working with communities are advocates for local arts and music, and work in capacities which are relatively unrecognised by the professional arts and music world. It can be a struggle to articulate these practices outside of the practical aspects, such as venue hire, performance, equipment and sound engineering. However, many of these musicians work to foster community spirit and individual wellbeing amongst the communities they work with.

It is therefore the aim of this research to uncover what it means to say “I facilitate community spirit through music”, and to equip community musicians with language to articulate their practice, talk amongst themselves, and gain recognition and support. This research has largely been collated through a cross-disciplinary literature review, alongside interviews with professional and amateur music-makers and community facilitators. Each chapter presents the relevant literature first, with a discussion based on the interviews to conclude.

Chapter 1 will discuss the basic underlying principles of community spirit, without which it cannot exist, before moving on to put it into context with arts and music in Chapters 2 and 3. The final chapter puts principles from 1, 2, and 3 into context with practice. Dispersed throughout the text are anonymised interpretations of photography taken at events held by the author under the organisation name of Shoots; a music events and studio business advocating high quality provisions for local music and musicians. Please refer to the appendices for interviewee profiles, and a brief review of the key texts.



Chapter 1 - Community Spirit

Community

The word 'community' is derived from the Latin *communitas* (of common), and the modern word 'community' is linked to a beautiful range of related meanings.¹

Community 'has no single definition which is generally accepted'.² As a place to start, then, community spirit is unlikely to have one all-encompassing meaning. Perhaps this is a good thing: after all, 'bureaucracy acts as a barrier to participation',³ and community is in itself participatory.

Communities can be based on many things, including ethnicity, religion, class, gender, or politics. They can be located in villages, towns, cities, or cyberspace. Communities can be large or small, local or global, traditional, modern, or post-modern. However, this "warmly persuasive word" has at its heart the search for human belonging.⁴

A concept that echoes community spirit is the 'sense of community' theory, as first discussed by MacMillan and Chavis in 1986. It highlights the complexity of what we are discussing:

Their definition of this concept is based on four elements; membership (the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness), influence (a sense of mattering or making a difference to the group), integration and fulfilment of needs (the feeling that

¹ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004. 91.

² Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. New York: Routledge, 2012. 90.

³ (Burns, D. and Taylor, M. "Auditing Community Participation: An assessment handbook," *The Policy Press/Joseph*, 2000. 2.

⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 142.

members' needs will be met), and shared emotional connection (the commitment and belief that members have and will have a shared history, common places, time together, and similar experiences).⁵

Social capital

From one perspective, 'social capital refers to [the] connections among individuals - [the] social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'.⁶ 'Benefits include access to: a flow of information; exerting influence; certifying social credentials and reinforcement in the form of identity and recognition'.⁷

In Coleman's rational model, the choices we make about how to live and relate to each other, are based on self interest. He sees the function of social capital, as values and shared norms, to underpin and sustain social order. With Putnam's political strain of social capital, the focus is on social networks, and the role of mutual obligation and cooperative action. Bourdieu's theory of practice provides a critical perspective, sharing an interest in the cohesive function of social norms and networks, but stressing the ways that social capital supports and maintains capitalist society and its inequalities.⁸

Whilst useful to our discussion, this interpretation (describing relationships as assets) comes with its own issues. Music Therapist Gary Ansdell states that: 'social capital theory has its critics, and I sympathise with those who are uncomfortable with its unapologetically capitalist metaphors'.⁹ However, 'the

⁵ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 90.

⁶ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. 19.

⁷ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. Research Centre for Arts and Health, 2014. 14.

⁸ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital: Concept, Policy and Practice*. Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007. 3.

⁹ Ansdell, Gary. *How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. 227.

core thesis of social capital theory, that “relationships matter”,¹⁰ is a good place to begin.

Human relations consist of multiple layers that extend out from the ego. These layers extend from the most intimate relations (e.g. marital ties), outward to social networks (e.g. connection to close relatives and friends), and to “weak” ties consisting of involvement in community, voluntary, and religious organisations.¹¹

The framework utilised in social capital theory is similar to the psychological framing above, with differentiations made between bonds, bridges, and links (which can be incorporated into bridges). Bonds are links to people ‘based on a sense of common identity (“people like us”) - such as family close friends and people who share our ethnicity’, whereas bridges ‘stretch beyond a shared sense of identity’.¹²

Bonding social capital manifests itself between members of a social network, exemplified by strong ties among people from similar situations. These “horizontal relationships” - between family, friends and neighbours - are good for “getting by” in life.

Bridging social capital refers to more distant “weak ties” between members of different social networks. These ties provide access to contacts, information and resources essential for “getting ahead” in life.

Linking social capital refers to links between groups with different levels of influence and power. Its “vertical ties” enable members of the

¹⁰ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 13.

¹¹ Kawachi, Berkman. “Social Ties and Mental Health.” *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 78 (2001). 463.

¹² Keeley, Brian. *OECD Insights: Human Capital*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007. 103.

network to leverage a greater range of resources than those available within any one community.¹³

We can say that a strong tie implies a bond, and a weak tie implies a bridge.

A strong tie is a relationship which is characterised by regular encounters, real conversations about matters that are perceived to be important, and mutual positive feelings. Weak ties are more transitory and may appear to be less important to each of us. ... Important aspects are frequency of contact, duration of ties, and reciprocity.¹⁴

Weak ties can thus become strong ties, and vice versa. But perhaps it could be perceived as a spectrum; a tapestry of ever-shifting, weakening and strengthening relationships. 'People's social capital practices are active, fluid, negotiated and cross-cut with class gender and ethnic practices, as part of the routine of everyday life.'¹⁵

Social identity

'Coleman (1988) discussed closure in social networks, emphasising the ability of small groups to monitor and pressure each other to behave'.¹⁶ Whilst social capital offers us a useful framework, the psychological aspects of communities give insights into how groups work. The psychological theory of social identity is 'guided by two basic motivations: self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction'.¹⁷

¹³ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 14.

¹⁴ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 94.

¹⁵ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital: Concept, Policy and Practice*. 2007. 12.

¹⁶ Jackson, Rodriguez-Barraquer, Tan. *Social Capital and Social Quilts: Network Patterns of Favour Exchange*. American Economic Review, 2010, revision: 2011. 4.

¹⁷ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" *Small Group Research* 35 (2004). 255.

Groups shape our psychology and contribute to our sense of self; they provide us with a sense of social identity. We embrace groups as they provide us with personal security, companionship, emotional bonds, intellectual stimulation, collaborative learning, and a sense of place, purpose, and belonging, all of which tend to be good for us psychologically. They enhance our self-esteem and sense of worth, and can buffer well-being when it is threatened. Social identities, and the notions of “us-ness” that they embody and help create, are central to health and wellbeing.¹⁸

However, these groups can have mixed effects on us. ‘A person’s psychology often depends on the state of the groups that define the self’.¹⁹ Social support can ‘either promote a sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem or become “disabling” by reinforcing dependence’.²⁰ So whilst a lack of social identity and support can have negative impacts on our wellbeing, group interaction is not necessarily beneficial.

A social group is a collection of more than two people who have the same social identity, meaning they identify themselves as having the same attributes. Social identity, or group membership, is a matter of collective self-construal “we”, “us”, and “them.” People have as many social identities as there are groups they feel they belong to. Identities vary in subjective importance and value.²¹

In-groups, out-groups and prototypes

Social groups are important to our identities; how we construct and perceive ourselves. They are based on in-groups and out-groups, or “us” and “them”,

¹⁸ Haslam, S. Alexander. “Social Identity, Health and Well-Being” *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 58 (2009). 2-3.

¹⁹ Haslam, S. Alexander. “Social Identity, Health and Well-Being” (2009). 5.

²⁰ Kawachi, Berkman. “Social Ties and Mental Health.” *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 78 (2001). 461.

²¹ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. “The Social Identity Perspective” (2004). 251-52.

which allow us to differentiate between our group(s), and an outside group. 'Social capital is often most easily created in opposition to something or someone else'.²² Prototypes are 'polarised away from out-group features and scribe ideal, often hypothetical, in-group members'.²³ A shared identity of a group, then, is dependent on the comparison to "other".

Social categorisation is the cognitive basis of group behaviour. When we perceive ourselves as members of particular groups (in-groups) and not members of other groups (out-groups), we tend to maximise similarities within groups and to accentuate differences between groups. Important dimensions of such differences are beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and behaviour. Prototypes are cognitive representations of the attributes of groups and include all attributes that characterise groups and distinguish them from other groups.²⁴

'Prototypes cannot form or be sustained purely by intragroup comparisons - they are dependent on intergroup comparisons'.²⁵ So an in-group prototype (or a stereotype when we discuss other outgroups) represents an idealised version of what embodies the shared identity. The prototype cannot exist for the group via internal comparisons, they must differentiate from external groups. We depend on what makes us not "like them", to know what makes us "like us".

You view yourself in terms of the attributes of the in-group, feel and behave normatively and, in this way, self-categorisation also produces conformity and patterns of in-group liking, trust, and solidarity'.²⁶

²² Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 360.

²³ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" (2004). 254.

²⁴ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 107.

²⁵ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" (2004). 254.

²⁶ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" (2004). 254.

By becoming part of a group, we categorise ourselves via the attributes of that group's prototype. This can mean adapting or compromising parts of ourselves for the group, but it can also result in friendship, support and validation. 'Within groups, people are highly attuned to prototypicality. Reactions to and feelings about fellow members are underpinned by perceptions of how closely they match the group prototype'.²⁷ Prototypes allow us to assess how we feel about the group and its members', and to what extent we will align with that group's social identity.

Groups can also be internally structured into nested subgroups. ... In almost all nested group situations, one group's attributes are more fully represented in the overarching group, and thus one nested group tends to occupy a dominant position. Subordinate subgroups often feel their distinct identity within the larger collective is threatened, which can cause them to fight strongly for independency within the wider collective. However, diversity that is internalised by members as part of their social identity may have a range of advantages for group function and group life as a whole.²⁸

So, ideally, a group will account for the diversity of subgroups, and hold strong bonds across their in-group, based on their assessments of members against the in-group prototype. They may maintain a level of openness to allow new members in, or to communicate with other groups. Whether the group is closed or open, or where it sits in that continuum (whom to allow in and how far), likely involves a process of shared discussion and decision-making (based on prototype alignment and reciprocity assessments) within the group. Both bonding within in-groups and bridging with "others" are valuable. However, this is not always in celebration and goodwill. 'Bridging is about coming together to argue, as much as to share'.²⁹

²⁷ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" (2004). 254.

²⁸ Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinkle. "The Social Identity Perspective" (2004). 261.

²⁹ Putnam, Robert D, Lewis M Feldstein, and Don Cohen. *Better Together*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003. 279.

Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups (bonding), other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages (bridging). Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity. Bridging networks, by contrast are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. ... Bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism.³⁰

‘By joining groups we find attractive (or groups which are highly esteemed) and keeping distance from groups of people that we perceive as less attractive, we may improve our self esteem’.³¹ Choosing identities we like influences our wellbeing, but they also serve as a means to protect communities from negative interactions, such as free-riding or disruption.

But each individual benefits more by shirking her responsibility, hoping that others will do the work for her. Moreover, even if she is wrong and the others shirk, too, she is still better off than if she had been the only sucker. ... These and other coordination challenges go by various names ... But they all share one feature: They are best solved by an institutional mechanism with the power to ensure compliance with the collectively desirable behaviour. Social norms and the networks that enforce them provide such a mechanism.³²

Communities, then, are not simply built on positive interactions and acts of reciprocity. In order for a social identity to exist, it is built on the rejection of “other” as much as the love of “us”. Though, ‘rejection’ may be an unnecessarily hard line to draw. There is an extent to which a member participates in the group and identifies with the prototype. There is an extent to which a member is inclined to bond with ingroup members, or bridge with others.

³⁰ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 22-23.

³¹ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 107.

³² Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 288.

If two would-be collaborators are members of a tightly knit community, they are likely to encounter one another in the future - or to hear about one another through the grapevine. Thus they have reputations at stake that are almost surely worth more than gains from momentary treachery. In that sense, honesty is encouraged by dense social networks.³³

'Contacts - both formal and informal - facilitate familiarity and stimulate trust'³⁴. Trust has been argued to involve 'a set of beliefs and expectations that a partner's actions will be beneficial to one's long-term self interest'.³⁵ 'Networks of relationships are needed to provide sufficient incentives for favour exchange, and it may be that an agent risks losing several relationships by failing to provide a favour'.³⁶

'Careful studies have shown that people who have received help are themselves more likely to help others'.³⁷ Having social connections in which we trust can help us to accumulate more connections in which we trust, giving means to the required exchanges. It is by maintaining prototypes, monitoring 'favour exchange' or reciprocity, and maintaining a state of flux and negotiation, that individuals assess their own status within a community, and that of others within and outside of a community, in terms of identity, social standing, and relationship.

Social cohesion

The members belonging to the same circle are likely to share similar, if not identical, information. If an individual wants to have access to

³³ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 136.

³⁴ Letki, Natalia. *Does Diversity Erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods*. Poland: Department of Political Science, Palace of Culture and Science. 22.

³⁵ Simpson, Jeffrey. "The Psychological Foundations of Trust" *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16. 265.

³⁶ Jackson, Rodriguez-Barraquer, Tan. *Social Capital and Social Quilts*. 2011. 1.

³⁷ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 122.

different information he needs a link with a different social circle too. The ties between different social circles are called bridges without which the circles will be independent. The combination between these two types of connections is an advantage in order to have a more spread information flow.³⁸

Bridging social capital speaks to the concept of social cohesion. Social cohesion can be defined as 'the extent of social connectedness and solidarity among groups in society'.³⁹ There are many aspects of community life that are of benefit to individuals, including self-esteem through common identities, social support in times of need, and opportunities for change and discovery. Disconnected communities, and people who lack trusting relationships, are restricted in many ways.

Communities that lack civic interconnections find it harder to share information and thus mobilise to achieve opportunities or resist threats. Social capital also operates through psychological and biological processes to improve individuals' lives. Mounting evidence suggests that people whose lives are rich in social capital cope better with traumas and fight illness more effectively.⁴⁰

Isolation, health and equality

'There is evidence that social identity loss (e.g. as a result of retirement, work restructuring, illness) can have a dramatic negative impact on well-being and mental health'.⁴¹ Being part of a group provides us with a social identity, and losing this social identity can produce negative consequences. However, change can be good too.

³⁸ Andriani, Luca. *Social Capital: a Road Map of Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Limitations*. Birkbeck University of London, 2013. 6.

³⁹ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 78.

⁴⁰ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 289.

⁴¹ Haslam, S. Alexander. "Social Identity, Health and Well-Being" (2009). 14.

To be physically handicapped, poor, a former mental patient, or an object of exploitation or social disapproval is an identity that society forces on many unwilling 'deviants' ... We see self-help groups as vehicles through which these outcast persons can claim and grow toward new identities, redefining themselves and society; can overcome solitariness through identification with a reference group; and sometimes can work toward social ends or social change that they see as important.⁴²

This speaks to the importance of being able to develop new, or redevelop old, identities. The act of being part of a new group can help to form a new social, and thus personal, identity for the individual. 'High levels of social support are associated with low levels of distress, psychological complaints and psychiatric symptoms'.⁴³

Research suggests that higher levels of social capital can enhance an individual's sense of self-efficacy and mastery, reduce alienation and stress and ultimately contribute to a sense of well-being, thus improving health. ... A number of studies have suggested that personal ties, contacts and mutual support enhances an individual's access to information, resources and opportunities and can make available assistance and emotional support, thus meeting physical and mental health needs.⁴⁴

Maintaining community life is clearly vital for individual wellbeing. We should also consider, then, what happens to those who are excluded. 'Social exclusion leads to more aggression, reduced willingness to cooperate with others, and an increased tendency to engage in self-defeating behaviours such as risk-taking and procrastination'.⁴⁵ Social capital has been described as a 'double-edged sword':

⁴² Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 151.

⁴³ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 97-8.

⁴⁴ Sessions, Yu, Wall. "Social Capital and Health: A Longitudinal Analysis from the British Household Panel Survey." *Bath Economics Research Papers: Department of Economics* 6/11 (2011). 3.

⁴⁵ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 107.

While group members (insiders) can benefit from common resources, the outsider might be excluded and under certain circumstances isolated by creating an environment of general distrust.⁴⁶

‘Troubled communities tend to have more connections of the strongly bonded, exclusive kind’.⁴⁷ They lack the crucial weak ties that ‘sew the network together; when eliminated, the network fragments into a number of isolated cliques. This fragmentation potentially reduces social resilience’.⁴⁸ The “Strength of Position Proposition” indicates that: ‘considering a member of a network, the better the position of origin, the more likely it is that this member will access and better use the social capital’.⁴⁹ Lack of social capital may be self-perpetuating without intervention.

Discussion

To be a ‘happy spirit’ is to be ‘someone who has a ‘good life’ by managing to balance aspects of health, contentment, social harmony, virtue, and an attention to what the philosopher Mark Vernon wittily calls the ‘spirit level’.⁵⁰

Spirit can be taken to mean: ‘the prevailing or typical quality, mood, or attitude of a person, group, or period of time’.⁵¹ So Community Spirit refers to the mood, quality and attitude of the community, and is perhaps inclusive of their attitude towards other groups too. For Michael, community spirit evokes encounters between people: “the spaces in between people, things that are created through connection.” For Maddy, community spirit makes you feel connected to something bigger and is a “feeling an attachment and wanting to

⁴⁶ Andriani, Luca. *Social Capital*. 2013. 18.

⁴⁷ Macnab, Thomas, Grosvenor. The changing nature of ‘connectivity’ within and between communities. Connected Communities. University of Birmingham. 2.

⁴⁸ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 13.

⁴⁹ Andriani, Luca. *Social Capital*. 2013. 7.

⁵⁰ Ansdell, Gary. How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life. 2014. 297.

⁵¹ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “spirit”, accessed August 20, 2015, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>

contribute to the community.” Michael also highlighted the importance of attachment: “often called a secure base in psychological theory, from that we learn to trust, and we learn to also be autonomous and independent. The stronger that attachment is the more likely you are to function autonomously and independently because you’ve internalised a working model of the world which is secure.”

‘To communicate means to make something common’.⁵² As interviewee Elaine puts it: “community comes from communing, it’s about mutuality”. To communicate amongst the community, or across communities, means to make something common. Amy points out: “people don’t have to be striving for the same things, but understanding and acknowledgement is really important.” As we will discuss later, creating common ground is how new bridges and bonds are made. As Michael highlighted, people are associated with several groups and identities: through friendship and close ties, clubs and teams, and larger groups such as ‘Yorkshireman’ or ‘Brummy’.

For Lloyd, “there’s the identity of the group, and my identity within it”, which maintains both the shared and subjective experience. When discussing the shared identity and fashion choices of a group of BTEC Music students, Ian commented: “it’s got connotations of being individual, but we gravitated to, it was like a little uniform.” Sarah notes: “everybody aims to be part of a good group of people”. Rich also noted identity’s importance: “people need identity and somewhere to call their own.”

Amy highlighted cohesion and the bringing together of values. For her, community spirit is about “understanding reciprocity and shared goals” or “common purpose.” Or, as Jeff puts it: “mutual benefit.” Elaine agrees that community spirit is about “shared interests”, but was not alone in feeling that it is also about caring: “you’re not just working alongside somebody and doing something, you care about them and they care about you.” Ian keeps it simple too: “it’s being aware of where you are, and who’s there, and being able to empathise with them.”

⁵² Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 90.

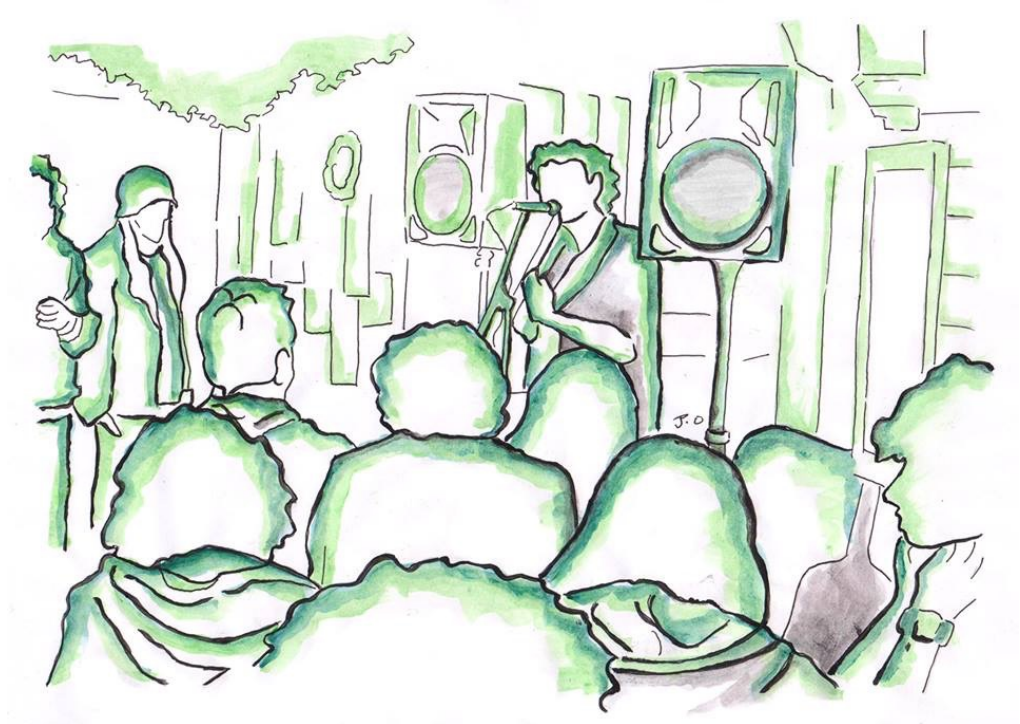
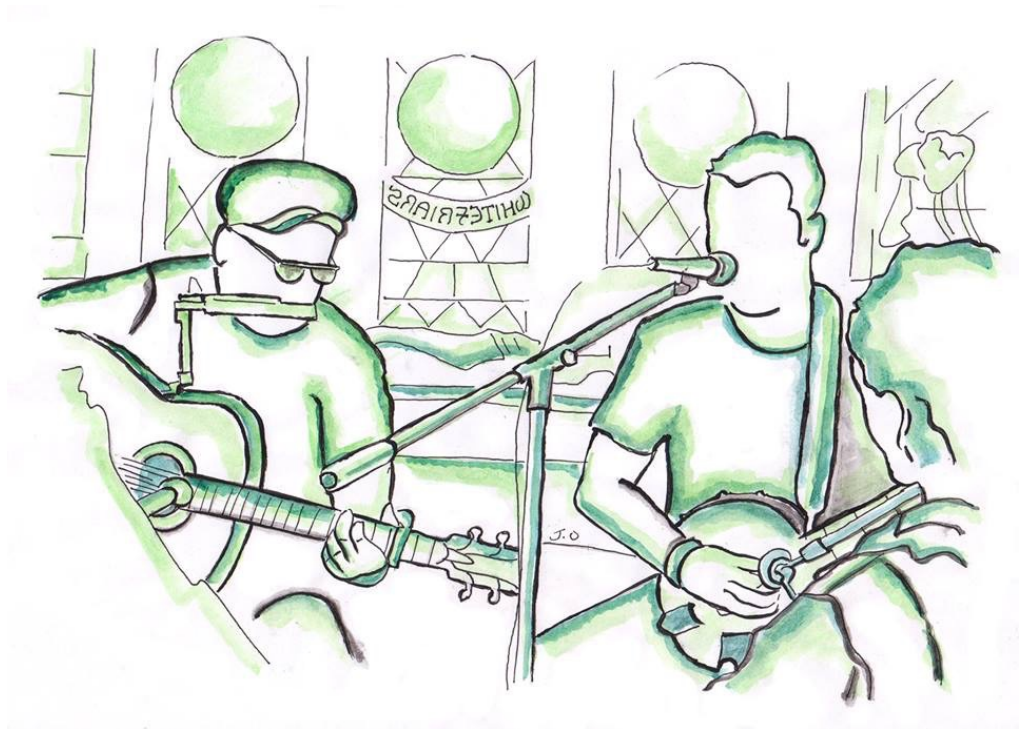
Many of the interviews brought up the simple things, like engaging with one another, smiling, and sharing memories. For many working closely with communities, it is the weaving of lives that means the most. Rich reflects: “we know that people met, people fell in love, people had children, and those children have grown up.”

Several interviewees expressed that community is about choice. Lloyd acknowledges that community begins “as something that’s in the individual first. It can only happen because a bunch of individuals choose to spend time together”. For him, “community spirit is the willingness to put the group ahead of oneself” and “the willingness to do something together rather than on your own.” He “wouldn’t be an evangelist for one kind of interaction or one kind of manifestation of community: we all have different styles of being in the world and we’re all experimenting all the time with being more in the world or less in the world.”

Elaine highlighted that “you’re much stronger if you work together”, using a metaphor that “if you have a twig then you can snap it, but if you put it together in a sheaf you cannot break it.” Many of the interviewees felt that community spirit evoked the importance of working and living together. As Maddy plainly explains: “as human beings we’re not lone creatures. We rely on things outside of ourselves.” When discussing working as a musician, Ian mentioned that “it’s very hard to work in isolation, because the nature of music is you need good people to put your ideas in motion, this means that people tend to stick together. We found that camaraderie and community spirit in BTEC Musicians.” Though, favour exchange is still key: “you have to develop your people skills, and your community spirit, and say, they’ve done this for me, so therefore i’ve got to do something for them.”

Community spirit was felt to be important for health, mental health and wellbeing. We need community not only to combat loneliness and feel a sense of safety, but as Michael sees it to also “affirm our own humanity and identity.” For Sarah, “being able to belong is just something that is natural within us, and to be in a place or with a group of people where you feel like you belong, is comforting.” She also comments that through engagement,

people “can learn important things about one another and about themselves”.
For Amy, “it’s a basic need to understand people”.



Chapter 2 - Community Arts

Arts Participation

Participation in the arts can 'bring communities together and help develop a sense of local pride while building social capital'.⁵³ It is an 'effective route for personal growth' which can lead to 'enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments'.⁵⁴ For individuals:

Those who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not. ... Participation in a creative or cultural activity shows similar benefits: those who had done this were 38 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who did not.⁵⁵

It also contributes to social cohesion by 'developing networks and understanding, and building local capacity for organisation and self-determination'.⁵⁶ For groups, participation in arts projects can help with:

A sense of identity and belonging; social cohesion; increased intergenerational contact; for migrant groups there is the opportunity to maintain links to their country and culture of origin in addition to developing hybrid traditions and customs that occur as part of a process of living in the host country; improved community image and identity.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ennis, Douglass. *Culture and regeneration. Working paper 48*. London: Greater London Authority, 2011. 3.

⁵⁴ Matarasso, Francois. *Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts*. Comedia, 1997. 6.

⁵⁵ Mowlah, Niblett, Blackburn, Harris. "The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society," Manchester: *Arts Council England*, (2014). 25.

⁵⁶ Matarasso, Francois. *Use or Ornament?* 1997. 6.

⁵⁷ Ramsden, H. Milling, J. Phillimore, J. McCabe, A. Fyfe, H and Simpson R. "The Role of Grassroots Arts Activities in Communities: a Scoping Study," *Third Sector Research Centre, Working Paper 68*, (2011). 10.

Matarasso found that '86% of adults who participated in an arts project want to be involved in further projects', and 91% of adults made new friends'.⁵⁸ 'People with strong social networks [have] mortality rates half or one third of those with weak social ties', whilst 'people with more social capital are likely to live longer, and suffer from fewer health disorders'.⁵⁹ In contrast, 'social inequality tends to reduce social stability and undermines social networks', and studies show that 'socially isolated people, compared with those with good social networks, have a reduced life expectancy'.⁶⁰

At a basic level, participation in art and cultural activity can help to increase communication and social skills, widening social networks; something which is central to the development of social capital. This can be of particular importance in disadvantaged areas where poor living environments can often prohibit the development of community relations.⁶¹

Arts and Social Capital

Whether visual, musical, dramatic, or literary, the arts allow us to "create together" and to discover shared understandings. The creation and presentation of art often inspires a raft of civically valuable dispositions – trust, openness, honesty, cooperativeness, tolerance, and respect.⁶²

⁵⁸ Matarasso, Francois. *Use or Ornament?* 1997. 7-9.

⁵⁹ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 15.

⁶⁰ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 15.

⁶¹ Flinn, J. and McPherson, G. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. Division of Cultural Business, Glasgow Caledonian University. 6-10.

⁶² Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 148.

‘Dancing, playing music and engaging in other artistic activities brings more joy than do many other leisure activities. That joy in turn enhances our willingness to reach out and connect with others’.⁶³ It is this willingness to connect to others, to potentially cooperate and develop trust, that gives rise to social capital. ‘Social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic’.⁶⁴ ‘The arts provide a powerful way to transcend the cultural and demographic boundaries that divide us’ (creating bridges), and ‘to find deeper spiritual connections with those like us’⁶⁵ (through bonding). ‘Whether we are spectators, performers, or producers’, social capital can be built among as well as across those groups.⁶⁶

Traditionally, arts institutions have done far more bonding than bridging, and it is rare for the same artistic production to do both simultaneously. Like neighbourhoods and churches, many arts and cultural institutions are unofficially but unmistakably segregated by race, by socioeconomic class, and sometimes even by gender.⁶⁷

However:

Arts organisations are increasingly being founded with an explicit aim to bridge inter-group chasms. The arts have the potential to promote such bridging social capital precisely because they can provide a safe space to shelve political and ideological differences, or at least manage those differences without conflict. We need not be of the same race, generation, gender, political party, religion, or income group to sing, act, or create together.⁶⁸

⁶³ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. Cambridge: Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America. 2.

⁶⁴ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 147.

⁶⁵ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. 2.

⁶⁶ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. 1.

⁶⁷ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. 3.

⁶⁸ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. 3.

'It is suggested that [participation in] art and culture offers a unique tool for accessing marginalised groups and individuals',⁶⁹ and that 'social capital can conserve and enhance particularly excluded communities'.⁷⁰ However, 'for working class young people in areas of social exclusion, breaking with local bonding networks [is] key to any social mobility'.⁷¹

Bridging and forming new bonds implies new 'other-ing'. Social capital can 'exclude outsiders as the ties that bond a network or community together can effectively bar access to others'.⁷² Something to be conscious of when working with a group or community, then, is the extent to which "others" are kept outside and the reasoning for this.

Culture forms a central part of a person's identity and is thus often used as a marker of distinction in that a person's culture differentiates them from other individuals and/or identifies them as belonging to a particular group.⁷³

It is a matter of preference as to the balance between strong bonds within, and open doors to forming bridges. The notions of "us" and "them" (or in-groups and out-groups) are fundamental to building a sense of shared identity. Group membership, however, 'creates demands for some level of conformity among group members' (to the group prototype and rules of favour exchange), and 'while this may be beneficial, in that it can provide the individual with a sense of belonging, such levels of social control can also be restrictive of personal freedoms'.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 10.

⁷⁰ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 6.

⁷¹ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 11-12.

⁷² Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 14.

⁷³ Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 14.

⁷⁴ Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 14-5.

The continuum for how open or closed a group is, is echoed by the continuum for how engaged a participant is. For arts and music projects, it is at the individual's discretion how involved they want to be. 'While membership of a group is likely to lead to internalised norms of behaviour which are generally seen to be beneficial to society, these beliefs and norms may, in some cases, be seen as unacceptable to wider society'.⁷⁵ We may not only strive to be aware of intergroup dynamics from the in-group perspectives, but from the out-group perspectives too.

Arts in Context

Recent political thinking on the arts has been criticised in that 'they miss the real purpose of the arts, which is not to create wealth but to contribute to a stable, confident and creative society'.⁷⁶ 'The principle reason given by [local authority] respondents for funding the arts and culture was economic development'.⁷⁷

Arts Council England have recently stated their goals as:

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, (museums and libraries)
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts
- The arts are resilient and environmentally sustainable
- The leadership and workforce in the arts, are diverse and appropriately skilled
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 14-5.

⁷⁶ Matarasso, Francois. *Use or Ornament?* 1997. 6.

⁷⁷ Mansfield, Claire. *On with the show: supporting local arts and culture*. London: NLGN, 2014. 34.

⁷⁸ Arts Council England. *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*. Manchester: Art Council England, 2013. 39.

Top of the agenda is 'excellence': presumably to maintain a reputation for high quality art, thus maintaining wide interest and the economic viability of the arts. A vital task. Nonetheless, this does bring us to the questions of 'high' and 'low' art, product verses process, and equality. 'With significantly reduced budgets, it is understandable that local authorities are scrambling to keep pressing services such as social care and education ticking over', and while councils are utilising the arts for economic and health purposes, it is advised that 'local authorities do not ignore the 'difficult to measure' aspects of the arts and culture as, in future years, it is the social capital of an area that may well reduce the pressure on essential services'.⁷⁹

Generating more, or different, social capital for individuals in society, then, could reduce costs later. Whilst reflecting on social capital as 'building blocks that enable a resilient community that looks after itself', Meradin Peachey said that 'where these things don't exist there's a huge call on public services'.⁸⁰ If excellence is a priority, this may inhibit the extent to which many people can engage in the arts. If it is 'excellence' that is influencing available arts programmes, those of 'non-excellence' may have no relation to, understanding of, or influence over, local arts. Some believe the current Arts Council framework is:

clearly inadequate for guiding engagement with the opportunities and challenges that exist in current public policy debates on the nature of England and the arrangements for its future governance at local, regional and national level (as well as within the United Kingdom and Europe).⁸¹

Debates on funding allocation, public arts, and equality continue, while the concern of quality still acts as a barrier to arts participation through pressures to perform well, and to be able to demonstrate value. 'Falling standards',

⁷⁹ Mansfield, Claire. *On with the show*. 2014. 34-5

⁸⁰ Burrows, Ewbank, Mills, Shipton, Clift, Gray. *Cultural Value and Social Capital*. 2014. 40.

⁸¹ GPS Culture. *Arts Council England's National Investment Plans 2015-18: Hard Facts to Swallow: Analysis, Commentary and Evaluation*. GPS Culture, 2014. 5.

according to Matarasso are 'nothing to fear'; a culture which needs protecting from people's participation is not worth the name'.⁸²

The community arts movement in Britain is about making the arts relevant and more accessible to everyone, especially marginalised communities; about inclusion and empowerment; about giving people a voice; about social interaction and often community action through the arts.⁸³

'Polarisation in influence and responsibility between agencies and users is part of the problem of contemporary communities, and sound community work therefore involves the empowerment of users and ordinary people'.⁸⁴ 'Community art emerges as a distinct sociological experience capable of transforming social realms'.⁸⁵ The arts can 'provide a safe space for discussion', as the 'act of creating and performing together breaks down the walls that block democratic discourse from occurring'.⁸⁶

Discussion

For Amy, communication across the arts industry and other industries is a pressing concern. This is something she expressed as a driving force in her business as she is keen to bring people together: "there's such a communication barrier in the arts and other sectors that I feel to actively start those conversations is the first step." When talking about the 'corporate world' and the 'arts sector' she expressed that "it feels like they're two different worlds and they shouldn't. I think artists are really good at articulating things amongst themselves, which fosters that community of artists, but for the wider community it's not easy, and it doesn't help that sometimes other industries

⁸² Matarasso, Francois. *Use or Ornament?* 1997. 9-10.

⁸³ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 168.

⁸⁴ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 97.

⁸⁵ Flinn and McPherson. *Culture Matters? The role of art and culture in the development of social capital*. 6.

⁸⁶ *Bettertogether: The Arts and Social Capital*. 6.

might not be accessible.” Her ideal solution for this is to form a hub “where people can mutually benefit from the values of the other”, as it’s “not like these organisations are doing the artists a favour, it’s a mutual benefit and we’re really keen to express that.”

Several interviewees highlighted the importance of arts participation. Elaine notes “the skills that you develop by working with other people is exactly what you need in the workplace, but you’re doing it without realising necessarily that you’re doing it.” Ian agrees that musicians learn transferable skills but won’t always realise: “you have to learn empathy, you have to learn negotiation skills from an early age, and you find that a lot of the guys that are drawn to music, they’ve got a lot more skills than they think they’ve got.” A further reason the arts can be beneficial to people is through allowing them to experiment with identity and to change their social circles. For Sarah, working with NEET young people through the arts can mean: “fostering that sort of atmosphere where you can engage with them on a level that they can appreciate, and if you give them a sense of belonging, and put them on a different track, then you can alter their whole life.”

There was a theme throughout, of professionals and non-professionals alike starting their own businesses, projects and social spaces. For Lloyd, current arts events weren’t hitting it: “in London at that time, most events for people like me were really either about somebody or they were about a thing. So we’d put all of our focus on a thing, this is the social medium or social object. What I missed was just the ability to have a conversation about whatever. That was my motivation. It was seeing something was missing.” Sarah responded to the lack of arts and cultural organisations in Coventry just over a decade ago too: “you just do something about it. That’s the only answer.”



Chapter 3 - Community Music

Music and Musicking

On an individual level, people make use of music to construct their identities. On a social level, we use music to create, manage and regulate our relationships. And societally, we use music to create and understand our role in relation to the world.⁸⁷

Music is integrated into everyday life, even if that is simply listening at home.

People are using music to regulate and control their emotional behaviour and take care of their health needs through music ... Music is not designed for privacy or containment - it naturally reverberates, permeates, goes through boundaries and walls. And in doing so it calls to others, attracts, gathers, connects people together. It creates community.⁸⁸

It might be of concern, then, that 'our engagement with music has become increasingly passive (we are all listening to our iPods).⁸⁹ However, 'even when we relate to music alone, such as when we listen to music in solitude, social relationships are implied and involved'.⁹⁰ Music is 'inextricably social and meaningful for those who compose it, perform it, and listen to it'.⁹¹

Regardless of context, content, or approach, music development and growth embody distinctive ways of knowing that expand and inform

⁸⁷ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 152.

⁸⁸ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 12-7.

⁸⁹ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 148.

⁹⁰ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 126.

⁹¹ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 4.

our perceptual awareness, our sensitivity and responsiveness to others.⁹²

Listening to music at home can allow us to 'express [our] inner emotional state' and shift [our] mood', and 'can help with personal stress and anxiety'.⁹³ Whilst music clearly helps individuals, participating in a musical group could do more.

The mere presence of other people heightens our arousal levels. This can of course help us to feel 'elated' when performing in a group context, and make our individual achievements seem all the greater.⁹⁴

In light of music being inextricably social, the term 'musicking' (as an active engagement in music) has a large scope. Music is 'something that people DO together, rather than dots on a page or sounds in a hall'.⁹⁵ When engaging in music as a social practice (musicking), we are all essentially 'musical persons':

Rather than just a talent, musicality is a natural sensitivity and responsiveness to music, perhaps better thought of as faculty such as speech. We all have the capacity to musick, even if it's cultivated in different ways and engaged with at different levels. A relationship with music is, however, seldom an exclusive person relationship.⁹⁶

⁹² Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. Plymouth: National Association for Music Education, 2013. 149.

⁹³ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 121.

⁹⁴ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 121.

⁹⁵ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 151.

⁹⁶ Ansdell, Gary. *How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life*. 2014. 269.

Community Music (CM)

‘Community Music consists of, but is not limited to, informal music making’,⁹⁷ and is ‘a leading movement in the contemporary practice of community arts’.⁹⁸ When defining CM, some approaches emphasise ‘those characteristics which set it apart from other forms of music-making, while others may view all music-making as Community Music’.⁹⁹ CM programmes are ‘shaped by the participants they serve’ and tend to emphasise ‘lifelong learning and access for all’.¹⁰⁰

Music in community centres, prisons and retirement homes; extra-curricular projects for school children and youth; public music schools; community bands, orchestras and choirs; musical projects with asylum seekers; marching bands for street children. All this—and more—comes under the heading of community music. ... But a single definition of community music is yet to be found.¹⁰¹

There is no clear definition of community music. Many musicians who work informally with communities ‘mostly describe themselves as “musicians” rather than “community musicians.”’¹⁰² Though, they tend to have a ‘strong sense of place and a deep rootedness to the people they perform with and for’.¹⁰³

Musicians will actively identify themselves as “community musicians” if they have had connection to local, national, and international organisations that support, advocate, and name community music. If

⁹⁷ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 1.

⁹⁸ McKay, Higham. *Community Music: History and Current Practice, its Constructions of ‘Community’, Digital Turns and Future Soundings*. AHRC Connected Communities, 2011. 4.

⁹⁹ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 4.

¹⁰¹ McKay, Higham. *Community Music: History and Current Practice*. 2011. 4.

¹⁰² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 4.

¹⁰³ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 4.

there has been no organisational field experience of this type, musicians and music educators will most often identify themselves in other ways.¹⁰⁴

Alongside those who work with CM organisations, there is also ‘a significant and well-established cohort of dedicated freelance professionals who work as community musicians as part of their creative music careers’.¹⁰⁵ ‘The claim has long been that activities named community music are just too diverse, complex, multifaceted, and contextual to be captured in one universal statement of meaning’.¹⁰⁶ However, it has been confidently stated by the International Society of Music Education that ‘community music is characterised by the following principles: decentralisation, accessibility, equal opportunity, and active participation in music-making’.¹⁰⁷ CM activities are ‘local, personal, political, multifaceted, and, above all, fluid’.¹⁰⁸ Its fluidic identity potentially offers ‘a strategic advantage’.¹⁰⁹ CM has been referred to as ‘a chameleonic practice’:

Adopting a broad definition of CM enables a sense of unity across the profession and provides practitioners with the flexibility to tailor their CM activity to the requirements tied to different sources of funding. ... Delegates sought to retain an understanding of CM as a ‘chameleonic practice’, capable of responding to shifting policy and funding agendas.¹¹⁰

It is not just policy and funding agendas that community music responds to. Music takes place in the community, without the need for public funding, all the time. The various contexts and forms of CM are diverse and unique to the

¹⁰⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 4.

¹⁰⁵ McKay, Higham. *Community Music: History and Current Practice*. 2011. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 3.

¹⁰⁷ McKay, Higham. *Community Music: History and Current Practice*. 2011. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 1.

¹⁰⁹ McKay, Higham. *Community Music: History and Current Practice*. 2011. 5.

¹¹⁰ Brown, Higham, Rimmer. *Whatever Happened to Community Music?* AHRC Research Network Report, 2014. 2.

communities in question. 'The reluctance to be defined functions as a more or less deliberate strategy for keeping artistic, and most importantly commercial, options open'.¹¹¹

Community musicians who lead projects encourage dialogue between themselves and their participants that are built on trust, respect, and responsibility. Although there is a concern for quality musicianship and performance, facilitation enacted through the workshop puts an emphasis and places a higher value on the process that may or may not lead to a sharing or performance.¹¹²

Community music practice involves 'a genuine reception for both experienced and inexperienced musicians'.¹¹³ In line with the wider community arts movement, community music strives for inclusivity and equality. The 'act of hospitality' describes one of the strategic approaches of community musicians: 'a greeting that extends beyond those who are already engaged'.¹¹⁴

Community musicians facilitate active and creative musicking through a welcoming workshop environment. Through acts of hospitality, the music workshop as event, evokes collective and inventive conversations that aim to encourage music making that is open, creative, and accessible.¹¹⁵

'Community musicians have emphasised the workshop and facilitation as key strategies for practice'.¹¹⁶ Community musicians pursue the workshop as their 'means of achieving a democratic space favourable to creative music', largely

¹¹¹ Brown, Higham, Rimmer. *Whatever Happened to Community Music?* 2014. 4.

¹¹² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 176.

¹¹³ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 176.

¹¹⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 176.

¹¹⁵ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 155.

¹¹⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 144.

due to the structural advantage which enables 'an open space to foster active and collaborative music making'.¹¹⁷

The workshop space becomes a site for experimentation and exploration through a deterritorialised environment. Although the space is bounded, it is not a tightly controlled location that fixes parameters with rigidity and barriers. Spaces set up in this manner enable change and transformation. Within the workshop situation, one might consider this as freeing up fixed and set relations, physically, mentally, and spiritually, while seeking the opportunity to expose new relationships.¹¹⁸

'Music is a hook; it pulls people into a social space. Or perhaps social space is what music is; it is a world where people can act and interact through sound and movement'.¹¹⁹ 'Through an openness and focus towards relationships, the workshop can become a touchstone through which diversity, freedom, and tolerance might flow'.¹²⁰

Music and Community

'The basic psychobiological capacity for relating to sounds, rhythms, and movements' has been termed proto-musicality, or communicative musicality.¹²¹ 'Our (proto)musicality is a shared human capacity but it is cultivated into musicianship through different life histories and different encounters with various musics'.¹²²

Each participant contributes with his or her musicianship, as cultivated musicality and appropriation of the perceived affordance of various musics. Communal musicking is at once private and public, personal

¹¹⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 144.

¹¹⁸ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 146.

¹¹⁹ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 115.

¹²⁰ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 144-45.

¹²¹ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 294.

¹²² Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 127.

and social, centred and de-centred. To create unity beyond uniformity is therefore one of the possibilities of communal musicking. ... Unity embracing diversity is of course somewhat of a utopian idea; in real world processes there will at times be conflicts which require careful navigation and negotiation.¹²³

‘Communicative musicality links with recent discoveries in neuroscience of so-called “mirror neurons” which help us to read others’ emotional and social intentions and thus coordinate our actions empathetically with others’.¹²⁴ Music can facilitate inclusive events when worked with by communities ‘partly because musical participation is possible without mastery of language’.¹²⁵ ‘One of the attributes that distinguishes music from language is that music provides an intimately shared, embodied experience rather than communicating a specific message’.¹²⁶

Communicative musicality is not just a capacity for relating to sound and movement, then, but also a capacity for relating to other people. Emotionally satisfying communication is established through the creation of a coordinated relationship through time.¹²⁷

What music provides, as opposed to communication, is ‘communion - an intimately shared experience between listener and listener and between listener and performer.’¹²⁸ Regardless of the extent of each individuals participation, everyone is sharing an intimate experience, whilst simultaneously having their own. ‘Music as an embodied and personal phenomenon is simultaneously, and in principle, a social phenomenon’.¹²⁹

¹²³ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 127-29.

¹²⁴ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 294.

¹²⁵ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 115.

¹²⁶ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 245.

¹²⁷ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 123.

¹²⁸ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 245.

¹²⁹ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 293.

Entrainment, essentially keeping time with the pulse (beat) of the music, contributes to our embodiment of musicking as a shared experience.

Pulse provides an isochronous temporal framework within which accurate prediction can occur. Such prediction and expectation can occur not only between two individuals, but also across large groups of individuals, with high levels of synchrony strengthening the feeling of a shared experience.¹³⁰

Emotional contagion is another way in which humans in a group ‘appear to ‘catch’ emotions experienced by others at the motor expression level’, and is thought to arise from ‘the tendency unconsciously to mimic the facial expressions, gestures, postures, and body sway of others, as well as their vocal expressions’.¹³¹ These gestures involve an involuntary and ‘pre-reflective immediacy’ of response, rooted in basic biological behaviour: ‘such an instinctively arising gesture by one member of the species triggers an equally involuntary adjusting behaviour in another’.¹³² Therefore, rather than feel a ‘separate sense of agency’, emotional contagion causes the listener to experience ‘an ambiguity of agency that fosters co-subjectivity’.¹³³

‘Taken together, the temporal coordination through rhythmic entrainment and our emotional responses to gesture provide a firm ground for intimately shared representation’.¹³⁴ Not just shared representation, but a shared place seen from multiple subjective angles, created, influenced and maintained together as a cooperative. ‘We argue that what remains essential to music is the shared experience of an embodied present, at the co-subjective, pre-

¹³⁰ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 249.

¹³¹ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 254.

¹³² Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 254.

¹³³ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 246.

¹³⁴ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 253.

reflective level of consciousness'.¹³⁵ Performing can 'provide musicians [with] platforms for obtaining these moments of flow' (and loss of self).¹³⁶

"Flow" is the way people describe their state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake'.¹³⁷ When musicking, an 'inclusive approach gives a group the freedom to 'go with the flow' and to make it an emotionally, socially and musically connecting experience'.¹³⁸

To exist is to co-exist. 'Culture enables and regulates such co-existence. Music may then be considered a mode of human co-existence'.¹³⁹ Music is a place, or a mode, in which we can transform and transcend identities, and experience 'flow' with others.

Open Mic and Identity

This musical place can be interpreted as:

a multidimensional and continuously changing milieu where an aggregate of biological, psychological, and sociocultural processes interact. This interaction has a transactional character, that is, agents, activities and artefacts change and develop over time through processes of mutual influence.¹⁴⁰

The open mic represents a 'hybridised place within the popular musical world' and is a 'social setting in which musicians come together to practice and perform, learn and negotiate, and compare and contrast music, performances, and identities'.¹⁴¹ Due to their embedded diversity, the singer-

¹³⁵ Clarke, David, and Eric F Clarke. *Music And Consciousness*. 2011. 260.

¹³⁶ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 43.

¹³⁷ Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990. 6.

¹³⁸ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 175.

¹³⁹ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 96.

¹⁴⁰ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 138.

¹⁴¹ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 8.

songwriters who attend open mic tend to be 'more accommodating' than closed scene members who host 'symbolic boundaries of exclusion'.¹⁴² Though open mic scenes still 'persist in varying degrees of openness in terms of the permeability of group boundaries and structures'.¹⁴³

People's aesthetics, the way they perceive their environment and other people, 'are neither completely static nor completely in flux, but are influenced by group values, collective ideologies, and practices while also influential in the selection process of social networks and group membership'.¹⁴⁴ Any one person is a member of multiple groups and aligns with several prototypes to various extents, the values of which are 'fluid and subject to change'.¹⁴⁵ Deciding who to be and who to be friends with is a complex, ongoing process. Music is a useful platform in that it 'not only reflects emotional life but creates it', and as such allows for 'culture identity building and re-building'.¹⁴⁶

'These events and activities do not reside in a social vacuum, but pull from the larger social and cultural milieu, reflecting, and reconstructing social boundaries, groups, statuses and roles.'¹⁴⁷ 'Participants are not just shaped in and by context; they are actively contributing to the shaping of these contexts'.¹⁴⁸ A democratic space in which to evolve and transform does not just change things for the individual, then. The space is influenced by the individuals participating, and becomes whatever they decide, which can go on to influence life outside of the space. 'Where there are differences in culture, ethnicity and pathology, there is musical experience in common. There is no right or wrong in music'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 193.

¹⁴³ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 8.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital: Concept, Policy and Practice*. 2007. 5.

¹⁴⁶ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 27.

¹⁴⁷ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 195.

¹⁴⁸ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 300.

¹⁴⁹ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 176.

Musicking and Social Capital

The resources for musicking can be described as 'participant strengths (such as creativity and musical talents), relational resources (such as trust and emotional support), and community resources (such as music organisations and musical traditions)'.¹⁵⁰ 'We could argue that the human psychobiological capacity for relating to sounds and rhythms is a "universal resource"'.¹⁵¹ 'We all have a universal capacity for engagement in music',¹⁵² thus we 'draw upon and use the cultural tools that stand within our reach'¹⁵³ for bridging and bonding.

Community music practice can lead to new friendships and foster deeper relationships between old acquaintances. Community music groups can open new social doors and a whole new outlook on life as people interact with others outside of their regular social and economic groups.¹⁵⁴

For some, the tools that allow us access to musical capital are 'simply not within reach', and those working with these people take on the role of facilitating their appropriation and creation of musical capital - 'thus building up the toolkit with which they can then go on to access social capital'.¹⁵⁵ 'Music bridges not just the barriers of illness, but also of cultural and social isolation'.¹⁵⁶

Community Music in Context

'Community Music is an expression of cultural democracy, and musicians who work within it are focused on the concerns of making and creating musical

¹⁵⁰ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 283.

¹⁵¹ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010. 300.

¹⁵² Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 125.

¹⁵³ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 159-60.

¹⁵⁴ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 176.

¹⁵⁵ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 160.

¹⁵⁶ Pavlicevic, M and Ansdell, G. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 27.

opportunities for a wide range of people'.¹⁵⁷ 'Music is a potential element of social identity construction and a path away from marginalisation, violence, and criminality'.¹⁵⁸ Through musicking, individuals can renegotiate, or reconsider, their identities. 'Cultural democracy advocates that people need to create culture rather than having it made for them'.¹⁵⁹

'As government attempts to reduce its expenditure on human services, it shifts responsibility to the local level through community programs at a much lower cost'.¹⁶⁰ 'Volunteers put in long hours to book and market a show, and act as local advocates of the arts. They may also take a financial risk'.¹⁶¹ Community musicians as 'boundary-walkers' manifest 'instability in terms of resources, training, education, advocacy and political influence'.¹⁶²

Community music practices are more vulnerable to social change than highly commercial or government-funded music styles or genres and need to be valued and nurtured to ensure optimal benefit for the societies in which they can thrive.¹⁶³

'Frustratingly, community arts' attempt to rupture dominant ideology often left it being judged by those it opposed, particularly when it involved issues of funding'.¹⁶⁴ However, as local music scenes and open mic events demonstrate, it is not necessarily acceptance and funding from organisations that makes for prime musicking.

The barriers to artistic expression and participation have been reduced via 'the growth and spreading of knowledge through the Internet and accessibility

¹⁵⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 7.

¹⁵⁸ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 235.

¹⁵⁹ (Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 168.

¹⁶⁰ Edwards, Franklin, Holland. *Assessing Social Capital*. 2007. 8.

¹⁶¹ Arts Council England. *Arts in rural England: Why the arts are at the heart of rural life*. Newcastle: Arts Council England, 2005. 18.

¹⁶² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 7.

¹⁶³ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 296.

¹⁶⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 40.

to less expensive musical and recording technologies'.¹⁶⁵ Meaning more and more people are able to learn to play, engage in musicking, record their work, and put on their own events; all on their own terms. These DIY music efforts illustrate that managing musical sessions requires 'patience, enthusiasm, hard work, and support', which are all things that any musical or non-musical person can achieve: 'the best singing leaders do not always have to be the best singers'.¹⁶⁶

Discussion

On the topic of research, Michael explained that when people talk about their experiences of music therapy, "they say they've enjoyed it because of being with other people." The social aspect is crucial. Some of the ways he believes it helps are "being together in time, actually synchronising. When you sing a song with a group, you're synchronising your breathing, your use of language in song, movement potentially." He also comments that "there's a kind of awareness that happens through music, so I think my role is to manage the situation so that people are aware of other people. My role is to use music as a way to bring people into a shared experience."

When reflecting on music scenes of the past, Sarah speculates that: "there was a whole community aspect of people going to folk clubs and there was no hierarchy, or [expectations of] who would do what when. For me, community spirit is looking back on those times, and not replicate it but bring people together in a similar way." For Jeff, community is "created in people by finding the same passions, and it emanates out from there." When discussing a musical community at an ongoing open mic that ended a over a year ago, he commented: "they all still interact with each other. So even twelve months on, that community spirit lives on."

As previously mentioned, many of the interviewees expressed a DIY attitude. For Sarah, it's not just about making things happen and getting the word out, it's also "important for us to be able to support other people to make things happen as well." However, doing it yourself can be tough on relatively

¹⁶⁵ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. 2013. 4-5.

¹⁶⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 153.

unsupported advocates of local arts and music. Sarah explained that “some of the things we’ve had to go through to get to this stage has been enormously stressful”, but what kept her going in those times was the “vision for what we want this place to be.”

Some of the interviewees did their community practice as a full-time job, and others acted as local advocates and worked it around their job. One of the toughest challenges for Jeff is “trying to fit it in with a day job; you’re doing a day job and you’re driving and you’re trying to get people lined up, you finish work and bang you go and do that and then you get home late a night, and you’re shattered sometimes, but it’s worth it.”



Chapter 4 - In Practice

Workshops

An important aspect of musicians' informal learning is peer learning, which takes place in a setting of trust among friends. Musicians learn in a reflexive way - by playing together and improvising, by listening and observing. Informal, experiential learning within non-formal contexts strengthens musicians' feelings of ownership of their learning.¹⁶⁷

When someone chooses to participate in community music 'workshops', they do so because 'they wish, or "call", to be "worked with" rather than "worked on"'.¹⁶⁸ The following summarises the encounter (not restricted to the first meeting, an 'ongoing cyclical' structure):

- The participant makes the decision to attend a music workshop. He or she meeting the community musician (face-to-face encounter).
- The participant is ready to make and create music and expects to do so (call).
- The community musician is open and ready to work with the participant to enable a meaningful music making experience (welcome).¹⁶⁹

The workshop is a place of relative equality, as 'ownership is not vested in a single individual (the workshop facilitator) but lies with everybody'.¹⁷⁰

'Although guidance is needed within workshop events, it is imperative that the structure remains porous and open':¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Veblen, Messengers, Silvermaan, Elliott. *Community Music Today*. 2013. 165.

¹⁶⁸ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 158.

¹⁶⁹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 158.

¹⁷⁰ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 153.

¹⁷¹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 146.

The workshop space becomes a site for experimentation and exploration through a deterritorialised environment. Although the space is bounded, it is not a tightly controlled location that fixes parameters with rigidity and barriers.¹⁷²

Democracy can be seen even at the beginning of most music workshops, in the form of the circle itself: 'a condition of space that reduces hierarchical structures'.¹⁷³ The facilitation of this space could be described as 'a gift'. However, 'gifts are exchanged and are therefore a self-limiting concept forming circular economies'.¹⁷⁴ Through mindful negotiation, it is the workshop leader's responsibility to 'create situations that are beyond debts'.¹⁷⁵

Facilitation and Friendships

'Facilitation is understood as a process that enables participants' creative energy to flow, develop, and grow through pathways specific to individuals and the groups in which they are working'.¹⁷⁶ The role of the community musician requires reflection, both in the short and long term, and well considered facilitation efforts. The role of facilitator also 'necessitates trust in the ability of others as well as submission to the inventiveness of others'.¹⁷⁷

At times the group will look to its facilitator for reassurance, clarity, direction, encouragement, guidance, or shaping. Facilitators are able to find a comfortable balance between (1) being prepared and able to lead and (2) being prepared and able to hold back, thus enabling the group or individuals to discover the journey of musical invention for

¹⁷² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 146.

¹⁷³ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 153.

¹⁷⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 152-53.

¹⁷⁵ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 153.

¹⁷⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 148.

¹⁷⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 148.

themselves. Facilitators are never static in one approach or another but move in and out of roles as the group dictates.¹⁷⁸

The facilitating musician ideally has ‘the ability to sense what is needed and to be able to offer an accurate response in all situations’.¹⁷⁹ A facilitator can be described as a ‘self-reflective, process-person who has a variety of human, process, technical skills and knowledge, together with a variety of experiences to assist groups of people to journey together to reach their goals’.¹⁸⁰ Another key aspect of democratic musicking is the participatory ethos, involving a ‘willingness to listen to each participant and to acknowledge his or her voice’.¹⁸¹ ‘Community music is context dependent, and as such programs, courses, modules, and units need to be developed with the locality firmly in mind’,¹⁸² if not actually leading and contributing to its design.

‘You can’t have something which is context and culture sensitive but which is a ‘one size fits all anywhere’ model’.¹⁸³ We cannot define definitive models of ‘good practice’ for community music: ‘they need to be collaboratively negotiated in relation to the multiplicity of roles and relationships that evolve in each context’.¹⁸⁴ The role of facilitator can often simply be to ‘keep the resources available, and an invitation constantly renewed’.¹⁸⁵ However, the work is usually complex, and can be described as practicing “safety without safety”:

Boundaries are marked to provide enough structural energy for the workshop to begin, but care is then taken to ensure that not too many

¹⁷⁸ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 148.

¹⁷⁹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 149.

¹⁸⁰ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 147.

¹⁸¹ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 281.

¹⁸² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 178.

¹⁸³ Pavlicevic, Mercedes, and Gary Ansdell. *Community Music Therapy*. 2004. 17.

¹⁸⁴ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 289.

¹⁸⁵ Ansdell, Gary. *How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life*. 2014. 267.

restraints are employed that might delimit the flow or the becoming of any music making.¹⁸⁶

‘The security of the familiar is replaced with the safety of the workshop environment’.¹⁸⁷ A workshop facilitator can potentially ‘advance success through the possibility of failure’, as this is not necessarily an ‘unwelcome possibility or an exposure to harm’.¹⁸⁸ If a ‘climate for risk taking’ can be created through the facilitation, ‘then this may release the group, or individual, to try the untried’ and the democratic musical place-experience can become a ‘path of no mistakes’.¹⁸⁹

The hosting musician maintains many relationships, which can be complex and difficult to understand. ‘Establishing trustworthy and respectful relationships is the result of skilful facilitation but can challenge the boundaries of the music facilitator’s role’:

The relationship between facilitator and participant is not an equal one. It is built upon inequality and structure through (1) the facilitator’s responsibility as leader of the process, and (2) the participant’s call that reaches beyond the capacity of those who lead.¹⁹⁰

‘The community music facilitator might strive toward unconditional hospitality’.¹⁹¹ This is something to be wary of given that the participants will likely ask for more than can be delivered. The majority of community musicians talk ‘explicitly about the idea of friends and friendship’.¹⁹² However,

¹⁸⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 150.

¹⁸⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 151.

¹⁸⁸ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 151.

¹⁸⁹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 151.

¹⁹⁰ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 160.

¹⁹¹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 147.

¹⁹² Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 161.

not everybody agrees with 'the notion of facilitator-participant friendships'.¹⁹³ Friendships formed through community music are based on features that are 'tangential, or accidental, to the facilitator or participant, and are motivated primarily by each person's independently defined goals'.¹⁹⁴ These friendships are made as an act of two (or more) people choosing to form bonds based on chosen social identities. One music facilitator stresses:

"If you view the relationship with your participants as just participants, I think the relationship can be pretty cold. So I think it is very important to get to know them as friends get to know each other."¹⁹⁵

Due to the nature of the 'democratic' space that musicking facilitators strive to create, the relationships between the community musician and those they are working with have blurred lines:

The hierarchal structure is not a simple binary construction but one of inequality marked by the participant's call and the facilitator's welcome or vice versa. Empathic understanding nurtured through the workshop as event reflects the "give" and "take" between the self as community musician and the other as participant. It is here, from this vantage point, that the perceptions of being equal are imagined.¹⁹⁶

The friendship commonly found between participants and the community musician is, at least somewhat, instrumental. 'They are unequal - although there is a desire and a perception for things to be otherwise'.¹⁹⁷ Whilst a practicing community musician should be mindful of the boundaries, or lack thereof, in their relationships, they are not the only party responsible for

¹⁹³ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 161.

¹⁹⁴ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 164.

¹⁹⁵ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 157.

¹⁹⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 161.

¹⁹⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 164.

successful musicking. Part of the skill is 'not being the sole expert, but in negotiating expertise and roles with others'.¹⁹⁸

The Open-Closed Continuum

'Community as a prefix to community music is a gesture toward an open-door policy, a greeting to strangers, extended in advance without full knowledge of its consequences'.¹⁹⁹ 'Patterned audience practices appear across the open mic landscape with notable variations and gradations paralleling the openness continuum'.²⁰⁰ We should be aware, then, of where our community falls in this spectrum, how this is managed, and why it is so.

Any arena or agenda produces possibilities for inclusion or exclusion, depending on the objectives and traditions they are connected to. Similarly, activities and artefacts encourage or discourage participation, for instance because of the skill levels they require or the values they are connected to. The agents that take part in communal musicking therefore usually need to negotiate on choice of arena, agenda, activities and artefacts.²⁰¹

As shared identities are formed, individual experiences are still happening. Therefore 'unity is always only partial'.²⁰² 'Crafting cross-cutting identities is a powerful way to enable connection across perceived diversity. That is, bridging may depend on finding, emphasising, or creating a new dimension of similarity within which bonding can occur'.²⁰³ 'In order to be inclusive and allow for growth and change, communities must be able to handle diversity

¹⁹⁸ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 288.

¹⁹⁹ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 143.

²⁰⁰ Aldredge, Marcus. *Singer-Songwriters And Musical Open Mics*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 158.

²⁰¹ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 133.

²⁰² Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 290.

²⁰³ Putnam, Robert D, Lewis M Feldstein, and Don Cohen. *Better Together*. 2003. 282.

and dispute'.²⁰⁴ 'Any new welcome is also always a direct challenge to what has been currently constituted, [which] calls into question prior group identity and predetermined community borders'.²⁰⁵ If the musical community is to incorporate diversity, and be a "community without unity", then it requires 'continuous negotiation':²⁰⁶

As a music facilitator, one might aim for group togetherness, respectful collaboration, and open negotiation. These may be partly met but can never be truly fulfilled unconditionally: the economic cycle will always close down these desires.²⁰⁷

Monitoring and Evaluation

We believe that stories, with their specificity and ability to express the complex realities of particular people and places and their possibly unique ability to express thought and feeling simultaneously, are the appropriate medium for capturing a sense of how social-capital creation works in real life.²⁰⁸

As projects are so varied in content and context it is difficult to prescribe evaluation methods. 'It is not enough to say "music does such-and-such" for people, without specifying the circumstances and meanings of such use'.²⁰⁹ An evaluation also implies an end to the project, which for many organisers (especially the "unincorporated" arts and musicking organisers) is not how projects are ran. Ongoing local music projects can last for years. Perhaps, then, it is better to monitor, or to evaluate periodically, against a set of pre-determined objectives.

²⁰⁴ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 290.

²⁰⁵ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 143.

²⁰⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 147.

²⁰⁷ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 153.

²⁰⁸ Putnam, Robert D, Lewis M Feldstein, and Don Cohen. *Better Together*. 2003. 6.

²⁰⁹ Stige, Brynjulf. *Where Music Helps*. 2010. 298.

When evaluating the outcomes of a project we could question what constitutes good music. Debates of what constitutes quality of product, and product verses process, arise. However, we can instead ask: 'What is good musicking?'

Focus, rather, on the process of musicking and it leads us to think more about aspects of human relatedness, conduct, values and virtues.²¹⁰

As previously discussed, social capital is often a by-product of musicking efforts rather than the objective of it. 'Virtually no-one sets out to "build social capital"'.²¹¹ As such, evaluation of community music projects tends not to focus on community spirit. Perhaps this is wise:

A current temptation, ... is to over-instrumentalise music's helpful effects - and in doing so, to reduce music to a useful tool that can be rapidly operationalised, and its effects measured for immediate cost-benefit analysis. ... Music is not primarily just a way of getting something done, but a way of doing things, or rather an indication of how to do things - musically. As such, musicking has value and purpose as an end in itself. Paradoxically, this is exactly how it achieves other things. ²¹²

Discussion

Amy explained that "the corporate guys I've worked with want outputs in numbers. How this is going to maximise audience, figures etc. Whereas in the arts, sometimes it helps having that information to approach funders, but artists won't necessarily do things for that reason." She expresses the difficulty of showing value through black and white measurement: "you're only expressing a part of something and not the whole thing, because you can measure that part but maybe not that part".

²¹⁰ Ansdell, Gary. *How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life*. 2014. 302.

²¹¹ Putnam, Robert D, Lewis M Feldstein, and Don Cohen. *Better Together*. 2003. 269.

²¹² Ansdell, Gary. *How Music Helps In Music Therapy And Everyday Life*. 2014. 299.

She discussed her approach: “it’s so important that we pilot test everything. We have lots of dialogue with people we work with before we make decisions or commit anything”. Lloyd, who also used methods of prototyping and shared development, remarks: “I would never be one to report on this or explicitly list the things that are going on, but I think things are good if I hear that so-and-so has just done some something with somebody else, as a result of us being connected.”

Sarah advises that “the biggest challenge is financing it all. You’ve got to really keep an eye on what you’re spending”. She explained that, whilst community spirit is important to the charity, they have other charitable objectives (such as education and outreach) which they measure against. Measuring community spirit would be hard for them, especially as a charity, as “it’s too intangible. When it comes to funding, funders have to have tangible results.”

For Lloyd measurement is simply: “having that relationship that let’s people say actually, this isn’t serving me anymore, or I think it would be better if we did this. So the measurement is built in. The challenge for me is not to feel like everybody’s unhappy if they’re not coming, because there’s not a simple correlation between happiness among the community and their presence at the meet-up.” Jeff also indicated an awareness of “natural peaks and troughs” and warned “if you’re not careful, you overthink it.” Rich agrees that: “spirits move in and out of that safe space, it’s transient.” He offers the insight that: “it can hinge on a small group of people who are really into it, and if they dissipate they’re not easy to replace. You have to be prepared to let people grow.”

Elaine also expressed concerns about measuring community spirit: “you can’t grow plants by lifting them up and looking at the roots, you’ll kill them. To know if there’s a good root structure, which is what community is, then you’ve got to look at the outside, not the inside.” Jeff returns to discussing the community that lives on through social media and other events: “it’s not necessarily a measure, but it proves that community is alive, well, and

healthy.” A discussion was had on monitoring the interactions of communities on Facebook, before recognising that “if you’re doing it purely out of passion, that’s reason enough to do it. If you’re going out with a specific aim to foster community spirit, that is when you’d need to demonstrate it.”

Maddy mentioned that another organisation had utilised the method of measuring every time a group member wrote in and said “we” instead of “you”, as a measure of how well liked they were; an innovative way of potentially measuring community spirit. However, the methods used by her own organisation were based on numerical records of responses, event attendance, and a new survey which is given out after events to follow up: “otherwise you bring a group of people together, they do something great, then they all dissipate, so this survey is to try and get that commitment.”

Elaine views her role as a nurturer of self-esteem, in order to bring this parcel of twigs that will all be stronger: “nurture for me is about feeding the soul and the mind and self-esteem of the person, and challenging people to be the best that they can.” She advises: “be kind, be honest, stay out of disagreements, and look for opportunities to bring people together.” Jeff feels it’s about “creating an environment where people feel secure and free to be who they want to be.” He goes on to stress the importance of being fair and equal: “everybody gets an equal chance, whatever the standard, so they feel valued and part of what’s going on that night.”

A challenge, as Jeff highlights, for many freelance musicians working with communities is “keeping the venues happy.” Difficulties around fluctuating attendance or low bar sales can mean disputes and the age-old request of “you’re an artist, do it for free.” This is generally resolved, or in many instances unresolved, through negotiation: “are you paying your bar staff?” A further challenge is knowing how much to give. When discussing the importance of communal activity, Lloyd recognises that: “spending too much time in those spaces is not good for me, my mental health or my physical and economic wellbeing, because I can easily just give it all and put everybody else before my own needs, and then it’s ‘oh hang on, I haven’t got anything’.”

For Michael, important factors are to: “distribute your attention so that you’re aware of everybody in the group, try to be aware of each persons needs on that day. Include variety. Get the balance between going with the flow and being very client led, and on the other hand steering the situation.” One of the biggest challenges for Michael is “simply explaining what you’re doing.” Measurement is a focus of his at the moment: “some music therapists use measurement scales. So they might take a video, and then do observation where they rate people to how much they’ve engaged. I tend to note down significant moments. I build a picture by writing a narrative on each client after each session, and if I had to demonstrate effectiveness to a manager I would look back at those notes over a period of weeks or months, and try to pick out a story. I normally get consent to video my sessions as well, video is very powerful. A third approach is feedback from staff and from families. If you can work with some combination of those, you’ve got a pretty sure basis on which to present evidence.”



Conclusion

Community Spirit, a seemingly 'warm' and 'fluffy' concept, is in fact built on social identities, in-groups and out-groups, and the monitoring of favour exchange. Whether the Community Spirit of a group is simply internal bonding, or also reaches out to be inclusive of others through bridging, largely depends on the community in question. Community Spirit can be defined as the attitude and mood of a group who are a community; a group of people with a common identity and prototype. Being part of a community is vitally important for individual wellbeing in terms of social support, self-esteem, opportunities and identity. Those who lack community bonds and bridges are at risk of social exclusion, loneliness, and lack of resources, which in turn produces negative consequences for individual wellbeing.

However, simply having relationships does not necessarily mean that the benefits will arise, and that the opposing negatives will be overcome. 'People's relationships to others are not only a source of wellbeing and good health. Other people may also represent a burden and a source of frustration.'²¹³ In order to account for this, the communities that individuals belong to should, ideally, be made out of choice. 'In late modern societies there is a tendency that communities develop out of common interests'.²¹⁴ 'As mobility, divorce, and smaller families have reduced the relative importance of kinship ties, especially among the more educated, friendship may actually have gained importance in the modern metropolis'.²¹⁵ The communities we choose to be part of, can be perceived as our chosen family.

Musical communities then, are the chosen families of many. Musicians may opt in and opt out of social identities, not necessarily with ease, but their affiliations and identities are flexible, whilst their overarching social identity of 'musician' can provide a permanent anchor. As musical communities, the in-groups tend to define themselves as 'musical people', usually linked to a

²¹³ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 98-9.

²¹⁴ Stige, Brynjulf, and Aarø. *Invitation To Community Music Therapy*. 2012. 90.

²¹⁵ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. 2000. 96.

particular genre or approach. By having a common identity of 'musical people', and a musical prototype, this can overcome social and cultural barriers, allowing for a diverse community. Musical communities can take many forms, including open mic and local music scenes, as well as directed projects and outreach programmes. 'Musical people' can also include spectators and supporters.

Community music, as part of the community arts movement, seeks to overcome barriers to participation by making musical activities more accessible and inclusive than 'high' quality music, which is about product as opposed to process. Music has many characteristics in social settings which allow people to come together and create a shared experience. This shared musical experience can overcome barriers of culture, language, and economic and social standing. This musical place can allow for individual and group transformation and the renegotiation of identities. Something which is highly relevant, and potentially useful, for those in a disadvantaged economic or social position. Not only that, but in modern times music projects can be set up as member-led, self-initiated and self-determined efforts. Thereby ensuring that the content is relevant to the users, as it is theirs.

Community musicians, unless identified with an official organisation, do not necessarily see their advocacy of local music as a profession. Many musicians who worked with communities do so in order to bring about some of the available social advantages for citizens in their locale. Many of them, particularly those in the "unincorporated arts" such as open mic hosts and local scene organisers, are unsupported and unrecognised. Overall, practitioners have 'developed a rich tapestry of practical projects but found it difficult to find time and space to critically reflect'.²¹⁶ Many of these musicians also lack the language and the networks to discuss their practice reflectively, and to learn from each other. By bringing several disciplines together through this article, this will perhaps contribute to the recognition of these local 'boundary walking' musicians, to their language and understanding of

²¹⁶ Higgins, Lee. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. 7.

facilitation processes, and will hopefully allow peer-to-peer sharing, support and solidarity amongst community musicians from all walks of community life.



Appendix 1

Literature Review

The sociology based concept of social capital quickly became a leading framework in this research. Whilst other sociologists contributed to the arguments put forward in the article, the two key texts were 'Bowling Alone' and 'Better Together', both written by Robert Putnam. Drawing on a vast amount of data, 'Bowling Alone' puts forward an argument that social capital in America is declining, and that this is a concern which American society should be addressing. Through this he highlights many insights into how relationships and networks may work, and how they may be beneficial. He believes that the relationships making up society largely depend on reciprocity. 'Better Together', published three years later, is a book of case studies and story-telling, very different to the statistics based research of 'Bowling Alone'. The case studies tell stories of people who are fostering social capital across America, and provide insights into how social capital is built in real life situations.

A further text on social capital helped to bridge the gap across to music and the arts. 'Assessing social capital: concept, policy and practice' is a collection of articles which critique the current methodologies and understandings of social capital. One particular chapter focused on social capital and music therapy, arguing that music therapy practice can both make good use of the concept, and has a potentially key role to play in the forming of social capital research and methods. Most other articles critiqued social capital in terms of politics, policy and broad societal issues. In stark contrast to Putnam's faith in social capital theory and reciprocity based relationships, this collection of articles provide a means to understand the problems in social capital theory, and how it can be potentially damaging to individuals and society.

There is limited literature available on community music. However, the key texts used in this article were 'Community Music Today', and 'Community Music: In Theory and In Practice' by Lee Higgins. The key arguments put forward by Higgins involve expressing community music as a political act; as

an act of democracy and inclusion. In-keeping with 'Community Music Today', Higgins underscores community music as a flexible practice, and that practitioners should keep in mind the importance of context; always adapting their skill-sets to those they are working with. This text also illuminates how little literature is available on community music practices, particularly theory based literature as most available CM texts are practice based, CM being a very practical field.

In light of there being little literature on community music, other texts such as 'Singer-Songwriters and Musical Open Mics' and 'Music and Consciousness' were utilised. However, in the recently developed field of Community Music Therapy is rich in available literature and public debate and discussion. The key texts informing this research included one of the early texts written on the subject as it emerged from Music Therapy, plainly named 'Community Music Therapy'. This book led key arguments against traditional music therapy practices, and calls for a re-think on how music therapists approach music and people, particularly groups of people. They ask for a less prescriptive approach, and an acknowledgement that they are simply making music with people in order to encourage wellbeing, not as a prescribed medicine. 'Invitation to Community Music Therapy', a later text, gives a full overview of the now well developed field of CoMT, including history, theory, practice and social implications. A highly comprehensive overview of CoMT today.

The key areas of research for this article were sociology, psychology, arts in health and policy, community music, and community music therapy. Whilst the above review refers to the most core texts of the research, readers should be aware that the cross-disciplinary, broad and wide-ranging literature review of articles and books is what had made for a comprehensive understanding of the subject of community spirit and music. It is therefore advised that anyone wanting to further their understanding of this subject should refer to the bibliography texts and ensure that they read texts from multiple fields.

Appendix 2

Interviewee Profiles

Amy is the director of MAIA Creatives, an agency established to support working artists and the sustainability of the creative sector. She is a passionate advocate for local arts in Birmingham.

Elaine is a pub festival and gig organiser, trustee of The Tin Music and Arts Centre, and a passionate advocate of local music and arts in Coventry.

Sarah is the manager of two venues and director of charitable organisation The Tin Music and Arts Centre, and is an advocate for local arts and music in Coventry.

Rich is the manager of Tin Angel Records, The Tin Angel being the original venue and community base for what has now become The Tin Music and Arts Centre.

Lloyd is a freelance social artist based in London and hosts a peer-to-peer meet-up and social media community dubbed Tuttle Club.

Ian is a facilitator and educator of music and media, and a bassist, based in Birmingham.

Jeff is an open mic host, pub festival organiser, singer-songwriter and advocate of local music in Coventry.

Maddy is a social movement organiser in a member-led, online petition based, campaigning organisation, 38Degrees, based in London.

Michael is a freelance music therapist and lecturer in music based practices.

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